AMUSEMENTS.

The new year, which opened yesterday with both the local theaters holding out "attractions" of passable attractiveness, bids fair to be a season of much greater pleasure and profit than the one just closed. Many indications, which cannot escape even the least observant, denote a gradual clearing of the sky and throwing off of incumbrances which will leave the stage a happier place and players and public better content with what the gods provide. Stock companies are coming in again—a most hopeful sign under existing circumstances. They will be a powerful factor in the emancipation of the stage. The year 1897 will be chiefly remembered as the year of the syndicate's greatest power, and also of the beginning of its end. It is hard to see how this monstrosity can exist over the fast approaching time of booking next season's contracts. That ordeal will test its strength, and will also reveal the magnitude of the opposition, which is likely to surprise even those who estimate it generously.

The serious illness of James K. Hackett, the very handsome young leading man of the Lyceum company, has been remarked with solicitude by thousands of play-goers to whom his personality has become pleasantly familiar. During his absence from the cast of "The Princess and the Butterfly," William Courtleigh, another handsome and clever actor, has been playing his part. The Mirror relates that Mr. Courtleigh, who was quite unfamiliar with the role, was called upon to play one night at 8 o'clock, and was forced, therefore, to read the lines. Things went along fairly well until the fourth act, when there occurs a rather frantic love scene with Mary Mannering. Mr. Courtleigh, with his arms about the actress, strove to read from the printed book. The situation struck the audience as funny, and a little tittering was heard.

Then, by an unfortunate turn of her head, Miss Mannering obscured the book, and Mr. Courtleigh's lines were lost. He strove to shift the book into view, and the audience laughed uproariously. The situation was irresistibly comical. Mr. Courtleigh deserved, however, great credit for his excellent playing of the difficult role in the circumstances. Since that first night he has been letter perfect, and has given a thoroughly admirable impersonation.

At the Baltimore Lyceum week before last, says the Mirror, the stock company put on "Lady Bountiful," in which play appeared a property baby. The baby had been used already in "Caste," and it was somewhat frayed out by the end of its second engagement. So it was that during a pathetic scene one of the baby's legs became detached and fell to the stage. The audience giggled and the players worked manfully to keep straight faces. William Harcourt went and looked out of a window to hide his laughter, and Jennie Kennark, with commendable presence of mind, kicked the truant leg out of sight. All would have been well after that but for the unfortunate fact that the dialogue introduced repeated allusions to the baby, and each time its name was mentioned there was an enthusiastic laugh from the house. Pathos was queered for the rest of the performance. A new property baby will be introduced at the Baltimore Lyceum.

The announcements for the coming week at Boyd's include engagements of "The Prisoner of Zenda," "The Wedding Day," and "Secret Service"—a showy rather than a soldily meritorious list. "The Prisoner of Zenda" is by no means new, even to Omaha, which did not get the original company the first time the piece was presented here and will be still further from it now, although the company is said to be a rather good one. The comic opera spectacle which condescends on Wednesday night to let itself be seen once only in this city, is believed to be precisely the kind of thing our theater-goers will rush to see and hear, paying considerably advanced prices for the privilege. "Secret Service" will be presented late in the week, without Gillette, but with a company which has been praised in Kansas City and elsewhere, and the wide celebrity which industrious press agents have gained for the piece will doubtless assure it a cordial welcome here.

Later in the month the bookings at Boyd's include a number of good things. Among them may be mentioned—without regard to the sequence of their appearance—DeWolf Hopper in "El Capitan," E. H. Gothern in "The Adventure of the Lady Ursula," Herbert Kelcey and Effie Shannon in "A Coat of Many Colors," and Sofia Scalchi in concert. Walker Whiteside will also play a half week's engagement.

At the Creighton, after a last farewell struggle with a Lincoln J. Carter tank play, the stage will be given up permanently to the uses of the ever welcome Woodward company which opens a season of indefinite duration with two performances next Sunday. Few changes have been made in the composition of the company since it closed its summer engagement here and entered upon a period of unprecedented and phenomenal success in Kansas City. All the old members are still in evidence, with the exception of Mr. Noble, who has been replaced by James Fulton, a leading man of whom many good things have been said. Young Arthur Smith also has left the company, and his place is filled by W. G. Warren. Miss Earnest, however, Ashley Rush, Caroline Clore, Mr. and Mrs. Livingstone, Dora Carlton, W. J. Davis, Charles Emery and William Schroth will present familiar faces to their audiences next Sunday, and will doubtless even increase their popularity in Omaha.

Mr. Woodward and his people will remain at the Creighton as long as people will go to see them. The work of clearing away the debris of the Kansas City Auditorium is already begun and a new and magnificent popular price theater will soon arise out of the ruins of the old. When that is ready for use, a second and co-operating company will be organized under the Woodward management, and the two companies will divide the time between Omaha and Kansas City, playing probably a fortnight at a time in each town. This will form an extremely profitable circuit, which will render it possible for Messrs. Paxton, Burgess and Woodward to secure the best and highest priced vaudeville people as adjuncts to the regular dramatic performance. Complete arrangements had been made for the operation of such a plan and the second company had already been engaged, when the disastrous bursting of the Auditorium changed the situation and necessitated a new deal all around.

