OPERA HOUSE MANAGEMENT

THE WAR BETWEEN ITALIAN AND GERMAN.

Society Determined That Teutonic Musical Influences Shall Not Dominate at the Metropolitan—Hence Gatti-Casazza—Meanwhile Mr. Hammerstein Is Happy.

The official announcement of the conclusion of arrangements for a new management at the Metropolitan Opera House can hardly have contained anything to astonish the readers of this paper, for the nature of the action was foretold in these columns some time ago. The new régime is to be so constituted as to arouse wonder in many minds. Why must the opera house have two managers, one of Teutonic and one of Italian origin? The answer to this must be sought among the most substantial patrons of the house, or perhaps rather among those who make its existence possible at all.

There has long been among these people a feeling that the term artistic has for too many critics, artists, conductors and music lovers spelled German opera. Now it must not be forgotten that some years ago the Metropolitan was a German opera house and that it was at times given over to the performance of some of the cheapest products of the Teutonic music factories. In the season which terminated the reign of German opera we had the misfortune to hear not only the incomprehensible "Asrael" of Franchetti but also the wearisome "Vassal of Szigeth" and finally the stupefying "Diana of Solange," composed by the Duke of Saxe-Coburg.

This last ton of lead broke the camel's back. The patient occupants of the boxes, the stockholders of the opera house, decided that as they were engaged every season in paying a deficit they would, if that must continue to be necessary, pay it for a kind of opera that gave them some amusement or entertainment for their money. So they incontinently kicked German opera into the street and invited Abbey, Schoeffel and Grau, who had conducted the first season of the house, to return and try it again. This brought Italian opera once more into the seat of power, but owing to the Gallic affections of Mr. Grau French opera in the French language became a part of the plan of the new management. Consequent upon this was the engagement of singers acquainted with both Italian and French.

It was not long before Jean de Reszke, with that fine feeling for the artistic proprieties which always dwelt in his mind, declared to Mr. Grau that if Italian operas were to be given in Italian and French operas in French, then it was illogical to continue performing "Lohengrin" and such operas in anything but German.

Mr. Grau at first held out against this proposition, but a highly successful season of opera in German under the direction of Walter Damrosch convinced him that there was still a strong public demand for performances of this kind, and he yielded an assent to Mr. de Reszke's proposal. The result was the restoration of Wagnerian drama in its correct text to the repertory.

Thus polyglot opera became the kind given at the Metropolitan, and it was given with great success as long as the manager was able to obtain for the German works such singers as the two De Reszkes, Nordica, Ternina, Schumann-Heink and Brema. The sensational success of Jean de Reszke in the great Wagnerian rôles brought the imposing music drama of Bayreuth once more into a position of command in the operatic world of New York.

But since the retirement of several of the great artists of the "international" school (the singers of Italian, French and German rôles) their places have never been filled to the satisfaction of the general public nor to that of the men who control the Metropolitan Opera House. Despite this fact the struggle to keep German opera in its old position of command has never ceased.

Mistaken views of the situation have centralized effort on the conducting and the scenic presentation, whereas the element wanting in the performances—in so far as public interest has been concerned—has been singers. We have had good singers, to be sure, but none great enough to counteract or equal the enormous influence of Mr. Caruso in fixing firmly in the general affection the works of the Italian list. Even "Faust" fell into disuse till this adored tenor learned to sing the title rôle.

What the most influential people in the clientèle of the Metropolitan Opera House have desired to see in the plans of a new régime was a provision that the repertoire affording the largest field to the most popular singers now before the public should not be in danger of sacrifice to the desires of Teutonic "artistic" conductors with admirable ideas of interpretation and stage management, but contemporaneous German notions about singing.

Fear of the predominance of Teutonic methods was the force which battled for the recognition of Italy in the new management. When the business of preparing to make a change of management was begun there was a strong party in the house in favor of turning the matter over entirely to the young representative of a Milanese publishing house. It was the knowledge of this influence which caused the publication in this paper in August last of an editorial article advocating the selection of Andreas Dippel as the most available man for the post, the man most likely by reason of his tastes and acquaintance with all schools to satisfy all demands.

At that time too the movement to secure the services of Mr. Mahler was under way, for it was felt that his catholicity of feeling and his ability in conducting such works of those of Mozart, Charpentier's "Louise," and the spectacular operas of Meyerbeer would fit him for such a post as that of musical director at the Metropolitan. But Mr. Dippel is a Viennese and so by long residence is Mr. Mahler. That was enough to arouse fear in the minds of those who were determined that German opera should never again be in the ascendant at the Metropolitan.

The battle between the advocates of the Italian publisher and those of the Viennese contingent has resulted in a compromise. Mr. Gatti-Casazza of La Scala is regarded by many as a tolerably acceptable representative of the publishing house alluded to. We shall probably hear many of its operas. Able and vigorous as this Milanese manager is in Milan, he will of course be quite strange to the unique conditions which prevail here. Furthermore, it is altogether likely that he will need some time to learn that the New York public is a vastly more complex organization than that of the Italian musical capital.

