GRAND OPERA'S OPENING.

FAVORITE ARTISTS SING TO A BRILLIANT AUDIENCE.

"Romeo et Juliette" Given with Much the Same Cast as Last Season—The Big House Filled with Appreciative Listeners—Some of Those Who Were There.

The opera season opened last night with a performance of Gounod's "Romeo et Juliette," by a cast changed in no important particular from that which sung the opera here several times last winter. The opening performance was brilliant in the matter of audience and enthusiasm, despite the fact that the opera was not a novelty, and the cast derived its interest from the fact that it served to introduce this year such popular performers as Jean and Edouard de Reszke, Mme. Melba and M. Plançon had already received their welcome, and last night the audience bestowed its particular favor upon the brothers De Reszke. Both were cordially applauded on their appearance.

The great house was filled, but in point of numbers the gala performance which concluded the season last year was more brilliant. But the attitude of the audience last evening showed how glad it was to begin the opera where it was left off last season. New Yorkers, moreover, have come to flatter themselves that the opera is a permanent feature of their city's life which no longer requires to be welcomed as an exotic that must be tenderly nourished.

It was in this spirit that the audience came last night in large numbers, welcomed cordially the singers that have earned their approval, and indicated by their kindly enthusiasm that they are ready to support as liberally as they did last year performances that are worthy of a city which shows itself so anxious to hear good opera. If there were any doubt of the musical taste of New York it was dispelled by the liberal patronage of the opera last year, and this season begins with indications as favorable on each side. That is to say, the management offered a performance worthy of the patronage which the public showed itself so willing to bestow.

Long before the doors of the opera house were open there was a waiting crowd before each, larger before the main entrance, and made up there of enthusiasts who wanted to be first in the line that leans on the brass railings at the back of the orchestra and holds tenaciously to those favored places throughout the three or four hours of the opera. Later the holders of seats in the gallery began the climb up the five flights of stone steps, and the gayly dressed crowd that filled the orchestra stalls arrived slowly. But there was no incentive to hurry them, for they were certain of their places. It was fully 8 o'clock before the carriages and wagonettes began to land the box holders at the side doors, and the staircases were crowded with women in opera cloaks that covered the gowns in which were shortly to be displayed in the boxes.

When Signor Mancinelli took his place in the director's chair the great audience settled back to look at itself and listen to the overture. It welcomed the director cordially, and when that little ceremony was concluded it had several minutes to realize just what a fine-looking audience it was. The women who occupied the orchestra stalls were in the main without hats, and many were in full evening dress. The boxes were, of course, as brilliant as handsome women and handsome gowns could make them. The upper tiers were crowded, and supplied, as usual, a much larger share of the applause than the other portions of the house.

At the rear of the orchestra stalls men and not a few women were standing three and four rows deep, and this part of the audience showed itself again as enthusiastic almost as that part which nestled away up in the other extremity of the building.

Mme. Melba dresses more becomingly as *Juliette* than in any other rôle she sings, and when she entered with the faithful Mme. Bauermeister there was applause. The waltz song, "Je veux vivre," brought her a small shower of roses. The applause continued and Mme. Melba bowed, and then looked ingenuously at Mme. Bauermeister, as though to ask if it were possible that the audience wanted her to sing again. Mme. Bauermeister's shoulders shrugged as though to say that was what they wanted, and Mme. Melba, looking as surprised as though she had never received an encore in her life before, stepped to the footlights and repeated the song.

Mme. Bauermeister all this time had stood holding Mme. Melba's flowers, and when they finished the scene the audience was impressed with the fact that this must be a very dutiful *Juliette* and a very obliging nurse. As a whole, however, Mme. Melba appears to be a very sophisticated *Juliette*.

The audience found Jean de Reszke as graceful and handsome a lover as usual, and certainly he seems to have found a wonderful secret of youth. The curtain was raised at the conclusion of each act in response to the hearty applause, and there was every indication in the manner of the performance and the mood of the audience that a season of opera as successful as its predecessor had been begun.

The Music—Melba and the De Reszkes Welcomed.

Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet" was chosen for the first performance, probably principally for the reason that two of the chief artists of the troupe, Mme. Melba and M. Jean de Reszke find most congenial environment in the rôles of the heroine and hero. Edouard de Reszke and Pol. Plançon also appear to advantage in the small but effective characters of *Friar Laurent* and *Capulet*; while a number of the lesser lights of the company, such as Mlles. Bauermeister and Jane de Vigne, MM. Mauguière, Gromzeski and Castelmary are comfortably situated in the cast.

Signor Mancinelli conducted with the same judicious thought and skilful management that were ever present in his work of last season. The orchestra sounded finely, playing with spirit and generally with smoothness. This latter praise could hardly with justice be given, however, to the opening prelude of the last act, and it must be said that the whole of the love duet in the third act was taken in far too swift a tempo. Much of its sweetness and sentiment was extracted from the music by this fault, though undoubtedly the singers were thus relieved of the weight of sustaining tones at length. Mme. Melba is much given to clever devices of all sorts for preserving her strength and making labor light.

