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THEODORE THOMAS.

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS IN NEW YORK.

IT seems a long time ago that New York city attained its undoubted position as the metropolis of the Western Continent, and yet for many years it lagged far behind most of the second and third rate cities of Europe in all that related to music. America had not then produced that brilliant galaxy of singers which is to-day receiving the well-earned plaudits of the Old and New worlds. She had not attracted to her shores those who stood foremost as singers, virtuosi, or conductors. With the exception of psalmodists and tune and ballad writers, American composers were unhonored and unknown. There was neither the material from which to form orchestras or choruses on a grand scale, nor an appreciative public, neces-

sary to their continuance when once organized.

The great artists of the Old World feared the ocean voyage; it was seldom that European favorites such as Jenny Lind or Jullien could be tempted to adventure so doubtful a field, and when they did come, it was for a brief stay only. In a few weeks or months they would traverse the country, and then return home, loaded with honors—and cash. As a rule, we were obliged to content ourselves with artists whose powers were on the wane, and whose popularity at home was declining.

The mighty upheaval of society caused by our civil war has resulted in a wonderful re-adjustment of our thoughts, hab-

its, and tastes. Year after year finds our audiences growing in size, and becoming more exacting, critical, and appreciative. In constantly increasing numbers the musicians of Europe visit us, and in many instances their stay is indefinitely prolonged. The piano no longer monopolizes the energies of our young music students. The violin and the various orchestral instruments receive more attention each year from American youth. But above all we have developed composers, conductors, organists, and critics from among our own people, whose influence for good can not be overestimated; who have taught thousands what good music is, and have elevated the taste of the entire public who care for music at all.

The fine arts and the drama have made marked progress throughout the United States during the last generation, but in neither of these has the advance been so great as in music. The change, noticeable all over the country, is of necessity more perceptible in New York than elsewhere. Including the adjoining cities, which practically are a part of New York, the population within an equal radius exceeds that of Paris, and is more than half that of London. Having numerous avenues of enjoyment, a pleasure-loving population, the city is a Mecca for the pleasure-pilgrims of America. In New York the wealth of the country is centred; trade, industry, and commerce are to a great extent regulated by its markets, and by the capitalists and merchant princes who make it their home. The cosmopolitan character of the city is plainly apparent in its population. Britons, Irish, Germans, French, Italians, are all present in such large numbers that the different nationalities impress their characteristics upon the city.

Nearly as many classes of music are to be heard as there are nations represented. French, German, Italian opera; English glees, German Lieder; Thomas's Symphony concerts and the *Pirates of Penzance*, the *Messiah* and Jubilee Singers, *Lohengrin* and the *Royal Middy*, all find an appreciative audience.

In considering the musicians of New York, one colossal figure stands, like Saul, head and shoulders above his brethren. England received Handel from Hanover, and to the same little kingdom America is indebted for Theodore Thomas. He holds an exceptional position in the history of music in America. He came to

this country when he was ten years of age. Successively a child-violinist, member of an orchestra, one of a string quartette, leader of Italian and German opera companies, violin soloist, and conductor of his own orchestra, he has run through the whole gamut of musical practice. By many he is regarded as the "apostle" of Wagner and the new school, whose music through his instrumentality has become to us "familiar as household words." If this implies a neglect of the old masters, it does him a great injustice. A comparison of names on the programmes shows that Beethoven has been oftener presented than Wagner, and Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and Mendelssohn oftener than Liszt, Brahms, and Berlioz. Mr. Thomas is not wedded to any particular school; but with a strong leaning to that of Wagner, he has always kept in view the sterling and beautiful compositions of all the great masters, and has played the best orchestral music, old and new, against opposition and misrepresentation, often the result of indifference or prejudice.

In 1861 he began the formation of an orchestra that for seventeen years was the pride and boast of New York; and as soon as he felt that he could safely rely on the support of the public in an enterprise that should appeal to the cultivated taste, the famous Symphony concerts were begun, and these were artistically his greatest success. That the orchestra might remain together during the whole year, the famous Summer-night Festivals were instituted in 1866. There, with an orchestra capable of interpreting any work, Mr. Thomas did not seek to enforce a severe class of music, but gave the public dance music, marches, and selections from the popular operas, as well as compositions of a higher order. By this means the frequenters of the Terrace and Central Park gardens by degrees grew to like and ask for the better music, and trivialities were gradually dismissed. It seemed a hazardous experiment to give daily concerts in Fifty-ninth Street and Sixty-third Street at a time when the centre of population was two miles down town, and when slow horse-cars were the only means of access; but distance could not keep away the great public, to whom these concerts were the Symphony and Philharmonic concerts of the select few.

When the plan was adopted of giving an entire evening to the works of one

composer, the musical camp divided into numerous armies, each under the banner of its favorite composer. Every one who called himself an admirer or follower of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, or Wagner felt himself under obligation to be present when his favorite's works were presented, and great were the crowds, and animated the discussions that ensued as to the relative attendance on the various evenings. The Wagnerites, being the younger and the more enthusiastic, thronged the garden when a Wagner night was announced; but the admirers of Beethoven and Mendelssohn would at times run them a hard race as to numbers, and would applaud quite as vigorously as the most devoted advocates of the music of the future.

