

WOMAN'S HOME PAGE

CHARLES DWYER... Editor.

The American Girls' Opportunities

The American Girl in Grand Opera—Her Native Abilities Great, But She Must Learn Patience

By Madame JOHANNA GADSKI

[Metropolitan Opera House, New York]

IN the years that I have been living and singing in America, I have become very much interested in the American girl and in her life, which, as you must know, is very different from that of the young girls of Germany. For America, of course, gives a liberty and opportunity for development to all the girls that do not have in Europe. And as the mother of a girl, who is growing up and receiving her education in your country as well as in mine, I have, perhaps, thought about a matter more seriously than a woman who is not a mother.

Especially have I had opportunity to know the girl with a voice and in many cases to know also the home conditions that surround her. I have seen singers before the public, I receive all the time requests to try voices and often to assist young singers. Yet I find it is seldom that the truth is appreciated when it is unpalatable, either as to the voice or the singer's method of using it. It is sad, of course, when a girl who loves music has not the voice to express what she appreciates, and the truth is not always easy to tell. But there is only one way to start right, and that is to find out the truth at once and accept it.

But how many girls are willing to consider filling a second or third place in the singing world? All must dream of becoming, some day, Brünhilde or Lucia—depending upon the character of the voice. Yet a great voice, after all, is an accident, a piece of good fortune which is no one's possession, credit that the inheritance of great wealth. It is the use she makes of her gift that is the singer's part.

Voices Not Everything

The question is if she has the mind of a musician, the intelligence, the courage, the persistence and self-sacrifice to make of herself a great artist. And one thing I am convinced of: the result depends more upon the pupil than upon the teacher. It is true that voices have been ruined by incorrect methods, but I believe that a great deal more than half depends upon the pupil.

It seems to me that the American girl has much to help and little to hinder her in her chosen work or art. The American girl has great ability to do the thing she starts out in life to do, and I think that almost all the girls in America want to do something. A girl may not need to support herself, she may not even have great talent, yet she will often desire to do some work rather than to remain in her home.

Useless Sacrifices for Ambition

There is much to admire in this impulse to work, but also there is a side to it that seems to me sad. I mean the so often useless sacrifices made by families, sometimes even by the husband of the young woman with a voice, to pay for its education and training. Is it not better that the girl with all her gifts, but not extraordinary voice, should be strong enough so that she may sing in her home and for her friends, rather than

to leave her home and enter upon an expensive course of training upon the chance of obtaining some day a position to sing small rôles in some small opera house? And if the family of such a girl must make great sacrifices in order to make the training and the trip abroad possible, is it worth the cost? But suppose the girl has an extraordinary voice—and I have found many such in America—then it seems to me that the greatest drawback to her real

the artist who would one day sing Brünhilde or Isolde. What do you think when I tell you that the year of my first engagement at the Berlin opera house in my seventeenth year I learned twenty-four rôles in four months? If the girl with a voice can be made to face the truth about the life of an opera singer and begin her preparation with her eyes open, there will be fewer sad failures and less unhappiness along the steep road she must travel in order to reach the top, and along which so many fall by the way.

The life of an opera singer is one which contains much beauty and happiness, yet it is also a life of many difficulties and uncertainties, and first and last of hard work. The singer would enjoy all that her art can give her must be prepared to endure much cheerfully and unjustly. She must bear unenviable conditions which misrepresent her, and she must not let any of

several possible reasons the singer does not fairly represent herself, perhaps hearing her, perhaps for the only time in the season, will leave the house feeling that she is not worthy of her reputation. They will express this opinion, perhaps write to the papers. These things are inevitable. They must be passed over, counted up in the balance of gain and loss. If the singer loves her art they will not disturb her peace, but she must not expect that they will not occur.

But once she has reached the proficiency in her art which will enable her to sing the great, noble rôles of Wagner, the beautiful music of Mozart and of Verdi, a great happiness is hers. It is a joy to use her voice, a joy to work over the conception of a great composer and to carry it out so that the part lives in her.

Rewards of Work

And after study and the mastery of technique have made musical expression second nature, there is the wonderful thrill that comes when one is swayed by the inspiration that comes with the actual performance. And most of all it is a happiness to feel that those who care for you and for your art are pleased.

