NILSSON AND SALVINI.

The Swede and the Italian Preparing for the Season.

Mme. Nilsson Is Almost Torn to Pieces by the Russian Students and Shoots a Bear Near the Gulf of Finland.

Face to Face with Death—She "Wonders What the Americans Will Say."

SIGNOR SALVINI AT WORK IN THE ACADEMY.

Prepared to Find American Audiences Cold, but Determined to Warm Them.

Why He Cannot Act Othello Two Nights in Succession.

Various Particulars About the Great Prima Donna and the Great Tragedian.

The typical prima donna is assumed to be a miraculous union of strange antitheses. She passes her infancy in poverty and her maturity in splendor, warbles in the streets at thirteen and has the horses taken from her carriage by enthusiastic youths at thirty. In childhood she twirls the tambourine for the pleasure of the public; in womanhood she twists that public round her little finger with equal facility. Of all people she ought to understand human nature, since she is brought face to face with it in its extremes. She shakes hands with the peasant at the beginning of her career and with a worldful of princes at the end, eats barley bannock and milk among the humble homesteads of her youth, and later on in life, like Solomon's spider, "takes hold with her hands and is in kings' palaces." This is the popular idea of the typical successful prima donna, and perhaps it is not very far out of the way. At any rate there are a sufficient number of instances correspoding to this picture to justify the extent to which it finds favor. Hence the interest with which the world regards all the environments of a great songstress. Once in a while you may successfully flash in the eyes of the public a great tenor or a great barytone, or even a great basso, who has risen from obscurity to eminence; but the public always comes back to its hankering after a prima donna, and thinks all the more of her if she has been born to a crust and a cottage. At least American sympathies run strongly in this direction, possibly because in America fame and fortune are oftener won by the inheritors of poverty than in any other nation under heaven. In these reasons are to be beheld a portion of the cause of that affectionate interest with which United States audiences have for the last three years attended the fortunes of Mme. Nilsson. They sympathized with a childhood of poverty because so many of them had once been poor. They sympathized with her long struggle and the brilliant triumph it secured because that struggle was the perfect reflection of what is every day seen in this country. They sympathized with her chaste temperament and idealizations, with her genius and capacity for labor, because these were the expressions of an American standard of art and womanhood united.

A writer upon the staff of the HERALD called yesterday upon Mme. Nilsson, at the hotel (the Clarendon,) where she is staying. He found the artist in perfect health and spirits, and looking the prototype of the Mlle. Nilsson whom the American public lost eighteen months ago. Those months have left no outward record of their flight. What inward record they have left will be seen when the curtain goes up and Violetta and Lucia and Mignon and all the rest come trooping on. In the course of conversation Mme. Nilsson made many allusions to her recent career in Russia. She likes the Russian people and appreciates the exceeding enthusiasm with which they received her. Both in Moscow and St Petersburg her success was emphatic. In the latter city her benefit night was something to be borne in sensitive remembrance by her (she says) to the latest day of her life. The poor students came pouring out in scores; they surrounded the doors of her hotel, and when she was about to enter her carriage several of them seized her, and, inspired by an enthusiasm which, in spite of its violence, never even lost a respect that seemed to border on reverence, took her in their arms and bore her in triumph to the theatre, the others, each with a lighted flambeau in his hand, forming a procession. The whole city was alive with these frantic worshippers, and finally the police turned out in full force, holding themselves in readiness in the event of fire. During the performance at this theatre she was recalled forty-five times, and the stage was absolutely imbedded with flowers upon which it was necessary for her to walk several yards before reaching the footlights. Finally, in answer to the general acclamations, the artist was compelled to seat herself at a piano, which was conveniently near, and sing one or two of the Russian national songs, the audience meanwhile standing and the royal family uniting, up to the last moment, in the popular enthusiasm. As the opera had been "Mignon," and as the heroine had her hair streaming over her shoulders, the effect was extremely unique and picturesque. But the honors which Mme. Nilsson reaped in St. Petersburg assumed sometimes a grotesque and eccentric shape. It was all very well to receive especial gifts of value from various members of the royal family and to be invited to Court concerts, but the tokens of regard presented by the students must have some times sorely tried the equability of the artist's nerves. On more than one occasion, incredible as it may seem to colder blooded Americans, some of the students, in company with not a few officers of dignified rank, prostrated themselves on the ground and welded themselves into a floor upon which Mme. Nilsson was obliged to walk in order to reach her carriage. "This was too much," said the speaker, her eyes glistening at the remembrance. "It was really too trying to an artist's feelings to expect her to accept it. But there they were, and what was I to do? At my concerts the people behaved so sometimes that I was frightened." Being requested to mention the particulars, Mme. Nilsson said that the people rushed to the edge of the stage, snatched at the hem of her dress and tore it into fragments, caught her and held her, so that she could not move, and left her in a condition that must have resembled that of the "priest all tattered and torn." They stole her gloves, her fan, her handkerchief, her bouquet, and almost took the slippers from her feet. The prima donna who would go unmoved through such scenes must needs have steady nerves and a strong constitution. So far as enthusiasm goes, a St. Petersburg audience is the beau ideal. Nothing to compare with it is seen elsewhere. English audiences are sterling and stolid; but, once having secured their goodwill, you may count on retaining it even after you have lost your voice and your artistic power. Not so with the Russians, and (Mme. Nilsson added) the Russians were in the right. They cease to shower these demonstrations of approval upon an artist the moment she comes back to them with a broken voice or powers otherwise impaired. Mme. Nilsson acquiesced in this treatment. She thought that no artist ought to expect to remain the idol of a public when she had once begun to fail.

THE EFFECT OF APPLAUSE ON THE NERVES.

