

She Leads Millionaires' Wives to Listen to Birds at 5 A.M.

By FRANCES L. GARSIDE



GLADYS GORDON FRY

birds. Enroute North she stops at popular hotels, and everyone knows what the clientele of these fashionable hotels is like: Men who have made their money, and find nothing to interest them beyond an occasional game of golf; women, who have grown lazy with riches and who sit on the porch and rock and rock and rock, beating to the rocks any guest whose conduct does not please them. They are deteriorating in doing it; but "what," they might ask, "can we do? We must do something to amuse us while here taking the rest cure."

Then one day the pretty Little Bird Lady of Montclair arrives, and among these men and women who are tired of self and of each other she finds her pupils.

She is a novelty. This alone attracts in the beginning. Love for the little feathered friends, which her pupils learn to know for the first time in their lives, holds that interest and cements it into a protecting and enduring love in the end.

Mrs. Fry asks the guests to meet her on the front porch the next morning at five. They are aghast; they do not get up till ten! But ten would not do; they must be there by five. And inspired by the novelty of seeing the sun rise, and for fear some other woman will go and have a better time than they have lying in bed, they decide to go. "Just once," they say; they are the first on the porch every morning after.

When Mrs. Fry starts off toward the woods it is with so many men and women following her she looks like a modernized and most attractive Pied Piper. They follow her across the meadow, up the hill, into a little stretch of woods, and gather around, an eager and excited group, while she explains what bird it is that is making that sweet, plaintive call, and the name of the bit of gold on the bough of the tree; and listen, now, let's be quiet a moment, and we will hear his morning song.

Mrs. Fry knows birds as familiarly as all women know bargains and buttons; she has traveled with them with the approach of the seasons from Florida to Maine; she knows the name of every bird that flies from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific, and she interprets that knowledge in language her pupils easily understand.

But when you come to think about it, there are few technical phrases in connection with birds; less than with any other of God's outdoor creatures. Even scientists seem to have known that to tack a ten-syllabled word onto a little bit of feathers and song

no bigger than your thumb would be too incongruous. The guests return to the hotel with an awakened interest and a better appetite. Somehow, for the rest of the day, the caprices of some pretty widow in the house are less absorbing; all minds are on birds, and this is good for them. The second morning the number who trail their little guide to the haunts of the birds is doubled. In a few days those who can ride follow her on horseback to woody spots more remote.

Birds, trees, wild flowers and foliage, better health, new interests in life, no more boredom, a love for all nature, and a protective interest awakened; Mrs. Fry claims to be no missionary, but one can plainly see that unconsciously her pupils are lining themselves up with those who regard a dead bird for millinery purposes as a symbol of barbarism.

When winter comes, and those who look out-of-doors see only ice and snow, and fail to take note of the animated bits of feathers hopping around in search of food, Mrs. Fry conducts classes of students to the woods and makes them acquainted with the birds whose love for our section is not of the fair weather variety.

It is an everyday sight in winter to find her in Central Park, New York, seated on a rock with a group of eager-eyed children surrounding her. They have colored cards in their hands, and as they trace points of resemblance between the pictures and the inquisitive birds perched so deliciously near, they, like the women in the hotels, are learning more than birds. There is a spiritual growth in a class like this of which no human being can take measure.

"I have always loved birds," said Mrs. Fry. "I hear often of the advantage of life in a metropolis for a child, and I want to ask what advantages there are in a city that can equal those in rural life? To be brought up without a bird in the neighborhood seems tragic to me. I was brought up under trees that seemed, on a bright morning, fairly filled with birds, so loud were their morning songs, and I learned to name them before I knew the difference between straight up and down 'I' and the moon-faced 'O' in the alphabet.

"I feel that in teaching folks about the birds, I am making friends for the birds. It is not a lucrative profession. That has not troubled me. I make enough from my hotel classes to pay my expenses. I count on the credit side of my accounts the interest I am awakening in my feathered friends."

"Go Study Seven Years," Said Hammerstein—She Did!

