THE ENGLISH ARE BORES, SAYS MARY GARDEN

Asserts They Don't Know Anything About Music and Their Superiority Is Pure Bluff, Assumed to Cover Up Lack of Understanding--Would Not Sing in Covent Garden for $5,000 a Night

WITH the utmost frankness Miss Mary Garden expresses her opinion of English audiences in the current issue of the *American Magazine*. To put it mildly it is not a complimentary opinion.

The most frequent questions put to the opera singer, says Miss Garden, are how she discovered that she had a voice; how she happened to think of going on the stage; how, in short, she began her career. These questions are mostly put by girls or women who secretly cherish the idea that they have voices and are looking for a suggestion as to how to get them recognized.

The mature woman is always hoping that you will say that you didn't discover your voice until you were grown up, that your voice improved with maturer years. Clearly the wish is father to the thought in such a question.

Other questions are: "How do you study the parts you play? Have you any method? Does your intuition do it for you or is it a matter of hard work?" Clearly, these are put by serious minded, interested persons who want information.

Men as a rule usually ask questions prompted by idle curiosity. "Has the singer any social life?" This question is usually prefaced by the comment that her preeminence in the world of music must make her a person to be courted, lionized by aristocracy or by "climbers," who use her as a bait to draw to their new houses members of the more or less exclusive set—for the appreciation of music is considered by everybody a mark of culture.

This question suggests another very common question: "How does the singer safeguard her voice? What does she eat? What exercise does she take?" and all the rest of it.

As to the first question, I can only answer that by touching briefly on my own career. To begin at the beginning, I was born in Scotland, but came here very young, and although I have lived a great part of my life in Chicago and much of it in Paris, I have always had the habit of calling the land of the "bonnie brier bush" home. I suppose I was born to have something to do with music because when I was only 7 years old I took up the violin. I studied it until I was probably 10, then I changed to the piano and became quite a good pianist. I was just finding my way, you see. Later on, while I was in high school in Chicago, my father took me to Mrs. Duff, a singing teacher, who became most enthusiastic about me and wanted me to take up music. But I was very young and my father did not want me to leave school, which was perfectly natural.

After a time I left Chicago and went to France. There, for three years, I studied under a master called Trabadello, voice, diction and the French language. That is all—no acting, no outside nonsense—just those three things. And in just three years from the time I went there I made my debut at the Opera Comique. So, when a person says to me, "I have studied seven years or eight years and have not yet been recognized," I say to myself, "You will never get there!"

The Opera Comique does not imply comic opera or musical comedy. The difference between it and the Grand Opera is that while every work presented at the latter is sung, at the former dialogue, or the spoken word, is allowed. The works done there are of a very high standard of opera, and the house is a very beautiful affair, seating about 1,500, which is small for operatic purposes.

While singing at the Comique one of my most delightful experiences was meeting Sibyl Sanderson. She was one of the most wonderful and charming women I ever knew. She came right to me and gave me a helping hand, which was most remarkable, since my line of work coincided exactly with hers. Then for the first time I met Massenet, who wrote "Thais." In fact, I had never met anybody in the musical world in an influential way until quite a long time after I had put my foot on the stage.

I found when I made my first bow to the public at the Comique that I'd just begun my education. Before this I'd only been taught how to learn. From every representation I sang I learned more and more and often to-day I learn. I first sang Charpentier's *Louise* and have since sung it here in America at the Metropolitan.

I found that by a piece of unparalleled good fortune I had fallen into the hands of no less a genius than Director Carre, who was then guiding the destinies of the Comique. He was a wonderful man and he just worked with me all the time on the stage, giving me freely of his vast store of experience. I had never taken any kind of an acting lesson, but Mr. Carre saw in me what he thought to be dramatic talent and he brought it out. He did not teach me to act, mind you. Nobody taught me to do that. I knew how myself. I simply needed direction. In fact, the moment you really teach people to act, acting with them becomes artificial. Take the two great women, Duse and Bernhardt, the one is all natural, the other is all technique—there's the difference between the two.

