HAMMERSTEIN TELLS ABOUT IT

GRAND OPERA AND THE IDEAS THAT WON'T LET HIM SLEEP.

Midnight Thoughts Materialized Into Patents—Also Into an Opera House—Also in the Philosophy of Middle Life—Methods Behind the Scene—Satisfied With His Success? Not Yet—Opera for the Common People Is Still to Come.

If a sense of humor is a necessary qualification to greatness, then any detractors of Oscar Hammerstein had better hereafter hold their peace, for this last touch of froth on the omelet soufflé of success is certainly his.

He proves it in the beginning of the interview by leading the way solemnly via the elevator and an awed lift boy to his big room upstairs in the Manhattan Opera House where he can talk unmolested. He has had a sleeping room, bath and dressing room arranged in connection with this room, but has never courted the wary goddess there, preferring to bunk up at the Victoria, where there is a tiny berth in which he can hear the roosters on the Hammerstein roof garden crowing in the early dawn.

He hands the interviewer for THE SUN a yellow tinted pencil with which he has just put the last touches on his latest waltz, yclept "Louise," and then points proudly to the parallel rows of chairs on either side of the long centre table, which he speaks of with an expansive gesture, as the seats of the directors.

"Directors?" is interpolated at this point. "Why——" Is it possible that after all the great Oscar has been deceiving the public and that like Andrew Lang he is not a single man, nor a married, but a syndicate?

"Yes, the directors' seats. When there is a meeting I sit in them each in turn and I take a director's fee with each one.

"Sometimes it occurs to me that perhaps it is about time there should be a stormy meeting, that things are going along just a little bit too smoothly, and when that happens I choose a rainy day and then open the windows and let the wind and storm howl through. I get all the satisfaction in that way that I could possibly enjoy if I was the scapegoat for a whole body of men.

"Speaking of directors, I've been wondering since one of the last bits of operatic gossip has been circulated how my friend Mr. Dippel is going to substitute for himself when he gets to be director. I suppose he'll have to; he's substituted for everybody else, and when he's rehearsing for some one who has dropped out of the cast and there is a directors' meeting called at the same time and the request is made to him that he kindly go up stairs and substitute for himself, you get quite tangled up thinking about it, don't you?"

There is no sarcasm in the remark. How could there be with that imperturbable face and chuckling voice?

"Seriously, it has been a great undertaking. I am not underestimating my career at the Manhattan Opera House in saying that I have done what no one else in the world has ever attempted successfully.

"I have fought single handed against an array of capital that is not equalled by any city that boasts an operatic season. I have competed with a system that has been in existence twenty-five years.

"Even if I had wanted to range Astors, Vanderbilts, Goelets, Goulds on my side I could not have done it, for they had all been bespoken, but I did not want them. I wanted to stand alone, and fortunately I have been provided with a good physical equipment including broad shoulders.

"Lord, I've needed them! There have been moments when I could have used an extra yard or so on either side and not have known that I was overweighted. Yes, quite a few of those moments!

"And if it had been money, just money, that I was after it would all have been different, and easier too. If I had put one-quarter of the enthusiasm and energy and ambition into any business whose only emolument was the accumulation of a fat bank account I'd have made so much money that I wouldn't have known what to do with it.

"Money? Why, the air's full of it! All you've got to do is to think it into your pockets and it's there. You can accomplish more with one good idea than with years of plodding work, but be sure you get the idea before the other fellow does, otherwise it's a mighty good plan to stick to the hard work, which you may be pretty sure the other fellow won't take away from you.

"I've had the ideas, but I've worked harder just getting them than most men do in the course of a whole lifetime, to say nothing of putting them into execution. I have guarded my health zealously. I live a life of incredible simplicity. I never drink, and I smoke only twenty-five cigars a day.

"Don't think in telling you this that I am boasting of my qualifications for a proscenium box up above, for I have no immediate desire to leave my life of usefulness here to go to a heaven where there is sure to be a chorus which I have not selected, like as not with wings too.

"Notwithstanding this simple life I cannot sleep, not as people ordinarily do—put their head on the pillow and away for eight or nine hours at a stretch. That is one of the joys of mediocrity, one that I have never experienced.