American audiences (Mme. Nilsson thought) have all the solidity of the English and all the enthusiastic feeling of the Russians without the outward expression of it. They kept their feelings more to themselves, but those feelings were all there. When questioned with respect to the fatigue of responding forty-five times in the course of a single evening to the calls of the audience, Mme. Nilsson naively replied, "Oh yes! it is very fatiguing—but I like it!" Who ever heard of a prima donna getting tired of genuine applause? The effect, however, upon her nervous organization she declared to be often painful. It shattered her for the time being, filled her with wild feelings, which prevented her being fully conscious of what she was about. But these enthusiasms over, she was soon able to gain the control of herself, and in the face of real danger she was generally calm. As an instance of this she mentioned the storm on the Lake of Geneva while she and some friends were sailing, a short time previous to her departure for this country. The storm suddenly came up in ten minutes, and they found themselves face to face with death. "But I was not frightened," said Mme. Nilsson; "I held myself close together in the bottom of the boat, expecting every instant to go down, and I thought if I did so what would my friends in America say." And she laughed merrily in the very pardonable consciousness that many hearts in America would have sorrowed deeply over the loss. One of the most unique recollections which Mme. Nilsson brought forward was her bear shooting near the Gulf of Finland, while on her visit to Russia. Bear shooting is not a general pastime with the Russian ladies, but M. Rouzaud, her husband, was going and Mme. Nilsson came to the determination that she would like to try her hand. Her courage kept up until she saw the bear, and then it kept up a great deal more. The readers of the HERALD will scarcely credit what I am next going to say, but since the assurance came from the artist's own lips there is no question about it. The bear approached. He was one of those old white Russian bears that we read about, very handy to have in a novel, but not so handy to have within sight. But the heart of the Swedish singer did not falter, neither did her hand. She knelt, she took aim, she fired. In another instant the bear lay rolling in death, and when his silver-throated slayer returned to the Russian capital perhaps this little incident did more than anything else to lend a fresh impulse to that celebrity which had first been won by her voice.

FUTURE CAREER.

Besides the *rôles* in which we are already familiar with her, Mme. Nilsson will this season interpret Cherubino in "Le Nozze di Figaro," and Aïda in Verdi's opera of that name. The only absolutely new *rôle* is the Aïda, in which Mme. Nilsson has appeared in neither London nor Paris. The other principal parts in this opera will probably include Campanini as Rademes, Captain of the Guards; Nanetti as the King, and Maurel as Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, and Aïda's father. The opera is in four acts, the action takes place at Memphis and Thebes during the period when the Pharaohs were in power, and the interest is tragic. Mme. Nilsson has built the part up alone, and it will probably take rank with her Mignon and and her Ophelia.

With regard to the question of her final retirement from the stage it is not difficult to conjecture that Mme. Nilsson's mind is in that state of uncertainty which is sure to give rise to contradictory rumors. Retiring from America is one thing; retiring from the operatic stage is quite another. But retirement for a while from both (she says) is pretty certain, as she needs rest. She declares that she can never bring herself to formally say "goodby" to America. That would be too painful; it would be unstringing her too much. She feels the immediate and warm endorsement this country gave to her, and declares that she would have returned hither had all the managers in the world tried to hold her back. The question of Cæsarism or no Cæsarism was one which never occurred to her in thinking of this generous country; she remembered it only as the land that had been good to her and to art through her, and that was quite enough to make memory affectionate and tenacious. She confessed that the attentions bestowed on her by titled and wealthy people were particularly grateful when she contrasted the dark and painful past through which she has struggled with the position she enjoys at present.

Mme. Nilsson's manners are quiet, unaffected, simple. Her conversation is vivacious and easy and now and then characterized by a *naïveté* that is more piquant than piquancy itself. Her affirmations are straightforward and candid and she makes no attempt to disguise the fact that she takes pleasure in her career and is enamored of its superb successes. Her *rentrée* will probably be made in Violetta. She expressed a preference for Lucia over Margherita and for Violetta over both. What she is as a singer, as a lyric artist, all the world knows. But all the world does not know that she is a born diplomate, her own best agent, with as great a gift for business as for the operatic stage; cool in the transaction of routine work, not without enjoyment of the fascinations she wields, but capable of exercising genuine gratitude as of awakening genuine affection, and industrious in deserving the praises of the praiseworthy.

Signor Salvini, the Tragedian.

Our duty next took us into the presence of Signor Salvini, who was found at the Academy of Music superintending the setting of some of the scenes that are to be used in "Othello." It may be premised that the original date, September 16, will be adhered to as the opening night, and that the public will therefore have the pleasure of seeing this great actor for the first time next Tuesday evening.

Signor Salvini's personal appearance and manners have already been described in these columns. In addition to what was said a day or two ago, it may be remarked that he has vast depth and breadth of chest, and that he impresses one with the idea of great strength and great repose. In conversation his features become animated, his eye kindles, and he employs gestures in moderation, always to the point and always serving to assist the sense of what he says. The writer of this article had the privilege of a long conversation with Signor Salvini yesterday afternoon. The tragedian gave some insight into his interpretation of Othello, which he declared to be his favorite character; but, to inform the public what the peculiarities of Signor Salvini's interpretation are, would be almost as *inapropos* as to state the conclusion of a novel which has been only half read through. It is preferable that the public should be left to discover for itself, with the hint only that the conception is original and is not in accordance with several of the printed descriptions. Signor Salvini, for instance, does not make Othello a negro, as Mrs. Bullard affirms that he does. He makes him a Moor, and he has conceived all his speech and action in correspondence to that nationality. He believes that Shakspeare exhausted human nature, and that other attempts at character creating are either imitations or modifications of Shakspeare's men and women.

SALVINI'S ASSISTANTS.

The principal assistants of Signor Salvini are Signora Isolina Piamonti and Signor Alessandro Salvini, his brother. Piamonti is a name not known here as yet, but the actress who bears it holds a high rank in Italy, where she is held only second to Ristori and Pezzana. Signor Alessandro Salvini is described as being a very excellent actor, whose only misfortune it is not to be as large a man as his more celebrated brother. He has made a specialty of character parts, and will play Iago on Tuesday evening. He also acts the part of the father in the original Italian play whence "David Garrick" was adapted. All the members of the present company, with one exception only, have acted with Signor Salvini for many years, so that the forthcoming entertainments are expected to progress with absolute smoothness. "Othello" will begin a few minutes after eight o'clock and terminate at half-past eleven.