Her voice last evening was exquisitely clear and silvery, her acting admirable throughout. She looked the part of *Juliet* most attractively, with a softness and girlish freshness that suited her rôle perfectly. In facial expression she became more versatile than heretofore, doing many bits of the more thrilling emotional scenes with extreme suggestiveness. But in the tragic climaxes she falls in concentration of power and often lapses into stagey conventionalism. It was Jean de Reszke who kept up the tension of the love duet, and it was he who made and saved the situation at the tragic close of the opera.

De Reszke was at his very best last evening. He received by far the most applause, and deservedly, and he was welcomed more cordially than any one else. His warmth of tone and his action were splendid, his enunciation crisp and flawless, always distinctly to be heard in every syllable, his voice rich, fresh, delicious in the end. He seemed glad to appear once more before a New York audience and to be thoroughly en rapport with his hearers.

Looking at the familiar names upon the programme, time seemed annihilated. One could imagine it was last year's opera and not the commencement of a new season. Even Mlle. de Vigne is an acquaintance of former days, whom it is a pleasure to welcome back, although we did not hear her last year. Her voice has grown and her style becomes more mature and assured.

On Wednesday "William Tell" is to be given, with Tamagno in the title rôle.

IN THE BOXES AND STALLS.

Some of the Men and Women of Fashion Who Saw the First Night's Performance.

While in general aspect the parquette and the two tiers of boxes repeated the scene of the first opera night last season, several new faces, for a long period in the social background, were seen in the gay throng and made the boxes a strong counter attraction.

The members of the under graduates of society took great pleasure in picking out the faces of Mrs. William Astor, Mr. and Mrs. John Jacob Astor, Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt and her daughter, Miss Consuela Vanderbilt, Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, George Vanderbilt, and Mr. and Mrs. Orme Wilson, all of whom had also to stand the concentrated stare of several hundred eyes in the pit.

The curious looked in vain for Perry Belmont, Mrs. Paran Stevens, Dr. Chauncey M. Depew, T. Suffern Tailer, Mrs. James P. Kernochan, and others whose faces are familiar. Mrs. Georgie B. de Forest, Mr. and Mrs. John H. Davis, Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Rives, Mrs. William E. Dodge, Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Dodge, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Hoadley, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. H. Walter Webb, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert E. Jones, Miss Callender, Mr. and Mrs. J. Hampden Robb, Mr. and Mrs. James Lawrence Breese, Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Potter, and a score of others who had not been fortunate in securing boxes sat in the orchestra stalls.

The owners of boxes, as usual, came late. But four boxes were occupied when Sig. Mancinelli tapped his music rack. The seats on the main floor were, however, filled when the house of Capulet was discovered on fête, and in the omnibus box a series of tiers of shining shirt fronts showed that the Opera Club was out in force.

Among the gentlemen of the Opera Club present were: N. C. Wooster, E. N. Dickerson, H. A. Chatfield-Taylor, William Bralken, J. M. McBurney, J. A. Garland, J. Norman Whitehouse, R. N. Johnson, Daniel Winslow, James Speyer, Robert Coverly, W. M. Kendall, D. H. Bates, Jr., Stanford White, C. Lyman Collins, W. M. Cohen, J. B. Chews, C. F. McKim, G. P. Slade, A. D. Shaw, J. A. Stow, M. W. Galloway, F. X. Sadlier, Alfred De Castro, C. T. Mathews, A. H. Swayne, Thomas Manning, Leonard Chenery, Capt. W. C. Beach, E. W. Durkee, N. H. Swain, Thomas H. Kelly, Eugene Kelly, Jr., J. Frank Carroll, Robert Reid, T. H. French, F. L. Gunther, T. R. Sheaff, A. N. Beadleston, H. L. Slade, W. H. Vanderbilt, Allen, P. H. Morris, Whitney Warren, Nicholas Geoffroy, J. F. Gibbons, C. V. Mapes, George C. Munsie, J. Warren Cutler, C. F. Smith, J. B. Russell, Peter Cooper Hewitt, J. P. Thorne, J. W. Henning, George P. Benjamin.

In box 1 were Mr. and Mrs. James A. Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt wore a gown of pale blue silk, with a voluminous bertha and big sleeves. Next were Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Wilson and their family of pretty daughters. Mrs. Wilson was dressed in light yellow silk. She had her white hair dressed close to her brow, and standing up from her coiffure was a yellow ostrich plume. Miss Grace Wilson wore a gown of pink satin of simple design.

