THE LATE JOHN K. HACKETT.

THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD RECORDER.

Some Characteristics of Mr. Hackett on and off the Bench—His Wonderful Skill as a Pistol Shot—How his Nerve and Coolness were Tested During his Stay in California.

The body of the late John K. Hackett lay, yesterday, in his residence at 72 Park avenue, where he died on Friday afternoon, and preparations were being made for the funeral, which is to take place on Tuesday next from Trinity Chapel on Twenty-fifth street, near Broadway. The service is to be simple. The Rev. Dr. Morgan Dix will officiate. Mrs. Hackett has asked that no flowers be sent to the church. After the ceremonies there the body is to be taken by special car to Woodlawn Cemetery, where it is to be buried.

Yesterday the flags on the City Hall and on other buildings throughout the city were at half mast, and Mr. Hackett's death was a subject of general conversation among politicians, lawyers, and others whose affairs brought them into contact with the Recorder, and many anecdotes were related of him. His life was full of incidents well worth recording, for he was a man who made his mark everywhere. He was also one to attract attention by his personal appearance alone. He was tall, straight, broad-shouldered, and all his motions gave evidence of strength and self-reliance. His face was essentially a strong one. His jaw was square, his mouth firm, the under lip particularly denoting tremendous will power. Beneath a square forehead were keen steel blue eyes, that seemed at times to emit sparks of fire, so keen were they. His hair was light in color and thin, and he wore no beard, save a closely-clipped moustache. In his dress he was likewise peculiar. He usually wore a short, square sack coat, with pockets in the sides, and it was said that in each pocket he always carried a pistol. Often this coat was of velvet—the only thing about the man's appearance that gave any indication of his sporting proclivities. He generally wore a silk hat, made to order, with a rim and crown nearly straight, no matter what were the curves and "bell" of the prevailing fashion.

On the bench Recorder Hackett was dignified, and took good care that others should treat him with dignity and respect. It was when he was sentencing a prisoner that he exhibited most plainly the peculiarities that have made him widely feared by criminals. Speaking quietly and with little apparent interest, closely examining his finger nails as he spoke—a habit he had—he would calmly inform the criminal that he was perhaps the very worst ruffian with whom he, the Recorder, had ever come in contact, and that he richly deserved the sentence he was about to receive, which would be all that the law allowed him, and then would follow the curt words, "Twenty years."

Among the stories told of Recorder Hackett yesterday were the following: One day, while the court was in session, a heavy and gruff voice was heard without asking for Recorder Hackett. The Recorder showed evident signs of nervousness, and when the doorman entered, asked what the man wanted.

"He wants to see you," was the answer.

"Let him in," replied the Recorder, and at the summons there entered a large man, evidently half drunk, who, seeing the Recorder, nodded familiarly and addressed in a stentorian voice, "Hello, John; how are ye. I came to get your belly."

The Recorder, dignified as ever, invited the stranger to the bench, shook hands with him, and, whispering, asked him to keep quiet until recess. The stranger subsided for a few moments, then grew restless, and, leaning over to Mr. Hackett, said in a hoarse whisper, audible all over the room:

"I say, John, how is your belly now, any way?"

At recess, the Judge took the stranger to his private room, when he introduced him to some friends who came in as an old Californian acquaintance, an actor, who desired to borrow the false stomach which his father, James H. Hackett, used to wear when playing *Falstaff*.

Another anecdote was in connection with the Recorder's proficiency with a pistol. The scene was laid at the Mission Dolores, near San Francisco, back in the fifties, when Mr. Hackett was a rising young lawyer, in California, but better known for his skill with a pistol. He had been accosted by a boy who was trying to get a living by shooting apples off the head and coins from the fingers of a lad of good nerve, who had perhaps as much confidence in Mr. Hackett's skill as the lawyer himself, and one day, after a little dinner party, a special exhibition was to be given. This time Mr. Hackett was to cleave an apple on the lad's head at ten paces. But before the time came, a practical joker in the party bribed the boy to assist in a joke on Mr. Hackett calculated to try his nerve. The boy was carefully drilled in his part. His wool was clipped close to his head by Mr. Hackett, a clot of blood-colored paint, and at the report of the pistol was to spin around with a yell, clap the paint to his forehead as his back was turned to the marksman, spring spasmodically into the air, and twitch headlong to the ground, as if dead. All this was admirably well done, and the presence of the party, when Mr. Hackett fired, and they waited anxiously for him to rush forward, horrified at the result of his shot, and remorsefully bend over his victim. But, quite contrary to expectation, the marksman smiled quietly, took a cartridge from his pocket and coolly lighted it, and waited patiently for the lad to get up. Hackett's friends could never quite determine whether his perfect confidence in his skill led him to know that the boy was not hurt or whether the joke had fallen flat in some way. But it is said that his confidence in his skill seemed to be boundless, and he never hesitated to undertake feats that appeared foolhardy, but which fortunately always resulted successfully.

