

# THE UGLY PRIMA-DONNA

The small town of Silver Creek was in a state of intense excitement over the news that a rare and wonderful singer, "in fact, one of the divinest voices ever heard upon the stage," as a New York daily had said, was going to visit them for one night on her way to San Francisco.

You should have seen the stampede to the music store for reserved seat tickets—for any tickets—for permission to stand inside the hall, in one day every inch of room in the shabby building was bought up and that a week before the time. All Silver Creek was either steeped in triumphant satisfaction or plunged in covetous longings.

The day arrived. So did the prima-donna and her attendants.

The crowd of sight-seers who were waiting at the railway station saw nothing for their pains, except three gentlemanly-looking foreigners who led an imperceptibly veiled lady into a cab.

Mademoiselle Cephele de Fascant was driven to the best hotel in the town.

No sooner were the doors of the "Music Hall" opened than a dense multitude took their seats, and thereafter ensued for one full hour such crammings of ruffles and squeaking past knees, and pushing of elbows, as had never been seen in that hall before.

And at last the three gentlemen entered, and arranged themselves as the orchestra; the subdued scrappings of violins, and rattling of silver flutes, held the greatest part of the audience spell-bound in breathless anticipation, and everybody prepared to be astonished.

So they were.

The prima-donna glided in from a side door, her long amber satin robe trailing over the carpeted platform, her white satin petticoat adorned with lace and embroidery, her gold hair flowing in ringlets, and sprinkled loosely with white camellias, her snowy throat enriched by gold, her dainty white feet decked with gilt butterflies, her small, upright figure so lithe, so graceful, rising out of a gold-and-white Moorish scarf, which was knotted loosely at one side.

A vision of perfect grace and Parisian taste was she; but the face which confronted the audience was the ugliest in the room.

A short of shock ran through the hearts of the throng. They had expected beauty to match the famous voice. Why not? The papers had called her young, attractive, the idol of every city.

Here was a veritable Gorgon.

There was a palpable silence as she swept to the front of the platform, where a bank of flowers did duty instead of footlights. The applause which had risen up like a whirlwind at the first glimpse of the gilded and white figure, was now hushed and dumb-smitten.

Mademoiselle Cephele turned with unmoved face to her orchestra, and straightway a low sobbing broke from violin and silver flute, like the softest whispers of the Aeolian harp, and the voice rose up, not glad and joyous as the tones of those who have found life a holiday, but sadly, proudly, purely, in its lonely beauty, like the voice of an angel who, wandering through sorrowful scenes in search of the All-Good, sings a song not of earth, but one taught by Heaven's ministers.

Oh, voice of majesty, of piercing, thrilling, pulsing, peerless sweetness! How it traced each vulgar soul in the old hall that night, and dragged them from their sordid selves to peep with awe-struck eyes through the golden bars to heaven! How it taught cold hearts their first lesson of love, of charity, of adoration to Him who rules above all! How it wanted the angel faces of the dead to weeping friends, and sent the innocent baby cheek back to nestle on the mother's yearning bosom.

Beloved voice, guerdon surely of a noble soul!

The song—or one should say the divine psalm—was ended, when a creak at one of the doors broke the intense stillness which astounded and emotion had bounded the audience with, and an old woman, dripping from the cold rain without, edged herself into the crowded building. She was ragged, and bowed together with rheumatism; a few sparse white locks fell from her old black bonnet over her poor, thin cheeks; her faded shawl scarcely hid her bony arms from the gaze of the throng, and her skirt, worn of cotton, worn to rags, had mended somehow to hang together. She had a basket on her arm filled with matches, spoils of cotton, tape, and needles; but the matches were spoiled by the rain, and her whole stock damaged.

"Come, come, Mother Pelletier," said the doorkeeper, taking her rather roughly by the arm, "you must go out of this; it isn't a place for the likes of you!"

"Ah, mon Dieu!" muttered the old woman, looking eagerly about with her keen, black eyes, "I heard a voice—a sweet voice. Where is it?"

Down stepped a lady from a reserved seat close by—a lady with gorgeous silks, and ermines, and opera cloak, all as fat, but her eyes were full of tears and her cheeks pale.

"She shall stay, Mr. Harold," said the lady; "the music will warm her poor old soul. A compatriot of your own, Mother Pelletier, a young Parisienne, and she sings like a seraph. Now sit down on this step near the stove, and look! she is going to sing again!"

The lady beck in her place, the old Frenchwoman crouching behind the stove, Mademoiselle Cephele responded, this time rapturously applauded, and began a tinkling French chanson, to the tripping measure of the accompanying orchestra.

