

WITH THE PLAYERS AND THE MUSIC & FOLK

BY BLANCHE PARTINGTON

I met Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch for the second time this week. The first time cost me just \$35.70, a commutation ticket, a recipe for oyster salad and a few other pocketbook fripperies. It was quite Mr. Dolmetsch's fault. It was in the days when I lived in Oakland—in that, of course, one was culpable—and had just laid hands on "Evelyn Inness." It was between its covers that I met Arnold Dolmetsch—not to speak of Melba, who will also be here this week. Inness, the quaint old figure among his viols and harpsichords, his Palaestrina and Monteverde, lost me one boat to begin with. However, I managed to get the next, and as far as possible from the Band was soon deep among the madrigals again. I forgot everything else. The city purpled, faded, lost itself; Goat Island loomed and paled, Oakland upglittered, the crowd crushed off the boat, I with it, still with my nose in the book. It was the other person that kindly took charge of my purse.

And that is why I rather felt that I knew Mr. Dolmetsch, who as every one knows is the original of Inness. Was the original as fascinating as the portrait, I wondered as I went into Lyric Hall to meet him? How near to life had the novelist dared to draw? It was at any rate not at all the outside Inness that looked down at me as I reached the platform. You would give Mr. Dolmetsch perhaps forty-two or three years, happily not more than thirty and eight. Eyes are the first and last thing you see of him. They are tremendously large, black, bright; eyes you would give to an Othello, or set looking over a lute. There is a delicate nose, a bit of softly-straggling pointed beard, and a heavy sweep of black hair covering the brow. It is a face you could not possibly escape. A painter, rather than a musician, it somehow suggests, but it is exquisitely in its last suggestion the artist face. The audacious red of the tie helped it delightfully, and the careless blue serge that you may have seen—as I have—on William Morris and that ilk. Mr. Dolmetsch was at the harpsichord as I went up, and I found, as he stood to greet me, that there was not more than five feet two or three of the man that has done more for the ancient faith of music than any other living person.

"Well, this is Mr. Inness at last," I laughed as we shook hands. Mr. Dolmetsch smiled and owned that he had sat for the figure. I asked him then if George Moore were not rather an impertinent person, and if he were generally given to putting his friends into his books, and if Mr. Dolmetsch had minded?

"Oh, no, I didn't mind," and Mr. Dolmetsch's shrug and smile asked why should he? "In fact," he added, "I wrote part of it."

"Oh!" I contributed. "That is," he explained, "some of the musical descriptions. It was odd how I came to know Moore—you care to hear?" I did indeed.

Then, sitting by the virginals, to which Shakespeare himself may have listened, Mr. Dolmetsch told me. He was dining at an old London tavern where artists congregated, and some friend of his came in with a tall, lank chap that nobody seemed to know. This was before Moore became famous. They came to the Dolmetsch table, and the ungainly stranger began to talk heresy about the harpsichord. He said that the friend had invited him to attend some of the Dolmetsch affairs and that he had refused. He intimated that any one could take a harpsichord, tinkle upon it and draw a crowd, but that that was freakish not art. Then said Mr. Dolmetsch: "You know nothing about it!" He stayed at the tavern a large part of the night explaining to Mr. Moore a few of the things he did not know about it. A day or two later came a note from Moore saying that he "was much struck by what Mr. Dolmetsch had said; might he come to hear him play?" Well, "Dowlands," of the book, even to the name, is the Dolmetsch cottage at Dulwich, and "Evelyn Inness" generally a proof of conversion.

"And who is Evelyn Inness?" I asked. "It is generally supposed to be Melba," the musician put it, "but is a compound, really, of two characters—most of the figures are drawn from life."

But this was not music; neither was the fascinating chat of George Bernard Shaw, William Morris, Burne-Jones, that followed—would I had space for it. I asked at length to hear the virginals at Mr. Dolmetsch's elbow and then I saw the Dolmetsch of George Moore's book. It was the face of a devotee that bent over the old boxwood keys, and turned to watch mine as the first notes of the virginals fell on my ear. My surprised delight in the tone—truth to tell I had expected

something of a thin, stringy tinkle—seemed a little to hurt the musician. It was as though I had doubted the beauty of a favorite child.

"That is not the kind of virginals I have heard before," I stammered.