Mention has been made of the South Side Club. It is an association of 100 gentlemen, who have hundreds of acres near Islip, L. I., where there are trout streams and covers for deer and small game. Recorder Hackett, always an enthusiastic sportsman, was made President of the club about seven years ago, and occupied that position at the time of his death. He was a crack shot with a pistol, and remarkable stories are told of his exploits with this arm. But it is said that he has of late been much overrated as a pistol shot. "He was well up in the old school of methods," said a friend; "but many of the boys of the present surpassed him in skill. I believe that he fostered the reputation he had gained in order to claim those who threatened him, and make them think that it would be a very dangerous thing to tackle him. He was right in this, for he had a firm hand and an iron nerve."

At a meeting of the Sinking Fund Commissioners yesterday Mayor Cooper and City Chamberlain Tappan were appointed a committee to draft suitable resolutions touching the death of Recorder Hackett to be presented at the next meeting.

GRANT IN WASHINGTON.

About One Hundred Persons Welcoming him at the Depot.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 27.—The arrival of Gen. Grant here to-day created a trifle more excitement than did his departure from Washington in the spring of 1877. About 100 persons, a large majority of whom were officeholders, gathered at the Baltimore and Potomac depot at about 4 P. M., to catch a glimpse of the face of the "old man," as they familiarly termed Grant. He arrived in a special car furnished by the Pennsylvania Railroad. Mr. Tyner and Gen. Beale entered the car as soon as it stopped, and the former welcomed Grant to Washington. The Administration was represented by William M. Evarts and Alex. Ramsey. Grant, accompanied by his family and Col. Babcock, walked through the depot to his carriage, and was driven to Gen. Beale's house. As he passed through the depot the people cheered him, and he responded by lifting his hat. To-night he was given a dinner by Gen. Beale, attended by Messrs. Evarts, Ramsey, Babcock, Tyner, and a few others.

When Grant left Washington three years ago he departed without any of the courtesies which are accustomed to be heard upon great and good exPresidents. He was not tendered a farewell banquet, and not until he reached Philadelphia did the managers of the third term boom give him a send off. His corrupt Administration was odious in the nostrils of honest men, and the persons who were sad at the thought of his departure were mostly those who had profited pecuniarily by the abuses which he permitted to exist and even appointed to foster.

To-morrow morning Gen. Grant will attend the services at the Metropolitan Church, and dine with Senator Don Cameron at his residence, corner of K street and Connecticut avenue. On Monday he will dine with the Hon. P. Morton, and some time during the day will probably drive out to Gen. Beale's farm to inspect his Arabian horses. Gen. Sheridan and his wife will arrive on Monday and join Gen. Grant, and Tuesday the party will start by special train for Key West, where they will embark on the steamer for Cuba.

Hayes in New Jersey.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 27.—R. B. Hayes and his son left this city this afternoon for Plainfield, N. J., where they expect to spend Sunday and Monday.

Powder Mill Explosion.

NEWBURGH, Dec. 27.—One of the wheel mills at Moses Hallock & Sons's powder works, four miles west of this city, containing 125 pounds of powder, exploded this afternoon. Frank Welt, an employee, was badly burned, but will probably recover. The damage amounts to $600.

Greenfield's Candies

For the holidays. Unexcelled for freshness, purity, and flavor. Try them 999 Broadway, near 20th st.—*Adv.*

FORTY-ODD YEARS AGO.

Distinguished Men who were Seen at the Old Washington Hotel in Broadway.

You would know that he is well along in years, but you would not surmise that he is as old as he takes pride in telling. Mr. James Ward, who was for about nine years the landlord of the Washington Hotel that stood in Broadway when Canal street was a swamp, is now a lonely, old-fashioned, white-haired man, waiting patiently for the time when he shall be placed beside his wife. In the winter time heretofore he has gone South, but this year he is too feeble to undertake the journey, and he tries to get as much comfort as is possible in a large armchair in front of a grate fire in a hotel in Jersey City, and for exercise he walks up and down the corridors, using a stout cane as a support. One dismal afternoon he was sitting in the reading room, which overlooks a busy street. One thin leg was thrown over the other, and a large red pocket handkerchief lay across both as he looked at the live coals and occasionally shifted the position of the cane that rested at his side, as if his thoughts were travelling in paths that had been strewn with difficulties and disappointments. Then at times his wrinkled face brightened, and, as a pleasant or an amusing memory passed, a smile took possession of it. Familiar faces seemingly appeared in black and red in the grate, and scenes renewed their outlines in the figures of the carpet.

"Seems to me I can see some of my old acquaintances," he remarked quietly, after his visitor had asked him to relate some reminiscences of old New York. "Most of the distinguished men of the day stopped at my house. It was on the corner of Reade street and Broadway, on the City Hall side, not quite to the corner of Chambers street. It was the same block where Stewart's store is now. Stewart's store was then on the opposite side of the street; but he was nobody in those days. It was a brick building, and as substantial as any in New York. I went out of business in '39, and I don't remember when it was torn down. Canal street was under water, and was crossed by an old wooden bridge. On the other side were farms. Where the Tombs is now was all under water, and what you call the Swamp now was called the Swamp then. But I was telling you about the distinguished men who stopped at the house. We had Washington Irving, Martin Van Buren, James Buchanan, Daniel Webster, and others that I don't think of just now.

