GOSSIP OF THE BALL FIELD.

BROOKLYN'S EFFORT TO GET ROBBY CARUTHERS NOT SUCCESSFUL.

A New Commercial League Being Organized—Minor League Mention—Organizing the International League—The Association Meeting—Players Should Have a Say in Forming the Rules—News in General.

The St. Louis-Brooklyn deal, by which Bushong, the great catcher, will come to Brooklyn, and the St. Louis-Athletic deal, by which several players were changed by these two clubs, were the only important transactions in base ball during the past week. That part of the deal in which the Brooklyn team was interested was intended to include the sale of Caruthers to the Brooklyns, but as President Von der Ahe wanted the value of a whole club in return for Caruthers, President Byrne held off. It is still possible that the St. Louis and Brooklyn Clubs may come to some understanding by which Caruthers may come her. The only trouble is that he knows he is a good player, and it interferes with his future success.

He has threatened several times to stop base ball, but he now says that all he wants is to get away from St. Louis. It is strange what stories players will start when they want to get away from a club or an increase of salary. Instead of coming right out and saying, "I will not play with you unless you do as I ask," they beat about the bush and talk of what they will or will not do. It is quite evident that the St. Louis players will not have the chance to squeeze Von der Ahe in regard to salaries next spring. A few of the players may find themselves out in the cold if they try it on.

PROTECTION FOR THE MINOR LEAGUE CLUBS.

The enormous amount of capital which is invested every year by the minor league teams, without protection, would tend soon to kill off all the smaller clubs. The recent move by the League toward giving the younger organizations a voice in their protection was forced upon them. Both the League and Association saw that they were cutting off the supply of players, and their recent move was to put an end to the practice by which the players of these younger clubs were carried off by the clubs of the older organizations. A meeting will soon be held to appoint delegates to the Arbitration Committee meeting.

THE SPLIT IN THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE.

The split in the International League, caused by excessive salaries, will, no doubt, prove beneficial to the two organizations formed since the split. The split was bound to come, in order to save the large amount of money paid out in the long jumps the clubs were obliged to take from time to time. Excellent circuits can now be made by the two organizations. One circuit can begin at Albany, and include Albany, Jersey City, Newark, Allentown, Rahlford, Norristown, Wilkesbarre, New Bedford, and Scranton. This will be a short circuit and a paying one. The circuit of the new International Association can include the clubs of Troy, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Hamilton, Toronto, and London.

AN UNBUSINESSLIKE MANAGEMENT.

Many good stories are told of the manner in which former managers of the Athletics did business. There was a treasurer and two bookkeeper, but the three men controlling the club came around after the game and divided the profits. When the day for paying player's salaries came around, the three managers came together and chipped in their third. The same thing happened when any expenses were to be paid. Each man took his turn in inserting the advertisement for one week. It could not be expected that a club controlled in this manner could be a success, and it failed. Sharsig was about the only man who knew enough to save what money he made, while one of the partners of the Athletic Club, and he now gets the benefit of it as a large stockholder and manager of the newly reorganized club.

A NEW COMMERCIAL LEAGUE.

The following firms are mentioned in connection with a new Commercial League for this city: Dunham, Buckley & Co., Carhart, Hackett & Co., Sweetser, Penbrook & Co., H. B. Claflin & Co., and Butler, Clapp & Co. It is intended to have a league of eight clubs, and a meeting for the formation of the League will shortly be held. A constitution and the rules of the American Association will probably be adopted. It will be known as the New York Commercial League of Base Ball Clubs. It is the intention to arrange a schedule of championship games, to be played on Saturday days only. Invitations will be sent to the Commercial Clubs of Boston and Philadelphia to participate in a final series, to be played by the leading clubs of each city. A handsome trophy will be donated for the season will open in April, and extend to October.

THE PLAYERS SHOULD HAVE A SAY.

Before going away John M. Ward said that one or two of the changes in the playing rules should not have been made. "I acknowledge," said Mr. Ward, "that I did not favor the four strikes at the beginning, but when they were tried and found a success I changed my mind. However, I think if I had been there the trouble between the League and Brotherhood that the players would have had some say with regard to the changes. I think that it would be no more than right that the players be represented on the Joint Committee on Rules, for they know whether a change would be for the best, and can give their reasons for it." There is but little doubt that the players will be represented on the Rules Committee before long, for in reality they are the only ones who know what changes are needed to benefit the game.

HOW THE ATHLETICS STARTED OUT IN LIFE.

Manager Phillips of the Pittsburgh Club sat in the Fifth Avenue Hotel corridor during the recent base ball meeting. Several other base ball men sat around him, and all were telling their experiences. "I tell you what it is," said Phillips, "but few managers have had my experience. Why, when I went to start the Athletics at the organization of the American Association club in this city I could not find a man who would put a dollar in base ball. Sharsig and Mason were with me, and none of us had more than a few dollars. Well, we succeeded in getting the grounds, and then we set to work putting up the fence and stand. We would get a few dollars' worth of lumber and get trusted for the nails. The carpenter work we did ourselves. At last we got things in shape, and we arranged for the Bostons to come on and play us. Our players all worked on tick, but when they found that I had guaranteed the Bostons $200, rain or shine, there was a small panic. As luck would have it, the day was fine and we made money. If it had rained we were gone."