As the lark-like voice rose and rose to higher flights of poignant melody, and the flute crept softly after, and the violin pinked the quivering trills, the breathless audience gradually had their attention diverted by a strange incident.

Old Mother Pelletier at first saw nothing but the rings of blazing bricks, and the melody of gaily dressed

## FARM AND GARDEN.

### MATTERS OF INTEREST TO AGRICULTURISTS.

Some Up-to-Date Hints About Cultivation of the Soil and Yields Thereof—Horticulture, Viticulture and Fructiculture.

THE WAY I GROW all kinds of roots: Plow under all the manure in the fall you can. Then plow deep in the spring. If your land is shallow, with a clay subsoil, it will take lots of fertilizing to bring it up. As soon as the land is in good condition in the spring, plow and drag. Then back furrow into a dead furrow. That will leave a ditch on either side. Now put the near horse in the furrow and set over your plow to the left of the furrow. Catching your eyes in a spot on the corner, and holding it over the furrows, the horse walks in them back on the other side. When you get the land as wide as convenient, take another dead furrow, and then the center between until you get it all done. If you will look ahead of you, you can make straight rows. If you have coarse manure, it will bother you some, but when you get done it will repay you. Then take the smoothing harrow and run over the rows lengthwise. Let the driver walk in the furrow. Go over it three or four times, and all of the lumps are in the ditch, the ridges will be a nice oval, and the fine soil on top will be firm. Sow your seeds in the center of the ridge. As soon as you get it ready, follow up the drag with your drill, so as not to let the ground dry before your seed-dril rollers run it over. Put in plenty of seed. You can cut them out, but can't always transplant them. I sow beets, mangolds and carrots as soon as the ground is fit. Ruta bagas on the 20th of June. The seeds on the ridge will start before the ditches. When the weeds start, I take a one-horse plow, put on a rolling coultter, and a slow horse, fix on the clevis so as to hitch low, and go on each side of the row, taking off one inch, except next to the roots. There I take off three-quarters of an inch, and throw it into the ditch. You can't do fine work with a fast-walking horse, as you don't want to leave more than two inches to hand-weed. Then, if near town, get some boys, but don't put them to weeding alone. Thin mangolds ten inches to one foot apart. Beets for table use, six inches; carrots, five inches. Then cultivate, throwing the ground from the center up to the roots, and when the weeds start, back with the plow. The one weeding and thinning will be almost all. We go over later, but it is a quick job. The cultivator should be run through often, after every rain if possible. Some other time I will give my method of digging roots.

F. D. Burch.

### Bad Bill's Theology.

Great Bend, Kan., now one of the best towns in the state, was at one time about the worst. This was when it was a railroad terminus, before Dodge City was established. A traveling evangelist went to Great Bend and tried to start a revival. There were a few Christians in town, and these all attended the first meeting, the only one of the unregenerate present being "Bad Bill," who took a front seat. Every one feared trouble when he walked into the church, but he sat quietly during the exhortation. The evangelist requested all who wanted to go to heaven to stand up, and every person present except Bill arose. When they were seated again Bill got up and drawing out a pistol, said: "You all say you want to go to heaven. Now, anything I can do to help this same along and give pleasure to the players I'm in for. You all want to go to heaven, and I'll give you as good a chance as you'll ever have. The first man that gets up I'll give him a ticket clean through, without any stop-over." The evangelist crawled under the seat and the members of the congregation lay on the chairs. "Well," said Bill, "I see you wasn't in earnest, so we will put out the lights and call this meeting adjourned." One by one he shot out the lights, and by morning the evangelist was on his way to Hutchinson, while the members of the congregation kept quiet and made no further attempts at holding a revival. —Washington Star.

### This Musical Story Is New.

James Mulligan, an employee of a logging camp, died in the woods a couple of days ago near Woodbeck, Mich. His friends placed his body and all his belongings in a coffin and shia to his family. They decided to carry the coffin to the railroad station. Eight stalwart woodsmen undertook the task of carrying it a mile over the frozen mud roads. They had not gone far when they suddenly stopped. Every one of them turned pale with fear and they nearly dropped their burden.

From within the coffin they heard the strains of "After the Ball" in the piping tones peculiar to a music box. Then some one remembered that the box which James bought to help shorten the long nights was packed in the coffin, and it is supposed the jarring caused the springs to relax. The men were assured and proceeded on their way.