The present company already has a large repertory, which was partly acquired during the long engagement here last summer, when some of the performances suffered from an unavoidable lack of proper preparation. This shortcoming is not likely to trouble anyone now, for rehearsals can be carried on more leisurely and with proper intervals for refreshment and sleep. A view of a recent performance in Kansas City showed that every member of the company has grown in artistic stature since he or she was last seen here. If Mr. Woodward gives Omaha as good entertainment as he has given on former occasions—and he will undoubtedly give much better—he is likely to have all the business the Creighton will hold; and as no offensive ordinances relative to standing room are likely to be resurrected here by a spiteful opposition, he may do almost as well in a financial way as he did down below.

As heretofore, a strong feature will be made of the specialties which will be introduced between the acts at every performance. For the coming week Isabelle Urquhart, the Damm brothers and Matso Moto have been secured. The fair Isabelle has a little company of her own and appears in a sketch entitled "In Durance Vile;" the Damms are athletes, whose turn is said to be of a phenomenal kind, and the Jap is a very clever juggler. This is a fair sample of the talent which will be presented throughout the season.

Coming Events.

"Secret Service," William Gillette's American play, comes to Boyd's Thursday, Friday, Saturday matinee and night, January 6, 7 and 8, with the record of 300 nights in New York, 150 nights in Boston, five months in London, where it is still running with great success, and two months in Paris, France, at the Renaissance theater. It is a play that finds incidents in the late civil war in this country. It is filled with military features and is resplendent with soldiers in uniform and bristling bayonets, but war's more terrible accompaniments are present only by suggestion, although the dramatist gives the audience's imagination a helping impetus toward the battlefield. All of war's thrilling paraphernalia merely furnishes a background, however, for one of the most superior stories of a woman's heart and a noble man's love that has ever been written. In the unfolding of this story Mr. Gillette surpasses all his own previous cleverness. His play is a succession of situations that rivet the heart and keep the emotions always on the jump and the element of suspense so necessary to a successful drama is ever present until the last curtain falls. Manager Charles Frohman, under whose direction the play is presented, has given it the following cast: Byron Douglas, Hardee Kirkland, Arnold Daly, Hamilton Harris Albert Perry, Samuel Wood, James Cody, Henry Wilson, John Verome, Edgar Selwin, Forrest Haynes, Woodward Barrett, C. M. Emmerson, Hannah May Ingram, Margaret Mayo, Isabel Waldron, Helen Buckley, Annie Wood and twenty others.

The announcement that Lillian Russell, Della Fox and Jefferson De Angelis, leading their triple alliance combination of comic opera stars, are booked to appear here at Boyd's in Stange & Edwards' comic opera, "The Wedding Day," on Wednesday evening only has been received with enthusiasm. This piece was presented by this three-star organization at the New York Casino for six weeks last spring and made one of the most profound impressions of the season. It will be presented here exactly as staged in New York, and no detail of scenery or properties will be omitted. The company will be exactly the same as that which supported the three stars at the Casino, and theater patrons here will have the pleasure of hearing not only Misses Russell and Fox, but such other artists as Lucille Saunders, the prima donna contralto, William Pruette, the baritone, Tom Greene, C. W. Allison, Albert McGuckin, Ada Bernard and William Sellis.

The brave old days when a courtier would as soon draw a sword as do a favor for a fair lady, and frequently did draw a sword to do a favor for a fair lady in fact, when the practices of life were tinged with romance—those times are gone, doubtless succeeded by better; nevertheless, many practical people have an itching for the stirring, reckless adventure, the daring of the age of romance, and read its record with interest. Anthony Hope bowed to this sentiment when he wrote "The Prisoner of Zenda," and it was a clever conceit, and one by which he gained thousands of readers. The incorporation on the old romance in a setting of the present day—nineteenth century—and the fact that he chose a country but hazily conceived in the minds of his readers for the scene of all these deeds but adds to the reality of the illusion.

While Mr. Hope was making readers for his novel he was paving the way for the success of Edward Rose's dramatization which will be presented once more at Boyd's theater on Monday and Tuesday evenings.

The drama abounds with that rare quality known as real heart interest, the smallest details being looked after with scrupulous care. Incident follows incident in perfectly natural sequence, and the stirring climaxes are thus so easily led up to that they occur simply as matters of course without straining for effect.

The company under Daniel Frohman's management comes from the Lyceum theater, New York, and is headed, as before, by Howard Gould, whose performance of the dual role has been highly commended in these columns and in all the large cities of the country.