For these reasons it is probably a fortunate thing for the Metropolitan Opera House that Mr. Dippel has been chosen as the associate of the manager of La Scala. Mr. Dippel is known to the general public merely as one of the lesser lights of the company, a singer who rarely appears unless called upon to fill the place of some one suddenly indisposed. But he has been in New York for seventeen years. He has been a student of American life, of financial and social conditions and of the special tendencies of our people in musical art.

He is a keen and practical business man, as more than one Wall Street financier can testify. In addition to German he speaks English, French and Italian, whereas Mr. Gatti-Casazza has only his own language at his command. He is thoroughly acquainted with operatic conditions, customs and methods in London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna.

He knows the art of all the leading singers of Germany and France. He is familiar with the achievements of all the "international" singers. He has a trained German musician's understanding of the requirements of the orchestral department of an opera house. He has a practical knowledge of the mechanics of the stage. He is thoroughly acquainted with all the operas in the repertory of a working opera house, and he is a musician who can study the score of a new work.

He is fruitful in ideas. The inclusion of a pension fund in the new plans for the opera house must be credited to his suggestion. He understands singers and knows how to deal with them. If emergency calls for it he can take the stage management into his own hands. And finally he is an amiable, patient and politic person, who will be able to meet the many troubles of an impresario's career with equanimity and firmness.

In the statement issued by the Conried directors there is some ambiguity of terms. The wording states the engagement of Mr. Gatti-Casazza as "general manager" and Mr. Dippel as "administrative manager." If these descriptions are to be accepted in their European sense the arrangement will in all probability not fulfil the expectations of its makers.

The term "administration" is used throughout continental Europe as applying only to the business department. If Mr. Dippel is to be merely an "administrative" manager in the European sense he will have no voice whatever in the artistic government of the opera house. But if that had been the intent of the Conried company there would have been no reason whatever for Mr. Dippel's engagement.

In another paragraph of the official statement we find these words:

"At Mr. Gatti-Casazza's side will be Mr. Dippel, a man thoroughly conversant with the traditions of the Metropolitan Opera House, long known and liked by the New York public as a sterling artist of remarkable musical ability and vast experience, tactful, resourceful, enjoying universal esteem and sympathy as an artist and a gentleman."

The meaning which lies behind this paragraph seems to be that Mr. Dippel is to have a position equal in authority to that of Mr. Gatti-Casazza and that his artistic knowledge and training are to play an important part in the formation of a policy. At any rate it is safe to say that the business men who are making the new arrangement will see to it that the contracts with their managers set forth in no doubtful terms the powers, prerogatives and privileges of each. It would be a sorry day indeed for the Metropolitan Opera House when a Milanese manager secured entire control of its fortunes.

Meanwhile lovers of operatic entertainment will without doubt possess their souls in patience. Whether Gatti-Casazza is to prove in the end a sinister influence or not, his power for evil will be curtailed to a certain extent by contracts already made. All the engagements of singers for next season will stand unaffected by the change of managers, for the good reason that the contracts are made not with Heinrich Conried personally, but with the Conried Metropolitan Opera Company, which as a corporate body will continue to exist under a new title, the Metropolitan Grand Opera Company.

This makes it certain that Mr. Caruso, Mme. Sembrich, Miss Farrar and other stars whose contracts do not expire with the present season will continue to sing at the Metropolitan Opera House next winter. Nor need any one be disturbed by the plaintive cry emitted by Mr. Delmas, the distinguished bass of the Paris Grand Opéra.

He appears to be deeply stirred by a report that colossal salaries will no longer be offered to European singers by the New York opera. He bemoans the fact that the life of a singer is one of suffering and self-sacrifice, and declares bravely that money is its only balm. Those familiar with the lives of musical "artists" have long suspected that this was the case.

But even if the salaries now paid to foreign singers were somewhat diminished, the woes of their careers might still be assuaged. For it does not appear certain to the common mortal that consolation for the sorrows of an art life necessarily includes private life on a scale of ducal magnificence. Perhaps, despite Mr. Delmas's proclamation that singers will not come here at reduced rates, a few may be found willing to accept three times, instead of five times as much as they would get at the Paris Grand Opéra or Mr. Gatti-Casazza's La Scala.

Another potent factor in the situation is the ever smiling Oscar Hammerstein. The inspiriting industry of luring singers away from the Manhattan Opera House, which began with Mr. Bonci's engagement, promises to thrive and wax eminent. All that the competent artists of Europe may have to do will be to permit Mr. Hammerstein to discover them and then wait for the Metropolitan managers to need them.

Mr. Hammerstein at any rate is not suffering any loss of sleep over the new arrangement. He has demonstrated his ability to find new and acceptable singers, and he is quite confident that he will find more. He will surely not seek in the places frequented by Mr. Gatti-Casazza, for the records of La Scala show that this gentleman often discovered stars which New York opera lovers had crossed off their celestial maps.

