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THE OPERA SINGERS

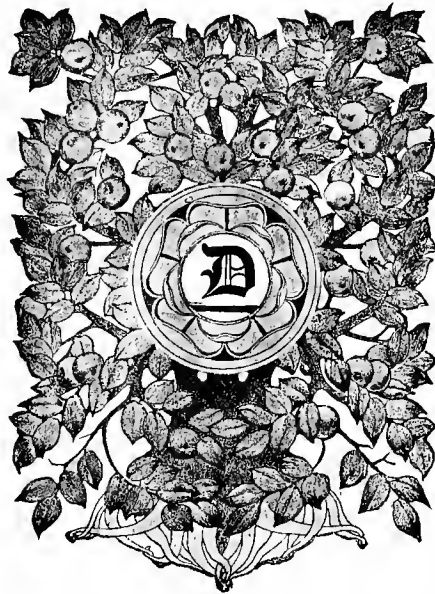
OPERA SINGERS

A PICTORIAL SOUVENIR

WITH BIOGRAPHIES OF SOME
OF THE MOST FAMOUS
SINGERS OF THE DAY

BY

GUSTAV KOBBE



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FOREWORD

THIS being the fourth edition of "Opera Singers" the book would seem to be fulfilling its purpose as a pictorial souvenir. My endeavor has been to gather here a series of costume and other portraits of the grand opera singers best known to American opera-goers of to-day. To these pictures I have added biographies of some of the famous singers—biographies which may be regarded as authentic because the data for them courteously were furnished by the singers themselves. In this new edition they are given in alphabetical order.

SOMEWHAT anecdotal (but none the less authentic) is "Opera Singers Off Duty" with which the book concludes. With it I give snapshots taken on tour and showing many famous singers in moments of relaxation "on the road"—intime glimpses of opera folk whom the public has seen only under the glare of the footlights and in character. In "Opera Singers Off Duty" prima donnas, tenors, baritones, and basses appear as men and women.

LEST the above should not fully explain the limitations as well as the scope of the book, I desire to disclaim any attempt at a critical work. Let me repeat that it is intended foremost for a pictorial souvenir. As such it is believed that the illustrations, many of them from the studio of Aimé Dupont, form the most complete and interesting collection of its kind obtainable. MY thanks are due to the publishers of several periodicals, chief among them "Harper's Weekly" and the "Woman's Home Companion," for permission to use here material which first appeared in their pages.

GUSTAV KOBBE.

New York, 1906.

To
BEATRICE KOBÉ

MME. CALVÉ

FASCINATING Calvé! Mention of her name at once recalls the dark-haired, dark-eyed Spanish gypsy, *Carmen*, with the huge crimson flower thrust in her raven hair. She is the *Carmen* par excellence. Americans always will measure other *Carmens* by her, just as those who saw Edwin Booth as *Hamlet* measure all other *Hamlets* by him.

AND yet the perversity of Man! When she was rehearsing for her first appearance as *Carmen* at the Opéra Comique, in Paris, and introducing those little bits of stage business and those dramatic vocal changes that were to astonish a world, which believed itself thoroughly familiar with the opera, she was constantly interrupted and corrected by the stage manager. He had seen many *Carmens*, he had his idea of how the rôle should be done—the purely conventional acceptance of the character—and he wanted her to act it and sing it according to his idea.

Mme. Calvé simply continued rehearsing according to her own idea. Result, the director was appealed to by the stage manager and called in to witness a rehearsal. "Oh, let her alone," he said. "She knows nothing about the rôle and will find it out to her grief at the first performance. It will be a good lesson for her." But at the first performance there burst upon an astonished world a new *Carmen*—*the Carmen* she has been ever since.

I ONCE heard someone arguing with Mme. Calvé that she made a mistake in wearing the

gorgeous red silk petticoat in the first act—that a gypsy cigarette girl could not afford to dress so richly. The prima donna gave one of her fascinating shoulder shrugs. "When I decided to sing *Carmen*," she replied, "I went to Seville, the very place where the scene of the opera is laid, to make studies on the spot. I often stood outside the cigarette factories and watched the girls coming to and going from their work. On one occasion I followed one of them to a second-hand costumer's, and saw her buy a brilliant red skirt. The next day she wore it, and occasionally lifted her dress a little so as to give a glimpse of the skirt and flirt with it. I went directly to the same costumer and bought the exact duplicate of the skirt. I have it on now, and as soon as you see me go on the stage you will see that I flirt with it just as I saw the cigarette girl in Seville do." It is just as well not to call the work of an artist





like Mme. Calvé in question. Were I to suggest that *Marguerite's* dropping of her prayer-book in surprise and confusion on her first meeting with *Faust* was somewhat theatrical, although subtly symbolical of *Faust's* influence on her life, I should be afraid of being told by Mme. Calvé that she had seen Gretchen do the very same thing.

ACCORDING to the best authorities, Mme. Calvé, whose baptismal name is Emma Roquer, was born at Decazeville, near Aveyron, in 1866. Her father, a Spaniard, was a civil engineer. She attended school in a convent, and it is said that her singing of the "Ave Marias" and other solos in the convent musical services attracted the attention of a Parisian, who after her father's death urged her mother to send her to Paris for a musical education. She studied with a tenor named Puget and with Laborde, and made her debut at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels, as *Marguerite* in "Faust" in 1881. She remained at Brussels during this and

the following season, receiving about as much for a whole season's work as she now does for a single night.

AFTER appearances at the Théâtre Italien with decided success, she placed herself under Mme. Marchesi's tuition, and then made a tour of Italy. While gaining additional experience as a singer on this tour, she seems also to have profited dramatically, especially as she saw Duse, by whom she was greatly impressed. To say, however, that she copies Duse (as *Santuzza* in "Cavalleria Rusticana," for instance) is wholly erroneous. A singer whose gestures and facial expression are necessarily limited, because effective emission of the singing voice is the chief aim on the operatic stage, may derive a general impression of a rôle or a general idea of the art of acting from a great actress, but copy her she absolutely cannot. Mme. Calvé is a woman of dramatic instincts, and when she saw Duse she promptly felt dramatic passion, which hitherto had lain dormant, stir within





EMMA CALVÉ



her. Her creation of the rôle of *Suzi* in Mascagni's "L'Amico Fritz," at Rome in 1891, added greatly to her reputation, and in 1892, when the same composer's "Cavalleria Rusticana" had its first hearing in Paris, she was chosen for the *Santuzza*, and made a phenomenal success, showing the study she had made of the Italian people, and the result of some valuable suggestions from the composer himself. She repeated the rôle with great success in London.

ECHOES of Mme. Calvé's great European successes reached this country during the season of 1892 and 1893, when, owing to the destruction of the Metropolitan Opera House by fire, there were no performances there. But during the following season, when the opera-house opened, Mme. Calvé was a member of the company, and made her New York début November 29, 1893, as *Santuzza*.

Her realistic power in the rôle was recognized, but it remained for her to make one of the greatest successes known in the operatic history of this country as *Carmen*. The opera was given thirteen times that season, and each time at receipts close to the \$10,000 mark. At her farewell performance of "Carmen" for the season, on April 27th, such a demonstration was made over her that she came forward and said, in French: "I shall never forget that to the American public I owe the greatest success of my career. I hope that I am not saying good-by, but only *au revoir*." THERE had been some dissensions in the company, and next season she was not here. But in November, 1895, she made her reappearance in "Carmen," and in December gave her first performance here of *Ophelie* in Ambroise Thomas's "Hamlet," showing unsuspected equipment as a singer pure and simple, but at the same time combining with her vocalization a remarkable significance of dramatic ex-





pression. Thus in the mad scene, which as formerly heard here had served merely as a vehicle for vocal pyrotechnics, she was brilliantly successful vocally, but by certain shadings and a remarkable variety of tone-coloring also subtly conveyed the dramatic meaning of what she was singing so superbly. During the same season she was heard as *Anita* in Massenet's "La Navarraise," and as *Marguerite* in Boito's "Mefistofele," a beautiful performance. During the following season she appeared as *Marguerite* in "Faust," and gave a wholly original interpretation of the rôle, fascinating

in the earlier scenes and highly dramatic in the more tragic episodes.

UNLESS, however, Mme. Calvé should create a great furore in some rôle in which she has not yet been heard here, *Carmen* is apt to remain more closely identified with her career than any other character, and this may be because, in addition to her vocal and dramatic equipment, she seems physically perfectly fitted to it. To watch her lithe form swaying in the "Habenera," or the "Seguidilla," while her dark eyes and her gestures express every shade of meaning in the words she sings, and her plastic voice allows no opportunity for artistic musical effect to pass by, is an experience always to be remembered.

PERSONALLY, she is said to be a curious combination of the developed woman and the simple girl, and highly impulsive, but with the saving grace that her impulses usually are kind. She seems to be spiritualistically, theosophically, and astrologically inclined—in fact, a thoroughly superstitious being. Nothing can, for instance, induce her to appear without an amulet from Hindostan, which she wears around her neck. Yes, Calvé is a thorough child of the theatre.

A FEW years ago she had her tomb designed, explaining that she shuddered to think of the possibility of being buried amid inartistic surroundings, also that she did not wish to give her mother the trouble of having a headstone made





there were any, not even if a full orchestra played a Wagner overture, although if they struck up the "Habenera," I am not so sure but that I should come out and sing it for them."

THE rôles I have mentioned are the ones in which this wonderful woman is best known in this country, but abroad she sings a much larger repertoire, including Massenet's "L'Hérodiade," which is one of her great characters. HERE is one of Mme. Calvé's characteristic remarks: "There are five girls of us in our family. I am the homeliest." Fascinating Calvé!

for her. She had the tomb designed by Denys Puech, and its principal features are the two statues of the prima donna herself which flank it, one as *Ophelie* and the other as *Carmen*. The *Ophelie* shows the hapless heroine being drawn toward the void by phantom voices. It is intended to show the ethereal side of Mme. Calvé's art, while *Carmen* shows the material. "Both are tragic rôles," she says in speaking of her tomb, "but then death is not amusing—except possibly to one's heirs. I shall have it erected either in Père la Chaise or on the ground surrounding my château in the south of France. Either place, I suppose, would be peaceful enough, though I take it for granted I would not hear any noise if



ENRICO CARUSO

ENRICO CARUSO, who made his American début on the opening night of the first season of grand opera under Heinrich Conried's management at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, in 1903, is the first tenor to be heard in this country since Campanini was in his prime who seems destined to take that great artist's place.

HIS voice is of unimpeachable tenor quality and faultlessly placed. It is ringing and vibrant, and conveys a sense of ample reserve power which gives the hearer faith in its staying qualities. Yet it is sweet and expressive, and even when used pianissimo carries to the remotest seats in the house. Caruso has a nice taste in acting, keeping well within a rôle, yet never forcing the dramatic as against the musical side of a character. He is of the best type of Italian tenors, and few artists have made a greater individual success here than he.

IL DUCA in "Rigoletto" was the rôle in which he made his American début. It would be difficult to imagine *La donna e mobile* sung better than he gave it. Seated at the table in *Sparafucile's* hut, he tossed up the playing cards while he sang the air in the nonchalant, devil-may-care way which suits it precisely. The cadenza he gave in brilliant style. His success with the audience was immediate. Later he confirmed it in "Lucia" and in "L'Elisir d'Amore," in which his singing of the romanza, *Una furtiva Lagrima*, created a genuine furore. The first time he was heard here in "Lucia" the demonstration on the part of the audience after the sextet, when the tenor seemed unwilling to have the number repeated, became so noisy that the policeman in the lobby grabbed his nightstick and started for the auditorium, fearing there was a panic. Before he reached the swinging doors there was sudden silence, for at that moment Vigna, the conductor, had rapped on his desk for the encore. The newspaper accounts of this demonstration were not exaggerated, for I was present and saw and heard it.

CARUSO is thirty-three years old. He was born in Naples, where his father was a mechanic. He himself became a mechanic and worked at his trade until the value of his voice was discovered. He was a good, industrious mechanic, too; and when he gave up the work, he was receiving two lire a day (about forty cents), a good wage for Italy. As a boy he sang





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in church, and continued doing so after his voice became tenor. The highest pay he received was the equivalent of three dollars for eight services.

VERGINE, the singing master, chanced to hear him, and, recognizing the fine quality of his voice, at once took him as a pupil. His début was made in 1896 in "Traviata," at the Fondo, in Naples, and was very successful. But his real artistic career began with his appearance in 1898 at La Scala, Milan, where, on his reappearance, when he was heard in the first performance of Giordano's "Fedora," an Italian critic wrote, "*Caruso canto Fedora e la Fe—d'oro.*" ("Caruso sang Fedora—'made of gold'—and made it of gold.) After that he sang with continued success in Italy, South America, and Russia, and, in the summer of 1903, in Covent Garden, London. Then he reached the golden Mecca of all opera singers' hopes, the Metropolitan Opera House.

IN spite of his great success he is a modest man, punctillious in the due observance of stage etiquette toward his colleagues, and very popular with them as well as with his managers. He has very handsome dark eyes and, though a trifle stout for an impressive stage appearance, has an agreeable personality that makes itself felt across the footlights. He has a clever knack at drawing caricatures. Mr. Conried, between whom and himself there is great good will and harmony, having criticised his costumes, he drew a caricature of the impresario, whose trousers he made ridiculously big. Underneath it he wrote that the trousers were so ill-fitting because they were drawn by him, and he was such a bad dresser that he could not even draw clothes well. He has been decorated by the Kings of Italy and Portugal, but rarely wears his orders. In 1901 he sang in Treviso and Bologna with Ada Ciacchetti, and she became his wife. They met on the stage.

THE manner in which Mr. Conried came to engage Caruso is most interesting. When he became Grau's successor he made up his mind that the time was ripe for a revival of interest in Italian opera. But where was the tenor for the experiment. It must be remembered that Conried had not been an impresario, but an actor, and after that the manager of a German stock theatre. It is an actual fact that even Caruso's name was unknown to him. So he began his search for a tenor, and mark how cleverly he went about the matter. HE argued that if you were to ask almost anybody you met on Broadway who the leading American actor was, the answer would be Mansfield. By analogy he concluded that there must be some Italian tenor so far above his fellows that any and every Italian asked for the name of the greatest living Italian

tenor would answer with the same name. So he put on his hat and walked up Broadway. The impresario (as yet without a company) strolled along until he came to a neat-looking bootblack stand, seated himself there, and proceeded to procure an unnecessary shine, all in the interest of art and himself. The proceedings having reached that stage when Tony was applying the paste, the impresario asked casually, "Who is the greatest Italian tenor?"

