

Bernal Osborne were no match for the keen and poisoned darts that were shot forth from Mr. Roebuck's tongue. Mr. Bethel, since known as Lord Westbury, was perhaps the only man in the House in the days when there were giants who could beat him at his own weapons. The present Mr. Justice Keogh sometimes threw himself into the breach, and once even silenced the terrible talker for a whole night by a quotation from "Macbeth." The House was in Committee, and Mr. Roebuck had been up three times with objections and aspersions. When Mr. Keogh rose he opened his remarks by observing—

Thrice the brindled cat hath mewed.

Mr. Roebuck's persistent attacks upon the late Emperor of the French will not be forgotten by the present generation, who will also call to mind the sudden change which came over the hon. member's opinion of His Majesty at a later epoch of the Empire. In 1854, Mr. Roebuck, speaking in his place in the House of Commons, protested against the Queen of England advancing to be kissed by "the perjured lips of Louis Napoleon." Seven years later he went over to Paris to entreat the Emperor to interfere in the American Civil War in behalf of the Confederate States, and on his return Napoleon III. had in England no warmer adherent or more respectful friend.

Writing last month about Mr. Ward Hunt, I ventured to describe the right hon. gentleman as "a scold," to refer to his possession of "a tone of voice and manner of speech which are strongly suggestive of the feminine art of 'nagging,'" and to derive from a study of "his cast of mind" small promise of "future manifestations of dignity." The number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in which these remarks appeared was barely published when the first Lord of the Admiralty made his now famous speech, in which he seems to have astonished everybody by plusteringly falling foul of his predecessors in office, and letting his tongue trip away with the foolish, angry phrases about the "paper fleet" and the "dummy ships." Mr. Ward Hunt is useful in contrast with Mr. Roebuck, as illustrating the difference between an ill-tempered man of suspicious mind and only average intellectual power, and one of the same temperament but gifted with high ability. Mr. Ward Hunt is undignified in his anger, and, what is worse, he is sometimes, as Mr. Goschen was fain to declare before the House of Commons, "not fair in his statements—is scarcely ingenuous." For lack of ability to conceive arguments he indulges in invective, and in order to support a theory he will paraphrase a statement of fact. He is like "the geographers" described by Swift, who

in Afric maps
With savage pictures fill their gaps.
And o'er unhabitable downs
Place elephants for want of towns.

Mr. Roebuck is able to dispense with such devices; and whilst he is ready enough to imagine evil things of his political adversaries, he is content to take their words as actually uttered and their actions as reputedly reported, and of these make scorpions for their backs. In argument his style is clear and incisive, and he is a master of good, simple English, which he marshals in short, crisp sentences. His voice, now so low that it scarcely reaches the Speaker's chair, was once full and clear. As in his best day she never attempted to rise to anything approaching florid eloquence, so he rarely varied in gesture from a regularly recurring darting of the index finger at the hon. member whom he chanced to be attacking—an angry, dictatorial gesture, which Mr. Disraeli, after smarting under it for an hour, once said reminded him of "the tyrant of a twopenny theatre." Now when Mr. Roebuck speaks his hands are quietly folded before him, and only at rare intervals does the right hand go forth with pointed finger to trace on the memories of the old men of the House recollections of fierce fights in which some partook who now live only as names in history.