If Jim hadn't been dead," said one of them, "after listening to that tone he surely would have died. No danger of his being buried alive now." —Chicago Tribune.

### He Could Wait.

The last day of a negro criminal in Texas had come. He was awakened and asked what he would have for breakfast, and told that he could have anything he liked.

"No, boss, I reckon I'll take my terribleness." —Texas Siftings.

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### Sauk County, Wisconsin.

#### Michigan's Fruit Institute.

(From Farmers' Review Special Report.)

On Wednesday morning Mr. Morrill continued his talk upon peach growing, discussing the "Cultivation and Care of the Orchard." He advocated giving up the land to the trees after the first year, but favored using the land for one year for some cultivated crop that would draw upon the land after the first of August, as it would aid in ripening the trees. The orchard should be plowed in the spring as shallow as possible, and should receive a frequent dragging up to the middle of August. By the use of a smoothing harrow or weeder, fifteen or twenty acres can be gone over in a day, and the dust mulch thus formed will do much to hold the moisture through a season of drouth. The first spring he recommended that the strong shoots be headed back, so as to give the weaker ones a chance to develop, all surplus branches being removed. After the first year cut back the new growth from one-half to two-thirds, beginning at the top and thinning out all weak and dead shoots along the branches. By thus shortening the shoots the danger of breaking down of the branches will be lessened and it will be much easier to thin and pick the fruit. Unless pains are taken to remove the extra shoots it will be better not to head back, as the tree top will be too thick. Do the pruning early in the spring, before the buds start, to prevent the exhaustion of the tree by developing an excess of pollen.

The thinning of the fruit should be done before pit formation begins, as, if delayed until the pit hardens, it will be a serious drain upon the trees. By thinning the fruit at this time so that they will stand six or eight inches apart, the full vigor will be thrown into those remaining and the crop will be larger and of much greater value than if not thinned. A large tree will often need to have from 3,000 to 4,000 peaches taken from it. To properly prune and thin an eight-year-old peach orchard takes about seventeen and one-half days per acre.

Mineral manures are particularly desirable for peach orchards. Stable manure is not desirable for good peach land, but may be used to advantage upon light sands. Wood ashes and ground bone make a complete fertilizer for the peach. They make the fruit buds harder and the peach cling closer, so that the loss in high winds is greatly lessened. In some soils there seems to be an abundance of potash and wood ashes are reported as producing no effect.

By mounding up the trees in the fall the formation of ice about the collar can be prevented, and if it is leveled down in July any eggs or young borers can be readily destroyed. If washes are

## THE JOKERS' CORNER.

### SOME UP-TO-DATE READING FOR OUR LEAN READERS.

The Yellow Dog—Honest Willie and How He Wiped Out a Debt—Why the Great Tragedian Became Alarmed—With the Wits.

LITTLE CHILD'S deep love was given, Unfettered from its tiny heart, To a dog, not great or noble, Or beautiful in any part; A yellow dog.

He was the butt of all the village, Was always being cuffed or kicked, Or tin cans tied upon its tail, Or other dogs upon its "sicked." This yellow dog.

The child was playing near a river, With boyish laugh and shout; He fell and drowning was he—When "Sic" pulled him out— This yellow dog.

From him let us a lesson learn, When a man is seedy, out of tin, Poor and old; we will not kick; A noble heart may beat within A yellow dog.

Wanted More.

Banker Spudde—I didn't hear you knock at the door of my office, young man.

The Young Man—I didn't knock. I wanted to be sure of seeing you.

"You don't appear to be lacking in nerve, sir?"

"I am, though. That's what I've come for."

"Yes, sir. And I come by permission."

"Wh-hat?"

"That's right. By permission."

"Whose permission?"

"Hers."

"Hers? Whose?"

"Your daughter's."

"Which one?"

"Miss Nerva."

"Good heavens!"

"Yes, sir. See?"—Chicago Tribune.

### Burnaby's Light Lunch.

The late Colonel Fred Burnaby had a prodigious appetite. When at a private tutor's in Wales he went on a walking tour, and turned in for a midday meal at a village inn.

On inquiring what he could have for lunch, the landlord announced a roast goose, hot, and ready to be served, and an apple tart. Burnaby was informed that 2s. 6d. was the price for the repast.

Having demolished the goose and tart, leaving only a few bones and an inch of crust to tell their tale, he proffered the 2s. 6d.

The landlord woefully accepted the coin, and, with a sardonic grin, ejaculated:

"Next time you are down this way, give my friend Jones at the Red Lion a call. I will give you 5s. 6d. if you will serve him the same way."—Answers.

