WITHOUT LESE MAJESTE,

OR THE ART OF INSULTING PRINCES WITH IMPUNITY.

The Ways of German Editors in Evading the Laws Passed to Safeguard the Reputations of the Emperor and His Relatives—Some of the Most Modern Instances of the Art.

Three years ago this fall the editor of one of the countless *Volkszeitungs* in Germany sat in court, answering the familiar charge of insulting a Prince.

"You are the responsible editor of the *Volkszeitung?*" asked the presiding Judge.

"I am."

"And as such you are named in every issue of the *Volkszeitung?*"

"I am."

"Did you write the article which gave rise to this action?"

"I did not."

"What class of articles do you write?"

"I do not write any articles."

"What, then, are your duties?"

"I sweep the office and receive the cards of persons who wish to see the editors."

"What else?"

"Well, in winter I build the fires and keep them going."

"Is that all?"

"No. I dust the desks and see that each gentleman has his paper and ink ready for work, and scour the windows and sometimes help distribute the papers."

"Anything else?"

"Why, your Honor, what do you expect for 60 marks [$15] a month?"

The *Koelnische Zeitung*, which reported the trial, cut short at this point its account of the examination of the *Volkszeitung's* responsible editor, and fell to moralizing on the deceptions and tricks which laws regarding insult of majesty, otherwise known as *majestaetsbeleidigung*, or lèse majesté, had forced upon the German press. Of course, the editor on trial was no editor at all, except in name. He received his $15 a month merely as janitor. Though he was announced, to satisfy the law, in every issue of the *Volkszeitung*, as the responsible editor, he never had penned a line for its columns. For this very reason he had been selected to bear the legal responsibility for the men who wrote the newspaper. If arrested, tried, and imprisoned, he never would be missed. The *Volkszeitung* would take on another janitor from its waiting list, for even in over-educated Germany janitors are much more abundant than editors.

Such is the institution of the jail editor in Germany. It is calculated solely to thwart by a trick the oppressive provisions of the press law and to fortify the newspaper business against the periodical onslaughts of crown prosecutors. Without it only the dyed-in-the-wool monarchist would be able to publish continuously a daily newspaper, for the law is unbending, the crown lawyers are fanatically zealous, and the complaints from Berlin flutter down like the leaves of autumn.

But the fiction of the responsible editor is only one of several means by which the law for the protection of royal reputations is thwarted. It belongs to the daily and weekly press. The pamphleteers, who appeal to a class of higher average intelligence, have a better trick. It is that of the historical parallel. The most celebrated example of this style of literature in recent times is "Caligula, written by the south German," Prof. Quidde. "Caligula" was aimed directly at the throne. It was intended to tell the German people that their Emperor was of the type of the old Roman monster, that his mind was of the same calibre and his impulses of the same nature, that he was passing through the same course of development and that he promised to bring up in the same sink of iniquity, cruelty and madness. The early promise that Caligula gave of better things, the dismissal of tried statesmen, the growing love of display that distinguished his reign and his waxing eccentricity and final madness were depicted by Quidde with a painstaking ruse of modern political phrases and current German idioms. Where Roman history threatened to mar the parallel between the monstrous Cæsar and the reigning Hohenzollern, Quidde bent it forcibly into line. So, without once mentioning an event of the last thousand years and without once hinting at nineteenth century man, he accused William II. of about every enormity that a human being can conceive.

Quidde's position was absolutely impregnable, although his onslaught on the throne was as vicious and direct as it could be made, and his pamphlet was sold up to the twentieth edition. There was not a sentence on which a crown prosecutor could hang a complaint. The whole Empire rang with the scandal of the insult, and dire wrath reigned supreme in Berlin's old castle and Potsdam's new palace, yet Quidde was as safe from the clutches of the law as if he had been in Timbuctoo or Chicago. "Caligula" was a delicate and poisonous piece of work. It has probably only one superior in the literary products of the lèse majesté paragraph, and that one is in another class.

In general that other class is lower in tone than the Quidde pamphlet. It includes revelations of royal scandals, notably youthful misdeeds in money and love. The scenes of these scandals are laid in the present usually, but the names of the actors are omitted or given only in distorted form. Most of the books, pamphlets, and daily newspaper articles regarding the Kotze scandal belonged in this class. For instance, in "The Secret of the Master of Ceremonies" (Zürich, 1896), in which Emperor William is brought to book for some of his love affairs under the name of King Victor, Baron Kotze is mentioned as Baron Speiers, Countess Hohenau appears as Countess Hohenhorst, and the chief of the Political Police, Major von Pausch, who then was in difficulties and therefore a safe subject, was disguised but thinly as Herr von Rausch. All this may seem rather clumsy, but it was in this class of trickery, nevertheless, that the lèse majesté paragraph and other provisions of its kind have been cheated most cleverly in recent times.