TONY looked up, and without hesitation answered, "Caruso."

THE impresario returned to his office and pondered. He asked one of his assistants if there were anything relating to Caruso in the office records. A contract was discovered between the tenor and Grau for the following season, but Grau's retirement had vacated it.

CONRIED pondered again. Suddenly it occurred to him that there was an Italian savings bank in the city, and forthwith he again put on his hat, walked to the corner of Broadway and jumped on a car, jumped off again at Spring street and walked in the direction of the Bowery until he saw the bank's sign in gold lettering.

CONRIED introduced himself to the president of the bank, Mr. Francolini, and then asked him who was the greatest living Italian tenor.

"Caruso," said Francolini. "And what is more," he continued, "the secretary of our bank, Mr. Simonelli, knows him and can tell you all about him."

THE upshot was that, after a chat with Simonelli, who also knew the singer's agent, the secretary of the bank was authorized by the impresario to conclude an engagement with the tenor by cable. Thus the dictum of a bootblack was the first step in the coming to this country of one of the greatest singers we have had here.



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EMMA EAMES

BEAUTY is one of the greatest aids to stage success. But when all possible paeans in its praise have been sung, it remains, after all, only an aid.

THEREFORE no artist, even if she be a woman, cares to have her physical attributes dwelt upon at too great length, since it makes her artistic gifts seem of secondary importance. But in the case of Mme. Eames, her pulchritude is so obvious and adds so much to the charm of her performances that it cannot be dismissed with the mere statement that she is beautiful. When she appeared in New York for the first time as *Aida*, she dressed the rôle in an entirely new and picturesque style. The soft draperies of her costume were in dull oriental tones, blending so exquisitely and so harmonizingly with her personality that had she gone through the entire opera without singing a note she still would have been an entrancing *Aida*. There was not a critic who did not speak of her perfect physical fulfilment of the rôle, and of her costume. In selecting this, she doubtless was somewhat guided by the taste of her artist husband, Julian Story, a son of Nathaniel Hawthorne's friend, W. W. Story, the sculptor, whom the great romancer visited in Rome, and who, it is believed, was not without influence in inspiring "The Marble Faun."

BORN in Shanghai, China, where her father practised law in the international courts, she passed her childhood in Bath, Me., with her grandparents. Her mother, an excellent musician, and gifted with a fine voice, taught music in Portland. To her judicious influence Mme. Eames owes much. The mother was too good a musician not to realize that her daughter possessed an unusual voice, but she did not allow her to begin cultivating it until she was fifteen years old, for she knew that too early training is apt to strain the voice. Twice a week Emma went from Bath to Portland and received instruction from her mother. Then, when the latter realized that the daughter's talent was capable of greater development, she arranged for her to stay in Boston with Miss Munger, an excellent teacher. Emma's mother did not wish to take upon herself the responsibility of cultivating her daughter's voice. She did not trust herself sufficiently, for she appreciated the difficulty of teaching in one's own family. Still she had done very well by the girl, for she had most judiciously avoided the risk of ruining her voice by too early application. In Bath they knew, of course, that Emma sang, and they persuaded her to sing in church





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E. W. H. I. S. T. E. R.

EMMA EAMES

and at private musicales; but as soon as the mother heard of it, she put a stop to it.

THE future prima donna studied three years with Miss Munger. After a while she began to sing professionally, making such excellent progress that she was engaged for the first soprano in Schumann's "Manfred," with the Boston Symphony orchestra, under Gericke, and also sang with George Osgood, B. J.

Lang, and Professor Paine, of Harvard. The latter gave a series of lectures in Boston on old church music. The young singer took the soprano part in the musical illustrations to these, learning to read the old-fashioned square notes. It was a splendid experience for her. Professor Paine is a charming man, and he encouraged her in every way, explaining the history and different forms of music to her, and giving personal attention to her study of the illustrations to his lectures. To this experience she owes a foundation in the classics for which she always has been grateful. Though she now sings Italian, French and Wagner roles, she still remains true to her early loves, the classics, as witness her purity of style in the Mozart operas. Her *Pamina* in the great revival of Mozart's "Magic Flute," at the Metropolitan Opera House, then under Grau, was a perfect example of the serene and chaste style of singing demanded by classic rôles. "To this day," she once said to me, "I am deeply moved by Beethoven's symphonies, and Mozart I seem to sing by intuition."

BUT *festina lente!* At this point of my story she still is a young girl studying with Miss Munger in Boston. In addition to her concert engagements there, she secured a position in

church. She became very popular, but she did not realize this until many years later, when she returned to Boston to sing an opera. She was then told by members of the congregation that whenever it was known that she was to sing there always had been several hundred people more in church than on other occasions. "I never imagined until then that that crowd was for me," she remarked with delightful naïveté, in telling me about it. During these early years of study Emma Eames had shown the same aptitude in learning which has been a characteristic of her career. "I never had to be told anything twice. When I went to Paris, which I did after my three years in Boston, I became livid with anger and felt humiliated if they tried to tell me more than once what to do and what not to do. I never have had to study the lessons of life twice."





IN Paris she studied voice with Marchesi and stage deportment with Plugue. After two years with Mme. Marchesi, there was a vacancy at the Opéra. They wanted some one for the rôle of *Juliette* in Gounod's "Romeo et Juliette." Jean de Reszke was to make his debut as *Romeo*, and altogether it was to be quite an event. Emma had studied several operas with Mme. Marchesi and had thoroughly gone over the rôle of *Juliette* with her. Gounod himself coached her for six weeks. But after a trial at the Opéra she was refused. The verdict was that her high notes were not easily placed and were not agreeable. It was a terrible disappointment, both to the young singer and to Mme. Marchesi. The prima donna's opinion of this teacher, who is so famous, is interesting. Here it is in her own words as given to me: "Mme. Marchesi is a thoroughly good musician," she said. "Any one who goes to her with an established voice can learn a great deal from her in the in-

terpretation of many rôles. She is an admirable teacher of expression and of the general conception of a character. As a drill master she is altogether admirable. She teaches you the value of utilizing your time, and she makes you take a serious view of your work, which is important, for hardly an American girl who goes to her has an idea of studying seriously. She also is capital at languages. But when it comes to voice development, I consider that she fails. My voice naturally was broad and heavy. After the end of the first two years' study with her I could not sing A without difficulty. She did not seem to know how to make my voice light. It was getting heavier and less flexible all the time."

AFTER her rejection by the Opéra, the young singer went to Brussels, but through intrigue on the part of some one who constantly professed the greatest interest in her, a debut there also was refused her. Returning to Paris, she at last closed an engagement with the Comique. She was to sing "Traviata," but after she had prepared for her debut she was told that she could not be allowed to make her first appearance in such an important rôle. Then she studied Bizet's "Les Pecheurs Des Perles." But—"We can't trust this in the hands of a debutante." She was at sea, until she learned that a French composer was using his influence with the directors to prevent her debut and in favor of another singer.

IN the midst of this distressing situation she received an offer from the Opéra. What to do? Here was an offer that would at once start her on her career. Yet she was bound by contract to Paravey of the Comique. She asked him

for a release, but the singer for whom intrigue had secured a début had utterly failed, and the young American was told that now she was to have her chance. The opening of the Exposition was approaching and the manager thought that having the only American singer would be a feather in his cap. She insisted that she wished to be released. He was obdurate. Finally, at a meeting of the directors, she walked into the cabinet and said:

"Now I want to know if you will let me off."

"We are paying you for not singing," was the reply.

"I am not going to leave this room until you have sent for my contract and torn it up before my eyes."

"This is not the time. Come back to-morrow."

"I am not coming back, for I am not going until you have done what I've asked you to do."

AS a result of her firm stand—American pluck versus French perversity—her contract was sent for and torn up in the directors' meeting. The next morning Paravey read the announcement that she was engaged for the Opéra. He was furious.



EMMA EAMES made her debut at the Opéra in March, 1889, as *Juliette*, scoring a great success, although coming immediately after Patti in the rôle. The day after her debut—remember, the day after her very first appearance on the operatic stage—she received a cablegram from Sir Augustus Harris, practically offering her any sum within reason which she might ask. As a result, her salary at the Opéra immediately was doubled. This seems to have been doing pretty well for the second day of her career. During her engagement at the Opéra she created De La Nux's "Zaire," and also St. Saens's "Ascanio," the two De Reszkes and Plançon also singing in the latter. At the Opéra there began a charming friendship between the young American singer and these three great artists which has continued ever since. Practically they have always been in the same companies. Whenever Plançon and Mme. Eames step out upon the stage together he always whispers to her just as they are leaving the wings: "Now they are going to see the two most beautiful noses in the company." What a pretty glimpse this gives of life behind the scenes!—this com-

pliment of the prince of *basses chantants*, a compliment in which naïvely he includes himself.

FROM the Opéra Eames went to London. There, in April, 1891, she sang

in "Lohengrin" without an orchestral rehearsal, except for one scene with Jean and Edouard, and appeared in Gounod's "Mireille" without any rehearsal at all. Among the operas she appeared in was, of course, "Romeo et Juliette," and while "Romeo et Juliette" was going on at the Opéra, it also was going on somewhere else, for it was at that time Emma Eames married Julian Story. They kept their intended marriage secret. Mrs. Eames was opposed to it, as she thought it might interfere with her daughter's stage career. One of the few persons the young people took into their confidence was the Prince of Wales. Three days before she became Mrs. Story, Miss Eames said to the prince: "I've a piece of news for you, but I would like you to keep it to yourself. In three days I am going to be married to Julian Story." The first letter she ever received addressed was with a wedding gift from the prince. THE same year her operatic debut in as *Elsa* in "Lohengrin," in Chicago, at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. Since then, in Madrid, her appearances have been altogether in England and the United States.

MME. EAMES'S *Elizabeth* in "Tannhäuser" and *Eva* in "Die Meistersinger" eventually to sing the *Isolde*. She is of the type that the voice be-



a certain amount of its lustre when devoted exclusively to singing Wagner. Therefore, it is her intention after every new Wagner opera to study several Italian rôles. She has appeared in many operas in the course of her career, but has made a point of eliminating every rôle which after several trials has not completely appealed to her. There are seasons when she does not appear at all, but rests at her villa near Vallambrosa, Italy. It is high up on the mountain, and she takes long walks in the exhilarating air. Her nearest neighbor is Mr. Story's sister, who married a De Medici, and she is six miles distant. In this mountain retreat Mme. Eames gathers health and strength for further conquests. Of course she studies, but she is relieved of the strain of public appearances. She is one of the great favorites of the English and American operatic public. Conscientious devotion to her art, coupled with remarkable vocal gifts, and unimpeachable musical intuition united with great personal beauty, have raised her to the high rank she occupies among prima donnas.

ceived addressed was with a wedding gift from the prince.

Mme. Eames made her American debut, appearing as *Elsa* at the Auditorium, Chicago, and later as *Juliette* at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. She has since made a few appearances in England and the United States.

Wagnerian rôles are her forte, and she has sung *Elsa* and *Isolde* with great success. She expects to sing three *Brunbildes* and *Isolde* in the future, but she is of opinion, however, that she comes heavy and loses weight.

MME. MELBA

“**W**HERE is Miss Nellie?” THAT was the question often asked in the Mitchell household in Melbourne, Australia. Mme. Melba’s maiden name was Nellie Mitchell, and she was born in the Australian capital in 1865. She was a vivacious, romping child, usually in some mischief or other, and thus the question, “Where is Miss Nellie?” was a frequent one.

THE house in which she was born is called “Doonside.” It is an old rambling building with a large garden, and still is her family’s town residence in Melbourne. But the place around which most of her childhood memories cluster is Steel’s Flat, Lilydale, one of her father’s country places in Victoria, and now the property of David Syme, a wealthy newspaper proprietor. There she was free to roam outdoors.

It was her delight to gallop bareback across the plains and through the winding bridle tracks of the bush.

NOTWITHSTANDING her active disposition, she loved to be alone, and she herself tells that she often spent hours at a time fishing on the edge of the creek and perfectly happy, even if she caught little or nothing. “The silent plains,” she says, “the vast ranges of eucalyptus forest, the sunny skies, and the native wild birds were all one glorious harmony, and the time seemed all too short as I rode, or fished, singing, singing all the time. I was never at the homestead, nor indeed anywhere else, when I should have been, and the question, ‘Where is Miss Nellie?’ grew to be a first-class conundrum.”

BOTH her parents were intensely musical. Her mother, who was of Spanish descent and from whom Mme. Melba inherits her handsome looks, was an accomplished



pianist, and the child sometimes spent hours hidden under the pianoforte listening while the mother played for her own amusement, wholly unaware of the wee audience concealed under the instrument. The child was so fascinated by this music that she often allowed the hour for her meal to pass by, although she knew she was being searched for. It was a great delight for her to sit on her father's knee and pick out the treble notes on the harmonium while he sang the bass. While still a mere child she picked up violin, piano and organ playing, and to this day, as an encore in the lesson scene of "Il

Barbiere," or as a will sit down at the to her own accom- was six years old she pear at a charitable "Shells of the that she was obliged for which she selected Rye." She was elated the next day, when with the little girl and who had been at ed eagerly for some curred is best told in minutes passed— but my child chum what to me was the world. Unable to any further I at last the concert! You concert?' My play- face toward mine and, a significant pitch, Mitchell, I saw your never forgotten the the criticism of my principal school-days donna were passed at

dies' College, Melbourne. She cared little for study and was accounted one of the worst pupils at the institution. During the hour and a half allowed for luncheon, however, she devoted her time to practising on the organ in the Scots Church, but as her health was affected by going without food from breakfast until dinner, her practising was summarily stopped. She once was called home from college to an important family celebration, and was intrusted with the duty of playing several selections of sacred music appropriate to the occasion. The music was placed on the desk before her, but instead of playing it she dashed into a lively polka, to the great scandal of the solemn assemblage.



concert encore, she piano and sing a song paniment. When she was allowed to ap- concert. She sang Ocean" so nicely to give an encore, "Comin' Thro' the with her success, and she went out to play who lived opposite the concert, she wait- comment. What oc- her own words: "The years I thought them continued to ignore chief thing in the curb my eagerness blurted out, 'Well, know I sang at the mate inclined her lowering her voice to answered, 'Nellie drawers!' I have spontaneous malice in little playmate." The of the future prima the Presbyterian La-



NELLIE MELBA



SHE was ambitious to go on the stage, but her parents opposed her wishes, and she was unable to carry them out until her marriage to Mr. Charles Armstrong (from whom she has been divorced). When, in 1887, her father was appointed by the government of Victoria a commissioner to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London, she accompanied him to London. This trip proved the turning-point in her career. In Freemasons Hall she sang to an audience of actors and their friends Gounod's "Ave Marie" and an English ballad. She was utterly unknown to almost everyone in the audience—"an unknown Australian lady" she was called at the time—but her singing created such a furor that someone gave her a letter to Mme. Marchesi, and, armed with this, she went to Paris and presented herself at the Rue Jouffroy. Mme. Marchesi heard her, and after she had sung her second song the famous teacher rushed excitedly out of the drawing-room and called to her husband, "*Salvatore, j'ai enfin une étoile!*" When the candidate for prima-donna honors had finished, Mme. Marchesi gravely asked, "Mrs. Armstrong, are you serious? Have you patience?"

