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A Series of Anecdotte Memoirs of the Principal Men Connected with the Direction of the Opera-Incidents of Management, with Reminiscences of Celebrated Composers, Leading Singers, Etc. Etc.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "QUEENS OF SONG."

In 1848 Covent Garden Theatre was taken by Mr. Delafield, a young man who had redently attained his majority, and come into possession et a fortune of one hundred thousand pounds. He was, it unfortunately happened, totally ignorant of even the most ordinary practical details of the management of an operatic establishment, and was obliged to depend on others for advice in the commonest matters connected with the

The prospectus which he issued declared that the Royal Italian Opera was commenced with a view to "the effective representation of operaby the most eminent composers, without dis-tinction of country." There was a certain anomaly involved in the title of the Royal Italian Opera—but the works were sung in Italian, so it passed unquestioned.

Everything was done on a scale of almost un paralleled spiendor, and truly reckless prodigatity. The young manager spared no expense in the plans which he laid out for the production of the various operas—scenery, orchestra, decora-tions, all were magnificent. MM. Grieve and Telbin were the scene painters. The celebrated chef d'orchestra, Signor Costa, and his accomplished artists, were retained, strengthened by the assistance of some of the most brilliant musicians of Italy, France, and Germany. Godfrey's military band was also engaged. Mr. Alfred Mellon was leader of the ballet. Every department was well filled. To nearly every singer in Europe Mr. Delatield offered engagements. The vocalists who accepted his proposals were Mesdames Persiani, Altred Castellan Grant and Vierdet. Signal boni, Castelian, Grisi, and Viardot; Signori Mario, Tamburini, Ronconi. The chief dancers were Mademoiselle Fabbri and Lucille

The general management of the business affairs of the theatre was entrusted to Mr. Frederick Gye; and it could not have fallen into better hands; for this gentleman had had great experience, and he was well adapted, by his practical knowledge, urbane and courteous man ners, and unfailing determination to preserve discipline, to conduct the affairs of an establish ment like the Royal Italian Opera. Mr. Ponteau was his subordinate, looking to matters in front house. The stage manager was Mr. Alfred Harris

One of the primary mistakes was the overwhelming expense entered into. With the hope of retrenching the director was induced to commit another well-nigh fatal error-to dismiss a large number of servants and stage supernumeraries-thus materially injuring the beauty of the groupings in some of the operas where numbers were indispensable for effect, such as the scene of the gathering of the clans in the Donna del Lago and the riot scene in the Huquenols. The consequence was, that when Mr. Bunn brought out the Lady of the Lake at Drury Lane, comparisons unfavorable to the Royal Italian Opera were made between the plendor of his scene representing the gathering of the clans, and the scanty grouping on the stage representing the same scene in the Donna del Lago.

The performances, however, were, as a whole of a magnificence which almost eclipsed those of the older house, although Mr. Lumley no only had secured the great singer who had the preceding season driven London out of its senses, but had besides drawn together a most excellent company, and brilliant dancers-Marie Taglioni, Cerito, Rosati, Carlotta Grisl, and M. St. Leon. By the production of La Favorita, Les Huguenols, and other works, on a scale of splendor never attempted before, the Royal Italian Opera was raised to the position of being one of the very first operatic establishments in

The announcement of Pauline Garcia's first appearance created an immense sensation in musical circles. Nine years before, when a girl of eighteen, she made her debut in England at Her Majesty's Theatre. She had then, in the character of "Desdemona," ashieved a veritable triumph. The girl of eighteen was, by universal acclamation, placed in the with her sisier Maria Malibran, Pasta, and with all the famous lists who had preceded her. She had appeared again the year subsequent to her marriage, 1841. By 1848 her genius had matured: she had passed from triumph to triumph in al the leading continental cities. So much had been predicted of her before she appeared, that the house was crowded on her first night. She came before the public trammelled by circum stances which would have entailed irretrievable ruin on an interior singer; her marvellous genius alone enabled her to surmount these cruel dis advantages. So agitated was she when she stepped on the stage, that her trembling was apparent to all parts of the house. It was not until she had been heard in the Huque note that she gained her right position. At the end of the season Guillaume Tell was produced. There was an intense excitement in the musical world when this opera was annouced Nothing was neglected by the manager which could render the performance irreproachable. The band and chorus were faultless, the mise en scene magnificent, the singers admirable-but, from a variety of causes, the opera was a tailure the chief reason perhaps being that it was

brought out at the very close of the season.

