

OPERA AT COVENT GARDEN

Baron D'Erlanger's "Tess" a Novelty of the Season.

BRIEF TALK WITH THE COMPOSER

Production Received with Interest—London Conservatism—Covent Garden and the Metropolitan's Terminals.

LONDON, Aug. 4.—A noon visit to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, is by pathways of decaying vegetables and faded flowers which mark the close of the market's busy hours and through strata of odors that make the far famed Cologne seem quite sterilized in comparison. As you pick up your skirts and mince gingerly along, with handkerchief held to the face, it is difficult to believe that you are near the famous cradle of song.

But used to the contrasts of London, where a narrow alley which suggests Avenue A, may lead to a place, you are prepared for the sudden appearance of a row of imposing, smoke grimed pillars fronting the huge building that dwarfs its insignificant surroundings. It has passed through many changes and chances and has only apparently grown a bit grimmer in the process.

It has survived its environment, for the fashionable dwellings and historical landmarks that once were its neighbors have passed into strange hands and strange uses. A boxing club occupies the one time Evans Rooms of Thackeray's day, and in Maiden Lane, also close by, where Turner was born, you will find it difficult to discover anyone who remembers further back than the murder there a few years ago of William Terriss. But in St. Paul's church, which still like the opera house, resists the invader, you may stop and get your breath, noting the resting places of Samuel Butler, author of "Hudibras," William Wyndham, author of "The Country Girl" and other comedies; Sir Peter Lely

and Charles Macklin, the actor, who lived to be 97.

It is well for you to make this detour to prepare your mind for the shock awaiting it, for you, being a New Yorker, may be used to the energy displayed in the offices of the home opera houses during the height of the season at midday. You recall them at the moment as antithesis of industry, a dozen telephones ringing, office boys and girls darting hither and thither, agents, impresarios and others in a wedglike mass, all demanding a hearing, and on the outside a fringe of Babel dwellers, who have to come to hand in their resignations or to revoke those of the day before. There is actually no moment when to your memory you can refer to peace brooding above the portico as it seems to brood here at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

As you step from the street into the main foyer you discover a solitary porter with a long handled watering can giving the row of potted plants their morning bath. He looks at you sleepily and continues his task. At the little window a youth is trying to book a stall, interrupting to do the reverie of an old gentleman with gray beard who has charge of the sale of seats.

A leisurely mannered employee takes your card and leaves you to rest for a long time on a velvet seat which occupies a comfortable corner. You have an appointment with Baron Frederick d'Erlanger, who, with Lord de Grey, Lord Escher and H. H. Higgins, forms the present directorate of the opera house. He is also one of the directors of the Metropolitan, a member of a banking firm and a director in the new Cape Central railway. Baron d'Erlanger, whose pseudonym is Federico Rinkel, is the composer of the one novelty of the opera season, "Tess," which has been received with much interest and which promises to have its success duplicated through the provinces, where it is to be taken this autumn. He was born in Paris of a German father and an American mother. He is a man on the sunny side of 40, apparently, entirely, tall, distinguished and pleasant mannered.

Although he has achieved a moderate success with other published works, he is

boyishly pleased at the reception accorded "Tess" in the three hearings already had. Before speaking directly of "Tess" he gives a rapid summary of his other compositions, which include "Noel," which is shortly to be produced at the Opera Comique, Paris; "Inez Mendez," produced at Covent Garden in 1896; a pianoforte quintet and a violin concerto, which was played last winter in America and elsewhere by Mischa Elman, and in England by Fritz Kreisler at a Philharmonic concert.

"Tess," says the composer, "was first produced at San Carlos, Naples, on April 10, 1906, under the direction of Mr. Panizza, who has conducted it here and is one of our regular staff. This first appearance was interrupted by the last great eruption of Vesuvius, and with falling buildings, clouds of lava dust and the noise and terror of panic stricken people, it is not remarkable that it dropped out of sight and hearing for a while, to be revived last autumn in Milan.

"The libretto is by Luigi Illica and is based on Thomas Hardy's Wessex novel, 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles.' The English version of the libretto is made by Claude Aveling.