One instance is worth telling in some detail, not only because of the light it throws on the straits of German newspapers, but also because of the view it affords of the Emperor's brother-in-law, Duke Ernst Guenther of Schleswig-Holstein. This flamboyant gentleman has been the subject of much anonymous and semi-anonymous literature, for when not engaged in some abandoned spree, he has been set on by the Emperor under the halo of divine right to lecture the nobility on its duties to mankind. As a first-class capacity at the wine that is red, at the table that is green, and at the chastity that is stained, Ernst Guenther has been a sight for kings and noblemen during his periodical appearances in the role of moral preceptor. In fact, his lectures on moderation and duty have been resented by the nobility, and not a few of the newspaper attacks on him have been inspired by the Counts and Barons whom he has offended. Thus it came that when the royal rake's betrothal to the young Princess Dorothea of Coburg-Cohary was announced early last summer, the masked batteries were opened on him.

The most cunning and at the same time most daring attack came from a Berlin journal, *Die Welt am Montag* (the World on Monday), whose name, in view of the proverbial blueness of Monday, may be intended to explain its periodical publication of very "blue" stories. The writer took ostensibly as his subject a man who was persecuted by the political police, told his story in an easy, careless manner, and brought in, as if but incidentally, the details of the last disagreeable affair in which the imperial brother-in-law had been involved. Ernst Guenther appears in the narrative as Duke S— [Schleswig], which would be indefinite enough if that were not for the care with which the scene of his crime is laid in K— [Koenigsraetzer] street, the fact of his betrothal is pushed into notice, and the police are led to Prenzlau to arrest his partner in crime. These details and a few less striking ones give unmistakable evidence that he is the man behind a notorious Berlin scandal of the previous year, although when the scandal was in court the name of the principal was withheld. Yet, while pointing thus directly to the Emperor's brother-in-law, the writer threw up around him a number of safeguards, which made his impunity sure.

The story was published as pure fiction. It was entitled "Der Spitzel" (The Spy) and was signed "Simplicissimus." It opened with a reference to the case of Major von Pausch, Chief of the Political Police, so as to attract the attention of everybody interested in high politics and political scandals. It drifted along in a gossipy vein, touching upon a company of good fellows who met daily at noon in a certain restaurant for luncheon, beer and conversation, were drawn into a daily discussion of Pausch's rights and wrongs and eventually were divided into two hostile groups by the question of Pausch's guilt. The secession of the Pausch group is described, the migration of his friends from the old restaurant to a new one is related with full circumstance and the peculiarities of every one of the good fellows are sketched cleverly and divertingly. All this requires about 1,500 words. Having put up his defences and masked his guns in this fashion, Simplicissimus warily makes ready for the attack. It is a delight to observe how he works himself up to the critical moment of action.

"Outside wind and snow whirled through the restaurant's tiny garden. Within, however, we sat at our spotless white table and drank the reddish brown punch which the doctor had brewed according to his own secret recipe. He knows how to prepare such elixirs of life, the old fox. Outside of our party there was not a soul in the restaurant, and that was just to our liking, as on such occasions we enjoyed giving full rein to our mood. But no—there at a little table by the pillar sat a lone man—a young fellow of 30 or thereabout, I should say, whose smooth face and long blonde hair led us to surmise that he was a musician or an artist. He was the only other person in the place and, remarkably enough, he had come in at the same time with us. But he was a harmless fellow; he sat there with his back half turned to us and with his face deep in the sheets of the morning newspaper. We were not disturbed by his presence. In fact, when he seemed to catch our jolly mood and turned his smiling face toward our group, we sent him by the landlord a full glass and asked him to empty it to the health of the man whose birthday we were celebrating. Of course one does such a thing only when he is a little exhilarated.

"Well, there was no doubt that in this case we had to do with an educated man. That was evident in the manner of the young fellow as he took down the punch, emptied over and bumped glasses with the doctor. He gave his name—Feldmann, or something of the sort—and at our invitation he sat down, taking a chair between two vacant ones as if to mark politely his isolated position in our group. Then, as he listened, he touched softly and drank his punch in little pippy sips. The counsellor had assumed the duties of master of ceremonies and did not weary of filling our guest's glass again and again. Nor did he fail in his efforts to exhilarate the young man, who in a short time was in the proper birthday mood. Ordinarily the counsellor was so taciturn that we had almost to draw the words from his tongue with pincers, but in this case he was so talkative that we could hardly believe our ears.

"The doctor had brewed his punch for the third time. The conversation grew quicker. Stories and jokes of all kinds were told. Now and then, however, serious questions intruded, and eventually we came back to the great question of the day, the Political Police."

With this introduction Simplicissimus has masked his batteries. What could be more unsentimental, according to German standards, than this local color of punch, beer, landlord, birthday carousal? It is as harmless and unsuspicious as the country ball or cricket match with which the English writer of short stories delights to veil his plot. But the English short story has its background of sorrowing love and "Der Spitzel" has substance of sorrowful politics. Simplicissimus swung away gradually from punch and gayety and approached thus the serious work in hand:

"Each of us gave his opinion of this institution and its importance in State affairs. Nearly every one had an instance of its activity to relate from his own experience.