Mr. Hammerstein now holds the record for the production of novelties. Furthermore, the great popular success of Charpentier's "Louise" and of Mme. Tetrazzini has made it certain that the Manhattan Opera House will continue to be an active competitor of the Metropolitan. Early in the present season there was reason to fear that Mr. Hammerstein would be forced to give up his courageous fight. He wrote a letter scolding the public for not patronizing him, and he has been heard to attribute the changed conditions to the effect of his epistle. But he will have his joke.

There is little doubt now that Mr. Hammerstein will have a substantial subscription for next season. A woman prominent in the smart set has constituted herself leader of society at the Manhattan, and she will undoubtedly wield a strong influence. The power behind the Italian element in the new management of the Metropolitan is also a society matron. This dinner and dance warfare may be left to the discussion of the writers on social topics, but it will have an important part in directing the future of at least one of the two opera houses.

It is a fortunate thing that Mr. Hammerstein is to continue. He is quite independent. As he said a few days ago in an interview, he has only himself and the public to consult. The new managers of the Metropolitan will have to consult many. Let us hope that among the multitude of counsellors the public and the interests of art will not be forgotten.

W. J. HENDERSON.

"PELLEAS ET MELISANDE."

Debussy's Maeterlinck Opera to Be Given Wednesday Night.

Oscar Hammerstein will produce at the Manhattan Opera House on Wednesday night "Pelléas et Mélisande," Debussy's operatic embodiment of Maeterlinck's drama. Four of the members of the original Parisian cast, namely Mary Garden, Mme. Gerville-Reache and Messrs. Perrier and Dufranne, have been brought to this country and will appear at the Manhattan. The scenery, it is promised, will be an exact reproduction of that used in the French representations. There are five acts and twelve tableaux, and it is said that the music is of so strange a character as to defy immediate comprehension.

The story is long and complicated and cannot be told in detail here. The substance of it is a version of the old tragedy of a young girl married to an old man and unconsciously falling in love with his younger brother. It is a repetition of the story of Paolo and Francesca, but told with the strange mystery and weird details of Maeterlinck. Walter Damrosch has delivered lectures on the opera and is to deliver another on Tuesday. Lawrence Gilman has published a book about it, a handbook explaining the story and the musical themes.

The house is practically sold out for the first performance and Mr. Hammerstein has received numerous letters from persons in other cities asking to have places reserved for them for later representations. Probably "Pelléas et Mélisande" will be one of the sensations of the operatic season.

NOTES OF MUSIC EVENTS.

The programme for the coming week at the Manhattan Opera House is as follows: Monday, "Rigoletto" with Mme. Tetrazzini as *Gilda;* Wednesday, first performance in America of Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande" with Mary Garden, Gerville-Réache, Perrier, Dufranne, Arimondi and Crabbe; Friday, "Lucia" with Mme. Tetrazzini in the title rôle; Saturday afternoon, first repetition of "Pelléas et Mélisande," and Saturday night, Giordano's "Siberia" with Agostinelli, Sammarco, Zenatello and Crabbe.

The announcements for the coming week at the Metropolitan Opera House are as follows: Monday night, "Manon Lescaut," Mme. Cavalieri, Mr. Caruso and Mr. Scotti; Wednesday, "Siegfried," Mme. Fremstad, Mr. Burgstaller, Mr. Reiss and Mr. Van Rooy; Thursday, "Faust," Mme. Eames, Mr. Caruso, Mr. Plançon; Friday, "Hänsel und Gretel" and "Pagliacci" with the casts usually heard in these operas; Saturday afternoon, "Tannhäuser," and Saturday night, "La Bohème."

The next Boston Symphony Orchestra concerts will take place on Thursday evening and Saturday afternoon at Carnegie Hall. On Thursday night Fritz Kreisler will play Beethoven's violin concerto, and the orchestral novelty will be Max Reger's variations and fugue on a theme of Hiller's. Saturday afternoon Anton Van Rooy will sing, and another orchestral novelty, Chadwick's "Symphonic Sketches," will be performed.

The next People's Symphony Concerts will be given at Cooper Union on February 20 and Carnegie Hall the following evening. The programme will include Beethoven's seventh symphony and two movements from MacDowell's "Indian Suite."

Katharine Goodson's only New York recital will be given at Mendelssohn Hall on Monday afternoon. The programme is divided into three parts, the first consisting of Mozart, Brahms and Schubert compositions, the second Schumann's Papillons and four studies by Chopin, and the third selections by Strauss, Sauer, Hinton, Holbrooke and Liszt.

The second concert of the Flonzaley Quartet will take place in Mendelssohn Hall Saturday evening, February 22. The programme, in addition to the E flat major quartet, op. 51, by Dvorak and Schumann's quartet in A major, op. 41, No. 3, will contain a number unknown to American audiences and whose decided interest calls for a few words of explanation. The composition is a sonata for two violins and 'cello by Giuseppe San Martini, which was recently found in London by Mr. Betti, the first violinist of the quartet. Giuseppe San Martini, who spent the greater part of his life in London, must not be confused with Padre Martini of Bologna. He was born in Milan and died in 1750 after having been court musician to the Prince of Wales.