"Although we broke the record of attendance on the opening night and in the royal box were Queen Alexandra, Princess Victoria and Prince Christopher of Greece, who were most enthusiastic, I was more delighted with the interest and satisfaction of Thomas Hardy himself than with anything else or than I can express. Mr. Hardy came from his home in Dorchester to be present at several rehearsals and the premiere. He expressed unqualified praise of the music and considered the dramatization of the novel very effective.

"It is not usual that an author can witness the necessary eliminations and changes that have to be made to fit a story for the operatic stage without some sentiment of regret, and if Mr. Hardy experienced any it was surely not visible. His commendation was most appreciative and his comprehension of the difficulties more kindly expressed than that of some of the critics who do not seem to realize that to use the entire story as it is, so fertile in incident, would require the composition of a trilogy at least.

"The story of the opera ends in the bridal chamber of Tess, where the confession to Angel Clare is made, and after his refusal to forgive in the song 'My Soul Belongs, It Cannot Pardon,' Tess goes out to commit suicide."

Every one agrees that the setting of the various scenes is admirable. The archaic settings of some of the Royal Opera house productions are curiously inefficient to American eyes trained to expect the best. But no criticism other than commendatory can be written of the scenic pictures of "Tess."

The first view is of Blackmoor in the early hours of a bright May day. There are the Durbeyfield farm, the hayloft, the tumble down wagon, the shambling old horse which looks out patiently from its shed. It is 4:30 and the clock from the village steeple announces the fact. Beyond the foreground is an exquisite perspective of the Wessex downs fading away into soft distances.

"The first scene is spoiled to me in a way," said the composer, "from the presence of the old horse, which is really one of the standbys of the Covent Garden equipment. Although perhaps not quite so celebrated as Frau Vogl's, which knew his Wagner operas so well that it is said that when it heard the motif in 'Gotterdammerung' it made haste for the funeral pyre with its beautiful burden, still our quadruped can boast that when it once gets on the stage—as for example when it leads the warrior crowd in 'Faust'—it is loath to depart and goes round and round and round until you would think it would become dizzy and drop from vertigo.

"Once in its long ago salad days there is a story, absolutely disbelieved by the old attaches of the opera house, that the horse attempted to break its thralldom and bolted down Bow street among the lamp posts and lilies, overturning rose stalls and cabbage heaps, until it was captured and brought back. It is should have a return of this demonic cheerfulness today I should not weep, for, notwithstanding my affection for it, I have always believed that the appearance of any animal on the dramatic or operatic stage is a great mistake.

"No matter how hard we try to produce the appearance of realism we cannot succeed perfectly. There must always be some artificiality, a degree of illusion. Human beings in the stage, still our quadrupeds no matter how crudely natural the stage settings may be and the action of the plot must conform to the rules of exits and entrances.

"But you can do nothing with an animal. It comes on without make-up, without illusion and never fits admirably into the picture. It holds the eye to the exclusion of everything else, and if it is fear on the part of the audience that it may escape and cause damage, there is certainly curiosity as to its movements, and its all attracts from the force of the play of opera.

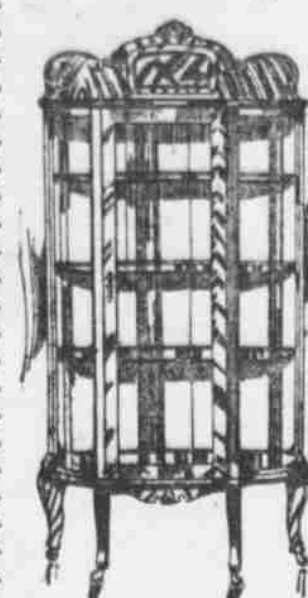
"Even in the subordinate matter of scenic arrangements the old time subscriber to the Covent Garden opera company loves to see best of all stage settings with which he is familiar. Conservative in everything, conservatism in opera seems to be part of the Londoners' creed, so I have been especially gratified that this season we have been able to put on several novelties and to have them received so admirably. Tess' among them.