THE ASSOCIATION MEETING.

The meeting of the American Association at Cincinnati on Dec. 6 will be about as interesting as the recent League meeting. One of the questions to come up will be the all-year reserve plan, which contemplates the adoption of a rule whereby the managers will have control of the player for the entire year, instead of six months, as now. This will do away with the present evils of advance money, and will also enable a manager to keep a watchful eye over his players, and see that they maintain themselves in proper physical condition. The idea is to divide a player's salary into sums to include the whole year and mete it out to him every fifteen days during the winter and summer alike. As it is now arranged, when the championship season closes, a manager loses all sight of his men until the following spring. It is not very likely that this rule will be adopted, for a player, if he lives away from the city in which his club belongs, will never be able to go home, and if he does it will take all his salary for railroad travel.

Another question is that of raising the admission fee to 50 cents instead of the present 25 cents. This, if adopted, would prove ruinous to some clubs. For instance, Cleveland could not support a team at 50 cents admission, while Louisville and Cincinnati would also lose money. Then the Athletics would prove a costly venture, inasmuch as the popular Phillies charge but 25 cents, and no club could hope to cope with them charging twice as much.

HOW THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE WAS ORGANIZED.

"In the winter of 1885," says Manager Jackson, "I conceived the idea of organizing an International League with a limited salary list, and with the idea of bringing a number of young players into prominence. Base ball was not much thought of in the upper part of the State at that time, and in many cases I found it utterly impossible to interest business men in the enterprise. The press was also somewhat loath to notice my efforts. I was not so easily discouraged, however, and made the circuit of the State six times, when I finally induced several parties in different parts of the State to become interested in the project. I had good recommendations from New York parties, and this helped me out considerably.

"Finally I issued a call for a meeting to be held at Syracuse, and at the roll call delegates from Albany, Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, and Auburn were present, and a temporary organization was formed by the election of myself as President. The delegates were unable to raise money to get up clubs, so I canvassed the different towns and secured enough money to place the clubs on the field. After succeeding pretty well in the different cities, I went to Rochester, where I had intended to organize a club of my own. Then came the tug-of-war—no one would put a dollar into base ball. This state of affairs went on for three or four weeks, when I made up my mind that I would put a club in that town, cost what it might.

"The lumber men would not let me have one foot of lumber, and wherever I went I was confronted with the sign, "Cheap for cash." But I undertook to build the fence and stands myself. With the assistance of three laborers, who demanded their pay before they would go to work, I got out on my undertaking. I worked from daylight to dark, doing all the carpenter work myself. This was kept up for two weeks. In the mean time I had secured my players, attended the schedule meeting, and secured good dates. The Friday night that I drove the last nail I was a happy man. The next day I was to open with the Syracuse Club. By this time base ball had received a boom. The visiting club with 900 backers and a brass band came on to do us up. When the teams came on the field they were welcomed by 4,000 spectators. In the sixth inning, when three men were on bases, Bresnahan, or 'Little Barefoot,' drove the ball over the right field fence, 325 feet from the home plate, and won the game.

"That same evening a delegation came to me with these remarks: 'Why did you not come to me? I've $10,000 that you can have. Come around and see me on Monday.' I could have secured $50,000 worth of credit within an hour. The club finally resulted in a stock company, and soon afterward I disposed of my interest and left the town.

"I tell you a man must work to build a ground, get a club on tick, and win the championship without a dollar in his pocket."

AN INDIGNANT MASCOT.

From the Kansas City Times.

A colored man in blue jeans trousers which were covered here and there with splashes of whitewash stalked into Chief of Police Speers's office yesterday with an air of singular importance. He was J. J. Smith, ex-mascot for the Kansas City Base Ball Club when it was in the National League. Mr. Smith owns a house and one or two lots and does artistic kalsomining, but he claims the duties of a mascot are less laborious than whitewashing.

"I've come in heah to complain sah, because I was engaged by the Chicago Club for the coming season as mascoble. They give me a check for $2,500, but when I went to the Bank of Commerce to get it cashed they said:

"'Just wait here a moment, sir. George, will you go for a policeman?'

"'Ain't you goin' to pay it?' I says.

"'You've got the money, will yo' as usual, ain't you?' the man said. I told him I knew Mr. Speers, and I wud jest go down 'n get him to identify me.

"'They are giving you what the detectives call a 'stiff,'" said the Chief of Police.

"'Some time ago,' said the well-known colored mascot, without appearing to understand precisely what the term 'stiff' meant, "I put a little advertise in the paper, which was this. I cut it out:

"'Wanted—A position by a mascot of several years' experience; part of salary must be paid in advance.'

