

Gossip of Music and Musicians

BY HENRIETTA M. REES.
T one time it was the writer's pleasure to visit a class in literature under Prof. Richard G. Milton, the well known professor of literary theory and interpretation at Chicago university. This day it happened that he chose for the subject of his lecture, "The Plot." He began with the lowest form of the plot, and it showed him in literature even at the very beginning the feeling for form made itself manifest. He took up the fairy story in which the sense is of little importance, but the form of story is perfect. He illustrated two kinds of plots by means of several splendidly told tales, one in which there were three sons set to do some wonderful task in order to win their father's farm. Each went away and studied for a year. When they returned each was to prove his skill. As I remember, the first shaved a man during a race. The second made a suit of clothes in phenomenal time. At this point it began to rain, and the third son, who was a soldier, swung his sword around his head so rapidly that it kept them all dry and he received the prize. By this he illustrated those plots in which there are a first, second and third incident, bound together by a little last touch that made them all one, and a complete story. He illustrated another type of plot, in which one incident grows out of another like the links of a chain, and uses these two as the nuclei from which all other plots grew. Passing on to other and more complex types, he finally came to that master of literature, William Shakespeare, and after taking up briefly the main points of the plots of one or two of his most famous plays, and showing how there were plots within plots—not one, but many, each of which would make a complete story in itself, but all so deftly woven and intertwined that at the end the sweep of the last final touch brought them all together and made them a unified whole—he made this remark: "William Shakespeare is in literature what Johann Sebastian Bach is in music."

I had not been expected to have a music lesson that day, but the more I thought about it the more convincing it seemed that here one had been unexpectedly taught. Since then it is interesting to find other analogies along the same lines between different authors and composers. It is interesting to look at musical compositions and work out the plots, according to Prof. Moulton's clear, brief outline. There are many that viewed as a whole show the first, second and third incidents, and the first unifying touch, and there are others that are just as clearly built upon the chain idea. There are complex and simple ones. There are some that are tragic and some that are not.

The comparison of Bach and Shakespeare in this way gives to anyone with a knowledge of the one a great help in understanding of the other. It is something like mountain climbing. You see a mountain and are curious to know what you can see from the top, and what is up there anyway. If you are curious enough you toil to the top and look over, and there you see on the other side and around you other mountain tops, somewhat similar. You know they are similar because you know what the one is like. If you do not climb any of them but even a foothill, how are you going to know what any of them are like? After the beautiful and clear interpretations of Shakespeare by Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern, wouldn't it be nice to have some Bach?

David Bispham presented some rather interesting views in an interview in the last number of Musical America. He spoke of the musical conditions as seen throughout the country on his latest tour. In the west and southwest he notices a significant advance in concert conditions, but in some other cities where the women's clubs devoted themselves exclusively to music they now are trying to get the most out of all the correlated arts—literature, drama, painting and music—which makes the concert artists' audience a little more difficult to attract. Mr. Bispham believes that these changing conditions are partly the result of joint recital tours, as well as the variety which a program affords that a single artist could not supply, and the relief from fatigue it gives to the artists themselves. Mr. Bispham expresses particularly strong views on what is termed the "unsexing" of certain vocal numbers, which for various reasons seem to belong to one gender rather than the other. "For instance, there are numbers which although the text contains nothing which could not be sung by either sex, were definitely intended by the composer to be delivered by a man or woman, as the case might be. Yet because these numbers are graceful and appealing to audiences, some singers insist upon offering them against the expressed wish of the composer. Take an ornate passage which although it is supposed to represent the words of the prophet Jeremiah, the composer con-

Principals in Wizard of the Nile



INEZ LACEY as Cleopatra

Entirely new costumes for all the characters in the "Wizard of the Nile," the comic opera which will be staged by the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ien at the Brandeis theater Wednesday and Thursday nights, are being completed by Oscar Lieben, and new properties such as crocodiles and animals have been finished by Gus Henz. Their introduction will be made at the rehearsal, with all characters in full dress, will be held. The costumes and scenery of the show are declared to be finer and more elaborate than those of the original production when Frank Danleis started on the road with the show. Lieben is donating the use of the costumes to the company and the expense of the production will be materially lessened thereby.

The seats for the two performances are meeting with ready sale, and the hustling committee which has this work in charge anticipates crowded houses on both nights, with many turned away. The first twelve rows are marked at \$1.50 a seat and the remainder of the house, with the exception of the gallery, will sell at \$1 a seat. No price has yet been placed on gallery seats, the hustlers desiring to wait until the others are sold. The boxes already have been taken, and many of the choice seats in the first seven rows also have been sold.

From a monetary as well as an artistic standpoint "The Wizard of the Nile"

is expected to be the best show the knights have ever staged. Performers are qualified. The various roles in the piece have been assigned with special attention to the qualifications of the many actors recruited and the result has been a delight to the promoters. Frederick C. Freemantel earnestly declares the organization is the finest singing body with which he ever worked. He is the director of the musical portion of the production. The cast of characters follows: CAST OF CHARACTERS. Kibosh, a Persian magician, making a professional tour of Egypt.

ceived as being most effectively sung by a woman. Would it not be inartistic for a singer to place such a number on his program in direct defiance of the composer? It would be just as if I should sing "O, Rest in the Lord," or a concerto should program "It is Enough." Bad taste it again found in the programming by a Noah's ark, as he is going to know what any of them are like? After the beautiful and clear interpretations of Shakespeare by Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern, wouldn't it be nice to have some Bach?