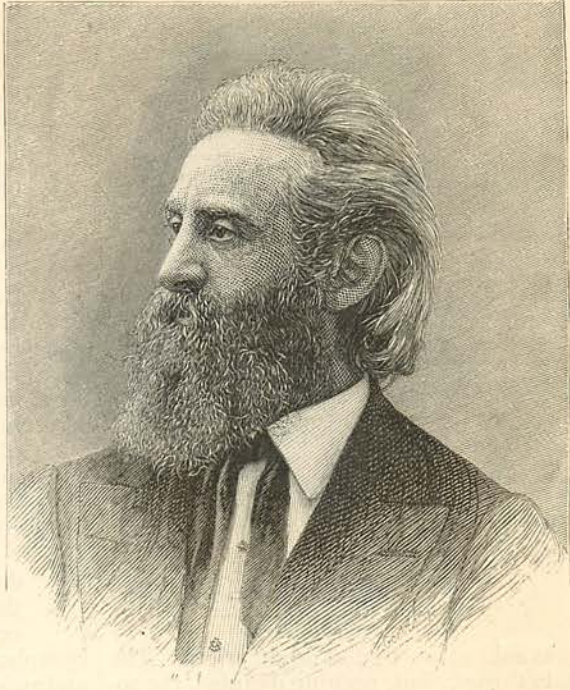
In 1869, Mr. Thomas conceived the idea of travelling during the time unoccupied in New York, and for nine years he made an annual round of the chief cities, and enabled other places to enjoy the services of his unrivalled orchestra.

Suddenly an offer came from Cincinnati to make him the director of the College of Music in that city, at a liberal salary. The terms were generous, the work congenial, and, above all, it would enable him to enjoy a comparative rest from his intense labors. Mr. Thomas felt it his duty to accept the offer, and for a short period New York lost him—not altogether, for he came periodically to the city, and, as the conductor of the Brooklyn and New York Philharmonic societies, retained his hold on the public.

Disagreements arose in the Cincinnati College, and in the spring of 1880 he resigned his position, and returned to New York.

Mr. Thomas is undoubtedly a born conductor, and no better proof of this could be given than the eagerness with which the members of his old orchestra return to his leadership at the first opportunity.

Should Mr. Thomas reorganize his orchestra, he will have as great advantages as ever; and we may reasonably expect that he will not only give us new and good music, but that he will continue by perfec-



LEOPOLD DAMROSCH.

tion of execution to give new beauty and charm to music already familiar, and thereby spur other associations throughout the country to greater exertion and more careful performance.

Very few citizens can remember the feeble beginnings of the New York Philharmonic Society, the oldest and best association of musicians in the city, and fewer still are the early members who remain to take part in its thirty-ninth season. The society has had many ups and downs, and at one period (1853), after a year of arduous labor, its members found themselves in debt, and obliged to declare an "Irish dividend," to make the accounts balance. Originally the society met for rehearsal in the Apollo Rooms, on Broadway, just below Canal Street. At that time ladies were not present at rehearsals, and the musicians chatted and smoked in the intervals between practice. Gradually the place of meeting moved up town, ladies were admitted to the rehearsals, and smoking ceased. In time it became fashionable to attend the Philharmonics, and for some years the Academy of Music was filled with the best people of New York. Box applicants were so numerous that the choice of boxes



ETELKA GERSTER.

was sold at auction at high prices. The tide turned; but, nothing daunted, the society kept on its course, and soon regained its hold on that part of the public that had deserted it. To-day the Philharmonic Society is as popular as ever before, and the public rehearsals and concerts are attended by a refined audience, who listen with hearty appreciation. The musical perceptions of thousands have thus been awakened, and the society has conquered in its long struggle for classical music.

Under the same conductor (Mr. Thomas), with nearly the same membership and repertory, the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society is a younger sister.

Probably the most important musical events of the past year in New York were the production of Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*, and Bach's *Passion Music*. The former was presented February 14, 1880, for the first time in America, to an audience consisting in great part of musicians and amateurs, that completely filled both the large and small Steinway Hall. Dr. Damrosch had the Symphony, the Oratorio, and the Arion societies under his direction, and led them through the intricate mazes of the score with a master hand. The soloists were Miss Amy Sherwin (Marguerite), Mr. Jordan (Faust), Mr. Remmertz (Mephistopheles), and Mr. Bourne (Brander). Mr. Remmertz proved the most satisfactory of the soloists, as the

music was admirably suited to his virile bass.

A few bars at the beginning lead to the opening lines of Faust, who, wandering on the plains of Hungary, sings an ode to awakening spring, accompanied by soft vibrating strains of the orchestra. His meditations are interrupted by a chorus of peasants dancing to the sound of flutes, clarionets, and horns. Hardly has the chorus ended, when the sound of approaching troops is heard, and here Berlioz introduces the superb *Racoczy March*, scored with a brilliancy and variety possible only to him who has a supreme knowledge of the capabilities of each instrument, and a grasp firm enough to bind them into one harmonious whole.

Few orchestras could have rendered this with the accuracy and the fidelity to the composer's conception shown by the playing of the Symphony Society. The precision, vigor, and swing of the march as it rang through the house thrilled the audience, and, when ended, a repetition was demanded. While all hearts were beating fast and strong in sympathy with the glorious movement of the advancing soldiers, Faust's voice was heard crying out, in utter dejection:

"All hearts are thrilled—they chant their battle's story;

My heart alone is cold—ay, dead to glory."

The second part introduces one of those contrasts of gloom and sunshine in which Berlioz delighted. Faust, weary of existence, yearning and suffering; while from the neighboring church the glad triumphant Easter hymn ascends peacefully to heaven. Then Mephistopheles transports Faust to Auerbach's cellar in Leipsic, where students and soldiers are drinking and singing. A scene of mad jollity follows, during which Brander and Mephistopheles respectively sing "The Song of the Rat" and "The Song of the Flea." The humor is ponderous, but both soloists sang with great sonority and much artistic feeling. Leaving the carousers, the scene shifts to the banks of the Elbe, with Faust asleep, dreaming of Marguerite. As the *Racoczy March* is the ideal of soul-stirring martial music, so is the chorus of gnomes and sylphs the very ideal of dainty, fantastic harmony. Male and female singers, the string and wind of the

orchestra, move in a perfect net-work of transparent rippling harmonies, part in three-four, the other in six-eight time, wonderfully blended into one delicate fairy-like composition. No wonder that when it is heard for the first time the hearer is surprised as by a new revelation.

