

"Keolanthé" was brought out at the Lyceum under Balfe's own management in 1841; and "Le Puits d'Amour," written for the French opera stage, was produced in Paris in 1842. The last was very successful; but a greater hit was made by Balfe, not only in France, but in Germany, by his grand opera, "Les Quatre Fils d'Aymon," which continues popular among the Teutons to the present.

It must not be supposed that Balfe had nothing to do all these years but bowl along a level road. On the contrary, his was often, and, indeed, commonly up-hill work. Besides engaging in the compositions mentioned above, and innumerable others of a minor nature, he was extensively occupied in a variety of ways. Now he conducted a concert, or sang at one; anon he appeared behind the footlights; then he sat in front of them, in the conductor's seat, and devoted patient hours of daylight to the rehearsal of his works; and again, night after night, wielded the baton from the same elevation. Twice he essayed the management of the Lyceum Theatre, only to be driven back to his profession in discomfiture. Among other difficulties of his managerial position, he found it impossible to keep a good company together, when he had taken no small pains to collect his singers. Jealousies among them were the chief cause of his ill success in both efforts. During his last management, the audience one night becoming impatient at an unaccountable delay, Balfe was compelled to come before them to make the following statement:—"About two hours ago I received a note from Mr. John Barnett, stating that he could not allow his pupil, Miss Gould, to appear at this theatre any longer. She being the third who has thus left the establishment, I am really unable at this moment to substitute anything. This is the last night of the English opera house, or at least of it under my reign. I am already burdened with five or six hundred pounds debt through it. I have done all in my power for the establishment. I brought out my opera of 'Keolanthé' gratis, for which Madam Vessis offered me three hundred guineas, and I had another opera by Mr. Macfarren ready cast and studied, but I was not able to produce it through the secession of Mr. Henry Phillips. I am exceedingly sorry, ladies and gentlemen, that I was ever such a fool as to become manager of an English theatre, and I solemnly promise you that I will never again appear before you in such a capacity."

Nor were his managerial troubles Balfe's only ones. Notwithstanding the favor shown him by the London public, the critics nibbled at him after their wont. Though ready enough in later years to take to their country the credit of his established reputation, they were far from forward in helping to build it up. We have before us as we write a volume of the most respectable musical journal London could boast of forty years ago. In it there is an elaborate review of "The Maid of Artois," which opens in this grudging manner: "It it be any gratification to Mr. Balfe to say that his opera evinces as much musical and dramatic talent as usually distinguishes the works of Donizetti, Vaccaj, Mercadante, and other popular imitators of the earlier writings of Rossini, we think we may compliment him to this extent. We should have been well pleased if the merits of his new production had justified a more sterling meed of praise." And after a severe analysis of the various numbers which make up the opera, and a scathing denunciation of Mr. Balfe's music in general, the review concludes dogmatically thus: "Let him forget Donizetti and Auber, follow the example of Barnett, and much may be expected of his future efforts." If the sagacious critic who penned that sentence be still among the living, it should occasion him some pain, we think, to reflect how little of Barnett's work survives, and how much of Balfe's.

In 1843 our Irish composer wrote his most popular opera, "The Bohemian Girl." Its fame extends all over the civilised world. It has been dressed in several languages, appearing as "La Zingara" on the Italian boards, and as "La Bohémienne" on the French. There is, we believe, even more than one German version. There is hardly a capital of Europe in which it has not been a welcome guest. In Vienna it has been performed in three theatres off the same evening. It is as popular in Berlin as in Dublin, in San Francisco as in Cork, in Melbourne as in London, where, on its first representation, it ran for upwards of a hundred nights—an unprecedented period for a single piece to occupy the stage thirty years ago. The success of this opera was far from tempting Balfe to idleness. In 1846 he gave "The Bondman" to the world; in 1847 "The Maid of Honour," and in 1849 "The Enchantress."

For several years afterwards no manager cared to call for a new English opera, and Balfe's pen, though not allowed to rust, was no longer engaged on dramatic work. It was during this period he wrote, among other minor compositions, his really admirable settings of songs by Tennyson and Longfellow. In 1857, however, the Pyne and Harrison Opera Company made a demand upon our composer, which was complied with by the production within thirty days of "The Rose of Castile." In rapid succession "Satanella," "The Puritan's Daughter," "Bianca," and "Armourer of Nantes" followed, all written for the same company. On the break-up of the Pyne and Harrison speculation, Balfe was at leisure once more, and soon afterwards set to recasting "The Bohemian Girl" for the Parisian stage, which he did with an amount of care and thought not always to be recognised in his work. Likewise he laboured long and lovingly on "The Knight of the Leopard"—the same which in an Italian costume was brought before the public for the first time only last year, under the title of "Il Talismano."