Mr. and Mrs. Buchanan Winthrop occupied box five, which is shared also by J. S. Barnes and H. A. Chatfield-Taylor. Mrs. Chatfield-Taylor sat with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, while Mr. Chatfield-Taylor spent the first and second acts in the omnibus box. Mrs. Winthrop was plainly dressed in white silk moiré. Mrs. Chatfield-Taylor's diamonds, which have been the wonder of Chicago society, dazzled the eyes of the people in the stalls.

In box 7 sat Mrs. William Astor, who looks ten years younger than she really is. She wore a black velvet gown unadorned save by a little lace and a few diamonds. Her gown was cut very low and she wore black gloves. Mrs. John Jacob Astor wore white satin, finely striped with faint blue, with a touch of mauve in the sleeves. Her display of diamonds was the most brilliant at the opera. John Jacob Astor and J. J. Van Alen sat in Mrs. Astor's box.

On the opposite side of the theatre sat Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt and her daughter. Miss Vanderbilt is tall and slim. She has a long oval face and highly colored cheeks. Her hair is very dark. Her eyes are almost black, and her eyebrows are dark and highly arched. Miss Vanderbilt has engaging manners and she is a bright talker. She wore a gown of light blue satin, and her mother was attired in white silk decorated with pink bows, and in her hair was entwined a pink ribbon. During the intermissions the heads in the stalls kept wagging from Mrs. Astor to Mrs. Vanderbilt. Mrs. Astor received more calls than Mrs. Vanderbilt. Some considered it significant that, while George Vanderbilt paid his respects to Mrs. Astor, he was not seen to enter the box of his sister-in-law.

Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, George Vanderbilt, and Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt's eldest son, who is a Yale student, were in box 31. They received much attention, and during the entr'actes the box was crowded with callers. Mrs. Vanderbilt was dressed in a gown of black velvet. George Vanderbilt left after the third act.

In the other boxes were: Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Burden and Mr. and Mrs. Elisha Dyer in box 9; Mr. and Mrs. August Belmont in Perry Belmont's box, No. 11; Mr. and Mrs. Henry T. Sloane and Miss Sloane in box 13; Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Iselin in box 15; Mr. and Mrs. William D. Sloane, Mr. and Mrs. H. McK. Twombly, the Misses Sloane, and the Misses Shepard in Box 17. The Misses Sloane and the Misses Shepard, who wore simple gowns of dainty coloring, were the most prepossessing débutantes present.

Commodore and Mrs. Elbridge T. Gerry and Miss Gerry were in box 23. Mrs. Gerry wore a gown of pale blue brocade. Miss Gerry was becomingly attired in white satin. Mr. and Mrs. G. G. Haven were in box 25. In box 27 were Mr. and Mrs. Susan Phelps Stokes and family. Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Van Nest, Charles Carroll Jackson, and Mr. and Mrs. Girard Foster were in box 29; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hitchcock, Center Hitchcock, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hitchcock, Jr., were in box 33; Mr. and Mrs. J. Pierpont Morgan, Miss Annie Morgan, Mr. and Mrs. J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr., and Miss Ethel were in box 35.

On the other side of the theatre Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Juilliard were in box 2; James Stillman, W. S. Gurnee, and party in box 4; Mrs. H. C. Fahnestock in box 10; Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius N. Bliss and party in box 8; Governor-elect and Mrs. Levi P. Morton and the Misses Morton in box 16; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Clews, Miss Clews, and Henry Clews, Jr., in box 12; Mr. and Mrs. Ogden Mills in box 20; Dr. and Mrs. W. Seward Webb in box 22; Samuel D. Babcock and the Misses Babcock in box 26; Mr. and Mrs. W. Bayard Cutting in box 28; Lawrence Turnure, the Misses Jeanne and May Turnure, and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Turnure, Jr., in box 30, and Mr. and Mrs. Luther Kountze in box 32.

Others in the audience were Mr. and Mrs. Franklyn Replid, the former the young actor, the latter formerly Mrs. Ronalds, John C. Furman, ex-Comptroller and Mrs. Myers, J. Langdon Ewins, Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Iselin, Jr., Gen. Sickles, Col. and Mrs. Frederick Dent Grant, Mrs. Potter Palmer of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Dana, L. J. Belloni, Mrs. W. G. Davies, Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Fish, Mrs. A. S. del Pino, Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Postley, Mr. and Mrs. McCoskry Butt, Chevalier de Riva, James C. Parrish, Mr. and Mrs. J. Hampden Robb, and Mr. and Mrs. G. G. Frelinghuysen.

DOCTOR AND PRIEST CONTENDED.

Each Wanted to Attend James Whalen, Whose Skull Was Fractured.

While James Whalen of 452 De Kalb avenue, Brooklyn, was exercising his horse in Atlantic avenue last night, a team attached to a coach came by at a full run. The horses had been frightened by a rapid transit train.

Whalen chased them on his horse. Just as he overtook the team they swerved sharply and there was a bad collision. Whalen was thrown violently to the ground. He was picked up unconscious and carried into a drug store. A priest came very quickly from St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Pacific street and began to administer the last rites of the church to Whalen, who was supposed to be dying.