The unhappy Marguerite, yielding to her fate, is condemned to die, but Faust, torn by anguish and remorse, extorts her freedom from Mephistopheles at the price of his own salvation. Having sold himself, Faust and the demon, mounted on their devilish steeds Vortex and Giaour, enter upon their ride to hell. Surrounded by Satanic demons, hounded on by the incantations of witches and imps, pursued by the curse of God and man, Faust's heart fails him, and he screams with horror as Mephistopheles taunts and sneers at him. Faster and faster their coursers rush madly through space, and with a hideous roar and blare plunge into the awful abyss of hell. Words fail to describe the titanic power with which this episode in the legend is treated by the composer. Its influence leaves the mind of the hearer in an agitated state that almost unfits him to appreciate the melody of the angelic chorus that is bearing Marguerite's soul to heaven. The harps and strings accompany this closing chorus with celestial strains growing louder and louder, until Marguerite enters the abode of the pure and the blessed.

Such was the popularity of the Berlioz legend that six performances were given to densely thronged houses, and Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia extended invitations for a repetition in those cities.

For generations Bach had been esteemed "dry," and held up to admiration simply as a master of counterpoint, until Mendelssohn brought the Passion Music out of the obscurity into which it had fallen. Every year has witnessed a growing interest in Bach, and each performance of the Passion Music has drawn attention to his other works. The reaction from melodious jingle and meaningless harmony shown by the increasing study of Bach is one of the cheering signs of the times.

The Oratorio Society was not daunted by the time and labor necessary to produce a work of such length and technical difficulty and in so unaccustomed a style, but devoted many months to the study of Bach's Passion Music, and had it been given in Steinyway Hall, its effect would have been better than as sung in St. George's Church, under the disadvantage of having orchestra and chorus divided.



ITALO CAMPANINI.

And yet the associations of the sacred place added greatly to the spirit in which it was heard.

The great success of the Handel and Haydn festivals in Boston, and the May festivals in Cincinnati, has encouraged Dr. Damrosch in the belief that a like success is possible in New York. With a chorus of twelve hundred singers, an orchestra of two hundred and twenty-five performers, Miss Cary, Mr. Georg Henschel, and other eminent soloists, it is proposed to give a series of performances at the Seventh Regiment Armory, which will seat ten thousand persons in addition to the performers. As the time approaches, the activity of preparation increases and the interest intensifies. The works decided upon are the *Messiah*, the *Ninth Symphony*, the *Dettingen Te Deum*, Rubinstein's *Tower of Babel*, and Berlioz's *Grand Requiem*.



ANNIE LOUISE CARY.

Nearly two generations have elapsed since the Garcia troupe, containing the famous Malibran, first transplanted that brilliant exotic, the Italian opera, from Europe, and despite the many attempts, with varying success, that have been made to domicile it with us, only of late years does it appear to have taken deep root. The lyric drama did not die—the indications of weakness at times were merely the transitory stages to a fresher and more vigorous life. At present, thanks to the owners of the Academy of Music and the enterprise of Mr. Mapleson, stimulated by the generous encouragement of the public, it has been established on a firm basis, and for some years to come probably as good an *ensemble* as money and managerial skill can command will be secured. The chorus and ballet are good, the scenery and stage settings fresh, and the orchestra, under the direction of Signor Arditì, is superb. The names of Gerster, Cary, Valleria, Bellocca, Campanini, Galassi, and Del Puente awaken hosts of pleasant recollections. The chief fault found with the management is the poverty of the repertory. A public that has encouraged representations of *Aïda*, *Lohengrin*, and other works before they had been heard either in London or Paris, deserves some novelties each season. The only novelty

of the past season was Boito's *Mefistofele*.

The lovers of opera in New York must at all times have an idol to worship. Some old gentlemen yet alive can remember the glorious Malibran, who sang their hearts away in early days. A greater number will ever remain faithful to their remembrance of the wonderful Jenny Lind. The present occupant of that exalted throne before which the devotees of the opera and all lovers of song bow in admiration is that bright gem of modern song, Gerster, whose winning gentleness, grace, and dramatic power have charmed every listener.

Judging from the operas in which she has sung, Gerster's preferences are for parts of which the prevailing characteristics are florid passages elaborately embellished. And

yet perhaps her greatest success in New York was as Elsa in *Lohengrin*—a part she surrounded with an atmosphere of tenderness, truth, and beauty. Owing to Gerster's absence during one year, the unusual sight was presented of a tenor and a barytone overshadowing the prime *donne* of a well-organized company.

The burden of that season was undoubtedly borne by Campanini, whom the appreciative King of Italy has recently knighted, whose life has been full of strange vicissitudes. While still a lad, he served in Garibaldi's Army of Liberation, and was wounded in the face during battle. From the heroic to the practical was but a step. Leaving the army, he was apprenticed to a blacksmith, and the hard work at the forge developed that robust health which to-day enables him to bid defiance, in his chosen profession, to hoarseness and overexertion. After some study, and two years of service with a travelling opera company, he made his *début* as Faust at La Scala, and three years afterward came to America with Strakosch in the Nilsson company. During that engagement he appeared in the title rôle of *Lohengrin*, with Nilsson as Elsa. On this memorable occasion there was an outburst of enthusiasm on the part of the public unparalleled, ex-

cept in the case of Parepa, since the days of Jenny Lind, and equalled only by the success of Gerster in after-years.

