

THE HARP CAME BACK

Incident In the Career of an Old Time Opera Manager.

A SURPRISE FOR MARETEK.

It Came at a Time When Max Was Broke and the Sheriff Had Levied Upon All His Stage Properties—Mrs. Maretzek's Thanks to the Carpenter.

In the old days in New York city, before there was a Metropolitan or a Manhattan Opera House and when the center of the theatrical world was around Fourteenth street, Max Maretzek and Strakosch were prominent at the old Academy of Music. There was a keen rivalry between them. Strakosch had Nilsson, and Maretzek was exploiting Di Murska.

By some error of dates both were booked for New York at the same time. Strakosch was at the Academy and Maretzek, having closed a poor season elsewhere, had halted in New York before going to Philadelphia and secured a week at the Lyceum theater on Fourteenth street. There were strong bills at both places. Each manager had his friends, and the bill-posters had a busy time of it. A round of bills for one company was no sooner posted than the rival billposter covered up the poster with the rival company's sheets.

At last, for the matinee on Saturday, bills at both houses were suddenly changed, every vacant fence place plastered over quickly, and with a peering storm in the morning the managers began to put out "paper" to fill the houses. Alfred Joel was the business man for Maretzek and an adept at "papering" when necessary. With a house packed from parquet to gallery Joel had counted the boxes, found only \$100 in the house and announced it to Max when the curtain fell between the acts.

This was serious to Max. The ever ready money lender who had "put up for him" had a hen on the box office, a sheriff's officer was in waiting on the stage, and it was a question of reprieve before the properties and costumes could be liberated to follow the company to Philadelphia early next morning.

"Well, Alfred," quietly said Max, "I guess I'm used to trouble. But there is a good, big house anyway!" Then, turning to his wife, who was the harpist of the orchestra, he clasped both her hands, kissed her and remarked: "Let your fingers do their best. I want to hear you play. It does my heart good, you know, even when there's trouble."

There was hustling after the performance. Legal talent was at a premium, creditors were obdurate, everything that was supposed to be Maretzek's was temporarily in "hock," and Mrs. Maretzek in tears, with longing looks at the harp she valued.

The scene of negotiations was transferred to the greenroom just as the officers making the levy were searching for more, and when their backs were turned the old stage carpenter hurried Mrs. Maretzek away, then called her back again five minutes after and pointed to the orchestra.

The harp had disappeared. Clearing out everything on Sunday morning, while the boxes of properties were being taken away, Max and his wife stood in the center of the darkened stage. Both were crying. The instrument they valued most had been taken from them. Other things had been liberated, but no harp, and with a scene of grief that no others than themselves could have appreciated they were silent.

Then Old Man Guernsey stood between them and waved his hand above them into space. There were a creaking of pulley wheels, an injunction from the carpenter to "look out for your heads," and, lowered from above, came Mrs. Maretzek's harp, landing on the stage between them.

"Now you've got it again, get it away quick!" said Guernsey. "Stop crying and be thankful. That's all."

He moved off without waiting for thanks, and a pathetic scene with Max and his wife closed the incident. To them the harp was as a part of themselves. To lose it was more than a misfortune, and in a broken voice the lady called the carpenter back to her.

"Please let the harp thank you," said she, "and listen. It will speak with my hands on this Sunday morning."

She placed herself beside it, seated on a box, and, with a smile that chased away tears, gave for a moment or two, as only she could give it, the air of the doxology, "Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow."—New York Times.

Usually Max Te.

"Say, paw, what is a genius?" "A genius is a man who can do his own washing, sewing and cooking, my boy."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Weak men never yield at the proper time.—Latin.

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1. The contest is open to all living in Alachua county who is known by the conductor of the contest, vouched for by some reputable person, to them well known.
2. No employee, attaché or relative of the proprietor of L. C. Smith are eligible to participate in this contest, and will participate in no other.
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