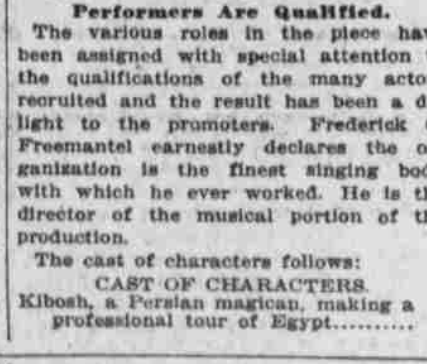
There are but two ways to solve the problem, either by composing music solely for its own sake or affecting a real union of two arts in the song, the oratorio or the opera. Personally if music expressed everything as it could be depicted by speech, the writer fears that soon her interest in music might suffer. It is, of course, very nice to have an idea of what the composer is trying to suggest. It probably helped him to think well as to see and think about the sense of the combinations, but sometimes it is well to stop and think about the music of Chopin. It is not exactly program music, but rather romantic music of the



OSCAR LIEBEN as the WIZARD



MRS. BOYLE as ABYDOS



HENRY W. DUNN as PTOLEMY

son. "It is not because I am his mother, Mr. Rogers, that I describe his voice as beautiful," she explained. "He has been heard by thousands of people and they all agree in telling me his voice is an exceptionally lovely bass cantata. Perhaps, with cultivation, it might develop into a sacred oratorio—Musical America.

Musical Notes. Mr. Frank Mach will present his pupils, Olga Eitner (a young prodigy), Leo Bravoff, Hans Fred M. Froelichsen in violin recital, assisted by Miss Florence Peterson, pianist (pupil of Mr. Borglum), on the 24th at 8:30 p. m. at 412 B. Bravoff will give "Chanson d'Amour," Heimrod-Sitt, "Torch Dance Henry VIII," "Hungarian Dance," Haasch, Mr. Froelichsen will contribute "Oberstas," Wieniawski, "Legende," Bohm, and the Mendelssohn concerto op. 4. Miss Peterson's part of the program will consist of the Chopin G minor Ballade, Mrs. A. H. Anderson, accompanist.

Omaha Symphony Study orchestra will give its third annual concert Tuesday evening, February 25. Henry G. Cox, conductor. Dr. Frederic C. Freemantel will give a sacred song recital at the First Congregational church on Sunday evening, February 24. The program will have the assistance of Miss Nancy Cunningham at the organ and Mrs. Freemantel at the piano. Free tickets, which are free, can be obtained from the church, or at Mr. Freemantel's studio.

Miss Vera Allen, the soprano in the "Country to come over to the Omaha girl who appeared here with the Aborn company last year. She has been the recipient of a great many complimentary remarks from her splendid singing. The musical department of the Omaha Woman's club will meet Thursday, February 27, at 2:30 p. m. when Mrs. J. A. C. Kennedy will have charge of the program, which will be devoted to the compositions of modern Russian composers. Mrs. Kennedy also will read a paper on the subject. Herrmann will play an oriental fantasia, entitled "Islamay," by Balakireff. Miss Madeline West will contribute a serenade by Galkin. Nocturne, Karganoff (b) Etude, Arensky, will be given by Martha Murphy, Miss Gertrude Minkoff, and Mrs. E. J. Sheppard. Lehl from the opera "Sue-sourotchka," by Rymnsky-Korsakow, and "Topsy-Turvy," by E. J. Sheppard, will close with the "Dance of the Elf," by Sapelinkoff, Miss Helen Bennett. The accompanists are Missa Eliza West and Nina Garrait.

Reed Goes East to Study Trade Schools

C. E. Reed, assistant principal of the Omaha High school, has gone to Philadelphia to attend a meeting of the superintendents' division of the National Education association, from which he will go to Toledo to study the trade schools there. He will also spend some time studying Philadelphia's technical schools. He will report to the Board of Education on his return here as to the work done by these schools. The Board of Education here will ask the people to vote \$25,000 to build a trade school, believing the success of such institutions elsewhere justified the erection of such a one in Omaha.

Heard at the Mendelssohn choir: "First Contralto—Now we're going to sing 'Rey Nonino' again. I think these are the silliest words to sing. I wonder who wrote them?" Second Contralto—William Shakespeare.

The delegates of the National Federation of Musical Clubs will assemble for the regular biennial convention in Chicago, April 2. These groups represent 6,800 organized music lovers in America, or some 20 clubs. They are headed together by one school, the National Federation of Musical Clubs in America.

A few weeks ago Francis Rogers was called up on the phone by a good mother who was seeking advice in regard to the budding vocal talent of her young

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