In this brief notice of a busy and bright career we have omitted mention of several of the less known dramatic efforts of Balfe. In all, he gave to the stage—English, Italian, and French—some six-and-twenty works. We cannot even glance at the mass of fugitive compositions he kept pouring out from his melodious brain as from a fountain. The strains of many of them are even now adding to the stock of human happiness in many lands and among various classes, from the mansion to the cottage. Neither can we take any note of Balfe's innumerable journeyings to and fro from city to city throughout his marvellously active life; nor have we space to descant on his

genial nature, his generosity, his wit, his unvarying kindness to all, his affection for wife, children, and grand-children, his sustained cheerfulness under every trial, his patient bravery in overcoming obstacles, and the many other estimable points of a rarely estimable character; while, even if our space were unlimited, no further proof of his untiring industry need be offered than the record given above. In that record, hasty and cramped as it is, we believe there is enough to show that his career was one in which his countrymen may feel a becoming pride, and we think it is suggestive of cogent reasons why they should unite at once and heartily in the work of doing honour to his memory.—*Nation*.

O'CONNELL AS AN ORATOR.

FROM A LECTURE BY HENRY GILES.

O'CONNELL was in every way made for a great tribune. Of commanding height and solid breadth of body—with elevated head, open face, clear, piercing eye, a full, sweet voice, imperturbable cheerfulness, ready wit, vernacular expression, and earnest address—in thought, forcible and direct—in passion, kindly or angry, as the case might be—in impulse ever-varying, from the whisper of emotion to the tempest of excitement, from the hush of prayer to the rage of indignation—O'Connell, as he willed, ruled a popular assembly. He put positions into broad, brief, and homely statements; he clinched them with pertinent instances, and then he let them take their chance. He dealt much in aphorism, proverb, anecdote. He ever and ever changed his topic and his manner; joke, story, insinuation, sarcasm, pathos, merriment, a lofty burst of passion, a bold personality, indignant patriotism, or subdued conciliating persuasion, came in quick succession—so that all within hearing of his rich, strong, musical voice, became unconscious of fatigue, and wished only the enchantment to continue. He was never boisterous, was not even vehement; and though he could, and frequently did, rise to transcendently figurative and impassioned speech, his general matter consisted in simple and earnest argument, in vigorous and homely sense. It is true that the popular assemblies which O'Connell was accustomed to address were Irish, and that Irish multitudes are susceptible and impassioned is also true. O'Connell had naturally his first school among such multitudes, and a most excellent school it was. No other multitudes can be so electrified by flashes of emotion, or can be so aroused by the expression of a sentiment. They are quick to every allusion of tenderness; and to wit, humor, and melancholy, they are alive in every fibre. Irish assemblies are not critical, but sympathetic. Eloquence is the child of confidence; and therefore it is that eloquence springs up in Irish assemblies as a native instinct. O'Connell in all such assemblies was an incarnation of the Irish soul. His genius was the genius of the nation, and faithfully it gave expression to the native mind of Ireland. One moment in jest and banter, sparkling like the streamlets in Irish glens; in another, like the tempest amidst Irish mountains; now soft as a song to the Irish harp; deep as the wind upon an Irish heath; again mournful as waves around the Irish shores. The people felt the personality of O'Connell; the sorrow of the past and its anger; the love of their country and its affections. They felt this in words plain to their intellect, in a poetry bold as their hopes, and in a prophecy as wild as their enthusiasm. Yet O'Connell's sway as an orator was not limited to an Irish multitude. I heard him in Scotland, when his triumph was as complete as it could have been in Ireland, and more splendid in its circumstances. He stood on Calton Hill, which overlooks the City of Edinburgh. The sky was clear and blue, and a mellowed sunlight spread afar upon flood and mountain. Some tens of thousands ranged themselves on the side of the hill, and gazed upon the stalwart man from Ireland. The city lay below them—the city of palaces—the city of romance and story—the city of Mary, of Knox, of Scott—the city of heroic memories and of resplendent genius. The panoramic vision stretched into the infinite, through glory and loveliness; and the eye strayed over frith, and lake, and brae, and highland, until the heart was dazzled and drunk with beauty. To this sublime scenery O'Connell pointed, and opened with an earnest eulogium upon Scotland. The Palace of Holyrood was beneath. He called up the shade of Bruce, and quoted Burns. He glorified the beauty of Scottish women, and the bravery of Scottish men. He said to the women that he would tell their sisters beyond the Channel that the daughters of Scotland could weep for the woes of Ireland. He dwelt with enthusiasm on the independence which Scotland had always maintained—giving sovereigns, but receiving none, and allowing no foreign king to keep his foot upon her heathered hills. He spoke of the Covenanters, whose dust made the soil which held it consecrated ground. He did homage to the sanctity of conscience for which these heroic men had fought, prayed, and died. He then turned with an eloquent despondency to Ireland. He pictured the long, the hard, the desolate sway of the oppressor—the humiliation which for centuries had crushed his countrymen, who, never willing to be slaves, had always vainly struggled to be free. He enlarged on the charms of his native land and her miseries—on the loss of her Parliament—the waste of her energies—the decline of her nationality, and the sinking of her heart and hope. Then he gradually arose to more cheerful strains, and closed in the rapture of jubilant and exultant prophecy. After three hours he was silent; then the collected enthusiasm of that sublime mass burst into one loud shout; it rent the skies with its boomings, and rolled in long-sounding echoes through the rocks and hills.

A cheese weighing fourteen tons will be one of the contributions from Ohio to the Philadelphia Centennial.

A Miss Sullivan of Boston, found a wallet with 1,000dol. in it a few days ago, and received 50dol. for returning it to its owner, whose name was in the pocketbook.