"Yes."

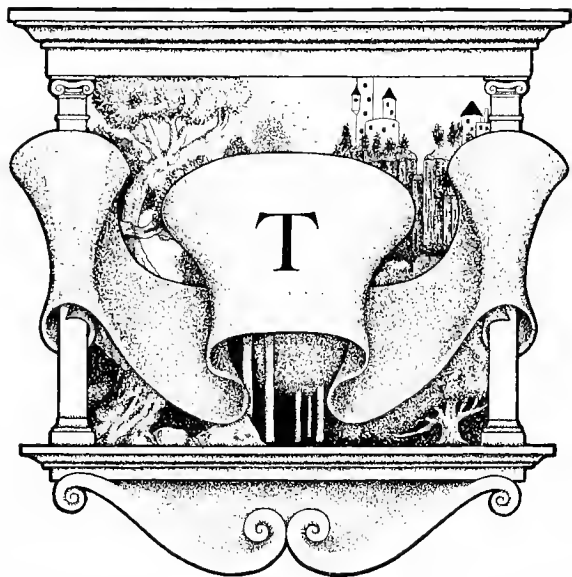
"THEN if you will stay with me for one year I will make of you something *ex-tra-or-din-ary*." (Mme. Melba says that Mme. Marchesi divided this word in a curious staccato way.)

MME. MELBA always speaks of her teacher with love and heartfelt gratitude. Their relations became almost from the start those of warm friends. Mme. Melba has a portrait of Mme. Marchesi across which the famous teacher has written: "Que Dieu protège ma chère élève Nellie Melba et qu'en chantant et enchantant le monde, elle souvienne quelques fois de son affectionnée Mathilde Marchesi."

THE Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels, has been the scene of many brilliant débuts. It is regarded as the stepping-stone to the Grand Opéra, Paris, on the one hand, and Covent Garden on the other. It was there that Mme. Melba, who takes her stage name from her native city, Melbourne, made her début in October, 1887, as *Gilda* in "Rigoletto." It was brilliantly successful and led to successive engagements at Covent Garden, Paris, St. Petersburg, Nice, Milan, Stockholm and Copenhagen, and in December, 1893, at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. Since then, Mme. Melba has largely divided her time between this country and London. But she has also sung with brilliant success in the principal German cities and in Vienna.

HER voice is a high soprano of beautiful quality, and she is at her best in rôles like *Juliette*, *Lucia*, *Ophelie*, *Marguerite*, and *Marguerite de Valois* in "Les Huguenots." She also has sung with much success *Mimi*, in Puccini's "La Bohème."

MME. NORDICA



Isolde and *Elsa* to be heard in that German house. The impression she created with her *Isolde* was so profound already in the first act, that, during the intermission the manager came behind the scenes and engaged her for the *Brünnhilde* rôles next year. Not very long ago she studied *Sieglinde* in "Die Walküre" with "Mme. Cosima," Wagner's widow. "I never may sing the rôle," she said to me. "But I always am singing or studying."

A *BRÜNNHILDE* or an *Isolde* hardly is associated with a little village in Maine. Yet Maine is the native State of Mme. Nordica, as it is of two other great American prima donnas—Mme. Eames and Annie Louise Carey. Mme. Nordica was born in Farmington, in the interior of the State, in 1859. Her parents were musical. Her father, as a boy, played surreptitiously on the violin. He had been forbidden to bring the instrument into the house, because his father "thought it was the devil." But his mother, more lenient, allowed him to hide it in one of the lower bureau-drawers, and when the sterner parent was out, the boy exhumed his beloved fiddle from the depths of the bureau and revelled in its sound. He grew up to have a fine bass voice, and he

HE career of Mme. Nordica is a splendid illustration of what can be accomplished through the union of extraordinary natural gifts with indomitable energy. It is now some time past since this artist won her position among the great prima donnas. Yet not for a moment has she relaxed the energy which has been one of the characteristics of her career or become less persevering in her studies.

SHE is internationally famous, and one of the greatest triumphs of her artistic life was when she opened the Prinz Regenten Theatre in Munich. She, an American of Americans, was the first



married a girl who had a fine soprano. They sang in church—the only place where it was not considered sinful to sing. Thus, within limitations it is true, Lillian Norton (Mme. Nordica's real name) grew up in a musical atmosphere.

SHE had an elder sister, a beautiful girl with a lovely voice. In order to give her the advantages of a good musical education, the parents moved with their six daughters (there were no sons) to Boston, and the gifted sister was placed

under the instruction of John O'Neill. Lillian was the youngest of the girls and "a perfect torment," because everything the sister learned she, too, sang. The untimely death of the elder girl caused Lillian to be placed with Mr. O'Neill. This teacher was an Irish gentleman—a scholarly man who had made a profound study of the physiology of the voice. On her first trial with him Lillian sang right up to high C. "I took it then just as well as now," she says. "It was not a Do of the same quality as now, but it was just as sure." For three years Mr. O'Neill instructed her in voice emission. She went at her work with an enthusiasm which has never left her. Her parents had no idea of her ever going on the operatic stage. They considered the life baneful. But Lillian had a premonition of the career ahead of her; and so, although people kept asking her, "Why don't you learn to sing 'pieces'?" she kept right on with the study of voice emission. She seemed to realize that a solid foundation was necessary to her life-work. Occasionally she sang in church, and when the late Eben Tourjée, of Boston, organized a choir of a hundred voices, she joined it as a soloist. Because she

could sing the high Do they sometimes gave the "Inflammatus" from Rossini's "Stabat Mater," which still is one of the great achievements of the now famous prima donna. At seventeen years she sang "The Messiah" with the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston; but she was engaged for only part of the work, another soloist finishing out the concert.

SHORTLY afterward came the turning-point in her career. Brignoli, the famous tenor, gave a concert in Boston. The day of the concert the soloist with him suddenly was taken ill. He was advised to "go and get Lillian Norton." She sang at the concert, and he was so delighted with her voice that he advised her to study in New York with Mme. Maretzek. Accordingly, she placed herself under Mme. Maretzek's care for the summer months, re-





LILLIAN NORDICA AS BRUNNHILDE

ceiving instruction in operatic arias. When autumn came she decided not to go back to Boston. It was her crossing of the Rubicon. Gilmore was giving concerts with his band at the Madison Square Garden, and one morning, while he was rehearsing there, Mme. Maretzek took her young pupil to him and asked him to hear her. "Well," he said, "what will she sing?"

"The aria from 'Sonnambula,' and if Mr. Arbuckle will play the cornet obligato 'See the Bright Seraphim,'" answered Mme. Maretzek.

"This is a very pale-looking little girl," said Gilmore. "But let's hear her."

THE pale-looking little girl sang her pieces so nicely that the bandmaster decided to give her a chance with the public. "Now, little girl, don't be afraid. Just sing right out," were his words as he handed her to the platform the first night. She made a "nice little success."

ABOUT this time she received a long letter from Mr. O'Neill, asking if this was what she had come to—singing with a brass band—after the high aspirations he had had for her. But the Gilmore engagement was a useful stepping-stone for her. He made her an offer of \$100 a week, and her own and her mother's expenses for a Western tour, and also engaged her when he went abroad in the summer. They arrived in Liverpool a little before eleven o'clock one morning and at noon gave a concert in the Royal St. George's Hall.

AFTER seventy-nine concerts in England, Lillian went with Gilmore and his band to Paris—it was during the exposition of 1878—where they opened the Trocadéro, hers being the first voice to ring out there. She spent the summer in Paris, where she had a number of American

pupils, and then went to Milan to study with San Giovanni, telling him she wanted to go on the operatic stage. He asked her to sing several arias for him, and when she had finished he said, "Well, why don't you go?" She explained that her knowledge of Italian was too limited and that while she could sing six or eight arias she did not know a single opera all through. "We'll attend to all that," was his reply; and she went right to work with him and in three months was ready to go on the operatic stage. It was then she adopted the stage name of Nordica. She had received letters from home saying she was going to drag the family name into the theatre and disgrace it, so she talked the matter over with San Giovanni and he suggested Nordica, "from the North."



HER operatic début was made at Brescia in "Traviata." For five nights a week during an engagement of three months, for the whole of which she received \$100 and a benefit which brought in two hundred livres, or about \$60, she sang nothing but "Traviata." Other nights another prima donna sang "Sonnambula." That was the entire repertoire of the house for that season. From Brescia Nordica went to Novara and sang *Alice* in "Robert le Diable." The little theatre was not heated. The dressing-room had stone walls and it was so cold she used to carry a little brazier of coals with her from her lodgings to the theatre. After Novara, she sang *Alice* in Genoa. The first night,

after a certain phrase, there were strong hisses. For an instant they paralyzed her. Everything swam around. She had the same experience for several nights, and always after the same phrase. She concluded there was something wrong with her pronunciation. Finally one night, after diligent study on her part, the critical moment passed without a hiss and her singing of the aria was followed by a storm of applause.

IN 1880 a Russian impresario, who came to Italy to look for voices and wanted a young singer for such rôles as *Inez* in "L'Africaine" and *The Queen* in "Les Huguenots," offered her an engagement for St. Petersburg and Moscow. There were ten or twelve rôles to be learned and she had about six weeks in which to master them. But by dint of arduous study at a time when the heat in Milan was intense, she prepared herself for the engagement, which was continued for another season, and led to her appearance at the Grand Opéra, Paris, where she made her début as *Marguerite* in "Faust," having studied the rôle with Gounod himself.

ALTOGETHER she sang seven months at the Opéra, and her success there led Mapleson to present her in New York. This was in 1885. She did not make much impression one way or the other. She sang only four or five nights and then returned to London. This American girl, who had made her way from Brescia via St. Petersburg and Moscow to Paris, failed at this time to conquer the audiences of her own country. When, in 1887, Mapleson reopened Covent Garden, she was engaged by him. The house had been closed so long that it was miserably cold the first night, and Mme. Nordica longed for her brazier of coals from Novara. The Prince of Wales, who was in a box, sat through the performance with his overcoat on.



AN incident in her career at this time was her singing in Sullivan's "Golden Legend" at the Royal Albert Hall. Mme. Albani, who was to have sung, had been taken ill, and Sir Arthur was so annoyed at this contretemps that when Mme. Nordica tried to have him coach her in the part, he told her friends that he was "not going to have any more of these singers crammed down his throat." However, the prima donna studied according to her own lights and made a great success, with the result that the next day Sir Arthur called on her and thanked her for having sung his music "so beautifully." After that Mme. Nordica sang all the leading oratorios at various English concerts and festivals—practically without any instruction in them other than what she had received from Mr. O'Neill. This scholarly man still is living and teaching in Boston, and he and his famous pupil, who never fails to acknowledge her indebtedness to him for the splendid foundation he laid for her career, always exchange pleasant greetings when she visits that city. After all, he had not trained her for a brass band.

HER next operatic experience was with Sir Augustus Harris, who had organized a large company for Drury Lane. He was to bring out two men who had become the idols of Paris—Jean and Edouard De Reszke—and any number of well-known people from Italy. It was a company with a great string of names in it. Mme. Nordica went to see Sir Augustus about an engagement. "Oh, we don't want you," he said. "We have got all these people," naming them over, "and you have been singing at cheap prices with Mapleson." THE next night they opened with "Aïda." Jean De Reszke sang and made a furore, but the prima donna had more tremolo than success. For the next night they put on "Robert le Diable," but at the rehearsal they came to the conclusion that the prima donna, who had quite a name in Italy, would not do. So the second night of the season for which Sir Augustus had said to Mme. Nordica, "We do not want you," she was sent for to save the performance. The same week she sang "Aïda" without a rehearsal. The following Sunday she was sent for by Sir Augustus to come to Covent Garden.

"Have you ever sung *Valentine* in 'Les Huguenots'?"

"No; I do not know it."

"Still, couldn't you learn it by next Saturday night?"

"I could not learn a part like that in a week."

"But you must do it, because you are the only one."

"Well, I will do what I can."

AS a result, she was ready to sing the rôle. In the great duet, when a singer who throws herself into the character is apt to be carried away with excitement, Edouard De Reszke stood in the wings by the window, and when she went over to his side of the stage he would call out, "*Non si allegro!*" And when she went over to Jean, he would whisper, "*Pas si vite!*" That was to keep her in check, so that in her excitement she would not sing too fast and arrive at the climax too soon, "with her tongue hanging out," to quote her own words. Mme. Nordica often has sung at Covent Garden since then. In 1890 she made her reappearance in America at the Metropolitan Opera

House, singing "Aida." Over seven years had elapsed since she had been heard at the Academy of Music and had failed to make an impression. They had been seven years of steady progress, and her success on her reappearance was very great.

SOME ten years ago, after one of the London seasons, several members of the

opera company, including Mme. Nordica, the De Reszkes, and Lasalle, concluded that they would go to Bayreuth and see what it was like. When they reached there the men in the party had no difficulty in finding accommodations, but Edouard and Lasalle tramped all over the town to secure lodgings for Mme. Nordica and her mother. Finally they found rooms in a girls' school. Next day they went to the theatre, and the first performance they heard was "Die Meistersinger." After the first act they came out and began making fun of it. "They call that music!" exclaimed Jean. "It is barbarous to ask a tenor to sing such a rôle as *Walther*." (He sings it beautifully himself now.) Then they heard "Parsifal," which seemed even more strange. The last performance was "Tristan und Isolde." When they came out of the theatre Mme. Nordica said, "Mother, I am going to sing here some day." The prima donna was impressed by the performance. Jean thought *Tristan* pretty heavy for the tenor. But something had sunk into them all. They were beginning to realize what there was in the Wagnerian music-drama.