The expenses had been almost rackless. the vocal department, £33,349 had been laid out: on the ballet, £8105. One dancer alone, Lucille Grahn, had received £1120. The orches tra had cost £10,048.

When the season terminated rumors were cir culated speaking of utter ruin as certain. For

once, rumor was correct in its surmises, Mr. Lumley had strained every nerve to carry his establishment successfully through the sea son. The command of the orchestra was confided to Mr. Balie-an appointment which met with the unanimous approbation of the subscribers and of the general public. Mr. Sims Reeves essayed the Italian stage as "Carlo," in the opera of Linda. He appeared only once for his favorite part of "Edgardo" having been taken by Signor Gardoni, he threw up his engage ment in anger. The trial was of unusual diffi culty, as it was then of rare occurrence that an English singer ventured on the boards of the Italian stage. The season closed with every outward signs of prosperity; yet embarrass ments were harassing the Director on all sides Mr. Delafield renewed his experiment in the following year, wisely determining to reduce his expenses. At the very outset he committed an error, in allowing Alboni to go over to Her Majesty's Theatre. The great interest of this London as well as in Paris, was cen tred in Le Prophete. Madame Viardot performes "Fides" -how grandly, it is needless to recall She had taken the character when the work was brought out in Paris. The day after the first representation, Meyerbeer wrote a deeply grateful and grati-fying letter to the prima donna. "I ceased for an instant to remember that I was the author of the work," he said. 'You had transformed me into a breathless and excited auditor of your impassioned and truthini accents." What praise this was, coming from Meyerbeer, need not be surgested to those who knew anything of the fastidious disposition of the great composer. After the fourth representation Mr. Harris went over to Paris to witness the miseenscent, over to Pairs to without the opera at the paratory to the production of the opera at the Royal Italian Opera. Mario went to study Roger's interpretation of the part of "Jean of Leyden." Catherine Haves took the char-"Bertha," originally performed by Madame Castellan. Even the subordinate characters were excellently filled. Everything was done to render the performance splendid and attractive. The scenery was gorgeous, the dresses new and costly; the decorations, process sions, the entire arrangements, in fact, magnificent and sparkling. The skating scene was a marvel of art. To mount four operas only-Le Prophete, Les Huguenots, Lucrezia Borgia, and La Donna del Lago-cost twenty five thousand

At her Majesty's Theatre, Mr. Sims Reeves repeated his essay. The great attractions of season, however, were the return the stage of Madame Sontag – the Coun-tess Rossi—and the debut of Mademoiselle Parodi, favorite pupil of Madame Pasta. Both these events caused the keenest curiosity and expectation. The reappearance of the Countess Rossi, after an absence of twenty years, created a furore, although she did not achieve a real success. Her sad, romantic history, the recollec-tion of what she had been, surmises as to how she would now sing, with many other reasons, threw an additional interest around her name. I she arrived too late to insure the prosperity of he season, she at least rescued the theatre and the manager from rain. She litt d Her Malesty's Theatre from the difficulties into which it had been thrown by the retirement of Jenny Lind—an event which had so seriously injured the director that he regarded it as 'le commencement de la fin." The Sontag furore promised to equal the Lind mania; again, strangely enough the ald largents again, strangely enough, the old legends were circulated in form. Concerning the success of her favorpupil-Mad'lle Parodi-M'me Pasta deeply auxious. She wrote warmly to the director of Her Malesty's Theatre, recommend ing "la mia Teresa" to his care. The debut of the young lady, however, resulted in disappoint-

Many causes combined to entangle Mr. Lum ey more fatally day by day. In despair he wrote to Rubini, imploring his heip. "Once more," he said, "you will save a friend—you will save this great establishment." "Your letter has touched me profoundly," the great tenor replied, "but it cannot be. A thousand circumstances render ny reappearance impossible. It costs me more than you can suppose to persist in this resolu-tion; but I must abide by it—you cannot, must not, count on me." Further correspondence ensued; the most urgent appeals were made by Mr. Lumley, but Rubini was inexorable.