"'They wrote me they was comin', and to-day I met 'em in the Nelson building.'

"'Met whom?' the Chief asked curiously.

"'Why, Mr. Spalding of Chicago, Mr. Soden of Boston, Mr. Reach, and Day and others.'

"'It's a put up—' began the Chief, when the mascot interrupted him by saying:

"'Mr. Spalding introduced Mr. Day to me, and after they talked a little off to one side they said, "We guess he'll do." Mr. Reach of Philadelphia says: Yes, he looks likely enough, and—'

"'Now, look here,' said the Chief, 'you had better quit mascotting and follow whitewashing for a living. It's the more honest of the two. As far as I can obtain the facts from the last base ball views, Spalding is in Chicago, and Von der Ahe has just been concluding a business interview with Menges at St. Louis. You've been the victim of a put up job, uncle, and you had better do whitewashing than mascotting for a living.'

"'I'll sue 'em for damages, see if I don't,' shouted the veteran mascot, as he withdrew.

BASE BALL NOTES.

Rowdyism must go.

Good-by phantom hit.

New Orleans has secured Moolie.

Baltimore wants another pitcher.

Esterbrook's arm is all right again.

Pennsylvania wants a State League.

It looks now as if the Indians must go.

Chicago will pay Krock $500 per month.

The old Northwestern League is no more.

Spring games are already being arranged.

The new Worcester Club will be a fine one.

The London club will be a stock company.

The Hamilton Club is in need of a manager.

Boston men favor the double-umpire system.

John I. Rogers favors the East and West plan.

The New York combination is making money.

Buffalo has secured Grant, the colored Dunlap.

Blackiston of the Athletic Club, is in California.

Young blood is becoming a drug on the market.

Gillespie will play with Syracuse next season.

The Eastern clubs have all arrived in California.

Otterson of Brooklyn has signed with Wheeling.

The buying and selling of players will go much on.

Clarkson's release has not yet been sold to Boston.

Umpire McQuaid is a Government clerk in winter.

Burdock is keeping himself in good form this winter.

And still the buying and selling of players will go on.

There will be a lively time at the Cincinnati meeting.

The Hamilton Club has raised $7,000 by subscription.

Zinn and Gamble are the new battery of the Athletics.

That fourth strike will be needed before the season ends.

The Arbitration Committee will meet at Cincinnati on Dec. 7.

Higgins will get $2,500 to play with the Syracuse Club next season.

The Association has completed its list of umpires for next season.

The Philadelphia Club wanted Crook, but the St. Paul Club got him.

Shriver, once of the Brooklyn Club, has signed with Philadelphia.

Patsey Powers is spoken of as the manager of the London Club.

The new Western League umpires will receive a salary of $1,500.

Buck Ewing is learning how to pitch, and with considerable success.

Chris Meisel will probably be the manager of the Brooklyn Club.

With a properly conducted club Utica would be a first-class business.

An effort to form a Commercial League in this city is now being made.

The ball players should have a say in the formation of the playing rules.

The American Association will have a fine set of umpires, if nothing else.

There will be a big jump in the salary lists of the different clubs next season.

Munroe of the Danbury Club will play with the Kalamazoo Club next season.

Mooney and Mildrum would form a good battery for one of the smaller clubs.

Billy O'Brien cannot become a base ball manager, he will always be an umpire.

It is said that Harry Wright can get $7,000 to manage the Athletics next season.

Eddie Kennedy will continue to knock out home runs for the Lowell Club next season.

The Association did not have much success in getting the Washington Club into its ranks.

Former President McKnight of the American Association is booming base ball in Texas.

The new International Association did a good thing when they elected Secretary White.

It is said that Wykoff is out of the race for the Presidency of the American Association.

Sportsman is a little base ball paper published by the Santa Clara (Mexico) Base Ball Club.

A large number of our fine ball players first played in the State and International Leagues.

The American Association will be unable to make both ends meet without Sunday games.

The Athletic Club is represented in all of the standing committees of the American Association.

Manager Chapman has done good work in getting together so fine a club for Buffalo next season.

The Washington Club will have a good catcher in Tom Dealey, but they must work him all the time.

If Kansas City is admitted to the American Association, Cleveland will become an Eastern club.

It is likely that Ferguson will be the regular second baseman of the Philadelphia Club next season.

Harkins and Knowiton are likely to form a good battery for the Harvard College team next season.

The new International Association is bound to be successful, providing a limited salary list is secured.

A special meeting of the Southern League will be held on Dec. 5 to consider applications for membership.

The rivalry between Troy and Albany will lead to a series of games between the two clubs in the spring.

President Von der Ahe seems to be trying to put his club on an equal with the other clubs of the Association.

The Syracuse Base Ball Association exhibited good judgment when they secured C. M. Hackett as manager.

Ted Sullivan would be much wiser to locate his club in Utica, owing to the rivalry between Syracuse and Utica.

Gifford will have an easy time as manager of the Browns. About all he will do will be to travel with the club.

