

Chat About Music, Musicians and Musical Events

TRULY there is nothing new under the sun. The other night a book came into the writer's life, a book written nearly 20 years ago. Now when a good book comes into one's life it is quite an event. It ought to be celebrated every year thereafter. It ought to have a birthday and an old book at the same time, enter at one instant into your life, it should be recorded. It does not follow that all old things, just because they are old, are good. No, not that. (Bin is as old as the hills.)

But when you get an old song that's a good song, or a good book that's an old book, you feel calling in the neighborhood to sleep with you, because you have found a sheep that was lost. And so, the other night, when you were sleeping the sleep of the just and the tired and the conscience-free, the one who writes these lines was sitting up into the early morning because he could not part company with a noble and irresistible old singer and singing-teacher who came down through the long distance of one hundred and eighty-six years to tell us some things about the sentiments on the ancient and modern singers, and observations on the florid song.

The old master is Pier, Francesco Tosi, and the book he wrote was published first in 1712. It was later done into English under the title of "Observations on the Florid Song" the translator being Mr. Galliard and the publisher J. Wilcox at Virgil's Head, in the Strand, London 1743! "Pier, Francesco Tosi was an Italian and a singer of great esteem and reputation. He spent the most part of his life in travelling, and by that means heard the most eminent singers in Europe, from whence, by the help of his nice taste, he made the observations." So saith the preface. Signor Mazzucato writing in Sir George Grove's famous Dictionary of Music and Musicians, says:—This book is "a practical treatise on singing, in which the aged teacher embodies his own experience and that of his contemporaries, at a time when the art was probably more thoroughly taught than it has ever been since."

And it was this old book, this good book, which held the musical editor of The Bee sleepless and spell-bound the other night, while the dear old master talked. Little did the splendid old artist and master-singer dream that in less than two hundred years, his principles would be preached to thousands of readers, through the mighty press, and that there would be found those to honour, respect and obey him, in a far-off part of a very far-off country, where at that time buffalo heads were the only muskets, and wild Indians the only artists.

While this book is especially for singers, it is so interesting that it seems selfish to reprint some of the sentences which he has so greatly enjoyed, for they will undoubtedly appeal to any lover of music, whether singer or not. The book is melow with the richness of the evening of life, brilliant with the gleaming of refined wit, and fresh with the pure radiance of Truth in Art.

Here he begins with a "Dedication" to "His Excellency, the Earl of Peterborough, General of the Marines of Great Britain." He reminds His Excellency of delightful days spent at his Lordship's country seat, "where, Your Lordship having been pleased to do me the Honour of imparting to me your Thoughts with Freedom, I have often had the Opportunity of admiring your extensive Knowledge, which almost made me overlook the Beauty and Elegance of the Place. The famous Tulip-Tree in your Garden there is not so surprising a Rarity as the uncommon Penetration of your Judgment." (Methinks he must have met the Barney Stone.)

There are some of the observations: "He that studies Singing must consider that Praise or Disgrace depends very much on his Voice; which if he has a Mind to preserve, he must abstain from all Manner of Disorders, and all violent Diversions."

"Let him be able to read perfectly, that he may not be put to Shame for so scandalous an Ignorance. Oh, how many are there who had need to learn the Alphabet! (It would seem from the pronunciation one hears nowadays that the advice still holds good.—Mus. Ed.)

"Singing requires so strict an Application that one must study with the Mind when one cannot with the Voice."

"The unwearied Study of Youth is sure to overcome all Obstacles that oppose, though Defects were suck'd in with our Mother's Milk. This Opinion of mine is subject to strong Objections; however, Experience will defend it, provided he corrects himself in time. But if he delays it, the older he grows the more his Faults will increase."

"A Student must not hope for Applause, if he has not an utter Abhorrence of Ignorance."

"Whoever does not aspire to the first Rank, begins already to give up the second, and by little and little will rest contented with the lowest."

"When he studies his Lesson at Home, let him sometimes sing before a Looking-glass, not to be enamoured with his own Person, but to avoid those convulsive Motions of the Body or of the Face (for so I call the Grimaces of an affected Singer), which, when once they have took Footing, never leave him."

