

AMERICAN OPERA AND SANDWICHES

ENJOYMENT OF THE HIGHEST IN MUSICAL ART IS EXHAUSTING AND NECESSITATES TAKING FOOD BETWEEN ACTS

BY ALMA A. ROGERS.

IN MY last letter I promised to say something about the new opera, "Tiefenland," written by the famous pianist, Dr. Albert, of Berlin, which will be presented to the American public at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, with Eric Schmedes, of the Vienna Hofoper, in the tenor role. The opera has scored a great success here, where the critics are said to be the most merciless in the world. The music is fresh, original and modern, this last without being at all Straussesque, and while it is not to be classed with the tremendous things, like the Wagner creations, the opera will no doubt continue to please wherever presented.

The story is of that old and threadbare type which certainly must be rooted in avaricious human nature, as the public never seems to tire of it in whatever guise the puppeteer appears. In this instance the amour is strictly in the European fashion, with the country lord for villain, the pretty peasant girl the victim, and the honest shepherd lover her avenger. These elements of tragedy create a spiritual action in the play, which at times even suggests the melodramatic, as in the climax, where, after having strangled the villain lord and called the peasantry in to witness the deed, the hero swings the weeping bride to a seat on his shoulder and bears her away amid the plaudits of his friends. Schmedes' heroic frame carries it off very well, however, but with a shorter hero and a heavier fraulein one can imagine how a hint of absurdity might creep in.

The scenes, which are laid in the Pyrenees, accord perfectly with the hot temper of the unspoiled European blood, with which knives flash out as readily as the cut of the fishman of the American funny column.

Knife play is no joke in Europe, however, as any one knows who has had even a glimpse of peasant life toward the southern parallels. I had been most curious to observe the flow of human nature in the peasantry of the remote districts, and unexpectedly had the opportunity—or quite as much as found I wanted—this summer in the mountainous regions of Southern Austria. In a village of 200 people there were three murders in as many weeks, the result not of cause or premeditation, but just the unchecked fury of temper flamed by wine over trivial disagreements.

When one shuts the eyes of one's mind to the evil in the world, it is possible to dream of the near approach of the millennium. In America there is a wave of progressive thought that bears the dream forward. But Europe is a rude district of idealistic philosophy. It will be some time before the masses are even fit for self-government, and I'm thinking the sun will grow cold before that millennium appears.

The growing habit of American operatic managers to swoop down upon Europe and carry off the best of its products, has been heavily upon the Hofoper of Vienna this year. Besides Schmedes, whose American tour is already mentioned, Demuth, the best singer, alto, of the Hofoper, goes to New York; also Kurtz, soprano. The engagement of artists with the Hofoper permits a six months' vacation, which may be taken as in the case of these artists, for a foreign season. The new management promises to bring most of the stars of the world here before the year is over, so there will be new voices for the vacancies.

A group of students were recently discussing the improbability of finding another Siegfried who could please the Viennese public as does Eric Schmedes. He certainly makes an ideal Siegfried. His acting is perfect, his figure likewise suited to the part, and though his voice is big and above the ordinary, it is not the equal of his other qualifications. To be able to sing is but one of the essential elements of operatic success. Above all else one must know how to act, how to create the illusion of reality and thus bring into play the psychological element of the modern public demands. An audience of today is no more satisfied with perfect vocalization only than it would consent to hear Mozart and Haydn take the place of Wagner.

We saw Schmedes as Siegfried for the second time last night and were more than ever impressed with his art. In the first scene he is just the big rollicking boy Wagner pictures, fond of rough bear play and perfectly natural when he throws himself on his stomach and kicks up his heels like the healthy young animal he is. Then as the action proceeds his nature awakes, and he transforms the unthinking boy into the maturity of a phoebe suddenly opened. Through every phase of the process Schmedes prescribes that spirit of youth which is to me the chief fascination of the character. He is charmingly and irresistibly young every moment on the stage. Wagner in his mind, pure in heart, perfect in physique, Siegfried creates an ideal of young manhood.