Nature endowed Campanini with a strong, even, and sympathetic voice, and art has enabled him to greatly increase its compass, while imparting flexibility and brilliancy throughout its range. An ardent, painstaking student, he is to-day a living proof that good vocalism is worth all the time and labor it takes to acquire, for without it no voice could have borne the strain to which his has been subjected. In one season he sang in opera a hundred times, took part in numberless rehearsals, besides singing in the *Stabat Mater* seven times, and assisting at a number of concerts in Boston, New York, and Cincinnati. His acting is nearly as good as his singing, and the poorest singer in the cast feels his magnetic influence. But not only as an artist is he enviable: his genial, manly character has won him hosts of friends, who love the man as much as they admire the singer.

When it had been decided that Gerster would not appear, Mlle. Valleria, an American lady under an Italian name, was put forward, and the manner in which she sang the parts allotted to her gave general satisfaction. Another American, who sings under her own name, and is almost as well known throughout the Union as in New York city—Miss Annie Louise Cary—is probably the most popular contralto yet heard on the lyric stage in America, with the exception of the incomparable Alboni. After completing her studies in Germany with Madame Garcia, she accepted engagements in opera for two years, singing successfully in the chief cities of Northern Europe before returning to America. Since her début here in the year 1870, Miss Cary has gradually developed both as actor and singer, and her last appearances have been the best. In operas like *La Favorita*, in which the interest centres in the tenor and contralto, with two such capable artists as Cary and Campanini, few hearers would look upon opera as an irrational and unintellectual amuse-

ment. The languid interest paid to scale-singing heroines and sentimental heroes gives place to an absorbed interest in both the music and the action.

The experience of impresarii during



ARTHUR SEYMOUR SULLIVAN.

late years has convinced them that nothing is too good, too elaborate, or too costly for New York. Mediocrity has proved fatal. Those enterprises succeed best that treat the public in the most generous manner; that offer the best of their kind, that do thoroughly well whatever is done at all. The most costly opera company ever brought to our country, that of Strakosch with Nilsson, Campanini, and Capoul, was the most successful pecuniarily. And the results made public by Mr. Grau at the end of his season of French *opéra bouffe* confirm this opinion. In a little over a year he gave 452 performances, of which over 200 were in New York, and after paying great salaries to Capoul, Paola-Marie, Angele, and the other members of the company, a large sum remained for the manager.

The remarkable success of this company in New York, remembering the fact that when Grau's first announcement appeared, a kindred organization, the Aimee troupe, had just completed a successful season, is in a great measure due to the large French element in the city. Some

of the twenty-five operas produced were very popular, notably *La Fille de Madame Angot*, which was sung fifty-six times; *Le Petit Duc*, fifty-one times; *Les Cloches de Corneville*, forty-six; *Madame Favart*, thirty-seven; *Girofle-Girofla*, thirty-six; and *Mignon*, thirty-three.

The success of *Pinafore* brings to mind an old Dutch story of how a rat, in search of pleasure or profit, burrowed through one of the dikes that protected Holland from the angry sea. At first only a few drops of water trickled through. Then a little stream appeared, which, gradually growing larger and stronger, at last broke down the barrier, and a mighty flood of waters rushed in and submerged the land.



CLARA LOUISE KELLOGG.

The adventurous manager who first put *Pinafore* on the stage in Boston, and his compatriot who followed in New York, certainly never dreamed of the popularity that would attend their venture; but a success unparalleled in the history of the stage was the result. For over a year it seemed as though every theatre in the larger cities was engaged in that "charming nonsense *Pinafore*." And not content with these, the enthusiastic public supported innumerable performances by amateurs, church choirs, children, ne-

groes, and others in every possible variety. Probably to-day numbers of towns and villages are enjoying the bright music and innocent fun of this operetta.

The authors received very little money directly from America, but were doubtless compensated in some degree by the effect in England of its popularity here. Taking advantage of the distinction drawn by our judges between printed and unprinted MSS., Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan visited us with a new opera in their pockets, which in due time was presented to the public. In some respects superior to *Pinafore*, the *Pirates of Penzance* lacks the great advantage of novelty. The plot, the characters, the catches, seem simply the *Pinafore* kaleidoscope shaken up a little. Ralph in *Pinafore* is Frederick in the *Pirates*, Josephine is Mabel, the Admiral is the General, Buttercup is Ruth, the sisters, cousins, and aunts are the General's daughters. The chief novelty is the policemen's chorus; for the General's funny patter song is the *Sorcerer's* song in a new dress. While arranging for new operas, it might be well to let the public hear the *Sorcerer*. If properly mounted, with a better orchestra and better soloists than those of the *Pirates*, it would be sure to win great approval.

The production of *Pinafore* marks a new era in the history of music in this country. To Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan the utmost praise is due for the brilliant outlook of English opera in America. Thousands of the best people, fond of music, who had hitherto shunned the theatre, were induced to attend the performances during the *Pinafore*

period, and were gratified to find nothing in the words or action to shock the most refined taste. Managers have not been slow to cater to the wants of this class, who wish their wives and daughters to participate in their amusements. A large number of companies have already been called into existence, and more are promised. Among the best of these are the Boston Ideals, the Emma Abbott, and the Strakosch companies. In addition to the large number of travelling companies, there are innumerable local societies scattered

all over the Union, partly social in their organization, who study the lighter operettas, and give three or four performances during the season. The list of works available is very large. The larger associations sing *Fatinitza*, *Little Duke*, *Crown Diamonds*, *Chimes of Normandy*, *Royal Middy*, *Doctor of Alcantara*, *Paul and Virginia*, *Bohemian Girl*, and similar compositions; the smaller societies take up *Princess Toto*, *Spectre Knight*, *Ages Ago*, *Charity Begins at Home*, and the like.