PECULIARITIES OF SALVINI.

Like almost every other great artist, Signor Salvini experiences a certain nervousness with respect to his first appearance at every fresh place, but has seldom or never felt quite so nervous as in view of his début in the United States on Tuesday night. This feeling he shares in company with Rachel, Ristori and countless other stars. He is prepared to find our audiences colder than many others; but, as he very sensibly expressed himself, every audience has its own way of enjoying and of demonstrating its enjoyment, and it is with these peculiarities that the actor must bring himself *en rapport*. He is prepared to find the first two acts of his Othello taken very coolly, because no opportunity occurs throughout them of stirring an audience to the heart's core; but with the third act arises a great occasion, and from that moment till the end of the fifth the interest culminates in one unbroken series of points, and, if by the time the final curtain falls, the audience is not worked into a frenzy, Signor Salvini's achievement here will fall short of what it has been at every other theatre in which he has played. But he is animated with the confidence which is seldom felt by those who are not used to universal and deserved adulation. He has no anticipation that the coldness of our audiences will react upon him and freeze him. On the contrary, he is certain of removing that coldness. That will be his task to perform, and his eye fires when he contemplates the triumph which his experience the world over warrants him in anticipating.

The reports in regard to the effect of the *rôle* of Othello upon Salvini have not been overrated. It exhausts him so, so wears upon his magnetism, that he cannot perform it two nights successively. The dresses he uses are invariably soaked with perspiration by the time the play comes to an end, and have to be stretched to dry before they can be used again. Signor Salvini believes that if he cannot draw our people to him, in spite of his speaking a foreign language, he could not draw them to him, though they understood every word he said. The personal address of the artist is extremely courtly and urbane, possessing that simple and graceful charm, that gracious and unaffected unconsciousness of the gaze of the curious which is only gained by long discipline on many a foreign stage and by moving on a familiar footing in the most cultivated circles. His smile is sweet and kindly, his manner princely in its suavity and ease, his air serious and grave, but often relieved by a brief vivacity of expression. Unless report has belied him he is certain to create among the lovers of the legitimate drama a sensation not second to that evoked by Ristori and Rachel.

An Artistic Triumvirate—Salvini, Rossi, Ristori—America in Judgment on Art—Italian Assimilation of the Shakspearian Philosophy—The Classic School of Acting—How Salvini is Regarded in Italy—His Capabilities, Personal Appearance, &c.

NEW YORK, Sept. 13, 1873.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

Ristori is famous in our midst. Salvini deserves to become even more so. His talent is of a higher order than hers. Such is the decree of Italy, where he is accepted as the greatest living actor. Ristori, accompanied by the trumpetings of renown, gave here the first specimen of Italian acting. Her talent being undeniable, she reaped an American harvest of honors and dollars, upon which she is now living in retirement at Rome. But Italy can yet justly expect a greater dramatic triumph on the American stage than any she has had. Signor Tommaso Salvini has just started from Europe for this country, in order to secure the American verdict upon his enactment of Shakspeare's greatest tragedies. His "Otello" and "Amleto" will offer an attraction by the side of which recollections of "Maria Stuarda" and "Medea" must pale, for the latter *rôles* are confessedly insignificant when confronted with those of the two masterpieces. Ristori and her impersonations remained an enigma to many; Salvini must perforce be understood through Shakspeare's words, which are household words from Maine to Texas. The greatest plays that were ever written for the stage will thus be made to assume new life and interest in American eyes. No small theatrical event indeed.

STUDYING FROM THE STAGE.

In the meantime it will not be amiss to lay something in regard to the coming tragedian before the readers of the HERALD, according to its invariable practice of being the first to enlighten the public as to the merits or demerits of those who may be classed under the head of public personages. Before Ristori became celebrated the present writer was living in Turin, and there assisted at the performances of the future queen of tragedy during an entire winter at the Carignano Theatre, where he may say that he first studied the "beautiful Tuscan tongue" from her diction. Subsequently, in the same city, at the old Gerbino Theatre, he enjoyed the acting of Ernesto Rossi; and last, though not least, he has had the opportunity of appreciating Salvini during the last few years at Florence and Rome—in the latter city during he recent season at the Valle Theatre, in February.

FRENCH CRITICS AS CLAIMANTS.

The fame of all three of these artists has been secured by general European success. But none of them would ever have been heard of beyond the Alps had they not in the first instance been stamped with the seal of approbation in Italy. When the tragedians visited and performed in Paris—1855-56—most of the amiable and pleasant critics in the Parisian journals informed them that, as they had been so fortunate as to secure "the consecration of a baptism in Paris," they had *ipso facto* their passports to roam the world and gather new laurels, and other nations were at liberty to pay unto them the tribute of wreaths and dollars. (*Nous venons de priser, le monde peut éternuer.*) Verily, in those days Paris was in vogue, and gave the run of fashion in theatricals as in bonnets; but Paris could neither adequately appreciate the three Italians nor consecrate their fame. This was reserved to Italy and America. The United States did more for Ristori's reputation and pocket than Italy herself; and now Salvini in turn will doubtless receive here a greater triumph than he has ever received elsewhere. In 1871 he visited South America and there met with an enthusiastic ovation; and yet Montevideans were not as capable as New Yorkers are of doing him that quota of justice which his splendid talent, as displayed in his interpretation of Shakspeare's masterpieces, entitles him to receive.

AMERICA THE FINAL JUDGE AND REWARDER.