KURTZ, SOPRANO. SCHMEDEW, TENOR.

Demuth, Baritone. Miltenburg sang the part better than usual, and Siegfried well earned the enthusiastic applause he received. Success to him in America. The new tenor, Dalmores, who is engaged at the Manhattan, New York, sang the role of Lohegrin last week. I thought I had seen this opera in America, but after witnessing the magnificent presentation at the Hofoper, concluded I hadn't.

Domestic Science Popular in East-Side High School

GIRLS IN KITCHEN LABORATORY SHOW EAGERNESS TO LEARN AND PLEASURE IN THE WORK

THE kitchen laboratory of the Portland East Side High School is the most recently equipped but by no means the least useful or interesting feature of the building. No knowledge or industry is more important to human happiness and well-being than that which makes the home; and it is in this room with its stoves and cooking tables and busy white aproned workers, that instruction is being given in those practical arts which will fit the students to meet their distinctive duties as women—the home-makers and the health-keepers of the world.

Of the young girls at work, some are taking the regular domestic science course, this year included in the curriculum, others are taking cooking and home economics as an additional study, but in all classes eagerness to learn and pleasure in working seem to be the rule.

The laboratory has been carefully planned for individual work. Each girl has her own set of simple kitchen utensils, her own little oven and gas plate. She must depend upon her own judgment and accuracy in the carrying out of any assigned task. "Don't try to use your neighbor's brains," says the teacher. "If she knows, you ought to know; if she doesn't know, she can't help you." So each one tries to do her independent best, with the aid of her notebook and occasional advice from the teacher, until the time comes for what Miss Tingle sometimes calls "the day of judgment," when all the "products" must be arrayed on a long table for inspection and comparison. Then is the time for learning by both your own and your neighbor's mistakes or successes—and failures are often more educative than successes. It is also the time for tasting—an interesting ceremony in which the lucky visitor is often glad to take part.

What is done with the cooked food? "People usually ask that question," says Miss Tingle, smiling. "It is not really a very difficult problem. In the first place, we are not dealing with very large quantities, nor are we actually cooking every day and all the time. Each cook has usually a 'tasting' of what she has made. That is necessary for the cultivation of skill and judgment. If she wishes to take the product home, she may do so, on paying for the material; but more often, if the dish is of a saleable kind and quality, we try to dispose of it in the cafeteria. The money thus received going to reduce the total expense for material. Then again, we are often able to use the same material for more than one lesson. Here, for instance, is a small lesson in economy."



COOKING CLASS AT WORK IN EAST SIDE HIGH SCHOOL LABORATORY.



ANOTHER VIEW OF THE LABORATORY WHERE MODERN COOKING METHODS ARE TAUGHT.

the dramatic demands of the later scenes, and altogether his work was one of the best things heard in the Hofoper.

Contrary to the custom of the former director, Mahler, who has also been gathered into the fold of the Metropolitan, the Ring has not been given in entirety this season. Three times a year—Fall, Winter and Spring—the Viennese were wont to crowd the Hofoper stage as at no other performances of the year. The new incumbent, Weinkartner, promised innovations and we seem to be getting them. The latest is the ballet, Aschenbrotel, whose staging costs \$8,000 kronen. More acceptable news is of a performance of Electra, by Dr. Richard Strauss, to follow the initial presentation of this opera at Dresden.

Francis Richter has now seen all of the Wagner operas, some of them more than once. No other work seems to afford so much material to the student. The Ring cycle alone, composed of four operas—Rheingold, Walkure, Siegfried and Gotterdammerung—stands as the greatest creation of human genius. But, indeed, much as I bow before its creator, I still wish that he had concentrated his genius into less space. For one must be almost more than mortal-like to the gods and goddesses he deals with—to endure the strain of seeing the Ring in succession.