JUST a few years ago Kitty Beale was a laughing and happy little lass playing ring-around-the-rosie, hop-scotch, shinney, marbles, hide-and-go-seek, or rolling a big wooden hoop around the streets of the neighborhood in which she lived in Washington.

Today, at the age of twenty-three, this same little girl, not so very much taller than she was then, is a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company, of New York. Her contract calls for a larger salary per week than is received by either David Franklin Houston, the new Secretary of the Treasury, or Thomas Riley Marshall, Vice President of the United States.

It was sheer pluck and downright determination that enabled this Washington girl to climb up the rungs of the ladder of operatic fame so quickly and successfully.

Miss Beale says she has been singing ever since she can remember, but it was not until she had reached her fifteenth birthday that she fully made up her mind to make a never-say-die effort to reach the happy heights of success where such well-known song-birds as the Farrars, Gardens and Tetrzzinis were perching so brilliantly.

"When I was fifteen," she said, "I got the impression that the late Oscar Hammerstein, who was then one of America's greatest impressarios, could tell me how to go about attaining my great desire. Despite parental and kinsfolk objection to my launching upon a singing career, I slipped over to New York one day and called upon Mr. Hammerstein and told him all about my big, wonderful operatic dreams. He was such a dear old gentleman! I felt quite at home the moment I saw him, because he was contentedly puffing away on a monster black cigar just exactly like the ones I had seen 'Uncle Joe' Cannon enjoying as he strolled about the streets of Washington. Mr. Hammerstein, who was then conducting the old Victoria theater, took me out on the stage at the close of the matinee, and seating himself in a box told me to go ahead and 'do my prettiest.' I had never been on a real stage before, and I assure you I felt weak, wobbly and lonesome. I sang the aria from Tosca.

"Imagine my delight, if you can, when he looked down at me with a pleased smile and asked me to sing something more. I sang Boheme. He then took me to his little cubbyhole of an office and sent me sailing

away up among the beautiful pink and blue clouds by telling me that I had a most promising voice and advising me to go to Florence and study with Lombardi, laconically adding that if I studied hard every day for seven years that I would surely win satisfactory success. With happiness surging through every fiber of my body, I rushed back to Washington on the first train and told my parents what I was going to do.

Somehow, father failed to join in my enthusiasm to any appreciable extent, and as a result, for the ensuing six months it was my daily custom to weep in the soup, and every now and then weep copiously between soups. Finally Daddy gave his consent. Don't tell me that weeping won't win! I know better! Back I hurried to Mr. Hammerstein and told him I was ready to go to his friend Lombardi in Italy. The great manager looked sad. He chokingly told me that during the six months I had been weeping and wailing the great Lombardi had passed on. But he quickly waived the impending clouds away by consoling me with the statement that there were now just as good teachers in America as there were in Europe.

"I went to work the very next day and never loafed a single minute for seven long, wonderful years. I introduced myself to a sunrise every morning during those years and kept working until long after the sun dodged behind the hills each night.

"I am not the least bit superstitious, but nevertheless I thought it might be a good idea to be on the safe side, and therefore never permitted a good luck superstition of any kind to get by me. My room was filled with horseshoes picked up in all sections of Manhattan Island. Once I found a horseshoe in the subway; I'm till wondering how it got there. Never did I pass a pin, button or hairpin. Always did I religiously tear off a tiny piece of the upper right hand corner of every piece of paper money that passed through my hands. That's right now, go ahead and laugh if you want to, but just the same on the very last day of my seven years of study I secured an engagement with the Metropolitan Opera Company."

Miss Beale has appeared in these Italian, French and English operas, "World's Premier of Suor Angelica," Puccini's latest opera; "La Reigne Fiammette," and "Shanewis."

In reply to the query as to whether she was fright-



KITTY BEALE

ened upon her first appearance, the little Washington warbler smilingly replied, "Well, I was glad my first part called for long skirts, because I know my knees outplayed the drums."

In musical circles Miss Beale is frequently referred to as a Mary Garden with a coloratura voice.