After seven years at the Opera Comique Oscar Hammerstein came to Paris and brought me over here. And then my troubles began. I had had no troubles in Paris because there I was accepted as the exponent of the modern school. In fact I created it. Over here they did not understand a woman who could give them a little singing and acting at the same time. And, heaven help me, the first morning after I sang! I never read such criticisms in all my life. The critics did not understand one blessed thing I was trying to do. But they do now. Little by little it has come to them. Every work I undertook was greater than the one before, and therefore the critics were compelled to wake up, realize what I was trying to do and keep the pace. For three years I worked here in New York, then Mr. Hammerstein went away and Mr. Dippel took up the work.

I made my debut in Chicago in "Pelleas et Melisande." There I found a wonderful understanding of my work. I have never heard such criticisms—so exacting, so appreciative, so sympathetic, so good! It goes to show the difference in the two cities. Not that they are more musical there—they are less spoiled. Everything that comes from Europe or any of the other countries of the world either stops in New York or passes through on its way to the West. Everything that is worth while in the way of beauty or talent has its first hearing here in the metropolis. They don't all go out to Chicago right away. So the Chicago people, because they do not get nearly so much, are much kinder when they do get it.

The Chicago opera season has grown year by year until to-day it is wonderful what they do there. Think of it! Ten weeks of opera and not a cent of loss! The Metropolitan has ten colossally paid singers, while we of Chicago have only two or three. Also the Metropolitan has a much bigger and more expensive administration. Then they have great ballets all the time and everything of the finest, the cost of which makes one dizzy to think of it. Really, I should think they would suffer great losses.

Of course, the Metropolitan is first class. The management takes the pick of everything that is splendid on the other side of the ocean and brings it over here and puts men of genius to direct the orchestra, which makes up an ensemble that is practically unparalleled.

I have not sung in many opera houses. You see, I remained at the Comique for seven years. I have sung in the Grand Opera House in Paris and in the Opera House in Monte Carlo, which is a small affair, and in Brussels and Cologne, where the houses are large and important. Also I have sung in Covent Garden, which I loathe and would not go back to for five thousand dollars a night. The atmosphere of the place is always frightfully depressing.

The people lack interest and understanding, so far as the opera goes. I don't love the English. Possibly I don't understand them. Certainly they didn't understand me. But, you see, I was just beginning there, so it doesn't really count. As I said, I was born in Scotland, and you know the Scotch and English are entirely different. The Scotch people are delightful—the English bore one to death with their absurd airs, assumed to cover up a lack of understanding, a superiority which is pure bluff. Nobody goes to hear music in England except when the crowned heads are there. They don't know anything about it. In fact, the only composer England ever produced was a Scotchman.

I like it over here because you have to fight and I like a fight—it amuses me. And things are done on such a magnificent scale here, so first class, so beautiful! The Metropolitan Opera House here is so beautiful and of so great dignity. Its acoustics are fine. Any one who criticises this great theatre does not know what he is talking about. This house is a little large for my work, but it is good for Wagner. It makes little difference to me, however, whether the house be large or small; the only trouble with the big houses is that the people who pay to go way upstairs cannot be in communication with the people on the stage. I was reminded of this when I sang "Salome" in St. Louis three years ago. It was in a kind of circus place like Madison Square Garden—the biggest thing I ever saw in my life. When I went on it was dark and I did not realize the size of the place. But when they put the lights on and I saw what I was singing into it made my cords sore! There were 7,500 people there! When I saw those human beings away up at the top they looked a mile away from me. I never saw anything so colossal. They seemed to be all very delighted, but you need not tell me that the persons at the top of the last row saw or heard a single thing!

Such a case is unfortunate because the people at the top—the gallery gods—are, as every one knows, the real music lovers. The "galleries" in Paris are notoriously the ones to be feared, not the downstairs people. The latter may have the good breeding and the others possibly not. When they are displeased, they let you know it. They don't manifest it in noises as they do in Italy. They let it pass in silence, but they just don't come—that is all!

When I created "La Reine Fiametta" the first night the house was so delirious downstairs that the composer, full of big phrases that appeal to the ear and a great deal of bad style, while the German is not only intense but profuse and has a reason for everything. "Pelleas et Melisande" the opera was hissed downstairs, but at the second performance you couldn't get a seat in the galleries, while downstairs it was nearly empty. But the galleries had passed the word, "Pelleas et Melisande" became the fashion. The stalls were crowded. That's the answer!

Here the poorer classes are just beginning to be educated up to music. The cheaper seats in the Metropolitan, I believe, are $1—five francs. In Paris they are a franc. The galleries are enormous and loads of people can go there.