As though speaking of a Raphael restored by a tinker, Mr. Dolmetsch then explained that the virginals one has heard before have mostly been restored by the ordinary pianoforte repairer. He himself has restored his own instruments.

"That is where I have such advantage," he went on, "I am a workman first. I used to be in my grandfather's organ factory before I played. I can make any part of the instruments, you know—have even made a whole grand piano—though, of course, a piano is not a musical instrument," he amazingly tacked on.

"What is it?" I gasped.

"Just a machine," Mr. Dolmetsch put it. "But these"—he touched lovingly the keys, then walked over to caress the harpsichord, "these are instruments. It is such a mistake," he struck out, "for people to call the pianoforte a development of the harpsichord. Cristoforo, who made it first, claims it strictly as an invention. So it was. Look at the difference—your string in the harpsichord, in the virginals, is plucked—they are both simply harps played upon by keyboards. In the pianoforte the string is hammered—hammered," he repeated, "and because one could hammer and make a great noise on it the piano superseded the harpsichord. Look here," and he pointed out the delicately-polished, un-

supported keys—black where white should be and oppositely.

"What would happen if you hammered those? They would break. And listen."

Then he showed me the extreme sensitiveness of response to the touch, and in the clavichord later, how one actually may, by a vibration of pressure upon the key, produce a crescendo on the note after it has been put down. But that was after I had admired the fine, lacquered case of the harpsichord made in Paris in 1764, but indistinguishable now even by experts from the finest Chinese. The musical part of the instrument, he told me, was old Flemish, and made in 1640.

After that we left the hall to call upon Mrs. Dolmetsch, a door or two away. On the way I asked Mr. Dolmetsch about his studies. He was, it seems, the last pupil of Vieuxtemps. That was, of course, for violin. He plays now the virginals, the harpsichord, the lute—with its nineteen strings—the viola da gamba, the viola d'amour and the clavichord—these I remember. There are several that I do not. And to think of the fuss in the quartet when the viola falls out!

There isn't a fiddler in fifty that can even bluff through an andante on it!

And this was Mrs. Dolmetsch, the gentle, pale little creature that held out to us a firm, small hand. Mrs. Dolmetsch was Mr. Dolmetsch's last violin pupil, he and she told me. Afterward she took to the viola, and into the workshop with her gifted husband. Mrs. Dolmetsch also plays many instruments and is also an essential enthusiast like her husband. One saw it

throughout, but was quite sure as she laughed at his organ story.

I had asked if Mr. Dolmetsch owned an old organ—for Bach.

"Once I had one," he told me, "but some one offered me a large sum for it—and there were some manuscripts—there are always manuscripts, you know—"

And Mrs. Dolmetsch laughed. Her husband explained that he could not have money and manuscripts too, and one had to have manuscripts—and Mrs. Dolmetsch laughed. I think it was she that brought over to me a book of Rameau, exquisitely made, the page old ivory in color, the notes drawn as by an etcher. And like a child she curled down on the rug on one side of my chair. Mr. Dolmetsch curled down on the other, and so we admired the book.

"It is a mistake to say that art progresses," the gentleman said, shaking back his anarchic mane.

"You think we are not progressing musically?"

"I think not. Take your opera. Look at 'Orfeo.'"

"The Gluck?"

"Nay; Gluck has already degenerated," he protested. "I mean the Monteverde. You have already there most of Wagner. Leit-motiv—why, Monteverde gives each character his group of instruments—Pluto, with his three trombones, for example. All my life I have wanted to give that opera. I want a year to rehearse it—and £2000."

"I wish I had it," I laughed, then asked: "Just where do you think we are musically at the present time?"



ARNOLD DOLMETSCH.

MRS. MABEL DOLMETSCH.

TALENTED PERFORMERS WHO APPEARED IN SAN FRANCISCO LAST WEEK AND WHO PLAY ON THE INSTRUMENTS OF CENTURIES AGO AND TO THE DELIGHT OF THEIR HEARERS, MAKE TO LIVE AGAIN THE MUSIC OF THE DAYS OF GOOD QUEEN BESS.

"Where the artists were, it seems to me," the musician put it, "before the pre-Raphaelite movement.

"And what the pre-Raphaelite movement did for painting, is it your hope, belief, that your revival of ancient music may do for music?"