"The Heart of Chicago," which was successfully launched at the Lincoln theater in Chicago early in the season to the largest house in the history of that theater, will be the attraction at the Creighton the last half of the week. It is said to be one of the best sensational melodramas produced in years, and to contain some absolutely and startling mechanical effects. The Chicago newspapers pronounce the new railroad scene effect to be an absolute novelty, and claim for it superiority over anything of the kind ever attempted. The Chicago fire scene also came in for unlimited praise. Other important works of the scenic painter and stage mechanic's art are the night illumination in the Court of Honor at the World's fair grounds; Masonic Temple Roof garden at night and a panoramic view of the South Side business district and Lake Michigan. The interpreting company is said to be very strong.

Mme. Yale, whose public lectures in Omaha always test the capacity of the house in which she speaks, will deliver two addresses this week at the Creighton theater. The subject of her discourse for Monday afternoon will be "Woman's Health;" for Tuesday afternoon, "The Yale Beauty System." The lectures are free. The many Omaha women who were unable to gain admittance to Mme. Yale's last public appearance will now have an excellent opportunity. Reserved seat tickets are ready for gratuitous distribution at the drug department of the Boston store.

Considerable interest has been manifested, not alone among citizens of Irish birth or descent, but also among many others who know, from travel or reading, the beauty and picturesqueness of the Emerald Isle, in the illustrated lecture which is announced to be given tomorrow night at Blum's hall, entitled, "Glimpses of the Ould Sod." Ninety-six colored views will represent to the eye the scenes described by the lecture. The proceeds of the entertainment go to charity.

Merely Players.

Amelia Glover is recovering from a recent illness.

"A Southern Romance" closed its season last week.

Bert Coote has left Roland Reed and will return to vaudeville.

The former Lansing theater in Lincoln is now called the Oliver.

Nat Goodwin will produce "Nathan Hale" in Chicago, January 25.

William Bonelli has closed his tour in "The Captain of the Nonsuch."

Beerbohm Tree is to play Sherlock Holmes in a drama by Conan Doyle.

Fanny Rice is the latest to aspire to a New York theater of her own.

The number two "Never Again," the one which was seen here, has closed its season.

Sidney Rosenfeld has a commission to write a play for May Irwin for production next season.

Mrs. Drew left property valued at not more than $200. John Drew has been appointed administrator.

Kathryn Osterman and Anna Belmont, who are playing together in "What Happened to Jones," are sisters.

J. E. Dodson and Annie Irish are soon to be married and will probably take out their own company next season.

The Lilliputians played "The Fair in Midget Town" in English for the first time at Newark, N. J. on Christmas eve.

James A. Herne contemplates sending out on a tour next season a magnificent revival of his first great success, "Hearts of Oak."

Adolph Luetgert, the Chicago sausage meat man, threatens to go on the stage "as soon as he can make the necessary arrangements."

Maurice Barrymore had a severe attack of nervous prostration recently and was out of the cast of "A Ward of France" for several days.

Colonel Kidder of Chicago, father of Kathryn Kidder, is authority for the statement that his daughter will never return to the stage.

During Julia Marlowe's engagement in Louisville last month the boys in the gallery sent her a magnificent bunch of American Beauty roses, with a card appropriately inscribed with a quotation from the poet Marlowe.

On Christmas night at the Bijou in New York, after May Irwin had sung her negro songs repeatedly in the middle of the second act, in response to enthusiastic encores, the cry finally arose for a speech. Looking quizzically at her audience a few seconds, she said: "In spite of the fact that our reform friends are in power until the first of the year, and that tomorrow is Sunday, and that you may still experience some difficulty in getting what you want, I wish you a merry yuletide."

The Washington Post accuses Johnny Ray, the ex-vaudevillain, of having developed a case of "caputus elephantus." The idea is better than the Latin.

Harry Corson Clarke has retired from the Frawley company, and is organizing a stock company of his own for the Pacific coast and the Sandwich islands.

Pearl Andrews, the well known mimic, has brought suit against the proprietors of a Sixth avenue department store, who falsely accused her of shoplifting.

Willie Collier, who is soon to reappear in Omaha in "The Man from Mexico," began his stage career nearly twenty years ago as call boy at Daly's theater.

A daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Brown Potter, who has lived with her father ever since the separation of her parents, made her social debut in New York last week.

Louise Rial, whose excellent work in "At Piney Ridge" has been universally commended, secured a divorce in Chicago last week from her husband, Jay G. Rial.

Rhoda Cameron, who was compelled by illness to retire two years ago from the Lyceum stock company, has regained her health and has been re-engaged for the company.

Fanny Davenport and William Gillette, syndicate attractions, played against Minnie Maddern Fiske in Washington last week, but did not seriously interfere with Mrs. Fiske's business.

John E. Kellerd claims to suffer from the hard fate which compels him to play subordinate parts so well that he makes the star jealous and so finds it difficult to keep an engagement.

Julie A. Herne, the eldest daughter of James A. Herne, is credited with doing really clever work in her father's company, playing Helen Berry and Perley, the hired girl, in "Shore Acres."

