

THE PASSING SHOW

WILLA SIBERT CATHER

The Pittsburg opera season opened brilliantly this year. A splendid and enthusiastic audience contributed much to the general spectacular effect, and Mme. Sembrich, Mlle. Calve, Campanari, and Edward de Reszke were greeted with ovations. The first performance was "The Barber of Seville," and "Cavaleria Rusticana," and was notable not only for such singers as Calve and Sembrich in their strongest roles, but in the opportunity of comparison between two of the leading Italian operas of divergent schools.

"The Barber of Seville" has held its own longer than any of Rossini's operas and, indeed, has outlived all the competitions of its day and style. Its vivacity and gait, its naive artifice of melody, and its three excellent comedy roles have prolonged its popularity among singers and with the public. Spirited and gay "The Barber" certainly is, ornate and decorative after the manner of the Italian school of half a century ago, but showy as it is, it is never truly brilliant, and its floridity is without richness. Entertaining as the opera is to the general public, and interesting as it is to students of musical history, it is a composition that can never be taken very seriously. Had operatic composition never advanced beyond the frank artifice and by the triviality of Rossini, opera going would scarcely have become a serious avocation.

Comparisons are usually unfair but anyone who has heard both Mme. Melba and Mme. Sembrich as "Rosina" must reflect somewhat upon the many things which distinguish an artist from a singer. After the finesse and bewitching comedy of Mme. Sembrich, the endeavors of Mme. Melba, seem not a little clumsy, and her comedy savors of the kittenish maid servant. Only an artist so resourceful in pantomime as Marcella Sembrich and so gifted in delicacy of comic suggestion can make the rapid "Rosina" at all attractive to opera goers of this generation.

When Wagner called his goddess women down out of Walhalla they relegated the fragile heroines of the old Italian operas to oblivion of antiquated dolls on the shelves of a toy shop, and only a true artist can endow them with any vitality whatsoever. Mme. Sembrich is perhaps the prima donna with a natural aptitude for comedy, and certainly she is one of the most intellectual of singers, and her wide culture and thorough musicianship is manifest in every part she sings. She sings with superb beauty of style and perhaps her exquisite vocalization is responsible for her freshness of voice at the end of a long and trying season. In speaking of her voice in itself, of its richness and mellowness and that haunting beauty of pure tone, I believe it was Charles Henry Meltzer who said, "It is a Slavonic voice, with all the sentiment of the Slav in it." In the lesson scene Mme. Sembrich sang a Strauss waltz song "Voce di Prima Vera," and for an encore a song of Chopin's "The Maiden's Wish," I believe it was called.

Certainly Sig. Campanari shared the honors very evenly with Mme. Sembrich. Only his inimitable vivacity and grace kept the opera from dragging at times. The esprit and picturesqueness of that admirable baritone give all his works a potent dramatic force, but his "Figaro" is absolutely unique. It is seldom that one sees such absolute identification with a part, and as an actor he greatly surpassed most actors who do not sing. I remember in the

Melba production he absolutely carried the whole opera through on his sturdy shoulders. Edward de Reszke was greeted with wild applause, and as "Basilio" gave an admirable comic impersonation, his generous proportions adding much comedy to the timid priest.

After a short but torrid intermission, the curtain rose again on "Cavaleria Rusticana." From old to new Italy, what a leap! From the rondos and cadenzas and quaint elaboration and foolish ornamentations of Rossini, to the intensity and passionate abruptness of Mascagni. Here is music that means something more than pleasing sound, here is music that becomes a notable emotional language, the speech of the soul. Surely Emma Calve is the singer of singers to speak this lofty language, the greatest singing actress of her time, whose inimitable art so far subordinates its medium that the mere beauty of her voice is well nigh forgotten. Yet what a splendid organ it is, what richness and color and throbbing vitality in her every tone! But after all, it is Calve the actress, it is "Santuzza" that transfixes one. Someone has said that Calve is the greatest of Wagnerian singers though she has never sung a Wagnerian role. She is the exponent of Wagner's message indeed, and no singer has been so permeated by the modern doctrine of music for art's sake. Having studied peasant life in Italy among the very people out of whose lives this opera grew, and having studied, too, under Duse until she assimilated much of her method, it was as "Santuzza" that Calve first took her place among the world's greatest singers.