A singer frequently has not time to send answers to the kind letters that are sent to her. The demands upon her time and strength are so many; but she cares for every bit of appreciation that comes to her.

Home Life Greatest Thing in the World

I find that the girl who desires to become an opera singer often feels as if the life of her profession were everything. But to live so would be to live but half of life. For, after all, away from the work and excitement and applause of the opera house, there is home and the real life. And the woman whose heart is only in her work, however great that may be, will not find real happiness in this world.

The Etiquette of Cards

RULES GOVERNING THE USE OF VISITING CARDS

When, Where, For Whom to Leave Them

"ASK me anything you like," said Mrs. Wright cordially to a friend who had been puzzled over some points of etiquette.

"You are very good to help me," said Mrs. Howe. "After living out of town for some time as I have done one gets out of touch with many things."

"In town or out of town there are always certain accounts to be kept with society," answered Mrs. Wright. "In smaller towns and country neighborhoods the same general duties should be done. I don't mean to call them 'duties' only. They should be pleasures."

"But with my children to think of, I have no time to keep up my pleasures," pleaded Mrs. Howe.

"That is a natural and a frequent excuse," said her friend, "but it is not altogether fair to your husband or yourself to neglect society, and not fair to seem indifferent to your friends. Therefore you must remember that you have two girls. They should give you a new interest in social life."

"But they are children!" exclaimed the young mother in surprise.

Keep in Touch for the Children

"They will not always be children. They will be grown up before you realize it. While they are growing up you must not drift away from social interests or customs. You must stay bright and young for the sake of your husband, children, friends and society in general."

"If you are right, I am going to try to follow your example," said Mrs. Howe gaily. Then she added, "If my girls have as good manners when they grow up as your Rosamond, I shall be happy."

"I did not intend to draw down so much fatness on my head or on Rosamond's," said Mrs. Wright, laughing. Then she continued confidentially: "Rosamond's coming out this winter has been a joy instead of a task, because I have the always to keep in touch with society and its ways. A girl's coming out brings up all sorts of matters for discussion, and one needs to be prepared with information."

"I see that you are having a very busy winter," said Mrs. Howe. "Yes, a busy and delightful winter; and now that you tell me you want my suggestions I shall have another pleasure to discuss."

"Yes; it seems to me that one of the most important things is the etiquette of cards. It is strange that a bit of pastboard means so much, isn't it?"

"Not when you think that cards help to unite society. We could never pay off our social debts, or even remind people of our existence, without these useful little bits of pastboard. Cards are very often, too, the expressions of kindness, sympathy or congratulation. After all, there is a common-sense reason about the use of visiting cards, as in most social matters. Leaving cards is a step towards renewing friendships, forming or enlarging one's circle of friends. If one does not follow the prescribed rules it is a sure step in the wrong direction."

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Becoming Styles for Middle Age—Suiting the Peculiarities of the Stout Figure



WE frequently hear a complaint that fashion artists consider only the model figure; many types are becoming to youth and grace that are impossible when middle age has been reached and the figure has taken on heavier proportions.

It is always well to consider that the latter stage requires a certain amount of dignity in costume; this does not mean that one must dress "old," but there should be an importance to the design and trimmings that is not essential to youth.

A young girl may wear an absolutely plain shirt-waist, for instance, with turned-down collar and turned-back cuffs, but for the woman of forty, or over, this garment would be entirely unsuitable. Even the plain plaited shirt-waist with standing linen collar, that looks trim and smart on a younger woman, seems in some way out of keeping with the dignity imparted by added years.

The Importance of the Waist-Line

The waist-line is important to any figure, but most particularly when the waist has passed the 26-inch mark great care and discretion must be used. The exaggerated "dip" at the front is to be avoided and never, never have a dip at the back. A trim, straight line across the centre-back, gradually dropping at the sides until at the centre-front it is about two inches below the natural, straight-around waist-line, is smart and becoming.

The exaggerated dip that brings the centre-front of the belt far down on the abdomen, may look fairly well at the front view, but from the side it is quite ugly, and the side-line that should fit in prettily to the curve of the waist is the critical view. The lengthened front edge may be much more artistically provided by trimming lines.