"'Now, counsellor, what have you to say?' remarked the army surgeon, turning to our man of silence.

"'After this gentleman,' said the lawyer with a motion toward our guest.

"The stranger cleared his throat and with the venturesome spirit which the wine had given him, began his story.

"'As you wish,' he remarked by way of introduction. 'Of course I could tell you many stories, as I have been a friend in the secret police from whom I have learned much of that body's varied activity. There is, for instance, a neat little story—an anecdote, I might say—regarding an affair of recent date. It is authoritative, for my friend was one of the principals in it. You know of Duke S—, of course, the man-about-town.'

"He let his voice sink suddenly and put his hand to his mouth.

"'Well, this young gentleman had become betrothed to the Princess O—. It was an affair of European importance, gentlemen, as you doubtless understand. One day a small tinted note was delivered to the Duke. It was from an old friend, a woman who lived in K— street. She had been the sole guardian of many ticklish ducal secrets, and she had an idea of turning them to account. The Duke had a liking for young women—very young women—and she had aided him in making their acquaintance. Paragraph so and so, criminal statutes, you understand. Well, her plan was, now the period of her usefulness to him appeared to be at an end, that she should stir his fears a little and open his pocket. The Duke, in keen distress, went at once to Paul Girardi—you know the detective agency in B— street.

"'"Whew, 30,000 marks," exclaimed Girardi as he read her demand. "That is pretty steep. She wouldn't stick to that if we should try to settle it. However, what we must do is to turn the tables on her. We have the choice of two criminal charges—attempted blackmail and gross immorality. Let's take gross immorality. Then your serene Highness will not be bothered in any way by the proceedings."

"'The Duke breathed a long sigh of relief. On the morrow day Girardi reported the case in full detail, and within twenty-four hours my friend and another official were out in pursuit of the Duke's female friend. Now how long, gentlemen, do you suppose it was before they had their game in the trap? Eight weeks. Eight anxious, disagreeable weeks. They were out after her night and day, in all possible and impossible disguises, lounging in the streets, loafing in restaurants, and standing about street corners. At last they found her in a little nest of a place near Prenzlaw. They made her acquaintance and, after displaying large rolls of bills, obtained her invitation to visit her in her city house. On the next day they all met in the K— street home of the Duke's friend. The two detectives were received with considerable splendor, but no sooner had the second cork popped than the old woman disappeared. She returned presently with a pretty 15-year-old girl whom she had induced at last for the purpose of learning a new kind of embroidery.'"

Thus the story is spun along in the rather free style of *Die Welt am Montag* until the moral turpitude of the Duke and his friend is fully established. It is not polite literature, but as it is intended to nail the Duke publicly to his iniquity and expose him to the scorn of the world, it may be forgiven. When the Duke's habits have been exposed in adequate detail, the "guest" is allowed to conclude his narrative thus:

"'And this horrible creature received her deserts—four years in prison, gentlemen.'

"'But the young Duke?' put in one listener.

"'The Duke,' interposed the counsellor. 'Ah, gentlemen, do we put Dukes in prison for their crimes?'

Having stabbed the Duke back and front, and declared that the Emperor's brother-in-law is better fitted for the prison cell than for the marriage altar, *Die Welt am Montag* returns placidly to the narrative in which the anecdote of the Duke is supposed to be merely an incident. His masterly manner in doing this is calculated to deceive even the elect of Berlin society. Here is the conclusion, following immediately the Counsellor's remark about Dukes and prison cells:

"And now, resumed the Counsellor, 'as I promised to tell my story after our guest should finish his, I will proceed to do so by computing the interesting narrative with which he has entertained us. The lawyer who defended the Duke's female friend in this case urged without ceasing that the Duke himself should be called as witness at the trial. Thereby he brought down on himself in court a sharp call to order and a fine, which, of course, he richly deserved. But that apparently was not enough, since the trial the Crown officials apparently have regarded that lawyer as a dangerous man. He takes hardly a step without being shadowed and watched.

"'The carefully watched lawyer whom I have described, gentlemen, is your humble servant. My own particular spy and shadow is the agreeable individual who has entertained us so capably with the story of the Duke. He is the man who pursued and arrested the Duke's old accomplice in crime. See, here is his picture, taken in Prenzlau during the chase.'

"The counsellor handed out a cabinet photograph of a group, and we eagerly put our heads together over it. He was right. There was the man, fine for fine. When we looked up from the picture to compare it with the original, the spy was gone. Only the heel of his boot was visible to us as the door creaked to between us and his retreating form.'

That is "The Spy," as written for *Die Welt am Montag* by Simplicissimus. It displays the acme of that German newspaper art which has been produced by the laws for the protection of royal families from disagreeable publicity. If any proof of this assertion is desired, let the doubter consider the fact that "The Spy" was published in the German capital at the most inopportune moment imaginable in the career of the Emperor's brother-in-law, yet publisher and editor went unscathed and not a copy of *Die Welt am Montag* was seized by the police.