When you have seen her, you have seen but a flat footed peasant woman in a shawl, with a great passion and a great despair. Mlle. Calve handles the score freely, subordinating it completely to the tempestuous emotion it conveys. Her impersonation is as great for what she omits to do as for what she does. She has followed Duse in the study of "what ought not to be done," and she omits as superfluous more than most singers ever master. That Easter morning in a peasant woman's life she has made tense with all the oldest and most perpetual tragedies of living, and seeing how much is concentrated into that half hour, one recalls again the frequent words of Henry James, "How much of life it takes to make a little art!"

The mixed chorus work was excellent, and the fact that the male voices predominated was not a disadvantage in the matter of effect. The orchestra of course found its best opportunity in the intermezzo.

From the enthusiasm of the audience and the frequent recalls I am led to believe that Mozart's Don Giovanni was more pleasing to the people than any other opera given here. Now this is a trifle perplexing as Mozart is supposed to be the musician's composer, just as Keats is the poet's poet. It would be interesting to know whether it was the liquid melody or the touch of opera buffe that delighted the general public. Wagnerian enthusiasts of course find that uninterrupted flow of pure melody monotonous and almost exasperating. Having become acclimated to the wild gorges of the "Val-kyrie" and the storm-swept sea of the "Flying Dutchman," they soon weary of this Mozart who is forever leading them among the same green fields and by identical still waters. Not that there is anything similar in the melodies themselves, certainly, but the pitch, the intensity, is always the same, and all these entrancing arias, duos, trios, quartets, quintets, sextets, in which everybody sings different words to the same

air, totally destroying the possibility of any dramatic significance, what of it all, Pourquoi? say the Wagnerists. What are all these airs about, where is the dramatic coherency, who cares about the woes of weeping ladies who trail about the country roads in party dresses and about the soprano who sings trills over her murdered father's body? Why is all this melody wasted upon a plot incoherent, grotesque and trivial, why is it not given direction and purpose and made to tell something of human experience and human passion? This is all because that malicious man Wagner has stung the palate so that all other styles seem insipid, and it recalls the story of the South Sea islanders who, having tasted the champagne in

the hold of a wreck, threw their whole some native drinks into the sea and proceeded to abuse their gods because the rivers did not run champagne. It is simply a question of whether the incomparable melody of Mozart does, or does not compensate you for the naive artifice of his plots.

It is undignified to find fault with so great a singer as Sembrich for trivial matters, but when she appeared as "Zerlina," the peasant girl, in the same elaborate satin costume which she had worn as "Rosina" Monday night, and when through all of "Zerlina's" varied experiences, as the bride of a country bumpkin, as the sweetheart of the count, and as a fugitive, she unblushingly appeared in the same gown, there is really cause for complaint.

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First Pub. May 5-5.

Master's Sale.

Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company, vs. John R. Conklin, et al. Respondents.

Doc. "S." No. 294. IN CHANCERY.

FORECLOSURE OF MORTGAGE.

Public notice is hereby given that in pursuance and by virtue of a decree entered in the above cause on the thirtieth day of December, 1908, I, Samuel S. Curtis, Master in Chancery of the circuit court of the United States, for the district of Nebraska, will on the fifth day of June, 1909, at the hour of ten o'clock in the forenoon of said day, at the east door of the Lancaster county court house building, in the city of Lincoln, Lancaster county, state and district of Nebraska, sell at auction, for cash, the following described property, to-wit:

The undivided half (1/2) interest of all of section numbered twenty-seven (27) and the northwest quarter (n. w. 1/4) of section numbered thirty-four (34); and the west half (w. 1/2) of the northeast quarter (n. e. 1/4) of section numbered thirty-four (34); and the east half (e. 1/2) of the northeast quarter (n. e. 1/4) of section numbered thirty-four (34); and the west half (w. 1/2) of the east half (e. 1/2) of the northeast quarter (n. e. 1/4) of section numbered thirty-four (34); and the east half (e. 1/2) of the northeast quarter (n. e. 1/4) of section numbered thirty-four (34) all in township numbered nine (9), north of range numbered five (5), east of the Sixth Principal Meridian, all in Lancaster county, Nebraska, subject to prior lien under above mentioned decree. If above mentioned undivided half interest does not sell for enough to pay the lien thereon, I will sell at the hour of eleven o'clock, all of lot numbered three (3) and the west half (w. 1/2) of lot numbered two (2) all in block numbered two hundred and eight (208) according to the recorded plat of the city of Lincoln, Lancaster county, Nebraska.

