

OPERA HOUSE UNDER A NEW MANAGEMENT.

William R. Williamson, the obnoxious manager of the Grand Opera House, has been ousted.

President of Council Jesse K. Baylis, one of Wilmington's best known citizens, and an old theatrical manager of national reputation, has leased the house for five years, and will give his personal supervision, assuming control on Monday last.

This is the result of a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Masonic Hall Company held in the temple last evening. The vote to oust Williamson and lease the place to Mr. Baylis was, it is understood, unanimous. Williamson had been engaged for another year, but the directors succeeded in getting rid of him, despite that fact, probably paying him a sum of money to release them from the bargain.

The trouble which led to this desirable change is not of recent origin. It dates back two years or more. Williamson began his career by endeavoring to browbeat the press of the city, reducing the advertising and demanding big free notices for grudgingly-bestowed favors. He acted in such an ugly manner towards the patrons of the house that it became a matter of general complaint. When meritorious attractions were brought here the schedule of prices was raised without public notice and that created widespread dissatisfaction. Despite this, the directors clung to him until his one-night's benefits began to constitute nearly half as much as the yearly clearances of the house.

Last January Mr. Baylis made them an offer. It was not accepted at the time, but it set them to thinking. They thought until last night when they acted, giving Mr. Baylis certain concessions not embodied in his original offer, the terms being the result of a conference with him about a week ago.

Mr. Baylis was manager of the house from January, 1874, to March, 1880, and most successful in the administration of its affairs.

Mr. Baylis was born in Wilmington on February 10th, 1843. He has always been one of the most public-spirited men of the city. For six or seven years he did efficient service on the Board of Education. At the last municipal election he was elected to the presidency of City Council.

He is one of the leading masons of the city, being a member of Washington Lodge, No. 1, St. John's Royal Arch Chapter and St. John's Commandery, No. 1, Knights Templar Industry Lodge, No. 2, A. O. U. M., also has his name on the roll.

This change is a good fortune to the patrons of this theatre and those of our readers who patronize the house can be assured that they will be treated in a gentlemanly manner by Mr. Baylis.

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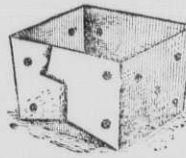
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