"IL TALISMANO."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* contains a notice of Balfe's "Il Talismano," just produced under brilliant auspices in London, the leading artists engaged in the recital having been Mme. Nilsson, Mme. Marie Roze, Signor Campanini, and Signor Rota. After stating that the libretto was prepared some years ago, the *Gazette* goes on to say: "Propositions were made to the composer for bringing out the 'Talisman' on the French stage, for which Mr. Balfe had already written three works—two for the Opera Comique, one for the Grand Opera; and meanwhile it happily occurred to him to substitute for the original spoken dialogue dialogue set to recitative. With the exception of a few bars added, we believe, by Sir Michael Costa, the whole of the recitative as now sung is by Mr. Balfe himself. 'The Talisman' was, in fact, already in the form of a grand opera when, some three years since, Mme. Nilsson heard portions of it played or sung by Mr. Balfe himself. She was delighted with the music, and offered forthwith, if the work were translated into Italian, to undertake the part of Edith. Naturally the translation was made as suggested, and Mme. Nilsson at the earliest opportunity devoted herself to the music of Edith Plantagenet, and, indeed, was said to be already perfect in it at the end of last season; when, however, for various reasons, it was determined to postpone the production of the work until the present summer. So much for the history of the work. Now for the work itself. The novel of the 'Talisman' presents so many different kinds of interest that half a dozen dramatists and composers might treat it in half a dozen different ways. Meyerbeer would have been above all struck by the opportunity it affords for contrasting two different kinds of civilization, each of which he would have found means to depict, or at least suggest, through characteristic music. Verdi would have been attracted by the passionate and melodramatic elements of the story. Gounod would have been moved by its romantic side, and would have given ample development to the religious scenes. Wagner—but who can say what Wagner would have done further than that he would have found in the 'Talisman' a heroic legend and chivalrous personages after his own heart, and which, but for the fact that they are not German, he might have found worthy of being treated after his own system? Without neglecting any one element of dramatic effect, Balfe, in 'Il Talismano,' has remained Balfe, as Verdi would have remained Verdi and Gounod Gounod. The sentimental relations between the various characters of

the story are those which have chiefly impressed him; and after listening to the opera without looking at the libretto, what one would carry away from the performance would be the recollection of a great number of charming airs from melodies which, as sung by Mme. Nilsson, seem as graceful and poetical as Weber ever wrote, to tunes lively and familiar enough to have occurred to Lecoq. That, after all, is the way to test an opera. An operatic drama to be worth anything should speak to the eye; and the drama of 'Il Talismano' is sufficiently well constructed to enable any one already acquainted with Sir Walter's world-famous romance to follow its incidents without once turning to the printed pages of the libretto. We missed Saladin; but had Saladin been made a prominent personage, then, as only a certain number of leading actors—"protagonists," as the Italians call them—can be provided for in one opera, some other important character would have to be omitted or at least thrown into the background. The dramatic poet, besides 'taking his property whenever he finds it,' claims the right of presenting it as he may think fit; and the chief operatic parts detected by the artistic eye of Mr. Matthison in the novel of the 'Talisman' where Sir Kenneth, Richard Cœur de Lion, and Edith Plantagenet in the foreground, with Nectabanus, Sir Thomas de Vaux (transformed into 'Il Barone di Vaux'), and Berengaria in second line. All these personages take part in the action, as do also the Emir Sheerkof, Philip of France, and the Duke of Austria. But, in a musical point of view, Edith, the soprano; Sir Kenneth, the tenor, and Richard, the baritone, stand out before all the others. Speaking of the work as we found it, and having heard it but once, it seems to us that with the exception of a grotesque air for Nectabanus towards the end of the first act, given with much point—too much rather than too little—by Signor Catalani; a very pretty and thoroughly Balfian air, in polacca measure, for Berengaria, sung precisely as it ought to be sung by Mme. Marie Roze; and an admirable concerted piece leading to the finale to Act. II., for Edith, Berengaria, Sir Kenneth, De Vaux, Richard, and Nectabanus, all the music may be dismissed, except that written for the leading soprano, tenor, and baritone. First in the musical race must be placed Edith, after Edith, Sir Kenneth, closely followed by Richard, and then the operatic field, with Berengaria and Nectabanus in advance of all other competitors. The Arab encampment of the opening scene was a great success in a scenic point of view, nor is the chorus sung by the Arab warriors without character. But neither the chorus nor the duet for Sir Kenneth and the Emir by which it is followed did much to arrest public attention which was waiting to concentrate itself upon Edith Plantagenet and her opening scene. This consists of the usual recitative, slow movement and quick movement which the composers of the present day (Gounod, for instance, Ambroise Thomas, and, we believe, Verdi himself in 'Aida') discard as conventional, but which a dozen years ago, when Wagner's denunciations of operatic routine had not yet produced much effect, was looked upon as the indispensable form of the *prima donna's* aria. The first movement, with the recitative which precedes and introduces it, was sung by Mme. Christine Nilsson with the most tender expression. Its poetic subject is the ordinary one of slow movements—and of a good many quick movements, too—sung by operatic sopranos; and the inevitable theme is enlivened by frequent references to the stars of heaven, the flowers of the earth, and the diamonds from under the earth. The soft, flowing melody, delivered as it was with deep feeling and consummate art, produced much effect, but Mme. Nilsson seemed to have determined to listen to no appeals for repetition, and it passed without a formal *encore*. The concluding part of the air is of the tearing tormented kind; and, uninformed by the libretto, we should have taken it to signify restlessness and agitation, though it in fact expresses rapture. As to one point there could be no mistake. As a mere matter of vocalization, Mme. Nilsson sang it superbly, in token of which she was applauded with enthusiasm. Of the air for Nectabanus we have already spoken. Then comes a very effective trio and chorus for Edith, Berengaria, and Sir Kenneth and the Queen's attendants; and, finally, as regards act I., an air for Sir Kenneth, which the hero ought to, and, whether he desires it or not, will remember. 'Candido fiore,' otherwise 'Floweret, I kiss thee,' will be heard again more than once in the opera; and by this very beautiful melody Sir Kenneth, singing it behind the scenes, will be recognized at a critical moment in the last act. The conventional opera which Wagner—greater, perhaps, as a critic and satirist than as a creative musician—proposes to drive out of fashion by force of ridicule, demands that each of the leading personages shall have a scene in set form; and at the beginning of the second act occurs Richard's opportunity. In the old days of the Pyne and Harrison company the second movement of Richard's air—of a highly martial character—would have been *encored* at least twice; and the audience last night would gladly have heard Signor Rota sing it a second time. Berengaria's pretty air in the same act was repeated, and the rule against *encores* having thus been broken through, Mme. Nilsson was called upon to repeat almost everything she sang, especially her portion of a sentimental duet with Sir Kenneth, and a very lively air in galop time, which seemed to express great animal spirits rather than contentment of the soul. But it will be enough for the present to record the fact that the work was in all respects—and most deservedly—successful."