"Four hours a night is my limit, and as soon as I turn off the light my brain begins to teem with a thousand million ideas which obsess me. When daylight comes I rise and begin to work on some of them, work, work, work, until I find out whether the midnight suggestion that will not be crushed into nothingness has any elements in it of worthwhileness.

"Perhaps you did not know that many of these midnight thoughts are materialized in the form of patents. I have taken out 107 patents, many of which are very successful. The most lucrative is the cigar rolling machine, the basic model for which was my invention and on which I still have patent rights.

"Anything for the theatre? Well, there was that wonderful invention of mine for showing oil paintings on a screen in their original colors. It would have turned out beautifully if it hadn't been that the heat necessary to make it work was so great that it melted the oil.

"I have written four operas—music, librettos, everything. Since Commissioner Bingham came into office I have stopped. Has he heard them? Well, I have stopped. There is no earthly reason why one should run in opposition with the authorities if he can avoid it.

"I studied music in my youth and perfected myself on three instruments—piano, flute, violin. Naturally my tastes led me to the undertaking which I have finally accomplished, and which, through all my theatrical ventures, was the one great thing I had in mind. In twenty-three years I attempted four times to put on grand opera for the New York public.

"I have had hardships, disappointments, sad, weary, heartrending times, and the best that I have gained out of it is not the satisfaction of ambition realized—one never has that; in the nature of things it is an impossibility—no, not that at all, but the philosophic attitude that comes to a man who has fought such a bitter fight, reached middle age and knows that nothing that comes to him can hurt him in the least, can make him either glad or sorry.

"When a man has reached that age and has provided for those who belong to him, his family, so to speak—queer word, isn't it? and queer thing, too—then he has no responsibility except to himself, and such a man who thinks only of making money is beyond my comprehension. Can he take it away with him? Can I look at this pile of bricks without realizing in the best moments that come to a man that I cannot pack it away in that little narrow box that is going to hold me some day; and so, knowing that, can I do otherwise than believe that it is a trust to do something for the future so that the good I do may live after me?

"When I said that a man finally reaches a time of life when nothing can hurt him if he has acquired philosophy I forgot one thing. I will retract the general statement for the one instance. He can be hurt by the approach of old age.

"When I hear people call me 'the old man' I can't describe to you how I feel—the old man, the term each one of us has got to hear some time. And we men, who are all of us so much vainer than women in reality, how it hurts us!

"When a man gets to be 50 he is just beginning to live, just beginning to enjoy the fruits of his labors, and then Age, the thief, steals upon you so imperceptibly. You used to have rosy cheeks. You think they are still rosy, and some morning you look in the glass and find that the rose has turned to yellow.

"There are horrible bags under the eyes, and what was once a dimple is now a frightful cavity. Personally, I would like to live to be 100, and I would be willing to work all that time, but—well, I've got a good many years coming to me still. How do I know? Because my work isn't done yet.

"I am not satisfied then? Satisfied? Why should I be? Success is a spectre which does not chain you to a spot, but dogs your restless feet on and on and on.

"Every thought created breeds another. People say to you how wonderfully you have advanced, but by your side is the ideal of what you hoped to do, which has little real resemblance to what you have accomplished.

"Satisfied for the moment, you are dissatisfied the next, and you don't know why. You wish it were otherwise, but it is not. You grow with your ideas and you can't help it, because you and it are all parts of some wonderful scheme of things whose secret you have not unravelled.

"That is why successful men make such bad husbands, not bad necessarily, but neglectful, indifferent, selfish. They are self-absorbed, self-centred, and the thousand details of family life are impossible to them. People hound them to their homes; and if they do not, ideas do, and they are just as subversive to family peace as the presence of a human intruder.

"When I commenced to give grand opera to the New York public it had come to be looked at as an antique form of entertainment, given at a place which I believe used to exist at—where was it?—oh, yes, Fortieth street and Broadway. It is a place with which I had slight, very slight friction when it really existed. Now that it does not, don't let's talk about it.

"Grand opera is really only in its infancy. I expect to live to see the time when every city of considerable size in the United States will have an opera house of its own, where they will have the best singers and the best operas to be procured. To-morrow I expect a delegation here from Denver, who are coming to New York especially to ask my opinions regarding some project of that kind on foot. I know any suggestion regarding grand opera that any one will make to Boston will receive grateful attention.