Julia Marlowe and Ada Rehan will each play "Rosalind" in New York this week. As similar coincidences have happened before Miss Malowe is beginning to think Mr. Daly does it on purpose.

Arnold Daly, the young actor who plays Wilfred Varney in the second "Secret Service" company, which will appear here this week, is pleasantly remembered for his fine performance of Chambers, in "Pudd'nhead Wilson."

When Julia Arthur returns to New York in April she will give a version of "Camille." She has decided to present, during the same engagement, a new three-act Italian comedy, "Infidele," by Roberto Bracco, which has been translated for her.

Joseph Holland was unable to appear last Saturday afternoon in Baltimore in "The Mysterious Mr. Bugle," because of a corn on his left foot. He fainted after the play Friday night, but appeared Saturday evening, though suffering much pain.—Mirror.

A Wellsville, Ohio, paper says: "Quite a number of our playgoing people went to East Liverpool last night to see 'Whits Sides.' They were well pleased with the play, and report a crowded house." It is surmised that Walter Whiteside was the "play" in question, as he is known to have been in that neighborhood at the time.

Paul Gilmore, who is soon to go a-starring in his own orbit, is winning golden opinions in the east for his fine performance in support of Chauncey Olcott. The Boston Herald says of him: "The acting of Paul Gilmore was one of the features of the production. He is a handsome, manly, convincing young fellow, who has been seen before in other good productions, and the wonder about whom is that Charles Frohman doesn't give him a Faversham opportunity."

GOSSIP ABOUT NOTED PEOPLE.

There is now in the employ of Uncle Sam at Washington a lineal descendant of Miles Standish. He bears the name of his famous ancestor and is a member of the tenth generation. He comes from Portland, Me., and is a constituent of Speaker Reed. He has just been appointed to a position in the government printing office through the civil service. His father and grandfather, both of the same name, lived and died on a farm called Flagstaff, not far from the boundary line between Maine and Canada. He is the only direct male descendant of the puritan warrior, having no brothers or sisters.

William Washington Browne of Richmond, Va., who died the other day, was the president of the Savings bank of the Order of United True Reformers in that city. It is said that he was the only colored bank president in the country. He had the confidence of the white bankers and business men of Richmond and it is stated that his was the only bank in Richmond that did not decline to pay currency during the panic of 1893, cashing the checks of other banks as well as those drawn on it, and furnishing the needful currency to enable the teachers in the public schools to be paid.

William J. Riley of Virginia, who is known best as "Judge," is in Washington, a candidate for any office, consular or diplomatic, that may profit by his real ability. He has many good qualities and an experience which is unique, for he shot a double-barreled gun full of shot into the black epidermatic covering of the queen of Madagascar. He was consul of the United States at Mozambique some years ago and some female bathers disturbed the peace of his pied de terre by the sea at night. Among these maids was the queen, and although he did not know that he fired what he thought was a pair of blank cartridges, with the sad results of sending a number of leaden messengers into the cuticle of her majesty.

Barney Barnato's "Life" is full of good stories. The South African diamond king was a capital amateur actor in his youth and always a great friend of actors. Kimberly people had a very high opinion of Barnato as Matthias in "The Bells." A very well known South African colonist was making a first visit to London and his friends, wishing to show him all the sights, booked seats for the Lyceum on a night when Irving was playing "The Bells." The visitor from South Africa was told of this and said: "Oh, let's go somewhere else. I have seen Barney Barnato as Matthias and I don't want to see anybody else." Barnato himself afterward told this story to Irving, who laughed and rejoined, "Such is fame!"

One who knows Cecil Rhodes well tells "The Sketch" that he is overtaxing his strength. "I have seen him," he says, "work hard at work dictate for ten or eleven hours at a stretch, absolutely wearing down the endurance of three typewriters, one after the other. All the time he has been pacing to and fro, up and down the room, turning all his immense faculties upon the matter in hand. Of course, his brain requires constant artificial stimulant, and the alcohol that is necessary merely to sustain him in times of pressure would send any weak man under. Yes, all this must affect his constitution in the end, and he is not now the man he was some few years ago; but, at the same time, not one man in a hundred could stand half that he has faced and conquered."

In a collection of autographs lately sold in London the following letter from Dr. Samuel Johnson to his godchild brought £12, thus being valued at a much higher rate than any of his epistolary or other literature commanded in his lifetime: "To Miss Jane Langton, in Rochester, Kent, 1784—My Dearest Miss Jenny: I am sorry that your pretty letter has been so long without being answered, but when I am not well I do not always write plain enough for young ladies. I am glad, my dear, that you write so well and hope that you mind your pen, your book and your needle, for they are all necessary. Your books will give you knowledge and make you respected, and your needle will give you useful employment when you do not care to read. When you are a little older I hope you will be diligent in learning arithmetic, and, above all, that through your life you will carefully say your prayers and read your bible. I am, my dear, your most humble servant, SAM JOHNSON."