Bismarck has said that German editors are men who have failed in other professions. Be that as it may, it is reasonably clear that they have not failed in the art of editing without lèse majesté.

After the examples already given, it seems hardly worth while to mention how writers of fewer talents surmount obstacles set up by the lèse majesté paragraph and others calculated to save the reputations of royalty. Some German editors who do not know how to edit according to the high requirements of the present regime, publish only the obscurest paragraphs concerning objectionable doings by Emperor and royal princes. The offender is referred to merely as a "high gentleman," and the details of his offence are given "without any assumption of responsibility on the editor's part for the truth of the statement." This style of work was the rule when the Archduchess Stefanie, widow of the Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria, was involved in a questionable affair three or four years ago. The paragraph which then went the rounds of the German dailies was merely to the effect that "a distinguished lady and a gentleman, evidently an officer in *civile*, alighted from a handsome private carriage On the Prater a few days ago and approached a distinguished gentleman, also in *civile*, whom the distinguished lady gave a court struck several times with a whip, after which cards were exchanged and the distinguished lady and her escort drove rapidly away." Of course, the German editor who publishes such third-rate matter as this does not rank among the artists of the Quidde and Simplicissimus class. As Bismarck would say, he has simply missed his calling again.

G. W. HINMAN.

VIENNA'S MUSIC SEASON.

GREAT THINGS EXPECTED OF THE NEW OPERA IC DIRECTOR.

Gustav Mahler as the Successor of Herr Jahn—A Performance of Smetana's "Dalibor," His First Success—Other Novelties Promised—Miss Frances Saville in Vienna.

VIENNA, Oct. 12.—The event of the musical season that has just begun in the Austrian metropolis is not so much to be found among the novelties that have either just been produced, or were about to be given, as in the fact that a new director has been appointed for the Imperial Opera House. Such an event used to be of more frequent occurrence, and in former days a change of management happened every five or six years; but with the appointment of Wilhelm Jahn, in 1880, stability apparently became the order of the day, and in spite of reports to the contrary that were continually heard, nothing was done by those in power to alter the existing state of things. Not that the affairs of the Vienna Opera House were in so absolutely satisfactory a shape that no one could have suggested an improvement; on the contrary, from the proud position of the first musical stage of the world it had reached a point where comparisons with cities like Dresden and even Munich had become dangerous. Certain performances, to be sure, were still on the old-time level of excellence, but these were only such as the Herr Director personally prepared for production. Again, among the artists there were a few—unfortunately only a very few—whose equals were not to be found in all the other German opera houses; while the orchestra—the famous Vienna orchestra—remained what it had always been, the finest body of musicians in the world.

On the other hand, the current works of the répertoire were given, for the most part, in a happy-go-lucky manner, so that if a good performance resulted it was quite as much a matter of chance as of well-intentioned artistic effort. The health of Herr Jahn, after seventeen years of hard work, had begun to fail, and with it his interest in the fortunes of the opera house plainly grew less. It was patent to the uninitiated as well as to those who took a special interest in the existing state of affairs that the time had come for a change, and so when, without any formal preamble, it was officially announced last May that Herr Gustav Mahler had been engaged as conductor, every one was convinced that the probable successor of Wilhelm Jahn was in sight. The season, to be sure, was fast drawing to a close, but when the doors of the opera house were opened again in August all possible doubt was dispelled by Herr Mahler's appointment as directorial representative, in which capacity he has shown ability of so high an order that, retrospectively, it seems surprising that the *fait accompli*, as such, should have been delayed so long. However, the official announcement has just been made, and so musical Vienna has no more unpleasant duty to perform than to join in the cry of "The King is dead! Long live the King!"

Gustav Mahler, who has thus been called to a post that every musician may well envy him, to which even celebrities like Mottl and Schuch have aspired, who certainly have made their mark in the tone world, is still a young man, though he has already made a name for himself. He was born thirty-seven years ago in Iglau, and is consequently an Austrian. His musical studies were pursued in Vienna, and after gaining experience in some of the smaller towns he went to Prague, where, under the able management of Angelo Nessmann he soon began to be talked about. From Prague he moved on to Leipzig, and here his work as a conductor and also as a musician of rare tact and intelligence soon placed his name in the foremost ranks of musical celebrities, so that it seemed not at all surprising that he should be called to Budapest as conductor of the royal opera. What he achieved there in a short space of time was in the nature of a revolution and little short of marvelous. But his intriguer and his inability to sacrifice artistic ideas for personal interests soon rendered his position untenable, and in spite of the universal satisfaction he had given he hastened to take his departure, but not without having made for himself firm and devoted friends among some of the most influential musical and political leaders in the Hungarian capital, and, if current gossip is to be credited, it is mainly due to these very friends that he was called to Vienna and thus secured the position which the Emperor has now called upon him to fill.