The season terminated. It had not been a happy one for the Director of Her Majesty's Theatre. Mr. Delatield was a bankrupt. In his schedule there was almost every imaginable description of creditor noblemen, shopkeepers, newspaper proprietors, singers, dancers, dressmakers, hotel-keepers, mechanics, architects, the band of the Coldstream Guards, engravers, tailors, prompters, gas-fitters, a gas company, rope-makers, police commissioners (for the attendance of constables at the theatre), bankers, chimney-sweepers, the proprietors of Waterloo Bridge (for exhibiting bills), etc., ad infinitum. Besides these, nearly one engaged at the theatre, prima donna to lamplighter, from every Mademoiselle Angri, a Greek singer, who demanded eighteen hundred pounds, down to the pettiest hanger-on, was credited with various amounts. He disappeared, but for years his mad speculation was not forgotten, and the gossips amused themselves with vain surmises as to his ultimate destiny.

Overtures were made to Mr. Lumley, on the part of the gentlemen connected with the Royal Italian Opera, to merge both operas in one, and advantageous terms were offered him to retire from the management of Her Majesty's Theatre, in order to facilitate this design. These terms he declined to accept, having already entered into other plans. At this time he was destrous to obtain the direction of the Italian Opera in Paris, then in the hands of Ronconi. Intrigues, hostilities, mischances of every kind were posed to his project, but he persevered until he gained his wish.

Covent Garden Theatre opened in 1850 for its fourth season, under the direction of a republic, of which Mr. Gye was a member-if not the chief. Mr. Gye's energy was indomitable, his industry untiring, and his influence despotic. in every way he was eminently fitted to rule a vast operatic establishment. He overlooked the most minute details in each department of the musical arrangements—nothing escaped his notice. The principal aim of the directors was give the operas of the grand French col, and to produce them in the school, and utmost splendor and completeness. Their achieved greatest successes were Les Huguenots, Masaniello. Le Prophete, and Robert te Diable. It was a year of splendid performances, memorable for many reasons. ompany and the operas were both admirable; the band and chorus were pronounced to be the finest in Europe. The leading female singers were Mesdames Castellan, Vera, De Meric, Grisi, and Viardot; the male singers were Formes, Tamberitk, Zelger, Mario, Tamburini, Ronconi, and others. It was during this season that Signor Tamberlik made his first appearance in England. He at once became a favorite. although, judged by the highest standard, was by no means a perfect or highly finished artist. He was one of the handsomest men ever seen on the stage; he was endowed with a beautiful voice, and an incomparable accent in pronouncing Italian, and he had a power of energy and sympathetic warmth which enabled him at any time to carry away his audience. The unlucky costume worn on his first appearance in Moise excited much laughter from its absurdity. He came on the stage with bare arms, on which were placed gold bracelets; he wore a spangled petticoat and bodice, and had false hair plaited at the sides of his face. Although he had a superb figure. and a proule exquisitely chiselled as an antique cameo, yet attire so ridiculously disfiguring nearly runed his own chance of success, endangered the opera. Herr Formes, season, injudictionally attempted Italian opera, in which he disappointed even his most ardent admirers. Signor Mario, too, disappointed the public by his inefficiency in the part of "Eleazar" ("La Juive"), a part which, it was said, he had most auxiously desired to perform. Mr. Lumley's difficulties increased daily, and

he felt that nothing could save his theatre, None of the new singers excited the slightest sensation, although many were tried. The event of the season was the production of La Tempesta, an opera written expressly for England by MM. Scribe and Halevy. Every resource afforded by Her Majesty's Theatre was employed to bring out this with effect. The best singers in the company were assembled to render it with spirit. The "Caliban" of La-blache, the "Mirande" of Madame Sontag, and the "Ariel" of Carlotta Grisi, created a temporary curiosity. Both composer and libretlist came to London for the purpose of superintendng the last rehearsals of the work. brate the arrival of these gentlemen, Mr. Lumey gave a grand dinner, at which many men of high rank and distinction were present,