THE prima donna became acquainted with Mme. Cosima in 1892. She studied

with her *Venus* in "Tannhäuser," with such success that she was requested to be the Bayreuth *Elsa* the following summer. During the New York season Mme. Nordica studied German every day. She went to Bayreuth early in May and studied and rehearsed there three months. She had twenty-six rehearsals with orchestra, and posed over an hour in the balcony scene while various light effects were tried—so thorough are they in Bayreuth.

HER great success in the Wagnerian stronghold made a deep impression in operatic circles, and when she returned here in the winter she was able to persuade Jean to learn "Lohengrin" in German. Seidl then suggested "Tristan



und Isolde." Mme. Nordica went to Bayreuth to study *Isolde* with Mme. Cosima. An outsider cannot imagine the strain imposed on an operatic artist by taking up at a certain point in her career a new rôle in a new language. The question of physical endurance is an important one. From ten in the morning until one in the afternoon, and again from three until five, the prima donna studied with Mme. Wagner in a little room, where she was drilled just as if it were a stage. The pronunciation of a single word would be gone over as often as 3,000 times. When the studies for the day were finished, Mme. Nordica was so exhausted she would go straight to bed.

THE two De Reszkes, who were to sing *Tristan* and *King Mark*, were drilled by a Bayreuth répétiteur; and when the three singers met in New York with Anton Seidl, who had secured a room at a hotel where they would not be disturbed, and they started in with the great scenes between *Tristan* and *Isolde*, they fitted right in like hand in glove. "I never shall forget how deeply Anton Seidl was moved," said Mme. Nordica to me in describing her experience. "We all felt that we were starting out on this new race side by side, with every nerve and every thought on the alert. But it was a great strain. Seidl came to me early one morning to go over my rôle with me, and he left me about two o'clock in the afternoon, having gone over the acting to the minutest detail. I had to rest for two days. Every noise, every sound, brought up something from 'Tristan und Isolde.'"

FINALLY, the night for the performance arrived. Seidl came up to Mme. Nordica and the De Reszkes and said, reassuringly: "Keep calm. Nothing can happen to you. You know what you have to do, and I am down there in the orchestra." But having related this, Mme. Nordica added, "Nevertheless, no one can know, and I never can tell, what it felt like to lie on that couch and hear the prelude progressing bar after bar and the sign given for the curtain to go up. They were awful moments."

WITH her *Isolde* triumph, which occurred in November, 1895, Mme. Nordica's career reached its high-water mark, and there she has maintained herself ever since. She is the perfect embodiment of the character. She also is a great *Brünnbilde*, and, not to mention her *Donna Elvira* in "Don Giovanni," her *Valentine* or her *Aida*, but to go to the opposite extreme of the operatic pole, an impassioned *Leonora* in "Trovatore." Practically the whole range of the repertoire is hers.

THE lesson of her career is that from the very start she steadily has progressed toward the highest ideal. She was not content to remain a mere prima donna—to continue a *Violetta*, a *Marguerite*, or even an *Elsa*. It was on and ever on. From "Traviata" five times a week in a little Italian opera house, from the brazier of coals at Novara to *Isolde* at the Metropolitan Opera House, is a far cry; but Mme. Nordica has covered all the ground between. There has been no relaxing energy, no resting upon well-earned laurels. Her career has been an honor to herself, to the operatic stage and to the country which is proud to call her its own.

MME. SCHUMANN-HEINK

FEW prima donnas have had a harder struggle for success than Mme. Schumann-Heink. Her maiden name was Ernestine Roessler, and she was the daughter of an Austrian army officer, who at the time of her birth was stationed in Lieben, near Prague. Her father had wretchedly small pay, and the family was very poor. Besides herself there were three sisters and a brother.

WHEN she was ten years old she was sent to the Ursuline Convent in Prague. There it was discovered by a nun that she had a voice, and while no attempt was made to educate her musically, she was placed in the choir, where she sang entirely by ear. When she sang well, she received as a reward a *kipfel* (a cookie with raisins). If she made a slip she had her ears boxed. Thus her musical education consisted of *kipfel* and slaps.

SHE was at the convent two years and a half. Then her father was transferred to Graz. There a singing teacher named Marietta von Leclair recognized the young girl's talent, and through sheer desire not to let it go to waste, undertook to give Ernestine lessons without compensation. For two years she taught her nothing but exercises, then began giving her songs by Mendelssohn, Schubert, and others. The girl had at that time a deep contralto with no high notes. On one occasion someone who was calling on the singing teacher heard the pupil in an adjoining room singing Schubert's "Der Tod und das Mädchen." "I did not know," said the visitor, "that you had calves among your pupils." "Ah," was Fräulein von Leclair's reply, "she is not a calf. She will be a great singer some day."

WHEN Ernestine was sixteen years old Maria Wilt, a famous prima donna of the Vienna Opera, came to Graz for a performance of the Ninth Symphony. The young girl was in the quartette, and the prima donna, noticing her voice, recommended her so highly to the director of the Vienna Opera that he sent for her to come and have her voice tried. Here was an opportunity but also a dilemma. The family was so wretchedly poor that the father could not give her the necessary sixty florins to enable her to make the trip. In her quandary she applied to the famous Field-Marshal Benedek, who promptly gave her the required amount.

ACCORDINGLY she went to Vienna and sang for Director von Jauner. Of her experience she says: "I was a thin, scrawny-looking girl, and shockingly dressed. My clothes were of the poorest material, and badly fitting. Altogether I suppose I presented a most impoverished appearance. The director heard me sing. Then, after looking me over, he said: 'You had better go home, and get fed up, and then go to a "Mauser Institut."'" (This is a German derisive term for "finishing school.") The young aspirant went home broken-hearted. She had



hoped to be able to tell her parents that at last they had her off their hands. But she had made the trip to Vienna and back without result.

SOME time after this, however, Materna, in passing through Graz, heard her sing, and on the prima donna's representations she received a request from the Dresden Opera to go there and have her voice tried. Of course her father could not furnish her with the means, but as the management agreed to repay her expenses she borrowed the amount from a friend. She presented herself at Dresden with two other candidates. When the trial came off, she sang the *Fides* aria from "Le Prophete" and the *Brindisi* from "Lucrezia Borgia," with the result that she was engaged at once. Director von Platen, a tall,

immaculately dressed, and very aristocratic man, was called in, and when he was told the result of the trial, he turned to her and said: "You are engaged at 3,600 marks. Are you satisfied?" "Satisfied!" exclaimed the poor girl, to whom it seemed as if a fortune had fallen into her lap from heaven; and with that she rushed up to the aristocratic director, and throwing her arms around him, hung to his neck. When she had let go, he looked at her and said: "But aren't you a mere slip of a girl to go on the operatic stage?" "As for that," she answered, "I will promise to eat and get fatter, and besides I will grow larger of my own accord."

WHEN she went home and told of her experience, her parents, remembering her utter failure in Vienna, refused to believe her. "Nonsense!" exclaimed her father. "Do you suppose they'd engage a fright like you?" To make matters worse, week after week went by and no contract arrived. She herself was beginning to be filled with dread, when at last, after six weeks, the formidable-looking document, with the big

seal attached, reached her. Then she had a very sad yet happy scene with her parents.

HER operatic début was made in Dresden on September 7, 1878, as *Azucena* in "Trovatore." It was a successful début. She was in Dresden four years, singing mostly minor rôles like the *Shepherd* in "Tannhäuser." Her contract obliged her to also sing in church. Though she had been trained vocally, she had received little musical education, and most of her singing was by ear. The conductor of the music in church was Herr Krebs, the husband of a famous contralto, Krebs-Michalese, the greatest *Fides* of her time. They were the parents of Marie Krebs, the pianist, who from 1870 to 1872 gave 200 concerts in this country.

SINGING the complicated church services by ear was quite a different matter from singing in opera, and at a Corpus Christi service, between looking over the rail at the Court people below and her lack of solid musical educa-





ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK

tion, the young singer broke down in the midst of a big solo. Krebs was furious, "You wretched goose!" (Du elende Gans!) he exclaimed, "you have spoiled the whole mass." At the same time he struck her over the arm with his baton so hard a blow that the welt was visible for several days. From that moment she made up her mind that she must study, and she began taking a severe course of technical instruction with Franz Wüllner.

SHE was in Dresden married a retired army Her marriage gave much her Dresden engage- of a year she received an atre in Hamburg. The most unhappy for her. turn out well, her re- and the manager, know- vantage of her poor cir- her not only to sing in farce and comedy. She was expecting a fourth heard her sing. He was performance at Kröll's struck with her voice she would take part in told her he could not travelling expenses—but opportunity for her to lin. She consented and ey from a friend to travel capital, she started in the night on the hard bench ment. She arrived in ing. The rehearsal was she felt that she could hotel to rest, so she Garten and sat there un- she entered Kröll's, Bö-



claiming: "Well, you really have come. We had given you up. Why didn't you go to the hotel, as I told you to?" She explained that she had not felt able to afford it. "Why," he said, "so long as you are here, you are my guest." Relating the occurrence, Mme. Schumann-Heink always adds, "To think that I had been so economical and made myself so uncomfortable for nothing!"

IN the evening she sang *Azucena* with overwhelming success. She was immediately engaged to give a series of performances the following summer. Of course, the director at Hamburg heard of the furor she had made, and some

four years. Then she officer named Heink. displeasure, and she lost ment. After an interval engagement at the the- next five years were Her marriage did not muneration was small, ing her plight, took ad- cumstances and obliged opera but to appear in had three children, and when the tenor Bötel soon to have a benefit in Berlin, and being and acting, asked her if his performance. He pay her—not even her that it would be a good secure a hearing in Ber- borrowing enough mon- third class to the German night train, sitting up all of a third-class compart- Berlin early in the morn- not until ten o'clock, but not afford to go to a walked to the Thier til rehearsal time. When tel rushed up to her ex-



time after her fourth child had been born he came to her lodgings and asked her if she would sing *Fides* the following night. She knew she would have no chance to rehearse, but for years she had been begging him in vain to let her appear in some important rôle, and this was her opportunity. So she went on without a rehearsal and scored a tremendous success.

AT the time, one of the most noted prima donnas in Germany was a member of the Hamburg company. She was so piqued at Mme. Heink's success that at noon one day she sent word that she would be unable to sing *Carmen* that night. The manager despatched a messenger to Mme. Heink and asked if she would take the rôle. Mme. Heink not only had never sung the rôle, she never had even studied it, but she had often heard the opera, and with her facility for picking up music by ear, she had acquired the rôle vocally and by watching other prima donnas had learned the "business." Therefore she consented to help the management out, went on in the evening and scored a veritable triumph. The next week she sang *Ortrud* in "Lohengrin." The following month she learned and sang three new rôles—*Favorita*, *Adriano* in "Rienzi," and

Amneris in "Aida," besides singing twenty-two times in her regular repertoire. She now received a considerable increase in her salary and filled many engagements for concerts and for star performances at other opera houses. At this time, too, she separated from her husband, afterward marrying the actor, Carl Schumann, and taking her present stage name. A success at Bayreuth in 1896 led to her engagement in London and this country, where she made her début in 1898. Mme. Schumann-Heink has a superb voice of both mezzo and contralto compass. Her *Ortrud*, *Bran-gäne*, *Waltraute*, and *Erda* are her most notable achievements. She is also a very popular concert-singer and a splendid mother to her eight children, to whom she is absolutely devoted.



MME. SEMBRICH

MME. SEMBRICH'S maiden name was Marcelline Cohainska. But when she went on the stage she adopted her mother's family name, Sembrich, and shortened her given name to Marcella. She was born at Lemberg, in Austrian Poland. Her father was a self-educated musician. Without having received any instruction, there nevertheless hardly was an instrument which he could not play, although the piano and the violin were his special instruments. There were nine sons and four daughters in the family. The father taught his children music, and the future prima donna hardly had begun to speak when she knew her notes. At four years old she began the study of the pianoforte and at six years old the violin, practising on an instrument which her father made for her.

HE had taught his wife to play the violin after their marriage, and Mme. Sembrich says she remembers very well playing when she was seven years old in a string quartette composed of herself, her mother, her brother, and her father. Thus she lived in a musical atmosphere. She breathed in music, not teacher's music, but music which was part of the family life and was second-nature. The family travelled through the provinces as wandering musicians, Marcelline playing the piano and violin at concerts, the father giving music lessons, one year in one town, the next year in another. She was not yet singing; in fact, none of the family was aware that she had a voice.

AN old gentleman who heard her play in one of these wandering minstrel tours was so much interested in her performance that he placed her in the conservatory in Lemberg. There for eleven years she studied the piano with Professor Stengl, whom she subsequently married. She also studied the violin. When she was about fifteen or sixteen years old she began singing for herself and in choruses. The opinion of those who heard her was that she had a pretty voice, but rather a small one, though of considerable range. For this reason she continued her piano and violin lessons, but did nothing for her voice.

ABOUT this time she had made so much progress that Stengl thought he would take her to Liszt to continue her studies. In passing through Vienna they stopped to call on Julius Eppstein. The girl played the piano and the violin for him and he was astounded at her proficiency. "What else can you do?" he asked. "I think she has a voice," Stengl answered for her.

"Is it possible?" said Eppstein. "Let me hear it."



SHE sang for him. He expressed surprise at its range and timbre, and urged her to develop it. "Stay here a year," he said. "Go on with your piano and violin lessons, but also try voice culture, and we will see what comes of it." As a result, she settled down in Vienna, studying the violin with Helmesberger, the piano with Eppstein, and the voice with Rokitansky. In a few months she didn't want to know anything more about the piano or the violin,

and after a winter in Vienna Stengl took her to Lamperti in Milan, with whom she studied two years—*pour poser la voix*. Here she learned the method of the real old Italian school, and acquired her beautiful legato style and perfect breathing. For hours at a time she studied the proper use of the breath in singing. Lamperti used to say: "No water, no sailing; no breathing, no singing. The voice sails on the breath." In speaking of her experience with Lamperti, Mme. Sembrich said to me: "Think how many young singers after five years get a tremolo. They are not well taught." Her experience with Lamperti was invaluable.

