MUSIC IN VIENNA.

The entire artistic world has been set in commotion by an event that occurred lately at the Conservatory. In consequence of the dismissal of Herr Dessoff, professor of composition, without the knowledge of professor Hellmesberger, the latter threw up his situation as artistic director of the Institution. The uncourteous way in which the directors took advantage of a letter which he wrote on the subject as a pretext for his instant dismissal has created great indignation not only in artistic circles but among the educated public generally. Nearly all the papers condemn the almost brutal and arbitrary conduct of a body of directors composed mostly of persons strangers to art, who, wholly and solely to avenge a fancied slight offered to their authority, threw over a man to whose talent and universally acknowledged zeal the Conservatory is indebted for its reputation, as coolly as though he could be replaced by the first fiddler that turned up. Herr Nicolaus Dumbe, a highly respected art-amateur, and a member of the board of Directors, was unable to attend any of the recent sittings of the latter, and was ignorant of the steps taken with regard to Professor Hellmesberger. He shares the general feeling of indignation, and, with several of his colleagues who think as he does, is about to leave the board. This quarrel, which is designated in Zellner's *Blätter für Musik*, "Suicide of the Vienna Conservatory" will, probably, be attended by results most disastrous to the Institution. A long period had elapsed since the date on which Professor Hellmesberger had despatched his letter to the directors when he was summoned before them, and required to sign a document retracting every point in his letter. This he naturally refused to do, and, on returning home three hours later, found his dismissal already there.—Mad. Pauli-Marcovics has appeared in another character, that of Lucia, and fully confirmed the favorable impression she previously produced. Mr. Adams was the Edgardo. There has been a highly successful performance of Herr von Flotow's *Martha*, with Mdlle. Rabatinsky for the first time as the heroine; Mdlle. Giudele, also for the first time, as Nancy; and Mr. Adams, as Lionel. —Mdlle. Ilma de Murska has been re-engaged for five months at the Imperial Opera-house. She is to receive 2,500 florins a month.

ART MATTERS.

I took occasion last week to refer to the founding of a National Fine Art Gallery. This is a subject that should be thoroughly agitated by the press throughout the entire country; it is not simply a luxury, it is an absolute necessity if we desire, as a people, to make any mark in the world of art; we want some permanent resting place where unknown painters can send their work and meet with that recognition and fairness of treatment which they cannot find at the National Academy—some place where the masses can go and, without expense, be privileged to look at and admire art as explained by American artists.

The National Academy has now been in existence some forty odd years; when first founded the population of the country was, naturally, much smaller than at the present time; since then we have increased; our ideas have enlarged; and we have a much more thorough art education. Painting at the present day is a far different thing in this country than it was forty years ago; men who at that time were looked upon as great geniuses, are now passed by without recognition and a stronger, more original, more aggressive set of artists have taken their places. But the National Academy has not advanced as much as it might, with the country—we still find a great deal of old fogyism in its management, still find a fondness for old ideas and traditions. The council need stirring up; need an infusion of more liberal ideas; need, in short, to be brought to more thoroughly understand the progressive spirit of the age. To bring this end about we must establish a free gallery—a national gallery which shall be open to all contributors of whatever degree of merit—a gallery where the public at large shall become the judges of an artist's capability—where personal friendship and party feeling shall not be the tests by which an artist is judged—a gallery, to sum up in one word, where an artist shall stand on his own merits entirely and not on newspaper puffers, friendly prejudice, or skillful wire pulling. Until we have such an institution we cannot hope to attain that position as a civilized country which it is the earnest wish of every one who has thoroughly at heart the art interests of his country we should attain. We cannot hope to rank with the old world, where such galleries are numerous, and where the art education of the masses is made a matter of national pride. We cannot become a thoroughly civilized, refined, and educated people. Art is the civilizing, the refining element of humanity; without its teachings we are, at the best, but a sorry set of boors—it elevates our minds to a higher train of thought; imbues us with purer, holier feelings; and until its doctrines are thoroughly disseminated among a people they cannot hope to look for genuine culture, refinement, or education. There is no surer way to bring about this end than by making the people thoroughly conversant with the precepts and subtle mysteries of art; teaching them there is something more in this world of ours than dollars and cents—a world of poetry and imagination into which it is the bounden duty of the painter to lead them—a world where, forgetting labor and money making, they can be brought into closer contact with God and his handiwork.

This is the task before our painters and educated moneyed men—it is their duty, and should be their pleasure, to bring the people up to a higher standard of education—through art to improve both their minds and morals. Let them look to it that they do this, for by their works of the present will they be judged in the future.

