

The New Opera-House.

Some of the friends of the new Opera scheme think we spoke unadvisedly the other day, as to the plan of organization. This is a mistake. The printed act of Assembly and prospectus were before us. The latter, in its present shape, is not susceptible of such explanation as to do away with its tone of exclusiveness. It starts out with the presumption that the Opera must be *patronized* to be successful; that the thousand dollar subscribers must lift it into respectability and fashion, and build for it a magnificent house in which it may revel, or it will fall through.

Now it strikes us, as we scarcely doubt it strikes the public, that if an Academy of Music, for popular use at moderate charges, cannot be established *for the sake of music*, then it cannot, and ought not, in this Republican country, to be established at all. If it be not profitable, in the money sense, to the corporators named by the act of Assembly, and their Upper-Ten friends, there is no obligation resting upon them to build such a house at all; the act is not compulsory; the demands of the public for enlarged facilities for music, are not necessarily to be complied with. Nor does this view of the case debar the corporators from erecting an establishment to their own taste, on their own means; a house which shall at once become a Temple of Fashion, if you please, as well as an Academy of Music, upon such scale, great or small, as their peculiar views may call for. The objection is to the public being made a tail to this kite of exclusiveness; and so long as the public are looked to to participate in or encourage the scheme, they have a right to make their objection known.

The popular notion is, that looking to the immense gatherings of the people of all classes at Castle Garden and Niblo's, whenever good music has been offered at moderate charges, a capacious temple for the opera, on the same scale of freedom from extreme fashion and high prices, at all seasons of the year, would be a profitable investment. If so, the house ought to be built and managed as a paying concern, on these terms. And if the corporators in this case, are really lovers of music instead of devotees of fashion, they have the same, and even greater inducements to establish the academy than under a programme recognizing a censorship of seats, of pre-arrangement of the opera seasons, and of the terms upon which the great public will be admitted, after the subscribers are provided for in perpetuity.

But, it may be replied, surely the builders of the house ought to have some advantages over those who refuse to subscribe. True. Their advantage is, first, in the consciousness of having promoted, by heartfelt enthusiasm and a commendable enterprize, not inconsistent with their private means, the cause of musical taste, in this great emporium; and secondly, in the cent. per. cent. returns, which they have a right to look for, if the house be wanted, and is built and managed as it should be, to the support of the masses.

As remarked the other day, the corporators are free to try this scheme in their own way. If, as with the nobility, in the smaller courts of Europe, they elect to build an Opera House, and support for themselves an Opera, "seventy-five nights" at high season, no one has a right to say nay. Money can accomplish it all, and the project would really be more candid than the one now proposed. We are far from believing, however, it could be made to live or last. The Astor Place successively swamped three managers, and has kept a single committee in hot water five years—the recent monkey suit adding the *coup de grace* to the whole affair—and if, after *this*, the cause of Music is again attempted to be separated from the popular taste, we have only to suggest that the smaller the new house is made, the more complete will be its identification with the "subscription" party, and the less the outlay to its wealthy and exclusive patrons.

One word as to the popular repugnance to what is known as Fashionable Opera. It needs little defence. It is right *per se*. We have really no class of society in this country, no aristocracy, no gentry or nobility who, by rank, title, blood or wealth, have the authority to dictate in such matters, except so far as wealth, erecting for itself, an exclusiveness, may think proper to act by themselves and for themselves. And this is a question of taste for their own decision. The public will never go with them. The people may, and do, without envy, esteem properly acquired wealth, and honor enterprise; and the people of New-York, seek in a large degree, to forward, and if possible, successfully emulate such examples; but this is very different from sympathising with the mere follies of wealth and the contemptible fickleness of self-constituted Fashion. These will ever be obnoxious, and at no time more so than when attempted to be grafted on the American taste for music.