At the hour of eleven o'clock I will also sell all of section numbered twenty-seven (27) and the northwest quarter (n. w. 1/4) of section numbered thirty-four (34); and the west half (w. 1/2) of the northeast quarter (n. e. 1/4) of section numbered thirty-four (34); and the west half (w. 1/2) of the east half (e. 1/2) of the northeast quarter (n. e. 1/4) of section numbered thirty-four (34); and the east half (e. 1/2) of the northeast quarter (n. e. 1/4) of section numbered thirty-four (34) all in township numbered nine (9), north, range numbered five (5), east of the Sixth Principal Meridian, all in Lancaster county, Nebraska.

Above land will be offered in two parcels: section twenty-seven (27) as one parcel and the three hundred (300) acres in section thirty-four (34) as another.

SAMUEL S. CURTIS, Master in Chancery.

First Pub. May 5-3.

Notice of Probate of Will.

In the county court of Lancaster county Nebraska—E 1461.

The state of Nebraska to Maud Arnold, Mark Twain Arnold, William B. Arnold and to any other persons interested in said matter.

Take notice that there is on file in said court, a petition signed by William B. Arnold praying for the probate of the last will and testament of Lois H. Arnold deceased, and for the appointment of himself as executor. That on May 28th 1909, at ten o'clock A. M., said petition will be heard at the county court room in Lincoln, in said county, and that if you do not then appear and contest, said court may probate and record said will and grant administration of the said estate to said William B. Arnold as executor.

Notice of this proceeding has been ordered published for three weeks successively prior to said hearing in The Courier of Lincoln, Nebraska.

Witness my hand and seal of said court this 30th day of April, 1909.

[SEAL.] FRANK R. WATERS, County Judge.

By WALTER A. LEESE, Clerk County Court.

Notice to Creditors.

[First Pub. April 28-4]

In the county court of Lancaster county, Nebraska, in the matter of the estate of James Wampler deceased.

To the creditors of said estate: You are hereby notified, that the County Judge will sit at the county court room in Lincoln, in said county, on the 1st day of September, 1909, and again on the 1st day of December, 1909, to receive and examine all claims against said estate, with a view to their adjustment and allowance. The time limited for the presentation of claims against said estate is six months from the 1st day of June, 1909, and the time limited for the payment of debts is one year from the 1st day of June, 1909.

Notice of this proceeding has been ordered published for three weeks successively in The Courier a weekly newspaper published in this State.

Witness my hand and the seal of said court this 23rd day of April, 1909.

[SEAL.] FRANK R. WATERS, County Judge.

By WALTER A. LEESE, Clerk County Court.

Notice to Creditors.—E 1449.

[First publication April 28-4]

In the county court of Lancaster county, Nebraska, in the matter of the estate of Joseph Westfahl, deceased.

To the creditors of said estate: You are hereby notified, that the county judge will sit at the county court room in Lincoln, in said county, on the 1st day of September 1909, and again on the 1st day of December 1909, to receive and examine all claims against said estate, with a view to their adjustment and allowance. The time limited for the presentation of claims against said estate is six months from the 1st day of June 1909, and the time limited for the payment of debts is one year from the 1st day of June 1909.

Notice of this proceeding is ordered published four weeks successively in The Courier of Lincoln, Nebraska, a weekly newspaper published in this state.

Witness my hand and the seal of said county court, at Lincoln, this 14th day of April 1909.

[SEAL.] FRANK R. WATERS, County Judge.

By WALTER A. LEESE, Clerk County Court.

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