

IN THE WORLD OF MUSIC

FRANCIS HUMPERDINCK'S "KÖNIGSKINDER"

To Be Produced at the Metropolitan Opera House on Wednesday Night. A New Opera Made Out of an Old Play of the Amiability of Walter Damrosch.

For information regarding the forthcoming production of "Königskinder" at the Metropolitan Opera House reaches us to-day it is in spite of the waning apathy of the publishers of the work. For more than a week past it has been impossible for any one to obtain a score of the opera, and the English libretto at the opera house, a man of energy, has been sitting with hands clasped and head bowed, for the simple reason that he could not procure any information of any kind to deliver to newspapers.

It was all so different when "The Girl of the Golden West" was in the making. There was an ocean of mud matter rolling through all the channels of publicity. Every day something "leaked out" about the new and wonderful creation of the genius brain of the master craftsman of Italian opera. The Milan newspapers were crowded with interviews. It is expected that the same of the editions which fell like thunderbolts upon the offices of New York papers were Puccini extras.

The local Italian newspapers were also clamoring with the glad tidings of the progress of the score. Every time that Puccini flung another quarter note at the double basses, the presses were started again so that the world might share the general happiness. And then to think now treacherous they were after all! Well informed among those sufficiently well informed to read Italian papers that most of them, particularly the adored Puccini in the pillory and all because he has refused to be the same old Puccini. It is reported that there have even been angry murmurs about "una granda porcheria." A "porcheria," polite reader, is one of those things about which we think but of which we are not in the habit of speaking. The Germans, who are a plain spoken people, call it a "schweinen," and do not hesitate to talk pretty freely about it. Perhaps we Americans would content ourselves with exclaiming that it was "rubbish," but that is not just what the artistic Italians mean when they say "porcheria," or the idealistic Germans when they grant "schweinen."

Neither would any American of open mind declare that the "Girl of the Golden West" was rubbish, because it is nothing of the sort. But that the Italians would find fault with it because it was not the kind of Puccini to which they were accustomed was inevitable.

This, however, has nothing to do with the matter referred to in the opening sentences of this series. Although it has been impossible to get any information from the official sources at the opera house, some has been acquired elsewhere. "Königskinder" is a German fairy tale in three acts by "Ernst Rosmer" (Elsa Barnstein). It was produced, with music by Engelbert Humperdinck in Munich, January 23, 1897. The chief actors were Elsa Brunner and Herr Redner. Elsa Barnstein, the author, is a daughter of Heinrich Porges, conductor and composer, who was a friend of Wagner and Liszt. He wrote many papers in ardent advocacy of the theories of Wagner. Once he penned a study of "Tristan und Isolde" with the result that he was forthwith summoned to Munich by the mad King Ludwig.

The daughter intended her play to be accepted as profoundly symbolic. This is most grateful to all critics, since it provides them with material for much comment overwhelmingly learned in appearance. We shall hear much about this symbolism before this blushing Humperdinck goes back to Berlin. It is by no means improbable that something may be said about it even in this place.

Mr. Humperdinck composed the music to the play in 1895-96. The introductions to Acts 2 and 3 were produced at a concert of the Bach Society in Heidelberg on June 2, 1896. Mr. Humperdinck conducted. These pieces were also performed in Frankfurt, Berlin and Leipzig before the play was produced.

At the Montauk Theatre, Brooklyn, on November 22, 1896, at a concert of the Brooklyn Sauerbrunn, conducted by Leins Koernig, the music was produced. It was played. Both introductions were given in Boston by the local symphony orchestra under the baton of Emil Paur on December 26, 1896. The play was produced in German at the Irving Place Theatre on April 29, 1898. The principal actors were Agnes Sorma and Rudolph Christians. The manager was Heinrich Conried.

The play was brought forward in English at the Herald Square Theatre on November 3, 1902. Martin Harvey, the English actor, impersonated the King's son and Mrs. Harvey the goose girl. This English version was by F. Langbridge and A. H. Irving, especially prepared for the approaching production at the Metropolitan, is from the artistic pen of Charles Henry Meltzer.

Mr. Humperdinck wrote a programme note for the introduction to the third act to be used of course when the piece is performed in concert. It reads thus: "The two royal children in their flight, sick, hungry, cold, look for shelter. Round about is a dreary and cold winter landscape. Sorrowful recollections of the former days of their short happiness fill the wanderers with a new longing to live. In vain! They are doomed to destruction. In vain! They are still alive in the song that the faithful minstrel sang to them as he stood near them, joined in love, married and frozen in the winter snow."