"I believe that these opera houses should be built with some regard to the needs and desires of the common people. When Mozart, Glück, many other composers wrote operas, they wrote in the firm belief that they would only be listened to by the wealthy, cultured classes.

"The Governments that subsidize most of the opera houses in Europe certainly had that idea, and the spirit of decay that was attacking grand opera in New York was partly due to the faulty construction of an opera house which took too much note of showy architecture and too little of the comfort of the great mass of people who should be considered.

"Take these European opera houses, with their showy façades, and inside tier after tier of boxes, each designed to hold four people, who are supposed in a majority of cases to wear their eyes in the side of their faces, certainly not where nature put them. Then the common people are shoved up into some lofty gallery.

"Even a moderate income will not help matters when the best places in a house are secured season after season by the class who have been allowed to believe that grand opera is something on which they have an exclusive claim. The houses built for the production of grand opera in the past have not taken into account any but this one patronage.

"That is why, little by little, those who have had their fingers on the pulse of public feeling have noticed a gradual decline in its popularity. I believe that the opera houses of the future will not be mere architectural abortions; they will have less show and more merit. In them a consideration for the clientele of the common people will be manifested.

"It is the belief of mine that all classes should receive an equal amount of consideration that has been one of the elements of my success. I am devoted to the interests of every one who is connected with me even in the lowest capacity, and in return I get their devotion. The one condition is a sure result of the other.

"Since the night that the Manhattan Opera House was first thrown open to the public I have never witnessed a performance either from the auditorium or a box. If you should want to find me any time you won't find me there, but in back, in the rush of things, among my people—if you like to call them my people. I think that is the place for a director if he wants to keep in touch with the working order of things.

"I have never missed a performance there, but I flatter myself, perhaps unduly, that I am not obtrusive. I do not go about speaking loudly. I do not try in an offensive manner to pump my ideas into anybody else's head.

"If you have ever tried to do that you will agree with me that it is an undertaking only to be approached after fasting and prayer, not strenuously. I have exerted a great influence, but it has been a subtle one. The man who carries a piece of scenery from one part of the stage to the other, the chorus girl, the conductor, all and each I have tried, by the quiet force of example, to make feel the spirit of the performance.

"And I have succeeded. The nights we have given 'The Cobbler and the Fairy,' that old fashioned, rollicking comedy, everybody has been in a hilarious frame of mind. Jokes and laughter are plentiful. Occasionally you will hear a whistle from one of the workmen. The stage manager is in a good humor; so is the chorus.

"This has a direct relation to the stage performance. Everybody entering so heartily into the spirit of it gives it a go, without which the entire performance might be a flat failure, lacking just that indescribable sparkle that makes for a successful production.

"On the contrary, when 'Pelleas and Melisande' has been given the atmosphere of the wings is entirely changed. There is a feeling of sadness, of gloom. People go about without speaking to each other, sadly, quietly, sombrely.

"There is never a laugh heard even from Miss Garden, who laughs easily. Everybody is in dead earnest. Everybody is absorbed by the tragedy of a thousand details and by the tragedy of the climax of those details.

"I do not want to assume to myself the responsibility of producing that atmosphere, but my presence there in back, always in harmony with the scene to be depicted, certainly has its direct result on the temperaments of the singers. That is what it means to be a leader. That is why a man becomes a director, because he has that inherent power within him to impress his thought on others. He is a keynote.

"I try always to make everybody feel that he or she is directly responsible for the success of the undertaking. I do not detract from anybody's work, nor I do attempt to seize all the laurel wreaths that are waiting to be claimed. I am not waiting poised on one toe for some one to call me out in front of the footlights.

"Only when an exceptional circumstance warrants it do I answer the kindly applause that shows my efforts are appreciated. I make my public acknowledgments when a new opera has been produced, when a star has appeared for the first time.

"I want the other people to have the credit for their work. They deserve it. The conductor of the orchestra, the stage manager, need all the encouragement that they can get. After one of the operas this winter I made the chorus master go out and bow. A great deal of the success of the work was due to him.

