

# Salomes of Many Lands and How They Played the Difficult Part

**N**EW YORK, Feb. 15.—New York saw a beautiful Salome when the daughter of Herodias, in the person of Olive Fremstad, passed before the vision of the one audience permitted to behold her at the Metropolitan.

Miss Fremstad had consulted the most famous of French costumiers as to the best means of appropriately increasing her own beauty and making herself look like "a silver dove and a narcissus trembling in the wind." She has always had a genius for costuming, as she showed, when for less than \$5 she made a costume for Kundry which was more beautiful than some that cost many times as much. The stage sought her and there in Europe the

opera, Messager and Boussan, had been willing to give the opera immediately, the part of Salome would have been sung by Mme. Braval of the stately pose and the defective tone production. Now that the brothers Leda are going to give the opera at a private theater, with the assistance of only the orchestra and some of the artists from the Grand opera, Mme. Destinn has been invited, on the suggestion of Richard Strauss, to come to Paris and will dance there before the mole-eyed Herod some time during May.

Mme. Destinn comes from the Royal Prussian opera house, but she will not therefore compel the Paris audience to witness a Prussian singer on their stage. She is a Bohemian and a native of a small



MARIE WITTICH, FIRST OF THE SALOMES OF STRAUSS



LOTTI SPARROW, MUNICH



LILLI MARBERG, MUNICH



ANNA SUTTER, STUTTGART



EMMY DESTINN, BERLIN AND PARIS



OLIVE FREMSTAD.



EMMA CALVÉ.



SALOMEA KRUSCINSKA, MILAN AND ROME.

materials for a gown for the Parsifal temptress, and the result was a rarely effective blend of color.

She sought the assistance of the Parisian costumiers in her dress for Salome, and they cannot design a gown of any period without leaving their mark on it. Whatever they make must in some way suggest the Rue de la Paix of this year of grace. The Salome dress of Miss Fremstad was intensely Parisian so far as its pellicettes and its chiffon ruffles were concerned.

The long blue velvet cloak that trailed sinuously over the floor was a beautiful detail of the costume in the scenes that preceded the dance, and the net of pale blue satin strips and applied gams that hung over the silk petticoat was a characteristic and ornamental feature of the costume. So was the gold fringe on the bottom of the skirt.

In spite of the heavy girdle jewels and the heavy band of gems that fell across the bosom, there was about the costume the inevitable touch of modernity and Paris which the French costumiers are never able to eliminate even if they want to. It is safe to say that no other Salome was ever so richly clad as this one.

The accompanying pictures of the women who have sung the part in other countries illustrate this point. There is never much waste of money on costumes in Germany anyway.

The Salome of Berlin and Paris is Emmy Destinn of the Royal opera house in Berlin. She sang the role of the Strauss heroine first on December 9 and has since been selected to create the same part in Paris.

If Pedro Gailhard had been willing to pay the royalties demanded by Richard Strauss, or the new managers of the Paris

town near Prague. Her name is one of the characteristic combinations of consonants that make up Bohemian names, and her present title she took from the woman who taught her to sing.

Although she goes annually to Covent Garden in London, and has appeared there often in "Madam Butterfly," she has sung during the ten years of her career almost entirely in Berlin. Her Italian repertoire includes many roles of which Aida is supposed to be the best.

Mme. Destinn, who is the foremost lyric soprano in Germany today, has won the honors that go in that country to the woman who sings all the Wagner roles except the Brunnhildes and Isolde.

"I love the role of Salome," she said just after the first performance. "And I consider the opera beautiful. When I saw the drama for the first time I said 'Salome' must be composed, and now Richard Strauss has done it."

"His work is truly wonderful. I love the music above everything, for, if one may say it aloud, he has gone beyond Wagner. Wagner is so pedantic."

"I cannot help saying that, for I have just recently heard again Tristan and Isolde." There is in the first act a wonderful pair of lovers, but glorious as the music is, there is nothing but dreariness in the dramatic action. King Mark and Queen Isolde are they not two terrible pedants and bores?

"I do not mean this criticism as blasphemy, but it was beyond the power of Wagner to put human beings on the boards. How unnatural is the first scene between Siegfried and Brunnhilde! Wagner was far ahead of his time, but he was still

hampered by traditions.

"These have been supreme in Strauss' time. How human is everything in 'Salome'! Herod and Salome are human beings, nothing but human beings, and Strauss does not attempt to give them any operatic pose. And what a courageous depiction of the human! That is why I love this courage, this titanic pose in music."

In spite of the handsome compliment from Mme. Destinn and the fact that Strauss is a conductor in the Royal opera house at Berlin, the work made no great popular impression there.