Before he had finished an ambulance rattled up from the Homœopathic Hospital, in Cumberland street. Surgeon Schell thought there was a chance to save Whalen's life, and insisted on removing him at once to the hospital. The priest wanted to complete his work, and for a short time there was a lively controversy.

It ended in the priest's defeat, and Schell took Whalen to the hospital, where it was found that he was suffering from a bad fracture of the skull. The surgeons began at once to operate on him, and said there was a slight chance that they could save him.

CLOAKMAKERS' STRIKE.

Barondess Says the Leaders Have Not Lost Their Courage.

A meeting of the officers and pickets of the striking cloakmakers was held in Walhalla Hall yesterday to get their sentiments regarding the strike. Joseph Barondess denied that the strike leaders are discouraged. It was decided by acclamation that the strikers should not yield on any terms.

About this time some sympathetic saloon keeper sent two kegs of beer to the hall. The kegs were broached in the lobby, and Barondess had to leave the hall to disperse the mob that gathered.

About 150 dispossess cases came up in Civil Justice Roesch's court, the majority of which, it was said, were cases of striking cloakmakers. The Justice in each case extended the time of payment with the consent of the landlords, several days.

A meeting of the Cloak Manufacturers' Association was held last night at the Metropolitan Hotel. President Rickman reported that the strike was on its last legs. About 1,000 available men, he said, were all that were still out. As hundreds of strikers had gone to other cities to work, the manufacturers would have to get along with their present force until the end of the season as best they could.

Garment Workers to Convention.

The United Garment Workers of America began their fourth biennial convention yesterday in the hall of the exempt firemen in the Jefferson Market Court building. There were present about fifty delegates, representing unions in New York, Brooklyn, Brownsville, Philadelphia, Boston, Newark, Baltimore, Chicago, and other cities. There were two women delegates present, Miss Mary E. Kenny, representing the Vest Makers' Union of Boston, and Miss Annie Goldstein, representing Ladies' Tailors Union 97 of Brooklyn. J. A. Felz of Boston was elected Chairman. The question of assisting the striking cloakmakers will be considered to-day.

Strikes in the Theatres Threatened.

The Manhattan Musical Union, which has an American Federation charter, held a meeting yesterday at 70 East Fourth street to consider what steps should be taken in view of a threat of the orchestra leaders in the Musical Mutual Protective Union to discharge the members of the Manhattan Musical Union if they don't join the M. M. P. U. by Thursday. The Central Labor Union committee attended the meeting, and it was decided to send this committee to all the theatres to inform them that strikes of the union stage hands will follow if the Manhattan Union musicians are discharged.

MANY WOMEN TOGETHER.

SOROSIS ENTERTAINS HUNDREDS OF WOMAN DELEGATES.

These Have Met to Form a State Federation in Which All Clubs, Whether Literary, Educational, Professional, or Reform, May Work Together for the Lasting Glory of Women—A Reception Also.

An epoch in the history of the women's clubs and organizations in this State was marked by the doings of yesterday. Fully four hundred women were present at the conference held at Sherry's to consider the formation of a New York State Federation. Of this number 120 were the representatives of sixty clubs in the State. These delegates are guests of Sorosis, and will be entertained at the Park Avenue Hotel during the conference.

Among all the clubs in this city but one exists for social purposes only. There was nothing suggestive of a festive occasion about the gathering yesterday, except perhaps the handsome afternoon gowns and the huge bunch of chrysanthemums which decorated the President's table.

Sorosis held a business meeting at 10 A.M. Then it prepared as a body to meet its guests, who had been received at the hotel by the members of the Entertainment Committee: Mrs. Sarah E. Youmans, Mrs Mary Dame Hall, and Mrs. Margaret T. Yardley. The half hour between 2 and 2:30 P. M. was spent examining credentials and making a list of the guests.

The Credential Committee, consisting of Mrs. A. M. Palmer, in black satin and diamonds; Mrs. Jeannette N. Leeper, in brown satin; Mrs. Anna V. Townsend, in a gown of black and gray, and Miss Jessie C. Lozier, in a black skirt and silk waist covered with violets, sat at their respective desks, and took the cards of the visitors, who each received in return a white satin badge, bearing the word delegate in delicate gold tracing. It seemed as if Sorosis had not anticipated such a general response to her call, for the white satin badges gave out before the guests were all supplied. More badges were ordered for to-day.

Promptly at 3 o'clock the meeting was called to order by Mrs. William Tod Helmuth, Sorosis's President. The Secretary who read the roll call of delegates had not proceeded far when she caused a general laugh by exclaiming in anxious tones, "Oh, dear! I can't read this writing." So Mrs. Helmuth welcomed the guests in an opening address, while the Secretary retired to decipher the hieroglyphics.