"Make others smile and you will smile yourself. Remember that.

"When I heard 'Pelleas and Melisande' the first time in Paris I said to myself, at the end of the second act: 'There is nothing in this to bother about. I am glad to have seen it because the matter is settled. It is mere music, without melody, that is all.' Then with my mind perfectly at rest I sat back and listened to the third act and the fourth.

"Then I was not so sure. I will hear it again, I said. There is certainly a wonderful story there, wonderfully interpreted by the music. I heard it the second time, the third and the fourth.

"By that time I had decided that the New York public was going to have an opportunity to give its opinion. What the opinion would be I had absolutely no idea. You can tell nothing about a New York audience. It will receive you with open arms or a clenched fist, one or the other, which one you cannot tell.

"Of course I received lots of advice on the subject, but any one who offers me advice usually does so at the cost of my friendship. I am perfectly willing to listen to arguments, but not to advice. Success means that you have dared to do something that no one else dared to do; advice means that people are trying to make you walk in the beaten track.

"It was a chance, of course, but when a man has taken the chance of a million dollars worth of contracts for a season and the chances of becoming absolutely bankrupt, the lesser chances are included in the greater.

"Wasn't I the least bit afraid? Afraid? I do not know what fear is any more than I know the meaning of pride. Fear and pride are absolute strangers to me.

"I have trained myself to meet every emergency. I have this fellow Hammerstein under perfect control. There is no circumstance of life in which I would turn and run or stand trembling and uncertain. There is no moment when it would occur to me to throw back my coat, so to speak, stick my thumbs in the armholes of my waistcoat and strut about, pleased with my achievements.

"I have a fundamental belief in the outcome of my inherent ability, but I am not deceived even in that. My private knowledge of myself is quite different from what the public thinks it is.

"Oftentimes I am accused of a lack of dignity. The word dignity has many meanings, according to the standpoint of the interpreter. To one it means a man who walks by himself in the isolation brought about by his own superiority as he sees it and his belief in a knowledge greater than that allowed his poor fellow creatures.

"I have not that kind of dignity. Then, again, it may mean wearing your hair on your shoulders, or eyeglasses and a far-away look. I have none of those aids. The simple man I have always been I am to-day and always shall be, and if simplicity is synonymous with a lack of dignity, then I shall never be dignified, I feel quite convinced.

"When one is engaged in the battle of brains one has but little time to think of one's personal dignity as the public defines it, although his real dignity of mind and soul as he knows it in his solitary communings may be perfectly preserved.

"Success means just that—a battle of brains. There is no such thing as good luck.

"There is no such thing as bad luck.

"We are so constituted that sometimes we think more clearly than at others. Our mental processes are dependent on our physical condition, which sometimes allows us to wander a little from the path of straightforward, clear, pellucid reasoning, and blunders ensue. Then we sit around and talk about our bad luck.

"The laborer who drives a nail into his thumb instead of the board is not a victim of ill luck; he is the victim of his own lack of foresight. The man who makes mistakes does so because he has allowed his grip on his mind to become loosened.

"My next patent will probably be of the psychological order. It is one designed to assist the single weak point in Nature's outfit.

"By an effort of the will you can close your eyelids and shut out the world. You can avoid hearing by stopping up your ears. You can close your mouth and stop talking—at least some people can; but you can't try as hard as you will, you can't stop thinking, and so it behooves all of us to be sure that the thinking process is carried on along the right lines, otherwise comes shipwreck, and when the shipwreck comes don't sit around and say that you've had bad luck.

"You haven't. You've missed the target by your own foolish blundering. You've run on the shoals on account of your inability to steer clearly.

"And if you want to keep your mental powers fairly clear, don't think of yourself all the time. Think of others."

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN.

"JUST THINK MONEY INTO YOUR POCKETS."

"A DIRECTORS' MEETING" AT THE MANHATTAN.

NATIVE DISHES OF ITALY

DIVERSION FOR THE TRAVELLER IN HUNTING FOR THEM.

Not to Be Found in the Tourist Hotels—The Famous Fish Restaurant of Rome—Favorite Dishes of Naples—Tuscan Cooking as It Is Found in Florence.