If Oscar Hammerstein had opened his opera house in Paris instead of London he would have done bigger things. The two big opera houses in Paris are Government theatres and all the work they give must be French, except that each can give one foreign work a year. Everything in these theatres, from the smallest position to the highest, must be filled by the French, which makes it difficult for a foreign woman to make her debut there and be taken into the hearts of the people. So, you see, if Hammerstein had a theatre here he could give all the operas in the world. And he could do it successfully, for the Parisians are the broadest and keenest people in the matter of opera in the world. I think they are much more appreciative even than the Germans.

The Germans are very conservative in their music very German. With them it is all Wagner and the old school. You don't find new French works often produced in their country. On the other hand the "Salome" of Strauss is included in the great repertoire in Paris. The French music does not appeal to the Germans like the old Italian and their own Wagner. As for me, if I ever gave up my French school I would never take up the Italian. But I really do adore the German, and I would love to go into their school. In fact, I am studying the language every day.

It may be a matter of temperament, but the German school is, to my way of thinking, much more wonderful than the Italian. The Italian is all impulse, full of big phrases that appeal to the ear and a great deal of bad style, while the German is not only intense but profuse and has a reason for everything.

You know to-day the stage demands not only the natural qualities one has to give, such as voice, personality and the like, but a great deal of intelligence. The opera singer should be a well read person in every way. In brief, her general education should be finished before she goes on the stage. These are not like the times when a singer could go on the stage, smile, throw a few kisses to the audience and run off. The people want, they demand, the more vital things in a drama. Happily I am living in my epoch, singing my own operas by my own composers, which is a great advantage, as the composers themselves are able to help me enormously.

The public has an idea that one must have experienced the atmosphere one uses in a role. But this is not the case with me. I don't "study out" my characters. I am not like some artists who when they have a certain part to give have to go to hospitals to see people die, or if they are going to give a great scene in an opera, first must see it done in real life. I did not have to go to Judea before I gave *Salome*. I didn't have to see the country or the people in order to feel their feelings. If you ask me why, I can only say: "I have a gift that way—that's all!" When I am impersonating a character it just goes into me, becomes part of me.

The question is commonly put to me: "Did you realize much difference between the women of the Salome period and the women of to-day?"

My answer is "No; only that the women of that day executed their hates and vengeance a little more brutally." To-day they cover them up more adroitly. But the passions back of them are just the same. The jealousies and vengeances of to-day are quite as they were in the day of Cæsar or any other classic character.

Another question relative to studying a role is: "Is there any difference between studying characters for acting and for singing?" Here again I must quote myself. I need the music to inspire me. Many persons have told me that if I would leave the operatic stage for the drama I would be the greatest actress the world has ever seen. I don't believe it. I don't think all of this could be brought out of me without the music, because it is the music which *does* bring it out. The case of "Pelleas et Melisande" is quite in point here. I went first to see it acted without any music, because I thought it would be interesting to act it, if I never sang it. It was just a commonplace drama, that's all; but when Strauss put the music to it it became strong, tense, magnificent—in brief, a new thing! Nor was I the only one affected that way by the change. In Paris, where it was created, every one said, when Strauss had put music to the drama, "The hand has found its glove!"

I would not be an actress if I never did anything else, but I love to be a "singing actress," if that is what people call me. I think my work is much bigger than that of the exponent of the drama pure and simple. With it I can go much quicker to the heart, the imagination, the human chords.

As to the time devoted to studying a role I can only say that I am always thinking about it. Coming over the ocean the last time I was every minute in my work. I was creating "Don Quixote" and it was ever present with me. Like the other things I have created I shall keep thinking about it until it is produced, and that minute I shall forget all about it.

To summarize a few other questions, I spend about three-quarters of an hour each day singing; the music helps me to memorize my lines and I never forget them.