Between Budapest and Vienna, however, he had to pass through six years of arduous work, first as kapellmeister in Hamburg, where, under the direction of Hofrath Pollini, he had an opportunity of gaining sufficient experience, from a practical point of view, to stand him in good stead for the remaining years of his life. For though the quality of the Hamburg performances may occasionally be doubtful, it is an accepted fact that no opera house in Germany has so ambitious, so diversified, and so constantly changing a repertoire as Hamburg. More valuable, though, than this experience must be accounted the bond of intimacy that linked him to one of the greatest conductors that ever lived, Dr. Hans von Bülow, to whom Mahler, till his dying day, was *a nitus Achates*. To his natural gifts as an orchestral leader Gustav Mahler adds rare ability as a stage manager, and—if one may judge by the methods he has so far introduced by him at the opera house—a very positive capacity for appreciating shortcomings and devising means to remedy them. He has taken matters in hand with an enthusiasm and energy that have fairly taken the breath from his slumbrous predecessor. Where formerly the little was attempted and kept in view, now the much, if such a thing is possible, is striven for. That Director Mahler will probably not be able to carry out all his many plans for future work stands to reason, and that, in all the undertakings, he may here and there fall into errors of judgment is equally probable. But the main point is that a new and healthy spirit has come over the old art institute, that the error of past ways has been recognized, and that talent, activity, and good will condense in the person of the new director to make him the right man in the right place.

Of course, he has been in office for too short a time to pass a final judgment on his merits. It is only possible to review what he has accomplished during the past few weeks, when he was called upon merely to act as the representative of Director Jahn. He has taken several of the so-called repertoire operas, and by carefully drilling artists, chorus, and even orchestra in tasks that had grown irksomely familiar, has presented works like "Figaro," "Lohengrin," and "Czar and Zimmermann" in a manner which the public had grown to look forward to in the case of favorites. Though decidedly Wagnerian in the matter of personal predictions, he has thus far bestowed his most loving care on the works of Mozart, though he has made no secret of his intention to give all the music dramas of the Bayreuth master without a cut, if any kind, thus following the example of all the more important opera houses of Germany.

In place of the three or four novelties that have hitherto made up the directorial pronunciamento for the season, Herr Mahler publishes a goodly list of new works; he furthermore promises any number of interesting arrivals, and is by no means as opposed to the engagement of stars—"guests" as they are called here—for special performances as was his predecessor. He has resolved to abolish that abomination of so many years' standing, the official claque. Others tried to do it before him and failed. It remains to be seen if he will be more successful in his efforts.

The first operatic novelty of the season, and consequently the first absolutely independent achievement of Herr Mahler, was the production of Smetana's "Dalibor," a work that has taken thirty years to find its way to Vienna from Prague, where it was first produced. It is one of the first of his operas, and though it cannot compete in point of popularity with his more familiar "Bartered Bride," it is a composition both valuable and interesting. The score abounds in passages of rare and positive beauty, the instrumentation is masterly, while the style is pure and noble, such as is rarely to be found in the works of the great masters. Unfortunately, the libretto, which has sought to make an operatic hero out of a semi-legendary Bohemian character who gave his name to a famous tower in the Hradschin, tells a more too interesting tale in a clumsy and halting manner. Two, at least, of its situations it owes to standard works, and in neither case has the adaptation been very happily effected. If we are to judge by the various Smetana operas that have been given here in a German version, Bohemia does not seem to have given birth to any great dramatic artists, and as in the case of "Der Kuss," "Das Geheimniss," and even "Die Verkaufte Braut," "Dalibor" will fail to achieve popularity, principally because its libretto tells so uninteresting a tale. Unlike the other works, "Dalibor," though the scene of action is laid in Prague toward the end of the fifteenth century, can boast little or no local color, and were it not for an utterly irrelevant chorus and duet introduced by way of relief to the unmitigated gloom of the story, we should have nothing in Smetana's happiest vein of tuneful merriment.

The production has a position in the répertoire for a season or two and from present indications it does not seem unlikely that it may—it will be due primarily to the loving care with which Herr Mahler has produced the work. The artists one and all have made a heroic effort to do their best. Chorus and orchestra are beyond all praise, while as a pageant alone the new opera is well worth seeing. So that, whatever may be the ultimate verdict as to the merits of "Dalibor," there is but one voice of praise in favor of the maiden effort of the new director. He has at the start achieved a result quite as brilliant and convincing as the completed triumph of his predecessor, and there is every reason to believe that as much, if not more, may be expected from him in the future.

Tschaikowsky's "Eugen Onegin" is undefined for production during the coming month, while Leoncavallo's "Vie de Bohème" is looked forward to before the new year.