AN EMIGRANT'S GRIEVANCES.

MY LIVERPOOL TOUT.

It was after days of deliberation that, very late on a Saturday night, I determined to leave England and try my luck in America. I disposed of a few trifles that I possessed, and, with my scanty savings, found myself in Lime-street, Liverpool, with twenty-two pounds and a few shillings. "Are you for the American steamer, sir?" asked an amphibious-looking creature, in a nautical cap with a grimy band, a pilot jacket with lustreless buttons, but with pavement-worn boots, and trousers that bore evidence of terra firma for a long, long time—ever since they fluttered in the breeze in Renshaw-street and bore on a knee the seductive ticket emblazoned with the figures "9/6." I cast my eyes enquiringly towards a massive policeman. "It's all right, governor," exclaimed that officer; "he's a reg'lar hagent."

"This way," said the fellow, who now proceeded to possess himself of my carpet-bag and small box, and darting on we passed the Adelphi Hotel and through various bye-streets, when my guide ultimately halted in front of a dirty-looking

wire blind with the words "Coffee Room" inscribed thereon.

"This is the 'ouse," said he.
"What house, sir?" I thundered. "I am in search of a ship, not a house;" and I made a movement towards my luggage, on which were already displayed flaring red labels with a head-line reading "Emigrant's Luggage," the centres being filled in with the name of the interesting creature before me, and an address which I at once recognized to be "the 'ouse."
"It's all perfectly square," said the runner, with a ghastly smile. "I used to be in Water-street, but for the last six months I've 'ad the station. Walk inside. What will you 'ave? Plain tea, or tea and chop, or 'am and heggs?"

"First of all," I explained, "I am going to book myself for the steamer, and as soon as possible I am going on board."
The runner looked puzzled. "But she don't sail till Saturday," said he.
"What ship does not sail till Saturday?"
"Our boat."
"What the devil do I care about your boat? There is a steamer advertised for to-morrow morning."
"But you 'ave our labels on your luggage, and you must go by our ship."