Mme. Destinn is shown in the picture in that attitude of adoration as the figure of

John the Baptist issues from the cloister. Her costume follows closely the design of that worn by Marie Wittich when the work was given first in Dresden last winter.

More daring is the dress of Annie Sutter, who created the role of Salome when the opera was sung in Stuttgart and who made a profound impression by her youthful beauty. None of the other Salomes was so young as she unless, it were Lotti Sparrow, who sang the part in Munich. Both

young women in the desire to show that they were, thank heaven, not so old as other Salomes, have made the fact apparent in their costumes.

Lilli Marberg, who might readily take the apple for beauty among the Salomes, is not a singer, but the young actress who made the greatest success in Germany of all those who appeared as the heroine of Wilde's play. She played the part first at the Schauspielhaus in Munich and was, especially in the dance, done on a gilded platter, a vision of such striking beauty that she was imitated by many German artists in the role. She acted it more than sixty times during the first winter the play was performed in Germany.

Marie Wittich created the role when the opera was sung for the first time in Dresden and was at that time pronounced unequal to the requirements of the part. The most important critic who noticed this deficiency in her acting added the consoling reflection that it was to her credit that she could not act Salome. Such a perverse nature could not appeal to the mind of a high minded singer in a German court theater. Nevertheless Wilde's play has found only in Germany the success its author never witnessed during his life time.

There have so far been two productions of "Salome" in Italy. At La Scala Salomea Kruscinska sang the title role, while at the Teatro Real, in Turin, the part was sung by the foremost of Italian singers, Gemma Bellincioni.

Mme. Kruscinska is a native of Little Russia and made her first appearances in Poland. In Warsaw, where she passed the first years of her career, she was known as a Pole and met with great success as the principal dramatic singer of that country who had remained at home to delight her countrymen.

When she decided that the frontiers of her own country were too narrow to confine her fame any longer she went to the grand opera at Paris and sang Elza in "Lohengrin." She was no longer a Pole, however. The French weakness for everything Russian had made it appear advantageous for her to present herself as a native of Russia.

So she became a Russian and has remained so ever since, even spelling her name now in Russian characters, although she is much more Polish than Russian and was once an enthusiastic patriot. Her career in France was not long and she went last winter to Italy, where she at once became a great favorite.

She was the original Butterfly and has sung always in Rome or Milan. She will go to Rome when "Salome" is performed there.

She is shown in the picture just about to begin the dance of the seven veils. She does the entire dance herself, not being replaced by a coryphée, as was done at the Metropolitan and in all the German cities. The reason for this substitution is to spare the singer the exertion of the dance, that she may not be out of breath when it becomes necessary for her to sing.

"With the striking necessary in that opera," one of the prima donnas said after the rehearsal at the Metropolitan, "a woman could sing—as it is called—just as well without breath as with it."

The dress of the Salome at La Scala is more in accordance with what the pictures teach us as to the dress of the period represented than the costumes worn by any of the other Salomes. It has no trace of Parisian smartness and in texture resembles the gowns worn in the old prints in Egyptian scenes.

Emma Calvé is seen here not as the Salome of Strauss's forbidden opera, but as the heroine of Massenet's "Herodias." In that work, which deals with the last days of John the Baptist, Salome is not so important as her mother, Herodias. This Salome is also in love with John, but she does not know that he is the man who is constantly denouncing her mother for her adulterous marriage with her brother-in-law.

The Herod of this piece, which is largely based on the romance of Flaubert, is also in love with Salome, but does not know that she is his step-daughter, her mother having concealed the facts of her parentage. The mother makes her daughter, who is a dancing girl, agree to the wish of Herod that she dance in order to avenge herself on John.

The wife of the tetrarch makes her husband promise her anything she wants on condition that she persuade the girl to dance. In vain Salome begs that her lover be spared when she hears that she has unwittingly caused his death to be in danger. The queen compels her husband to carry out his promise and blood on the spear of a soldier shows to Salome that John has been murdered.

She rushes to kill Herodias, but learns that she is her daughter. Then she kills herself.

Geraldine Farrar is shown in this same character, which is much more sympathetic and maidenly than the Salome of Wilde's play.

Emma Calvé sang this role first in the early '80s at the Theater des Italiens when Jean de Reszke was John the Baptist, and she later promised Mr. Grau to sing the part at the Metropolitan as a contrast to her inevitable Carmens and Marguerites. She had her costumes made and was photographed in Paris.

Mr. Grau had all the scenery for the opera painted. The capricious French prima donna decided, however, that she would not sing Salome after all. The scenery for "Herodias" lay for a long time in the cellar of the Metropolitan opera house, and may be there to this day. It never got any nearer the public, and all that the New York public ever saw of Mme. Calvé as Salome was in the pictures she brought over from Paris, one of which is reprinted here.