It is very gratifying to find that many of the larger companies, and almost all of the smaller, are made up of American singers; and with proper attention to details, and an unwillingness to do things by halves, the prospects of a national opera in the vernacular are excellent. While the extensive patronage of some of these compositions indicates a low grade of musical taste, and many of them are uninteresting, yet they are innocent in themselves, and argue a love of music, which experience shows, once awakened, may be easily directed into higher channels. A step in this direction has already been taken by the representation of *Deseret* by the Dudley Buck Opera Company. Operas by American composers are no novelty. Mr. George Bristow's *Rip Van Winkle* was produced in 1855; Mr. W. H. Fry's *Leonora* in 1858; and *Notre Dame de Paris*, by the same composer, in 1864; but after a few performances these were put aside, and have not been heard again. An operetta better known and oftener heard to-day than when first sung, eighteen years ago, is the work of Mr. Julius Eichberg, a native of Germany, who for many years has been a resident of Boston. Various English opera companies have received great encouragement in the past. Parepa, whose memory is held as precious in America as in England, gave, with Carl Rosa, a brilliant series of representations; and Miss Clara Louise Kellogg, one of the first American singers to win European laurels, organized a company in 1874, which was favorably received during the entire time of its existence. But Mr. Buck's is the first successful opera by American authors with an American sub-



DUDLEY BUCK.

ject, and its success at first seemed commensurate with its novelty. The scene is laid in Salt Lake City, among the Mormons, and Elder Scram's relations with his twenty-four wives, to whom he proposes to introduce a twenty-fifth, form the basis of the comic situations and incidents. The male chorus is supplied by United States soldiers, while a sprinkling of Indians, Mormons, and army officers offers a wide field for quaint conceits and fine scenic effects. Brilliant orchestration is one of the strong points of the opera, and the voices in the choruses are so distributed as to secure the best effects. The solo parts, full of poetic fancy, are melodious and flowing, adding greatly to the power of the text. The comedy, never degenerating into buffoonery or vulgarity, is as unobjectionable as *Pinafore* itself, but unfortunately not as sparkling.

The work is not that of a 'prentice hand. Ever since his return from the Leipsic Conservatory, where he was a fellow-student of Arthur Sullivan, S. B. Mills, Carl Rosa, and other since distinguished musicians, Mr. Buck's various compositions have met with the unqualified approval of musicians and the public. His reputation as composer and executant, while organist of the Music Hall, Boston, having attracted the notice of Mr. Thomas, he accepted the position of as-



RAFAEL JOSEFFY.

sistant director at the Thomas Garden Concerts. The highest compliment that an American composer could receive was paid to Mr. Buck by committing to him the composition of the music to a cantata to be sung at the opening of the Centennial Exhibition. Performed by a chorus of eight hundred voices and an orchestra of one hundred and fifty pieces, under the direction of Mr. Thomas, the result fully justified the confidence felt in Mr. Buck's powers. He has also published a large number of compositions for the organ, church anthems, and songs, which have become very popular. Two larger works, the *Legend of Don Munio* and the *Marmion* overture, were followed by the *Golden Legend*, which from more than a score of competitors carried off the prize of \$1000 offered by the Cincinnati May Festival for the best composition for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra.

To the large number of choral societies already in existence, Mr. Thomas has added one in New York and one in Brooklyn, for the purpose of aiding the two Philharmonic societies in the production of works demanding a large chorus and orchestra, such as Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and selections from Wagner's *Trilogy*. Of the numerous German societies, most of which are of a private or social character, the *Liederkrantz* and the *Arion* are

most widely known. The Oratorio Society continues to devote itself to the study of Handel, Haydn, Bach, etc. The Mendelssohn Glee Club, under the direction of Mr. Joseph Mosenthal, consisting of a male chorus, sing English glees and German part songs, chiefly without accompaniment, with remarkable finish and precision. Some years ago, Mr. Mosenthal directed the Glee and Madrigal Society, in many respects the best chorus ever formed in the city. Glancing over the programmes from 1869 to 1874, many names familiar to the public appear as members of the chorus, those of Miss Emma C. Thursby and Miss Antoinette Sterling being the most conspicuous. This society sang madrigals by Morley, Wilbye, Festa, Gastoldi, Weelkes, Gibbons, and Ford, with admirable precision, intensity of expres-

sion, and true intonation. For variety's sake, the society sang such compositions as Mendelssohn's *Psalms*, Gade's *Erl King's Daughters*, selections from Schumann's *Paradise and the Peri*, and the male chorus gave the Mendelssohn Greek choruses, Schubert's "Night," "Spirit Chorus," and similar pieces. The voices individually and collectively were good, and they sang in a way that demonstrated their careful and admirable training, and showed that they loved the music and delighted in the exercise.

The organists attached to several of the larger churches have established choral associations, of which their respective choirs in some instances form the nuclei. These study the more difficult church music, and miscellaneous music of the highest grade.