"If too many did not persuade themselves that they had studied sufficiently, there would not be such a Scarcity of the Best, nor such a Swarm of the Worst."

"There are an Infinite Number of others, who wish and sigh for the Moment that eases them from the painful Fatigue of their first Studies, hoping to have a Chance to make one in the Crowd of the second Rate. * * * These do not consider that MEDIOCRITY in a Singer means IGNORANCE."

"That Professor ought not to be frequented, though excellent in this Art, whose Behaviour is vulgar and discreditable, and who cares not, provided he makes his Fortune, whether it be at the Expence of his Reputation."

"A discreet Person will never use such affected Expressions as 'I cannot sing Today—I've got a deadly Cold'; and, in making his Excuse, falls a-Coughing. I can truly say, that I have never in my Life heard a Singer own the Truth, and say, 'I'm very well to-day.' They reserve the unreasonable Confession to the next Day, when they make no Difficulty to say, 'In all my Days my Voice was never in better Order than it was Yesterday.'"

"At first Sight, Arrogance has the Appearance of Ability; but, upon a nearer View, I can discover Ignorance in Masquerade."

"This Arrogance serves them sometimes as a politic Artifice to hide their own Failings: For Example, certain Singers would not be unlearn'd, under the Shame of not being able to sing a few Bars at Sight, if with Shrug, scornful Glances and malicious shaking of their Heads they did not

Remember what has been wisely observed, that Mediocrity of Merit can but for a short time eclipse the true Sublime, which, how old soever it grows, can never die."

"Behold the Example of those who hate Correction: for like Lightning to those who walk in the Dark, tho' it frightens them, it gives them Light."

Such are some of the observations of one of the most renowned of the great masters of singing of all time. They are as pertinent today as when they were uttered almost two centuries ago. He that hath an ear let him hear the words of one who, being dead, yet speaketh.

—THOMAS J. KELLY.

Christine Brooks, who is to be presented in recital at the First Baptist church on Tuesday evening, will sing to a host of friends who have eagerly followed the praise of the press and public during the last two years which she has spent in Berlin studying under Mary Forest Ganz and the great Raimund von zur Muehlen. A Berlin critic recently commended her as a beautiful young American who is destined to do something worth while in opera and adds: "Christine Brooks sings with a great deal of musical and artistic intelligence and with a pleasing warmth of expression. Her interpretations of selections by Handel, Schumann, Franz and Gaux were admirable. Miss Brooks sails for America soon, but will return to Germany and sing in opera next season."

When Christine Brooks sang at Temple in full orchestra, under Herr Walter Schirwenka, she received many curtain calls from an audience which filled the opera house. A London paper (Pall Mall Gazette) says: "We have seldom heard an artist whose voice is more tonally perfect or whose interpretation is more artistic. Miss Brooks' singing of the German makes it hard to believe she is not a German."

On all occasions this artist's programs have been of a high and exacting character.



CHRISTINE BROOKS.

CATHEDRAL WITH A HISTORY
Famous Church of New Orleans, Its Associations and Surroundings.

A dispatch from New Orleans says there was a mysterious explosion in the south tower of the old St. Louis cathedral last Sunday afternoon. It is suspected that it came from a bomb which had been placed in the south tower by some enemy or enemies of the Italian workmen engaged during the week in making repairs in that part of the building. The damage will probably not exceed \$2,000.

It would be a great pity if the St. Louis cathedral were to meet with a real disaster. It is one of the great churches in New Orleans and one of the most famous in the country. During the days of the foreign regime in Louisiana it was built from the pious offerings of one of the great Spanish magnates of the Crescent city, Don Andres de Almonaster. The generous old Spaniard who raised the structure to 300-and perhaps himself buried beneath the floor, while his blood lives in the Pontalba family of France, which boasts a title and draws goodly revenues from his ancient holdings in New Orleans.