Jack Nelson says that he does not want to play in New Orleans; he says the walking is bad in case he wants to come home.

President Collins of the Newark Club has been selected as President of the new inter-State League. He is well fitted for the place.

President Von der Ahe says that he has had enough of being the manager of the championship team—what he is after now is money.

That great pitcher, McCormick, has found a way to make money faster than he could as a ball player with a salary of $4,000 a year.

There will be no Eastern League next season, which is mainly due to the high salaries and strong competition for players last season.

Simmins, who sold score cards on the Newark grounds last season, was said to be a candidate for the management of the Newark Club.

It is very probable that the dates of the League and Association clubs heretofore next season will be so arranged so as not to conflict.

The change in the batter's box will prevent such players as Welch, Kelly, and Burdock from leaning over the plate and getting hit by the ball.

The Western League Club of St. Louis will have a strong combination of ball players, and should make a good fight for the championship.

Albany would be a good city in which to locate a professional team next season. The veteran manager, Billy Arnold, is still a resident of that city.

The Rochester Club has lost their grounds and will next season locate on West avenue. The change in location does not seem to be encouraging.

Ted Sullivan says that the management of the Washington Club has been offering to him but if his Troy Club comes out all right he will not accept it.

The new Southern League President, Mr. Wilson, says that he is going to be strict in regard to the umpires, and gives promise of selecting only the best.

Charley Bennett may not be able to catch for the Detroits next season, and as a precaution the club has secured one or two good catchers to fill his place.

President Von der Ahe says that he can get more for Caruthers than Boston paid for Kelly. He also says that if good players are wanted he has some to sell.

Manager James Jackson exhibits keen judgment in the selection of players for team work, and the Washington Club would make no mistake in securing his services.

When a manager has been successful in organizing forty-one clubs, and securing the financial backing for the same, it is evident that he is capable of managing a club in one of the older organizations.

Nic Young has been for eighteen consecutive years Secretary of the National Association and its successor, the National League. There never was a more obliging man in the position, and he is not an old man, either. Mr. Young's office, and can do day run 100 yards as fast as he could when 21 years old, and he was a fixer then. He lives in a suburb of Washington, has a pretty house with spacious grounds, an Alderney cow, a fine horse, a good wife, and is supremely happy.

Gleason was a weak second on the Louisville team simply because he lost heart. He will be a great addition to the Athletic Club, however, and he will not only be benefited by the change, but he will steady the younger men.

Bill Mildrum of Harlem, who has played in semi-professional circles for a number of years, intends to become a full-fledged professional next season. He is a good pitcher, with excellent command of the ball, and has a good head.

One by one the Providence Grays, champions of the League in 1884, are dropping out of sight. Jack Farrell will go to Syracuse next season, Joe Start has gone South, Charley Sweeney and Nava, the Spanish catcher, have disappeared.

A strong Hudson River league is talked of, to include the following towns: Yonkers, Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, Kingston, Nyack, and Hudson. It is possible that Haverstraw and Peekskill may place semi-professional teams in the field.

Billy Sharsig is gaining quite a reputation as a "hustler." The active part that he has taken in all the deals and plans of the American Association shows that he is fully aware of the fact that if the Athletic Club wants to draw big crowds they must have a strong nine.

Montreal would make an excellent base ball town, providing a Canada League could be organized. The International Association thought very seriously of admitting them, but the long distance prevented it. A sufficient amount of money can be secured to put such a club on the field.

The Cleveland papers are still saying that the Cleveland management will purchase the release of Edward Seward, the Athletic's crack little pitcher. Manager Sharsig has made up his mind that he will put a stop to all of taking a trip to the moon. In fact, he thinks that Seward and Weyhing will be the star pitchers of the Association next season.

Stenzel pitcher is likely to prove a valuable acquisition to the Clevelands if his arm is in good condition, as stated. With Snyder to catch his delivery he should do good work, as his pitching last season was always good when Kelly caught him. He is a young player, and Snyder possesses the tact of inspiring confidence in his pitcher and drawing out his good points.

The next meeting of the American Association will be held at Cincinnati, Dec. 6. There are plenty of propositions to purify the game of some of the evils that now surround it will come before the meeting. The most important of the other matters to be discussed are: 1. A banquet. 2. Proposition to increase the price of admission to championship games. 3. Rule changes. 4. Shortening the championship season.

Chris Von der Ahe's fortune is computed at $200,000, all made out of base ball. Von der Ahe's club has not been doing financially so bad for the last two seasons as he claims, and during each the world's championship games have helped him out greatly. For the first three or four years at St. Louis he coined money, and he was shrewd enough to invest it wisely. He is, next to Spalding, the richest man in base ball. The latter is worth at least a quarter of a million.—*Courier-Journal.*

In regard to the Hines matter, Manager Spence says: "When I took hold of the club I found that a deal had been made by the Indianapolis and Washington Clubs for the transfer of Hines to the former club. The price of the release had been settled, and Hines had agreed to accept a salary of $2,700. At this point Pittsburgh stepped in and induced Hines to come to our city. The question now arises, Has the Pittsburgh Club the right to negotiate with a player when his transfer has been agreed upon?