In the meanwhile the Theatre an der Wien, the home of comic opera, has opened its doors to the "Boheme" of Puccini, which, by a strange coincidence, or by the clever machinations of its publisher, generally appears a few weeks before the latest opera by the composer of "Pagliacci" is given. So it was in Venice, so in Berlin, and so again here. The scores are said, by those in a position to judge, to be very different one from the other; they have but this in common that they attempt, according to the rules of the new Italian operatic school, to set that to music which is hardly in any way adapted therefor. So much has already been written and reported as to Puccini's version of Murger's scenes of Paris student life that it would be superfluous to add further criticism as to the merits and weaknesses of the score. It is only necessary to speak of the impression "La Vie de Bohème" has made in Vienna, and that, it must be said, has been in the main favorable. To be sure, the fact is chiefly owing to the masterly interpretation of the principal comic role by the American prima donna, Miss Frances Saville, who came, saw and conquered. Very few here had ever heard her name before she was announced to appear in the new work, but now she has already sung herself into such popularity that her engagement at the imperial opera house is reported as a successful fact. As a first-class coloratura singer is sadly needed in Vienna, her succession to the ranks of our artists would be hailed in the light of a valuable gain.

This week will see the first performance of Sydney Jones's "The Geisha," in the adaptation presented last spring in Berlin. It, as is hoped, it duplicates here the success of the German capital, it will restore to Vienna what by many is supposed to have entirely died out—the vogue of comic opera.

W. VON SACHS.

WESTMINSTER'S SEXTON.

A Man Who Is on Familiar Terms with the Bones of Kings and Poets.

LONDON, Oct. 23.—He was a worn and aged little man who led a party of Americans in and out of old Westminster. Life had almost done with him, and life had not been wholly kind. True, it had given him high honors; in Dean Stanley's time it had made him chief sexton of the Abbey and awarded him the glory of digging great men's graves. But Dean Stanley's time was over a dozen years ago; new despots ruled the world between those ancient walls, and the old régime was elbowed out of the way. Yet, in spite of oppression from the great, he loved his world. He knew every stone from floor to vaulting; his memory kept the record of every tomb. The great cathedral was his heritage; no tyrant could rob him of its mighty consolation.

When a special providence persuaded him to emerge from his remote retreat and show the visitors the secret places of his domain, they humbly blessed their watchful fates. No feeble-loving verger was this, no parrot-voiced beadle skimming heartlessly the surface of deep memories, but a man intimate with history, one who had uncovered lost inscriptions and watched the renewal of crumbled stones, who had measured the bones of kings and sifted the dust of poets; one who was loyal to each tradition, who resented each advance of modern iconoclasm.

"They began to doubt whether Edward the Confessor lay in his own tomb," he said as he climbed the narrow stair that led to the chapel of King Henry V.; "so one fine morning we pried it open and cut through the leaden shroud, and there, on the ancient cere cloths, we found the royal coat of arms and monogram. There's nothing so good as a little investigation for those people who know too much. There lies Richard II. with a broken skull; that's better than all the arguments to prove the crime that killed him."

He dwelt upon funereal details. One seemed to be breathing the dust of kings and prying into their uncovered tombs. His mind was pregnant with mortuary memories. Even when he led to the coronation chair he brought up thoughts of monarchs dead who had sat there for their anointing.

"See, there they married it at the golden jubilee," he said mournfully, pointing to the marks of tacks in the ancient wood; "that shows how carelessly they nailed on the crimson velvet, as though this historic piece of oak were carved for the occasion. I protested to the officials, and they stopped it." The antiquarian fingers passed lovingly over the unhealed wounds and the worn brow wrinkled with incongruous modern cares.

"I used to have a stall in the choir," he murmured, "and march in the procession. But after Dean Stanley died they wanted me to change it for another. Since that day I have never set foot on that floor during service, and I never will. No, not if they were to beg me on their knees! In Dean Stanley's time there never was a function in the Abbey that I did not get a card for it. But there's different now, a crowd in control now; they can't stop to think of an old man like me. Dean Stanley—ah! there was a gentleman. When there was a stone to renew or a grave to dig he consulted me, he asked my advice. He told me once I ought to write a book; it would take a big book to tell all I know about this place."

"Do you dig the Abbey's graves?" asked one of the party, awe-stricken at confronting the home maker for England's heroes and standing face to face with history.

"Yes, and not a grave been dug here for thirty years that I have not directed the job," he answered proudly. "And I tell you it's no easy task. Under the Abbey floor is a thick bed of concrete which time has hardened into granite. It takes a force of men all night with crowbars and pickaxes to make room for a coffin there."

"And you dug Tennyson's grave—and Browning's?"

"To be sure I did, and cold work it was, with no fire and a few interns against the gloom and chill." A scene for Rembrandt—those vast shadows, those toiling figures weirdly lit against the cold stone!

"And does anything remain of ancient bones down there? Does Chaucer really lie there still?"

"Oh yes," said this familiar with immortals. "I myself measured Chaucer's bones. The coffin was large and gone, but most of the bones were there. He was a short, stocky man, with a big head, was Chaucer."

"But how could you be sure it was Chaucer?"