The low state of church music until within comparatively recent times was in a great measure the result of the influence of the first colonists and their successors. The Puritans, the Dutch, the Quakers, and in after-times the Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and others, cared little for music beyond psalm and hymn tunes. For a long period the organ even was not allowed in many churches, and until the growth in numbers of those churches whose ritual permitted an elaborate use of mu-

sical forms, very slight attention was paid to the subject. It is true that in New England it was an object of desire among the young men and women to become members of the choir, but except the weary round of psalms, almost the only attempts at higher music were the so-called fugue tunes, familiar to the present generation through the medium of the "Old Folks" concerts. The musician of to-day esteems these compositions as beneath his notice, yet they were the sign of a struggle for something beyond mere metrical tunes. Bach's chorals were seldom sung, their peculiar metre and rhythm, full of double endings, preventing their use in connection with the ordinary hymn-books. The walls of conservatism once broken down, music in many churches was made use of as a means to attract large audiences, and the competition that ensued was not confined to any one denomination. As a matter of course, the true function of church music was lost sight of, light secular music, arranged according to the fancy of the organist or leader, was introduced, gifted vocalists rivalled to the extent of their ability in brilliancy and effects the artists on the stage, and propriety was very often disregarded. This state of confusion was transitory only, and a change for the better has already taken place; but great diversity of opinion and practice still exists. A few churches have adopted the Gregorian music, and the vexed question of quartette or chorus choirs has been generally solved by the employment of both.

In the Catholic and Episcopal churches the orchestra is often used as an auxiliary, and churches in which congregational singing is the rule are now well supplied with suitable hymnaries. The typical churches for the higher forms of music are the Trinity Episcopalian and several of the Catholic churches; that for congregational singing is Henry Ward Beecher's.

Aside from the good effect on the instruments, the generous rivalry between the great piano manufacturers has resulted in a gain to the city of two fine halls. Fifteen years ago, Messrs. Steinway and Sons built a large and commodious hall,

admirably suited for concert purposes, and gave their name to the building. Since its erection, many of the most successful concerts and most of the oratorios have been heard within its walls. Some years later, Messrs. Chickering and Sons followed this example with a hall on Fifth Avenue, admirably adapted for chamber con-



FRANZ RUMMEL.

certs. At a great expense to themselves, the Messrs. Steinway and Chickering have aided in bringing to America many of the famous pianists of Europe.

Come what may, the piano will permanently keep the first place as the instrument of the household. And in no country are there so many pianos and so many players as in the United States. The widespread use of this instrument has created an extremely large class to whom the masters of the piano can appeal. The appeal is never unheeded, and unless mismanaged, hardly any engagement in New York, or tour through the country, has failed to be profitable to the performer and to art.

The most successful artist of late years has been Joseffy—a second Liszt in technique. Certainly no such extreme delicacy of touch, marvellous facility of execution, and exquisite finish have been reached by any artist ever heard in this city. In Chopin, Joseffy is unsurpassable; but with some composers, as he knows



S. B. MILLS.

no technical difficulties, he frequently hurries the *tempo*, and injures the effect.

Franz Rummel, while he can not rival Joseffy in technique, possesses what many pianists lack—breadth of conception, vigor, a bold style, and the power of merging his own identity in that of the composer whose work he is reproducing. Lacking somewhat in elegance of style, he yet at times rises to a height which suggests that great genius Rubinstein. At one concert of the Philharmonic Society he fairly electrified the audience by his brilliant rendering of Liszt's *Fantasia on Hungarian Airs*.

Very few American pianists have adopted the concert-room as their field of labor, preferring, in most instances, teaching as a profession. Their concert playing has been incidental only. One of the best-known is Mr. William Mason, whose whole career has been that of a thoroughly conscientious artist of the highest aims. Mr. S. B. Mills, who has been more frequently heard on the platform, has few superiors in delicacy, accuracy, and technique.

Piano and organ recitals have long been fashionable, and the next step is obviously in the direction of the stringed instruments. As musical taste is developed they receive more attention, and either as solo instruments or in quartettes are rapidly growing in public favor. Should Joachim and Sarasate visit this country, the many Amer-

icans who have been delighted by their playing in Europe will cordially welcome them to the shores of the New World. Be that as it may, we have with us Wilhelmj, Reményi, and the child Dengremont, and listening to them, we are for the time content.

During the Bayreuth performances, it is reported that Liszt said of Wilhelmj, "He is so thoroughly adapted for the violin, that, were the instrument not at hand, we should have to invent it for him." Ever since his first appearance in America, his popularity has steadily increased. The tones he evokes from the violin are remarkable for their clearness and richness; technical difficulties cease to exist, and without ever straining for dazzling effects, the result attained is marvellous.

Wilhelmj lacks that personal magnetism which is so potent a factor in the career of a public performer. Ole Bull possessed this in a remarkable degree. The public that heard him once regarded him as a friend, and every subsequent appearance was sure to awaken a storm of approval. Though others may be acknowledged as greater artists, no one can ever expect to win greater love and favor from an American audience than was bestowed on the charming old man who has so lately left us.

Perhaps the most characteristic street in the city is the Bowery. For a short time a rival to Broadway, it soon sank into a secondary position; its broad street was given up to numerous lines of street cars; its stores and cellars were turned into beer saloons, cheap restaurants, clothing stores, etc.; the upper stories into tenements and cigar manufactories, and the sidewalks occupied by hucksters. In truth, it seemed that when the elevated roads should be added, and confusion be worse confounded, the street would sink into utter obscurity. But, strange to say, it thrives on the noise and confusion, and is now one of the most frequented avenues in the city, especially in the night-time. On a mild evening, up to eleven or twelve o'clock, it is a scene of marvellous activity. Almost every beer saloon has a brass band, or at least a pi-

ano, violin, and cornet; and what the performers lack in finish, they make up in vigor. Through the open doors and from the cellars come outbursts of noise and merriment; the innumerable cars go jangling and rumbling along; every truck and wagon in the city seems to rattle through the street; the dwellers in the upper stories are congregated in the hallways and on the sidewalks, seeking a little fresh air; the street hawkers, with gasoline torches, are crying their wares; in front of the auction-rooms men with throats of brass are inviting the passers-by to enter; every shop is open, and a vast tide of humanity is streaming down the street, met by a still vaster throng going up town, while, high above, the trains on the elevated roads thunder along. The discord is simply amazing, but the good citizens, accompanied by Frau or Schatz, do not seem to mind it in the least, but serenely go on their way, and turn into the stores, theatres, or beer gardens, intent on an evening's shopping or entertainment.