"It is rather amusing to hear such players as Lovett Woods, and others talk about not having anything to do with the League and Association, because of the unfair treatment they received when they did play with them. The unfair treatment, if there was any, was on the other side. They received big money for their services and failed to give an equivalent for it. If the truth of the matter was told, they probably think that the League and Association are a little too fast, and, while they are king bees in the minor leagues, they would not show up near so well in either of the high ones.

"What do I think about the salaries young players are asking?" said Harry Wright. "Why, it is ridiculous. There was a young player recommended to me, and I asked his salary. It was so high that I looked over his record and found it only fair. Yet this player asked as much as is given to some of the best players in the League. The young player crase can be carried too far and do great injury to a club. The success of a club is from its team work, and this can not be expected until the men have played together for at least a season. The removal of old players and putting in their places youngsters generally works disastrously."

The Cleveland Club will be a well-dressed team in 1888. The uniforms will be white and navy blue. The home uniform will be similar to that worn last season, but a change will be made in the uniform worn by the team on its trips. The gentlemen will be made of cloth used for military uniforms, with a dark blue stripe down the sides, and the shirt of light material, which will be especially made for the purpose. On the edge of the collar will run a dark blue band, and on the breast will be worked the monogram "C.C." The stockings, cap, and belts will be dark blue, a gray blue stripe running round, arching the whole view, is partly supported by a massy column that rises on the right-hand side. Never were rocks better painted. Though they are either canvas or cardboard, no one who sees them and possesses a particle of imagination would be willing to land on the stage with the knowledge that they were likely to fall on him. It is no exaggeration to say that one must go to the Rocky Mountains to see such rocks. They look like stone that has passed through volcanic heat. A primitive blacksmith's forge stands on one side of the stage. Behind it is a huge bellows, and beside it a trough scooped out of a log. Near the centre of the stage is an anvil, and beyond that a couch of stone, on which a great skin serves as a bed, for the time represented is before the dawn of history. The mouth of the cave is on the further side, and through it the people in the seats see a lovely vista of primeval country, beginning with a pellucid pool framed with rocks and shadowing a few plants and grasses. Beyond all is a vast forest of giant trees, through a rift in whose foliage the far-distant cerulean sky appears.

In the course of the performance this scene is witnessed in all sorts of lights—in twilight, in the fitful, vicious, blinding glare of a myriad flashes of lightning, in morning hue, and in the glow of noon. The blacksmith dwarf is a masterpiece of construction—a tall, big man, bent to pigmy size, and with a face and head so nearly covered with bristly hair as to look like a huge window brush endowed with human features. The godlike youth, *Siegfried*, is the handsome Herr Alvary, the tenor, robed merely in a skin, so that he displays his statuesque limbs and head after a manner not satisfactory to the dream of a German poet. The forge fire is a real forge fire of coke, and its flames dance and pulsate above the forge continually, throwing ruddy, incessant shadows on the rocks, trees, and the dwarf feeds the fire, muttered about. The dwarf feeds the fire. The youth files a broken sword, gather the filings in a crucible and melts them, heats the pieces of the sword white heat, welds them, and beats the blade in shape on the anvil with a sledge hammer. The dwarf is quite unable to do this division over the anvil and into the air precisely as one sees them in a blacksmith's shop, but in a limitless quantity, since they are produced by electricity or some other foreign force. Whenever it is necessary the hot irons are plunged into the trough, and steam rises in clouds.

The next scene is prettier still and more extraordinary. It is a woodland bit at early morning—an opening in an old forest so dense that the air overhead is almost literally full of foliage, not of painted sheets such as Irving hung from the flies in one scene of "Faust," nor of perforated hangings of green cloth such as we may see in a popular piece played by another first-class company in this city last week, but a foliage of leaves, painted leaves cut out singly and attached to twigs projecting from branches that grow out of boughs. There must be many thousands of these leaves, and they and the branches and tree trunks are absolutely natural in appearance. Great tree trunks hem in the sides of the woodland opening, and one huge mogul of the forest rises in the foreground, displaying a trunk so enormous that a large man appears beside it as a broom handle would appear beside a telegraph pole. Under the tree boughs in the back of the scene is a small, black-mouthed cave, where dwells a fearful dragon. Between the cave and the footlights the flooring of the scene slants like the side of a hill, and is dotted with gnarled tree roots, fallen tree trunks, and rocks and plants.