This little programme note gives us some insight into the nature of the story, which at greater length runs thus: The son of a king goes out into the wide world to seek adventures. In the forest of Hella in the hut of a crafty old witch he finds a goose girl, who is (perhaps) a princess held under the spell of enchantment. He promptly falls in love with her, and she, who has never before seen a handsome youth, returns his passion. They have a charming scene in which they struggle for a wreath of white flowers which she has been wearing on her head. It is broken in the struggle and she weeps for that it can never be made whole again. He offers his crown in exchange, but she desires only his love.

They try to run away together, but the enchantment prevents them. The witch goes off not well pleased, and the goose girl bewails his departure. Then some fiddler, a broom maker and a wood chopper to ask the witch to tell the people of Hella where they may find a king. Only the fiddler understands her answer, which is in effect that whoever enters the city gate after the stroke of twelve on the next day shall be the king. The fiddler recognizes the goose girl as a

royal maid and takes her away. You have to conjecture whether she is really an enchanted princess or just a plain goose girl with a princely soul.

In the second act the people of Hella are waiting in their houses for a king. The prince has come to them, but they have put him to rest as a wanderer. Only the child of the broom maker has recognized him as a king's son. At the appointed time the city gates open and in walks the goose girl, who rushes into the arms of the prince.

But the people jeer at them and are wroth that the witch should have played them such a joke. They drive the two royal children out of their city.

The third act informs us that the city of Hella has been set by the ears. However, the fiddler and some children, among them the daughter of the broom maker, search in the forest for the missing prince. The prince, however, has been taken to the hut where he has his mother. More symbolism. It was a beautiful spring time, but now all is buried in the snows. The wood cutter is there and the prince gives him his royal crown for a loaf of bread. This is a poisoned loaf left by the witch. When the fiddler arrives he finds the two king's children "wrapped in one another's arms and silent in a last embrace."

Then he sings his last song, the song of the one who knew their true quality and who is filled with passionate sorrow for their fate. When the play was first given in Germany it was violently assailed by some declared that the drama was interesting. This information is pertinent and timely and of course surprising, and is accordingly here repeated. It is not like the melodramatic music "Gegen das Melodram" was the war cry of one party. There were also defenders. When the drama was produced in this town there was a large and enjoyable absence of all pother over it.

However, Mr. Humperdinck, far from being discouraged by the wrath of some of the German critics, dwelt with fondness on the ideas which he had conceived as musical illustrations of the drama and at length came to believe that they ought to be extended into an opera. He wrote much more music, built up and developed the descriptive parts, wrote the vocal parts and expanded the original germs into what is practically a new work. The original play has of course been reconstructed in text somewhat. This was made necessary by the requirements of lyric drama. It will be seen, therefore, that the subject is of a type, and different from that to which the school of "verists" as they are called adhere. The composers of contemporary Italy appear to believe that the best lyric material is that which is found in the realistic drama. Mr. Humperdinck, on the other hand, shows a growing predilection for the idealistic.

The demeanor of the operatic public in the presence of a work of this type will be interesting. The citizens of Hella were people of the opera performances, people without ideals and without aspirations, except such as can be quelled at market prices. They could not comprehend the royalty of persons who did not wear crowns. The question now is whether the operatic public will also fail to comprehend it.

But the tunes are very pretty and the scenery is picturesque. Of course there are highly objectionable. But let us wait and see. Is there any reason why passages should be any more objectionable than others?

At a very distinguished whitewashing party a few nights ago Walter Damrosch, conductor of the Symphony Orchestra, director and said "I take off my hat to Arthur Wythorn Ames for the mercurial zeal, gentleness, intelligence, firmness and courtesy with which he has accomplished so much. The theatre has at last come into its own. The opera has been expelled. The echo, that mysterious bugbear of the architect, has been followed to its lair and manfully strangled. The acoustics now are excellent, and it is possible to hear the bugbear voice clearly and distinctly in any part of the house."

Every one must have been glad that Mr. Damrosch took off his hat because he has an imposing dome of thought which is utterly lost in the prosa shadows of a top hat. It was one of the finest of all possible demonstrations of the smooth operation of the machinery within the dome that Mr. Damrosch passed the acoustics and noted that the human voice was at last audible.

How skillfully he ended reference to his own or other, whose names are happily omitted in the dead and dusty recesses of the sepulchral auditorium in Central Park West.

How does the public find out that a performance which has not yet taken place is going to be of an inferior order? Somehow it seems to do so at times. When THE SUN's chronicler of musical doings wended his way toward the Metropolitan Opera House on Thursday night and was besieged by speculators offering five dollar seats for two he knew that the performance was not going to be one of high distinction, for in some way the public had found it out and refused to be present.

