

SOME NOTED MEN AND WOMEN

By James W. Morrissey

Manager and Impresario

Edited by J. HERBERT WELCH

THE Emperor Will Arrive To-day." This head-line, in a newspaper propped up before me on the breakfast table, caught my eye, and I read it eagerly, because I instantly realized that an Emperor was just the man to help me in a venture I had on hand.

It was in Philadelphia in Centennial days. For several days I had been much engrossed in preparations for what I had named a "Grand Musical Congress," a series of three concerts for which a number of the leading vocalists and instrumentalists of America had been engaged. It was a private enterprise, largely my own. My artists were the most expensive in the land, and this meant that I had obligated myself to the payment of a lot of money.

The opening had been announced for the next Monday night, and I was looking forward to it rather nervously. There were moments when I wondered whether, after all, the good people of Philadelphia and the strangers within the gates would favor us with their dollars in sufficient numbers to lift the income above the outlay. I never before had undertaken so large an enterprise, and to be frank I was experiencing some of the symptoms of financial stage-fright. This was why I was so interested in the coming of the Emperor Dom Pedro of Brazil. I felt that he could be of use to me.

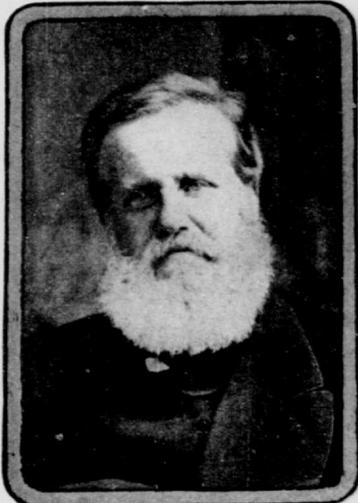
With considerable pomp he and the Empress arrived at the Continental Hotel. Indeed, when they approached the street was jammed with American citizens eager for a glimpse of royalty. I had fitted an office within the portals for the transaction of the business of my concerts, and here I devoted at least an hour that afternoon to the task of drawing up a proper note informing his majesty how honored my artists and I should feel if he would accept a box for the opening concert. I did not forget to add that he would hear the best music that America could produce, and that we should be delighted, in the event of his presence, to render the national hymn of his country.

This communication I presented to a glittering attaché outside the door of the Emperor's suite, and awaited the answer with much anxiety. In a little while the gentleman-in-waiting handed it to me with a sweeping bow, which I returned in kind, except that I cut it rather short in my haste to see what his majesty had to say.

At a single glance I devoured the words, which were to the effect that the Emperor and Empress were pleased to accept Mr. Morrissey's invitation to hear the great lyric artists of the United States. In my sudden joy I could have slapped on the back the dignitary in gold lace, but I merely bowed again and tucked my epistle from an Emperor in my safest pocket.

It was desirable, of course, that the newspapers know of this, so I lost no time in despatching a messenger to the strongholds of the press, with the information that Mr. Morrissey would be pleased to receive its representatives. The reporters came, and were duly impressed. As may be imagined, I was in high feather. My doubts had disappeared. With royalty present at my concert, I knew that the people would not remain away.

On Sunday night I retired betimes, so as to be in the best form for the greatest day my career had yet seen. I already had made arrangements for a lavish decoration of the theater in the colors of Brazil. All day men and women filed past the box-office window buying tickets for the opening concert, and few of them neglected to ask if the Emperor and



Dom Pedro, Emperor of Brazil

Empress surely would be in evidence.

There were neither seats nor standing room for a quarter of the throng that stormed about the doors that night. The police had their hands full in clearing a way for the carriages of the Emperor's party. While the orchestra was playing the opening number I surveyed the house. Reaching to the roof was a sea of faces. The body of the theater was brilliant with beautiful women in gorgeous gowns and flashing gems, and as a huge frame for this dazzling picture there were the intermingled flags and bunting of Brazil and the United States. The boxes stood forth resplendent. In the lower one on the right-hand side sat the Emperor and the Empress, surrounded by an array of personages in glistening uniforms.

Naturally, I was proud of this culmination of my weeks of toil and worry. It was for me one of those

happy moments that sometimes come as the fruit of long-continued effort. For the concert itself I had no fears, for Clara Louise Kellogg, Annie Louise Cary, Signor Pasquale Brignoli, Julie Rivé King, Franz Remmert and others of hardly less note, the flower of the musical genius of the United States, were even then in their dressing-rooms, keyed up for the effort of their lives.