"Oh, but you see, there's no possible doubt about it; we know every square inch of that floor, and have for centuries. In 1100 Chaucer was buried there, and for 100 years his corner lay untouched for two centuries and a half. Then, in 1467, the floor was opened near him to make a place for Abraham Cowley. Cowley was a fine big man, and his neighbors thought him quite a good enough poet to lie near Chaucer, for they called him the English Pindar, Horace, and Virgil of England. Two years after Cowley John Denham was buried near by, and in 1700 a grave was made for John Dryden. Those four graves near together in Chaucer's corner lay untouched for nearly two centuries. Then there was question of burying somebody—Tennyson and Browning were getting old—and it was decided to investigate those graves. So we opened up the whole place and found the poet poets according to the records. There wasn't much left of Chaucer, but we measured him and laxed him up decently and made all out a coffin for any kind, thus following the example of all the more important opera houses of Germany.

In place of the three or four novelties that have hitherto made up the directorial pronunciamento for the season, Herr Mahler publishes a goodly list of new works; he furthermore promises any number of interesting arrivals, and is by no means as opposed to the engagement of stars—"guests" as they are called here—for special performances as was his predecessor. He has resolved to abolish that abomination of so many years' standing, the official claque. Others tried to do it before him and failed. It remains to be seen if he will be more successful in his efforts.

The first operatic novelty of the season, and consequently the first absolutely independent achievement of Herr Mahler, was the production of Smetana's "Dalibor," a work that has taken thirty years to find its way to Vienna from Prague, where it was first produced. It is one of the first of his operas, and though it cannot compete in point of popularity with his more familiar "Bartered Bride," it is a composition both valuable and interesting. The score abounds in passages of rare and positive beauty, the instrumentation is masterly, while the style is pure and noble, such as is rarely to be found in the works of the great masters. Unfortunately, the libretto, which has sought to make an operatic hero out of a semi-legendary Bohemian character who gave his name to a famous tower in the Hradschin, tells a more too interesting tale in a clumsy and halting manner. Two, at least, of its situations it owes to standard works, and in neither case has the adaptation been very happily effected. If we are to judge by the various Smetana operas that have been given here in a German version, Bohemia does not seem to have given birth to any great dramatic artists, and as in the case of "Der Kuss," "Das Geheimniss," and even "Die Verkaufte Braut," "Dalibor" will fail to achieve popularity, principally because its libretto tells so uninteresting a tale. Unlike the other works, "Dalibor," though the scene of action is laid in Prague toward the end of the fifteenth century, can boast little or no local color, and were it not for an utterly irrelevant chorus and duet introduced by way of relief to the unmitigated gloom of the story, we should have nothing in Smetana's happiest vein of tuneful merriment.

The production has a position in the répertoire for a season or two and from present indications it does not seem unlikely that it may—it will be due primarily to the loving care with which Herr Mahler has produced the work. The artists one and all have made a heroic effort to do their best. Chorus and orchestra are beyond all praise, while as a pageant alone the new opera is well worth seeing. So that, whatever may be the ultimate verdict as to the merits of "Dalibor," there is but one voice of praise in favor of the maiden effort of the new director. He has at the start achieved a result

IN PIONEER RAILROAD DAYS

INCIDENTS RECALLED BY THE DEATH OF A VETERAN ENGINEER.

He Ran the First Train Between Tidewater and the Lakes—When the Erie Employed but Three Conductors, One of Whom Still Lives—How Charles Minot Used the Telegraph—Josh Martin's Great Feat.

"Charles H. Sherman, who died at Dunkirk, N. Y., the other day," said a veteran railroad man, "was the engineer who took into Dunkirk the first passenger train that ran through from the Hudson River to Lake Erie on the Erie Railroad—the first train that ever made the trip between tidewater and the lakes on any railroad. It was one section of an excursion train that left Piermont, then the eastern terminus of the Erie, on May 14, 1851, to celebrate the opening of the railroad that had been nearly twenty years in building. That section of the pioneer through train carried the most distinguished party that was ever got together on a railroad train before or since. In it were Millard Fillmore, President of the United States, and his Cabinet, including Daniel Webster and John J. Crittenden; Stephen A. Douglas, William H. Seward, Hamilton Fish, ex-Gov. Marcy, Daniel S. Dickinson, Charles O'Conor, and six carloads of others, Judges, statesmen, journalists, all men of great fame in that day. Daniel Webster rode much of the time sitting in a big easy rocking chair placed on a flat car as an observation car, 'so he could see the country,' he said. The trains were in charge of the officers and Board of Directors of the railroad company, among whom were William E. Dodge, Marshall O. Roberts, Sheppard Knapp, John J. Phelps, and Charles M. Leupp, Benjamin Loder being President of the company. Dodsworth's famous band accompanied the excursion. Gad Lyman was the engineer of the first train out of Piermont, and Capt. Henry Ayers the conductor. The engine of the second train was in charge of Onderdonk Merritt and the conductor was W. H. Stewart. The trains ran to Elmira the first day. On the next day they ran to Dunkirk. At Hornellsville Charles H. Sherman took charge of the first train as engineer and W. D. Hall of the second. That part of the road was entirely new, and a locomotive was run a short distance behind the second excursion train to be on hand to help in case of a breakdown. This locomotive was in charge of W. A. Kimball. The first train was preceded by another locomotive run by H. G. Brooks, then an engineer in the employ of the Erie. That locomotive was the first one that ever sounded a whistle on the shore of Lake Erie west of Buffalo. Brooks, then an engineer on the Boston and Maine Railroad, was hired by the Erie to fetch the locomotive from Boston. It was carried on a vessel from that city to New York, where it was loaded on an Erie Canal boat and transported to Buffalo. From there it was taken on a Lake Erie steamboat to Dunkirk. Brooks set it up on the Erie track at that place in November, 1850. It was the pioneer locomotive of the western end of the Erie Railroad, and was named the Dunkirk. Brooks remained with the Erie. He became superintendent of the western division and master mechanic. He left the road in 1869 and founded the Brooks Locomotive Works at Dunkirk.