In the opera, the popular air by Dr. Arne, "Where the bee sucks," was employed by the composer for the pantomimic music of Arie. and as the finale of the piece. Unjuckily this was the only morecau in the three acts which obtained universal admiration. The character of "Caliban" was the last, as it was judged by some to be perhaps the best creation of La-blache. It became the "town talk" for a while,

and was justly regarded as a masterpiece. To the great surprise of the frequenters of Her Majesty's Theatre, Madame Pasta appeared for one night at the close of the season. She was then staying for a short time with her papil, Mademoiselle Parodt. Never was singer more ill-advised than the once mighty Queen of Song, in thus consenting to pass across the scene of her tormer triumphs. The fine phrasing, the facililess style, the grand declamation, the classic severity of taste, were, it is true, still remaining: the rest was not to be conjured up by the imagination. Her voice, always veiled and husky even in its prime, was utterly gone. She had the mistortune to be dressed in the most disfiguring manner. Yet, as one of the reigning Queens of Song (Madame Viardot) cried, looking at this noble ruin, it was like the Cenacolo of Da Vinci at Milan-a wreck of a picture, but that picture the greatest picture in the world. Mademoiselle Parodi continued vainly her effort to attain the place which she amoitiously coveted. Mr. Lum-ley had now obtained the formal con-cession of the Parisian Italian Opera. similar concessions under Like the regulations then existing in France, it was ham pered with conditions of a most embarrass no nature—cond flous minutely described in Mr. Lumley's "Reminiscences." Some of them are positively languages. He lost, in the two disas-trous searons of 1850-land 1851-2, while director of the Italian Opera in Paris, nearly five hun-

ared thousand france, or twenty thousand

With many institutions of superior importance, the Italian Opera was shaken to its foundation by the coup detat of December 2,

The fiction of the operatic republic of directors at Covent Garden Theatre was dropped in 1851, when Mr. Frederick Gye declared himself sole manager. The effects of a spirit of order and judicious discipline were soon perceptible. ise retrenchment was the first step taken, Every one in the theatre, from the prima donna assould to the very doorkeeper, willingly sub-mitted to a reduction of salary, and this reducion, combined with a generally vigilant administration, changed the entire aspect of affairs at the Royal Italian Opera. From that time, Mr. Gye has continued, year after year, to govern his empire with perfect judgment, carrying over season after season successfully.

This season-1851-his singers were Mes dames Grisi, Angri, Castellan, Viur-dot, and Louisa Pyne; MM. Tamberlik, Formes, Tagitatico, Ronconi, Mario, Tamburini, etc. Miss Pyne had never, until this season, attempted Italian opera; and the essay was all the more wonderful in its success when it was considered that she replaced another singer (Mad'lie Zerr) at an hour's warning. At the end of the season, M. Gounod's Saffo was produced, and proved a failure, from causes into which it is unnecessary

In 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, Mr. Lumley was still struggling against his adverse He had two charming dancers, Mesdames Ferraris and Carlotta Grisi; but all interest in dancing had died out in London. Even at the Royal Italian Opera it was aban-doned, except as an adjunct to the Opera. Mr. Lumley had a long list of singers, the most attractive of whom was Sophie ruvelli, who was greatly admired by some, and heartily abused by others. Her "Fidelio," in which she was ably supported by Mr. Sims Reeves, created a sensation.

The last "event" of the season occurred on the night when Mr. Balte, the conductor, took his benefit. That eminent composer's own opera, Les Quatre Fils d'Aymon, was performed for the first time on the Italian stage under the title of I Quattro Fratelli. Already it had enjoyed much popularity in its French, English, and German The work was received with favor when presented in Italian. Sophic Cruvelli, with Gardoni, Pardini, Coletti, and Massol, performed the opera in a spirited and effective

manner. Mr. Lumley entered on his campaign in 1852 with the faintest hopes of success. Uncertainties and difficulties aftended on his preparations, causing the theatre to open unusually late. It was generally supposed that the theatre would not open at all. Perhaps the heaviest misfortune which befel him was the "Wagner quarrel," the details of which unhappy affair it will be needless to reconstitute. will be needless to recapitulate. To this im-broglio he attributed chiefly his downfall. This quarrel seriously injured not only Her Majesty's Theatre; but the Royal Italian Opera. The history of this season is a dismal one. The unexpected flight of Sophic Cruvelli was another blow to the uniortunate manager, Countless embarrassments followed each other. Actions at law menaced him on all sides, both in London and in Paris. In this crisis several noblemen and gentlemen, influential among the friends and patrons of Her Majesty's Theatre, convened a meeting of the subscribers to consider the best means of aiding the management to carry on the enterprise to the end of the season. A committee was appointed to receive subscriptions in support of the establishment, and to regulate the manner in which ithe sums thus raised should be disbursed. scheme, however, although partially car-ried out, did not save the house. Early in the season, Mr. Lumley had con-ceived the plan of forming an association for the purpose of earrying on the affairs of the Opera House—of organizing a joint-stock company to undertake the financial and speculative section of the directorship, while he himself continued the management. In this design he was cordially assisted by many noblemen and gentlemen, but it was found impracticable. this juncture, Earl Dudley (then Lord Ward) was somewhat desirous of becoming director of the theatre.