The last of Sam Franko's concerts of old music this season will be given Wednesday evening, March 4, at Mendelssohn Hall. For the first time, an entire programme will consist of the works of one composer, and, appropriately enough this composer is Bach. An opportunity will thus be provided to introduce to the public the new Bach Society, the chorus of which has been in training under Mr. Franko's direction throughout the autumn and winter. They will sing the Cantata No. 6, "Bide With Us," and the Reformation Cantata No. 79, "The Lord is a Sun and Shield." The orchestra will play the C major suite in a new arrangement by Weingartner, and the concert-masters, Messrs. Henry P. Schmitt and John Spargur, will perform the double concerto for two violins with orchestra.

A new departure in the realm of chamber music is recorded in the announcement of three Sonata recitals to be given by Mr. and Mrs. David Mannes on Sunday evenings, March 8, March 22, and April 5, in the Stuyvesant Theatre.

Walter Damrosch's third explanatory lecture recital at the piano on the Debussy-Maeterlinck music drama "Pelléas and Mélisande," which he will deliver at the Lyceum Theatre at 5 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, will come most pertinently and opportunely. The following evening the opera will be produced for the first time in America at the Manhattan Opera House.

The annual Wagner concert of the New York Symphony Society, under the direction of Walter Damrosch, is announced for next Saturday evening, February 22, at Carnegie Hall, with the usual repetition on Sunday afternoon. The feature of the programme will be the appearance of Mme. Nordica as soloist. Among other numbers, she will sing Isolde's "Lament Over Tristan's Body" and the "Liebestod." This will be Mme. Nordica's first concert appearance of the season. For performance by the orchestra Mr. Damrosch has selected three early overtures of Wagner, one of them a distinct novelty. They are: An overture to "Christopher Columbus," to be played for the first time in America; overture to "Rienzi" and overture to "Tannhäuser." This afternoon the Symphony Society repeats its performance of the melodious Tschaikowsky opera, "Eugène Onégin," with Mr. Emilio de Gogorza in the title rôle.

HER INITIATION.

Explanation of a Blindfolded Young Woman in a Harlem Street.

"Now go ahead."

So said one young woman to another whom the speaker had just blindfolded, all this happening in the daytime in West 125th street.

The blindfolded young woman was tall and the clothes she wore were not very fine, a lanky sort of a long skirt and a three-quarter coat and a slouchy sort of felt hat drooping at the sides. She wore also, visible under the open coat, a white apron with a ruffle around it, and in her left hand she carried a blue and white enamelled basin and a wooden spoon, while pinned or sewed on the back of her coat was a piece of paper six or eight inches square on which were inscribed three Greek letters.

The tall young woman was escorted by a party of half a dozen young women, and when as they passed west along 125th street they had all reached a point just west of Lenox avenue she was halted, and it was then that one of the escorting party tied the bandage around her eyes and bade her go ahead.

Apparently the young women attending her were initiating the tall young woman into some college secret society.

Old Railway Track Found in River Bed.

From the Philadelphia Record.

A half mile of ties and railroad iron have recently been discovered in the Allegheny River between Oil City and Franklin. The rails show the trademark "B. B. I. C.," indicating that they were turned out by the Brany's Bend Iron Company, the first to manufacture iron for railroads west of the Alleghany Mountains. As the Franklin branch of the former Atlantic and Great Western, now the Erie Railroad, and the Franklin and Jamestown branch of the Lake Shore Railroad originally followed the banks of the river closely it would be probably a difficult matter to determine which of these roads lost a section of their line years ago by a landslide. The Brady's Bend Iron Company has been out of business for nearly or quite forty years.

NOTES OF MUSIC IN EUROPE

A NEW TENOR DISCOVERED IN A GERMAN BAKERY.

Marcia Van Dresser Engaged to Sing at Dessau—"Louise" to Have Another Trial in Berlin—New Manager for the Famous Opera House at Brussels.

A new dramatic soprano, who promises to follow in the path of her famous teacher, has just been discovered in Berlin. She is a pupil of Lilli Lehmann, by name Melanie Curt. Her first appearance was made at the Royal Opera House in Berlin and she was immediately engaged for a period of five years, although her contract is not to begin for another season. She has been singing in Brunswick.

Cosima Wagner, after celebrating her seventieth birthday at Bayreuth, has gone to Italy with her daughter Eva—a namesake of Eva Pogner—and will remain at Rapallo until spring.

Heinrich Boetl, who has just celebrated the first quarter of a century of his stage career, used to be a cab driver. Now a new tenor has been discovered in the kitchen of a Berlin bakery. Director Gegory of the Komische Oper in Berlin heard of his gift and invited him to sing before some experts. They pronounced his voice beautiful in quality and of great compass and he is to be trained in Berlin for the stage.