Mrs. Helmuth was greeted with hearty applause, and said: "Delegates to the Convention for the Formation of a State Federation of Woman's Clubs and societies, Sorosis bids you welcome. Sorosis, the first born of your State, the metropolis of your country, the 'Greater New York.' Welcome to the city that has been purged of its uncleanness and is entering upon a new career of purer politics and better municipal government. Welcome to the birth-place of the first woman's club, and welcome for the cause for which you come.

"We have asked you to meet with us to consider the measures necessary for the consummation of a perfect 'union' of the formation of a great State organization of women. Each club in their different lines of work would be materially aided and improved by the interchange of thought and the mutual consideration of their aims and ends. With this object in view, we propose that the word 'Federation' shall be made to differ from those other organizations already formed in different States, by dividing and subdividing the work into groups, wherein every interest may find a place and every object a congenial home. Miss Gerry says that 'namely good for something, or good for nothing, and every organization formed for their improvement is only one more step toward that realization of our highest ideal: 'Earth's noblest thing, a woman perfected.'

"This Convention has, therefore, a task and duty of great responsibility to perform: and Sorosis, in taking the initiative in this movement, has been actuated by the desire to place her state in the advance guard in the effort to harmonize different interests that tend toward the development and education of our sex, and to unite in one common interest women of all ranks, professions, industries, and faiths. The work is great, the opportunities manifold; the boundaries of its influence limitless.

"Let us, then, be up and doing, putting our hands to the wheel, our hearts in the work, and 'Onward and upward forever' shall be our cry; for:

"There's not a place in earth or heaven,
There's not a task to mankind given,
There's not a blessing or a woe,
There's not a whisper, yes or no,
There's not a life or death,
That has a feather's weight of worth
Without a woman in it."

After the roll call of the delegates Mrs. J. C. Croly, the founder and first President of Sorosis, then read the call which has been sent out, and gave the reasons for it.

Mrs. Croly said that State federations had been formed in Maine, Massachusetts, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and New Jersey. Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and other states announce their intention of establishing a Local Federation in the near future.

"The Empire State," said Mrs. Croly, "must not lag behind in this march of progress. New York is the mother of women's clubs. The idea of 'Unity in Diversity,' which Sorosis gave to the General Federation in its inception, has inspired the plans of the groups under which we ask you to form the Federation. As the call states, these groups comprise the literary, educational, philanthropic, industrial, artistic, scientific, reform, village improvement, and others.

"Under the general educational head is included the alumnæ associations, college and seminary associations, study clubs, teachers' societies, &c., under scientific, the Social Science of government, physical science, &c.; under industrial, working girls and women's clubs; under professional, the law, art, press, and medical clubs. These groups will bear the same relation to the State Federation as the State Federation does to the General Federation; that is, they will be organized on an independent basis, elect their own officers, arrange their own plans of work, and bring their results to the State gathering.

"The General Federation has become too large, covering thirty-seven States, for local questions to receive attention in its sessions or for small clubs to find representation. She who stands alone to-day, be she woman or organization of women, is missing her place in the great accordant note of the century."

Mrs. Henry M. Ward, Mrs. Jennie Lozier, ex-President of Sorosis, who received prolonged applause for what she said upon the "Educational Influence of Women's Clubs."

"The last half century," said Mrs. Lozier, "marks a marvellous advance in the education of women. From the struggles of Mary Lyon of Mount Holyoke and Emma Willard of Troy to the opening of Johns Hopkins, Yale, and Harvard to women, stretches a period of unflagging effort and brilliant success. There have been many similar movements in the past when women seemed about to enter into their rightful inheritance. They demonstrated the possibilities of women by their achievements, but the conditions of society were unfavorable. Because of the adverse, selfish, and cruel conditions that which now prevail as the results of civilization indispensable to culture, we have now an environment which gives permanency and vigor to any attainments we may make. There is an axiom that the status of woman is an infallible index of progress. This test ranks our civilization higher than any that has preceded it. Woman's clubs have gone into the home, and brought the home keepers into the affair. It has gathered in an army of good women whose misfortune was perhaps to have been born too soon; women whose education, incomplete in the beginning, had been completely buried by an avalanche of chirps and pretty prattle, and suffered the pangs of mental starvation. They needed some influence to give them an outlook beyond the walls of home and an inlook into their own mental condition. This influence emanates from the Woman's club.

"A woman's first duty is to make herself strong, intellectual, brave, and happy, and then to build her home, train her children, enlighten public sentiment, and maintain social purity."

Mrs. Ella Fleets Farmer stated that there were more delegates present than had assembled at the General Federation from all the states. The organizations of women reminded her of her grandmother's patchwork quilt, in that they made a beautiful whole out of isolated patches of woman's work. "But," she said in conclusion, "that we will not make a crazy quilt out of it."