Few of the passengers who are now crowding the steamers to Italy will make any further acquaintance with the cuisine of the country than the various hotels offer, and that is likely to be very much the same at the North Cape or in Sicily. The traveller who cares to take the trouble to seek the restaurants in which Italians eat will find his effort worth while.

The average Italian voyager at this season of the year makes his acquaintance with the country at Naples. If he has crossed on an Italian ship he has been in the atmosphere of that country during the twelve or fifteen or even sixteen days of the voyage. He has already acquired some education in the peculiarities of Italian food and drink, and there are many chances in favor of his complete capitulation to the delights of both. If it is an English or German steamer that has brought him to Italy, however, the voyage has revealed to him no traits of the country.

There can be no doubt of the excellence of many of the Naples hotels, and their dinner will be up to the average of any offered in Europe. But it will not be Neapolitan. There may be a few Germans at the table. The majority of guests, however, will be English and American. The time has passed when it used to be regarded as an adventure to leave the hotel for dinner, but there are few persons still anxious enough to see all there is of a town to trouble themselves enough to wander into its eating houses. There are many of these in Naples that are well worth investigating.

Most of these places are centred about the Galleria Umberto Primo and the Toledo, which is the principal street of Naples. The most popular of those on the Toledo is the Giardini di Torino, and from 7 o'clock until 10 it is not easy to find a seat there. Although the balconies of the restaurant overlook the Toledo the entrance is on a side street. One walks perhaps twenty feet up the Vico Re Tre, a characteristically dirty Naples thoroughfare, and enters through a rather unsavory court. Up one flight of steps is the restaurant. Adjoining the main entrance, at which the host is always standing to welcome guests, is the kitchen. Through its continually swinging doors one sees a multiplicity of cooks confusedly preparing before a long open stove the dinners ordered by the patrons. Further forward in the rooms overlooking the Toledo are the majority of the tables.

There is no elegance about this place, but the tables are clean and the food excellent. Some of the tables are filled with parties of six or seven who seem to comprise an entire family that has come out to dinner. These and many middle aged couples give the place a look of domesticity, which is not its principal characteristic, however, as there are many tables at which only men are seated. Naturally no man is allowed to keep a table to himself. The tables at which they sit are not supposed to be filled until every place is taken.

The floors are uncarpeted and the walls adorned with nothing more artistic than posters of vermouth and other aperitives. But the food is as good as it is cheap. Few dishes cost more than a lira and a quarter, which is 25 cents, or a lira and half, which is 30. Spring chicken in its various forms is one of the dishes likely to be more expensive. Of course with every dish costing these prices, the diner is not likely to get out under four or five liras. But that is not expensive to have the privilege of eating well in the restaurant that Naples considers its best. One may also have the privilege of feeding the cats for this price. They wander about the restaurant and in spite of the prevailing tendency to stuff them they appear perpetually starved.

If the diner shows the least hesitation as to what he wants to eat the waiter immediately brings out a plate containing specimens of every kind of fish on the menu. Of course they are uncooked. There are always red mullet, the polpi or small octopi or devil fish, served in some of the Italian restaurants here, and usually the classic spigiola, considered the most delicate of all the fishes of the Mediterranean. These are boiled or roasted, and as spigiola is a delicate fish it has none of the strong Italian flavors in its preparation. The sauce is a harmless compound of melted butter, parsley chopped up and slices of lemon. The little octopi, which are such a characteristic feature of the fish market in Naples, are stewed in a species of casserole along with oil, tomatoes, chili and red wine. They must cook for a long time, too, else they will taste more than usually like long strips of tender leather. They are well saturated with the flavor of the sauce as an oiled paper is placed between the pot and the lid so that none of this savory brew escapes into the outer air.

Characteristic of this restaurant and of Naples is the veal cutlet or *entrecote alla Pizzaiola*, which is placed in the oven, covered with potatoes, garlic and thyme and allowed to cook to a degree which in the case of the beef is sometimes too well done for an American palate. *Pizza alla Pizzaiola*, which is in place of an entree, or the truly mysterious *frito misto*, is an unsweetened pudding, served with grated cheese, anchovies and tomatoes stewed with thyme. Cottelet trifolati will appeal to the lover of garlic, for the veal cutlets are highly seasoned with that typical flavor and covered with cèpes or occasionally mushrooms. Another entree of these cèpes and mushrooms is made by putting them into a shallow pan, covering them with cheese and allowing them to cook well, but not dry enough to solidify the cheese and butter melted in the dish. There is a suspicion of garlic in the tomato sauce or stew to be eaten as an accompaniment of this dish.