"Look here, you scoundrel," said I, grasping my walking-stick, "if you don't take those labels —"
"Softly, softly," urged the runner, assuming a manner of the profoundest interest in me. "As you're so very hankous, I don't know but I may book you for the boat to-morrow; but," and here he closed a pair of the shadiest lids of an eye, the evil of which it was a mercy to escape even for the duration of a wink, "they'd feel lovely about it at the orfis."

Now I never felt such a loathing towards a human being as I did towards this touter—this leech, who lives out of the scanty purses of poor emigrants. I felt that I was a commodity in the commission market, and that, on the very shores of the country I loved so well, this grimy object was to be the broker who would profit by my departure, and out of the little money I possessed. I was determined, however, to leave by the next steamer, and not knowing a soul in Liverpool, I thought I would leave my things in "the 'ouse," and stay the one night in it. On arriving at the office the first visage that I noticed was, of course, that of the runner.

"This way," said he, pointing to an inner room that one could not miss. Some glass doors flew open, and I stood before one of about a dozen clerks.

"A ticket for this party, please, Mr. Willers."
"Name, age, and married or single," queried he addressed as Mr. Willers.

I enlightened him.
"Six guineas. All right. Here is your ticket. You must be on board by nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

I turned to leave.
"This will be three, Mr. Willers," lisped the runner.
"Very well, Tadpole. Will you take it now or in the evening?"

"In the hevening, Mr. Willers, in the hevening. I will be round again."

Back through the streets of Liverpool that murky afternoon, the pavement muddy, the theatrical and circus posters hanging dank and miserable—theirself more ragged than the paper hoop through which "Madame Ariel" had just burst in one corner, more weird than the grimace of the painted clown in the other, whose underjaw as I glanced at him was whisked off by the wind, and on over the pavement till it hitched against a bulletin board of the *Mercury*, where the rain had soaked away the paper, and blended the steamship disaster of last week with the railway accident of the current one.

I remembered all at once that clothes are dear in America, and that I badly needed an overcoat, both for the voyage and for the country. I enquired the price of a rough, warm-looking blue. Tadpole immediately appeared.

"Gent's going to Noo York," said he. "Nothing like a good hovercoat, and one at 'alf the price you give there, not reckoning the comforts of the voyage."

Again I could have annihilated this pest, but the coat took my fancy.

"You shall have it for forty-seven and six," said the shopman.

"I supposed I could buy such a coat for about two guineas."

"Not in the United Kingdom; but I'll see what I can do."
In a minute he returned. "As you are going abroad"—very kind of him—"we'll say forty-five."

"I cannot afford it," said I, and I turned to leave.
"Well, I'll do as well as I can by you; this coat is cheap at fifty shillings, but we'll knock off another, and forty-four is the lowest farthing you shall have it for."

I yielded, the coat was mine, and it answered the purpose; but just after I had paid for it the shopman came to a sudden recollection—

"Oh, Tadpole," he exclaimed, "a gentleman came in this afternoon and left four shillings for you—wasn't it this afternoon, Mr. Smithers? Ah! I thought so." And I saw the four shillings I had just parted company with put into Tadpole's talons, and then into his pocket. Tadpole was in luck, for the cutler who sold me a knife was the trustee of a pint of beer for him, and in the morning the man who supplied me with my little sea-moss pad of a bed, and the one who furnished me with my tin cups, plates, and washbowl, both paid tribute to Tadpole. If I had wanted a tooth drawn the dentist would surely have discovered some obligation to Tadpole.—*Gentleman's Magazine*.

THE COMING COMET.

The latest computations prove that Coggias comet is the most extraordinary body of the kind that has ever visited the solar system, and that probably by the 20th of July the earth will be passing through its tail. Already the tail is about three millions of miles long, but, as like Donati's comet the tail of this one is curved (though from the position of the earth we cannot perceive the curvature,) the real is much greater than the apparent length. Mr. Henry M. Parkhurst, who has been making calculations in regard both to the orbit of the comet and the gradual elongation of the tail, estimates that the perihelion distance of the comet from the sun lies just within the orbit of Venus, and that the tail increases one tenth each day. He further makes a number of predictions in regard to this wonderful visitor which are of so interesting a character that we quote them in full:

On Tuesday evening, June 30, and on the following evening, the moon will rise before the twilight fairly ends; but on