Mrs. F. C. Goodale, Chairman of State correspondence for New York of the General Federation, advised that the work of the State Federation be made thoroughly practical, so busy women would think it worth their while to work.

"Dorothea Dix of times past and our Josephine Shaw Lowell," said Mrs. Goodale, "have pointed out the way to us. Women had reached the point where isolated effort but added to their discouragement when some good genius suggested woman's clubs."

Mrs. Mary Mills West, Vice-President of the General Federation, spoke.

"Now Mrs. Goodale thinks we should be dreadfully in earnest," she said, "but I think women should get together sometimes just for frivolity. We had a meeting of the Board at St. Louis, and I wish you could have heard it."

Three minutes each were allotted to the delegates for remarks. Mrs. Hessel Sage spoke of the Emma Willard Association, of which she is President. Mrs. Northrup of the Normal College alumnæ spoke, she reported a membership of 1,200. Mrs. Scrimgeon of the Woman's Health Preservative Association in Brooklyn was followed by Miss Kate Upson Clarke, who kept her hearers laughing.

Mrs. Ballington Booth of the Professional Women's League, Mrs. Richardson of Elm Travellers' Club, Mrs. Celia Dunn Steele, and Mrs. Voss of the New Century Club of Utica, and many others also spoke briefly. Copies of the provisional constitution and by-laws, which it is expected will be adopted to-day, were furnished to the delegates and the meeting adjourned.

In the evening the delegates and members of Sorosis and their husbands were entertained at a brilliant reception given by Dr. and Mrs. William Tod Helmuth, at their house, 200 Madison avenue. Guests thronged the spacious, handsomely decorated parlors from 8 to 11 o'clock. An elaborate collation was served.

Mrs. Helmuth, assisted by the Committee on Entertainment, received the guests. Many handsome gowns were displayed. Mrs. Helmuth wore a Japanese embroidered white crêpe.

To-day's session opens at 9:30 o'clock this morning.

LIVE TOPICS ABOUT TOWN.

That portion of New York's population which resides permanently in the big hotels of this city does not grieve over the termination of the Horse Show. The influx of visitors from other cities was so extraordinary that for weeks people whose business it is to entertain out-of-town visitors have had their facilities taxed to the utmost. Some indication of the extent of the demands made upon the principal hotels may be gathered from the fact that as long as two months ago several of the leading hotels in New York, including the Waldorf and the Brunswick, sent out the announcement that they could not make any further engagements for Horse Show week. This was not well understood by the regular out-of-town patrons of the hotels, and when they arrived strong pressure was invariably brought to bear upon the management to take them in. All of the hotels and restaurants in the middle section of the city have been taxed to their full capacity during the week.

This draws attention to another fact in connection with the Horse Show which has been glossed over, but is, after all, of great importance in considering the future of New York's greatest entertainment of the year. This is that since the first few years of the Horse Show's popularity among society people what may be described as "a contingent of outsiders" has been steadily growing more numerous and aggressive. There is no question about the success of the show from a financial and a horse standpoint. From a social standpoint, however, it is certain that this year's show was less a pet of society than any that has preceded it. A significant illustration may be found in the fact that three boxes in a single row were occupied respectively by a well-known Fifth avenue dressmaker, a hotel keeper and his wife, and a gentleman who is known as a successful backer of bookmakers on the turf. The last named received his box through a well-known horse owner, who turned it over to him because he happened to be the first man he met after he made up his mind not to go that night himself. Adjoining one end of these three boxes was a box occupied by a lady of unquestioned prominence socially, and at the other end a Philadelphian, who owns a big horse-breeding establishment, and whose income is still largely derived from his business.

These things are, of course, of no importance to the world at large, nor do they affect the breeding of horses in this country, but they are indications which cannot be overlooked that the high ideals which society originally placed around the Horse Show are gradually being reduced. Unquestionably the Horse Show has reached its present great prosperity through the influence of society people. They are much derided, but their work in this direction has had a splendid and enduring effect. Owing to some inscrutable reason, it lies in their power to popularize any sport, just as in the past they have pushed roller skating, riding, and tennis into popularity, as they are this year spreading the taste for bicycling and golf interests. Unfortunately, society grows tired of its fads quickly. The past is strewn with records of sports which have been taken up and made popular and then thrown aside. It will be a pity if the Horse Show is one of them, for such a successful should lose its force by reason of society becoming tired of the entertainment, but the signs are not to be mistaken that society has lost its zest for a function which was once exclusively its own.