At last the doors of Her Majesty's Theatre closed, not to reopen for three years. It was evident that the "old house" had succumbed. Various plans were suggested by those interested n the establishment but none arrived at any tangible result. The following year, the "properties" of the theatre were announced for sale under a claim of the ground landlord who, in 1850, had advanced on this security a sum of ten thousand pounds. To prevent the dispersion of these valuable theatrical accessories, the oririnal cost of which had been estimated at twenty-three thousand pounds, it was arranged that they should be purchased in the names of Lord Ward and Sir Ralph Howard, upon se-curity afforded by Mr. Lumley. Sir Ralph Howard shortly afterwards relinquished his claims to Lord Ward. At the beginning of 1853, Lord Ward was still anxious to take the manage ment, and entered into negotiations with diflerent singers; and directions were given that the theatre should be held ready to open at a moment's notice. Suddenly, however, he abandoned the project, in consequence of diffidulties interposed by the principal creditors. His connection with the theatre had commenced in the previous year, when he had taken a decidedly prominent part in the famous committee meeting.

An action of ejectment was brought against Mr. Lumley by the ground landlord, upon the plea that a violation of the terms of the lease had been committed by the lessee. This vexaious suit was carried on through years. Some efforts were made by the Director of Covent Garden to obtain the theatre. At one

time, early in 1854, Mr. Benedict, the celebrated composer, had an idea of taking the theatre under his direction. After a few months of rupless negotiation, he relicquished the design. Mr. E. T. Smith, lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, then came forward, but he also recoiled from the everwhelming difficulties and heavy responibilities of the undertaking.

Fortune had smiled on-the Royal Italian Opera during the season of 1852. Several new singers had appeared, the most re-markable of whom was Madame Bosio. At first this charming singer made little pression, and it was not until a sudden revelaion showed the beauty of her voice and the refined nature of her talent to the opera-going public, that she gained the place in their esteem and admiration—even in their affections —which she never lost. The next season, 1853, was also successful, although the singers, few exceptions, were only moderately distin-The band still continued most admirable, and had become, under its leader, Mr. Costa, one of the most famous in Europe. William Beverley was at this time scene painter; Mr. Harris retained his position as stage mana-ger. A protound sensation was created in 1854 by the first series of Madame Grist's many farewell performances.

In spite of the gloom cast by the war over London society, the brief season of 1855 was the most prosperous since the opening of Covent Garden Theatre as an open house in 1847. A terrible blow nearly ruined the director before the commencement of the season of 1856—the total destruction by fire, not only of the house itself, but of a vast quartity of valuable pro-perty which had been accumulating during nine year, the mus cal library, the scenery, the costumes, and other accessories of more than fifty operas. This, the great operatic event of the ear, naturally created an extraorolnary sensa-By many it was thought-hoped or feared, as interest dictated—that the days of Italian Opera in London were ended. Fortunately it happened that the Lyceum Tagatre was untenanted, and the director of Covent Garden was enabled to secure it as a harbor of refuge for his band, chorus, and principal artists. He made proposals for Her Maies-ty's Theatre, but Mr. Lomley had hurried to London from Paris, with the hope of reopening his house.

Lord Ward was desirous of bringing the affairs of Her Majesty's Theatre under his own control, although he had relinquished his idea of taking the main practical direction into his hands. He had bought up the various incumbrances which rested upon the establishment, and was now the most powerful creditor,

acquiring a far larger interest in the theatre | the end of the regular season Mr. Lumley than the proprietor.

The singers engaged by Mr. Lumley were Mesdames Piccolomini, Alboni, Johanna Wagner, Albertini, etc., and some excellent male singers. The dancers were Rosati, one of the most admired etoiles de la danse, and Marie Tag The conductor was Signor Bonetti.