Eugen d'Albert's opera "The Lowlands" has been the most successful work sung in Germany in years. It has just reached its fiftieth performance at the Komische Oper in Berlin and seems likely to remain popular for months to come.

The beautiful Marcia van Dresser, who began her operatic career as one of the flower maidens in "Parsifal," has just been engaged as lyric soprano for the opera house at Dessau, after having appeared there with great success as *Elsa* and *Elisabeth.* She has also been singing in Dresden.

French singers rarely appear in German cities, as all the opera houses there have the rule that performances cannot be given in mixed languages and few of the French singers know any other tongue. Albert Alvarez recently proved an exception to this rule by going to Mainz to sing *Jean de Leyde* in "Le Prophète," which was of course performed in German.

"Louise," which had one previous trial in Berlin, has just been sung at the Komische Oper after an interval of five years from the date of its first performance. It was produced at the Royal Opera House and after a few performances disappeared from the répertoire. Now it has been given at the Komische Oper and it is expected that in the smaller theatre it will enjoy greater prosperity. The production at the Royal Opera was made almost immediately after the original performance in Paris. It was sung in German on both occasions although the present performance has the advantage of an Italian conductor who was brought from Italy to direct "Tosca" and other Italian works. He is Egisto Tango, who was here as a young man to conduct a season begun at the Academy of Music by Col. Mapleson in 1896. At that time he was only 22.

Anton Erl, who has been for more than thirty-three years a member of the company at the Roya Opera House in Dresden, has just celebrated his sixtieth birthday. He was for many years one of the most popular singers of French and Italian music, and no tenor had a greater vogue as *Faust* and *Romeo* in the Gounod operas.

Ferrucio Busoni, who is yearly devoting himself more and more to composition, has finished a ballet to be called "The Man in the Bottle," which will soon be performed in Munich. During his years of control at Vienna Gustav Mahler had very little interest in the ballet, using it merely as an incidental feature of the operas. This did not make him popular with its members, who were delighted to hear that Felix Weingartner intended to devote more attention to this department. They worked enthusiastically at a ballet called "The Award of Paris," which Gustav Mahler had once put into rehearsal and then dropped. But in spite of their assistance Weingartner also lost confidence in the work, and the ballet is again disheartened because he has also put the piece aside.

Francesco d'Andrade, who was for years one of the most popular performers of *Don Giovanni* in Germany, has now entered a new field with great success. He recently gave in Berlin a recital of German lieder. He is a Portuguese and has always sung hitherto in Italian. His other great rôles were *Rigoletto* and *Figaro* in "Il Barbiere di Siviglia."

The Metropolitan is not the only opera house soon to have a change of direction. The Théâtre de la Monnaie of Brussels, one of the foremost opera houses in the world, will no longer be under the control of Kufferath after this year. The theatre has not made money under its present manager, although the artistic level has been high. Messager's "Fortunio," just sung there, has been a complete failure. More successful was a ballet called "The Land of the Grasshoppers," composed by a young musician who lives in that region.

Francesco Guardabassi, who is well known here, where he sang at the Metropolitan and in many private houses, has made his début as a tenor singing in "L'Africaine" at Nice. Under the direction of Jean de Reszke, who regarded him as his best pupil, Guardabassi has for three years been engaged in the task of making his voice a tenor. Jean de Reszke, who has been working with him daily during nine months of the year, predicted that his pupil's career would be equal to his own. Guardabassi, who was singing *Vasco di Gama,* was christened *Fiasco di Gama* before the second act was finished, and was so voiceless after the first act that he was scarcely able to end the opera. Another De Reszke pupil is Wilhelm Thorner, who is known here. He was at one time private secretary to Edouard de Reszke. He will soon make his début in opera.

The performances of the new operatic version of "Cavalleria Rusticana" have been forbidden in Italy, as Sonzogno owns the copyright to the use of Verga's text there. But the work is making its way in other countries. It has just been performed in two of the large German cities.

Jacques Bizet, son of the composer, and Henri Cain have just completed the libretto of an opera founded on Hoffmann's "Kufner von Nürnberg," which will be a kind of "Meistersinger." The score will be composed by a prominent French musician. Georges Bizet in 1859, at the age of 20, thought of using the same text, and the suggestion for the present work was found in three letters of the composer written to his mother bewailing his inability to find a capable librettist.

The new director of the Royal Opera in Stockholm is a merchant who has long been looked upon as one of the most eminent business men of Sweden. He knows nothing of music, and was selected by the Minister of the Interior on account of his business talents.

A CHAUFFEUR'S DEVICE.

Plan to Make It Easy to Start a Car in a Snowy Street.

Many chauffeurs have trouble in the snowy days when they are waiting with heavy cars outside the houses of their employers. The cars get fixed in the snow so that the wheels won't turn.

Sometimes it takes half an hour to get pried out of the snow. Anyway the wheels won't catch well.

There was a chauffeur in an uptown street who had a good idea recently. So when he was told to wait he backed his car so that it was at a slight angle to the sidewalk.