"There is certainly a change in public sentiment here. In America I understand that the situation is quite different; that a new operatic work is always received with interest and an impresario can always count on an audience who if they have no other motive than curiosity will attend urged by that impelling force. Quite a contrary state of affairs prevails here. "People will have to come to a new work. If it is advertised they stay away, as they do in many towns and cities of northern Germany—Hamburg, for example. They display no curiosity, no interest. They will not run the risk of being bored. "This is the first season here that we have been able to give Samson et Delilah, on account of its libretto. I suppose, which has handicapped its production in the past, the directors not believing that it would have a success sufficient to warrant its presentation. It has been tremendously well liked and has been produced more times than any other." Before he hurries away to keep an engagement Baron d'Erlanger speaks in the highest terms of the work of Miss Emmy Destinn, who takes the name part in his opera.

"She makes an ideal Tess and says that she loves it," he says. "Her beauty fits admirably into the picture of peasant surroundings, and she looks thoroughly at home in the charming farm yard scenes."

One of the singers at Covent Garden this season was Madame Edvina, who was heard in "Louise." She is a Californian but has been in this country so many years that she is usually considered an English woman. She is a sister-in-law of Lord Kensington and a pupil of Jean de Reszay.

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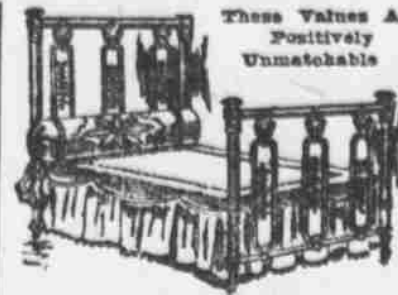
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At the Theaters

Burwood to Continue Its Mixed Program—Krug Opens with Strong Melodrama—New Company for Airmans.

The eleventh consecutive week of the popular Burwood's form of mid-summer entertainment will be inaugurated at that theater this afternoon. That the whole season's diversion that is being furnished is high in the esteem of amusement lovers is most plainly demonstrated by the fact that the Burwood is the only Omaha theater that survived the summer season, and the last week, hot as it was, resulted in the most prosperous business of any week this far this summer. Summer time vaudeville is to continue this week and next week, is to continue being in store for the week starting Sunday, August 29. Just what it is has not been made public, but it may be taken for granted that when the Burwood announces a surprise, one may rest assured that something out of the ordinary is in store. So it will be well to keep one's eyes peeled.

A glance over the fine array for the first half of the current week will satisfy the most skeptical that another treatable value program has been prepared. It may truthfully be said of Franz Mathes and Miss Lewis, the sharpshooters, that no team in a similar line of work has won more medals and trophies. Their shooting is said to be marvelous, and so unerring is their aim that their work smacks almost of a supernatural order rather than being simply that of a devoted man and wife—ordinary human beings. Copeland and Coy will supply a few minutes of nonsense, and there will be still one more act. The usual extreme case has been exercised in selecting the various reels of films from which come the state-wide known Burwood distinctive moving pictures. Herr Urbach's place at the big pipe organ will be taken by Herr Ferd Bangs, but recently arrived from Copenhagen, where he was engaged as organist in one of the immense cathedrals. Monday evening during the half hour organ recital and vocal concert Herr Bangs will perform Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" and "Lullaby" by Godard. It is said that his understanding of this most melodious and wonderful of instruments covers a broad scope and much is expected of him tomorrow evening. Miss Higgins will sing "Dream," by Bartlett, and "I Love You Truly," (A) by Carrie Jacobs Bond, and "When You Are Near" (B). One of her own compositions. This particular recital is of special interest and bids fair to be the best attended of any of the regular Monday evening concerts. After the recital, which will continue from 9 to 10, the picture and vaudeville program will be resumed.

"Cool breezes" matinees are given daily from 1 until 5, and are just the place for tired shoppers to rest an hour or so and an ideal amusement for the youngsters.