T. B. Thorpe, well known in literary circles by his delicious "Hive of the Bee Hunter" and other works, has lately abandoned literature and proposes hereafter to devote himself to art, having set up his studio at the corner of Tenth street and Broadway, where he has on his easel some very charming pictures of domestic scenery. Mr. Thorpe's style is at present somewhat immature, but there is in all his works a genuine feeling and sentiment which must in course of time lead him to do thoroughly good things. One of the best pictures in the gentleman's studio at present is a study of early morning on the Hudson, in which he has admirably succeeded in depicting the effects of a stormy sky being dispelled by the rays of the rising sun. There are portions in this picture which remind one strongly of some of Turner's best efforts—good in color, strong in effect, and innately delicate in expression. Mr. Thorpe is an earnest, energetic painter and deserves both encouragement and success.

PALETTA.

MATTERS THEATRIC.

"Little Nell and the Marchioness," produced at Wallack's last week, from a pecuniary point of view has proved a decided success, the great public flocking to see it in large numbers. From a purely artistic standpoint, however, it is not so entirely successful.

Mr. Brougham has used the "Old Curiosity Shop" in his adaptation just so far as he found scenes and incidents made to hand; many of the characters are omitted, Kit Nubbles, Mr. Garfield, Mrs. Nubbles, and many others, the whole interest being concentrated in Little Nell, the Marchioness, Quilp, and Dick Swiveller, who do things that probably Dickens never dreamt of. The play, in fact, may be termed almost entirely original, so independent is it of the incidents of the novel. Quilp's affection for Little Nell, and his desire to marry her, are the motives which are carried throughout the play, and form the sole basis of the plot; these are well carried out, and take three acts of very cleverly-written dialogue to develop. Mr. Brougham is always very happy in his dramatizations, and "Little Nell" may be counted the best, presenting, as it does, a series of strongly-drawn, powerful scenes and a continuous flow of genial humor throughout.

Miss Lotta's personation of the dual title role, although decidedly amusing, is by no means good. As "Little Nell" she looks charmingly, and plays with an unexpected quietness; but as the "Marchioness" she gives full vent to her superabundance of animal spirits, and, although Dickens' "Marchioness" is *outré* enough in all conscience, Lotta's antics are beyond the bounds of all

reason. She has almost entirely failed to grasp the spirit of the part, albeit one would imagine it to be entirely in her line; we are presented with the picture of an odd, elfish little specimen of humanity who frisks, bounces, plays the banjo, dances breakdowns, and is unnecessarily vulgar—but "the Marchioness" was something more than this; and, as to the playing the banjo and dancing breakdowns, the idea of such things probably never entered her poor little head. Dickens' characters are, almost without exception, overdrawn; there is always a strong vein of caricature running through them, intensely amusing in itself and sure to raise a laugh. "The Marchioness" partakes more strongly of these characteristics than any of his other characters—a more unnatural person it would be hard to conceive—yet Lotta exaggerates this exaggeration, fairly out-Heroding Herod in the absnrdity of her gymnastic bouncings.

This young lady has been greatly bepraised by the local press, and John Brougham has pronounced her to be a "dramatic cocktail." Now, cocktails are very efficacious in dispelling unpleasant feelings in the morning; but, for a continual beverage, one wants something more substantial. So it is with Lotta, she is pretty, vivacious, and winning in her ways, but she utterly lacks the substantiality of thorough art, without which she cannot hope to rise above her present position of little more than respectable mediocrity. The truth of the matter is we are too apt to be carried away by a pretty face, here in New York, and if an actress but possesses this requisite it matters but little whether her acting is good, bad, or indifferent.

The only thoroughly good piece of acting in the play is the Quilp of Mr. E. H. Coleman, a new actor to these boards, who has succeeded wonderfully in catching the meaning and spirit of the part. The Quilp of Dickens is the grossest libel on humanity, and this Mr. Coleman makes him; taking his conception from that of the novelist, and fully carrying out his idea. Mr. Williamson's Dick Swiveller is decidedly funny, but greatly marred by that crudeness and angularity which characterize all his personations. The other characters are represented with varying degrees of success, none of them being particularly worthy of mention. The play is put upon the stage with the usual regard for accuracy of detail which marks all the productions at this establishment, the old curiosity shop, the fair scene, and the final tableau, calling for particular commendation for their artistic grace and truth to nature. With the attractions that it unquestionably possesses, "Little Nell and the Marchioness" will undoubtedly have a decided success, and add another laurel to Mr. Brougham's already heavy literary wreath.