"Webster was a most singular person," he resumed, smiling as an amusing incident was brought to mind. "He was a lord, but whether he was an English lord or an Irish lord, I forget. He arrived late in the evening, and signed his name on the register as Patrick Cunningham. He was a quiet man, saying very little to anybody, and he didn't go out much. In a few days the report got around that I had a lord in the house. Friends came to me and asked me to point him out, but I told them there was no lord there. He had a little room, and was simple in his desires, but finally somebody who knew him confirmed the report, and he went away.

"Washington Irving was a plain, simple man. Almost any time he was reading, and when he wasn't reading he was walking up and down the hall. He had a cane and a big, red, spotted pocket handkerchief, almost exactly like this. When he walked up and down the hall he would take out that handkerchief and hold it by one corner like this" (taking hold of the extreme point of one of the corners of his handkerchief) "and swing it back and forth. Everybody knew that handkerchief. Sometimes he would get absent-minded and drop it, and if anybody saw it on the floor, it would be picked up and handed to him. He would say

"Thank you,' and pass along as if he didn't care whether it was picked up or not.

"Webster was a peculiar man sometimes. They accuse him of drinking, but I never saw him under the influence of drink. He was a man who liked his own mind. If he wanted a drink, he went to the bar and got it, but as for his being a hard drinker, I don't believe it.

"And John Quincy Adams; yes, yes, I almost forgot him. He was one of the finest men I ever saw. He always stopped with me, and I think I see him standing before me now. I thought as much of him as I did of Irving. There was no more pride about him than you or I. Buchanan was a rough kind of man, and I didn't like him. Van Buren was a natty man. He never was there any length of time, and when he was, we didn't see much of him; but the other Presidents associated freely with those stopping in the house. We didn't have many merchants. It was too far up town for them. And we didn't have many City Hall politicians. We had to keep clear of them. We had Louis Napoleon and his cousin Pierre for a while, but I had to get rid of them. They were too much for us. Louis Napoleon was a well-behaved gentleman in his way, but Pierre was—well, different. Forrest and all the English actors stopped with me. Forrest was the first man to wear wind on you have on your face."

"Moustache?"

"Yes, and when he came back they stoned him. I wish everybody who wears them could be stoned now. Every gentleman was clean shaved in those days. He cut it off pretty soon, I tell you, and he didn't wear it after that. The Park Theatre was the only one in New York then."

"You must be pretty well along in years."

"How old do you think I am?"

"Seventy-eight," the reporter ventured.

"You're pretty near it. I'm eighty, and all alone. My wife is dead, and I have no children. All my friends are gone, and I don't see anybody I used to know when I go to New York.

"I saw the first steamboat and the first railroad. The railroad was at Hoboken, and there was only one house near. Gen. Stevens built it, and it cost him a great time over it. If you got to Philadelphia in twenty-four hours then you were lucky. Now I hear you can go there in two hours. I remember when there were only about half a dozen houses here in Jersey City. There was no way to get over here except in row boats and sailboats. When they had a horseboat they thought it was the greatest thing ever invented."

"Who started the up-town movement?"

"John Haggerty, the great auctioneer. He moved into Chambers street, and that was the first up town street of any account. I'll never forget my move up town. I bought two lots at Broadway and Twenty-ninth street, and everybody said, 'What a fool he is;' but I didn't have them long before a man offered me three times as much as I paid for them, and I said he could have them first prick. But soon afterward he sold them for five times as much as I paid. That stopped me."

BATTLING WITH A WILDCAT.

How Farmer Westfall's Life was Probably Saved by His Son's Marksmanship.

MONTAGUE, Sussex County, N. J., Dec. 27.—Wilhelmus Westfall, a farmer of Montague Township, a few days ago accompanied Alexander, his son, on a fox hunt in the woods bordering the Delaware River, on the New Jersey side. While passing through the thicket, a hound that accompanied the hunters came upon a large wildcat that was lying in a dense clump of underbrush. The animal at once attacked the dog, and when the elder Westfall arrived on the scene the dog was badly worsted, and escaped yelping and limping through the snow. Westfall, who was only a few feet distant, aimed at the wildcat with his gun and pulled the trigger. The cap exploded, but the gun did not go off. Another cap was placed upon the tube, and that also exploded without igniting the charge.

