

New York In Chiaro Oscuro.

A Plea for a National Hymn—How to Become a Philanthropist at Little Expense—Italian Opera.

(From Our New York Correspondent.)



BESIDES being a professor in Columbia university William Milligan Sloane is also president of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. This double dose of distinction does not in any way make it impossible for him to be a patriot, and that he is exactly all signs fail. What else can it be that inspires him to suggest that his institute should devote itself to the propagation of a national hymn that is really worth while? Professor Sloane considers it a perfect shame if anything so unpopular as shame can be perfect—that this mighty republic, which has plenty and to spare of everything else, is still unprovided with a national hymn of sufficient merit to appeal to the real musician as well as to the devotee of ragtime.

We have patriotic songs, a number of them. "The Star Spangled Banner," for instance, was a genuine inspiration, and Francis Scott Key deserves a good deal more credit for having been the medium through whom it was communicated to man than he is likely ever to get. Poetically and musically, however, it is only "middling mediocre," not big enough for this great big country. It is really a curious bit of composition, violating pretty nearly every rule of harmony and still maintaining a certain dignity which is all its own. It certainly isn't popular in the real sense of the expression. Among Gotham's four millions and odd there must be at least half of that number to whom it is an unknown melody.

Worst of all, other countries not half so worthy of a splendid national anthem as this have good ones, so good, indeed, that we use them for hymn tunes in our churches—those of England, Russia and Austria, for example. Up to date neither "Dixie" nor "Yankee Doodle" has been accorded a place in foreign hymnals, and the lack of reciprocity is galling. Professor Sloane deserves well of his countrymen and all that he can get besides.

I have been feeling rather deeply on this subject, and it is possible that it may have tintured my ordinary conversation somewhat too perceptibly.

Last night at the play I met Jacobus Damm—who, after all, cannot be held strictly responsible for the Kalkreber blood he is reputed to contain—and I spoke of the awful paucity of our national songs.

"It seems to limit our national capacity," I said. "It puts a damper on our expansive-ness."

"If we need it so much, why in— (the locality mentioned by Mr. Damm is now a matter of grave theological dispute, and he will be given the benefit of the doubt) can't we buy it? Tell me! Isn't our money as good as the other fellow's?"

"It isn't that so much," I tried to explain. "Austria had its Joseph Haydn, Russia its Anton Rubinstein."

"Then why don't we hire that 'Merry Widow' fellow to do the job?" interrupted Jacobus obtusely. "He ought to polish off a national anthem in good shape. Dick Savage has raked in about a million out of the 'Widow' and more coming."

An excellent method of becoming a philanthropist has just occurred to me. It is nothing that will draw on one's resources either of time or money, but it is something which may be accomplished by anybody who is capable of deriving satisfaction from the fact



HE DOESN'T WANT TO BE PRESIDENT.

that some time—nobody can possibly say when—a small coin of the day may take on a value wholly disproportionate to its present worth. At the recent sale of a coin collection in New York a United States silver half dime of 1802 was knocked down to a man from Oakbrook for \$715, and the Wis-

consin numismatist seemed tickled to death to get it at any old price. There are only sixteen specimens of this coin in existence, and the Wisconsin man now has three of these in his possession. He doesn't want to be president of the United States. He would be perfectly satisfied to be the owner of those remaining thirteen half dimes.

So to be a philanthropist—in future, that is—all that is necessary is to bequeath a small coin of the present day to the trustees of some charitable foundation with the request that they keep it until—well, until it is worth a million.

Until recently I had been wondering how it happened that the bottom still refrained from dropping out of that cheerful American industry known in Gotham east side parlance as the "Eyettalian operar." Strange that it shouldn't have occurred to me that the market for this commodity is growing up right here in our midst. Although the subscriptions of those who take their season of grand opera as they take a course at Carlsbad or the gold cure are still solicited by the managers, the time is approaching when they will not be indispensable. That will be when the Italian colony in New York surpasses the population of, say, Milan, with its La Scala. Measured by the tide of immigration of the last few years it will come within the present generation.

Now, the Sicilian as he is found in Gotham is not as black as his skin would seem to indicate. He is apparently of simple construction, demanding little and getting less. Most things he can do without and does, but there is one thing which he cannot and will not try to deny himself—grand opera of the home brand. He does not regard it as a luxury; for him it is a necessity. That is what makes Italian opera such a good business in New York, that its two foremost promoters, Giulio Gatti-Casazza and Cleofonte Campanini, are employed by our rival opera houses to boom it for all it is worth.

That the opera going habit is congenital in the Italian population of Gotham is a fact recognized by those who try to do business as if it were only acquired and might easily be modified. My friend Giovanni Matteo, who has been an Italian long enough to know better than to interfere with nature, is convinced now that such is the case. He is a bootblack padrone, the patron saint of twosome olive skinned and decidedly husky Sicilian lads who monopolize the "shine and polish" industry in an uptown business district, a cheerful and vociferous brigade that is putting nickels into Giovanni's pocket with a certainty and a celerity that ere long will enable him to return to his native Palermo in "great shape." Last year Giovanni was brought to a keen realization of the fact that the good old Sicilian custom of keeping one's employees at work as long as it can be made profitable regardless of time and tire has not yet taken root in this country.