Yale Glee Club's Passage.

The members of the Yale musical clubs will arrive in Omaha at 4:35 o'clock on Sunday afternoon over the Union Pacific railroad from the west. At Council Bluffs their three special cars will be transferred to the Northwestern road, over which they will go to Minneapolis for a concert on Monday night. A number of the Yale men of Omaha and vicinity will go out as far as Grand Island on Sunday to meet their fellow Yalensians and accompany them to Omaha.

MUSIC.

At the recent Christmas celebration so many selections from Handel's Oratorio, the "Messiah," were performed that a history of the composition and first performance of that great work seems likely to be unusually interesting at the present time. We are wont to look upon a work of art as a sort of divine communication, put into tangible form by men, if not endowed with supernatural characteristics at any rate far above and very different from ourselves and those with whom we associate. We look upon Beethoven as a more than human man, and even Wagner, although it is but a few years since he died, is slowly but surely being canonized and raised above his contemporaries, as if he were made out of other stuff than that which composed them. The everyday life of great men has never been very much different from that of ordinary mortals, excepting that they did more work and made what they did count for more. The great man does the right thing at the right time, in the right way, and he is able to put into it a force which others feel; yet he eats, drinks and sleeps, worries over details, enjoys the pleasures of life and suffers as keenly its agonies as his fellow beings.

George Frederick Handel, the composer of the "Messiah," was a man among men, possessing as much weakness as greatness. He was not only a composer of music, but he was a manager of opera companies and was skilled in all the possible requirements of running so complicated an enterprise. He was noted for his enormous appetite, his ungovernable temper, his indomitable will and his belief that when he wanted a thing a certain way that was sufficient reason why it should be that way. He was tender hearted and generous to a fault. Often when in the depths of poverty himself he organized and conducted musical performances for the benefit of charitable institutions, and it was at one of these times and for such a purpose that the oratorio of the "Messiah" was produced for the first time, in the city of Dublin, Ireland, Tuesday, April 13, 1742.

The first advertisement of it reads as follows: "For the Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer's Hospital, in Stephen's Street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inn's Quay, on Monday, the 12th of April, will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Mr. Handel's new Grand Oratorio, called the Messiah, in which the Gentlemen of the Choirs of both Cathedrals will assist, with some Concertos on the Organ by Mr. Handel."

In the same paper another announcement appears which will be interesting for reasons that are self-evident. "At the desire of several persons of distinction, the above performance is put off to Tuesday next. The doors will be opened at 11, and the performance begins at 12. Many ladies and gentlemen who are well wishers to this noble and grand charity, for which the oratorio was composed, request it as a favor that the ladies who honor this performance with their presence would be pleased to come without hoops, as it would greatly increase the charity by making room for more company."

The gentlemen were requested to come without swords and by thus reducing each individual's demand for space, 700 people were accommodated in a hall which ordinarily would contain only 600.

The words of the oratorio were entirely selected from the scriptures, and arranged in their order by an intimate friend of Handel's, named Charles Jennens. This librettist was not very much pleased with the music set to his words, and in a letter written to an unknown friend, says: "I shall show you a collection I gave Handel, called 'Messiah,' which I value highly. He has made a fine entertainment of it, though not near so good as he might and ought to have done. I have with great difficulty made him correct some of the grosses faults in the composition; but he retained his overture obstinately, in which there are some passages far unworthy of Handel, but much more unworthy of the 'Messiah.'"

His reference to the overture affords us a fine opportunity of judging the difference between his comprehension of the magnitude and grandeur of the subject and the best way in which to represent it to those who should listen. Jennens desired apparently a brilliant orchestral introduction which should at the very beginning fasten the attention of the audience. Handel saw the oratorio from one end to the other as a complete work in which each part was related to every other part and dependent for its effect upon such relation. It was his intention to paint in music the innermost spirit of Christianity as represented in the prophecies concerning Jesus, in his birth, life, death, resurrection, and in those promises and predictions concerning the final redemption and elevation of humanity. The first words with which the oratorio opens are: "Comfort ye my people," and the burden of the entire number is that the darkness, sorrow, the uncertainty of the past is about to give place to a universal salvation to be consummated in the glorification of mankind. Therefore he wrote his prelude, which he called sinfony, in a minor key; began it with a slow and dignified movement, constructed the middle part in fugue form, and brought it to a close in the same spirit in which it was begun, somber, quiet, sad. The genius of the composer was so far above the mechanician librettist that the one failed utterly to comprehend the other, and condemned piecemeal that which he should have considered in its entirety. The whole oratorio was composed in twenty-four days; it was begun on August 22, 1741. The first part was completed August 28, the second September 6, the third September 12, the instrumentation September 14. At this time Handel was 56 years of age. The work consists of solos for soprano, alto, tenor and base; a duet for alto and tenor; recitatives for each of the solo voices, choruses, a prelude for orchestra and a sort of intermezzo also for orchestra. The whole work may be said to be divided into three parts, the first representing the longing of the world for the Messiah, prophecies concerning his coming and the announcement of his birth; the second, to his life and death; the third to the doctrines of the religion which he founded, especially that which pertains to immortality and eternal happiness.