For an outdoor costume a long coat that outlines the figure gracefully, but is semi-fitting—not tight—is the proper garment to select. The actual length must be determined by one's height and by experiment at the time of fitting, but it should come well down over the hips, and the French cut with the seams running to the shoulder at both front and back is better than the darted front with

finished materials tend to increase the apparent size, while a smooth surface reduces it. For the same reason large or pronounced plaids or figured goods should be avoided.

An Effective Costume

Because one is stout and has reached the happy and kindly middle distance in life, it is not necessary to deny oneself the small though insistent fads of fashion. The suspender waist and the under-blouse or guimpe, both rather frivolous details of the costume, may be adapted to the use of the woman who is fair and forty, if she will only bear in mind the idea of dignity.

The waist shown presents the bretelle feature embodied in the over-blouse, that is, however, given a distinctive touch by the use of the small vest-pieces at the front, which should have small fancy buttons by way of decoration for the simulated or actual closing. The same buttons, with silk cord or cotton cable cord covered with the waist material, trim the slashed opening through which the lace under-blouse is visible at the shoulders.

The skirt has two side-plaits at each side of the centre-front, forming what is known as an inverted double box-plait, and the same arrangement is repeated at the centre-back; the skirt has nine gores, and flares smartly about the feet. Silk or satin will develop nicely by this design, though, perhaps, woolen goods will be even better. Lanesdown is an especially suitable material, or



SOME SPRING MODELS FOR THE WOMAN NO LONGER SLENDER

Suiting the Stout Figure

The so-called shirt-waist costume shown herewith exemplifies the distinction that may be imparted to a simple gown by a few comparatively trifling additions. The shirt-waist has three tucked plaits laid at the shoulder at both front and back, but, instead of finishing with a plain collar or stock, the neck is cut into a V at the front and a small chemisette of lace or tuckered lawn fills in the opening. A turn-over collar to which is applied fancy band trimming edges the neck of the waist, and the same trimming outlines the front edges, forming a V effect that is always becoming to a figure that is at all inclined to stoutness.

In the same way length is given to the front of the skirt by the triple-plaited panel that is judiciously flattened at the top by having the centre panel overlap the two added plaits. A similar neck effect may be introduced into any skirt-waist, and any plain skirt may have the long front lines suggested by making lap seams where the front breadth joins the sides, or by trimming these seams with braid or folds of the same cloth.

curving side-bodies at the back. The curved, cut-away line at the lower front edge is another desirable feature, as it avoids cutting the figure by a straight line across the front of the facing being cut in a shaped outline, forming a bot that laps upward at each seam. The skirt seams and the long French seams at the front and back of the coat will look well if finished with lap seams, and be certain that the seams in both garments are lapped in the same direction.

In selecting material for such a gown, it is well to bear in mind that rough-

chiffon broadcloth, henrietta or cashmere.

The Importance of Colors

Considering color, gray always comes first to mind, but there are almost as many shades of gray as if they were different colors. Then, too, the individual complexion and coloring must be considered. The theory of matching the general tinting is safe to follow.

The colorless face may not be framed to advantage with the tints that favor the pink and white skin; for the latter there is gray with a pinkish tinge that is very suitable, and the dark orchid shades through which the same pinkish tinting runs, but not light enough to be conspicuous, will be good for the street costume.

Plain black, though not mourning, is often adopted for almost constant wear by the middle-aged, is really quite trying, unless well relieved about the neck and throat by white. Take a lesson from the changing of the guard and make the black and white proportions practically correspond. Do not be afraid of a few touches of delicate color, a few fancy stitches in embroidery silk outlining an edge, a spider web worked in silks on the cloth-covering of buttons, or gold-realize by what simple means original and distinctive gowning may often be attained.

A Good Fit Not a Tight Fit

There is one thing the woman of well-developed figure should bear in mind, and that is that a good fit is not necessarily a tight fit—rather the reverse, in fact. A well-cut, easy-fitting garment, with symmetrical lines, is more graceful and becoming, and less inclined to attract attention to one's size than the waist or coat that is noticeably tight-fitting.