The *frito misto* in different parts is likely to vary in its details. Naples always includes some of its wonderful tomatoes in the compound and some of the shell fish or *vongole* which come from the bay. They are like little mussels which are picked up in large numbers at low tide on the rocks. They are used to flavor sauces for meats, fish and macaroni, and a soup is made of them. There is, of course, among soups the *minestrone*, which is the vegetable soup that changes least in Italy. The same soup is known in different parts of the country under different names, but *minestrone* retains its title and character in Tuscany as well as in the south.

There are pastries at the Giardini di Torino, although fruit is a popular way of ending the meal. Then there is the most beloved of all Italian desserts in the zabajone, which is a sort of froth of egg and sugar flavored with wine and usually served hot. Marsala is likely to be the flavoring of this wine dish in Naples, although the wine differs in parts of Italy. In Venice, for instance, the wine of Cyprus is used, while in Florence three wines are mixed. Zabajone is nutritious, but it is undoubtedly eggy and excessively sweet to American taste.

The Regina d'Italia is a similar restaurant, which is also situated on the Toledo and differs from the Giardini only in the extent of its popularity and the size of its rooms. The Gambrinus and Bavaria as well as the Pilsner are restaurants devoted to the sale of beer from Germany. They are frequented by Italians, but are in the main much less local in character than the wine restaurants. They often have a certain German character in the cooking as well, and are not to be selected to give the guest the best idea of Neapolitan life. The Restaurant Milanese is devoted to north Italian cooking, which can be best enjoyed in its native place. A typical Italian lunch made up of native dishes is to be had at the Scotto Jono, which seems to live only from the clientele of visitors to the museum and the clerks employed in the vicinity of the Galleria Principe di Napoli, in which it is situated.

Certainly one of the most interesting eating places in Rome is Bucci's, although it is by no means the most elegant or expensive. It is situated in the oldest part of the city, just around from the Pantheon. Bucci might be considered analogous to the old Dorlon establishment that used to be in Fulton market. He is the principal fish dealer of Rome, famous especially for his "zuppa marinara" and other products of fresh and salt water. In the winter months the officers who form such a large part of his clientele must eat in the rather stuffy rooms of his little hotel, but in summer there are much more appropriate surroundings.

Before the hotel is the fish market. It is quartered in a long iron building. At both ends of this rectangle, up to a point about ten feet from the centre on each side, are white marble slabs on which the fish lie during the morning. After the noon hour the remaining stock is put on ice, the slabs are flooded with water and there remains no visible trace of the stock in trade of the house of Bucci. Between the tables which are spread in the centre of the building and the marble slabs are small bushes growing in pots, which serve to hide almost entirely the two ends of the market in which business is transacted. This open air dining room—for it is almost out of doors, so easily may the glass walls of the market be opened—makes a very delightful retreat in the warmth of the Roman summer.

There are deep plates piled with fresh water mussels prepared with a rich brown sauce called "zuppa marinara," which might serve as a soup or a solid, so thick and rich is it. The *zuppa di pesce*, or fish soup, is made of so many kinds of finned and scaly creatures that it corresponds most directly to a bouillabaise. Dory, red mullet—of the kind so popular at Naples—cuttlefish, lobster, whiting, mureana and the fresh water mussels are to be found in it, and they rest on an appetizing foundation of toast. Cuttlefish fried in oil, which has a very long name in the Italian language, is another of the Bucci specialties.

The Milano, situated in the Piazza Colonna, serves excellent Italian food to the Romans who flock there, although few Americans are to be found in the place. Veal is the staple dish of central Italy, and it appears in many attractive forms in these Roman eating houses. Some of their other specialties—to take the Milano as a type of its class—are very young lamb and goat stewed together with anchovies, a kind of pèté of macaroni, which comes to the table in the form of a pie; a species of macaroni which consists of small balls of paste and is boiled and served with melted butter and cheese, green peas rolled in ham and boiled in that way and served with butter sauce—all these varieties are added to the bill of fare at the Milano in addition to the chicken, entrecôte, cutlets and other Continental dishes with no markedly local peculiarity.