"Brooks, Sherman, Kimball, Hall, and many others were all brought from the Boston and Maine Railroad by Charles Minot, General Superintendent of the Erie, who was himself a graduate of the Boston and Maine. He was a son of Judge Minot of the Massachusetts Supreme Court. He was the first to use the system of running trains by telegraphic orders, which he did on the Erie in the fall of 1851. Sherman, the veteran engineer, who died the other day, was 78 years old. Kimball is still living at Hornellsville. Hall is at Batavia, N. Y., where he is running a switch engine on the New York Central Railroad. They, with Sam Vandee of Hornellsville, are the last of the pioneer engineers of the Erie that came on the road with Charles Minot, nearly fifty years ago.

"W. H. Stewart, the conductor who started from Piermont with one section of the great excursion train, is living at Waverly, N. Y., at the age of 86. He began as conductor on the Erie in November, 1842, when the railroad was only fifty miles long, and he worked there more but little more than a year. This was between Piermont and Goshen. Three conductors were then all that the business of the Erie required. Stewart was the third in the service, Eben E. Worden having been the first conductor to run a regular train on the road, and Jesse Cole the second. Worden did all the work on the road from its opening in September, 1841, until October, 1842, when Ayers was added to the service, Stewart following him two weeks later. There were no such things as cabooses on freight trains in those days, and the men had a rough time. The conductors had to ride on the locomotives. There was no protection from snow or rain. It was not an uncommon thing to see the engineer and conductor covered with ice. There were only two ticket offices on the Erie, at Goshen and Piermont. The conductor was provided with tickets for each station on the road, a square tin box to carry them in, and a bag containing $10 in small coins and bills. This was carried in the box, and was the conductor's capital for the day. It was to make change with when passengers offered money larger than the fare collected. The box and its contents were delivered at one end of the run to the general ticket agent at Piermont. This was Henry S. Fitch, Erie's first general passenger agent, still living at Jersey City. The account was balanced with the conductor and the money put into the box for the next trip. It was again for use on the return trip. All tickets for New York were collected on the steamboat.

"Conductors Ayers and Stewart were selected to run the first and second section of the great through excursion train in 1851 as far as Elmira. At that place Conductor T. K. Robinson was to take the first section, and Conductor A. N. Chapin the second section, and run them to Dunkirk. The train lay all night at Elmira, and everything was "wide open." Things were whooped up all night long, and Conductor Robinson, carried away by the uproarious good cheer, was not feeling in shape to take charge of his train next morning. General Superintendent Minot put Conductor Stewart in charge of section 1 on the train, and so he ran all the way from Piermont to Dunkirk, and thus became the first conductor to make the through trip on the Erie, and on the road to which the junction of which he is very proud in his old age.

"This dean of the now wide fraternity of railroad conductors also ran the first train that was ever run on telegraphic order. This was in the fall of 1851. Up to that time the trains on the road had been run by time-tables and by signals. The track was single, and at convenient sidings along the line a train going in one direction would wait ten minutes for a train coming in the opposite direction. Eastbound trains had the right of way, but lost it if they were ten minutes late in reaching a turn-out or waiting station, and "lay" meant that they must stay and wait for the westbound train to pass. Stewart was running the westbound express. His engineer was Isaac Lewis. Superintendent Minot was on the train on this particular day. At Turner's Station it was to wait for the eastbound express to pass. The Erie telegraph line had then but recently been put in operation, and it was a mystery to the old railroad men. Superintendent Minot was a telegraph operator. When the westbound express arrived at Turner's, Minot telegraphed to the operator at Port Jervis to inform him whether the eastbound train had left that station. The answer was that the train had not arrived at that station yet, showing that it was much behind its time. Superintendent Minot then wrote and handed to Conductor Stewart the first one ever written, an order to run into Port Jervis regardless of the train coming east. The conductor took the order, and handing it to his engineer, told him to go ahead. The engineer read the order, and passing it back to Stewart, exclaimed:

"'Do you take me for a damn fool? I won't run by that thing!'

"Conductor Stewart reported to the Superintendent, who went forward and used his authority on Engineer Lewis, but without avail. Minot then climbed into the cab and took charge of the locomotive himself. Lewis jumped off and pointed out the road to Port Jervis. The Superintendent ran the train to Goshen. The other train had arrived that point yet, he inquired for it