All the Wagner operas are very long, lasting from four to five hours. To go at 7 and sit until 12 is something of an ordeal, unless you are born a musical genius and find the supplies you need don't make you break your back leaning forward to see, as mine did when we saw the Ring a year ago. Seats are always difficult to obtain at this time. Then, as early as 7 o'clock in the morning the line before the box office began to form. At 8:30, the time of opening, the crowd filled all the corridors and spread for the length of a block and more beyond the doors. At 11 the member of our party deputed to purchase seats succeeded in reaching the window, only to find that none remained under ten kronen, and two and a half hours had gone for nothing. Recourse was had to the burton.

A detailed description of the Ring would probably be tiresome. It can be characterized in one word—stupendous. The adjective can also be applied to the orchestral rendering and the artistic performance, as well as to the genius of its composer. The Hofoper orchestra is always increased for the Ring from its usual number of about 80 artists to more than a hundred. I use the term "artist" with intention for no man can play in the Hofoper who is not. Their work quite bears out their reputation of the world's best.

The whole Ring is too big to grasp at one seeing. Francis Richter, who certainly has the enjoyment necessary for appreciation, always enjoys the repeated performances best. For the uninitiated, the stage pictures and the melodies are about as much as can be taken in the first time. One young critic of my acquaintance, whose comparisons incline to a gastronomic basis, was so overwhelmed by his first experience that he declared seeing the Ring all at once is like eating a whole turkey.

Now that I have been brought down to the material, I am reminded of some of the amusing sidelights flashed on our first. For instance, I learned that ham sandwiches are the natural accompaniment of Wagner opera. When the curtain dropped on the first scene of the Rheingold, my attention was attracted by a rustling of papers in all directions and an assurance of sandwiches of various form and bulk therefrom. Closer observation showed that the more delicately disposed carried them in their pocket bags. But everybody had them.

I put this item down in my notebook of "local color" as a new and strange phase of things European. But after sitting through one production I realized that the ham sandwich as related to the stupendous Ring has a sound scientific basis, appealing to the first law of nature. It is necessary to the preservation of the individual.

It occurs to me to wonder if it is in order to explain that the observation has been recorded only to the multitude, as viewed from the top gallery, I would not have it thought that the elegant ladies and gentlemen who fill the parquet and boxes take the same merrits in this way! They go out for them, and a very pretty scene is made by the movement of exquisite gowns and jewels in the promenade.

Before giving up this epicurean topic I must tell about a happy couple—not young—who sat just across the aisle from me the night of the Gotterdammerung, and who may be taken as a type of their class. They looked like substantial shopkeepers. The wife no doubt, as so often is the case here, tended shop and cooked with perhaps a maid to clean and wash the dishes. She wore a bright silk waist, very light, with a collar embroidered by her own hand-working fingers. He was in a cutaway coat, also very light. A white fringed napkin containing sandwiches, with generous plink edges of ham protruding, was introduced after the first curtain. When the bell rang the warning, and people walking in the halls came back, the napkin disappeared, and its owners settled themselves with the most undisturbed attention to following another chapter in the destruction of the gods.

As at each intermission the napkin appeared again with contents apparently undiminished, I began to think the magic of the play had got into it, and became fascinated in watching the steady process of consumption. I am positive that my heart three sandwiches remained when Walthalla went up in smoke.

Since it really seems a crime against art to leave the taste of ham sandwiches in the reader's mouth when he has been decoyed to a Wagner feast, I shall retract and outline very briefly the story of the Ring.