Prices at the Milano, which is on the opposite side of the Piazza from the Colonna, are about the same as the rate prevailing in Naples. A dish will cost about half a lira and a quarter, although chicken may be higher. The restaurants of the class described rarely have such luxuries as game on their bills of fare, although they are by no means the cheapest.

One strikes the Tuscan kitchen in Florence. Tuscan eating houses are advertised in Rome and Naples, and one is thereby made aware of its supposed excellence to Italians. The average American will, however, observe very little difference from what he has had in the other two cities. There are less tomatoes in the color scheme than Naples affords, for that vegetable is a special of the southern city. The same things may be called by different names, especially the soups, but nothing that he eats will make so much impression as the way in which the dishes are arranged on the bills of fare—not the bills of fare, of course, at the hotels, but in the restaurants. Tuscany rejects the arrangement that is good enough for the rest of the world and refuses to begin with soups and end with coffee. The foods on the bill of fare are divided in accordance with the way they are cooked. Thus fish may be there under fried, boiled, stewed or roasted. It takes some practice for the American diner to avoid eating a dinner exclusively of boiled dishes when he sits down.

That danger is not present at Mellini's, which is perhaps the most popular Tuscan eating house in Florence, because some of the dishes are set down in French. Mellini's, which stretches from the Via Calzajoli to the square, has long divans along the walls and is supplied with a bar at which ices and cakes are served. The bill of fare changes only once a day. One must eat the same for lunch and dinner. There is of course variety enough to select from the bill two meals without repeating the dishes, but no special preparation is made for the evening visitors.

In the same street and equally native in its patronage and its cuisine is La Toscana. There the fish is brought from Leghorn, and the *arselle*, which is not unlike a mussel, is especially praised by patrons of the place. There are of course much more fashionable restaurants in other parts of the town, but they are wholly continental, and there is scarcely a trace of the Tuscan cuisine. There are not many really local dishes in Florence. Fowls are especially good there, and it comes about that giblets stewed in white wine are a specialty of the city, and beef braisé, cooked with tomatoes, has long been a favorite Tuscan dish. Then there are kidneys with white wine and cèpes, called *rognone trifolati*, noodles with meat sauce or butter sauce; pastry balls stuffed with chopped up meat or cheese, and called in different parts of Italy ravioli or canaletti or agnolotti. In Florence they are known by the first title.

Then all the Milanese dishes have been brought into the Tuscan menu, so that chicken is prepared with risotto or rice or noodles. Then there are the various kinds of veal cutlets, which include one that is stewed in red wine, and another, more exotic still, which is surrounded with ham, then put into batter and finally fried and served with lemon.

In Venice there is the same interest awaiting the explorer in cooking. There are several kinds of fish that are famed as part of the classic Venetian cuisine, and they of course never find their way to the table of any hotel supported by American and English guests. The most famous restaurant in the lagoon city is German in name and cosmopolitan in the character of its cuisine. The two places on the piazza, especially Florian's, are expensive, and the café named is indeed famed as the most costly in Europe. It has few eatables. At the Quadri opposite more persons dine and lunch, although it is scarcely purely Venetian any longer.

The Cappello Nero, on the other hand, which stands at the entrance to the Merceria, under the clock tower back of St. Marc's, is purely Italian. So are the Bella Venezia and the Accademia, although they are even less pretentious than the Capello Nero. Then there are eating shops unknown to the average traveller where he can find the *scampea*, a fresh water fish not unlike a very small crab, and a peculiarity of Venice, the fish soup made of the little *uccei*, not unlike the same shell fish that were served at Naples and Rome by Bucci, and above all the large eels from Commachio, which are broiled, stewed or fried in bay leaves as the guest may select.

BLACK WALNUT PRIZED AGAIN.

Civil War Time Furniture Ripped Apart to Supply the New Demand.