In no country are merit and talent, in whatever line, so sure to meet reward as in this land of ours. The foreigner, whether engaged in opera, drama or anything else, if only deserving, will certainly, when appearing in our cities, be accorded a hospitable welcome and a profitable endorsement. In this way we claim that the metropolis of America is more competent in consecrating art itself than any other country, excepting Italy alone, which is an artistic judge of the first water, if not a dispenser of gold. The claim of the *feuilletonistes* of Paris [illegible] judgment on all that is artistic in the world is an inadmissible pretension. A people natural and sensible in their ways of life may justly lay claim to a better appreciation of the true and the beautiful than those who are critics in mere artificial jargon and who are adepts in sacrificing substance to the narrowest of forms.

THE INTERPRETATION OF "SWEET WILL."

By the uninitiated out of Italy no little surprise has been expressed that two Italians, Tommaso Salvini and Ernesto Rossi, should have achieved such fame in representing the master characters of Shakspeare. Both have obtained a success in Othello and Hamlet unequalled in the present age, and, perhaps, even surpassing that historically allowed the greatest tragedians of England. The surprise so expressed has been based upon the very false notion that Shakspeare's philosophy was of a different school from that of Italy; that it reflected the cold, nebulous North rather than the genial, bright South. There are, doubtless, readers of Shakspeare's plays who accredit him with nebulosity because they are themselves in a fog in the matter of comprehending plain ideas in plain language, whether of "Sweet Will" or any other writer. Now, in both Hamlet and Othello there is spread out the immediate play of human passions, and these do not vary from England to Italy and *vice versa*; in both pieces the *causa rerum*, the great typical craving of man to "know the reason why," is visibly sought after.

HO FOR THE UNKNOWN!

The sympathy for the unknown, which the great author possessed and which he left to be read between his lines, has been seized hold of and naturally assimilated by the two great Italian tragedians. He in writing, they in acting, but hold the mirror up to nature. Shakspeare is so well understood in Italy, because, as with the English so with the Italian race, there has been a marked and persistent striving to ferret out the unknown. The Italians have had—not to mention a host of others—three great seekers, and who found something, too, although not enough to satisfy them. Dante, Galileo, Columbus discovered unknown worlds in heaven, earth and hell, and nevertheless these discoveries never quenched their thirst for knowledge, their craving. In the England of to-day Livingstone and Baker are modern searchers after the secret of things.

NATURE AS A MODEL.

As Shakspeare's ideas are incomparably true, natural and beautiful, so have they been in a natural and beautiful manner perceived, assimilated and rendered by the greatest of living actors, Salvini. All art in Italy that may be styled of the higher kind has been immemorially moulded and directed according to the laws of nature, and hence it is that Italian style has always been so renowned for its truth, simplicity and beauty. Salvini in his cultivation of the dramatic art simply follows the method of his country in not overstepping or falling short of the laws of nature. The art of Shakspeare and of Raphael, although far above "realism," was not supernatural. Such men could not be silly.

SALVINI'S GREAT POWERS.

This much would serve to explain how an Italian may be found moving on the same track with the great Anglo-Saxon dramatist—apart the cant on race, language, climate. But in order that one particular actor, come from where he may, be as true to the dramatist as the latter is true to all players and all times, it is of course indispensable that this actor should be endowed with uncommon natural powers. Such are the powers of Salvini, and to appreciate them he must needs be seen at his work. Acuteness and strength of perception, joined to unparalleled flexibility in reception and rendition, are the mainsprings of his acting. In these qualities, which make the great actor, he is quite without a rival. He possesses also all the minor qualities or accessories so important. Let it not be inferred for an instant that Salvini's play is, so to say, mere skilful mechanism. Into his simulation or imitation is breathed the vivifying spirit of the highest order of art, and it is only thus that it leaves an indelible impression on the beholder.

HIS APPEARANCE AND ACTING.

As an artist he has eminently the charm of originality. In personal appearance he is strikingly handsome and *distingué*. He pleases at first sight, and the more his audience see of him the more he fascinates them. He is youthful looking, being in the prime of manhood (forty). His regular features, his high forehead, his eyes piercing, black and remarkable in variety of expression; his figure well developed and above the average height, at once give him a decided air of intelligence and strength. His gestures on the stage are entirely natural, never of the affected, pose order; his attitudes graceful, his whole play is sober, concentrated and powerful. He is not a mere flitting body before the eye of the spectator, but a man who throws his whole soul in every utterance and movement, as one earnest and intent—ay, absorbed—in what he does. His natural advantages stand him in good stead always, but it has only been through the closest and hardest study that he has reached his present perfection as an artist; that he is enabled to exhibit before his audience such towering outbursts of energy, combined with such delicate renderings of all the shades in human passions. Most admirable is his faculty of transformation. From the tenderness of love he can spring to the fiercest anger or the dissimulation of assumed idiocy. To cite only one well known instance, in the love scene of his famous "*Deh! meco, O Desdemona, vieni*," &c., the vibration from his lips of those few words produces the most strange, powerful and pleasing effects on the hearer. It has been said that no woman can hear the sweetness of toning that he gives to this passage without being charmed by it.

THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE.

It may be a drawback to some that the tragedian will use a foreign language, although many among the cultivated audiences who will listen to him will not perhaps be entirely unacquainted with the Italian. But, on the other hand, the beauties of that language will also be an immense gain; and although the point and pith of the original text may be lacking, the translation is a splendid setoff in the way of polished form, enclosing the rugged strength and substantiality of ideas. Italian is indisputably more musical than English, and, even if not understood, will not fail in many years to be an agreeable and novel substitute for the harsher idiom so familiar to them. Salvini has a noble voice. His diction is exquisitely pure and distinct. He is a master of intonation.

VALUE OF THE CLASSIC SCHOOL.