That was the night when "Lohengrin" was substituted for "Tristan und Isolde." The early work of Wagner had been given already and was supposedly in a state of preparation. As matter of fact it was not. The comments made on the morning after the representation were not intended to do more than record the facts of the change and of the first appearance this season of Carl Gott.

It may, however, not be amiss to add to-day that it would be difficult to recall a more heavy, prosaic, stupid and un-musical performance of "Lohengrin" than that of last Thursday night. "Lohengrin" has for several years enjoyed the distinction of being the most popular opera in the world, but it would not require many such interpretations as that of Thursday evening to put it to sleep.

It was in a restaurant a few evenings ago while a tin plate orchestra was disturbing the atmosphere of a man called a waiter and said: "Look here, do you always have your hand play this infernal funeral music? Why can't they give us something lively?" At that moment the orchestra was in the midst of the can-can in Offenbach's "Orfée aux Enfers."

W. J. HENDERSON.

Corn in a Cluster.

From the Mount Olivet Tribune Democrat. John S. Massey of Mitchell's Mills brought to our office one of the most peculiar freaks of nature we have ever seen. It consisted of a corn cluster in one, there being one main or central ear, the remaining seven ears forming a circle around the central ear. The grains are unusually large and well developed.

"THE WHITE WOMAN OF THE GENESSEE" Statue of Mary Jemison Recently Dedicated in the Park Near Portage, N. Y., Given to the State by the Late W. P. Letchworth.



BRONZE STATUE OF MARY JEMISON IN LETCHWORTH PARK. (H. K. BUSH-BROWN, SCULPTOR.)

Here are pictures of the statue of Mary Jemison, "The White Woman of the Genessee," executed by H. K. Bush-Brown of Washington for the Park at Portage, N. Y., given to the State by the late W. P. Letchworth. The statue was dedicated recently.

The story of Mary Jemison is that she was captured by Indians near what is now Gettysburg, Pa., and adopted by a Seneca family. She was married to a Seneca Indian in girlhood and was renamed Ah-gewah-wah.

The sculptor has depicted her in Indian garb, with her baby strapped on her back in a primitive fashion, on the long march to the Genessee River accompanied by her foster relatives.

The backless dress, leggings and moccasins lend themselves readily to sculptural treatment. The heroic Anglo-Saxon race has been carefully emphasized, and even the baby's small countenance is evidently but half redskin. Mary Jemison died at the age of 91, having spent the greater part of her life among the Seneca Indians. She was the owner at one time of extensive lands along the Genessee.

The statue is in bronze, and was the gift of Mr. Letchworth. It is placed in the Central House grounds, where her body was interred as the original grave in the mission cemetery near Buffalo was threatened by the advance of modern improvements.

Mr. Ludewig Marim will be the soloist and Kurt Scheller will be the piano.

Volodya Mers, pianist, will be the soloist at the next pair of concerts given in the Stuyvesant Hotel, New York, by the Damrosch quintet, at the New Theatre on the afternoon of January 6 and 8. On both these occasions she will play the first two concertos. The programme in other respects, however, will be different. That of Friday afternoon will include Brahms's fourth symphony and compositions by Liszt and Johann Strauss. On Saturday afternoon the first two concertos will appear. Volodya Mers, pianist, will be the soloist at the next pair of concerts given in the Stuyvesant Hotel, New York, by the Damrosch quintet, at the New Theatre on the afternoon of January 6 and 8.

At the third concert of the Russian Symphony Orchestra to be given in Carnegie Hall on Thursday evening, January 12, at 8 o'clock and Saturday afternoon, January 14, at 2:30 o'clock. At both of these concerts the soloist will be the Russian pianist, Volodya Mers, who has just appeared in New York. There will of course be an entirely different programme for each evening. Mr. Elman playing different concertos.

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The Olive Mount Quartet will give two afternoon concerts this season at Mendelssohn Hall in addition to the evening series. The first concert will be Wednesday afternoon, January 5, at 4 o'clock. The second concert will be Thursday afternoon, January 12, at 4 o'clock. The programme for the first concert will be: Mendelssohn's "Liedersong" for voice and piano, assisted by Miss Waldrop at the piano, will give his first New York recital in Mendelssohn Hall on Wednesday afternoon, January 5, at 4 o'clock. This occasion the singer will be heard in several compositions new to this country, which were secured by him during his recent stay in Europe.

Perceval Busoni, who sailed for America on December 21 aboard the Oceanic, is due to arrive in this city next Wednesday. He is known as a very bad sailor and for that reason has planned to come sufficiently early so that he might thoroughly recover from the effects of the sea voyage and be in the best possible condition for his opening appearance on the evening of January 9, at Carnegie Hall, when he will play a recital.