It isn't alone Santo Domingo mahogany that's getting so rare that a decent piece of it will make an old furniture sharp's eyes sparkle. The humble black walnut has come into its own at last and furniture builders who are making single reproductions of old Italian and Spanish antiques are buying up some of the heavy and artistically atrocious wardrobes and tables and sideboards of thirty or forty years ago just for the wood.

They tear the things apart, and when the walnut reappears it is in a design worthy of its quality. Some of the handsomest and purest furniture now produced is made up from lumbering arks which, just after the civil war, were installed to give the final touch of grand and dismal unsightliness to houses which commemorate the worst stage of American taste.

"Good walnut," said a Fifth avenue furniture maker, "is worth more to me than mahogany. We can fake the mahogany but not the walnut.

"And the walnut trees about the country, that used to be chopped down and converted into wood for the kitchen stove, fetch all kinds of money. I know a man who has a little hillside farm over in northern Jersey who for years staggered along trying to feed a big family and a small mortgage at the same time.

"The family grew steadily thinner and more poorly clad, but the mortgage seemed to gain in health with every succeeding year. By and by I noticed that conditions were changing, and one day I met the man on the road. He was whistling as he jogged along in his cutter.

"'You seem pretty good natured to-day, Rowley,' says I.

"'Good reason,' says he. He unbuttoned his overcoat and fished a paper out of his inside pocket.

"'That damn thing,' he said, shaking it at me, 'has been taking the sleep off my eyes and the hair off my head and the clothes off my back and the victuals out of my mouth for years, but now it won't do it any longer, for I'm goin' to burn it up in my kitchen stove to-night and celebrate with a square meal for the hull family. That's a mortgage, that is, an' I hope you'll never have one.'

"'Well, your farm has done pretty well by you,' says I.

"'Farm nothing,' says he, spitting contemptuously over the dashboard and ramming the paper down in his pocket. 'Farm nothing. I paid that mortgage with black walnut.'

"'Why,' says I, 'I didn't know there was any timber to speak of on your place.'

"'They hain't,' says he. 'I wisht they was. If it was all black walnut I'd own Bergen county by this time.

"'Nope. It was a piece o' luck, this was an' it only shows how easy it is to make a success if a man's only got gump enough to take a holt of a chanst when it's put right under his nose. I built a little chicken house out there, and had to buy part new lumber for it.

"'Well, when I went into the lumber office to pay up, I heard the clerk talkin' to his boss over the telephone. The old man was sick an' the young feller was tellin' him what was in the mail.

"'"Here's a letter from So-and-So," says he, "and they want to know about black walnut. What? No, they want to buy. They want black walnut trees standin' an'll pay any kind of a fair price for 'em and do the cuttin' themselves, provided the trees is big enough to saw up good."

"'That was enough for me. I paid my bill an' got out. I put up my hoss in Sam's son's stable an' took the fust train I could catch for the city just as I was. I hunted up that lumber firm over on the West Side an' sa'ntered in an' says:

"'"Is they any market for black walnut?"

"'"I guess so," the feller says.

"'"I kin git you all you want, mostly," says I, "but you'll have to cut it."

"'"We want to out it," says he.

"'Before I quit I'd signed an agreement to give them first chance on all the walnut I could find, an' the figure suited me, for I knew where there was a lot of old trees scattered around the country.

"'Next day I hitched up an' started. Sell 'em? Of course, all the farmers sell 'em, and glad to git the money. All I had to do was to pay down a dollar to bind the bargain and git a bill of sale and then spend two cents now and then for a stamp.

"'I tell you I kept 'em busy, an' I didn't care whether I got my corn an' potatoes in or not. The boys can look after the farm now. I've got a better hoss an' a little spare money, an' I'm goin' prospecting for black walnut. By the time I git through they won't be a walnut tree left standin' this side of the Great Lakes. Giddap!'"

Going to a Fire in a Missouri Town.

From the Wayne County Journal.

When the editor starts to run to a fire at night and runs into a tree in the middle of the walk, skinned his shins, comes to a garden step off from eight to ten inches, which sends him sprawling into a pond of water and mud where a sidewalk ought to be, stumbles over a sudden raise in the walk, falls and smashes his nose on a broken board and then sprains his ankle by stepping in a hole where a board isn't, he begins to wake up and take interest.