In the grand *rôles* of Shakspeare Salvini is truly superb, and in this country they will of necessity please. In other pieces that are merely good—in those of Alfieri, and in "La Morte Civile," of Giacometti—he shows himself still superior. If his style of acting be described as that springing from the "classic drama," then one can take no objection to that rather cut and dried cognomen. As long there are tragedians like him tragedy cannot be said to have outlived its day; on the contrary, out of all theatrical entertainments those of the "classic" pieces that are based on the principles of human nature, always and universally immutable, will ever most aptly rouse the heart and mind of the theatregoer in any country and age. There are not always at hand great tragedians to give us a taste of tragedy, even if we could bear being so often stirred up. Surpassing as the "classic" masterpieces are in effect when powerfully acted, still the sweet warbling of prima donnas and tenors, the trivialities of comedy and the hash of shows will continue to be served up on the boards in swift succession. When we are not hearing Nilsson our ears will be open to Patti; when Cox is absent Box will be present; and when one Black Crook is taken away another shall be given in its place. Life is mixed. On the whole, however, provided there exist actors like Salvini capable of interpreting the most difficult of "classic" pieces, then the classic repertory may advantageously be removed from the centre-table to the stage of a theatre—not without. Ariosto says, *Talor cresce una beltà, un bel manto.* (A pretty dress at times increases beauty itself.)

ITALIAN APPRECIATION.

Salvini has been playing in Italy for the last twenty years, and yet he has never failed of success in any city whither he and his company have migrated. Italy, supreme in taste, believes as firmly in tragedy as in opera, and the tragedian Salvini is as much enjoyed by her children as the sweetest songstress. His compatriots have never got tired of him or high drama. Over and over again they greet him with enthusiastic applause. In their eyes he is a species of idol, and in talking to foreigners they proudly speak of him as "our Salvini," as though they would put him up against all comers; and well they might, for he is without an equal. Marquis D'Arcais, the art critic, whose authority is recognized throughout the peninsula, constantly eulogizes Salvini for his steadfast adherence to and proficiency in the schools of Shakspeare and Alfieri, while unable sufficiently to anathematize the trash current from Paris. D.

Signor Enrico Tamberlik.

The first appearance in this city of a tenor who has charmed all the rest of the world, is important enough to justify a very general curiosity in regard to his antecedents. This curiosity has been amply gratified with respect to Signor Campanini, who will be heard here in a very few weeks, and we propose to do the same service with respect to Signor Tamberlik, against whom all that can be urged is that he is just two years younger than the tenor whom nine New York hearers out of ten declared, a couple of seasons ago, to be the finest tenor who had ever visited America. If Wachtel charmed us at fifty-five, perhaps Tamberlik may be conceded the same opportunity at fifty-three. He was born in Rome in 1820, and has "wandered singing through the listening world" for about thirty years. That is to say, his first successes were won in 1843, while he was singing at the Grand Opera at Lisbon. Previous to this time he had taken singing lessons from Guglielmo and Borna, and had studied theology. Whether his theological studies were of any use to him in providing him with sympathies for Poliuto, in which he was subsequently so successful, we will not now stop to inquire. His début took place at the Theatre del Fonde, in Naples, in 1841, in the "Capuletti e Montecchi." Then came the Lisbon engagement, when he first began to give an earnest of what he would become. A sudden change in his voice transformed him to a tenor *sfogato*, and visiting Barcelona, Madrid and London, it was hinted that the mantle of Rubini had fallen upon him. At Covent Garden his interpretation in "Guglielmo Tell" produced a very profound impression. The London endorsement was ratified by that of St. Petersburg where, for nearly twenty consecutive seasons, he pleased one of the most exacting audiences in the world. It was here that he produced for the first time "Le Prophète" and "Le Pardon de Ploermel," and at the conclusion of one of his most prosperous engagements the Emperor Nicholas accorded him two decorations and appointed him "Chief Singer of the Chamber Court." Meanwhile Signor Tamberlik kept shy of Paris. He declined the invitations of even Meyerbeer and did not make his début there till 1858. It was during that very year that M. Maretzek announced him as having been engaged for this city. But M. Maretzek was fifteen years too early. The engagement was postponed; Paris proved too attractive; the season at the Italiens was renewed, and the impressible, yet fastidious French vowed that they had found their ideal singer. A triple strand of admiration was woven for him by Paris, London and Madrid. His Othello struck the Frenchmen to the heart, and the success was renewed as lately as 1869 at the Italiens. These achievements have been repeated in Rio Janeiro, Buenos Ayres, Montevideo, Mexico and Havana. During his recent season in Havana Tamberlik sang in public twenty-six times in four weeks, which is a pretty severe test as to the present integrity of his voice. For the rest we prefer to wait for his appearance at the Grand Opera House on the 6th of October.

Musical and Dramatic Notes.

The dramatic season has begun, but we are without the promise of any exceptional success, and no new piece has yet been announced as in preparation, for which a long run is expected. Starring engagements and rapid changes seem to be the order of the day. Already Mr. Jefferson's engagement at Booth's is nearly half finished, and Maggie Mitchell is announced to follow "Rip Van Winkle." In another fortnight the Aimée company, at the Broadway, and the Lydia Thompson troupe, at the Olympic, will yield to others. The Grand Opera House has already produced two show pieces, and on Monday of next week "The Wandering Jew" will be succeeded by a spectacle called "Haunted Houses." Mr. Charles Gayler's local drama, "Dust and Diamonds," is in preparation, to follow "The Colleen Bawn." The Vokes, at the Union Square, seem a fixture till the beginning of the regular season on the 1st of October. There is in all this very little real encouragement for art, but we need not despair of much excellent acting before the winter is over.

The company at the Boston Museum has been playing the comedy of "Divorce." The company includes Miss Mary Cary, Mr. W. J. Lemoyne and Mr. W. H. Crisp, well known to the theatre goers of this city, who, as a matter of course, are able to play modern comedy; but with these exceptions, and excepting Mr. Charles Barron as Alfred Adriance, it is played as gravely and stiffly as the "The School for Scandal." And it requires, on the Boston boards, nearly an hour longer than is necessary for its interpretation.