AFTER she had been studying with him two years, a small impresario came along looking for young singers. He engaged her to make her *début* in Athens, and there, before the date of her *début*, she married Stengl, so that, as she herself says, she "never took a step on the stage unmarried." Her *début* was made in "Puritani," and she was eighteen years old. "It was a fine country for a honeymoon," she says, "but the impresario failed and left us high and dry." However, she had made a great success, and the papers prophesied a brilliant career for her.

She returned to Vienna. Stengl wanted to work and

at once secured a position at the conservatory, and the young prima donna began to study the German repertoire with Richard Levy.

CONDUCTOR WULLNER, of the Dresden Opera, heard of her, and needing a colorature singer, engaged her for three years for Dresden. There she made what she considers her real operatic *début* as *Lucia*, under Von Schuch's direction. After a winter's experience in Dresden she obtained a furlough and sang with great success in Milan. Stengl thought Dresden was rather a small place for a singer of her brilliant promise. "Nicht sitzen bleiben im Kleinstadt" ("Don't stick in a little place"), he used to say. Besides this there were jealousies in the company, and obstacles were constantly being put in her way. So she asked to have her contract cancelled, and finally she was allowed to go.

IN the spring of 1880 Gye was giving a season at Covent Garden. Stengl concluded to take her there. She had no engagement, but when she asked,





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MARCELLA SEMBRICH

“What shall we do when we get there?” her husband replied, “No matter about that. Come along.” She was utterly unknown in London except to Vianesi, who was conducting at Covent Garden. He induced Gye to let her sing for him. She reached Covent Garden just after Patti had finished rehearsing “Dinorah,” and before the orchestra had left. She sang an aria from “Lucia,” and although the orchestra was tired from rehearsing, it rose in a body and applauded her. Gye at once engaged her to make her début in “Lucia” in a company which included Patti, Albani, Gayarre and Graziani. THE following winter found her in St. Petersburg, where she made an equally great success, and in 1882 she sang in Madrid. In 1883, with only three years as an opera-singer behind her, she took part as one of the principal prima donnas in the opening season at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. She made her début in “Lucia,” singing also in “Il Barbiere,” “Puritani,” “Hamlet,” “Martha,” “Figaro,” “Traviata” and “Sonnambula.” After this season she went to Paris, Lisbon, and again to St. Petersburg, and from that time until her return here to sing with the Maurice Grau Opera Company, she sang chiefly in St. Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin, with a few London seasons, and always with growing success. She came back here during the season of 1898–99 and soon re-established herself in popular favor. At the spectacular revival of Mozart’s “Magic Flute,” she was the *Queen of the Night*, a most brilliant performance.

MME. SEMBRICH is one of the few great exponents at the present day of the pure Italian style of singing, and of the Italian repertoire, including Mozart. In Wagner she has essayed only *Elsa* and *Eva* in “Die Meistersinger.” She believes that her voice has lasted so well because she stays in her *genre*. While she considers Wagner marks a colossal progress in music as such, she does not consider that musical declamation with a heavy orchestral accompaniment is good for certain voices, hers among them, and she believes it impossible for a young singer to begin with Wagner without ruining her voice. On this point she says: “To sing ‘Lucia’ one must study for years. Yet many young singers think that it just requires voice and some knowledge of music to sing Wagner. Times have changed. Now life and excitement in everything is wanted. It is so even in pictures and books. But this is only a passing characteristic of the times, for after all it is the true and beautiful that survive. We used to sing with only twenty-four or thirty play-



ers in the orchestra ; now there must be seventy-five or a hundred. Formerly a little simple tulle would do for a costume ; now you must have real lace. But after all, ' Lucia ' sounds just as well in a tea-gown."

"AN operatic career is a fine thing, but an opera-singer really doesn't 'live,' and if it were not for the few minutes' joy when you hear thousands applauding, there would be little tempting in the career. For the minute the artist is off the stage she thinks how the next thing is going. If one only could always end a performance and never begin it. If I myself could not feel how everything was going, I could tell from Stengl. He always sits in the audience and comes in to see me between the acts. He has a very long nose, and if it is longer than usual, I know that I have not done well."



MILKA TERNINA

MILKA TERNINA was born in Croatia. Her given name, Milka, is Croatian for darling. Therefore the interpreter of the stately *Brünnhilde*, the impassioned *Isolde*, the tragic *Tosca*, is "Darling" Ternina. If it seems an absurd name for a great prima donna, it must be remembered that her parents, having no idea that a great career lay before their girl baby, did not consult the public in naming her. Moreover, there is some evidence that the name is not ill chosen, although its owner is a *Brünnhilde*, an *Isolde*, a *Kundry*; for her aunt, who is her constant companion, endearingly calls her "little one."

"I beg to introduce my aunt.—Permit me." Thus the prima donna.

"Please repeat the name, little one. I failed to catch it." Thus the aunt.

THIS aunt is the prima donna's second mother and has been since Milka was a child. Ternina, unlike some others in her position, does not object to telling her age. She was born in Vezisce in December, 1863. When she was six years old she was adopted by her aunt Jurkovic, who lived in Agram, and it is this aunt who still calls her "little one." Uncle Jurkovic was a Regierungsrath (a government counselor), which is not quite as big in Croatia as it sounds in America. Nevertheless the uncle was a man of some importance in Agram, and distinguished people, in passing through the place, were likely to stop at his house. Thus Milka grew up among people of good breeding. The uncle, although fond of music, was anything but a Wagnerite and probably little dreamed that his niece and adopted daughter was destined to become one of the greatest interpreters of Wagner rôles. When she still was a young girl he went with her to see a performance of "Siegfried" in Munich. The music drama was new to him or he could not have been induced to so much as put his nose inside the opera house. The girl sat through the performance too deeply moved for words. Uncle Jurkovic stood it until the curtain rose on the Valkyr rock with *Brünnhilde* asleep under the tree. Then he rose. "Well," he said, "if you think I'm going to stay here until that woman stretches herself, yawns, and wakes up, you're mistaken!" So he departed, leaving Milka to see the performance out. Uncle Jurkovic may not have been a Wagnerite, but he understood how to clothe his thoughts in expressive language.



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MILKA'S voice was a chance discovery. Her aunt had another niece who was taking singing lessons, and Milka went with her when she called for the girl. Sometimes they arrived before the lesson was over, and when they reached home it was noticed that Milka had absorbed the instruction she had overheard and would go about the house singing her cousin's exercises. As a result, she herself became a pupil. The teacher under whom she took the first steps in her remarkable career and who first awakened the slumbering ambition within her, was named Ida Winiberger. No mention of her will be found in any musical dictionary or other book of biography, but she surely deserves this passing reference to the part she played in the life of one who was destined to become a great artist.

TERNINA—this is her real name and not a stage appellation,—was then twelve or thirteen. At fifteen she entered the Vienna conservatory, studied there for three years under Gänsbacher, and left there to secure immediately a position at Leipsic. She has been called the “blue-ribbon product” of the staid Vienna conservatory.

HER début at Leipsic was made in 1881, when she was eighteen years old, and as *Elizabeth* in “Tannhauser.” Her aunt, who never had seen her on the stage, was in the audience. When she saw her “little one” stretched out upon the bier in the last scene, she forgot that it was not Milka herself, but only *Elizabeth* who was dead, and began to cry. At Leipsic, at the very outset of her career, Ternina had an experience which has been repeated wherever she has appeared. The audience did not like her. It always has required time for her to win each successive new public. She tried for a year to overcome the prejudice of the Leipsic audiences and then resigned. She went to Graz. Hardly had she begun her engagement there than she received offers to return to Leipsic. It had been necessary for her only to leave that city, for the audiences at the opera there to realize what a great artist they had let go. But she did not return. After two years in Graz she went to Bremen, where she added, among other rôles, *Isolde* and *Brünnhilde* to her repertory. *Brünnhilde* she first sang under the conductorship of Anton Seidl. She was at Bremen until 1890, and then went to the Court Theatre, Munich. There she was so popular that when she left to tour individually or to accept star engagements, the public petitioned her to remain. As a result, she has endeavored to give a brief season to Munich every year.

HER first appearance in London was in 1895, at a Wagner concert under Herman Levi. She was brought to America by Walter Damrosch, and her American début was made with his opera company in Boston, in February, 1896. In March of the same year, and with the same company, she made her début in New York at the Academy of Music, as *Elsa*. Since then she has appeared here with Grau, and also has been the leading Wagner prima donna in Heinrich Conried's company at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, where she sang *Kundry* at the first performance with scenery and action, of Wagner's “Parsifal” in this country, December 24th, 1903. Her appearance as *Kundry* led to an incident which has not yet, I believe, been

made public. She previously had sung the rôle in Bayreuth, but had made her reputation before that and was in no wise indebted to Mme. Wagner or to Bayreuth in the shaping of her career. Therefore, when she learned of a letter written by Wagner's widow in which it was said that she had been willing to lower her art by appearing in the New York "Parsifal" performances for the sake of money, she made a dignified reply in which she pointed out that, so far as her relations with Bayreuth were concerned, there was no reason why she should not sing the rôle here, while, as for money, she had yet to learn that the residents of Wahnfried were wholly indifferent to it.



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TERNINA is *par excellence* the intellectual interpreter of great operatic rôles. She is to opera what Mrs. Fiske is to drama, or what the latter would be to drama, if her genius were fully appreciated. Ternina has the intellect to completely analyze and comprehend a character, the voice and temperament to interpret it, and, what is as important as any of these gifts, the power of holding her temperament under control. This is the reason why audiences to whom her art is new, think her cold. It is artistic reserve which keeps drama from degenerating into melodrama, and it is artistic reserve that maintains Ternina's interpretations upon the highest intellectual and emotional plane. The foregoing is true of her when she is at her best. She is at times the victim of illness (when she came over here for the season of 1898-99 with the Damrosch-Ellis company, she was unable to appear at all), and there have

been occasions when she should not have appeared, but has done so to save her manager. Those who have heard her only at such times cannot understand the enthusiasm with which those who have been more fortunate acclaim her art. The above is the real reason for the radical differences of opinion that exist regarding her performances. Doubtless those who do not know her at her best never will appreciate why, after she had sung *Kundry* at Bayreuth, Mme. Wagner went down on her knees, kissed the hem of her robe, and exclaimed: "If my husband only could hear you!" Mme. Wagner wanted her to sing *Elizabeth*, but Ternina declined because she differed so radically

with the composer's widow regarding the interpretation of the rôle. They sat up until two o'clock one morning arguing over the matter, Mme. Cosima curiously insisting that *Elizabeth* was not in love with *Tannhäuser*.

TERNINA has been a personal friend of the Czarina from the time the latter was simply Princess Alice of Hesse-Darmstadt. When a special performance of "Tannhäuser" was to be given at Darmstadt, the prima donna always was sent for, and she sang the rôle when the opera was given at Darmstadt for the engagement festival of the Princess and the Czar. After the wedding the German Emperor conceived the idea of sending some of the greatest opera singers of Germany to give a complimentary concert to their Imperial Majesties at St. Petersburg. Ternina was selected as the leading dramatic soprano. Before the artists started for Russia, the entire program was rehearsed for the Emperor in his palace at Berlin. His pet project was to have the chorus of the Valkyries sung by prima donnas. But when they sang it in the comparatively small apartment in which the rehearsal was held, the racket was so terrific that Prince Henry, who is not a lover of music even at its best, turned to his brother, the Emperor, and exclaimed, "*Aber sag a' mal, Wilhelm, das kann ma' nicht thu'n. Dass ist ja grässlich!*" ("But say, William, that can't be done. It's horrible!") It struck the Emperor much the same way, and the Valkyr chorus was crossed off the program.

SPEAKING of "Die Walküre," the horse provided at the Metropolitan Opera House one season was a very refractory beast, and both in that music drama and in "Götterdämmerung," the prima donna had much difficulty in keeping the animal under control. She was greatly amused to receive, the morning after one of these performances, a large box of roses with this letter from a young woman: —

Dear Madame Ternina,

I cannot tell you how much I admire you as a horsewoman. Being accustomed to horses myself, I appreciate your skill in managing *Grane* last night. Again with admiration,

NOT a word about her singing or her acting—that was the amusing thing about the letter. Instead it praised the horsemanship of a woman who, probably, never has been on a horse's back. This particular horse smelled strongly of the stable, which the prima donna found so disagreeable that she made a complaint about it. At the next performance, when she stepped into the wings to take the horse, she found the beast's colored attendant, armed with an atomizer, spraying *Grane's* head and neck with perfume.



THERE is a letter from Lilli Lehmann, in which she writes to an American friend, "My successor in America is and remains Ternina." After a performance of "Götterdämmerung," Edouard De Reszke wrote to his brother Jean, in Paris, that he was so much interested in watching Ternina he almost forgot his own rôle. *Isolde*, the *Brünnhildes*, and *Tosca* are her greatest character creations. Considering how dissimilar *Tosca* is to the other rôles mentioned, it is a remarkable performance and, if the work were more popular in the repertoire, would be more widely appreciated here. Puccini advises all *Toscas* who come to him for advice, to copy the black dress which Ternina originated in the second act. Though she is best known in this country as a Wagner singer, she has a wide range of other rôles. Of such a thing as professional jealousy she seems wholly ignorant. The expression of truth in art appears to be her one aim in life.

SHE has a home in Munich. Her summers, however, she usually spends in the Steiermark, where she lives like a simple village girl. In fact simplicity is a characteristic of her life. After a performance of *Isolde* she is up and at breakfast by eight o'clock the next morning. Ternina once described herself as "only an ordinary Croatian girl with a great love for music, a voice, and an unflinching determination to reach the highest possible standard of training;" adding, "I was passionately studious."

SHE has attained much. There is even a Ternina cult. Yet she is unhappy. Her ideals are so high that, in her own opinion, she never has been able to attain them. Only a few summers ago, though long a famous prima donna, she took a course of study with Lilli Lehmann.