"One hopes something of the kind," Mr. Dolmetsch owned.

Then he made a plea for the purity and simplicity of the older music—for its genuineness, for its spontaneous character. He told me interestingly that the people that most enjoyed it are the working folk, who bring to it the unspoiled ear, and then the most utterly sophisticated listener. Bernard Shaw is a great believer, and William Morris—yes, one must find space for this. Morris, artist, socialist, cabinet-maker, bookbinder, poet, novelist, was artist in everything but music. He not only did not enjoy it nor understand it, but disliked it.

One day he heard Mr. Dolmetsch play. It was the harpsichord first, and Byrd and Purcell. Morris listened, minute after minute, then burst out crying. He said: "That is the music I have been wanting all my life." He was faithful to the new-found art until his death. Two or three days before Mrs. Morris drove over to Dowlands to tell Mr. Dolmetsch that Morris had said that he had just one wish left—to hear some of his music. Mr. Dolmetsch took the virginals with him and for an hour and a half he played to his dying friend.

"You must be glad to remember that," I said.

"I remember nothing more gladly," said the musician. Mrs. Dolmetsch looked her shared gladness.

INTERESTING BILLS AT THE PLAYHOUSES DURING PRESENT WEEK

"Mother Goose," at the Grand Opera-house, will be the big novelty of the week at the theaters. The piece is spectacular and includes 350 people in its cast. It is one of the London Drury Lane Theater productions and is said to be mounted with all the splendor of the original production. Pretty girls, clever comedians, beautiful costumes, fine dancing and gorgeous scenery are said to be among its many attractions, and the piece will doubtless draw large houses. The engagement will begin tomorrow evening.

The best of Willie Collier and the best of Richard Harding Davis that one knows so far are to be had at the Columbia this week in "The Dictator." The farce is one of the funniest and best acted ever seen here, and those wearying for a laugh cannot miss it. Collier as a New Yorker thrust into the midst of a South American revolution has a lovely opportunity and gets everything out of it. There are half a dozen other good parts. John Barrymore has one of them as a pessimistic wireless telegraph operator, and Louisa Allen as a tropical, much-husbanded

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Old Tale of the Artist and the Dealer

BY LAURA BRIDE POWERS.

Some weeks ago a bitter plaint reached mine ear of the injustice done to artists by some of the local dealers—of the facility with which they juggled sales, even as does the middleman with your vulgar butter and eggs. And, as with the dairy produce, it's the producer, with his busy brush, and the buyer, with his not o'erwilling cash, that gets squeezed. And conforming to requests from the artist folk, I explained the methods of finance employed by the dealers under fire. The procedure is very simple. The artist fixes his price and the dealer his commission, which runs anywhere from 25 per cent to 50 per cent, and the purchaser's price is thus supposedly fixed. Well, sometimes it is—and sometimes it isn't.

And that's the tale that a prominent patron of local art is about to unfold before Judge Seawell at some early day. The crime? The contestant claims that the artist received \$300 for his work—and we all know the type of work Thad Welch evolves—and the patron paid a dealer \$710 for the same. Query: Who received the remaining \$410? Of course, there are some persons

—tush! tush! no names—suspicious enough to suggest that the dealer kept it. It will remain for the court to tell us—if he can and will. However, this is an old, old story.

The dealer appears to be as necessary to the artist as the commission man is to the dairyman, and it must remain with the artist—and the public, too—to discriminate between the dealers—that is, if there be a basis of discrimination, and many of us think there is. "Legitimate commission only" is the cry of the artists, who claim that the exorbitant prices put upon their pictures by dealers in order to satisfy their greed results in many good pictures remaining unsold.

On the other hand, the dealers say that the artists would starve but for them—that they give them publicity, a fit setting for the work and an audience, all of which is of invaluable service to the picture makers, say they. And thus the matter stands. Whether the erudite Judge can adjust the relation remains to be seen. Long have the artists sighed for a Solomon.

To the uninitiated it would seem that legitimate commission would amply compensate the dealers. Suppose they try it. It seems a fair adjudication. Meanwhile let praise be given where due—to the honest dealer, who sells the picture at the artist's price and pays it to him. And here's to him! May his tribe increase.