The fact that Mr. Joseph Jefferson is playing at Booth's at the same time that Mr. G. L. Fox is acting comedy at the Grand Opera House reminds us how successfully each has followed his own line since they appeared together at the Olympic under Laura Keene's management. Almost equally great, they are equally the representatives of different methods. With Mr. Jefferson, especially in his great part of Rip Van Winkle, every detail down to the minutest gesture is carefully studied and settled as firmly as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Mr. Fox, on the other hand, depends to a great extent upon the inspiration of the moment, as is well illustrated in the death of Pyramus, where he always dies according to the temper of the house. During the three weeks Fox played Bottom this season the death scene was never twice alike. Rip Van Winkle has gone to sleep for years with the same motion of the hand and arms. But both artists are worthy of careful and repeated study as among the greatest representatives of American art, either past or present.

It is not judgment in advance to protest against such "star" actors as Miss Maggie Mitchell and Mr. J. K. Emmett in advance of their appearance. Neither of them can bring us anything in the way of dramatic art worthy of serious consideration, and both do great injury to a profession where they hold places far above their merits. Mr. Emmett's "specialties" are even more reprehensible than Miss Mitchell's maudlin juvenility, but we suppose they must be endured till our people learn that a good stock company in our theatres is worth a thousand such feebly flickering stars.

The new drama with which the Union Square Theatre begins the regular season is by Mr. George Fawcett Rowe. We presume Miss Rose Eytinge will make her first appearance in this place.

That "eminent young American actor," Oliver Doud Byron, is to play "Ben McCullough" at Wood's this week. Ben McCullough was not a great man, but there is no telling what an "eminent young American actor" may do with him.

The building of the new Fifth Avenue Theatre, at Twenty-eighth street and Broadway, is progressing rapidly, but it is not likely the house will be ready for occupancy before the beginning of November.

Mlle. Aimee goes to Havana at the close of her present engagement at the Broadway Theatre. Only two weeks remain of her New York season. During the remaining fortnight three operas are to be given, "La Grande Duchesse" and "La Périchole" this week, and next week, "Orphée Aux Enfers," which has not been sung here in four years.

A number of young ladies, mostly graduates of the Normal College, wishing to follow up their previous musical instruction, have just formed a vocal society, which they call the Winterburn Chorus, after the director, Mrs. Charlotte V. Winterburn. The society is to be composed exclusively of women. The first rehearsal will take place at Dr. Crosby's church, Fourth avenue and Twenty-second street, on Wednesday afternoon. This society is excellent in design, for nothing can be more important to young ladies than an opportunity to pursue their musical training after leaving school. A great conservatoire may grow out of like enterprises.

"Haunted Houses," which is to follow the "Wandering Jew" at the Grand Opera House, is a "thrilling sensation" by Mr. H. J. Byron, the English dramatist. It is now running successfully in London.

Yesterday Mr. Max Strakosch received from his brother, Mr. Maurice Strakosch, the pleasing intelligence, per Atlantic cable, that the directorship of the Italian opera in Paris had passed into their hands.

Mr. Shiel Barry will appear every evening this week, excepting Saturday, both as Danny Mann and Myles na Copaleen in "The Colleen Bawn," at Wallack's. This will be a novelty worth seeing, Mr. Barry's excellence as Miles enhancing the curiosity to see him as Danny. The same programme will be repeated on Saturday afternoon. On Saturday evening Mr. Gayler's play, "Dust and Diamonds," will be produced.

Barney Williams, who has been suffering for some time from paralysis of the left eye, is much improved. But his physicians having advised him to give up his professional pursuits for the present, he has cancelled all engagements until next spring.

Mme. Nilsson visited the Lyceum Theatre last evening, and was the recipient of an almost perfect ovation, being called to the front of the proscenium box which she occupied and presented with many beautiful floral offerings. Monsieur Salvini was also present, and occupied the box directly opposite Mme. Nilsson, and was enthusiastically applauded as soon as discovered by the audience, which was one of the most fashionable which has assembled this season.

CHEAP TRANSPORTATION.

Third Session of the United States Senate Committee on Transportation.

Statements by the Delegation from the New York Cheap Transit Association—Interesting Statistics from the Statistician of the Produce Exchange—What Railroads and Canals Can Accomplish—Explanation of the Belgian System of Towage—The Continental Air Railway.

The Senatorial Committee on Transportation resumed their session yesterday, Senator Windom in the chair. The testimony given was of considerable interest and included the views of the merchants and producers as well as private citizens who had given the question of transportation great consideration. The representatives of the Continental air line had also an opportunity of explaining the work they had undertaken. The investigation was closed, as far as New York was concerned, about five o'clock. Just previous to the committee rising, the Burlington delegation, introduced by Mayor Dodge, of that city, were presented, and the Senators were invited to stay at Burlington, on their way to Montreal, in order that an opportunity might be afforded of explaining the water route proposed to be made in connection with the St. Lawrence River. Mr. Windom informed the delegation that until the committee arrived at Albany they could not positively say whether they could stay at Burlington, though it would give them very great pleasure to do so.

THE BLUE LINE.