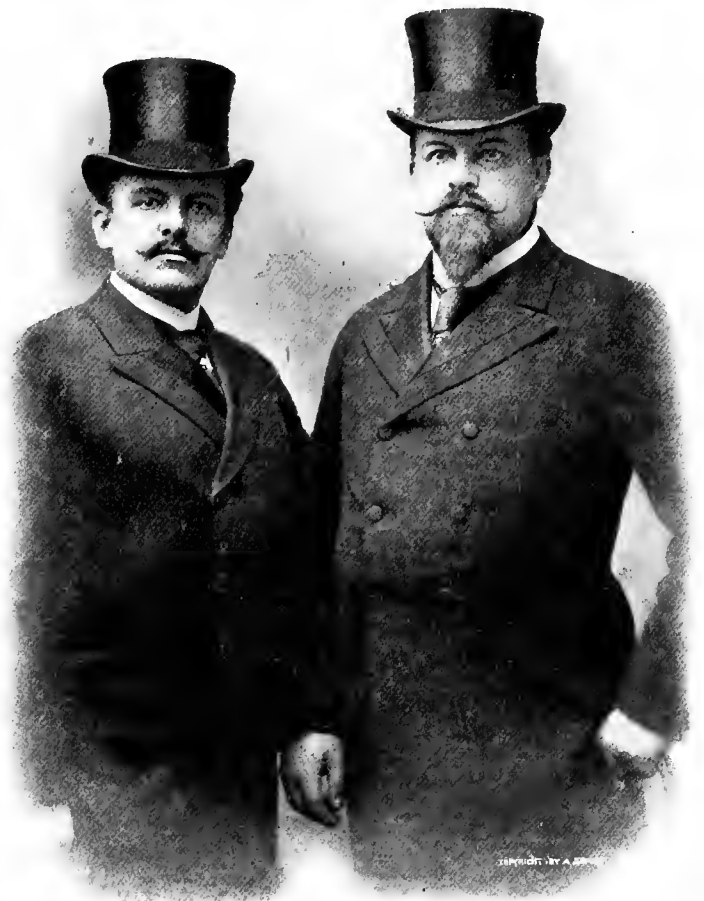


JEAN AND EDOUARD DE RESZKE

NO two figures are more notable in the operatic world than those of Jean and Edouard De Reszke. They stand for the highest achievements in their respective *milieus*—the one the greatest tenor of the day, the other the greatest basso. Jean does not, indeed, possess a phenomenal tenor voice. His higher notes do not ring out with the resonant tenor timbre which those who remember Campanini in his prime can recall so well. But it is a voice of great beauty and exquisitely managed, and to the interpretation of every rôle he brings an artistic seriousness, a completeness of dramatic conception, which give it the significance of a “creation.” Moreover, “Monsieur Jean” is associated with Wagnerian performances of unequalled beauty, and thus deserves a place not only in the annals of opera, but in the history of music; and the same may be said of “Monsieur Edouard.”

THE De Reszkes were born in Warsaw, Poland; Jean in January, 1852; Edouard in December, 1855. Their father owned a hotel there. Both parents were passionately fond of music, and the mother possessed a fine soprano voice, which had been trained by Garcia and Viardot. It is worth noting that a sister of the De Reszkes, Josephine, who died in 1892, was a distinguished prima donna, and that another brother, Victor, is said to possess a fine tenor voice, but remains in Poland to manage the large estates of the two brothers and the family. A family of voices, forsooth!

AS a boy Jean sang in the cathedral choir in Warsaw. But he was destined for the bar, and after his school days began his law studies. In these he is said to have shown the same conscientiousness which has characterized his artistic career. But the inspiration which comes from the love of the work in hand was lacking. He was ambitious to become an opera singer, and from a family so musical as his there was no opposition. ACCORDINGLY, he went to Italy and successively became a pupil of Ciaffel and Cotogni. These two teachers trained him as a barytone, and it was as such and under the Italianized name of Reschi that he made his début as *Alfonso* in Donizetti's “Favorita” in Venice, in January, 1874. For several years he continued singing barytone rôles, and in such was heard in Paris and London. He acquired a large barytone repertory, including *Don Giovanni* and *Valentine* in “Faust.” He was the barytone at the Italien, in Paris, when that theatre was under Maurel's management. A friend of mine who





heard him sing *Valentine* there tells me that he was not very fine in the rôle, and had complained after the performance of the great fatigue he suffered after each appearance in opera. It was this fatigue which first led him to the conclusion that his voice really was not a barytone, but a tenor. Moreover, he had been able in singing *Alfonso* to always create a furore with a high A natural in the caldaletta in the first aria.

AT all events, a famous teacher, Sbriglia, urged him to abandon singing barytone, assuring him that with proper training he could become a tenor. Accordingly, he went to work under Sbriglia, and in 1879 made his début as a tenor in Madrid, as *Robert*, in Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable." He made a great success. He sang at the Paris Opéra, creating, among other rôles, *Rodrigue*, in Massenet's "Le Cid." From Paris he came to this country in 1889, to the Metropolitan Opera House, and he has been here almost every season since then, taking part

also in the Covent Garden seasons. In 1899 he retired for a year, and on his reappearance at Covent Garden as *Faust* in Gounod's opera he broke down and it was feared that his voice was permanently impaired. But in December of the same year (1900) he returned to New York with his voice completely restored. His finest Wagnerian rôles are *Lohengrin*, *Siegfried*, in the music drama of that name, and in "Götterdämmerung," and *Tristan*. He also is a notable *Faust*, *Romeo*, *Rhadames* and *Raoul*.

EDOUARD DE RESZKE studied agriculture at an agricultural college, but he too broke away from the work which his parents had chosen for him, and studied in Italy under Colletti and Steller. In 1875 he went to Paris with his mother and his sister Josephine, the prima donna. He sang a good deal as an amateur at musicales, and when Verdi produced "Aïda" in Paris and was hunting about for some one for the part of *The King*, Escudier, the conductor, who had heard Edouard sing in private, said to the composer: "Perhaps that big fellow, Edouard De Reszke, will take the rôle." When Edouard received the proposition he consulted with his sister. "Go and see Verdi," she said. "If you please him in a little rôle, it may lead to something better." ACCORDINGLY, Edouard went to the Hôtel de Bade and called on Verdi. After looking him over, the composer asked, "Do you know 'Aïda'?" Edouard answered, "I have heard it in Italy, and have sung all the rôles for my own amusement."

"The female ones, too?" asked Verdi.

THEN they laughed, and the next day Edouard had his first rehearsal. He



JEAN DE RESZKE

made his *début* in April, 1876, at the old Théâtre des Italiens, at the first production of "Aïda" in Paris, which Verdi himself conducted. During the first *entre acte* the composer came behind the scenes and said to Edouard: "My friend, you look more like the son than the father of *Amneris*, but you are singing very well."

EDOUARD'S career has been closely identified with his brother's. They are devoted to each other. Edouard says that when they begin to study in the morning—for like true artists they still study assiduously—Jean sits down at the piano and sings "*Salve! di mora!*" Then Edouard exclaims, "Bad! Very bad! You sing like a pig this morning." Then he sits down at the piano and sings. "Bad! Very bad!" exclaims Jean. "You sing like a pig

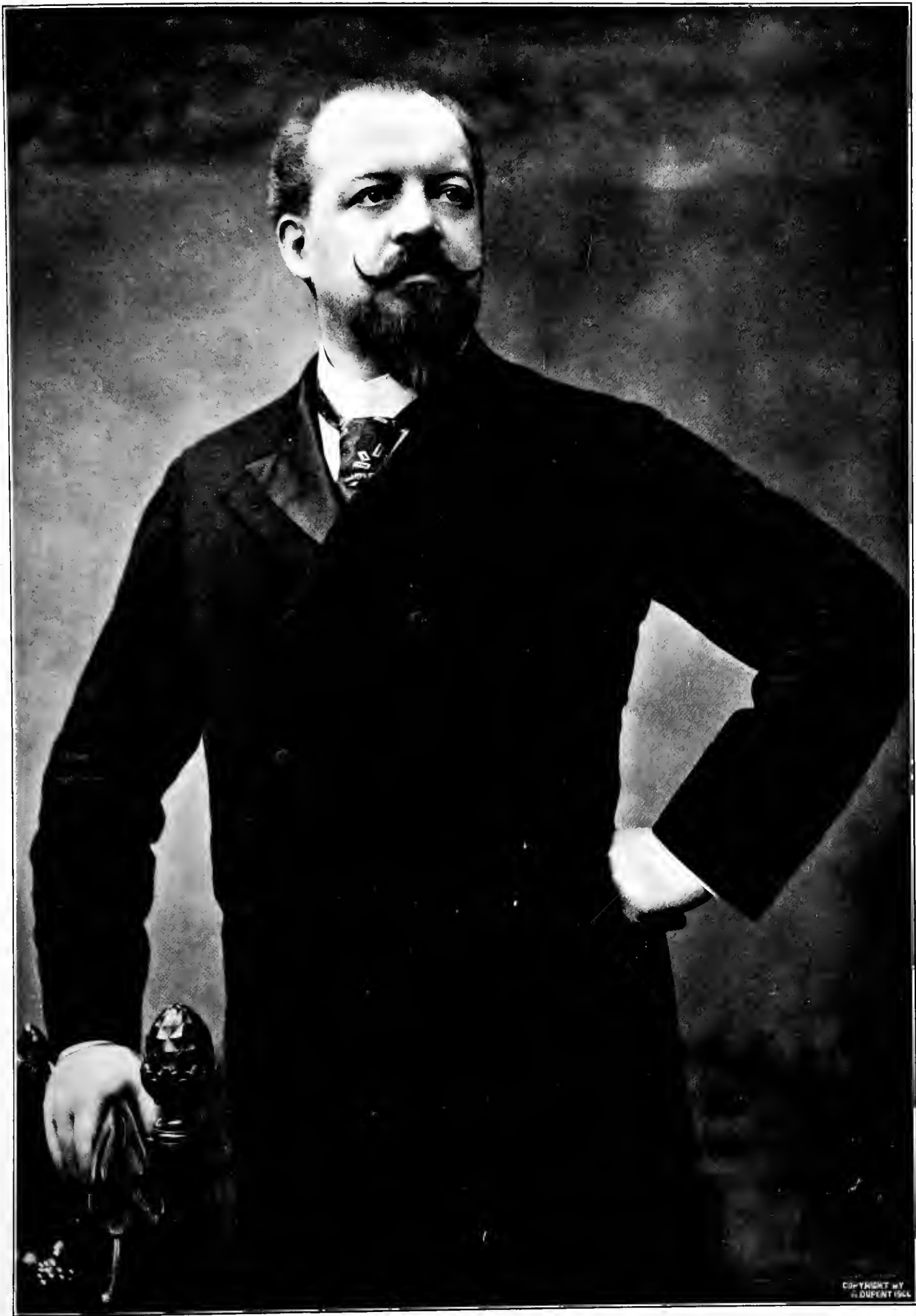
this morning. Perhaps both of us had better buy hand-organs and try to make a living." Then they both laugh and go to work seriously. The two brothers own large adjoining estates in Poland, where Jean maintains a racing stable which is well known on the Russian turf. He has won the Warsaw Derby and important prizes at St. Petersburg. The De Reszke colors are white and cherry.

THE stud farm is at Borowno, near Klomnice, in Russian Poland. The little village near the De Reszke château is composed almost entirely of stable hands and workmen on the De Reszke estates. These employees are accustomed, when they meet any of the family or any of the De Reszke friends, to seize their hands and imprint kisses upon them, and it is a difficult matter to walk anywhere around Borowno or the other De Reszke château without having your hand kissed about 150 times a day. There is a large oval for exercising the horses in front of the Borowno estate, and in winter a smaller one is shovelled out from the snow. Jean often rises early in the morning to watch the horses exercise, and almost invariably takes a smart canter himself.

PERHAPS nothing gives a better idea of the vastness of the De Reszke estates than the statement that there is one potato field of 10,000 acres. Beyond it the eye sees a long stretch of forest, and in other directions broad expanses of waving grain.

BOROWNO is only one of the châteaux owned by the tenor, yet the land which goes with it is said to be twenty times the acreage of Central Park. Of his other châteaux, the one nearest to Borowno is Skrzydlow. But it is a six-mile ride. M. De Reszke really lives at Skrzydlow, but as the stud farm is located at Borowno, he spends much of his time there. Other châteaux which he owns are those of Chorzenice and Zdrowa. There are even more acres in these châteaux than there are consonants, and it is said that it would require a week for a hunting party to pass through the wooded portions of the land which M. De Reszke and his brother Edouard own. M. Edouard De





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EDOUARD DE RESZKE

Reszke, who, during his brother's bachelorhood days, lived with him at Borowno, now has a charming château at Garnek. The affection still continues in the relations of these two brothers to each other, and they are very frequently in each other's company during their holidays.

THE De Reszke châteaux are all beautifully located a little south of Warsaw. The River Warra runs a circuitous route through these estates, and winding in and out makes rich pasture-land, refreshes the forests and vivifies the country with lakes and ponds. Large herds of cattle graze over the pasture-land, and there is a quantity of game in the forests, including deer, wild turkey, wolves and wild boars. The river itself and its numerous little tributaries, and the lakes and ponds on the estates, are filled with trout, carp, perch and other fish.

M. JEAN DE RESZKE is still making large investments in real estate. He is very fond of buying up forests, but a very large portion of the land is cultivated or used for pasturing, and he rents it out in farms. In addition to this he owns a large cement mine, which yields him a handsome income.

SKRZYDLOW, where M. De Reszke lives, is a château built in the Polish style. This means, to begin with, that it is only one story high, but also that it is very roomy. It is built of stone, with immensely thick walls, so as to be cool in summer and warm in winter. While M. De Reszke himself has not been there during the winter for a number of years, owing to his operatic engagements, Mme. De Reszke is averse to crossing the ocean, and spends at least a part of the winter on her husband's estates.

THE interior arrangements of the château at Skrzydlow are in no way showy, but are all designed to add cheer and comfort to its inmates. The music-room is filled with souvenirs of the great tenor's many triumphs, none of which he values so much as that given to him by Queen Victoria. The Queen had "com-

manded" an operatic performance at Windsor, but M. De Reszke had been indisposed and could not take part in it. Instead of this he sang a few selections for the Queen, and she presented him with a huge silver tankard, which is said to have been the handsomest present ever made by her outside of the royal family.

LIFE at Skrzydlow is extremely simple. M. De Reszke breakfasts at about eight o'clock. The morning is usually spent in the music-room at work over some score. He dines at noon. In the afternoon he drives or hunts. Hunting parties are one of the greatest diversions of his summer rest, and at Borowno he has built a lodge, which he calls, in compliment to the American public, "Cottage Americaine," in which he has his hunting head-quarters.





One room, called the "Hunters' Den," has comfortable lounges and is finished in stamped Russian leather. There is a huge fireplace, in which only logs of apple-wood are used, because of their soft, agreeable light.