When the opera season opened the padrone was confronted by a delegation of eager and determined youngsters who were a unit in demanding early closing on opera nights. Giovanni tried to be diplomatic. He tried to convince the insistent lads that in



DEMANDING EARLY CLOSING ON OPERA NIGHTS.

America bread is regarded as the staff of life and that opera is only a fitting supplement to terrapin, truffles and the other unattainables. It did not work. Giovanni tried to be firm, and his youthful countrymen proved that they were becoming real Americans by going out on a strike.

Now, such a thing as a bootblack strike right in a congested business district of New York means real hardship. It is almost as impossible for the average business man of Gotham to do his daily stunt without his daily shine as it is for the normally constructed Sicilian to do without his opera. Giovanni wrestled with the problem individually for an hour or less, but the miracle of shining forty pairs of New York shoes in less than forty minutes did not happen in his case. There was nothing to do but yield, and he yielded finally and consented to the "night off" system among his triumphant employees. He is by no means reconciled to the situation and has no enthusiasm over the coming of Gatti-Casazza.

"If dat Gazzaz he know da miseree he make me," he moans, "he woulda gif only da German op'tra."

STUYVESANT BROWN.

One Guess Only. "What did he ever see in her?" asked one. "What did she ever see in him?" asked the other. Which of these two was the woman and which the man?—Kansas City Times.

FACTS IN FEW LINES

The average number of Alpine accidents has trebled in fifteen years. Bicycles are not out of date in Holland, which imports over \$1,500,000 worth a year.

A cord of wood ordinarily yields about one ton of mechanical pulp or about one-half ton of chemical pulp. There are five so called foreign banks doing business in Rio Janeiro, three British, one German and one Italian.

The Kongo Free State includes 900,000 square miles of undeveloped territory. The number of black inhabitants is 20,000,000.

The Humanitarian League of England has addressed a petition to King Alfonso of Spain asking that he put a stop to bullfighting.

Just 3,002,000 cords of wood were used in the United States in the manufacture of paper pulp last year, twice as much as was used in 1890.

In Philadelphia all the fire trucks are equipped with an acetylene searchlight for the purpose of illuminating cellars and smoke filled rooms when fighting fire.

At Milan, which claims to be the theatrical center of the world, there will be an international theatrical exhibition in 1913 in honor of the first centennial of the birth of Verdi.

A new Belgian life preserver in the form of a knapsack, which the inventor claims is unsinkable, contains a small storage battery to light an electric lamp in a headpiece, which forms part of the apparatus.

For several weeks after the British steamer *Seostris* was stranded on the coast of Guatemala a nearby town was lighted with electricity from its dynamo, wires being strung from the vessel over temporary poles.

Application has been made for a patent for a process of extracting wax from the sugar cane. It seems that the rind of the cane contains a certain proportion of wax which has hitherto been lost with the refuse.

Edison's \$1,000 concrete house will cost not less than \$2,402, declares Popular Mechanics. Experts have figured up the cost on the lowest basis practicable and found it impossible to crowd the expense into the \$1,000 limit.

W. W. Hilditch of the Sheffield Scientific school has by laboratory tests ascertained that the bacteria found on paper money, while running up into the thousands for each bill, are not usually of an infectious or virulent type.

A method has been found to make a much stronger and more durable gas mantle by using an artificial silk as the fabric on which the oxides are deposited. This silk is made by the dissolution of cellulose in ammoniate of copper.

A Bangor (Me.) man after lighting a lamp fell asleep. When he awoke he found that the wick had worked up and had covered everything in sight with a black coating of soot. It cost him about \$300 to put things into condition again.

The authors of "Wintering in Rome" claim that in respect to water supply that city is better off than any rival health resort in the world. The daily supply consists of 51,000,000 gallons of absolutely pure water, well aerated, entirely without odor and moderately hard.

Until about 1850 writing was taught in the schools of the United States from copies that were written by the teacher, who also made from goose quills the pens which the pupils used. A penknife with a keen blade was an essential part of the teacher's equipment.

Beginning last February, the Austro-Hungarian bank as well as the exchequer suspended the payment of silver florins. It is in this way proposed to withdraw silver florins from circulation, covering the withdrawal by the issuance of silver pieces of 1 to 5 crowns.

The flame of an ordinary match has a much higher temperature than is generally known and will melt cast iron or steel filings. Try it by striking a match and sprinkle the filings through the flame. Sputtering sparks like gunpowder will be the result of the melting metal.

A fire which broke out in Walton, England, recently was found to have originated in strange fashion. A circular shaving mirror standing next the window in a bedroom had focused the rays of the sun on to the bed, and the intense heat speedily set the clothes ablaze.

The Japanese army had till recently only one artillery range, that situated at the foot of the Fujiyama mountains, but in consequence of the improvements in weapons and the increased strength of the army five new camps have been established in various parts of the empire.