The cathedral neighbors on the old Cabildo, one of the most historic structures in the United States. On a little portico in front of the second story of the heavy looking, arched, and, if we forget the queer French masonry roof, typically Spanish looking structure, while the applauding crowd from the plaza, looked on, took place the formal act which completed the transfer of Louisiana from France to the United States. To all Americans, but especially to those who live in some part of the great territory once called Louisiana, the old Cabildo should appear as an important national monument.

There is only one thing which can be said against the Cabildo; it is so like the building on the other side of the cathedral that it is hard to tell them apart. Tourists stop in Chartres street in front of the St. Louis cathedral and angrily dispute as to

which is the Cabildo and which the imitation. It cannot be denied that many people have returned to their homes in distant cities with the mistaken impression that the Supreme Court building is the Cabildo. It must be admitted that it takes something of the grandeur from the real historic building to have a double in the same street, only separated from it by a church. But we must take these things as we find them.

In front of the cathedral is the "Place d'Armes" of the French regime and the "Plaza de Armas" of the days of Spanish

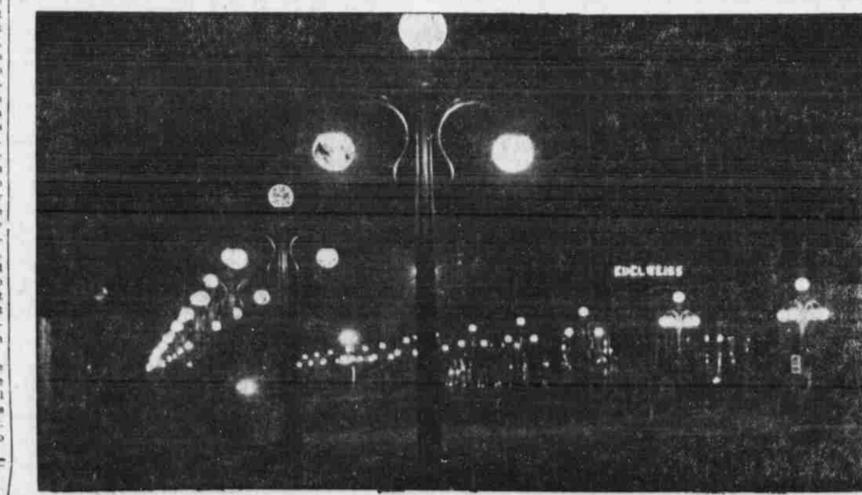
domination. Today it is known as Jackson square. It was to this spot that the Laifite pirates, who had been stationed at Spanish Fort to help ward off a British attack by way of the lakes, made their memorable run one morning on summons from Andrew Jackson that they were needed—an event the memory of which is still preserved in the annual "Run from Spanish Fort" by athletic members of the Young Men's Christian association. It was also in this little plaza that General Jackson reviewed the troops assembled for defense of the city against the British and

breathed into the disordered local militia his own indomitable spirit.

The St. Louis cathedral and its neighbors, the Cabildo and the iron fenced flowery little plot of land known as Jackson square, are three of the sights of New Orleans full of quaint charm and real historical interest. When these go or lose their present air through the agency of modern improvements, the most fascinating spot in the old French quarter will have vanished.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

Your complexion as well as your temper is rendered miserable by a disordered liver. By taking Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets you can improve both. They cleanse and invigorate the stomach and improve the digestion.

How to Turn Night Into Real Day



PLAN OF STREET ILLUMINATION SUGGESTED FOR OMAHA'S DOWN-TOWN DISTRICT.

For the purpose of giving the citizens of Omaha an object lesson in what may be accomplished by concerted action among business men, and to prove that better methods of lighting streets and caring for them than are now in vogue in Omaha exist, the firms doing business in one block on South Sixteenth street have combined under the name of "The Ginger Club" and are actively preparing to put their ideas into force. One of the first big moves will be to provide better lights on the boulevard, and in Minneapolis and several other important cities. Its introduction into Omaha, even in an experimental form, will be of great practical value, and will probably be in place in about thirty days and then Omaha citizens will get a chance to view what is being done in other cities generally. The photograph from which the accompanying cut was made was taken on River street, Aurora, Ill., and is a good example of the proposed method of street lighting. 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