BOROWNO is where M. De Reszke lived for many years before he was married, and it is with this place his friends usually associate him. It was built in the time of Louis XV., and it is a combination of French and Russian architecture.

M. DE RESZKE never has accepted an engagement to sing at a private musicale, at least I never have heard of his doing so. "M. Edouard" did so once during his first season here, but never again. For he was treated not as a guest, but as a hired professional. The De Reszkes are princes of opera and their estates are princely—be-

yond those, perhaps, of any American millionaire. No one is justified in treating them otherwise than as guests in his own house.

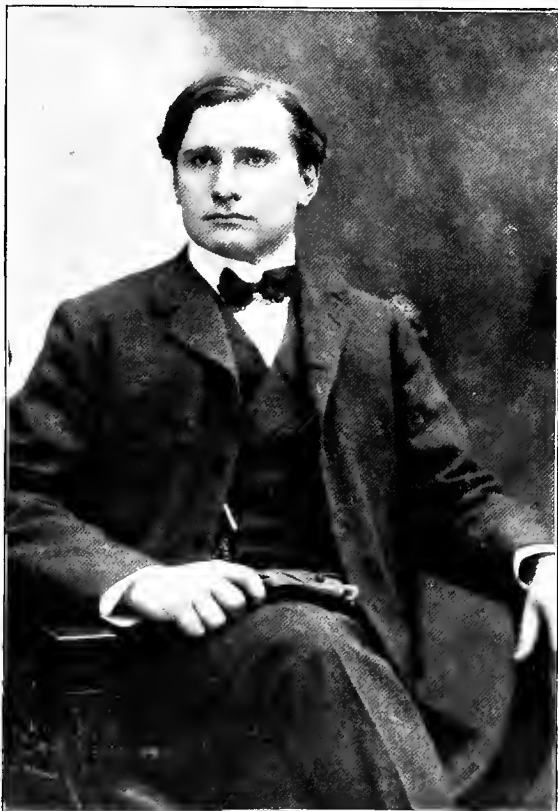




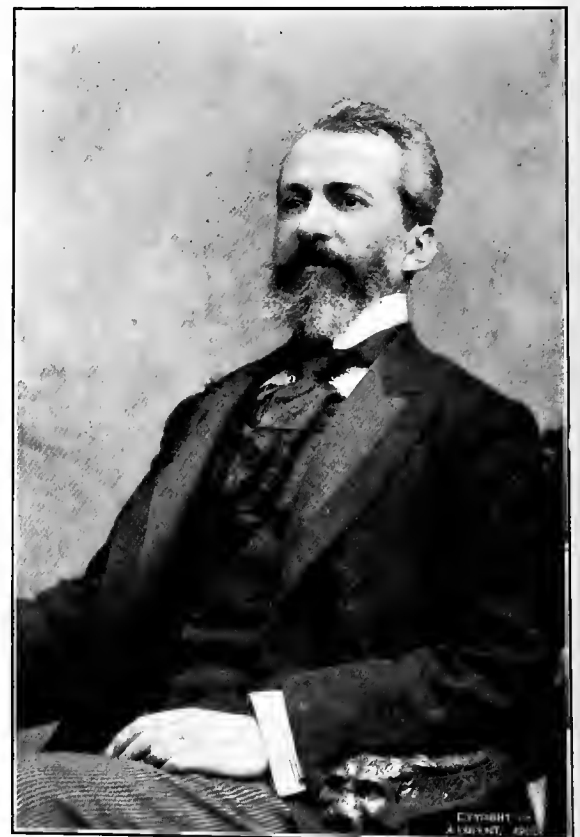
ANTON SEIDL



FELIX MOTTL



WALTER DAMROSCH



SIG. MANCINELLI



MARCELLA SEMBRICH



LILLIAN NORDICA AS ISOLDE



LILLIAN NORDICA



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A. QUANT

MILKA TERNINA

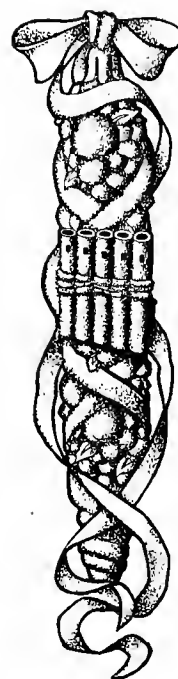


EMMA EAMES AS ELSA



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NELLIE MELBA AS MARGUERITE



LILLI LEHMANN



LILLI LEHMANN AS ISOLDE



LILLI LEHMANN AS BRÜNNHILDE



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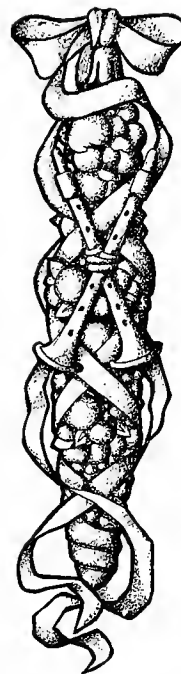
JOHANNA GADSKI AS BRÜNNHILDE



EMMA CALVÉ AS CARMEN



SUSAN STRONG AS SIEGLINDE



SUZANNE ADAMS



LOUISE HOMER AS FRICKA



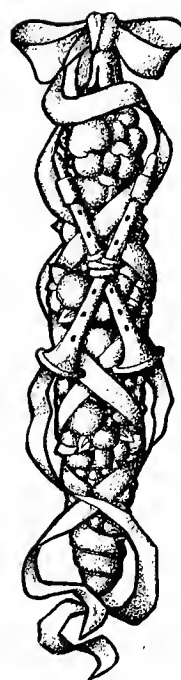
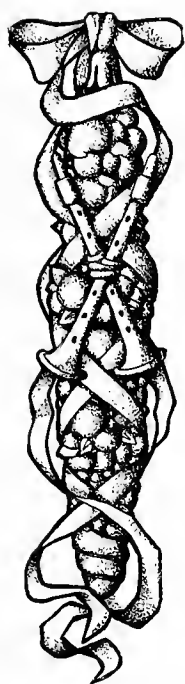
LOUISE HOMER AS AMNERIS



LOUISE HOMER IN "GIACONDA"



LOUISE HOMER AS ORTRUD



LINA CAVALIERI AS TÄIS



AINO ACKTÉ



BERTA MORENA AS SENTA



OLIVE FREMSTAD AS SIEGLINDE



OLIVE FREMSTAD AS VENUS



MARIE RAPPOLD



KIRKBY LUNN AS KUNDRY



GERALDINE FARRAR AS MIGNON



GERALDINE FARRAR AS MARGUERITE



CARUSO AS DON JOSE



CARUSO IN "GIACONDA"



GERALDINE FARRAR



GERALDINE FARRAR AS JULIET



JEAN DE RESZKE AS TRISTAN



GERALDINE FARRAR AS JULIET



EDOUARD DE RESZKE AS HAGEN



LUCIENNE BRÉVAL IN LE CID



ERNEST VAN DYCK AS TANNHAUSER



VICTOR MAUREL



SIG CAMPANARI



ALBERT ALVAREZ



ALBERT ALVAREZ



M. PLANÇON AS MEPHISTOPHELES



M. PLANÇON AS MEPHISTOPHELES



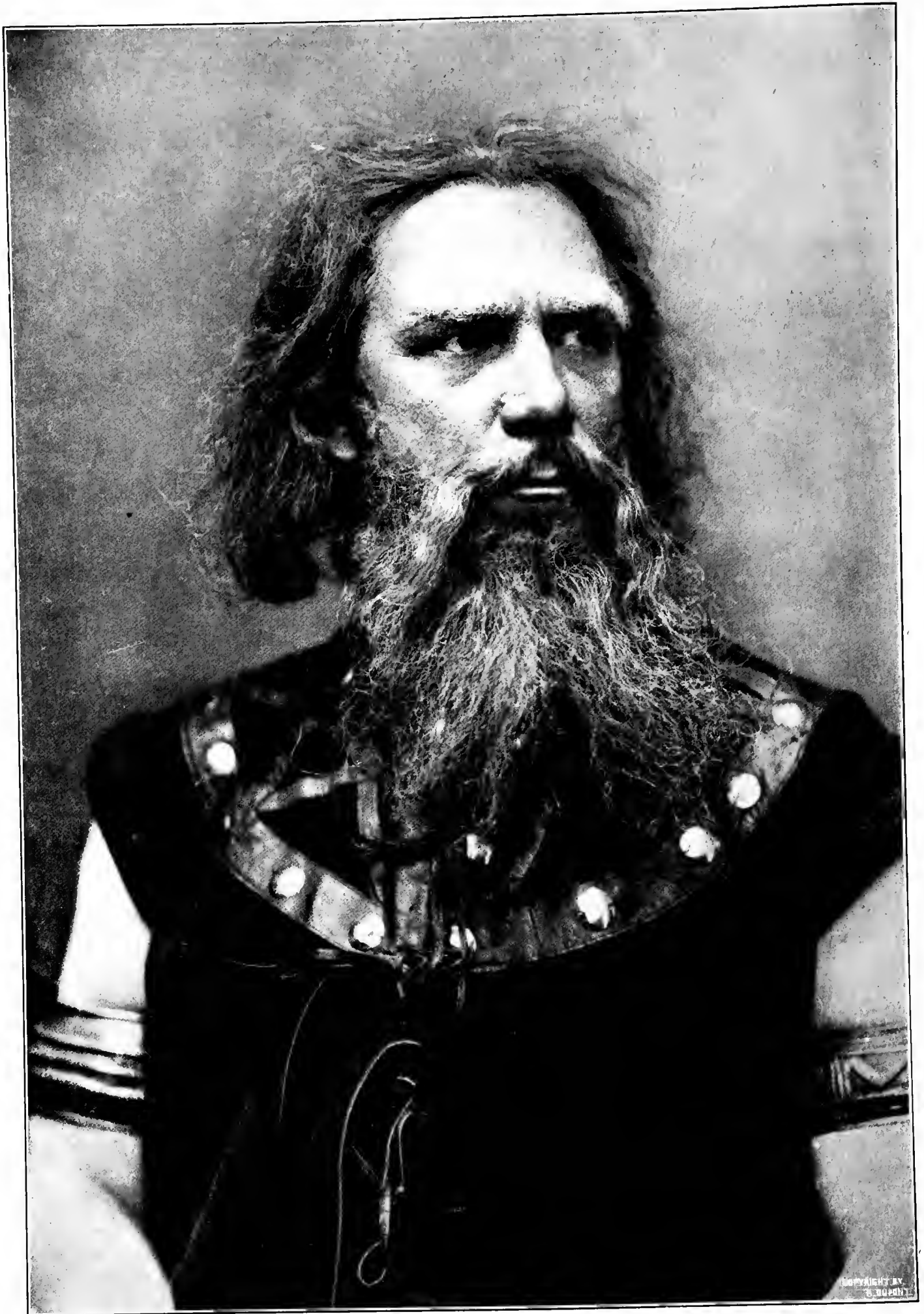
M. PLANÇON AS MEPHISTOPHELES



M. PLANÇON



M. PLANÇON AS ESCAMILLO



DAVID BISPHAM AS KURWENAL



JOURNET AS ESCAMILLO



HERR VAN ROOY



ANDREAS DIPPEN



M. SALÉZA AS RHADAMES



M. SALÉZA AS ROMEO



M. SALÉZA AS RODOLPHE IN LA BOHÈME.



M. SALÉZA AS DON JOSE IN CARMEN



SIG. SCOTTI IN DON GIOVANNI



SIG. TAMAGNO



M. LASALLE



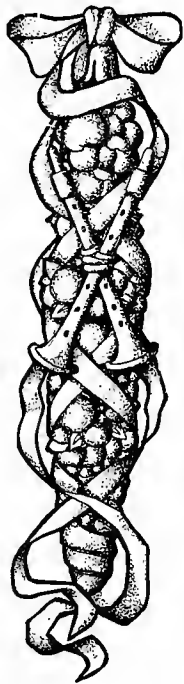
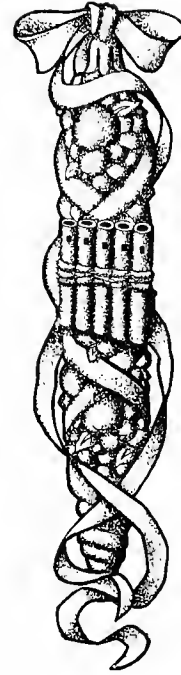
ALOIS BURGSTALLER



ERNST KRUASS



MAURICE GRAU



HEINRICH CONRIED



BRESSLER-GIANOLI



GIANINA RUSS



LINA PASCARY



EMMA TRENTINI



ELEONORA DE CISNEROS



REGINA PINKERT



CHARLES GILLIBERT



GILLIBERT—LE JEUNE



ALESANDRO BONCI



VITTORIO ARIMONDI



CHARLES DALMORFS



JEJA ALTSCHEKY



LILLIAN NORDICA



FLORENCIO CONSTANTINO



ALICE NIELSEN



IRMA MONTI BALDINI



ADELAIDE NORWOOD AS AIDA



GERTRUDE RENNYSON AS ELSA



MARION IVELL AS AMNERIS



ELZA SZAMOSY AS MME. BUTTERFLY



JOSEPH SHEEHAN AS LOHENGRIIN



WINFRED GOFF AS WOLFRAM



FRANCIS MACLENNAN AS PARSIFAL



HARRIET BEHNÉE

OPERA-SINGERS OFF DUTY

ASK a prima donna to tell you when opera-singers are off duty and have opportunity to enjoy themselves. Her answer will be, "Never."

IT is a fact that opera-singers rarely find opportunity to see even each other in a social way, except when the company is on tour, making a "kangaroo jump" in a special train. During the season in New York there is but little chance for visiting or other diversions. Even if there were, the care a singer has to take of her voice hedges her around with restrictions which few ordinary mortals appreciate. No members of the company would, for instance, think of calling on Mme. Eames on a day when she has to sing. They know she wants to save her voice. Probably the next day the other prima donnas are to sing at a matinée or evening performance, and Mme. Eames would not think of calling on them.

BUT when the company is on tour in its own special train, or in Chicago, where they sing in the Auditorium, and most of them reside in the Auditorium Hotel, there is some little opportunity for social amenities. Even then, when they meet, the topic of conversation is apt to be how little enjoyment, in the ordinary sense of the word, an opera-singer gets out of life. On days when there is no performance or rehearsal she has to brush up her rôles with an accompanist at the piano. If she has an engagement at the photographer's to be taken in costume—that means half a day posing. Then there is a stack of letters to be read and answered (or thrown into the waste-basket)—most of them from girls, would-be prima donnas, who want to come and sing for the great artist and hear her opinion of their voices. A walk, a little drive to get a breath of air—that perhaps sums up a prima donna's modicum of enjoyment on an off-duty day.