The second concert of the series of three to be given this season at Cooper Union by the Marim Quartet will take place on Thursday evening, January 5, at 8 o'clock. Ludewig Marim has selected as the soloist for the evening series, the first concert of the series, which will be given on Wednesday afternoon, January 5, at 4 o'clock.

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TWO CLEMENTINES IN LONDON

H. B. IRVING IN A PLAY MADE FROM MASON'S NOVEL.

George Edwardes's latest production "Not Well Received Quick Action Plays at Music Halls An Ibsen Play and "Edipus Rex" After Christmas.

London, Dec. 17.—On Wednesday evening H. B. Irving opened at the Queen's Theatre in "Princess Clementina," a dramatization of A. E. W. Mason's novel "Clementina" made by the author and George Freydl. "Princess Clementina" has lost all the vigor, charm and humor which made the novel delightful. As a play it is distinctly dull and its chances of success are small.

The plot follows that of the book closely. Charles Wogan, a young Irishman, goes to rescue the Princess Clementina from her Austrian prison and brings her to James Secord, the pretender, who is to marry her. Wogan falls in love with his Princess as they travel half way across a continent together and she with him. Both are loyal to the King and sacrifice their love to him.

Mr. Irving is a finished actor but he cannot portray dashing Irishmen, that is quite certain. He made no attempt at a brogue or a dash and he looked undeniably plain and unattractive. The love scenes he played with charm and poetic fervor, but here his Clementina, in the person of Miss Stella Patrick Campbell, quite failed him, for she was amateurish.

There are two Irvings acting at West End theatres now and two plays dealing with Clementines, for "Decorating Clementina" is still struggling along and Lawrence Irving is playing "The Unwritten Law" to empty houses. All of which is very confusing to provincial theatre-goers up in town for a Christmas treat.

At the Gaiety Theatre last Saturday evening George Edwardes produced "The Captain of the School," a so-called farcical comedy by Judge Parry and Frederick Monillo. At Christmas time even dramatic critics forgive much, but it would require the combined amiability of spirit of a dozen Christmases to overlook the faults of "The Captain of the School," and the usually mild critics of the London press slated Judge Parry's latest dramatic venture as a piece of airy which would not interest the schoolboy or his dad.

Pom Brand, the captain of Birkbeck College, takes advantage of a rehearsal of "Homes and Juliet" to make love to the headmaster's daughter. A classmate and a schoolmaster report his behavior to the head and the captain is expelled, but not before he punishes the master and the classmate.

By the aid of a wig and side whiskers that would not really deceive a baby Pom comes back to school in the next act, impersonating his uncle, a professor of anatomy, who is engaged to the head's sister but has not seen her for years and is expected on a visit. As the professor of anatomy the captain indulges in much fooling of a venerable kind.

The real professor turns up in due course, but is locked in a bedroom by the captain and some schoolboy confederates so that he cannot attend the breakfast dinner, where his dutiful nephew still in character has all sorts of a good time, till the uncle who has draped his legs in a tablecloth appears on the scene. Explanations follow and the captain is eventually forgiven and taken back into favor.

The fact that the Coliseum is being used for allowing Seymour Hicks to appear in a version of "Richard Third" which was too long to come under music hall restrictions, is interesting all the theatrical profession. The Coliseum management puts the blame entirely on Mr. Hicks, as according to his contract, the play was to be of the legal length only.

James Welch made his first appearance more regularly and slept during the day.

He finished the opera in September and then set to work on its orchestration, which took him over two months to complete. He orchestrated over 700 pages by hand and worked steadily from six to seven hours daily without a break.

Next month Signor Mascagni will leave Rome for New York, where "Ysobel" will be produced for the first time on any stage at the New Theatre.

Mascagni originally intended "Ysobel" to be played by an orchestra of at least 120 musicians, but later he reduced the orchestra to a much smaller number.

The main pieces of the music consist of three, the song of the hawk in the first act, the intermezzo in the second and the duo of "Ysobel" and "Polo" in the third act. "Ysobel" is the only modern opera with only one love duet.

Mascagni hopes that "Ysobel" will prove as great a success as "Cavalleria," if not he says he will not compose more operas but will write symphonical compositions.

MASCAGNI'S NEW OPERA

"Ysobel" to Be Produced for the First Time in New York This Winter.

Rome, Dec. 14.—Signor Pietro Mascagni says that music cannot be described, but must be heard, and when asked to talk about his new opera, "Ysobel," he sits at the piano or takes up a violin and plays it.