Judging by appearances, it would have seemed as if the 'old house' had completely regained its ancient prestige. The theatre was crowded every night, and there was every outward sign esperity. The subscribers were so pleased to find themselves within the familiar precincts of their favorite haunt, that Mr. Lumley was summoned by them to receive an outburst of

The bright little star, Marietta Piccolomini, created the most singular enthusiasm—she be-came, in fact, "the rage." Unce more a mania possessed the public; this time without much fustification. The sprightly little Sardinian had no sound claims to be considered either an excellent singer, a fine actress, or even a beau tiful woman. She was not a great artist; she was rather a clever amateur—full of fire, it is rue, and determined to achieve success at any However, her audiences yielded to the peculiar fascination which she exercised over them. From the time of her debut, the fortunes

of the theatre were assured for the season.

At both houses—at Her Majesty's and at the

Lyceum-the season was unusually successful. There was a second provisional season at the yceum Theatre, under the direction of Mr. Gye The director of her Majesty's Theatre, Mr. Lum ley, still hoping to contest the field successfully with his partially disabled rival, opened his doors during 1857. It was a desperate, but far from Lappy effort. Nearly all the singers were new to the English public. The only one whose appearance, however, was attended with legiti mate success, was Signor Giuglini. The exqu site quality of his voice, the elegance of his tyle, and his handsome person, despite his doubted deticiencies as an actor, won popularity for him on the night of his debut. Signor Ginghad originally been destined for the priest hood, and had been remarkable in his boyhood and early youth as a singer in the choir of the metropolitan church of Fermo. His excellence -first as a treble, and afterwards as a tenorattracted general notice, and many efforts were made to tempt him upon the lyrical stage. These efforts he resisted for a long time; but at length it happened that a member of the or-chestra of the Fermo Theatre fell ill, when Signor Giuglini took his place at a mo-ment's notice. Soon afterwards, the prin-cipal tenor was incapacited by sudden illness from appearing, and Signor Giug lini replaced him. His success as "Jacopo," in I Duc Foscari, revealed the lovely quality of his voice to the musical judges of Fermo; and from that time he decided to renounce the church for the stage. His knowledge of music was thorough, extending even to the art of composition. The triumph of the new tenor was the chief operatic event of 1857. Every other male vocalist seemed to be eclipsed him. Mr. Lumley mentions a curious arity of taste when speaking of Signor Giuglini. "At this period," he says, "the principal passion of the great tenor was for making and letting off fireworks. It was one of those passions which almost amounted to a mania, and engrossed all his thoughts when not occupied with his art. He had come to be a considerable adept in firework-making, and his enthusiasm in exhibiting his beautiful works, and his pride in success and applause, apparently equalled that which he felt in the pursuit of his musical career. A pantomime expression of a 'Catharine wheel,' from a friend in a side-box, would make him sing on the stage with redoubled spirit." Another of his fancies was for making and flying kites, formed in every variety of eccentric device. The prima donna who sang with him in 1857 was Mademoiselle Spezzia-a tall, handsome woman, with an unpleasant voice.

Mr. Lumley was anxious to revive the taste for dancing, which had died out. His prepara-tions for the bailet were organized on a most extensive scale. Lord Ward, who claimed from his position to be considered the adviser of the director, wrote to him before the opening of the theatre-"It strikes me you have an enormous ballet. I do not know how you will place

An experiment was tried by Mr. Lumley, in the December of that year, in the shape of a winter campaign - "extra performances," at reduced prices. The success of this experiment, in a pecuniary point of view, was beyond the director's anticipations. Rumor declared that no new theatre would be built to replace the one destroyed by fire. It was not the first time that rumor fell into error. A theatre, new from its very foundation, was commenced, built, and opened for public performances within twenty-six months from the destruction of the old one. It was a new and magnificent edifice, raised on the ashes of the old Covent Garden Theatre. The house was opened in 1858 by Mr. Gje. There were four opera houses open that season—Her Majesty's Theatre, Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and the Opera Buffa at the St.