The descriptions of the Dowager Duchess of Montrose which have found their way into print since that lady's demise have not in any way exaggerated the extraordinary characteristics of one of the most remarkable women in Great Britain. Very few Americans who visited England during the hot months saw much of the "Red Duchess" of recent years, as she was only in evidence at the race tracks and in her training stables, but a few years ago, just after her marriage to Mr. Milner, she took it into her head that she was growing a little bit old-fashioned and stupid, and entered into the gayeties of London life with a degree of vivacity that astonished visitors to the English metropolis. She always called her red attire "mourning for her second husband." It was a rather startling style of mourning, but the Duchess was never happy unless she was making somebody talk, and she believed that her wearing Stirling Crawfurd's racing colors at all times she was paying a deeper tribute to that gentleman's memory than if she had worn black. It did not excite much comment when she attended the races attired throughout in scarlet, including her boots and hat, but when she went to the opera she chained the attention of the entire house. She wore the brightest sort of scarlet gown, with long gloves of the same color, a huge band of red around her neck, and red pompons in her hair. As she was a large woman, and at that time very stout, she was easily the most conspicuous woman at the opera. This means a great deal in London, where duchesses and countesses are addicted to eccentricities of attire altogether undreamed of in other countries.

It is often difficult to distinguish the true from the false in the stories on sporting subjects that come from the West. Just at present Denver seems to be enjoying an unusual prominence in a sporting way. Bicycling, trotting, running, walking, and billiard performances of the most startling nature have recently come out of Colorado, but most of the stories are denied a day or two after their publication in the Eastern papers. The assertion, however, that there are two female football teams in the West has been repeated so often that it is beginning to take root. The latest despatch gives the names of the women composing the teams, and announces that they are being coached by ex-college players from the East. It is said that they play the Rugby game, wear uniforms, and give a good an exhibition of football as is played by regular college teams. This would seem to be stretching it a little, but too far. The Rugby game is as unsuitable for women as pugilism.

Senator Peffer's appearance in New York, and the numerous remarks that have been made upon the great length of his whiskers, has drawn attention to the fact that his style of wearing the beard has practically been ridiculed out of fashion in New York. It has also had the curious effect of reversing the meaning of two English words. The motley hair which hangs two feet below the senator's chin would, two years ago, have been described as a "beard." The word "whiskers" was used to describe a growth of hair upon the side of the face, and the distinction was well understood and generally regarded in speech. The ridicule against abnormally long beards was begun under the name of "whiskers," and nowadays the style of face ornament which Mr. Peffer flaunts is always described as "whiskers," while a close-cropped growth of hair is called a "beard." What were formerly known as "whiskers" are now described by such slang words as "sideboards," "broadcloths," and the like. The wearers of this style of facial ornament have also come in for general ridicule, and we no longer see men complacently wearing long tufts of hair which extend from their ears out to the points of their shoulders.

Lady Colin Campbell is to have a paper of her own in London, and it will be called the *Realm*. She is by no means a novice in journalism, as it is known that for eight or ten years she was assistant to the late Edmund Yates, editor of the London *World*. It became known in time throughout journalistic London that much of the successful work on the *World* was from Lady Colin's pen. When Edmund Yates died a number of men interested in the newspaper business in London got together and formed a syndicate for the purpose of backing Mr. Yates's assistant in establishing a paper of her own. It will be a journal of the style of the *World* and Labouchere's famous journal, and a staff of well-known men has been engaged. Lady Colin, after passing through a trying ordeal in the divorce court, defeated her husband's efforts to sever his matrimonial ties, but was obliged to earn her own living. She is a tall woman, and was formerly very handsome, but she has recently lost much of her beauty through persistent attacks of muscular rheumatism. She wrote a novel a few years ago that was a flat failure, and she then decided to devote the rest of her time exclusively to journalistic work.

Aged Mrs. Muller's Mishap.

Mrs. Henry Muller, aged 70 years, of 150 St. Felix street, Brooklyn, while crossing Fulton street near St. Felix, yesterday morning, was knocked down by a team of horses attached to a business wagon. The driver whipped up his horses without waiting to ascertain the extent of the woman's injuries. Mrs. Muller was removed to the Homœopathic Hospital, where it was found that she had sustained a fracture of the skull.

CUT RATES IN GROCERIES.

RETAIL GROCERS DISCUSS DRY GOODS STORE COMPETITION.

The Prevailing Opinion Was That the Grocers Should Undersell the Dry Goods Men and Should Let the Public Know It.

L. J. Callanan, who is a member of the Committee of Seventy, told the members of the New York Retail Grocers' Union last night that the proper thing to do when a dry goods store advertised any particular article in the grocery line below cost was to go and buy it. "If a dry goods man sells flour that cost him $3.90 or $3.95 a barrel for $3.64," he said, "go yourself, send your wife, send your boy, send your clerk. Buy all you can of it."

The union had a meeting in Retail Grocers' Hall at 140 East Fifty-seventh street. The methods adopted by department stores in the sale of groceries was the advertised subject for discussion, and it was expected that some such resolutions as were passed by the Brooklyn grocers two weeks ago, boycotting the dry goods stores that sell groceries, would be adopted.

The matter was brought up by Herman Rohrs, who moved that a committee of five be appointed to draw up resolutions. F. H. Lohman jumped up and said he had come to talk on the subject.

