

MAGICIAN HERRMANN DEAD

HE BREATHES HIS LAST IN HIS PRIVATE RAILROAD CAR.

Apparently in Good Health When
He Left Rochester Yesterday
Morning—The End Came
Suddenly.

ROCHESTER, N. Y., Dec. 17.—Alexander Herrmann, the magician, who appeared at the Lyceum Theatre last night, concluding an engagement of three performances, died this morning in his private car while on the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburg Road on his way to Bradford, Penn., where he was to open an engagement this evening.

Prof. Herrmann was as well as usual when he left this city this morning at 7:30 o'clock. He had passed the night in his private car, and was in bed when word was sent from it to the station master at Great Valley that he was ill, and the attendance of a physician was desired. Before a physician could get to the car Herrmann was dead. The car was taken on to Salamanca with the body. It is not yet known in this city what caused the magician's death. When he took leave of Manager Pierce of the Lyceum after the performance last night, he was in apparently perfect health. He was entertained at the Genesee Valley Club later, and seemed to be all right when accompanied to his special car by several of his Rochester friends.

One of the last acts of Mr. Herrmann was to extend financial aid to a stranded theatrical company in this city. The "American Cousin Company" broke up at the Academy here last week, and yesterday Mr. Herrmann was made aware of the fact and immediately telephoned the hotel where the company were stopping to send him the bill of \$50, and to tell all the members to come to his show last night and he would have their railroad tickets to New York all ready for them.

Last night after the performance some one asked Mr. Herrmann who would be his successor in case anything should happen to him. He said he had a nephew in Paris he was very anxious to have learn the art, and he said that he intended to go to Paris next Summer to see him. This nephew, he said, is studying law, and he did not want him to give that up.

THE MAGICIAN'S GREAT CAREER.

He Astonished the World by His Wonderful Cleverness.

The death of Prof. Herrmann caused general regret yesterday among his many theatrical acquaintances of New York. Several of the most prominent of these have been connected in various ways with the singular career of the great prestidigitateur.

Herrmann had been before the American public thirty-five years, and during that time he furnished the stage with more surprises than any other living man. Every habitué of the Rialto has a fund of Herrmann anecdotes, usually of an agreeable kind.

There was mystery in Herrmann's life-story, as in his performances. Many who knew him for years say that he was of Portuguese nativity, and others believe he was an Austrian. When the magician Alexandre brought suit against him in England many years ago, it was said that he was really Alexander Nieman, a Polish Hebrew. The public, however, long since accepted the declaration of Herrmann's earlier advertisements, that he was the son and legitimate successor of Samuel Herrmann, the great French magician.

First Appearance as a Star.

Herrmann was born in 1844, and began his stage career in New York in 1861, with his elder brother. His first engagement of note as a star was at the Star Theatre in Brooklyn, where he was paid \$1,000 a week. Later, when he returned to New York, his success was so great that he played seventy-five consecutive nights. At the close of this engagement he made a tour of the world, and appeared with equal success in all of the principal capitals of Europe.

In 1867 he dissolved partnership with his brother and began a second trip around the world, exciting great wonder by his feats of legerdemain in the Oriental home of the art. Before his return to America, in 1874, he visited India, Siam, China, Russia, and the countries of Southern Europe, earning and spending several fortunes on the way. The King of Spain made him a Knight of the Order of Mahella, and he also received a decoration from the King of Portugal.

His American engagements kept him busy after 1874, when he made his first trans-continental tour. It was on the ship which brought him from London in that year that he met Adelaide Scarsia, an English girl, who became his wife. She afterward became his principal assistant, and continued to appear with him in all of his performances until his death.

Herrmann's net income from his American engagements during the last eight years was between \$65,000 and \$80,000 a year. His professional expenses were small, except for the last two years, when he maintained the most princely style of traveling, and materially increased the cost of his performances. There are now twenty people in his company. His traveling equipment consisted of the private car Herrmann, built for him three years ago by the Ohio Falls Car Company at a cost of \$40,000; the palace stable car Addie, which cost \$22,000, and a specially constructed baggage and scenery car, the Fra Diavolo.

The Professor's Horses.

In the stable car he carried his four horses, Cock Robin, Matchless, Addie, and Perfection, wherever he went, and many curious stories are told of his night drives in small towns and country places while on his tours. It was his custom to drive about the small towns before his performance began and count the three-ball pawnbrokers' signs. If there were few of them, he would shrug his shoulders and say: "Poor business to-night." He was always looking for bargains in jewelry at the pawnshops.

Herrmann's four horses were entered at the Horse Show this year, but were ordered from the ground for some trifling infraction of the rules. Herrmann was inconsolable. He had better luck at San Francisco, where his fancy dancing horse Queenie won two blue ribbons.

The steam yacht Fra Diavolo belonged to Herrmann, and was in commission every season for his use. His home was at White-stone, L. I., and the place is luxuriously furnished.

Herrmann claimed to have made and lost \$500,000 in Wall Street. His losses in theatrical ventures are well known. His first enterprise in this line was the Transatlantic Vaudeville Company. He lost \$100,000 in the Herrmann's Theatre venture here, and \$75,000 in Brooklyn. Five years ago he gave up his Broad Street Theatre venture in Philadelphia with a loss of \$50,000.

His Chief Attraction Frankness.

Herrmann's chief attraction to many people was his frank denial that magic or supernatural powers had anything to do with his exhibitions. It was he who gave a dignified meaning to the cant word prestidigitateur, by which he preferred to be called. He was a man of sympathetic temperament, and spent large sums annually in aid of unfortunate theatrical people. On the day before his death he gave a benefit performance for the waifs of the State Industrial School at Rochester.

He was to have opened a week's engagement in the Great Northern Theatre, Chicago, Monday night. The private car bearing his body will reach New York on the Erie Road at 6:40 o'clock this morning.