In the mean time the wildcat was moving slowly away through the thick brush, and the hunter, thinking he could kill the animal with the butt of his gun, started in pursuit. He soon overtook the wildcat, which stopped when Westfall had got within a few feet of it. With eyes glaring the animal sprang upon the old man, lacerating him terribly about the face and body, and tearing his clothes into shreds. After a fierce struggle, the hunter succeeded in loosening the wildcat's hold, and his son, who had been called to the scene by the cries of his father, took deliberate aim at the animal and discharged his rifle. The wildcat sprang upward and fell dead upon the show. The cat was nearly six feet long, and weighed fifty pounds. It is the only wildcat that has been killed in this section for many years.

Make Your Own Pies.

How well we remember, the fair days of yore,
The old farmhouse kitchen, the bright painted floor.
Those days of our childhood, where mother's dear face
Illumined each corner about the old place.

Those pies of our boyhood! we've not seen them since
The custard and pumpkin, the apple and mince,
So juicy and deep, and so mammoth in size;
But then our dear mother, she made her own pies.

Then pretty, fair housewife, with home bright and neat,
Your kitchen so tidy, your household complete,
What happiness beams in your fair sunny face;
With snowy white apron that adds such a grace,
You make your own bread, that is spongy and white,
You "put up" preserves, and make cake dark and light,
Would you fashion a dainty your household would prize?
Then pretty, fair housewife, pray make your own pies.

And dear little maiden, expecting to wed,
Now don't pass this by with a toss of your head;
If your husband you'd please, all the days of your life,
And make him the sweetest and best little wife,
Pray, would you be healthy and would you be wise,
Why, dear little maiden, then make your own pies.

MAUD MILLER.

The Latest and Most Successful

Remedy for consumption, coughs and colds is Phillips' "Palatable" Cod Liver Oil, in combination with Phosphо-Nutriline. All druggists. Depot, 2 Platt st., N. Y.—*Adv.*

A wife cannot make her husband a more acceptable holiday present than one of Knox's matchless silk hats. No. 212 Broadway and Fifth Avenue Hotel.—*Adv.*

THE FALL SEASON OF OPERA.

HAS IT RESULTED IN LOSS TO MANAGER MAPLESON?

One of the Directors Asserts that Col. Mapleson was Losing Money Past Until Marimon Came—Facts about Gerster's Absence.

The Italian opera season that closed yesterday afternoon is variously reported as having barely paid expenses for Mr. Mapleson, and as having entailed a heavy loss upon him. It is understood that the large advance subscriptions saved him from great loss up to the time of Mlle. Marimon's arrival, but whether the good houses attracted by her have made up for the losses on the off nights cannot be learned. Col. Mapleson himself replies evasively to all questions on this point, but an influential director of the Academy of Music said yesterday:

"Col. Mapleson's first season here was extremely successful. He cleared, I suppose, forty or fifty thousand dollars. All his promises were fulfilled. Gerster was accepted for the great prima donna which she was, and we congratulated ourselves that Italian opera was in a fair way of being established at the Academy. So favorable was the feeling toward his management that, when it came to selling the boxes for this winter's season, the supply did not meet the demand, and many persons were sorely disappointed. Mapleson's promises were as large as before, and, particularly, we were to have Gerster again. I now believe that he knew, as early as August, that Gerster could not come; yet he gave out no intimation of that fact. On the contrary, when he arrived in October, he sent out those elaborately bound circulars, in which her name headed the list of singers, and said that she would certainly be here.

"Well, the season opened with a bad performance of 'Traviata,' and the newspapers spoke severely about it. I then thought they were too hard on Mapleson, but probably they felt, what I am now convinced of, that he was disposed to deal out humbug to our public. He probably calculated that the merit of one good season could be spread over two seasons. I do not doubt that he intended to pretend an expectation of Gerster's coming, and so get through the season without any prima donna of the first rank. But criticism in the newspapers and by private individuals grew so bitter that the necessity of procuring a prima donna was forced upon him. He was losing money fast, and heard grumbling on every hand. Then the negotiations with Marimon were begun. She seemed unreasonably exacting. She demanded, first, a guarantee of half her entire salary before quitting Europe. Two of the directors gave her the assurance. Then she altered her terms to a deposit in Paris of the whole amount of salary which she was to receive. One of the directors who had joined in the previous guarantees refused to make any more, and he would have nothing more to do with it. But her demands were satisfied at length, and she came, when the season was three-fourths over and more than three-fourths a failure. Now, if he had told us that she would make the demands that she did, for he must have known it, we could have taken measures to get her here without delay. Oh, there is no reason to doubt that Mapleson has dealt disingenuously with the directors and the public. He is a queer compound of a great deal of obstinacy and not a little humbug. Has he made up his mind that he could fool New York with a season of poor opera on the reputation of a previous season of good opera, he stuck to his plan with John Bull pertinacity."

This director was asked if Col. Mapleson was to have the Academy for the season of 1880-81.