A busy little woman is Ada Romer Shawhan, up in her eyrie at 997 Market street—quite out of the zone of the artist-quarter. Perhaps, that's why she works so well—and so seriously. This Latin quarter of ours is getting quite too gay for serious work. If you don't believe it, ask a few men who inhabit the lower end of Montgomery street. And the gavelies are not of Saturday's making, either, for that's the artist's day to play. It's the other days that are laughed away.

Mrs. Shawhan has just completed the accompanying character sketch, which she calls "A Minute's Symphony." Strong in treatment, and full of feeling—as is all of this clever young wom-

an's work—you bear away with you the strong, sweet face, with its exultant joy at the stolen moments with her cello—while the roost is browning.

In character work, Mrs. Shawhan is going ahead in promising fashion.

Charles Rollo Peters, adept in the mysteries of the deep, blue night, will show his pictures—thirty of them—at Claxton's gallery on Post street, beginning on February 9, and remaining for two weeks. Mr. Peters has not given a local exhibition of his work for some time. Meanwhile has he perfected his art, in which are imbedded the elements of the highest type of lyric poetry.

Grace Hudson has some fetching little Indian children at Schussers—if you bear a fondness for the little redskins. Miss Hudson's work, however, is more than mere portraiture. In composition, some of them, notably the "Happy Family," are especially good.

The Century Club is doing much to

promote the appreciation of art in the city, giving exhibits now and then of real worth. Last week a loan exhibition was held in the assembly hall, where canvases by Faruffini, Battaglia, Simoni, Carbone, Torrigiani, Enrique Serra, Zoffoli, Paolo Sarrasin, Gargiulo, Michaelangelo Amerighi, Magni, Bergamini, Reggino and Bazzanti were shown. Mr. Gump and Dr. de Vecchi were among the principal exhibitors.

Dr. Arnold Genthe's collection of photographs taken in Spain and Morocco were on exhibition at the Bohemian Club during the past two weeks, and I doubt if a similar exhibition has ever attracted such interest—the interest of those who discriminate. True, photography is classified among the mechanical arts. But these photographs by Dr. Genthe are in a class all their own—they have as much "art sense" as paintings or etchings, or water colors—and more than some I know. Of the photographs of the Alhambra is this especially true. They are surely exquisite bits of work. Can a photographer be an artist? He can, if he knows

Signor Polacco says that we have not yet heard the "Andre Chenier"; that good as it may have been in the Tivoli's first production, the smallness of the orchestra prevented its being adequate. Next Wednesday, for one of the novelties of the extra two weeks we have been so fortunate as to get, the opera will be given. The production should be good. The frequent repetitions of the other operas have left space for ample rehearsal and the opera is getting it. The work also has been a favorite with the Drog company and they should be at ease therein.

One does not forget, however, the exceeding pleasure the first production of the opera gave here. The new company owns neither a Gregoretti, whose Girard was a really noble figure, nor an Agostini, who was eminently poetic as Andre Chenier. But there is Berliand, and she makes up for a good deal. The opera itself is charming. As a drama—every one knows its subject is the French revolution—it is one of the best ever set to music. The trial scene well compares with that in "The Only Way" in dramatic intensity.

The music again is most charming and immediate in its appeal. It is far more melodious than most, perhaps any, of the modern Italian operas, and very happily illumines the emotional scheme. Prettiness itself is the setting of the first act, with its flowery old French minuet, suggesting admirably the aristocratic atmosphere. But through it one hears the herald of the coming terror and on until in the brilliant climax of the third act the revolutionary atmosphere grows in compelling measures.

The opera should not be missed.

The novelty of the week, however, is "The Pearl Fishers" of Bizet, that last opera of the genius that composed "Carmen," and that is to be given on Wednesday night with Tetrazzini.

Perhaps, as librettos are as scarce as pearls, the story of the opera may be useful. Here it is: The story of "The Pearl Fishers" is founded upon an Indian legend, the scene Ceylon. There, once upon a time, it was the custom for the pearl fishers, before they went to their sea-

lady of the south is another of the joys of the piece. It runs this week only.

An interesting engagement is that of Paul Gilmore in "The Mummy and the Hummingbird," at the California Theater. One has heard many nice things about Mr. Gilmore, and his play is one in which John Drew achieved a considerable success two seasons ago. It will be Mr. Gilmore's and the play's first appearance here this evening.

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