Very strange effects are produced with lights in these woods. For instance, a sort of god or superhuman being appears, preceded by a halo of such effulgence that the distant depths of the forest glow before him. Again, daylight breaks through the foliage slowly, a little brighter every instant, until one has seen the view pass from the dusk of gray dawn to the brilliancy of gay morning. This effect and the manner of producing it are new to the New York stage. It is apparently done by the gradual accumulation of strong lights, directed from different points. At last the fierce sunlight beats through the leaves, and they are at the same time so stirred by a brisk breeze that the air is filled with the glint of broken sun rays and the earth is merry with the dancing shadows of the foliage. The music, which is of course incessant, is of the quality called descriptive, and every step of the progress of the play is illustrated or explained by music as eloquent as language. With the broad daylight come the song birds. The godlike youth, *Siegfried*, imagines that they desire to have him understand them. He plays to them on a whistle that he fashions from a reed plucked from a hillock at his feet. Next he tries to talk with them through the little silver horn he carries. He knows this is futile.

The music that the makes, most closely resembling to human ears, disturbs the dragon asleep in the cave, and that monster wakes up and rushes out upon the stage. A dragon is a ticklish thing for a stage manager to produce in this laughter-loving and practical age, but it had to be done in this case, as the dragon is one of the characters in the opera. Furthermore, nobody laughs at this monster, which is remarkably like a thing of life in all its movements. Whoever made it had the sagacity to copy nature, and this is apparently simply a copy of one of those horned lizards found in Mexico, faithfully made, and then magnified ten thousand times. It has a lizard head and jaws, but they are bigger than the biggest crocodile's. Its eyes are great red lamps, that blaze like the luminous bottles in a drug store at night. *Siegfried*, sword in hand, converses with the dragon in song, the dragon evidently borrowing the voice of a hidden basso who sings through a trumpet, with a voice like the wail of a dying lion. When the youth essays to fight the beast, from out of the huge gaping jaws of the monster clouds of steam are expelled. His nostrils also expel steam. The battle ensues and the dragon is slain. It dies as an animal would die, and there is something woful in the expiring light and convulsive opening and closing of its eyes. Again, at the verge of death, it belches steam. The heroic youth licks his fingers clean of the dragon's blood, and lo! the instant the blood touches his tongue he understands the carolling of the birds. So do the people in the seats; for now, to the very notes in which the birds had carolled, Frau Sedl Kraus, hiding above the foliage, sings to the youth of the distance, in sleep, upon the mountain top, of a beautiful maiden guarded by a circlet of fire. In the next and last scene the youth finds this maiden in a scene not permissive of anything extraordinary in painting or carpentery. Amid herculean and long-winded song, after the Wagnerian method, he reaches her retreat, and then, on simplicity! he kisses her, she wakes, and is his.

A SPLENDID ILLUSION.

THE STRIDES TAKEN IN THE ART OF STAGE SETTING.

Henry Irving No Longer Master of the Field—The Beauties of Notable Plays and Operas Produced in New York this Year.

The art for the mastery of which Henry Irving won the lesser half of his reputation was that of realistic stage setting, or the close approach to fact and nature in theatrical scenery and stage appointments. He used people to assist in this reproduction—as, for instance, where the roystering young men who have nothing else to do with the play roll across the stage in the night scene in "Shylock," after *Jessica* has run off with her lover, and again where the village maidens troop forth into the St. Lorentz Platz in "Faust," having nothing else to do with the piece than to people a street as it naturally would be in front of a church at the time of morning service. But it is in this very play of "Faust," Irving's latest and greatest effort toward perfect theatrical illustration, that the means are afforded us for a comparison of our methods and his, with the result that we see that the imitative managers of New York have taken his cue and distanced him in his own line.

There never could have been, either in the London Lyceum Theatre or anywhere else, a more absolutely perfect series of stage pictures than those in "The Old Homestead," where one sees a farm yard exactly as in the country, with a house that is house, a well frame spouting real water, a barn, and all the other details, except possibly the poultry that might add to the closeness of the realization. The next act discloses a parlor in a banker's house in New York, with precisely the same fidelity to truth, and the next shows half a block of Broadway, opposite Grace Church, with a letter box, letter carrier, policeman, apple woman, and the truthfully nondescript assortment of citizens that might be met there, including a rowdy, a salvation army band, a dude, and many others. Scarcely less is to be said of the less exacting scenery and stage detail in "The Henrietta" at the Union Square Theatre. It is as nearly perfect as anything Irving has ever shown us.

But the greatest progress known to New York is that seen on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House. All who saw "Faust" and "The Prophet" last year will recall the mirror-like veracity of the stage arrangements. In the scene corresponding to the St. Lorentz Platz in Irving's "Faust" the German company introduced a much more varied and city-like assembly of stage figures merely to move across the boards, and in the coronation scene in "The Prophet" men and women in hundreds trooped upon the stage in costumes more gorgeous and costly, as a whole, than were ever seen here before.

The opera house management has outdone itself in the presentation of "Siegfried," first presented to America at the opening of the present season. All who have seen it agree that in this production all past efforts, even in this house, have been belittled. The opera is one of Wagner's, and is sung by only eight persons, two of whom are not seen, so that there is no massing of persons to impress the eye. The grand effects must all be produced by the stage carpenter and the scene painter. How well they succeeded is recalled by the fact that the public insisted upon calling out the stage manager (who planned what they carried out) three times during one Saturday matinée.