"He holds a lease," was the reply, "and has given no intimation that he intends to give it up. He promises Nilsson, and I understand that a letter has been received from H. C. Jarrett of London, her agent, saying that she is willing to come here. She was greatly pleased with the American people, and would rather sing here than anywhere else. But Mapleson must give us more than his word that she is engaged. After this season's experience, we cannot rely upon his promises. Grand opera is an exotic here, and will not stand much treatment. Mapleson cannot any more afford to humbug the public than August Belmont could afford to back a fraudulent mining company. However, I am hopeful that we will have a good spring season with Marimon, who is a favorite, and Nilsson next season. Meanwhile, and a brilliant season with Nilsson next season, Mapleson has probably learned that we know good opera when we hear it, and will not put up with anything else. He can give us the best if he tries, and no doubt he will hereafter try."

As an offset to this statement of the director referred to, it is stated by those who are in possession of the facts that it was impossible for Mapleson to have foreseen the contingency that prevented Gerster from coming to America; that, in fact, her dresses for the season were all bought in Paris and actually packed and sent on from Liverpool on a steamer in October, and were only withheld by telegram from Italy when the physicians positively forbade Gerster from leaving her home. That immediately that Mapleson discovered the extraordinary and unforeseen misfortune in which he was placed, he set about making good the loss as far as he was able by securing at great expense the best singer disengaged in Europe, Mlle. Marimon, and brought her to this country. That with Gerster he would certainly have given us a better company than he did last season, and it is his misfortune and not his fault that she was not here. This latter view of the situation is probably the true one.

It is known that the supply of free tickets up to the time of Mlle. Marimon's arrival was, perhaps, unprecedented. They were freely distributed in hotels and the various clubs. For the Marimon nights, also, free tickets have been given, in more limited number, to the various hotels. But, notwithstanding the "papering" of the houses, for several of the matinees there were very small audiences, and at the last matinée performance of "Linda" there were not more than three hundred persons in the house.

Col. Mapleson, when seen last evening, would say nothing further than as to his tour in the Western cities. "He transports his company by elevenths, and it is working admirably," he said. "It is simply palatial. The outside is covered with the flags and arms of Great Britain and the United States, and the inscription, 'Her Majesty's Opera Company,' is painted on each side in two-foot letters. But that's nothing to the inside, which is so gorgeous I fitted up specially for my own and family's use. There is a salon, furnished in walnut, with pale maroon satin upholstery. There is a miniature piano, so rehearsals can be held at any time. Then I have an office, with a carved oak desk in it, a smoking room, a dining room, a wine closet, and various other arrangements for comfort. By all means, you ought to see it."

"Have you made any bargain with the directors of the Academy for the season of 1880-81? If not, is it true that there is dissatisfaction on one side or the other?"

"That is a good way ahead, and in the mean time we shall make the biggest jump ever attempted by an opera company—from Boston to Chicago between two regular performances. We will start from Boston in our special cars after a Saturday matinée, go around New York on the car floats without change, and get to Chicago on the ensuing Monday in time to perform in the evening. This is the only country in the world that such a thing can be done in."

Mr. Maurice Strakosch sent his sympathy for his brother manager. He was also full of information as to Col. Mapleson's bad luck.

"Col. Mapleson has lost a mint of money," Mr. Strakosch said, "and he has my heartfelt sympathy. He is my very dear friend, notwithstanding my brother—for whom I am acting—brings his company to Booth's next month. My brother's company's tour in the West has been an uninterrupted march of triumph, sir, exceeding anything before in the history of opera in this country."

"You say that Col. Mapleson has lost a great deal of money. Will you give me a reason?"

"He has had no stars—a good company, but no stars. What could he do without a dramatic prima donna? He couldn't produce such operas as 'Norma' and 'Lucia' at all. He has lost more by his second season than he made by his first. I told him when he was planning to come here that he would clear $20,000 the first season, because his company would be a novelty. That one season were off the novelty, just as I thought it would, and he was bound to lose money this season."

Tommy Haley's Christmas.

Tommy Haley, about 12 years old, sat humming comic songs with a couple of companions of about his own age in a Fulton ferry boat on Christmas night. Most of the passengers seemed amused. Two burly employees of the ferry company came in and eyed the boys with sour looks, but could not catch them making any noise. When the boat reached the Brooklyn side the boys scampered up the bridge, shouting as boys are apt to on a Christmas Day. This angered the two employees of the company, who forthwith arrested Tommy and marched him off to the Washington street police station. At least a dozen indignant passengers started to follow, telling the men who claimed to be special policemen, that the boy had done nothing to deserve arrest and that to imprison him would be shameful. At the police station the men claimed that the boys had been disorderly on other occasions.

"But this boy was not disorderly on this occasion," protested four of the passengers who had come all the way to the station.

The Sergeant locked the boy up for the night. When the matter was brought to the attention of Police Justice Walsh he let Tommy go, and the boy had already spent his Christmas night in a cell.

Justice Walsh says that it is a common thing for the special police at the ferry to arrest boys without sufficient cause.

Her Majesty's Opera Company to Weber.

NEW YORK, December, 1879.