The first recitative, "Comfort Ye, My People," is now always sung by a tenor, but Handel himself permitted it to be sung by either tenor or soprano. The solo, which follows, "Every valley shall be exalted," was and is for tenor, but in the Dublin manuscript concludes with a long cadenza, now omitted. The great bass solo, "But Who May Abide," was originally for Bass voice and is now sung in the key of D minor, but Handel had it transposed into E to be sung by tenor and also rewritten upon the alto clef that it might be sung by an alto. It was even transposed into G minor and A minor that it might be sung by a soprano voice. To us who have never heard it except as done by a bass these transpositions seem very strange, but it is very evident that Handel had no objection whatever to his music being sung in different keys by different voices. The chorus, "For Unto Us a Child Is Born," is one of the greatest of Handel's compositions and the climax which it attains on the words "Counselor," "Wonderful," "the Mighty God," "the Everlasting Father," "the Prince of Peace," is one of the greatest to be found in music. The harmony is the simplest, only the chords of D and G and A being used at its first appearance. This chorus is followed by what is known as the pastoral symphony, called by Handel a "pifa," and founded upon a Calabrian melody, probably of great antiquity. This Handel had heard in Rome thirty-two years before the composition of the "Messiah," and he had treasured it up until the time came when he should make of it a tone picture of the vigil "of the shepherds abiding in the field, watching their flocks," and about to listen to the celestial chorus. "Glory Be to God, the Highest, Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men." This chorus, as Handel has written it, is of the character of a triumphant outburst of ecstacy, as if coming from heaven itself. It is followed by a sort of cry of prophetic joy in the soprano solo, "Rejoice Greatly," and this again by another pastoral melody, "He Shall Feed His Flock Like a Shepherd." In the autograph copy of the oratorio written by Handel himself the two verses form a single aria in the key of B flat and in the soprano clef. But in another version there are two leaves inserted, in which the first part is in F and the second part in B flat. As it is ordinarily performed at the present day the first part is sung by an alto, in the key of F, and the second by a soprano, in the key of B flat.

The second part pertains to the events of "Behold the Lamb of God that Taketh Away the Sins of the World," and is a wonderful representation in tone of the feeling by which one would be overcome, as he stood contemplating the Savior upon the cross. This is followed by the great alto solo, entitled, "He Was Despised and Rejected," one of the most effective descriptions of the sufferings of the "Man of sorrows" that the human brain ever evolved. There is a gleam of brightness in the chorus, entitled "All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray," but which only serves to deepen the gloom all about it. It ends with an adagio in which occur a succession of the most majestic harmonies to be found in the realm of music. Handel has been criticised for having given in this chorus too realistic a description of the wanderings of a scattered flock rather than the errors of human sinners. Much has been said and written on both sides. It is very likely that Handel knew as well as anyone what he was about. After the consoling soprano solo, "But Thou Didst Not Leave His Soul in Hell, nor Suffered Thy Holy One to See Corruption," comes the triumphant chorus entitled, "Lift Up Your Heads, Oh, Ye Gates." From this point we are led step by step, from one triumph to another, until we reach the great "Hallelujah" chorus, the greatest single composition for voices ever written. At its first performance at Covent Garden, March 23, 1743, King George II and the whole assembly were so thrilled by its triumphant measures that they arose and remained standing until the end. This is the origin of a custom which at the present time prevails throughout England and America wherever the oratorio is given. When Handel was questioned as to his own feelings while he was composing it, he replied: "I did think I did see all heaven before me and the great God himself."

The musical subject to which the words "And He Shall Reign Forever and Forever" is set is very much like the seventh and twelfth lines of the choral "Wacht auf ruft uns die Stimme." That, sung to the words "For the Lord God Omnipotent," is a part of a very ancient plain chaunt, and is used by Handel in several other choruses. With this chorus the second part ends.

The third part begins with the great soprano solo, "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth." The words are taken from the Book of Job, and by a mistranslation were long supposed to be a prophesy concerning the resurrection of the body. As they appear in the St. James version of the bible and in the oratorio they read "Yet in my flesh shall I see God." The real meaning of the original Hebrew was "Yet without my flesh shall I see God." The work ends with two choruses, the first entitled "Worthy is the Lamb," the second, the "Amen." The climax is reached in what is called a close canon, the difficulty of the construction of which can only be perceived and appreciated by the thoroughly trained musician. These choruses abound in what may be called after-thoughts and were worked out with considerable deliberation. There are three very interesting studies for the stretto of the final fugue, written in Alla Breve measure in the key of G, and were evidently made for the purpose of testing the subject of the fugue for canonic imitation. The matter of all three of these studies appears in the finished chorus with very little change excepting the necessary transpositions.

