



New York women who set the style for the rest of the country as Paris does for Europe, have ceased to wear picture hats on the streets. It is *comme il faut* to wear a plain felt simply trimmed with a wing, a quill or a knot of ribbon on the street. The walking and bicycle hats are in keeping with the severe gowns that the modern out door girl has made necessary. Fluttering laces and ribbons

and gingham jet are used to trim dinner and carriage gowns as much as ever, but the swagger set in New York is characterized by the plainness of their street suits and hats. The girl in the cut above is wearing the latest shape. It is called the Telescope and is sold by the Armstrong Co. of this city, and comes in browns, navy blues, reds, pearl and slate colors.

**THE BARBER OF SEVILLE.**

Rossini wrote one greater opera than "Il Barbiere," certainly none more charming. "William Tell," the last and greatest opera of Rossini, would scarcely be recognized as by the same composer. It is more like the music dramas of the great German composers and requires dramatic fervor and power of emotional interpretation, but comparatively little facility in coloratura singing. "The Barber of Seville" abounds in scales, trills and all the wealth of *floriture* demanded by the earlier Italian opera composers. It escapes, however, the thinness of melodic invention and of harmonic combination of the school of Bellini and Donizetti. Its beautiful melodies and fresh and vigorous orchestration—fresh even in these days of elaborate orchestral devices—makes it a joy to the musician and to the average hearer as well.

It is somewhat infrequently given because of the difficulty of procuring a competent "Rosina." This part was written for the contralto or mezzo soprano voice in the day when even contraltos were capable of surmounting every technical difficulty in the way of *floriture* scales and trills and thus were the ordinary performers of the great contraltos Alboni, of Malibran and Viardot-Garcia. But today with the less florid requirements of German and French operas, the necessity for this type of singer has disappeared. It is rare to hear even a dramatic soprano who has any flexibility of voice. Consequently the part is not often sung and when sung is given to some light high soprano with such transposition as may be necessary. And at present there are very few sopranos before the public who can sing the music of Rossini's earlier operas. Adelina Patti, Marcella Sembrich, Nellie Melba. A short list, is it not? Perhaps I should add Emma Nevada. Of this short list Patti is nearly past. Sembrich we rarely hear in the United States. Melba is almost superlatively good in roles of this kind, although the music of "Rosina" in this opera lies a little low for the best part of her voice. Her singing on Wednesday

evening at the Boyd theatre in Omaha was rather more brilliant than usual, her voice sounded fresher than when I last heard it and, *mirabile, visum* her acting, was vivacious and full of charm. The impassioned, the tragic is, and we doubt always will be, beyond the limitations of this singer. She is no Sarah Siddons, but she is one of the best singers in the world, and she has learned, despite her temperamental short comings, to act this kind of role with skill.

It the music lesson scene Melba sang a ballad of Paolo Tosti, "Mattinata," besides the "Swanee River." Comment upon this last is unnecessary. In the last act the singer interpolated Ardit's "Se Saran Rose," a vocal waltz well suited to her voice and style. She was warmly greeted and repeatedly called out. I wish some kind person had informed the Omaha people that the "Barber of Seville" is funny, is, in fact a famous comedy. Their solemnity at this function was appalling. If Melba had been Bruenhilde the Valkyr, they could not have gazed with more gravity at the spectacle. Really Mr. Homer Moore should have warned them in the Bee. The support was more than adequate, it was extremely good. Even the tenor could act, and all could sing. I append the cast:

- Rosina.....Melba
- Bertha.....Mme. Van Cauteren
- The Count.....Salignac
- Figaro.....Canpanari
- Bartolo.....Carbone
- Basilio.....Viviani
- Fiorello.....Mr. Van Hoose

Signor Oreste Bimboni conducted with spirit. The whole performance was a most enjoyable one, and was upon the whole well worth the rather expensive price of seats. JOHN RANDOLPH.

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