Dear Mr. Weber:

Before leaving New York we wish to express to you our appreciation of the many courtesies you have shown us, and to thank you for the magnificent pianos you have placed at our disposal during our stay here. They meet not only every demand required by an artist, but are such models of excellence that we must express our astonishment at finding combined in one instrument so much sympathetic sweetness of tone, great power and singing quality. These together make the Weber pianos the choice of artists, and they are considered by us unequalled.

ALWINA VALLERIA,
EUGENIE LABLACHE,
ANTONIO F. GALASSI,
LUIGI ARDITI,
FRANCESCA RUNCIO,
ANTONIO ARAMBURO,
MLLE. MORIANI,
ANNIE LOUISE CARY,
ITALO CAMPANINI,
GIUSEPPE DEL PUENTE,
GENNARO BISACCIA,
JOSEPH DRAUSI,
MME. ADA ADINI,
FRANK DE HALP.—*Adv.*

THE CHRISIMAS ORATORIO.

The Oratorio Society's Christmas Concert.

Handel's "Messiah" was sung last evening, in accordance with the time-honored custom that brings this week to us with the recurrence of Christmas.

It is a custom that, it is sincerely to be hoped, will be perpetuated for generations. It certainly is one that commends itself to the people, as was shown by the fact that so large an audience came to hear the oratorio last evening that it was necessary to add the entire smaller Steinway Hall to the larger one to accommodate them all.

The work was given by the New York Oratorio Society, under the direction of Dr. Damrosch, and aided by the same fine vocalists who sustained the solo parts just two years since—Miss Thursby, Miss Drasdil, Mr. Simpson, and Mr. Remmertz.

As for Mr. Simpson, he has identified himself with this oratorio from the time when "the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." That "Comfort ye My People" or "Every Valley" should be sung otherwise than as he sings it has, from force of habit, become a thing apparently impossible. Fortunately he sings these and his other arias well, with simplicity and a quiet exactness and yet a sentiment, that while it lacks intensity, is nevertheless entirely agreeable and consonant with good taste. His quietude of habit has undoubtedly helped to preserve his voice, which is apparently as good now as it was in his youth.

Miss Thursby is a versatile singer, but among the chief of her accomplishments is the ability to give adequate expression to religious music. To this the pure and delicate quality of her voice contributes, and also a certain tremulousness, the result, of course, of art, and only adopted on occasion, but which, when used, lends pathos to her singing. Doubtless there are parts of "The Messiah" where a larger voice is required, but nothing could exceed the ease and purity of intonation, the distinctness and fluency with which she rendered the bright and difficult music of the aria, "Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion." She is also a most discreet singer, never forcing the sentiment or exaggerating her style to produce effects. This is, however, an error into which Miss Drasdil not unfrequently falls. It seldom, unfortunately, fails to catch the applause of a portion of an audience, and this stimulates many singers to sacrifice purity to effect. Her rendering, however, of the aria, "He was despised and rejected of men," was free from this tarnish, and was a fine example of devotional singing.

Mr. Remmertz was at his best in the great aria, "Why do the nations so furiously rage together," which he gave with striking effect.

The society itself sang superbly. They know the oratorio almost by heart, and every point was taken up with a precision that was most impressive. The beautiful chorus, "For Unto Us a Child Is Born," was sung with beautiful finish, and it required all of Dr. Damrosch's firmness to resist the popular demand for its repetition. He allowed, however, no repeats, and hurried on the numbers, so as to save all the time possible. The oratorio is of very great length, and it is thoroughly worry out an audience if the pauses between the numbers are made too long. Under Dr. Damrosch the time of its performance is fully three-quarters of an hour less than that in which it is ordinarily given.

Mr. Sautelle's Warren lent excellent help with the organ. Its alternations with the orchestra in accompaniments are often a great relief to the ear, and there certainly are portions of accompaniment, especially of recitative, where the organ is better even than the orchestra.

PANIC IN A THEATRE.

Narrow Escape from a Tragedy at a Performance of the "Two Orphans."

BALTIMORE, Dec. 27.—At Kate Claxton's matinée performance of the "Two Orphans" in the Holliday Street Theatre, this afternoon, an alarm, occasioned by a fight at the entrance, caused a sudden panic, which narrowly escaped being attended with loss of life. The theatre was densely packed with a large and fashionable gathering, and nearly 200 persons who were unable to obtain seats occupied the aisles. The play had proceeded uninterruptedly until, just before the curtain arose for the last act, the doorkeeper attempted to eject a man who had insulted a lady. A fight ensued in the lobby until the combatants were separated by Police Captain Lannan, who chanced to be present. Before this was accomplished, however, those standing near the doors heard the scuffle, and a slight movement among them quickly spread through the audience, which the next instant rose en masse. A cry of "fight" was mistaken for "fire," and the excitement, which was added to by the superstition surrounding Miss Claxton, became intense. A rush was made for the door, and for a time the scene that followed was one of wild confusion. Ladies screaming and fainting on all sides added to the tumult occasioned by the crowds in the galleries rushing down stairs. The theatre officials, assisted by the police and several cool-headed bystanders, succeeded in quieting the military alarm. Capt. Lannan hurried up the stairway to the dress circle, and being a man of colossal strength and size, forcibly stemmed the tide of human beings that was rushing down. Below the scene was one of intense excitement and terror. The crowd rushed for the doors, regardless of the voice of Mr. Chas. Stevenson, who, partially dressed for the character of *Pierre*, rushed on the stage at the first alarm, closely followed by Miss Claxton. The repeated cries of the actors and officials finally allayed the excitement. As far as could be ascertained, no one was seriously injured, although a number of ladies were trampled upon during the crush. Too much credit cannot be given to the action of Capt. Lannan and his officers, the actors, and theatre employees, who were instrumental in restoring quiet. After a short delay the curtain rose on the last scene, disclosing *Pierre* bending over the couch of *Louise*. The spectators enthusiastically applauded them, and then the performance was quietly concluded.