Handel wrote the oratorio upon oblong folio paper 9¾x12 inches, such as was used in the composition of Italian operas. It filled 275 pages. The autograph score exhibits numerous changes, interpolations and omissions. The first orchestration of the work would be considered, from the standpoint of modern scoring, as very incomplete. Much was left for the copyist to do, it being taken for granted that where there were no special directions, certain instruments should double certain others for the voice parts. At the time "The Messiah" was written the clarinet, although invented, had not come into popular use and Handel wrote no part for it. At the Handel Commemoration at Westminster Abbey, in 1784, the orchestra was composed as follows: First violins, forty; second violins, forty-seven; violas, twenty-six; violoncellos, twenty-one; double basses, fifteen; first oboes, thirteen; second oboes, thirteen; flutes, six; bassoons, twenty-six; double bassoons, one; trumpets, twelve; trombones, six; horns, twelve; kettledrums, three; double kettledrum, one; total, 242. The chorus consisted of sixty sopranos, of whom forty-five were choir boys; altos, forty; tenors, eighty-three; basses, eighty-four; total, 267.

From 1791 to 1861 the "Messiah" was given annually on Christmas eve in London by the Cecilian society. It has become the custom, both in England and America, to give this great work during the Christmas holidays. It is impossible to leave this subject without making reference to the deplorable fact that Omaha is without a choir organization that feels itself competent to sing this oratorio, and to express a hope that the time is not far distant when such a society will be organized and that it will receive from the people of this city such support as will make it one of its permanent institutions.

At a recent meeting of the congress committee of the Bureau of Education of the Transmississippi Exposition the following action was taken: "It was moved, seconded and carried that Mr. Homer Moore be appointed chairman of a committee of five to arrange a musical congress, the other members of the committee to be suggested by him and appointed by the executive committee of the Bureau of Education." The writer was pleased to accept this very honorable position and recommended that the committee for the organization of the musical congress be increased to seven members. This has been done. The Transmississippi Exposition is a national affair and is being developed on the broadest lines possible. Its music must be conceived and managed in the same spirit in order to be a credit to it. A "National Congress of Musicians" must represent the musicians of the whole country and the musical achievements up to the present time that can claim to be American. Such a congress was a feature of the original proposition for the music of the exposition, submitted to the chairman of the ways and means committee last August. It was the outgrowth of a number of conferences held in New York last summer when it was evident that the Music Teachers' National association would not meet here next June. As has been said repeatedly in The Bee, the exposition is Omaha's chance to come in contact with the musical world. It is the one opportunity that will be granted for bringing the musicians of both east and west together in this city. The action of the congress committee is the first step toward this consummation. It's success will depend upon the co operation that can be secured from the leading musicians in other cities. When the matter was talked of in New York last summer there was great interest manifested and numerous promises were made to come and work in so worthy a cause if a congress were held.

Seven committeemen were desired that a larger extent of territory could be reached directly. It is expected that Boston will have one representative, who will bring into line the New England states; New York City another, who will represent New York and New Jersey; Pittsburg one; Chicago one; St. Louis one; San Francisco one. The writer expects to look after Omaha and surrounding territory. The duration of the congress, the number of essays, recitals and concerts will be determined by the committee.

The writer has prepared a list of twenty topics for essays on important musical subjects. These will be submitted to the committee and a line of educational work proposed which will evolve a lasting monument to the exposition in the form of a book in which each essay will form a chapter. This will be published at the close of the congress. It will also contain all the programs of recitals and concerts and a directory of all the members of the congress. The writer believes that as far as possible the influence of the exposition should be made permanent, and that its musical department should lay the foundation for the future musical greatness of the middle west. Everything possible will be done to cause this congress to contribute to that end. The hearty co-operation of the musicians of this city, with those of other cities, and the firm support of the exposition back of it all, will ensure for it a grand success and make it an honor to Omaha, to the exposition and to the musicians of America. HOMER MOORE.

Musical Notes.

Next Friday afternoon the Omaha Orchestral society will resume its concerts at Boyd's theater, under the direction of Franz Adelmann. The numbers of the program are not all selected, but it is very probable that Mr. Adelmann will play the Grieg sonata in G minor, accompanied by Mr. Long on the piano. The orchestral numbers will present the usual variety. The concert will begin at 3 o'clock, instead of at 2:30, as heretofore.

The fourth regular recital of the musical department of the Woman's club will be given at the First Congregational church on Monday, January 10, at 3 p. m. The program will consist of selections from the works of Grieg, and will be rendered by Mme. Muentefering, Miss Kountze, Miss Dickinson and Mr. Adelmann. This performance will be free to members of the Woman's club.

A NEW YEAR'S OFFERING

ANOTHER WEEK EYES EXAMINED FREE

A Liberal Offer from Well Known People that Interests Everybody.