The new theatre was more ample and splendid than any theatre hitherto existing in London. It was still in the hands of the decorators, carpenters, and painters, when it opened on the 15th May. About the opening of the new theatre at the appointed time, speculation had been busy, and hundreds of pounds had changed hands on the result. The interior was to be beautiful and commodious; the utmost care had been taken to accommodate the occupants of every part of the house. The anxiety which Mr. Gye had suffered from his desire to keep faith with the public, and his great exertions, brought on an illness which confined him to his house for weeks. The chief singers were Mesdames Grisi, Bosio, Parepa, and Nantier-Didice, MM. Mario, Tamberlik, Gardoni, Ronconi, Tagliatico.

Mr. Lumley had discovered another prizeanother new singer, who was destined to gain the laurel crown of a Queen of Song. This was Mademoiselle Tietjens. The season did not begin until after Easter, and therefore much depended on the success of the first night, The Huguenols was selected as the piece for this mportant occasion. Every nerve was strained by the Director to render this production as effective as possible; every effect that could be commanded by scenery, dresses, and general appointments, had been studied and executed with the minutest care. The singers rivalled each other in zeal. The last rehearsals excited much interest and excitement; the curiosity of the privileged few who could obtain admission on these special occasions was highly aroused. Mademoiselle Tietjens naturally felt most anxious regarding the coming ordeal. "How much she telt this critical position," observes Mr. Lumley, was evidenced by her bursts of artistic anima tion and excitement at the rehearsals. As her powerful voice rang through the theatre, and excited the plaudits of all present, the latent fire of Giuglini became kindled in turn, and one artist vicing with the other in power and passion of musical declamation, each rehearsal became a brilliant performance." Indeed, so strongly were both artists and connoisseness impressed with the merits of Mademoiselle Tietjens, that fears were expressed lest should atterly swamp the favorite tenor. These fears were groundless.

At this time the director found himself in reater difficulties than at any previous period. The nobleman who had hitherto been his friend suddenly changed to being his most urgent crelitor, refusing the slightest concession. Ward pressed for three quarters' tent (£4000), and sent him notice that if the money was no mmediately paid, Mr. Lumley must be prepared to give up possession of the theatre into his lord

The opening night was encouraging. Queen and Court were present, and everything seemed bright and propitious. The two great singers were nervous, but the opera went off well. Giuglini was in ecstasies when the director told him, on the stage, that the Queen was to be present. The reception of Mad'ile Tietjens was enthusiastic. Ginglini was resolved o exert himself to the utmost, lest he should be

At the close of the protracted season of 1858 Her Mujesty's Theatre passed forever from the hands of Benjamin Lumley. Lord Ward had pressed him very stringently: he left the director no atternative between the immediate payment of the arrears of rent-£4000—or an immediate cession of the whote property into his lordship's hands. Nothing remained but a surrender of the lease and the possession of the theatre into Lord Ward's rands. From the time when possession of the house was formally given up by Mr. Lumley, his connection with the theatre was entirely

The first event in the operatic world in 1859 created a strange, sad excitement. News came from St. Petersburg that the charming tavorite, Angiolina Bosio, was dead—killed by over-work and an unkind climate. Perhaps no prima donna was ever more universally lamented than this graceful and refined singer, who died in the flower of her age and at the zenith of her repu-

Although Her Majesty's Theatre was closed, there were two Italian operas in London that year. Under the direction of Mr. E. T. Smith, Drury Lane was opened for the performance of opera. The company consisted of Mesdames Victoire Balfe, Piccolomini, Guarducci, Tietiens MM. Giuglini, Badiali, Belart, etc. The chie feature of this attempt was the assumption, for the first time in London, by Mademolselle Tier

ens, of the part of "Norma." It was probably the success attending this effort which induced Mr. E. T. Smith, the lowing year, 1860, to become lessee of Hei Majesty's Theatre. Considerable changes and improvements were effected before the house opened. The theatre underwent a thorough renovation, both internally and externally. The pit, the vestibule, the lobbies on the grand tier and the crush rooms were lined with mirrors the walls were papered, the ceilings painted, the floors and stairs carpeted, the chandeliers improved, the stalls newly arranged. The singers engaged were Mesdames Alboni, Laura Mamo, Tietjens, MM. Mongini, Guiglini, Sebastiano Ronconi, and Gassier. The Schastiano Ronconi, and Gassier, dancers were Marietta Pocchini, one of most accomplished of living dancers, Amalia Ferrais, idol of the French and Russian capitals, Claudina, Cucchi, and others,