Singing before royalty is perhaps more of a professional than a social distinction. I have done it many times, but it bores me to distraction. It is such a nuisance. I never sang for the Czar. But I did sing before the English court, the old court of Edward and Alexandra. The King slept through it all, as heavy a sleep as I have ever seen. But the Queen would always pat his hand at the time to applaud and he would wake up. On one occasion he had fallen into a rabbit hole and sprained his ankle and his foot was all tied up in a great bundle. The King of Greece, a brother of Alexandra, was a special friend of mine. He used often to come to where I was singing. He told his sister of his admiration for me and she had me come to Windsor to sing, but when I saw the King with his foot all tied up in bandages it was not very encouraging. I would sing and courtesy and walk off again. I am afraid I'm an anarchist in my heart, and I don't love to courtesy. There are some who are not kings—such as Marconi, who has done big things—to whom I would go down on my knees because of their achievements, but I just had to get my courage in my two hands to courtesy to the King of England. It went against me.

The matter of health and the matter of safeguarding the voice are one and the same thing. And this has a direct bearing on the social side of the singer's life, since it is clear that she must, if she would sing well, abstain from all those things that sap her energy or interfere with her digestion. The physical strain upon the opera singer is enormously greater than upon the dramatic player. Of course, if she sings like an automatic piano, that's one thing. She can walk off the stage just as she went on. If she have a well placed voice she can sing without any great effort. But if she have a great scene to go through with and does it humanly and artistically it takes it all out of her.

When I get through my work I am all in. I don't want anybody to talk to me even. I go home with my maid, get to bed and sleep eight hours without moving. I don't even remember next morning that I sang the night before. But I have such a constitution that I build right up and the minute I open my eyes I am wide awake. They say that eight hours is an awful lot of sleep—that five or six is enough. But I sometimes have nine. I almost never eat before going to bed. I have my dinner about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, a nice cup of tea and some toast at 5 or half past, and then nothing until the next morning. Sometimes if I feel very tired when I come home I take a cup of bouillon or half a dozen oysters, but that is all. I am too nervously fatigued to eat. As for suppers, they are the most awful things! I can't imagine anybody being able to go out and sit and talk after they get through singing, but they do. You have no idea of the people who ask me out to supper. It gives me indigestion to think of it. The singer must be very careful of her diet. She must eat very plain food and above all very little pastry and sweets, since these contribute to obesity, which is fatal.

There is little self-denial in my abstinence, since my tastes are extremely simple. To those who are fond of a good table and a glass of wine, however, it is a hardship. But they just have to give it up, that's all, unless they want to get to be enormously fat and lose all of their vitality. You may think it curious of me that I don't like whiskey, I being a Scotchwoman—and Scotchmen are either falling all over the streets or they don't touch it at all. My father belonged to the latter class, and probably I get my near teetotalism from him.

I do all my work in the morning, see anybody I have to see, and in the afternoon do nothing at all unless I go to a matinee or something like that.

As to exercise, I do a great deal of horseback riding, not in America, but in Scotland, and much tennis playing, but no walking. I don't think walking does one a bit of good; at any rate, it tires me very much.

There is very little fatigue attached to travelling in this country. You get into a lovely train, equipped with good beds and dining cars. But the mode of travelling in Europe is pitiable—no comfort, much less luxury. And it is amazing to me how those trains with their tiny little cars that jolt and shake and run at a fearfully high speed stay on the rails at all.

The question of the social life of the singer has been discussed so much that I am afraid I shall have to answer it in a most conventional way. In what I'm going to say it is difficult to avoid being considered ungracious, unappreciative. But notwithstanding the vanity that usually is ascribed to the singer I confess that when I am invited to a dinner I cannot help feeling that it is not Mary Garden the woman but Mary Garden the prima donna that they want. Nor do I consider this in any sense a form of snobbery. We are all trying to gain recognition, which is perfectly legitimate, and if we can borrow a little of the so-called glory of some one else it's no more than a good business proposition.

But what motive has the opera singer in lending herself to social schemers? If she sing there for money, that's proper, since it's her business to sing for money. But if she is going to sing for nothing, it's far more satisfying to her to sing to convicts or gatherings in the slums. Nor can the singer be more lionized in a parlor than in an opera house. And I'm sure she cannot show to greater advantage standing beside a piano than on a stage amid the proper settings.

And, too, there are many reasons why the singer should avoid social life as far as possible. So, notwithstanding the many demands, I almost never go out, unless it be to a very small party at the house of some woman whom I know very well and where I know I shall meet interesting people. But to go just to be looked at—it does not amuse me at all. I have been invited to many house parties, and when I used to go I always came home looking fifty years older. Is any other reason for abstaining necessary?

