

his return from this third expedition, Payer, loaded with honours and distinctions, quite unexpectedly retired from the service to devote himself entirely to painting. The memory of the intensely luminous and shifting pearly tints of the Arctic sky, and the solemn, blue Polar night haunted his mind, and he became a painter in order to record the splendour and the wonders he had seen. Hasselhorst, of Frankfort, was his master for two years, and then he studied art for three years under Alexander Wagner, of Munich. He subsequently spent four years in Paris. Payer had begun from the first to work on large canvases, painting very stirring scenes of his Arctic experience with highly artistic feeling. The pictures he exhibited at the Munich Academy in 1883 earned him the highest award for merit—the gold medal—and again a medal at the Paris Salon of 1887, and a gold medal at the great Paris Exhibition of 1889. Fine *technique*, broad and solid handling, with masterly sobriety of effect in colour and figure movement: these form the note of Payer's work, and his pictures, which are in the highest degree impressive, have from the first met with general approval. Payer has painted in succession "The Bay of Death"—the abandonment of the boat—"The Death of Franklin," and "Divine Service." Then in 1892 Payer added to his series of pictures representing the episodes of Arctic adventure, that bearing the legend "Never Retreat," which lights up, with its fascinating intensity, the somewhat gloomy gallery of modern paintings at the Vienna Museum. This picture was a commission from the Emperor Franz-Josef. Payer has more than one string to his bow. I need not say that he is a man of science and a fine seaman; and throughout the expedition of 1872 he kept a journal, which was published after his return with illustrations from his own drawings and from photographs by Count W—, who was also a member of the party. The subject alone was enough to make the book interesting in the highest degree, and it was immensely successful. But what gives it a permanent value, and tempts old and young to read it again and again, is that the narrative and the descriptions of scenery, never dry or over-long, are pervaded by an atmosphere of style at once lofty and attractive, and that over all we feel the presence of a living soul. There are some passages—as the turning of the dogs adrift, the descriptions of the immense ice-bound solitude and of the Northern twilight—which have brought tears to my eyes and moved me as deeply as the work of any recognized genius. . . . Payer sets his model by the side of his canvas, then goes a few yards away, returns and puts in a touch—only one—steps back again, considers the effect, and then lays on another. He does not scorn drawing, he draws too well for that; but in painting he admits nothing but the general mass, light and shade in small touches, worked up and gradually formed to the modelling till they are a lifelike reproduction of the original; and this working up over a highly elaborate ground-painting, and carried by degrees to complete finish, results in a solidity of workmanship and largeness of style which makes every study from Payer's brush a picture almost worthy to be called a masterpiece.—*Prince Bojidar Karageorgevitch, in the Magazine of Art.*

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Music.

VERDI'S latest gift for a purpose of charity is described as follows:

NAPLES, July 9, 1896.—During Signor Verdi's long musical career the great maestro has accumulated a colossal fortune, which he uses for the benefit of suffering humanity.

Several years ago he opened a hospital for the poor of his native city, Villanova, and there is yet another act of munificence on his part to register. On his arrival at the Grand Hotel at Milan, where he usually spends the months of June and July, he deposited 400,000 lire in the People's Bank of that city as the first instalment of the sum of 1,000,000 lire which he intends to devote to the erection of a house for aged and needy musical artists. He has called it "Casa riposo per gli artisti di musica" (the house of rest for musical artists).

The site chosen for the building lies in the healthiest part of Milan and consists of 4,500 metres of ground. The

building, which is to be two stories high, will have in the centre a large garden and room enough to accommodate 200 persons, besides a hall for concerts of 250 square metres. It will take a year to complete the work, which has already been begun, and it will cost nearly 1,000,000 lire. In two years the house will be opened. It is calculated that it will take 150,000 lire yearly to keep it up. This amount will also be furnished by the maestro.

That rehearsals are an uncertain indication of the value of a work was proved once more in the case of Mascagni's *Zanetto* at Florence. He was so disappointed with the general rehearsal, although Bellincioni was in the cast, that he declared he would not permit the piece to be produced and would himself leave the city that evening. He finally changed his mind, insisting that the first chorus, sung behind the scenes without orchestral accompaniment, must be omitted. The success of the opera was great. The music is described as passionately emotional, sweet, original, worked out in a masterly manner, and full of inspiration.

The operas performed at Covent Garden during the season just closed were:

Roméo et Juliette (with Jean de Reszké and afterward with Alvarez), eight times; *Faust*, six; *Die Meistersinger*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, five; *Tristan und Isolde*, four; *Aida* and *Carmen*, three; *Cavalleria Rusticana*, with *Hänsel and Gretel*, *Gavorita*, *Rigoletto*, *Fra Diavolo*, *Martha*, *Die Walküre*, *Lucia*, *Menstofele*, *Don Giovanni*, *Manon* and *Les Huguenots*, twice; and *Traviata*, *Philémon*, with *Pagliacci*, and *Pagliacci*, with *Hänsel and Gretel* once each.

In all there were twenty-three operas performed, *Roméo et Juliette* and *Faust*, by Gounod, leading off with eight and six performances respectively. Among composers, Wagner was represented by twenty-one performances of his works, including five each of *Die Meistersinger*, *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser*, four of *Tristan and Isolde*, and two of *Die Walküre*. Among the other German works are *Hänsel and Gretel*, three times; *Martha* and *Don Giovanni*, twice each, thus making twenty-eight performances of operas from the Fatherland. Italian works were brought forward twenty-two times. The modern works were much the more popular, as we see *Pagliacci* and *Cavalleria Rusticana* were given five times each, *La Traviata* only once, while *La Favorita*, *Rigoletto*, *Lucia*, *Aida*, *Mefistofele*, were put on twice each. French operas claimed the attention of the public twenty-four times, and, as stated above, Gounod's works lead with *Roméo* eight times, *Faust* six times, and *Philémon et Baucis* once. *Carmen* was not put on until late in the season, and consequently we saw it only three times. *Manon*, *Les Huguenots*, and *Fra Diavolo* each twice. It is noticeable that no novelty is included in the list.

With regard to artists, chief among these have been Mmes. Albani, Melba, Eames, and Lola Beeth, Mlles. Macintyre, Margaret Reid, Marie Engel, de Lussan, Olitzka, Brazzi, and Bauermeister, MM. Jean and Edouard de Reszké, David Bispham, Alvarez, Plancon, Ancona, Lucignani, Arimondi, Corsi, Albers, and Castelmarty. Signor Mancinelli and Signor Bevnignani have conducted the majority of the performances.

The following unusual tribute was lately presented to the Brothers de Reszké by the musical critics of the London press. It must have been gratifying to the recipients:

"To the Brothers Jean and Edouard de Reszké—To the great artists, who have ever upheld the dignity of their profession, and enjoyed the confidence and respect of the public. To the men whom success has failed to enervate, and abundant honours to deprive of manly modesty. To the vocalists in whom survive the traditions of a glorious past, and through whom the succession of all that is illustrious in their art has continued to the present hour. To the lyric actors who have given substance and vitality to creatures of imagination, and made them live in sight and memory. We whose names are hereto appended, being musical journalists in London, desire to offer the homage of our admiration and gratitude—admiration of brilliant talents, gratitude for high example, and the rare delight of perfected art."

Great excitement raged in musical and journalistic circles over the libel case of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, principal of the Royal Academy of Music, and the Saturday Review. The article in that journal of which complaint