"The talk of boycotting," he said, "is all foolish. The money of the department stores is just as good as ours, and if they want to go into the grocery business they have the right to. Our business is to run our own business and compete with them. We can do that, and that's all we can do."

Herman Rohrs retorted that it wasn't the fact that the dry goods stores were going into the grocery business that the grocerymen objected to, it was the method they used to get business away from the retail grocer.

"They try to make the people believe we are highway robbers," he said, "and that we can't tolerate. It is easily proven that we are not, for if we were we would all be millionaires like these dry goods fellows."

He went on and declared that the prices charged for groceries generally by the dry goods stores were higher than the retail grocers charged, and he said the question was whether the retail grocers should let the wholesalers and the manufacturers sell their goods to department stores, when they knew that the department stores would sell some of them below cost at bait. To this Mr. Lohman retorted:

"The same sun shines for all, and the same ashman tends to us all. The dry goods stores are all right. If the retail grocers can't compete with them, then they are big fools, and had better give up the business. The method the dry goods stores adopt is to entice the people in to buy. That is all right. That is the method the retail grocers should adopt."

R. C. Hewitt said: "The proper thing for us to do is to get our business on a cash basis. We trust too much. If we sell for cash then we can compete."

"Let's drop the matter," suggested Mr. Kerr. But Mr. Rohrs wasn't ready to drop it. He went over his old arguments, and contended that the manufacturers of staple goods should not permit their goods to be advertised below cost as bait in draw trade to other goods at higher prices. He thought a resolution ought to be drawn up showing that in the general run the dry goods grocers were higher priced than the retail men.

Lohman replied again that it was foolish to try to drive the dry goods stores from buying. He cited an instance:

"A department store was buying pickles of an agent and selling them at less than cost. A committee of the union went to the agent, and he agreed to sell no more to them. As soon as the store manager heard of it he cabled to Europe, and bought 100 barrels of the pickles from the manufacturers cheaper than he ever bought of the agent. Their money is as good as ours. We sell crockery. The department store might compete with us for that, and liquor. The liquor stores have as much right to complain as we have. We make them compete with us; we must compete with our rivals."

The committee of five was appointed, however. Then Mr. Waldron said:

"The dry goods stores get the trade by fooling the people. The American people want to be fooled. The man who is the cleverest at it gets the money. If we can get trade by making the people believe we are robbers, and that our neighbors, that's legitimate business, and that's what we ought to do—not stand and complain. It's our business to get trade any honest way we can."

Then Mr. Callanan closed the discussion. He began by saying that the union had a good deal better devote itself to seeing that the people got honest measure than to talk about dry goods stores. He advocated selling all vegetables by weight, and said he thought the new Board of Aldermen could be induced to pass an ordinance making it compulsory. By advocating this the union would be doing a public good. Then he said:

"The only way to treat the dry goods grocers is to compete with them. Get the goods and sell them as cheap as they do. Look them in the face and fight them." He concluded with the advice to buy up their bargains.

Before the meeting adjourned Vice-President De Mott said he did not see any reason why the committee on political reform appointed before the last election should be continued. "Unless the Committee of Seventy needs it in aiding in selecting men to fill the offices."

The committee was continued.

OBITUARY.

Odle Close, of the law firm of Close & Robertson, died at his home in Croton Falls yesterday morning. He was one of the best known lawyers in the State, and for forty years the partner of ex-Collector William H. Robertson. He was born in Greenwich, Conn., and graduated from Yale in 1845. Among his classmates were Chief Justice J. A. Peters of Maine, Chancellor Runyon of New Jersey, Judge Douglass Boardman of New York, the Rev. Dr. Hall of New York, and Calvin Frost of Peekskill. He was Bankruptcy Register from 1867 to 1878. In 1873 Gov. John T. Hoffman appointed him one of the Commissioners to draft amendments to the Constitution of the State. He was also a member of the Constitutional Commission appointed by Gov. Hill. For over twenty years he was yearly elected Supervisor of North Salem. He married Miss Samantha H. Truman of Peekskill, N. Y., in 1846, who, with one daughter, survives him. He leaves an estate of $350,000.

George Albert Colbath, one of the two living brothers of the late Henry Wilson, ex-Vice-President of the United States, whose original name was Jeremiah Colbath, died on Monday in his home at Natick. The other brother is John Colbath of Whitefield, N. H. George Colbath was born in Farmington, N. H., and went to Natick in 1849. He was a veteran of the rebellion and celebrated his golden wedding last March. After the war Mr. Colbath received an appointment in the Custom House, Boston, where he remained till 1876. A wife and five children survive him.

Edward Allen Conlin, a nephew of the late William J. Florence, died yesterday at his residence, 170 East 116th street. He was in his 33d year, and unmarried. His father, Edward H. Conlin, a brother of the comedian, and formerly Captain of the