In skirts, too, a figure with full hips will look immeasurably better when there is a good swing at the sides, from the hips to the lower edge. Only at the centre-front should the skirt hang perfectly straight and flat. When it is drawn back too much from the sides, the effect upon the figure is not at all good.

Presently Mrs. Howe rose to go while saying to her hostess, "This friendly talk has given me new energy and courage. I am determined to try to surmount all difficulties in the social world."

Mrs. Wright and Rosamond rose and shook hands with their guest, and Mrs. Wright accompanied her to the door, saying, "Come to me as often as you wish with problems."

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Needlework for Household Decoration

BY THE USE OF THE NEW BRAIDS

Beautiful Lace Easily Made

IN the matter of dress trimmings fashion must sometimes plead guilty to the charge of fickleness, but the accusation scarcely applies to the laces that are used for household decoration. There are certain novelties introduced from time to time, yet none of them is strong enough to disturb, seriously, the favor of the Renaissance.

Just this much of innovation has affected the latter, and that is the use of the filet or square mesh for filling in large spaces, a change that produces greater variety and a more striking effect. This square mesh is very plainly shown in the table-cover, the first illustration.

The open spaces in the scrolls are filled in with bars, Romaine and the centre of the seven-pointed flower-like figure with straight lines crossing at right angles, the thread twisted in working back, and a small wheel or spider worked at each intersection. Bars Romaine are worked in the same manner as the first, a second line of the stitches being made across the space at right angles to the first.

Working Bars Romaine

To work it, fasten the thread at one edge of the braid in the space to be filled and carry it across to the opposite side, where it should be secured to the braid with a buttonhole stitch; make a second buttonhole stitch in the braid at the space of about twice the thickness of the thread from the first, and start to carry this second thread back to the starting side. About one-quarter of an inch from the braid make, with the second thread, a buttonhole stitch on the first line of thread, making it loose enough to allow two other buttonhole stitches to be made across its loop.

Make these buttonhole groups at spaces of about one-half inch across the first line of thread. Work across the space in this manner, having each double line of threads about one-half inch distant from the next. Work another row of the bars across the space at right angles to the first, making the buttonhole groups come midway of the space between the rows of the first lines of point

of these stitches to the first with a buttonhole stitch at every point, where they cross. This is a very simple way of filling in large spaces and one of the most effective stitches in lace-making.

A Design with English Braid

Bars Romaine and the cross-lines of twisted bars with wheels at their cross-



ings are used for the principal filling-in stitches for the centrepiece, for which English lace braid was used, and the same stitch is used in the last centrepiece illustrated. This is rather more ornate than any of the others, as the rose in each of the flower groups worked in the linen centre is filled in with drawn-work.

The rose outline is worked in satin-stitch and the plain linen so enclosed is punctured at regular spaces with a carpet-sewing needle or the point of a stiletto, and the groups of threads thus separated are gathered together by overcasting with a needle and fine

thread. Seeding stitch may be employed to fill in these spaces, but the simulated drawn-work, with its open effect, is more novel and attractive. It is very simple done, as it is not necessary to draw the threads unless the material is very closely woven and a very open, filmy effect is desired.

In that case the outline of the blossom is first worked in satin-stitch, padding the outline first with several layers of running stitch, laid one over the other, then working over the padding with satin-stitch. The threads must then be counted, and those that are to be drawn out cut close to the embroidered outline. While this is particular work, needing to be done carefully, an error is not irretrievable; should the wrong thread be drawn, it may be run in again.



by threading it into a fine needle and darning over and under the cross-threads.

After the desired number of threads have been drawn in both directions, the bars remaining are overhanded with fine thread to form a regular and even network, or several of the simpler stitches used in drawn-work are suitable for this purpose when the space to be filled in is large.

For small spaces the plain mesh or another simple stitch also used in this centrepiece may be employed. The latter stitch is made by taking one stitch around the centre of one group of

threads, crossing the drawn space to the opposite group, where a buttonhole stitch is taken around that group, the working thread is twisted back to the centre, then crossed to the remaining sides of the opening, where a buttonhole stitch is made around each group of threads. Seeding stitch is a succession of tiny back-stitches made on the right side of the material. They must be even and regular in size and the stitches of every row are made to come midway between those in the preceding row.

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SOME EXAMPLES OF HOME NEEDLEWORK