The past week having been vacation, we have found it necessary to give most of our time to the children who have availed themselves of this opportunity of having their eyes examined, and many older people who have wished to take advantage of our liberal offer, have been unable to secure attention, so that we will continue this offer until all those who think their eyes are failing them, and yet do not feel able to pay the customary price for a thorough examination, can come and see us without charge.

EXAMINATION AND GLASSES ABSOLUTELY FREE.

In order to more thoroughly demonstrate the absolute correctness of our statements, that cross eyes can be straightened without an operation, we make this offer to any parent having a cross-eyed child, and who may have had their doubts or been sceptical upon this subject heretofore. The press and pulpit might herald the fact from one end of the country to the other, that glasses would straighten cross eyes, but still there are people who would neglect their cross-eyed children on the ground that an operation is all that is necessary, and can be done when the child is older. This belief is absolutely false and ungrounded. If glasses will straighten the eyes in early youth, as they will nine times out of ten, there is no other proper way of doing it. We make this offer in order to show our unbounded faith in what we know to be a fact, and any who are sceptical are invited to avail themselves of this chance. Neglecting a cross eye may mean the loss of sight to the eye. Proper attention in time will save the eye and do away with an operation. We limit these dates to Wednesday, January 5th and Saturday, January 8th, of the coming week.

Do not be afraid to take advantage of this offer on the ground that some one may think you are not able to pay for the work. This is not the question with us. If you want to pay for the work after the eyes are straight you are welcome to do so. What we want is a chance to straighten the eyes, and the money consideration is an afterthought, which we can only prove to you by offering to do the work absolutely without expense to yourself.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE PRICE OF GLASSES.

So many people ask us this question that we are tempted to explain our methods as we do not wish the feature of expense to keep any one from calling on us. In the first place it is impossible to quote prices until we know the nature of the glass required. After making an examination of your eyes we can tell you exactly what it will cost to furnish you with the lenses necessary to the condition of your sight. You are at liberty to let the matter drop, or, if you wish us to do the work for you you will know exactly what the expense is going to be before undertaking it, and for the class of work we do our prices are always reasonable. This statement will be vouched for by thousands of people for whom we have done work in past years. We will not take your work for less money than we can afford to do it rightly, and we will always furnish you with the best that can be had. We carry the largest stock of frames in the city, and they range in price from 25 cents to $1 for steel, from 50 cents to $1.50 for aluminum, from $1 to $3 for gold filled, and from $3 to $5 for solid gold.

SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS.

We have without doubt the most complete scientific instruments in the west for this work, having spared neither pains nor money in procuring the very latest and best that could be had. Our offices are perfectly arranged for this work, and we not only offer every possible advantage to those seeking assistance in this line, but we positively guarantee all our work to be of the highest grade obtainable. We have references and testimonials by the thousands, from the most prominent people in this state who have tried in vain to get assistance before coming to us. We are not strangers to you, and if our statements seem rather broad, come and satisfy yourselves of their validity.

Your eyes are too precious to trust them in the hands of people who solicit your patronage on the strength of their being able to sell you glasses at bargain counter prices, or the fact that they sell some particular kind of glass which contains some magic power. The reputation of a specialist depends on his skill and success and we do not wish anyone to come to us who has not investigated this matter thoroughly.

CHILDREN'S EYES.

We positively have the most accurate instruments for this class of work in this city.

DRS. SEYMOUR AND DAILY,
413-414 Karbach Block,
15th and Douglas Sts., over Nicol, the Tailor.

SOME LONG FELT WANTS.

Nixon Waterman in L. A. W. Bulletin.

I am a great inventor, a profound experimenter,
I've a grand, colossal intellect on mechanism bent;
I can reason on a canter, I can catch a thought instanter,
And my brain unravels anything on which it is intent.

For the woman who desires to "size up" her passerbyers,
I've a wondrous patent mirror that will bring each one in sight,
And she'll see just what they're wearing without turning round and staring,
While a phonographic annex says, "Oh, isn't she a fright!"

Men who 'tween the acts must "see a man" will greet my new idea,
It's a necktie demijohn from which their thirst they may assuage;
And I've made a spiral tower for the hopeless ones who now are
Softly swearing at the women's hats that hide them from the stage.

I've a motor just completed that is certain to be greeted
With joyous glee throughout the land by every budding bard;
It's a new machine for writing verse like this I am inditing,
So a hired man can reel it off at twenty cents a yard.

RELIGIOUS.

It is stated that 700 Chinamen in San Francisco have professed conversion to the Salvation army.

In Germany there are 1,250 Young Men's Christian associations, with nearly 80,000 members.

The Volunteers of America, after eighteen months' existence, have nearly 700 commanding officers.

Very successful missionary work along industrial lines is being done among the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians in Oklahoma.

At Silver City, Idaho, a mining camp where there are nine saloons and no church, a Christian Endeavor society of twenty-nine members is doing good work in establishing a reading room.

The Presbyterian synod of Montana has wisely decided "not to enter a field in which