Mr. Benedict and Signor Arditi were ap pointed directors of the music, composers, and

conductors. Jules Benedict, who was born at Stuttgard 1805, came to London for the first time in 1835 chiefly at the instance of his friend Madame Malibran. Since that period he had resided almost entirely in England. From his early youth he had been accustomed to the duty of conducting an orchestra. At the age of nineteen be was, on the recommendation of his triend Weber, engaged to conduct the German Opera at Vienna; afterwards he transferred his services to the theatre of San Carlo, and then to the Fondo at Naples. He undertook the direction of the Opera Buffa at the Lyceum in 1836, an entertainment carried on for two seasons by Mr. Mitchell. He was subsequently musical director at Drury Lane, when Mr. Bunn was manager. He was again conductor at Drory Lane during the Italian Opera season in 1859 During 1860, he brought out at Her Majesty's Theatre an Italian version of Weber's Oberon with recitatives and additions principally selected from the composer's own works Weber had been one of his most sincere friends. The works which Mr. Benedict has given to the world have all been more or less well received.

Luigi Arditi was born (1812) at Crescentino, a small town in Piedmont. He commenced his public career in 1843 as orchestral conductor at Vercelli. Since that time he has continued to wield the baton of a chef-d'orchestre, during a life of wonderful variety and industry. Mr Lumley introduced him to England. At the Royal Italian Opera, in 1860, the

ingers were Mesdames Nantier-Didice, Csillag

Miolan Carvalho, Penco, Rudersdorff, and MM

Tamberlik, Relger, Tagliatico, Ronceni, Mario Faure, and Formes. One of the most remark-able events of the season was the unexpected appearance of Mademoiselle Adelina Patti. The new floral hall, a spacious and elegantly constructed saloon attached to the Covent Carden Theatre, intended to be devoted to a variety Durboses, was of the performances in the theatre, about the middle of the season, and was so used on several A grand show of flowers took place shortly after the opening, and in the evening the occupants of the boxes, stalls, and pit were

allowed the right of entrance. The farewell performance of Madame Grisi formed an attraction at Covent Garden. The finest performance of the season was, perhaps the production of Guillanme Tell.

This work achieved then the greatest success it had ever met with in England, and for nine or en nights drew crowded audiences-would all probability have continued to attract for nine nights more, had not the attention of the public been suddenly diverted by the appearance of Mademoiselle Patti. This charming singer gained as veritable a triumph as her im-mediate predecessor on the lyric stage-Made moiselle Tietjens—had obtained.

Mr. Mapleson made his first essay in operation management at the Lyceum Theatre in 1861. He was in many respects well fitted for the position at which he ambitiously aimed. Signor Arditi was conductor, Mr. Calcott scene painter. The leading singers were Mad'lle Tietiens and Signor Giuglini. Emboldened by success, he the fol-lowing year undertook the direction of Her. Majesty's Theatre. Although he entered upon this enterprise at the briefest possible notice. and was obliged to carry the season through in a hurried manner, his efforts were highly successtul. Signor Arditi and Signor Calcott accompanied him to this enlarged sphere. Since that year, Mr. Mapleson has conducted Her Majesty's Theatre to the unqualified satis-faction of the subscribers and of the general public. His success has been all the more highly to be appreciated as he has never had the same means at command as his rival, Gye, who had the good fortune to possess the amplest resources of any theatre in Europe. Signal efforts were made by Mr. Mapleson to restore the bygone prestige of the ballet, but its days of glory have apparently passed away for ever. Not all the fascinations of Amaija Ferraris, nor the brilliant qualities of Mademoisell Pocchini, nor the picturesque beauty of the divertissements, could raise the baflet to its ancient popularity.

The great incident of the season of 1883, at

Her Majesty's, was the production of M. Gound's Faust. The principal characters were admirably sustained, and the work created a pro found interest. It was proposed, at the close of the season o

st year, 1865, to unite the two rival opera houses by means of a joint-stock company, his scheme has, however, for the present been abandoned. The history of the successive directors

Italian opera in London must, necessarily, be an imperfect one. It would be impossible to close its pages otherwise than abruptly, especially at a time when the fortunes of the operatic establishments and o their rulers hang to the balance of an uncertain destiny. - Londo Society for June.

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