The Old Bowery Theatre, time-honored seat of the "blood-and-thunder" drama, was altered, repaired, and renovated in the summer of 1879, its name changed to the Thalia, and its doors thrown open as a home of the German drama and light opera. On its boards, in rapid succession, were presented a large number of operettas and pieces, as the Germans have it, "Posse mit Gesang," and here the first representations in New York of the *Royal Middy* (*Der Seekadet*), *Boccaccio*, *Prince Methusalem*, *Nisida*, and other light operettas were given in the original with great success. The owners of this theatre, under the direction of Fräulein Cottrelly, have solved the problem of light music at low prices for the German population. They recognized the fact that their patrons, though fond of music, have little money to spend in the gratification of their pleasures, and the rules adopted by them are as simple as they are good: low prices, and no unsold reserved seats.

By adherence to these rules the theatre has been generally

well filled, and at no time was it necessary to "paper the house" to secure fair audiences. English managers and impresarii would do well to take a leaf out of Fräulein Cottrelly's book, and try the same plan for a season. Possibly the results might be similar to those of the Opéra Comique in Paris, where, during the summer, prices were reduced one-half, with increased receipts as the effect. Aside from the financial result, the effect on the actors and singers would be beneficial. Where now they go through their performance in a listless manner, the effect of empty benches, they would then feel the inspiring influence of crowded houses. Such a result would please all parties: the management by its larger income, the singers by the magnetic influence between the performers and the audience, and the public by reason of the lessened expense.

Through the enormous immigration of the last thirty years, many German manners and customs have become fixed among us, and have exerted a marked influence on other immigrants and on those who are native born. Absorbed in the hurly-burly of money-making, the American people could not be brought to separate business from pleasure. As a consequence, most amusements were taken sadly. But with the Germans



AUGUST WILHELMJ.



EDOUARD REMENYI.

came the German ability of enjoyment through cheap and innocent amusements. In the father-land they had been accustomed to go with wife and children to the gardens and open-air cafés, where the father placidly smoked his pipe and sipped his beer, while the mother quietly plied her needle or knitting, and the children played around her or strolled about and chatted with each other in undertones, while all listened to the charming music discoursed by good bands. For a long time the counterpart of the father-land was confined to the Bowery, Jones's Wood, and Hoboken. Gradually, however, the patrons of these places ceased to be only Germans, and with some slight changes capitalists felt that the city at large would support similar concerts. Among the first results of the change were Theodore Thomas's garden concerts, soon followed by Gilmore's concerts in the Madison Square Garden, and culminating in the innumerable daily afternoon and evening concerts at Coney Island. But all these were for the summer months only, and the next step was to build a suitable house which should be cool during summer and warm in winter. Messrs.

Koster and Bial were the first to make this venture. They purchased the Twenty-third Street Theatre, tore out the stage, continued the building through to Twenty-fourth Street, pierced large open arches in the side walls, and laid out the adjoining vacant lots as a garden, and placed a large organ and an orchestral platform in the main hall. Here, under the direction of Mr. Rudolph Bial, at one time director of the famous Krolls Garden in Berlin, a continuous series of concerts has been given, which have been unusually well attended from the beginning by the most respectable people. The music, as a rule, has been of a light, sparkling character, which pleased while it did not demand close attention; but occasionally music of a higher order has been attempted, with encouraging results. Notable among these were the concerts given during the past summer in connection with Wilhelmj, when,

despite the double price of admission, the hall was thronged by thousands.

Encouraged by the success of Messrs. Koster and Bial, the Metropolitan Concert Hall Company, in the early summer of 1880, opened their building on Broadway and Forty-first Street—a hall capable of accommodating four or five thousand people, while leaving ample room for promenading. Mr. Aronson, the director of this new enterprise, spent several years in Europe studying the characteristics of the popular summer-night concerts of Berlin, Vienna, and Paris, and on his return interested capitalists in the scheme, and the result was a building without a superior of its kind either in Europe or America. The main characteristics are an immense hall of great breadth and height, surrounded by wide aisles. By means of a steam-engine in the cellar, the sliding roof above the hall is capable of being opened or shut in a few seconds, thus affording complete ventilation, and keeping the hall cool, even when brilliantly lighted by innumerable gas jets. Above the aisles on the main floor are tiers of boxes on either side, with a restaurant at the end, and the ceiling above these

boxes forms the floor of the great novelty of the building—an open-air terrace or gallery, eighteen feet wide, which runs entirely around the building. The windows of the clear-story of the hall being thrown open, the auditory in the terrace can hear the music almost as plainly as in the hall itself, into which they have a full view; while, crossing to the other side of the terrace, they overlook the neighboring four-story buildings and the street below. Upon Mr. Thomas's engagement as director of the music, the attendance, already very large, was greatly increased, notably on the two evenings of the week devoted to classical music. Both the Metropolitan and Koster and Bial's combine the features of a concert hall, restaurant, and café under one roof.

