

was arrested by a most marvelous sound. The bridge extends above the dressing rooms of both theatres; in the dressing room just below me the sky light was open, and from it there streamed up a flood of light and a perfect geyser of the most wonderful notes that were quite unmistakable. It was Mme. Brema practicing the "High-oh" song of the Valkyries. The night was murky and starless; only the red lamps of the Hotel Henry and the line of river lights above Mount Washington were visible; on every side rose the tall black buildings that shut out the sounds of the streets. Those free, unfettered notes seemed to cut the blackness and the silence, seemed to pierce the clouds which lay over the city and reach the stars and the blue spaces of heaven behind, and to carry me up with them.

In the second act the curtain rose upon that "wild and rocky pass" in the mountains of the gods. "Wotan," Herr Anton Van Rooy, who has so distinguished himself in the part, appeared in the foreground with "Brunnhilde, Mme. Marie Brema." He instructs her to protect "Siegfried" and slay "Hunding" in the coming conflict, and the joyous Valkyrie leaps up the mountain side singing her "High-oh" song—and Liebre Himmel! how she sang it! The very paste-board mountains seemed to echo it, as in the storm scene in Childe Harold, where,

"Every mountain now hath found a tongue,

And Jura answers through her misty shroud,

Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud."

Then "Fricka" enters, the wonderful Schumann-Heinck, whose "Ortrude" I had heard only the night before. She came not in her ram-drawn car in which she enters at Bayreuth the Holy, but on foot, like common mortals, and she came in a bad humor. I should like to see this incomparable Schumann-Heinck in a good-humored part just once, for I know that she is capable of simulating every sort of bad humor and spitefulness known to woman or goddess. She comes of course to lecture "Wotan" for his countenancing the unholy love of "Siegfried" and "Sieglinde," and to express herself upon the sanctity of the marriage vow. Then the deeper tragedy of the drama unfolds; the god bound by the laws of his own making, the strong man pilloried by the weakness of the race. It is of this that Mr. G. Bernard Shaw says in his clever book, "The Perfect Wagnerite":

"Governments are, of course, established by the few who are capable of governing, though, its mechanism once complete, it is generally carried on unintelligently by people who are incapable of it, the capable people repairing it from time to time when it gets too far behind the advance or decay of civilization. These capable people are thus in the position of 'Wotan,' forced to maintain as sacred, and themselves submit to laws which they privately know to be obsolescent makeshifts, and to affect the deepest veneration for ideals and creeds which they ridicule among themselves. No individual 'Siegfried' can rescue them from this bondage. Indeed the individual 'Siegfried' has come often enough, only to find himself confronted with the alternative of government or destruction at the hands of his fellows who are not 'Siegfrieds.'"

I suppose that if there was one man in that strong, well balanced cast who stood out head and shoulders above the rest, it was Herr Van Rooy, by reason of the vitality, the intimacy, the flesh and blood which he has given to that wooden part, full of long theological discussions and lectures on the civil government of Heaven. He does not always, I think, interpret Wagner

perfectly, but it is an interpretation which commands attention, respect, admiration. He presents a figure not to be forgotten, with his iron jaw, his resolute mouth and a single gray lock drooping over the maimed eye, which was the price he had paid for wisdom, when, overcome by the authority of his wife's arguments, by the insatiable law that he had himself created, he sits down upon the rocks and his shield falls from his hand, he makes you feel how much more terrible it is to be a helpless god than to be a helpless man, and something in his attitude recalled the helpless god of the Greeks, Prometheus chained to Caucasus. He calls back Brunnhilde, the "wish maiden," she who executed his heart's desire, and re-instructs her, and so the wish is subordinated to the law, even with the god.

Herr Van Rooy's last scene is scarcely so satisfactory. His denunciation of Brunnhilde is too furious, too much washed by anger and resentment. Surely Wagner never meant that. "Wotan's" heart never changed an instant toward his daughter, he hated her no more than one hates his own desire that is impossible of fulfillment. He was too big a god to bear malice. He was driven against his will, by the inexorable law that tires out even the hearts of the gods, that binds and fetters in Walhalla just as it does in Pittsburgh or in Lincoln. In his parting from "Brunnhilde," Van Rooy is more impassioned than Emile Fischer, but not so tender. He is the irate god rather than the father.

That night, when the singers boarded their special street car to take the long run out to the Hotel Schenley, where they were stopping, I got on the same car with several local musicians who were going out to a supper party. When the car was bowing off across the hill tops, I noticed a man in the further end, fast asleep. His coat collar was turned up, his linen crumpled, the make-up still discolored his eyes, his face was damp with perspiration, and he looked gray and drawn and tired. It was Herr Anton Van Rooy, late of Walhalla, tired as a laborer from the iron mills. It is hard work apparently, this being a god.