He ran one wheel up on the sidewalk a bit and the other he braced against the curb. When after an hour's wait he was ready to go, all he had to do was to crank up and start the car. It came nicely away, just as if it were a calm day in June.

"OTELLO" ALMOST HISSED.

Last Performance of Verdi's Opera in Rome a Failure.

ROME, Feb. 2.—The revival of Verdi's opera "Otello" at the Costanzi Theatre in Rome has recalled many anecdotes and episodes of the composer's life.

Before it was set to music the play was practically unknown in Italy. This was probably due to the fact that it is lacking in tender sentiments and hence it did not appeal to the Italian public, used to witness episodes of love on the stage.

Verdi, who knew the Italian taste thoroughly and had already set to music "Macbeth," realized what a powerful auxiliary love is to a musical composer and the many difficulties there are to surmount without it. Nevertheless, at the age of 74 he started on his work.

For sixteen long years after composing "Aïda" he lived in voluntary exile and solitude in his villa of Sant' Agata, centring his interest in his garden and horses. The true reason why he was prompted to compose an opera at a time when the strings of his lyre were supposed to have been snapped forever and when old age was supposed to have exhausted his musical genius has never been known. It is said that he may have been influenced by the fact that another Italian composer, Boito, visited him and spoke of his intention of setting to music Shakespeare's play.

Verdi may have then thought of attempting the same work himself. The plot of the tragedy very likely appealed to his artistic sense, and this added to his admiration for Shakespeare may have led him to interrupt his rest and begin the composition of his last opera.

He gave no hint of his intention of writing an opera to any one, not even to his most intimate friends. But on January 1, 1885, he sent, as was his custom, a cake to his musical editor, Signor Ricordi, who on cutting it discovered a half open sugar egg in which a miniature baby Moor was to be seen.

Signor Ricordi did not connect the Moor with the opera that the maestro was engaged in composing. The following year he received the same gift, only this time the Moor was a lad instead of a baby. Finally in 1887 the Moor had grown to manhood and Signor Verdi notified his publisher that the new opera was ready.

The libretto of "Otello" was quite unlike any other that Verdi had set to music. It was not, as Wagner used to say, a field over which the composer could freely exercise his musical talent. Hence the music had to be written specially in such a way as to form a whole with the work of the dramatist, to complete it as it were, and clothe it in melody.

Verdi succeeded so well in doing this that his "Otello" is considered a masterpiece of Italian music. It was produced for the first time at the Scala of Milan with Tamagno and Maurel in the cast. It provoked enthusiasm bordering on frenzy.

Fully four thousand persons assisted at the first performance, many of whom waited for eight hours outside to get a place in the upper galleries. After each act the maestro was cheered again and again by the whole audience with repeated cries of "Viva Verdi!"

When the opera was over the old composer was carried in triumph to his house by the crowds waiting outside, who removed the horses from his carriage and took their places. Still the triumph of Milan, although so great, did not assure a long series of victories to "Otello" on the Italian stage. This perhaps was due to the fact that a great deal of the public's enthusiasm was roused not by the music but by the powerful vocal powers of Tamagno and the finished art and extraordinary efficacy of Maurel. In fact after the first representation the prevailing conviction was that it would not be possible to hear a *Jago* as interpreted by Maurel or an *Otello* equal to Tamagno.

Still, with the passing of time the music of "Otello" began to be appreciated for itself alone. In Rome, owing to the difficulty of finding artists of sufficient vocal power to undertake the interpretation of "Otello," this opera has only been given on three occasions. Unfortunately the last representation in Rome has proved an utter failure, and but for the ability of the leader of the orchestra, Maestro Leopoldo Mugnoni, who was compelled to supply the deficiencies of the singers, the opera would have been hissed off the stage.

GRUB RACING AS A SPORT.

The Speed of Selected Worms as a Subject for Wagers in London.

The crusade against gambling on the racetracks was being discussed, when the proposition from a casual racegoer that the sports would have to train cockroaches to race brought forth the statement from an Englishman:

"That would be nothing new. When I was a young fellow in an office in London there was a regular sport of grub racing and nearly every clerk had his stable of racers.

"These worms were bred in nuts or apples and carefully stabled between two walnut shells. They were selected by placing them in the centre of a piece of paper and the ones that proved most adept in making a speedy beeline to the edge of the paper were matched against the pick of a rival stable.

"Some of the fastest could not be induced to travel in a straight line. In racing parlance they bolted and were bad betting propositions. But when two came together that showed a disposition to run straight and true the betting on the result was lively enough to stir up the anti-gambling enthusiasts.

"I read lately that John W. Gates won a big bet on which drop of water would be the first to slide down the pane of glass on a car window, but he had to wait for the rain to get a bet down while we always had some of our crack grubs in condition to race."

BERTILLON ON FRANCE'S WEALTH

Savings for Old Age Pretty General, but Very Small—Population.