FOOTLIGHT FLASHES.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" is the attraction at the Aquarium.

"Hearts of Steel" holds the stage at Niblo's Garden Theatre.

The New York Circus offers one of the best holiday attractions in the city.

Mr. Augustin Daly's "Arabian Night" remains as the attraction at his theatre.

At the Union Square Theatre "French Flats" is continued with great success.

The "Mulligan Guard's Christmas" is an undimmed attraction at the Theatre Comique.

Tony Pastor's Theatre offers a very attractive bill this week. It has been crowded nightly.

The present week will conclude the engagement of the Christy Minstrels at the Broadway Opera House.

Concert this evening at the Grand Opera House, in which Mr. Howard Reynolds, the English cornet player, will appear.

Mr. John McCullough, on Christmas Day, in Brooklyn, played at two performances in the Park Theatre, to 4,720 persons.

Mr. Louis Aldrich and his company will appear at the Williamsburgh Novelty Theatre this week in Bartley Campbell's play, "My Partner."

The San Francisco Minstrels afford their usual evening of unalloyed fun at their comfortable little theatre at Broadway and Twenty ninth street.

Mr. Wallack will appear at his own theatre to morrow evening as *Charles Mortimer* in "She Stoops to Conquer." He may be sure of a hearty welcome.

Mr. Neil Burgess and Mr. George Stoddart in D. R. Locke's Newby humorous play, the "Widow Bedott," will be the attraction at Haverly's Brooklyn Theatre this week.

The last opportunities of seeing "Princess Toto" at the Standard Theatre are left for this week. On Jan. 5 Rice's "Evangeline" Company will begin an engagement at the Standard, with Mlle. Jarbeau as *Evangeline*.

The present will be the last week of the "Dalley Sisters" at Haverly's Theatre. On Jan. 5 "The Pullman Palace Car Tourists," which has been making a tumultuous success every where, will be reproduced.

Mr. J. K. Emmet, in "Fritz in Ireland," will be at the Brooklyn Park Theatre this week. For a special attraction at the New York Theatre Mr. Wallack's Theatre company will appear in Boucicault's comedy, "Old Heads and Young Hearts."

Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's new melodramatic opera, "The Pirates of Penzance," will be produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre on Wednesday evening of this week by Mr. D'Oyley Carte's London Opera Company. The Theatre will be closed on Monday and Tuesday for final rehearsals.

Mr. Frank Mayo, a sterling actor who has won his way to a deserved popularity and exceptional success, will begin an engagement tomorrow evening at the Grand Opera House. The "Streets of New York" will be produced. Mr. Mayo appearing in one of his most popular and effective impersonations, that of *Tom Badger*.

Mr. Bartley Campbell's play of "Fairfax" has apparently met with great success in Boston. It will be produced for the first time in New York at Mr. Abbey's Park Theatre to-morrow evening. The company is an excellent one, including Mr. Frederic Robinson, Mrs. Booth, Mr. J. E. Whiting, Miss Sidney Cowell, Mr. W. J. Ferguson, Miss M. Chester, and others.

The Strakosch Italian Opera Company begins a season of two weeks of Italian opera at Booth's Theatre on the 19th of January. The principal prima donna is Mme. Teresa Singer. Other members of the company are Miss Blanche Davenport, under her Italian name of Bianca Lablanche, Miss Marie Litz, Mlle. de Belocca (contralto), signori Petrovitch, Baldanza, and Lazzarini (tenors), and Storti, Gottschalk, and Castlemary (basses.)

Notes of Entertainments.

Ball of St. Patrick's Benevolent Association, in City Assembly Rooms, New Year's eve.

Ball of the Cercle Français de l'Harmonie at the Academy of Music on Monday evening, Jan. 19.

Christmas entertainment for the benefit of the Orthopædic Dispensary and Hospital, at the Academy of Music, Tuesday afternoon.

Performance and reception under the auspices of Amity Chapter, No. 100, R. A. M., in Lexington Avenue Opera House, Tuesday evening.