The funny, dumpy little Frau Schumann-Heinck had her most recent baby here with her. It is the ninth and was only three months old, having been born in New York last winter. Where she ever gets time to attend to her professional duties is the mystery. I asked Mme. Nordica if the lady sang Wagnerian lullabies to all the little Schumann-Heincks, and she replied: "No indeed, it's few enough lullabies they get; mamma has to save her voice to buy Mellin's food for them." Nordica told me that all the little Schumann-Heincks have been named after the hotels in various parts of the world in which they were born. There is a Cecil Schumann-Heinck born in London, and a St. Denis Schumann-Heinck, and so on. Last winter, before the arrival of the ninth, Frau Schumann-Heinck threw the company into a state of consternation by packing up her traps and nurses and children and changing her hotel in the middle of the season, because she said she could not inflict upon any child the name of Waldorf Astoria.

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The Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs, which is the oldest organization of this kind in the West, recently held its third biennial at Burlington, and the large gathering of earnest cultured women was one of influence and significance. Women are rapidly learning how to conduct such gatherings with smoothness and efficiency, and it can be truly said of this convention that things were done decently and in order. The program was not crowded and there was plenty of time for everything. Mrs. G. F. Van Vechten, the retiring president, is an ideal presiding officer. She introduced a new feature which was received with much satisfaction, viz.: Each of her associated officers were invited to preside over one session of the convention. The convention proper was preceded by an informal council of workers, in which there were, brief discussions of questions pertaining to the good of the work—as, University Extension, City Federation, Parliamentary Drill, Limited Clubs, etc. The president in her annual address referred to the fact that there are only two larger State Federations than the Iowa Federation. Those of New York and Illinois. She recommended that the officers be elected at different times, and that some of the members on all standing committees be retained at each re-election of these committees. She further recommended that different women be sent to recurring conventions that all may have a chance to go, see, and learn. As usual the question of reports from clubs came up, and it was decided, for want of time, to omit them. As usual many regretted this necessity, but this is one of the problems which it seems impossible to solve satisfactorily, and which confronts each state federation in turn. The Reciprocity Bureau reported this department as of special value to the smaller clubs. The program proper was one of great practical value; the addresses and discussions were conspicuous by the absence of theorizing, and at the convention they carried a conviction that the women knew from experience whereof they spoke.

The great literary event of this convention was the address by Octave Thanet (Miss Alice French) who spoke on "The Perils and Opportunities of Club Women" with special reference to the social evolution or revolution which she predicted the future held. The

choice of such a subject by a woman known for her literary attainments was a surprise to nearly every one who heard her, and her treatment of it was still more surprising, but when it is known that she belongs to a family of iron manufacturers and has been brought up in the atmosphere of economic problems, hearing business discussed all her life, it is easy to understand and also, it explains why the stories abound in labor situations. She is a sincere believer in the power of organized women as a conservative force in the dangers which are threatening the social situations today.

Mrs. Adeline M. Payne, of Nevada, made a decided hit in her sketch of "The Modern Martha," and Mrs. B. M. Stoutenborough, of Nebraska, paid a glowing tribute to "A Mother's Influence."

The new officers of this Federation are Mrs. Mabel Dixon-Hutchison, of Ottumwa, president; Mrs. J. T. Illick, vice president; Miss Grace Harsh, of Creston, recording secretary; Mrs. Alice C. Baily, of Des Moines, corresponding secretary; Miss Dodge, of Council Bluffs, treasurer; Mrs. Warren Gorst, auditor.

The new officers had nearly all served in some capacity, as officers or on standing committees, and began their duties at once by holding a board meeting before leaving for home.

[The Courier is under obligations to Mrs. H. M. Towner, state chairman for Iowa, for an Iowa paper containing accounts of the convention, and to Mrs. Stoutenborough, of Platteville, for an account of Octave Thanet's address, some extracts from which follow:]

"The Federation of Women's clubs is much in the position of Aladdin after he had first polished his lamp—frightened at their own success; they don't as yet quite know what to do with their tremendous power. Women of wealth and position, intellect, and trained ability to use their wits to the very maximum of value, constitute this new and untried dynamic force. The significant feature of it is an organized force. The difference between organized and unorganized force is the difference between powder and shot scattered on the ground and the same material properly loaded in the cartridge. There is a great and terrible problem before us; there is impending either an industrial revolution or an industrial evolution. For a long time those who dread and those who welcome this change have seen the shadow on the dial. The working man long ago discovered that he was helpless in his individual capacity, and he organized and in his unions he knows his strength. Now the employer has learned the same lesson and has ceased fighting his competitor in relentless trade warfare, when his motto was as David Harum's—'Do the other man as he would do you, and do him first.'"

"Cut-throat competition has had its natural consequence and inevitable reaction. Last year it was trusts and this year it is combines. Newspapers and the public do not distinguish between them, but there is a vital difference. A trust is made up of a number of distinct

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