Mr. Hayes general manager of the Blue Line, appeared and made a supplementary statement. He said that the local traffic in short hauls costs more in proportion than the traffic in long hauls. For example, the railroad receiving property would be obliged to handle, weigh and load it at a cost, if handled in large quantities, equal to twenty cents per ton. The time of an entire train is occupied while the engine is putting cars in and taking them out; a local train occupies three times as much time collecting a full train as a through train would in passing over the same distance. Therefore, if the cars are compelled to discharge the load at the end of fifty miles, there will be a corresponding expense and delay of trains amounting to $4 at the two termini for a car of ten tons. At the same rate per ton per mile travelled the amount netted from the fifty miles would be only $1, while the through car for the same distance and the same rate would net $5. The through lines, in order to cheapen transportation to the producer and consumer, were compelled to inaugurate a system of through freightage. The reason for painting the cars of one color and calling them "line" cars, was to distinguish them from cars known as local cars; and by agreement between the companies they are placed under one manager to run for the benefit of all lines, and to prevent any road from using a "line" car for its own local business, to the detriment of the Western shipper. In reply to questions with regard to receipts given without guaranteeing the amount contained in the car, Mr. Hayes said that there are many points at which the railroad companies are too poor to build warehouses. Private persons own these warehouses and sometimes the land around them, and for the purpose of developing the country are purchasers of the produce. They handle and load their own property. When it arrives at its destination it passes from the hands of the railroad companies into the hands of persons not connected with the roads; therefore the companies neither weigh in nor out. It is therefore unreasonable to expect the roads to guarantee the weighing at either end. From an elevator owned by the railroad company loading a given quantity, sending it to Boston or any other point where the company owned an elevator, it is weighed out by the company; they have guaranteed weights, deducting one per cent for shrinkage. It was Mr. Hayes' opinion that if the company could receive and discharge they should assume the shrinkage of one per cent, so as to deliver the quantity loaded or its value. The system of inspection at New York, where each receiver claims the identical grain, instead of receiving an equal quantity of the same grain, requires more storage capacity than has yet been afforded. In answer to the question of Senator Sherman as to why the capitalists of New York build elevators at the West and not here, Mr. Hayes said that the reason for not building here was because where there is inspection and a large quantity of grain is delivered in one bulk the business is profitable: a small quantity occupies the same space, except with regard to the depth of bins, and brings no profit. In answer to Senator Conkling, who asked why the system could not be changed, Mr. Hayes answered that the system was adopted to meet receipts by canal, when large quantities could go into one bin. That custom had been continued. Large warehouses, owned and controlled by leading men of the Corn Exchange, would have to be changed at a loss to their owners; but the necessity of the business requiring the removal of the property by rail is rapidly changing that course of business. The corresponding change must be made to meet the competition of other seaport towns, otherwise New York must lose its business. Many of the railroads centring in New York end in Jersey City, while the New York Central ends in New York. There is, consequently, a difference of opinion as to what point can be called New York. The railway companies claim that New York is where the road ends. From there they discharge into barges in five car-load lots, and deliver to any ship, warehouse or inspection yard, whether in New York, Brooklyn or Jersey City. These barges are controlled entirely by persons outside the railroad companies. The expense of this ranges from sixty cents to $1 per ton, for which neither the producer nor the consumer pays anything. This is one of the Crédit Mobilier arrangements by which the companies pay but get nothing in return—not even the thanks of the merchants, for the interests of the railroad companies and those of the merchants are identical; and the railroad companies are compelled to compete with other lines centring in other towns. Mr. Hayes then read a brief paper showing the prosperity of the town of Peoria, Ill., illustrating the condition of the towns of the West, and showing that no section of the country is more prosperous than the Western country, notwithstanding the cries of oppression on the part of railway monopolies. Mr. Hayes also read selections from the Board of Trade returns for 1872 corroborating his statements.

THE CHEAP TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION.

A delegation from the Cheap Transportation Association, consisting of Messrs. Baker, Thurber and Jones, made statements with regard to railroad monopolies, their control of water fronts and their legislative jobbery.

STATEMENT OF MR. ELMORE H. WALKER.

Mr. Elmore H. Walker, Statistician of the New York Produce Exchange, said that there were two prominent competing routes in the future—one through the city of New York by the Erie Canal and the other by the St. Lawrence Canal—and the city of New York must be prepared to meet the competition of the St. Lawrence route. The rate of freight now by that route is ten cents a bushel from Chicago to Montreal, and when they have 1,200 ton ships instead of the present class they will reduce the rate below that, and the advantages of that route are as good as the other, including insurance. By the improvement of the Welland and the St. Lawrence Canals, it will be carried below ten cents. We are moving by all routes north of the Ohio of through freights about 33,000,000 tons per year, of which about 13,000,000 tons is properly through business. The rail route from Chicago on fourth class freight and terminal points of the West of like distance from New York, about $9 per ton; that is at the rate of nine mills and a fraction per ton per mile; the water rate for the last six years from Chicago to New York has been $7 and some cents for corn per ton and a fraction over $8 for wheat, and that is owing to the difference in the rate of toll. The rate per rail cannot be furnished cheaper than $9 per ton. If all the freight of the railway is carried at that rate—if the Central road should carry all its freight at three quarters of a cent per ton per mile of its mileage of 1872, it could neither pay interest nor dividends. If it should carry all its freight at the rate of twelve cents a bushel for wheat, which is nine mills and a fraction of a ton per mile, it could pay its interest and would have about $200,000 to pay $8,000,000 of dividend with. So that, practically, unless there can be some means devised by which railroads can carry it cheaper the people cannot get the relief they seek in the Far West by railroad routes. The lake route, with large class vessels of say 2,000 tons capacity, can be reduced to $1 50 from Chicago to Buffalo, and, take the entire route through by water, it can, by proper appliances, be reduced to $3. But, in any event, the rail will divide the business with the water lines. One ninth of the tonnage of the railways is live stock and its products, and this is nearly one sixth of the eastern movements; and there are a large class of other commodities that will come by rail in any event. Mr. Walker then went into elaborate calculations as to what would be required of railroads before the end of the century. The remedy will be in a cheaper water route and in the extension of the railroad system that will meet the element of cost, but we shall need more than six double lines to meet the business of the country. In the far West it needs the produce of three acres to transport one to market, and that is very oppressive for the producer. We are bringing into this State 45,000,000 of bushels of grain more than we grow, and New England takes a larger amount. The canals since 1837 have transported over $7,000,000,000 worth of property, and have produced a revenue sufficient to pay for themselves. The tonnage of the canals for twenty-three years has been more than double the tonnage of all the vessels entering the port of New York. The greatest capacity of the canals to move property Eastward is 4,000,000 tons. The capacity of a canal is limited to lockages. A lock should be able to accommodate a boat of 2,600 tons. The price now on the canal is about two mills and a fraction per bushel per mile from Chicago to New York, and it can be reduced by the enlargement to a little over one mill.