For the opening attraction at the Krug theater "Shadowed by Three," an interesting melodrama by Lem B. Parker, will be presented by W. F. Mann's company of thirty players. The Krug has been redecorated and now presents an inviting appearance to its patrons. "Shadowed by Three" is a story which abounds in the elements of humor and pathos, love and hatred, skillfully blended. Incidental to the plot is a series of mysterious feasts. A quartet sings some of the old songs in a little different way. Bertha Julian, the heroine, makes a sensational escape from officers in an automobile, which is a real sixty-horse power car, and carries three passengers. This car crashes into a conservatory of a wealthy New Yorker and furnishes one of a series of thrilling escapades in which the heroine is involved before the three sleuths finally apprehend her. One scene is laid in Wyoming, where the heroine disguises herself as a cowboy. A snowbound train is shown in one scene. Several horses are carried by the company. The scenic investments are elaborate, and Mr. Mann promises Omahans something really worth while in the way of modern melodrama. Following this attraction "The Cowboy and the Chief" will be seen at the Krug.

"Shadowed by Three" will be presented four nights and usual Sunday and Wednesday matinees, beginning with matinee today. Seats now on sale.

of plays which are the exclusive properties of Mr. Breckenridge, they will be staged and costumed to the smallest detail. Mr. Charles Breckenridge is a comedian of ability and reputation; he has appeared in nearly all the cities, but this is his first bow to an Omaha audience, though he will be remembered by many people, as this city is his home.

The company will appear tonight in the new southern drama, "Down Where the Cotton Blossoms Grow." The play is a realistic presentation of southern life before the civil war. It represents strikingly the stirring society and business events of the ante-bellum days in New Orleans after the cotton trade had been cut off. The play deals with the subject of slavery in a rather unusual way, showing the possibilities of people of noble birth being dispossessed of their property and branded as slaves of the law. Marion Chandler, a Louisiana heiress and her sister, are disinherited because their father failed to make a will; but through the heroic efforts of Dick Stanbury, Marion's tutor, and the cleverness of a Yankee lawyer, their property is restored to them and their noble birth is established. The costumes used in this production are correct reproductions of those worn about 1850 and the Crescent club house at the race track in New Orleans is an exact representation of the southern architecture of that period. The climax of the first act is a thrilling horse race, when "Blue Grass," the Kentucky colt, wins the Interstate Post Blue ribbon. The play is full of strong situations, interspersed with lots of good comedy. A complete change of program Thursday night.

ONE MORE CONVENTION BILLED FOR SEPTEMBER

Associated Fraternities, Combine of Eighty-Seven Orders, Meets Here Week of Twentieth.

Still another September convention. The Associated Fraternities of America, an organization comprising eighty-seven fraternal and benevolent associations, will hold a convention in Omaha the week beginning September 20. Each society will be represented by delegates, supreme physicians, general attorneys and secretaries. Some eminent attorneys have promised to come and several state insurance commissioners have been invited.

Monday, September 20, is the day that President Taft visits the den and the Associated Fraternities will be guests at that important session.

The Sovereign camp, Woodmen of the World, will provide the place of meeting and it is expected that the Commercial club will provide an automobile ride about the city the morning of Tuesday, September 21. Colonel B. W. Jewell is chairman of the committee on arrangements.

The officers of the Associated Fraternities are the following: President, Joseph C. Root, Omaha; vice president, E. W. Donovan, Detroit; secretary-treasurer, Captain C. H. Robinson, Chicago. These, with Frank P. Tyler of New Haven and Robert Rindale of Rock Island, compose the executive council of the association.

Word has been received by Postmaster Thomas that the application for the establishment of a new postoffice sub-station at Ames avenue and Twenty-fourth street had been approved by the Postoffice department at Washington and the new station is to be installed at once. It will be located just off Ames avenue on Twenty-fourth street in the north end of the Saratoga Drug company's building, next to the alley. The portion of the building assigned for the sub-station will be remodeled and equipped as a modern postoffice station with a full complement of boxes, stamp and delivery departments. The people in that section of the city have been wanting a sub-station there for several years, the nearest sub-station being Lake street. The new station will be opened for business about October 1.

Station B of the Omaha postoffice department at Leavenworth street and Park avenue is to be enlarged for the accommodation of the rapidly increasing patronage of the Hancock park section.

The present station in the Johnson building, just off Leavenworth street on Park avenue, is crowded to the limit, particularly when the Sunday noon mails are distributed, and the rooms are far too small for the growing needs of the office during week days.

It is planned to erect a special building for the postoffice on the vacant lot on Leavenworth street, just east of the Johnson building.

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