### Janet Waited.

Little Janet, aged four, noticed the other day at dinner the rest of the family helping themselves liberally to mustard.

Nobody offering her any, she waited until something drew away the attention of the others, when she lifted the mustard spoon, liberally daubed a piece of bread which she was eating with the fiery condiment, and took a substantial bite.

Her hand immediately went up to her burnt mouth; but, bravely suppressing an outcry, she put the bread away from her, remarking:

"I think I'll wait until that jelly gets cold."—Phila. Inquirer.

### Winter Wheat in Iowa.

A bulletin of the Iowa experiment station says: Extensive variety tests of winter wheat have in times past been conducted at this station and the result reported in previous bulletins. The only variety of winter wheat thus far found to be adapted to this locality is the Turkish Red. The yield of this variety has not been less than twenty-five bushels per acre on the experiment station grounds and in 1894 and 1895 the yield reached 48 and 54.7 bushels respectively. The yield of winter wheat has invariably exceeded that of the spring wheat grown here and the quality has been uniformly better.

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## A Numerous Thrust.

"How?"

The savage chief held a glittering spear perilously near the captive missionary.

"—Do you like this?"

His tone was not facetious, but the captive was unflinching.

"Well, if you ask me"—

He glanced at the weapon, the propinquity of which was not comforting.

"—It goes against my stomach!"

Unfortunately, however, the captive was in a locality where there is no market for humor, and the end came soon.—World.

### And Nothing to Eat.

"Will he speak to me?"

There was agony written in every feature of her haughty face. She glanced fearfully at the man beside her and her heart sank.

"Ah, no," she sighed.

In fact, he had already remarked that it was a lovely evening and that he thought Wagner was too sweet for anything.

They were at an informal reception and there was nothing else to say.—Detroit Tribune.

### The Bar Rebuked.

Wife (to her husband, who is a great criminal lawyer, and who has found fault with the dinner)—"There you go again, always finding fault with my cooking. You never see any redeeming qualities in me and yet you have an excuse for every murderer that comes along."—Philadelphia Inquirer.

### Experiences Doct.

Salvino Amfat (with deep feeling)—And I have been blighted to star here for three nights!

"Yes," said Mr. Cash Byrnes to his boon companion, "I went to see Uncle Bill, and as soon as I stepped in he said, 'I can see by the looks of you what you want. You want to borrow a couple of dollars.' Then he pulled them out of his pocket and handed them to me."

"Liberal old chappie," replied the friend enviously.

"Liberal! I was just about to touch him for twenty, and he as good as knew it."—Indianapolis Journal.

### Capital and Labor.

A—Political economy is a ticklish subject. A man has to be wide-awake to understand all about it. For instance, the very ideas of capital and labor—

B—Look here; that is simple enough. Supposing I borrowed twenty marks from you; that would represent capital.

"To be sure."

"Then after awhile, you would be trying to get your money back. That's labor."—Zeitgeist.

### The Best They Could Do.

"Don't you sometimes make a mistake and lynch the wrong man?" asked the visitor from the East.

"We did once," replied the native, "but we offered to do the square thing by the widder."

"How was that?"

"We told her she could take the pick of the crowd for her second husband."—Life.

### A Champion of a Kind.

First Cyclist—Do you see that gentleman yonder? He holds the largest number of prizes and medals ever possessed by any one man.

Second Cyclist—What! that fellow? He doesn't look a bit like a champion.

First Cyclist—It is just as I tell you, though. He is a pawnbroker, you see. —Centralblatt fur Radspport.

### Purely Imaginary.

"Maria," said Boggles to his wife, with an idea of instructing her in political economy, "do you know what civil service is?"

"Jaaper," said Mrs. Boggles, with memory of recent contact with the cook, "there isn't any."—Boston Transcript.

### With the Wits.

"Have those people in the other flat been married long?" "I think not; he takes naps on her best silk pillows."—Chicago Record.

Gazley—Is it good to eat at night before going to bed? Lazley—Be definite, man; is what good to eat?—Roxbury Gazette.

"The game is up," remarked the hungry customer as he noted the advance in price of birds on the bill of fare.—Philadelphia Record.

"Poster designs are said to be often mere accidents." "Some of them must be regarded as fatal accidents, too."—Chicago Evening Post.

Teacher—Tommy, what is meant by "nutritious food?" Tommy—Something to eat that ain't got no taste to it.—Indianapolis Journal.

Mr. Doodle—You began life as a bare-footed boy, I understand? New Clerk