The production of Giacometti's really grand tragedy of "Elizabeth," at the French Theatre, on Monday evening, with Mrs. F. W. Lander in the title role, must form an era in the annals of the New York stage, proving, as it did, such a decided success. Ristori's personation of this arduous part is too fresh in the minds of the public to make it any light task for a native artist to undertake it, as she would naturally have prejudiced opinion and greatly biased judgments to contend against. To say that Mrs. Lander overcame these obstacles and achieved an almost complete triumph, is but saying the truth—from beginning to end she fairly electrified her audience and held them complaisant to her changing mood—now thrilling them with her queenly power, now melting them to tears by her womanly weakness.

The character of Elizabeth is an intensely revolting one; the very personification of female vanity, arrogance and deceit, it is hard, nay, almost impossible, to sympathize with her. In the pages of history we cannot find her equal for cruelty and impetuosity of character, cannot find a woman so utterly lost to all the kindlier, purer feelings, that are supposed to govern the female heart—cannot, in short, find any one so entirely calling for abhorrence and condemnation. To depict truthfully the foibles and strong passions which agitated this woman's bosom, to show to us the every day life, the subtle workings of the mind of this wicked, yet great, queen, is indeed a hard task for the dramatist, and one which he would not willingly undertake; yet Giacometti has done all this, and done it well; giving us a play that must hold a lasting place in the temple of the drama for years, from its very truthfulness and the power and fidelity with which the strong characteristics of Elizabeth and her day are depicted. Historical truth has, in parts, been sacrificed, but this we can forgive in view of the intensely dramatic situations which this sacrifice has gained. The requirements of the stage and dramatic unity called for it, and the dramatist cannot be blamed for sacrificing history to obtain strength, vigor, and a succession of scenes rarely, if ever, equalled in the annals of the modern stage.

Coming so directly in the footsteps of Ristori, Mrs. Lander cannot but expect to be compared to that great actress in her personation of this same rôle. That Mrs. Lander stands this comparison well there is not a shadow of doubt. Ristori gave us a woman grand, statuesque, full of passion, yet cold as ice. Mrs. Lander gives us a woman purely womanly, innately fiendish, treacherous, and weak in character, yet throughout all, the woman; the woman who, loving a man, could sign his death-warrant; the woman who could coldly condemn her own sister to an ignoble death. Ristori possessed greater physical capabilities for representing the queenly character than Mrs. Lander, while her management of drapery was a perfect study; but for all this, she did not, as Mrs. Lander does, so fully impress us with the character of Elizabeth; did not present us with so thoroughly realistic a picture of the woman. The great fault in Mrs. Lander's acting heretofore has been an undue elaboration of detail, a "working up to" and straining after effect, and an artificiality, which have marred her best efforts; but these are to be found only to a very limited extent in "Elizabeth." Here we have a personation evidently the fruit of careful, earnest, and thoughtful study, and the result is a performance almost faultless in its conception and carrying out, an effort of histrionic talent that must always demand respect and admiration.

The closing scene of the third act, the signing of the death warrants of Mary and Essex; and then that last grand burst of pent-up passion and ambition which closes the play, are specimens of acting such as one rarely sees at the present day, and as thorough efforts of genius, for by no other name can they be called, should elicit the unrestrained admiration of the people. Ristori came to us with a great European reputation—she had startled the entire Old World by her unquestionably great talent; but had Mrs. Lander played "Elizabeth" in this country before her appearance there is hardly a doubt that Ristori's personation of the same character would have met with the almost cool reception accorded to her Lady Macbeth, in which she had been forestalled by our own great actress, Charlotte Cushman.

The support afforded Mrs. Lander is good throughout; Mr. Jas. W. Taylor winning good praise by his admirable personation of Essex, in which, although at times somewhat too boisterous, he succeeds in giving a truthful and powerfully drawn picture of the unfortunate nobleman.

The play is both badly and carelessly put upon the stage; the scenery being old, tawdry, and inappropriate. This is almost the only fault that can be found with the most thoroughly artistic performance that has been seen upon the New York boards for years.

John Brougham has ceased to "play with fire" at the Olympic, and this week his own excellent dramatization of "Dombey and Son" holds the stage, Mr. Brougham playing the part of Captain Cuttle—probably the worst personation in his entire repertoire.

At the New York Theatre "Under the Gaslight" is still the sensational attraction; while at the Broadway "Caste" still maintains its position as a delightful picture of modern life, and what an entirely different phase of modern life than that represented at "the New York!" SHUGG.