Dr. Jaques Bertillon, the statistician, has just issued an official report as head of the Statistical Bureau of the French Government on the division of wealth throughout the population. Three-fourths of all the people in France over 50 years of age possess savings, but in the great majority of cases the amount is trivial, the average for the whole number being about $400.

Of 770,000 persons who died in 1905, the last year for which the figures are compiled, only 1,343 persons left an estate of $100,000 or over; 6,257 left property ranging from that figure down to $10,000, and 7,000 left from $10,000 down to $2,000. There were 326,000 others who left estates of smaller amount. The 430,000 who left nothing were mainly women and children.

Dr. Bertillon discusses in the report the change for the worse that has taken place in the influence which France wields financially and economically. He does not think it is due to any actual impoverishment of the country. But a hundred years ago France had within her boundaries 27 per cent. of the population of Europe, while to-day she has only 11 per cent. It is not the fertility of the soil nor the excellence of industrial products that counts, he says. It is the number of men laboring in a country that gives it economic and intellectual power.

Danger in Cigar Cutters.

From the Medical Record.

The German health officials are considering abolishing the devices for cutting off the ends of cigars that form a familiar part of the equipment of tobacco shops. It is alleged that many smokers make use of the instrument after having already placed the cigar in their mouths and therefore render possible the transfer of germs to other smokers.

RAID ON THE NOODLE SOUP.

Showing That the Civil War Was Not All Grim, but Had Its Comedy.

Some of the incidents in a war play now running in New York suggested to a civilian of the present generation that the playwright of to-day takes a whole lot of license. A veteran with an empty sleeve took issue with him.

"The incidents you mention," he said to the young man, "may not have occurred as here presented. But the struggle had its comedy situations. It was not all grim, and it was a good thing it wasn't.

"There wasn't much time in the closing days of the war for farcical incidents, but while the masters of the great trouble were formulating plans Falstaffs were plentiful in remote places. One of these whom I knew had got up to the title of Major. He was a German.

"His battalion consisted of the rawest lot of recruits that ever huddled under one command. The aggregation was mounted. It was assigned to a post in close proximity to a settlement of bushwhackers.

"These were not the bushwhackers of later days. They were for the most part young men who were banded together awaiting an opportunity of getting to the front. Pending that soldiering with them was a frolic.

"The big German Major took his part with all the seriousness of a division commander on the eve of battle. Once a week, sometimes oftener, the Major sent hurry orders for the recruits to ration up for a two days scout and then took them out solemnly into the country.

"As often as the column went out on scout did it return, a day or two later, usually splashed with the mud of the country roads, the horses looking jaded and uncurried. If they ever brought back a prisoner that fact was kept concealed by the Major.

"On one of these scouts the column had an experience that was not down in the Major's tactics. The bushwhackers, who always knew of the coming of the column and scattered, concluded to give him a surprise.

"The column had halted at the end of its first day's ride and was bivouacking in a corn field. The camp fires had been lighted and the air was redolent with the odor of noodle soup. The bugles had sounded for the serving of rations. Even the pickets had come into camp for grub.

"Without warning the bushwhackers rose up out of the fodder shocks and the fence corners; with one combined rush they swept down upon Major Joseph's soup line and captured it. The Colonel of the bushwhackers, a former school teacher, and his staff appeared simultaneously, as the Major reported it to his superior officer, before the Major's shack and demanded his rations.

"The Colonel saluted the Major and begged his pardon for the intrusion. He said he and his men had not come to fight, but they were almighty hungry, and the odor of the noodle soup had made them furious.

"If permitted to have their fill they would retire in good order and the Major could do likewise. If the Major wanted fight, he could have it, but they were not there with any hostile intentions, other than those mentioned.

"The Major was virtually a prisoner. He submitted gracefully and asked the Colonel and his staff to be his guests as long as the grub held out. The Colonel regretted to say that he and his staff would need all there was, and as the Major could go back to town and get more they would have to sweep the board.

"They devoured every morsel. When the repast was finished the Colonel's eye fell upon the Major's spyglass; he allowed that as the Government had plenty on hand and the article was scarce in the Confederacy he would have to take it. The Major removed the field glass from his uniform and handed it over.

"The Major was then politely requested to send word to his men in camp that they were to allow the visitors to depart in peace. This was done, and the bushwhackers scattered as only bushwhackers knew how to do.

"Major Joseph broke camp that night and returned to the city before daybreak. It was his last scouting expedition from that post. He was ordered to the front soon after, and I believe, under the watchful eye of his superior officer, who was an old West Pointer, he did some creditable fighting until he was mustered out.

"The story of the bushwhackers' raid on Major Joseph's noodle soup got to the headquarters of many commanding officers, but I do not think it ever had general circulation."

SHOULD SHE HAVE MOVED?

Facts About a Young Woman's Change of Seats in an Elevated Car.

In this car all the seats were occupied and there was quite a bunch of passengers standing up. Among the passengers sitting were two young women seated next each other in side seats, while among those standing was a young man who was accompanying one of the two women.