A few years ago an association of capitalists made the delightful discovery that New York was within twenty-five minutes of the blue ocean, and of a white sandy beach unsurpassed by any of the famous European sea-side resorts. Acting on their discovery, they built a magnificent bathing pavilion, and a yet more magnificent hotel, surrounded by flower beds, in the centre of which a music stand was erected. A military band under the direction of Mr. Gilmore, the originator of the famous Boston Jubilees, was engaged to give a concert every afternoon and evening during the summer months. It is true that Coney Island could be found on all the maps, but, with the exception of a few Brooklynites who drove down in the late afternoon, the place had been abandoned to card sharpers and the roughest class from New York. The fashion of the metropolis went to Long Branch, Newport, and other places at least fifty miles from the city; but the proprietors of the Manhattan builded even better than they knew, for to-day six railroads and numerous boats are hardly sufficient to carry the countless thousands to the various hotels that dot Coney Island. The Manhattan still retains its pre-eminence, and is thronged every day and evening by the multitudes to whom Gilmore's Band and the sweet notes from Levy's cornet are the chief attraction.

Stimulated by the success of the Manhattan, a second hotel was soon built—the

Brighton—which is to Brooklyn what the Manhattan is to New York. All the paraphernalia of the older hotel were repeated—a special railroad to carry the multitude, a large bathing pavilion, an immense restaurant to feed the hungry, and lastly and chiefly, an orchestra and a good cornet-player. Mr. Neuendorf was intrusted with the music, and during the first sum-



EMMA C. THURSBY.

mer he employed a complete string, wood, and brass orchestra. The artistic effect was encouraging, but was unfortunately lost to those unable to obtain the best seats, and the next year the orchestra was replaced by a military band.

Farther to the west, on the same beach, numerous sea-side resorts were built, each of which had its band, the best known being Downing's Ninth Regiment Band, with Mr. Arbuckle as cornetist. With the enthusiasm peculiar to Americans, numerous hotels were built at Rockaway, Long Beach, and other places. The direct gain to music is small, but indirectly the certainty of employment throughout the otherwise dull months has induced many musicians to remain in the metropolis.

At a farewell supper given to Miss Thursby in London, Mr. Hutton, in proposing a toast, took occasion to say, "The truth is, the leading English concert singers of to-day are Americans, and the principal Italian prime donne of the lyric stage

come from America," and called on Mr. Mapleson to substantiate his remarks.

Making all due allowance for the circumstances under which this compliment to our fellow-citizens was made, the statement was not so very far from the mark. Could we but have a Conservatory of Music on a generous plan, with a large endowment, having at its head a man of undoubted ability and a thorough musician, by encouraging the latent genius which in so many instances is crushed by unfavorable circumstances, it might be verified in its entirety. What is needed is concentration and co-operation. Good teachers are numerous in the city, and some of our best singers have received their entire musical education at home. Miss Thursby is one of the shining examples of the vocal culture attainable in America, for, with the exception of a few months' study in Milan, her perfect method and brilliant execution are the results of training received under the direction of Julius Meyer, Achille Errani, and Madame Rudersdorf. Her voice is of unusual compass, with great carrying power and perfect intonation, and, by reason of its purity and strength, may be heard above orchestra and chorus throughout the largest building. In ballads and songs, which she sings with a *naïveté* that is irresistible, in the great arias, and in concert pieces that abound in technical difficulties, her singing is in turn tender, lofty, and graceful. Never indulging in execution that is ornamental only, all her powers are subordinated to the one great end—expression. Her true field is the oratorio and the concert-room. Miss Kellogg and Miss Hawk also are among those whose education has been altogether American, the list of whom might be greatly extended.

There are few countries in which music is more extensively cultivated, or at least performed, than in the United States, but as yet our best musicians have chiefly been executants. The composers have been hampered by lack of opportunity, caused by the chilling indifference to native talent, and by the flood of European writers, whose works are common property in America. Valuable and interesting symphonies, grand operas, compositions in all forms, have in years past lain neglected on the shelves of their authors' libraries. A better time is near at hand. Help is extended to the American composer by the offering of prizes for compo-

sitions, and a sure sign of the improvement in musical taste is seen by the increased interest in the composition rather than in its performance. Mozart's father once wrote to his son, "Consider that for every connoisseur there are a hundred wholly ignorant; therefore do not overlook the popular in your style of composition, and forget to tickle the long ears." Mozart replied, "Fear not, father, respecting the pleasure of the multitude; there will be music for all kinds of people, but none for long ears."

Too many American musicians, knowing the fate that had attended the larger compositions in the past, wrote for the "long ears" only, and the result is an enormously long list of extravaganzas and music of the most ephemeral character. The only characteristic American music hitherto is the product of the lowest strata of its society. The plaintive slave songs, and their echoes the plantation melodies and minstrel ballads, have won popularity wherever the English language is spoken; but they are rapidly passing away, and in a few years will exist in memory only.

The chief hinderance to the development of a national school of music lies in the diverse character of our population. American composers may flourish, but American music can not be expected until the present discordant elements are merged into a homogeneous people.

" APRILLE."

SHE walked across the fields, ice-bound,
Like some shy, sunny hint of spring,
And stooping suddenly, she found
A violet—a dainty thing,
Which shunned the chilly light of day
Until sweet "Aprille" came that way.

They knew each other, girl and flower;
There was some subtle bond between;
And I had walked, that very hour,
The fields, and had no violet seen:
For me the winter landscape lay
All blossomless and black and gray.

They knew me not, blue flower, blue eyes;
She, careless, passed me when we met;
The tender glance which I would prize
Above all things, the violet
Received; and I went on my way,
Companioned with the cheerless day.

From wintry days blue violets shrink;
From wintry lives blue eyes will turn;
And yet if she, I sometimes think,
Could smile on me with sweet concern,
One life so like this wintry day
Would spring-time be for aye and aye.