The composer has taken about two years to write "Ysobel." Last spring he disappeared from Rome and since then he has been hard at work first at Castel Armano near Piacenza in the hills of his birth, Luigi Illica, and later in a secluded hotel at Milan, where no one was likely to disturb him.

Mascagni commences at night. He works as a rule from midnight until 8 in the morning, and when he first started to write his new opera he was in Rome, where he was director of the Costanzi Theatre, he was so taken up with his work that often for several days running he did not sleep at all. After he left Rome he worked

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in a music hall on Monday evening when he opened at the Coliseum in a sketch called "The Man in the Street," in which he represents a character study of an elderly rogue, cunning with the slyness which comes after years of fighting for one's own in the gutter. The sketch emanated from the pen of Louis S. Parker, but both are entirely due to Mr. Welch, for his impersonation made the success of the piece.

Herbert Sleath is another recruit to vaudeville ranks. He has a sketch at the Hippodrome which is a sort of mélange of "The White Man," "Blanco Posnet," etc. It is called "The Horse Thief" and has thirty persons in its cast. Mr. Sleath plays the he who "takes upon himself a crime he has not committed and narrowly escapes being lynched. The sketch has been bottled down to music hall length and is played at lightning speed.

F. C. Whitney has resolved to take the Old Waldorf Theatre, now known as the Strand. Its career so far has been a series of failures. "The Man from Mexico" had the longest life of any piece ever produced there, as it has almost reached 100 performances. Mr. Whitney is not afraid of this record, however, and has taken over in March.

The youngest actress-manageress in London now is Miss Phyllis Beadon, who is to open the Court Theatre next week with "A Poster Pantomime" in which she takes leading part. Should the pantomime be a success she is to take it on a long provincial tour.

Sir Arthur Pinero is to come into the acting and dramatists with a new play which Charles Frohman will produce at the Comedy Theatre early in January. "Preserving Mr. Pantomime" is the title of the proposed farce. Sir Arthur describes it as "a comedy play in four acts." George Alexander has produced the last three works of Sir Arthur Pinero and Mr. Frohman is rather pleased to have secured this latest effort.

Herbert Trench promises many good things in dramatic fare after Christmas. He will revert to his early plan and make of "The Physiology of Taste" a farce. After a six weeks run of "The Blue Bird" Mr. Trench will produce "All That Matters" by Charles McVey, which is a study of "The Desert Isle." Following that he will produce "The Physiology of Taste" either "Baldwin," his latest comedy, or the dramatization of "Rippa," on which he and H. G. Wells are now working. Then Mr. Trench will produce "The Physiology of Taste" at the London stage, and after that a version of the "Edipus Rex" of Sophocles, which the censor has agreed to allow. The version has been made by Prof. Gilbert Murray.

Belley, in France, to Honor the Memory of Brillat-Savarin. Belley, a little town in the southeast of France, is about to raise a monument to the glory of one of its sons, Brillat-Savarin. The author of "The Physiology of Taste" was the absolute realization of the typical good liver. The Revolution confiscated his property and removed him from his office as civil judge. He fled to Switzerland and then to the United States, where he played a fiddle in a New York theatre to gain a living.

His property was afterward returned to him and he was made a councillor of the Supreme Court, an office he clung to successfully through changes of empire and kingdom. His "Physiology of Taste" shared the fate of many celebrated books. It was refused by several publishers and eventually was published at the author's expense, but without his name attached to it, as he considered the nature of the work incompatible with his judicial functions.

It was Brillat-Savarin who declared that "the discovery of a new food does more for the happiness of the human race than the discovery of a star." "The man who can cook is made, the man who can roast is born." "To invite anybody to your house is to undertake the responsibility of his well being during the whole time he is one's guest."

"Animals feed; man eats; the man of sense also knows how to eat." "The destiny of nations depends upon how they are fed." "The table is the only place where one is not bored for the first hour." And who would it be PERSONAL? A hostess asked him one day, "which do you prefer, Burgundy or Bordeaux?" "Maitre," replied the judicial authority, "I have as much pleasure in which I always postpone judgment."

A Letter to "Santa"

FROM A LITTLE GIRL AND FORWARDED TO US.

Dear old Santa Clause, won't you bring me a nice straight nose, because I would rather have a straight nose than anything else for the first year. And who would it be PERSONAL? Attractiveness is after all the most valuable thing any one could wish for. A man, woman or child who is PERSONALLY attractive—i. e., clear, clean complexion, Perfect Features, smooth, unblemished skin and pleasing expression of face, surely gets the most out of life—they will get more real happiness than any other way. Buy the NOSE that SHOWS wherever it GOES.

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From an Autographed photograph. PIETRO MASCAGNI.