When I do go out socially they never ask me to sing. Probably I have a look in my eye that makes them hesitate. I would not do it anyway.

The great pressure that our profession puts upon us singers makes us very careful of time and friendships. I have probably only four women friends in the world, and these are all from fifteen to twenty years older than myself, but I have many magnificent men friends. Two of these women friends are in France and have colossal fortunes; but instead of sitting down indoors and counting their dollars, they are doing things—they have built glorious houses and entertain everybody in the world who passes through Paris who is worth entertaining. Another lives in Chicago, and the fourth in Philadelphia. The friendship of these women, who are so human and big, is worth more to me than anything else in the world.

Miss Garden as Thais.

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Mary Garden in "Salome."

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At right—As Marguerite.

Mary Garden's home in Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

Above—Mary Garden in street costume.

AVOID RED IN HOT WEATHER.

By DR. L. K. HIRSHBERG.

GO but a few steps along the boardwalk at a seaside resort, mingle among the bathers on the beach on a hot summer day and you will see red parasols, red shirts, red skirts, red dresses, red bathing suits, red colors galore.

Yet in hot weather you might as well carry a fire or a hot stove as to wear red clothing. Indeed, how any girl with a red parasol stands the heat or escapes severe sunburn is difficult to discover.

There is also a class of persons who have been erroneously taught to wear red medicated underwear for some foolish reason or other. These individuals care not whether it is summer or winter, the red garments remain on them.

Red sweaters, red waists, red ties, red stockings, even canoes and boats painted red all augment heat and discomfort. Red curtains, red wall paper, red furniture are similarly at fault.

The slow end of the sun's spectrum, as the red end is called in contrast to the fast end, where the blue and ultra-violet rays are situated, is the one which holds the heat rays. Red light or red rays are the ones responsible for heat prostration, or insolation or sunstroke, and the various miseries of hot weather. While it is true that the ultra-violet rays are most vicious in chemical power and cauterizing action, it is the red rays which really burn or give you the sensation of heat.

Sunburn and tan are the consequences of the chemical damage to the outermost layers of the skin by the blue and ultra-violet end of the sun's rays. The coat of tan is nature's effort to shield you from the dangers and destructive power of the ultra-violet light.

If, perchance, your skin is covered with stray microbes or an eczema, hives, pimples or similar blemishes are present you may wish to peel off the epidermis by burning with ultra-violet agents. Very few girls, however, need such heroic treatment; therefore they prefer to be discreet rather than valorous.

Red apparel, red surroundings, red anything offer an invitation to the burning heat rays of the sun to assault your anatomy. Not only are your thoughts and your nerves irritated by the red rays, but they make you hypersensitive or give you a heat stroke.

A room fitted out with red paper, red glass and red furnishings is not only an undesirable place to sit in during hot weather, but actually dangerous to your peace and comfort.

Green, on the other hand, is a decided antidote to heat and to red. Nature evidently discovered this early, for green fields and green trees spring up in summer not only to cover red clay, but to cool the soil and atmosphere irrespective of color and situation.

Green is not only cooling, but in opposition to the irritation of red materials it is actually soothing to the senses. Psychologists advise that in the heat of the day in summer green shades, green umbrellas and green skirts should be worn. Green keeps out the hot, red rays of the sun and reflected light and is especially obnoxious to mosquitoes, flies and other annoying insects.

All summer cottages, in addition to green lawns and green shutters, should have the whole interior decorated in green trimmings.

SHE KNEW HER JUDGE.

MR. JUSTICE HAWKINS presided at the Old Bailey in London in the celebrated Penge murder case. A man named Staunton, his brother, an artist, his brother's wife and her sister, named Alice Rhodes, were charged with murdering Staunton's wife by depriving her of nourishment. The prisoners were convicted and sentenced to death, but later their sentences were altered to penal servitude for life; moreover, Alice Rhodes was given a free pardon.

A few years later Justice Hawkins, who came from Hitchin, where his father had been a solicitor, was spending his vacation in that town. One afternoon he went for a walk, accompanied, as usual, by his little fox terrier, and feeling thirsty walked into the roadside inn and asked for a bottle of ginger beer.

"Here it is, my lord," said the barmaid.

"You seem to know me," said the Judge.

"I think I ought to, my lord; you once sentenced me to death. My name is Alice Rhodes."