I ONCE read an account of the care that was taken of a certain millionaire baby, and I thought what a poor time it must have. An opera-singer is a good deal like that baby. A slight cold, that ordinary mortals would not know they had, incapacitates her; so it can be imagined how careful she must be that weather conditions are just right when she ventures out. In fact, her whole mode of life must be regulated with regard to the preservation of her voice. Mme. Nordica once said to me, "I am so trained to eat what I don't want, that I don't miss what I want."





An Impromptu Rehearsal

rarely see any singers of the company at the Metropolitan in the audience. It is only when stage and hotel are so near together as at the Auditorium in Chicago that a prima donna will occasionally slip from the hotel into a secluded nook of one of the boxes and hear a performance. As Mme. Eames expresses it, life at the Auditorium is a good deal like life on board ship. You pass from the hotel to the theatre as you would from your state-room to the salon or deck. There, too, the members of the company have some chance to see each other and enjoy themselves.

AT the little social gatherings which they arrange among themselves no members of the troupe are more welcome than the De Reszke brothers. These two great singers know how to throw aside stage heroics and unbend when it comes to an evening's amusement.

BOTH have a great faculty for imitating people and animals. Jean is especially gifted in the latter line. Mme. Nordica tells a capital anecdote to illustrate the tenor's skill in "imitations" of animal voices. Some

seasons ago she had a French poodle of which she was very fond. One evening she and her maid went to the Opera House, leaving the poodle in charge of someone at the hotel.

TO their great surprise, on entering the dressing-room at the Opera House, they heard the poodle's quick, sharp bark. Mme. Nordica called her pet by name, but it did not respond. The barking was repeated, seeming to come from under the piano. She looked there, and what should she discover but Jean De Reszke on all-fours! Do you wonder that she and her husband were convulsed with laughter? Imagine *Tristan* barking; *Siegfried* of "Götterdämmerung" in the rôle of a French poodle; *Lohengrin* on all-fours under a piano!



Melba off the Stage



Walter Damrosch as Conductor

EDOUARD DE RESZKE, that large, dignified-looking basso, has a special knack of imitating musical instruments and their players. Mme. Eames says it is simply marvellous to hear him imitate a 'cello. He produces with his voice the exact tone quality of the instrument throughout its entire range. But he is such a good actor that he cannot imitate the instrument unless he assumes the exact position of a 'cello-player, with the fingers of one hand on imaginary strings, while the other hand apparently guides the bow.

THE devotion of the De Reszke brothers to each other is well known, and their intimate friends say it is charming to hear them urging each other to show off. "Now, Jean," Edouard will say,

"give us your clever imitation of a monkey;" and Jean, anxious not to disappoint his brother, will proceed to comply with his request in a realistic manner that convulses everyone present. Having done so, he will turn to the basso and exclaim, "Edouard, you must show us how Pfeiffenschneider plays the trombone in the death scene in the 'Götterdämmerung.'" There is a saying in the company that Edouard is a whole orchestra in himself, and that if he could imitate at one and the same time all the instruments which he can give separately, the orchestra could be dispensed with entirely.

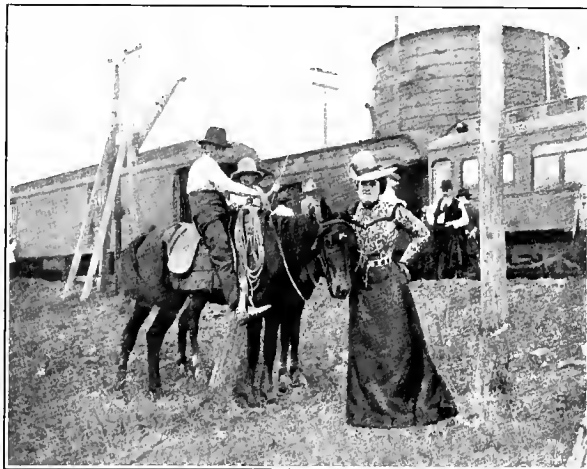
HOWEVER, these two brothers are interesting in other ways, and artists of the company say that a most profitable evening can be spent with them, hearing them discuss the serious side of their art. Mrs. Story (Mme. Eames) has sung so many years in the same company with the two Polish artists that she and Mr. Story have become very intimate with them, and when on tour the four often dine and spend the evening together. In fact, the Storys regard the De Reszkes as if they were their brothers.

MME. CALVÉ is a good deal of a mystic. On her mantel-shelf she has a statue of Buddha as a decorative accessory. She believes in a previous state of existence. Evidence of this belief is found in a remark once made by her to a sister prima donna, who has an extraordinarily large repertoire.

SAID Mme. Calvé to her one day: "Think of my good luck in having made one opera so completely my own that I hardly ever have to sing anything else! It is in my own language, too. There you are, obliged to sing in three languages in order to keep up your repertoire. Mon Dieu! how you have to work! Perhaps in your former existence you had a very easy time of it, and now you have to make up for it; or perhaps you were



Edouard de Reszke and Fritzi Scheff



Suzanne Adams as a Cowboy



And as a Locomotive Engineer

very wicked and are now atoning for it." This was all said in absolute seriousness; but fortunately the other prima donna was more amused than offended at the point of view. Imputations upon acts committed during one's "former existence" are not apt to cause much worry.

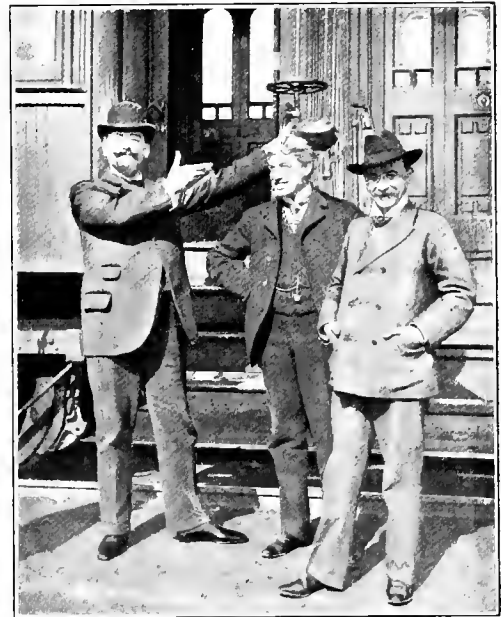
A FAVORITE diversion of Mme. Calvé is to hold spiritualistic séances in her rooms, with other members of the company as her guests. One evening in Chicago she rushed into the room of one of the other prima donnas and excitedly begged her and her husband to come to her apartments, as she was expecting a "splendid medium."

HALF-PAST eight, the hour appointed for the séance, came, but no medium; then half-past nine, half-past ten, and still no medium. The other prima donna's husband thought it about time to question *Carmen* regarding the medium's identity. "What was his name?" "Moses." "Moses?" "Yes." "Nothing more?" "No, just Moses." Further inquiry, this time extended to the hotel office, elicited the fact that Mme. Calvé had asked the clerk if there were any good mediums in Chicago, and had been told of one who was said to be "as good as Moses."

WITH her imperfect knowledge of English she had misunderstood the remark, and had addressed a letter, making an appointment, to "Moses, Chicago." Small wonder that Moses did not materialize!

THE season in Chicago once over, the members of the company have little opportunity to see each other when off the stage, except while travelling in the special train during the rest of the tour preliminary to the long season in New York. There may be on the train an occasional exhibition of the "if Mme. So-and-so doesn't come into my state-room I sha'n't go into hers" feeling; but, as a rule, the tour is the occasion of much pleasant intercourse.

DURING one season's tour Mme. Nordica and Mr. Doehme, Mme. Sembrich and her husband (Professor Stengl), Herr and Frau Dippel, and Herr and Frau Schumann-Heink were much together, and played many hands at whist and other card games. At meal hours the dining-car was, from a linguist's point of view, like the Tower of Babel. The air was filled with a polyglot of German, Polish, French, Italian, and English. Some singers like to prepare certain delicacies for themselves. Mme. Nordica is especially fond of Vienna coffee. She has a machine in which she brews this delightful beverage for herself and her friends. Signor Cam-



Plancon, Max Hirsch and Salignac

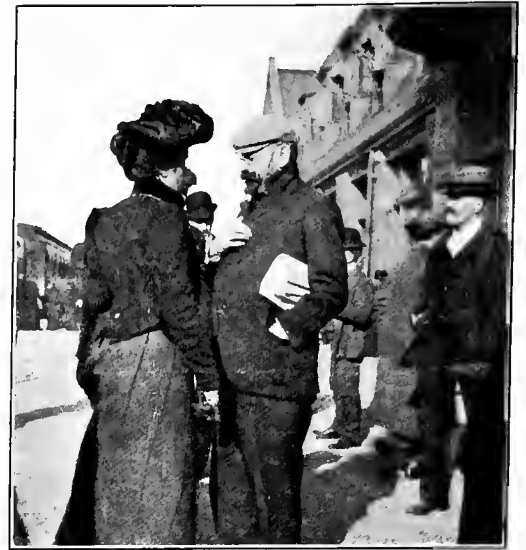
panari probably carries his liking for a special dish farther than any other artist of the company. He has with him a small machine for the manufacture of spaghetti, and another apparatus for cooking it, so that he both makes and prepares this delicacy. A baritone spaghetti factory is a rare phenomenon, even for an opera company.

THE company has had many amusing experiences on its tours, but none more so than in Kansas City. It was booked for three performances there—on a Monday night and the following afternoon and evening—in the huge Convention Hall, which has a seating capacity of 25,000.

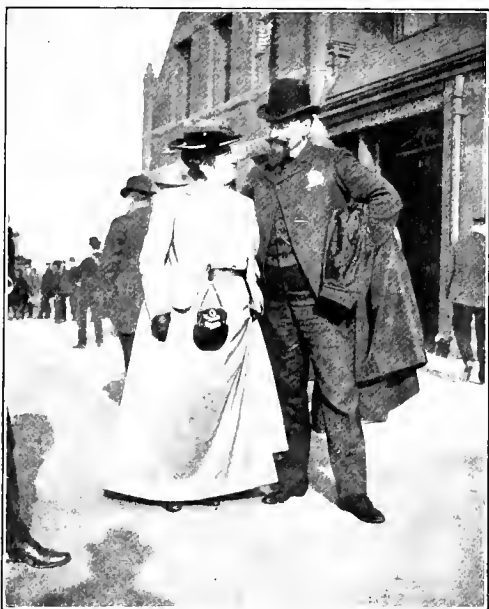
THE company reached Kansas City on Monday morning, but by about eleven o'clock had made its way to the hall. There a startling condition of affairs was discovered. Up to the previous Saturday night the hall had been used for a horse show, and, except that the horses had been removed, it was in exactly the same condition as when the show had closed. A large part of the building was divided into stalls, and the whole floor was covered with tan-bark. There was no stage, no proscenium, no suggestion of apparatus for setting and shifting scenery, and not a seat in the whole house.

YET "Faust" was to be given there that night. Under even ordinary circumstances it required quick work to have the scenery and baggage transferred from the station to the hall in time for the performance. But here was the hall itself, absolutely barren of every theatrical suggestion, to be converted before evening into an opera-house. Mr. Grau had sold out the performances to the local management, and they in turn had sold tickets within the widest possible radius of Kansas City. It is said that tickets for these three performances were sold in eight States, and that people came from as far as Montana and North Dakota. Of course it would not do to disappoint such a public.

It might shoot. Horse show or no horse show the week before, there had to be opera that night. What was left of the horse show must be dug out. THE first thing that was done by the Grau forces was to engage thirty mule-carts and colored men to rake and dig up the tan-bark and dirt and cart them away. Meanwhile a small army of stage hands was extemporizing a rigging-loft for working the scenery on the iron girders of the building; carpenters were putting up the stage and the proscenium, and hastily throwing together a set of dressing-rooms, that resembled a row of bathing-houses at a second-rate summer resort. It looked as if a circus, instead of the greatest opera organization in the world, had struck the town,



Mr. Grau Explains



Schumann-Heink and Plancon



An Opera Company in Arizona

and as if, instead of "Faust," "Carmen," and "Il Barbiere," there was to be a three-ring show, with bare-back riding, flying trapeze, "brother" acts, and "vaudeville on the side."

A HOST of women was also set to work at sewing-machines, sewing strips of canvas together, until they formed a carpet large enough to cover a floor space sufficient for 5,000 chairs. This was to hide the last remnants of the horse show, which even the thirty mule-carts and their drivers had been unable to obliterate. Then 9,000 seats were procured, and put in place on the floor and one of the galleries.

THAT night every one of these 9,000 chairs was occupied, by an audience some of whom had come

a thousand miles. Nearly 27,000 people attended the three performances, and the enthusiasm was immense.

WHEN the company visits college towns it is rarely necessary to hire supers. The students are only too glad to take their place, and are usually willing to pay for the privilege. Even women will offer money for the chance, and are perfectly willing to wear costumes which have been worn over and over again by the regular supers, so great is their curiosity to get behind the scenes. Half an hour before the performance begins this opera militia reports for duty, and stage-manager Rigo puts the "Carmen" soldiers through a little drill.

THERE is only one difficulty about these volunteers. They like to carry off part of their costume or some convenient "prop" as souvenirs. During a Boston season, Mr. Rigo one midnight saw a part of a "Faust" suit of armor walking across the Common. He promptly seized it, and under it found a student who had been acting as super in the opera at the Boston Theatre that night. He evidently had grabbed the armor at the last moment before leaving the theatre, for it was fastened over his overcoat. Had he worn it under the coat, he would have escaped observation and capture. But a piece of "Faust" armor crossing the Boston Common at midnight was too much for Mr. Rigo. Not being a Bostonian, he did not take the apparition for one of the Pilgrim Fathers come to life again, and so nabbed it and recovered the armor. It is said that some \$300 worth of costumes and properties is carried off by amateur supers in the course of a season. Yet, on the whole, there is economy in employing them.

I HAVE now told how some of the leading members of the opera company



David Bispham on a Handcar

enjoy themselves during their few leisure hours, and of some of the amusing incidents of an opera company on tour. But I have yet to speak of the manager's recreation. What about him? Where does his fun come in? Apparently only in paying the piper.