The first scene represents a rocky cave, where a dwarf, who is a blacksmith, works and lives with a godlike youth for a companion. The cave fills the forepart of the stage. It has sides of apparently immeasurable thickness, and its roof, arching the whole view, is partly supported by a massy column that rises on the right-hand side. Never were rocks better painted. Though they are either canvas or cardboard, no one who sees them and possesses a particle of imagination would be willing to land on the stage with the knowledge that they were likely to fall on him. It is no exaggeration to say that one must go to the Rocky Mountains to see such rocks. They look like stone that has passed through volcanic heat. A primitive blacksmith's forge stands on one side of the stage. Behind it is a huge bellows, and beside it a trough scooped out of a log. Near the centre of the stage is an anvil, and beyond that a couch of stone, on which a great skin serves as a bed, for the time represented is before the dawn of history. The mouth of the cave is on the further side, and through it the people in the seats see a lovely vista of primeval country, beginning with a pellucid pool framed with rocks and shadowing a few plants and grasses. Beyond all is a vast forest of giant trees, through a rift in whose foliage the far-distant cerulean sky appears.

In the course of the performance this scene is witnessed in all sorts of lights—in twilight, in the fitful, vicious, blinding glare of a myriad flashes of lightning, in morning hue, and in the glow of noon. The blacksmith dwarf is a masterpiece of construction—a tall, big man, bent to pigmy size, and with a face and head so nearly covered with bristly hair as to look like a huge window brush endowed with human features. The godlike youth, *Siegfried*, is the handsome Herr Alvary, the tenor, robed merely in a skin, so that he displays his statuesque limbs and head after a manner not satisfactory to the dream of a German poet. The forge fire is a real forge fire of coke, and its flames dance and pulsate above the forge continually, throwing ruddy, incessant shadows on the rocks, trees, and the dwarf feeds the fire, muttered about. The dwarf feeds the fire. The youth files a broken sword, gather the filings in a crucible and melts them, heats the pieces of the sword white heat, welds them, and beats the blade in shape on the anvil with a sledge hammer. The dwarf is quite unable to do this division over the anvil and into the air precisely as one sees them in a blacksmith's shop, but in a limitless quantity, since they are produced by electricity or some other foreign force. Whenever it is necessary the hot irons are plunged into the trough, and steam rises in clouds.

The next scene is prettier still and more extraordinary. It is a woodland bit at early morning—an opening in an old forest so dense that the air overhead is almost literally full of foliage, not of painted sheets such as Irving hung from the flies in one scene of "Faust," nor of perforated hangings of green cloth such as we may see in a popular piece played by another first-class company in this city last week, but a foliage of leaves, painted leaves cut out singly and attached to twigs projecting from branches that grow out of boughs. There must be many thousands of these leaves, and they and the branches and tree trunks are absolutely natural in appearance. Great tree trunks hem in the sides of the woodland opening, and one huge mogul of the forest rises in the foreground, displaying a trunk so enormous that a large man appears beside it as a broom handle would appear beside a telegraph pole. Under the tree boughs in the back of the scene is a small, black-mouthed cave, where dwells a fearful dragon. Between the cave and the footlights the flooring of the scene slants like the side of a hill, and is dotted with gnarled tree roots, fallen tree trunks, and rocks and plants.

Very strange effects are produced with lights in these woods. For instance, a sort of god or superhuman being appears, preceded by a halo of such effulgence that the distant depths of the forest glow before him. Again, daylight breaks through the foliage slowly, a little brighter every instant, until one has seen the view pass from the dusk of gray dawn to the brilliancy of gay morning. This effect and the manner of producing it are new to the New York stage. It is apparently done by the gradual accumulation of strong lights, directed from different points. At last the fierce sunlight beats through the leaves, and they are at the same time so stirred by a brisk breeze that the air is filled with the glint of broken sun rays and the earth is merry with the dancing shadows of the foliage. The music, which is of course incessant, is of the quality called descriptive, and every step of the progress of the play is illustrated or explained by music as eloquent as language. With the broad daylight come the song birds. The godlike youth, *Siegfried*, imagines that they desire to have him understand them. He plays to them on a whistle that he fashions from a reed plucked from a hillock at his feet. Next he tries to talk with them through the little silver horn he carries. He knows this is futile.