STATEMENT OF MR. GEORGE O. JONES.

Mr. Jones said that he would put before the committee what he regarded as vital to the considerations of the question, and which might be described as general principles. For example, he believed that railroads are for public use, and cannot, constitutionally, be made objects of private speculation. All the legislation in reference to railroads in this country during the last quarter century has been wrong in principle. Highways are for the public good, and up to the last fifty years all legislation in that direction was for the public good. After a few observations on this general principle Mr. Jones said that the right of eminent domain had been only exercised for the general welfare, when everything done under it was in the line of strict justice and welfare to all. Competition in railroads had been found by an investigating committee in England to always end a combination. There could be no competition in railroads except by a line of cars down parallel with the line. Property taken and used for public use could never be increased in value. He believed that the wisdom of limiting the passenger rate to two cents per mile on the Hudson River and Central Railroad, in the legislative acts of 1852, had been shown in the growth of large cities along the route. The question in relation to canals, and which some people expect to get so much relief from in New York city, was, he thought, somewhat over-estimated. He believed that in ten years hence there would be no animal power used for the transportation of freight. "Unless there could be some other means of locomotive power than that there would not be a canal-boat running. "Examine the burden imposed on commerce over the canals," said Mr. Jones, "and contrast it with that imposed by railroad companies doing business in this State, and see which is of most importance to the people. During the year 1871 this State collected for tolls over its canals $2,813,686, and the sums paid to boatmen for moving the property about equalled that paid the State for tolls. Six million ($6,000,000) dollars is a liberal estimate to put on the burden imposed on commerce moved over the canals of this State during the last year. By reference to reports made to the State Engineer and Surveyor by railroad companies doing business in this State, it will be found that these companies received during the year 1871 for transporting freight, $53,635,589; for passenger fares, $23,094,876, and from other sources, $4,431,785, making a total of $81,162,242. From this amount deduct $10,000,000 on freight and $5,000,000 on passengers' fares, over the Boston and Albany, and Lake Shore and Michigan Southern roads, on business done outside of this State, and it will be found that the enormous sum of $43,500,000 was taken from the people of this State for having their property, and $18,000,000 for having their persons transported over its railroads during the past year. Yet no political party has raised its voice against this vast burden; and none has been found potent enough to compel an investigation into these charges to see whether they are just or unjust.

THE NEW YORK STEAM CABLE TOWING COMPANY.

Colonel H. D. Falconer appeared on behalf of the canals and in reference to the Belgian system of towage. The principle involved in this system is the same that is in use between Paris and the river Seine. It is the principle of the drum, with the addition of a wire cable. The outer edge of the drum is set with steel clasps. It accomplishes the same purpose as the cogs do on the river Seine. Every attempt on the Erie Canal to introduce any other motive power than that of animal power has failed because it has been found to be more expensive than animal power. What was now being done by the promoters of this plan was to put it on the Erie Canal and on the Rhine. The Austrian government has put it on the Danube, and the Russian government has put it on the Volga. We now have in operation thirty-one miles on the Western system of the Erie Canal. We hope by next winter to dismiss horses entirely from the Erie Canal. We can take boats through from Buffalo to Albany in four or five days—the average now is ten or eleven days. The great trouble in enlarging the Erie Canal is the supply of water. It is found here that the supplies are inadequate, and to make it a ship canal would only intensify the difficulty. We can take up from eight to ten boats, loaded up to their fullest capacity, either going west or going east. Now only one hundred tons can be taken by boats going west. The plan will be to lay down two cables, one going east and the other going west. The cable lies right at the bottom of the canal. The average speed is three miles an hour. The average speed now of the horse power is about one or one and a half miles an hour. If we had double locks all the way through we could send 18,000,000 of tons. We could cheapen the freight rates about one-half. The chances of a monopoly could be controlled by the Legislature. Our system does not interfere with any other boats running on the canal. In reference to the Belgian system of railroads, one-half belongs to the stockholders and the other half to the government. The result is that the roads are built well at a low cost, and they pay four and a half per cent and leave a surplus to the government. In England there was a limited liability law, and all corporations are established under it, and I throw it out for your consideration, because I think if we had a similar general incorporation law, subject to a bureau of corporations, the same as they have in England, whose duty it is to report respecting these, it would be greatly to the advantage of the country.

THE ERIE RAILROAD.

Mr. Doonan, of the Erie road, said that there were four fast freight lines on the Erie road. He presented the contracts under which those four lines ran. Those lines were the Great Western despatch, the Erie and Pacific, the North Shore and the South Shore. Mr. Doonan then answered questions put by the committee as to the capital stock of the company, and closed by putting in a printed report.

THE CONTINENTAL AIR RAILROAD.

Mr. W. C. Kippy, who appeared for the Continental Air Railway, said that about three years ago a few capitalists and engineers, observing the increase of commerce to the West and regarding the fact that the present railroad system would soon be inadequate for the through traffic, entered upon the duty of a reconnoissance of the Continent, and this resulted in showing to them that a line saving a great distance and also a saving in grades could be built. They obtained a charter throughout the different States. This line would save from fourteen to twenty per cent in geographical distance and also in grades. The contracts for building a double track have been completed, and the capacity of the road will be very great. About one hundred miles of this road had been laid in Ohio and Indiana, and was doing a large business. The entire cost of the line would be about $170,000,000.

At the conclusion of the testimony of J. E. Abbott, the engineer of the Continental Air Line, the committee adjourned, to meet in Albany on Monday.

A DEADLY EXPLOSION.

One Man Killed and Another Badly Wounded.

BALTIMORE, Sept. 13, 1873.

While John Hamilton and William Munk, employed at John G. Schwind's stone quarry, on Franklin street, were drilling preparatory to blasting this morning, a fearful explosion took place. Hamilton was horribly cut and mangled about the back and legs, and died in two hours. The deceased was twenty-six years old, and a native of Manchester, England. Munk was badly cut about the face, but will probably recover.