Gradually the standees in this end of the car thinned out, and presently a passenger who had been sitting on the other side of the car directly opposite the unaccompanied young woman of the two described got up and went out.

Then the unaccompanied young woman rose and changed her seat to the vacant seat opposite, so that the young man might sit beside the other young woman, and she did this perfectly quietly and unostentatiously, the young man acknowledging her kindness by quietly removing his hat.

Now to one man observer at least this act of the young woman who moved seemed like an act of kindness and graciousness, though he felt also in some way that he couldn't figure out exactly to his own satisfaction that still she ought not to have moved; and so, later, this man asked a young woman of his acquaintance what she thought about it.

She said that certainly the young woman ought not to have moved; that she should have kept her seat where she was and let the young man remain standing, or let him take that vacated seat opposite; that while men are required on all occasions to show every politeness to women, and in cars or elsewhere it would be their duty to change their seats to permit a man to sit beside a woman, yet it was not required of women in such circumstances that they do likewise for the accommodation of men.

An older woman to whom the case was presented said she thought that what the young woman in the car did was all right; that in fact she herself in circumstances not just like these but of the same nature had in an elevated car changed her seat to give place to a man. She had never got up and walked to another seat on the opposite side of the car, but when somebody sitting next to her on one side had left his seat she had moved into that so that a man who had been standing in front of the woman sitting next to her on the other and whom he was accompanying could sit down beside her.

So this older woman thought the action of the young woman in the car was all right.

The Chinese Tael.

From the Journal of the American Asiatic Association.

The tael one speaks about so glibly is not a coin nor is it uniform in weight, touch or value, and in carrying on trade between one end of China and the other as many as ten different exchange transactions may have to be effected.

Had each province its own tael of a fixed value there would be some gleam of light, but it has many kinds of taels, and even in one part of a province there may be half a dozen or more taels of different values current side by side. Pekin, for example, has seven and Tientsin nine different taels, all equally current.

This lack of uniformity is a great drag on trade, whether foreign or native, but it is a source of profit to the thousands of native exchange banks scattered throughout the Empire, which may be relied upon to resist to the last any innovation likely to curtail their gains.

PERCY MACKAYE ON THEATRE

"THE LAW OF DRAMATIC DETERIORATION."

Playwright Pleads for the Judgment of His Peers for the Dramatist as Well as for the Painter—His Argument Leads To Dream of an Endowed Theatre.

Percy Mackaye lectured at the Hudson Theatre yesterday morning before the League for Political Education on "The Playhouse and the Play," pointing out the causes of the present low state of dramatic art in America, which he finds not in any one set of managers but in the conditions of the times, and suggesting as a remedy some form of endowment that would enable the dramatist, like the artist or sculptor, to do his best, not his worst or "middling best."

Significant parts of the lecture follow:

What, then, in general, does the public demand from a theatrical production? In one word, diversion—diversion by some kind of stimulation. Roughly speaking, human nature is susceptible of three kinds of stimulation—intellectual, æsthetic, emotional.

The appeal of the first is to the intellect alone; of the second, to the intellect and the senses combined; of the third, to the senses alone. Now, the drama is an art whose function is to convey an intellectual appeal by means of an appeal to the senses. Which of these three kinds of stimulation, then, will ideally be best adapted for the drama to excite? Clearly not the first, which appeals to the intellect alone; nor the third, which appeals to the senses alone; but the second, which appeals to both combined. Æsthetic stimulation, then, is ideally adapted for the drama to excite. It is, therefore, the rational aim of dramatic art. But is it adapted to the greatest public demand?

Of these three kinds of stimulation which kind is most strongly, permanently, universally desired?

Psychology predicts and experience proves, that of these three the kind which most strongly, most permanently, most universally is desired is the third—emotional stimulation; and the kind which is least strongly, least permanently, least universally desired is the first—intellectual stimulation.

The reasonable policy of the manager, therefore, is clear. As a sound business man, it becomes his policy to provide the least possible amount of the first kind of stimulation and the greatest possible amount of the third kind. The second kind—æsthetic stimulation—he may reasonably ignore altogether as a superfluous combination. Thus it becomes the rational aim of theatrical enterprise to ignore the rational aim of dramatic art. Moreover, in order to be a wise and enterprising business man, the manager must, by judicious advertisement and the organization of his business, endeavor to increase and deepen the demand for emotional stimulation and to lessen and nullify the demand for intellectual stimulation.

Thus modern theatrical business is based broadly and firmly in human psychology on the law of increasing emotional and decreasing intellectual demand, a law which is accelerated by the night weariness of our strenuous modern days. This law I shall name the law of dramatic deterioration.

The general course and effects of this law, or tendency, though evident in any given theatrical season, are better traceable over a space of years and by comparison with conditions in other lands. Originally in America, when actors themselves were frequently both business men and artists, taking the financial risk but revelling in the æsthetics of "the profession," the motive of theatrical production was usually based more in the art and life of acting than in the box office. The law of dramatic deterioration, then, was frequently counte