The music that the makes, most closely resembling to human ears, disturbs the dragon asleep in the cave, and that monster wakes up and rushes out upon the stage. A dragon is a ticklish thing for a stage manager to produce in this laughter-loving and practical age, but it had to be done in this case, as the dragon is one of the characters in the opera. Furthermore, nobody laughs at this monster, which is remarkably like a thing of life in all its movements. Whoever made it had the sagacity to copy nature, and this is apparently simply a copy of one of those horned lizards found in Mexico, faithfully made, and then magnified ten thousand times. It has a lizard head and jaws, but they are bigger than the biggest crocodile's. Its eyes are great red lamps, that blaze like the luminous bottles in a drug store at night. *Siegfried*, sword in hand, converses with the dragon in song, the dragon evidently borrowing the voice of a hidden basso who sings through a trumpet, with a voice like the wail of a dying lion. When the youth essays to fight the beast, from out of the huge gaping jaws of the monster clouds of steam are expelled. His nostrils also expel steam. The battle ensues and the dragon is slain. It dies as an animal would die, and there is something woful in the expiring light and convulsive opening and closing of its eyes. Again, at the verge of death, it belches steam. The heroic youth licks his fingers clean of the dragon's blood, and lo! the instant the blood touches his tongue he understands the carolling of the birds. So do the people in the seats; for now, to the very notes in which the birds had carolled, Frau Sedl Kraus, hiding above the foliage, sings to the youth of the distance, in sleep, upon the mountain top, of a beautiful maiden guarded by a circlet of fire. In the next and last scene the youth finds this maiden in a scene not permissive of anything extraordinary in painting or carpentery. Amid herculean and long-winded song, after the Wagnerian method, he reaches her retreat, and then, on simplicity! he kisses her, she wakes, and is his.

FARMERS ON THE WEATHER.

An Opinion that the Safest Thing to Do is to Go Ahead and Get in Your Crop—The Bureau Not Quite as Good as it Was.

The Bedford Farmers' Club is an organization of farmers principally, and incidentally of politicians, merchants, and professional men in the township of Bedford, Westchester county. Among the members are Speaker Husted, ex-Collector Robertson, John Jay, and Henry E. Pellew. The oldest farmers of the north of Westchester county are members. In pleasant spring and summer weather the club meets on the lawn in front of one of the members' houses and displays on long tables choice beets, enormous carrots, and bulging cabbages for each other's admiration or envy. When winter sets in the members sit indoors and listen to a paper on a subject interesting to farmers.

On Thursday the Bedford Farmers' Club met in the Mt. Kisco Opera House to listen to an essay by the Rev. Lea Luquer, rector of the Bedford Protestant Episcopal Church, on "The Value of the Weather Bureau to Farmers." The chance to talk about the weather attracted to Mt. Kisco almost all the aged members of the club and their wives. Among them were Godfrey Haines and Joseph Haines, his brother. Godfrey Haines is 90 years old and Joseph 87. Both of the old gentlemen wear satin stocks and high collars when they leave their farms. They both work every day. Another is Bartholomew Gedney, 86 years old, of White Plains, who can mow as wide a swath as any man thereabouts. Others present were the Rev. J. H. Hoyt of the Bedford Presbyterian Church, the Rev. G. W. Terbush of the Mt. Kisco Methodist Church, John Lee Fountain, L. K. Bell, County Treasurer David Cromwell, Robert S. Haviland, Leonard Sutton, W. A. Keeler, Vice-President James Wood, George W. Dunn, and A. Meade Clark, all of Bedford; the Rev. J. H. Eastman of Katonah Presbyterian Church; Godfrey Haines, Joseph Banks, Dr. Harrison Teller Vice-President John Green Clark, and Charles Haines of Mt. Kisco; Miles Adams, Supervisor of Pound Ridge, and James Field, Supervisor of Somers. The meeting at the opera house yesterday was brought about by the Mt. Kisco members and their wives who conspired to entertain the farmers with a gilt-edged collation. Across one side of the room on a suspended slack wire a chintz curtain was hung, and from behind the curtain various sounds indicating that something pleasant was going on, and odors of coffee sadly disturbed the old gentlemen. Perhaps from a fear lest there should be a wild break of the old gentlemen to loarn what was going on behind the curtain and partake of the savory viands, the ladies of Mt. Kisco took seats in a body between the curtain and the farmers.

John Green Clark was elected to preside.

The Rev. Lea Luquer began his essay on weather, as Old Probabilities dispenses it to the farmer, by describing the old-fashioned way farmers used to forecast it by the movements of birds, the actions of animals, and the appearance of vegetation. Farmers got to be wonderfully accurate augurs, and their concentrated wisdom in weather lore has been handed down to us in weather saws. They believed it would rain when leaves fall to spin, when house walls are damp, when rheumatism rages in the bones, when ducks quack loud, when distant hills look near, when swine snort, when flies are troublesome, when crickets chirp shrilly, when fishes rise in the streams, when frogs change from green to russet, when cats paw and wash themselves, when dogs bark loud, and when smoke from the chimney falls to the ground. Mr. Luquer poked fun at the old-fashioned almanac with the man on the cover with his Latin parts turned out and the signs of the Zodiac, while within the book were weather predictions which were true when they were read to the contrary. Finally the essayist described the Weather Bureau system as it now carried on, and added that it did farmers very little good, because reports were not near a Post Office at which they can get their newspapers in the morning, when weather prophecies would benefit them in their farm work. Farmers produce the solid wealth of the country with honest labor, and the Government should find a way to increase the efficiency of the Weather Bureau. Its efficiency has been reduced by the sudden death of Gen. Hazen and Gen. Powell. In the