The concert was well under way, and my artists were being received with tumultuous applause, when one of the attachés of the Emperor's retinue presented himself to me. He handed me a note, remarking: "From his majesty." "The Emperor desires to know," it read, "if it would not be possible to change the program from the Chopin waltzes to the Liszt Rhapsody No. 2, which is a special favorite of his."

Now, it is no light thing to make changes in the middle of a concert. The artists and the orchestra may not be prepared for a substitution, and the manager must consider the people in the house, who may have come to hear the selection which he eliminates. Therefore I answered hesitatingly that I should have to ask Rivé King if she could play the rhapsody on so short a notice. The attaché waited while I went to put the question to her.

"Indeed, I can play the rhapsody!" she exclaimed



Annie Louise Cary



Clara Louise Kellogg

with enthusiasm. "Why, I was a pupil of Liszt in Germany, and I love above all else to play his music. I must say that the Emperor has excellent taste."

I returned to the envoy with the assurance that Madam King would be delighted to gratify his majesty, and that she too thought that the rhapsody was one of the most beautiful pieces of music ever written. "I should like exceedingly," I remarked, "to have his majesty's note read from the stage. Do you think that his permission could be obtained?"

"I am sure he would have no objection," answered the attaché. "It is not necessary to ask him. I will authorize it in his name."

And so the note was read, and Madam King played

the rhapsody as, I believe, she never had before. The Emperor and Empress beamed with gratification, and applauded with all the fervor of ordinary music-lovers. When the last strains of her music were dying away I was asked to come to the royal box to be presented to their majesties. I had prepared myself, when told that this honor awaited me, for an ordeal; but found it far otherwise. Both the Emperor and Empress were profuse with compliments, and chatted in an easy manner that caused me at once to forget that I was not conversing with merely a cultivated couple who had a deep love and knowledge of the world's best music.

Dom Pedro told me that he was perfectly familiar with the names of my principal artists, and on the strength of this, with no idea as to whether it was in accordance with royal etiquette, I invited him to the green-room. He accepted with alacrity, and we held a little levee behind the scenes. That night I had my artists and some other guests, among whom was the late George W. Childs, to supper. There was much sparkling conversation; but through it all a single phrase kept running through my mind. It was: "Long live the Emperor!"

I was still in my room the next morning when a bell-boy brought me word that one of his majesty's retinue was waiting for me in the parlor. Full of curiosity as to what his mission might be, I hurried down. Would Mr. Morrissey accompany him at once to the Emperor? he asked me. Mr. Morrissey certainly would. His majesty greeted me with extended hand, again complimented me on the success of the concert, and after a brief interval of general conversation inquired:

"Do you think, Mr. Morrissey, that I would be recognized if I should go out on the streets on foot?"

"If you will pardon me for saying so," I answered, surveying him, "you do not appear very differently, in that frock-coat, from just a prosperous American citizen. Once away from the hotel, I am sure that you would not be generally recognized."

"Good!" he exclaimed. "The truth is, I am so hedged about by wearying formalities in my own country that I am eager to seize any opportunity to get away from them, to get a breath of real liberty. I desire much to observe the life of the great city. Will you not walk out with me?"

I expressed my great pleasure at being able to serve him, and in a few minutes we were in the throng of pedestrians on the street. With the exception of some acquaintances of mine, no one noticed us.

"I get so little of this freedom!" exclaimed the Emperor with an exultant laugh as we dodged a truck in crossing Broad-st. He told me that he would enjoy selecting an American piano for the apartments of the Empress in the palace at Rio Janeiro, and so we visited some sale-rooms, in only one of which his identity was discovered. He listened critically to the tone of a number of pianos, but none of them seemed to satisfy him.

"They are fine instruments," he remarked after we had come out of one of the establishments; "but none

of them pleases me so much as that which Madam King used last night. Aside from the magnificent playing, it seemed to me to possess a brilliancy and responsiveness which were remarkable. Could it not be purchased for me?"

"Most assuredly," I answered. "If you say so, I shall to-day arrange with your secretary concerning it."

Thus it was that the fine instrument which I had provided for Rivé King was shipped to the royal palace in Brazil.

In the course of our conversation that morning his majesty told me that the Empress had brought from South America a young girl named Esmeralda Cervantes, who was considered Brazil's best harpist.

"Would she not play at one of the concerts?" I quickly asked, on fire with this new idea. "The people of Philadelphia would be delighted to hear her."

His majesty seemed pleased at the suggestion, and replied that it might be arranged. He said he would send me word that afternoon. He also informed me

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Pasquale Brignoli