Lecture by the Rev. Dr. R. D. C. Lewin, on "Our Bonds of Union," before the Young Men's Hebrew Union, in Clarendon Hall, this evening.

Extensive arrangements are being made for the masked ball in the Academy of Music on the evening of Jan. 5, under the auspices of the stockholders of the Academy and many other gentlemen.

BURKE'S PLAN OF THIEVING.

HOW THE TRUNKS OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS WERE RIFLED.

Opened on the Ferryboats between New York and Jersey City—A Woman who Acted as Receiver for a Dishonest Baggage Driver.

When a passenger train arrives at the Pennsylvania Railroad Company's depot in Jersey City the baggage is immediately transferred to crates prepared for its reception. These crates are constructed of strong wood, and they resemble small grain cars. They are furnished with shafts, and are drawn by horses to and from the ferryboats. During the past four years the officers of the company have frequently received complaints from passengers that their trunks or packages had been robbed while in charge of the company. Communications of this character became so frequent that Detective Francis set a watch on every employee whom he had any cause to suspect, but he failed to discover the thief, although the property of passengers continued to disappear in a mysterious manner. As Detective Francis was about to give up the attempt to discover the robber, Detective Michael Bowe of Jersey City informed him of a clue that on Friday night led to the solution of the mystery. It seems that Joseph Lynch, an employee in an oil factory in Ravenswood, L. I., recently informed Detective Bowe that he had positive information as to the identity and residence of the thief who had been stealing from the Pennsylvania Railroad Company's crates. The thief was, he said, Patrick Burke, a driver of one of the crates. Burke, Lynch added, had emigrated from Ireland to this country in 1874, and engaged board in his (Lynch's) house. Lynch and his brother were in the employ of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company at that time, and they obtained a position for Burke. He was believed by his superiors to be an honest man, and was, after a time, made crate driver. Soon after that he began to present costly articles of jewelry and wearing apparel to the wife of Joseph Lynch, in whose house he was staying.

When Lynch discovered that his wife's finery came from Burke he demanded an explanation. Burke assured him that the articles had been either found by him or given to him, and that, as he had no use for them, he concluded to give them to Mrs. Lynch as a token of his kindly feeling for her and her husband. This satisfied Lynch, and he thought no more of the matter until a few months later, when his jealousy was excited by his wife's frequent absence from home and her undisguised regard for Burke. His suspicions seemed confirmed by finding in her bureau a pile of pawn tickets for valuable trinkets of every description. Mrs. Lynch denied that any improper relations existed between her and Burke. The pawn tickets represented some of the articles that Burke had given her, and which she did not need. Lynch then hired rooms at the Commercial Hotel, in Greene street, Jersey City. He then began to keep a constant watch on his wife's movements, and discovered that Burke and Burke met almost every afternoon at the ferry house, and usually held a brief, whispered conversation. Finally, Lynch left his wife, and moved to Ravenswood. He was convinced, he said, that the robberies of the crates were perpetrated by Burke, and that Mrs. Lynch was the receiver of the stolen property, and attended to the disposition of it among the professional "fences."

Detective Bowe told Detective Francis of Lynch's story, and they began to watch Burke. On Friday a box of sample gold and jewelled rings was stolen from one of the crates. The rings were marked, and could readily be identified. During the evening, Burke was constantly shadowed, and late at night he was arrested. He first expressed astonishment, and denied any knowledge of the robbery. When the Greegory street station he broke down completely, confessed his guilt, and professed his willingness to assist the police in recovering the stolen property. In his pockets were found the key of one of the crates, and several bunches of trunk and valise keys. He explained the method he had adopted in effecting his robberies. The trip across the river commonly consumed from seven to ten minutes. In that time he opened the crate and plundered the trunks of whatever portable valuables they contained. His opportunities for this were numerous. Mrs. Lynch was generally on the boat by previous appointment, and he delivered to her the stolen articles. The detectives found in Burke's room, at 94 Steuben street, 191 collars, 95 pairs of cuffs, 50 pairs of silk stockings, 25 white shirts, and a large bundle of drawers, razor strops, silver knives and forks, the box of rings, and other miscellaneous articles.

Mrs. Lynch was arrested in her home at 355 First street. She confessed her complicity in the robberies. Secreted on her premises was found a trunk and valise full of jewelry, fine lace goods, handkerchiefs of every description, a pearl mounted opera glass, a set of turquoise jewelry, consisting of a necklace, earrings, bracelets and brooch, a silk circular lined with crimson, gold cuff pins and chains, and a stack of pawn tickets. The back of the brooch bore the inscription, "From P. B. to K. S.," which Mrs. Lynch explained by saying that the stones had been reset and presented to her by Burke. Her maiden name, she said, was Sullivan, and she had been married to Burke before marriage.

Both prisoners have been committed to await the action of the Grand Jury, which is now in session. It is impossible to determine the value of the articles that they have purloined and disposed of during the past four years, but the property found in their possession is estimated to be worth more than $1,000.