

DEATH OF MAX ALVARY.

The Famous Impersonator of Siegfried Passes Away in Germany.

A private cable message received in this city late Monday night announced the death of the famous Wagnerian tenor, Max Alvary. Two years ago almost to the week, news came that he was seriously ill in Jena. For several years before that he had been in poor health, but it was only in November, 1896, that the incurable nature of his malady became known. He was then operated upon for a stomach trouble said to be the result of cancer. His last appearance in America was made at the Academy of Music late in March, 1894, when he sang Tristan to the Isolde of Frau Klafsky, who has also since died.

Alvary was born in Düsseldorf, Germany. The exact date of his birth is not known, but he was not yet forty years of age in 1896. He was a son of Andreas Achenbach, one of the leading masters of landscape painting. While at school Alvary frequently sang publicly in the churches. His musical study was pursued under the direction of the famous master Lamperti, though it must be admitted that his singing showed few traces of the pure Italian style of that teacher. He was not satisfied with the opportunities offered him by the Italian operas, but desired to turn his attention to German works, and for this reason he placed himself under the tuition of Julius Stockhausen of Frankfort, a teacher of the highest repute. He made his operatic debut at the Court Theatre of Weimar, under the direction of Edward Lassen, and was very successful. His career in America is well known, and is an instance of the advancement which awaits musical talent in this country.

He made his début here at the Metropolitan Opera House in the season of 1885-6 as Don José in "Carmen," and during that season was the second tenor of the company. His opportunity came when he first sang the rôle of Siegfried in the first performance in America of Wagner's opera of that name, on Nov. 9, 1887. He was at once recognized as an ideal interpreter of this poetic rôle, and, despite serious faults in his singing, he became a popular idol. It is with this rôle that his fame is chiefly associated, and on his last visit to this country his performance of the part was as remarkable as it ever had been, although he was not so young a man by several years as he had been when he first expressed with such remarkable success the youthfulness and ingenuousness of the character.

He became a great favorite with the audiences at the Metropolitan when Anton Seidl directed the German seasons there, and particularly with the young women who were regular attendants at the opera. He made his farewell appearance in 1889 as Siegfried, and it was after that matinée that he was the subject of a demonstration that, remarkable as it was, showed the position which he held in the affections of certain of his admirers. A crowd of women, young and old, gathered at the stage door of the Opera House, in Fortieth Street, and Alvary's progress across the sidewalk to his waiting carriage was interrupted by the violent farewells of the crowd, and several young women are said to have embraced him with an enthusiasm which he was powerless to prevent. He was a married man at that time, but this fact did not cool the affection of the young women, who were overwhelmed with grief at the thought of losing their favorite tenor. When he returned to this country in 1894 it was seen that he had still remained youthful and athletic, although the old-time furor of his admirers was not revived.

His twenty-fifth appearance as Siegfried was reached at St. Louis on May 8, 1889, his fiftieth at Hamburg on March 15, 1892, and his seventy-fifth at Strasburg on Dec. 5, 1893. Alvary sang Siegfried in New York twenty times, in Hamburg twenty times, in Munich eleven times, in Breslau eight times, and in London seven times. The principal cities of the world where he sang the part are the following, which are given in chronological order: New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis, Brooklyn, Karlsruhe, Hamburg, Munich, Augsburg, Breslau, Königsberg, London, (Covent Garden and Drury Lane,) Frankfort-on-the-Main, Wiesbaden, Düsseldorf, Strasburg, Mainz, Halle, Darmstadt, Amsterdam, St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Milan. His one hundredth performance of the part at the New York Academy of Music in December, 1896, was made the occasion of a special demonstration. Alvary's only appearance at Baireuth were in "Tannhäuser" and "Tristan und Isolde."

Alvary's long illness carried him into serious pecuniary difficulties, and Mrs. E. G. Love of 80 East Fifth-fifth Street has collected \$3,300, which will go to aid the widow and nine surviving children. Additions to the fund would be welcome. It is not impossible that some who got much pleasure from his admirably artistic work will feel inclined to aid his family.

Alvary's work was always characterized by devotion to the highest artistic ideals. He combined rare charm of manner with handsome personal appearance, grace of movement and beauty of voice. His performance of Siegfried will always be remembered for the romantic nature of its acting and the complete justice of its conception. Alvary inherited some of his father's artistic tastes, and is said to have assisted in designing the costumes for the production of Walter Damrosch's opera, "The Scarlet Letter."