## Gossip and Stories About People of Note

**Twain's Influence on Legislation.**

IN HIS autobiography in the North American Review Mark Twain relates that during the winter of 1862, shortly after beginning his journalistic life on the Virginia City (Nev.) Enterprise, he was sent to Carson City to report the legislative session. "Orion" (Mr. Clemens' brother, secretary of Nevada territory) was soon very popular with the members of the legislature, because they found that, whereas they couldn't usually trust each other, nor anybody else, they could trust him. He easily held the belt for honesty in that country, but it didn't do him any good in a pecuniary way, because he had no talent for either persuading or searing legislators. But I was differently situated. I was there every day in the legislature to disburse tributes and compliments and, as a very evenly balanced justice, and spread the same over half a page of the Enterprise every morning; consequently I was an influence. I got the legislature to pass a wise and very necessary law requiring every corporation doing business in the territory to record its charter in full, without skipping a word, in a record to be kept by the secretary of the territory—my brother. All the charters were framed in exactly the same words. For this record I was authorized to charge 40 cents a folio of 100 words for making the record; also \$5 for furnishing a certificate of each record, and so on. Everybody had a toll road franchise, but no toll road. But the franchise had to be recorded and paid for. Everybody was a mining corporation and had to have himself recorded and pay for it. Very well was prospered. The record service paid an average of \$1,000 a month in gold."

**Made "Graft" Known to Fame.**

It was the late Joseph P. Willard who really gave to the world the word "graft," which he first heard while engaged in one of his explorations of the underworld. It has been said of Mr. Willard that other investigators were lacking in the quality which made him pre-eminent. One writer declares: "He never took on a superior air or behaved with condescension to those about whom he was curious. He was simply interested in the life of all sorts of queer people—crooks, petty grafters, the scum of the police in general. The books he wrote about them were the natural result of his travels. The travels were never undertaken for the purpose of writing the books. There is an essential distinction here."

**Represented by Proxy.**

There is a statue of Roger Sherman of Massachusetts in statutory hall at the capitol. It is said to be a good likeness of the distinguished son of the old Bay state, but it also bears a striking resemblance to Champ Clark of Missouri. A party of Missourians were taking in the sights at the capitol and paused before the Sherman statue. "Why, there's Champ Clark," exclaimed one of them. "I thought that they only put dead ones in here. Wasn't Champ re-elected last fall?" Mr. Clark happened along just then and explained the situation. "I have no ambition for a place in this hall of fame," he said. "That is right away, at any rate. It suits me just as well to be represented by proxy."

**Bismarck and His Cigar.**

"The value of a good cigar," Prince Bismarck once said, "is best understood when it is the last one you possess and there is no chance of getting another. At Konigsgratz I had only one cigar left in my pocket, which I carefully guarded during the whole of the battle as a miser does his treasure. I did not feel justified in using it. I painted in glowing colors in my mind the happy hour when I should enjoy it after the victory. But I had miscalculated my chances. A poor dragon lay helpless, with arms crushed, murmuring for something to refresh him. I felt in my pockets and found I had only gold, and that would be of no use to him. But stay! I had still my treasured cigar. I lighted this for him and placed it between his teeth. You should have seen the poor fellow's grateful smile. I never enjoyed a cigar so much as that one which I did not smoke."

**Gorman and Cleveland.**

The memorial exercises in congress in honor of the late Arthur P. Gorman, says the Washington Herald, recalled to some of the dead statesman's intimate friends an experience he had with Grover Cleveland at a critical stage of the former president's first campaign, of which the Marylander was the manager. The Maria Halpin story had got on Mr. Cleveland's nerves. All sorts and conditions of people were bombarding the presidential candidate for an explanation. He journeyed from Albany down to Mr. Gorman's headquarters, in the Fifth Avenue hotel, New York, with the determination to write a letter to the subject for publication. He said nothing to Mr. Gorman about his intention until the letter had been written and read by the candidate to several friends. Then he visited Mr. Gorman's room.

"I have written a letter about that Maria Halpin story," said Mr. Cleveland, "and I thought I would read it to you before giving it out for publication."

So saying, Mr. Cleveland drew from an inside pocket a bulky manuscript and started to read it aloud.

"You needn't read it to me, please," calmly said Senator Gorman.

**Lincoln and the Nomination.**

In the last installment of Carl Schurz's Reminiscences in McClure's the writer describes the scene at Lincoln's home when formally notified of his nomination for the presidency as follows: "There the republican candidate for the presidency stood tall and upright in his black suit of apparently new but ill-fitting clothes, his long, tawny neck emerging gaudily from



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