In the northern part of India sheep are put to a use unthought of in European or American countries. They are made to serve as beasts of burden because they are more surefooted than large beasts, and the mountain paths along the foothills of the Himalayas are steep and difficult.

Wherever carob trees are found on Greek government land they are rented to contractors, who harvest the crop. In the four provinces of Epidaurus, Kynouria, Spetsae and Hydra there was thus gathered last year 2,821,850 pounds, from which the government received a revenue of \$1,750.

The referendum in July last by which the Swiss prohibited the manufacture and sale of absinth throughout Switzerland has resulted in an unprecedented boom in the beverage. The prohibitive law does not go into effect until July, 1910, and in the meantime absinth manufacturers in the canton of Neuchatel are working day and night with doubled staffs in order to meet the demand.

NEW SHORT STORIES

Obedy Orders to the Letter. "When I sailed with Admiral Markham some years ago," said a naval officer, "he had already made a reputation as a rigid disciplinarian. One day it chanced that a midshipman whom he had sent ashore went a trifle beyond the instructions given him with relation to his errand. The matter was not of the least importance, but Markham chided him sharply, saying: 'When you receive an order, sir, do simply what you are told to do and never a particle more or less.' 'The midshipman touched his hat respectfully, but he thought the rebuke

Got Left in the Rush. "Jessie is engaged to be married." "The mischief she is! I intended to propose to that girl myself when I got time."—Chicago Record-Herald.

One of Many. A literary bent he thought He had till he awoke One day and found he was Not only bent, but broke. —Detroit Tribune.

Taking Him at His Word. Weerlus—Old fellow, I know it's none of my business, but— The Old Fellow—Well, then, don't butt into it.—Chicago Tribune.

The Retort Matrimonial. "Madam, did you go through my pockets last night?" "Sir, you ask too searching questions."—Baltimore American.

Impatient Susie. "Oh, I can't thread this needle, ma!" Was little Susie's cry. "Just as the thread is going through The needle winks its eye!" —Woman's Home Companion.

Complimentary. He pried the biscuit in two parts, Then said, not wishing to be rude, "I truly, madam, never met A really more substantial food." —New York Press.

The Hunt. Ursus Major—What's the matter? Ursus Minor—I see a shooting star coming.—New York Sun.

Costly Missiles. Dan Cupid's darts are costing more Than they did in days of old, For they are not effective now Unless they're tipped with gold. —Chicago News.

Our Stock Expressions. "I can't see the point of this joke." "That's funny."—Boston Post.

Shakespeare Revised. This world's a stage so vastly set, And every man's a trooper, I long to be a hero, yet I'm only just a super. —Smart Set.

A Flattering Estimate. "How do you like your new teacher Tommie?" "Aw, fine. She dresses swell and she knows a lot o' slang, and I guess she'll get along with me all right."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Tragic. He's sitting at his desk, deep bowed in woe, And as the hours pass grows daff and dafter. No crimes are his; he's just a bard I know Who somehow cannot find the rhyme he's after. —New York Telegram.

In a Hurry. "The best man in Georgia," said the old farmer to his son, "came from the plow." "That's where I want to come from," said the youth, "an' mighty quick too!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Out of Gear. The strangest opinions from him you hear. It seems he's possessor of every whim. He's full of caprice, and his thoughts are queer. Why, even his food can't agree with him! —New York Telegram.

The Aftermath. "My, but there was lots of fire and brimstone in Mr. Bowers' sermon this morning!" "I expected there would be. Their cook left them yesterday."—Brooklyn Life.

Another. The leaves all turn to fairy gold, Whose brightness swiftly will forsake The scene as skies grow black and cold. It's just another nature fake. —New York Telegram.

The Airship Paradox. Though they should tame the fickle wind, The skeptic still can scoff. The more balloons there are, we find, The more the falling off. —New York Evening Telegram.

Wanted at First Hand. Gerald—May I kiss you for your mother? Geraldine—I never receive anything in trust.—New York Press.

Busted. These are the empty days, indeed, When we come from the seaside nooks Loaded down with empty shells And empty pocketbooks. —Los Angeles Times.

A Different Young Man. Gerald—There is a good deal of power in my arm. Geraldine—I have never had occasion to notice it.—Brooklyn Life.

One Case Explained. The fisher would not overstate. His catch to him looked very great, But all because his jug of bait Had made his eyes exaggerate. —Kansas City Times.

An Adept. Miss Flirtie—I don't care, he's just an expert at making love. Mr. Chellus—Yes, especially to himself.—Philadelphia Press.

Old Favorites. Now doth the gay spellbinder note Once more the scrapbook anecdote. By changing just a name or two He makes it seem as good as new! —Pittsburg Post.

Mixed Fruit. "You say you have a date. With whom is it?" "With the apple of my eye."—Baltimore American.

Held Many of 'Em. When sitting in her hammock The Willies all grew bolder, Which was the very reason She called it her spoon holder. —Houston Post.

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