Wagner chose from old German folk-lore a theme for this series of music drama that is rich in dramatic possibilities. It deals with gods and goddesses who build for their glory the palace of Valhalla, called Valhalla, with gnomes delving down under the earth, and with the giants upon it. Existence on these various planes seems to be fairly satisfactory until the theft of the gold from the Rhine-maidens, three charming nymphs who guard it by command of the

master-god, Wotan. This is the gold which afterward is snatched into the Ring. Trouble begins for everybody. For the Ring carries a curse with it, and as gnomes, gods and giants possess it in turn, and each has after the power it bestows, or which they think it will bestow, its ultimate function of the Ring is to sweep everybody out of existence, which it does pretty cleanly. The whole order of the world is toppled over. Wotan himself loses his godhood, even the heroic devotion of the lovely Brunhilde cannot avert the doom that smashes her from her lover and culminates in her death upon the funeral pyre of Siegfried. There is much burning of red fire about this time, and at last Walthalla itself is enveloped in flames, and the curtain drops.

To see these operas is to be assured that Wagner was an innovator. Not merely his style of composition is as different from the conventional Italian type as the sea from the land, but also his treatment of the themes. I have no means of ascertaining whether an opera without a chorus was ever heard of before Wagner's day, but I'd like to know. In the Ring he departs boldly from the chorus, and each has after the power upon the singers. In Rheingold is none, in Walkure one. Siegfried is in reality a series of solos with a single relief of duets, the whole tremendous creation being carried by just six people, of whom the hero does much the greater part. The Gotterdammerung contains one slight chorus.

That Wagner in spite of such undue disposition of his material was able to create masterpieces that hold their auditors fascinated, is sufficient proof of the divine right of genius to establish new standards. The chorus in the Walkure, though limited to the eight Walkyries, sisters of Brunhilde, who are Wotan's messengers to bear the fallen heroes to Walthalla, thrills beyond a host. In the Gotterdammerung one thinks more about the wonderful music which laments the death of Siegfried than the lack of people.

Further, and perhaps most wonderful of all, he wrought out his ideas in the face of a bitter scorn and poverty that would have crushed a smaller soul to bits, resulting in large degree the shrewd truth that all who depart from the accepted order of things must expect opposition and contumely.

Vienna, Oct. 11.

STOPPING THE WASTE IN OUR TIMBER SUPPLY.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2.—(Special Correspondence of The Sunday Oregonian.)—We are now cutting timber from the forests of the United States at the rate of 500 feet board measure a year for every man, woman and child. In Europe they use only 40 board feet.

Few statements could be made which would better convince the average man that this country leads the world in the demand for timber. It is made by Treadwell Cleveland, Jr., in a circular which treats of the conservation of the forests, soil, water and all the other great natural resources, which has just been published by the United States Forest Service. In speaking further of the consumption of timber in this country, Mr. Cleveland says:

"At this rate, in less than 20 years all our remaining virgin timber will be cut. Meantime, the forests which have been cut over are generally in a bad way for want of care; they will produce only inferior second growth. We are clearly over the verge of a timber famine."

"This is not due to necessity, for the forests are one of the renewable resources. Rightly used, they go on producing crop after crop indefinitely. The countries of Europe know this, and Japan knows it; and their forests are becoming, with time, not less but more productive. We probably still possess sufficient forest land to grow wood enough at home to supply our own needs. If we are not blind, or willfully wasteful, we may yet preserve our forest independence and, with it, the fourth of our great industries."

"Present wastes in lumber production are enormous. Take the case of yellow pine, which now heads the list in the volume of lumber cut in this country. It is estimated that only one-half of all the yellow pine cut during the season was used, and that the other half, amounting to 8,000,000 cords, was wasted. Such waste is typical. R. A. Long, in his address on 'Forest Conservation,' at the conference, pointed out that 20 per cent of the yellow pine is simply thrown into the woods—a waste which represents the timber growing on 300,000 acres.

"The rest of the waste takes place at the mill. The lumber cut in this country is so much of it that it would take a long time to speak of the material rejected at the mill as waste unless this material could be turned to use by some better and more thorough form of utilization. But in many cases we know, and in many other cases we have excellent reason to believe, that most, if not all, of this material could be used profitably. It is simply a question of intelligent investigation, and, more than all, of having the will to economize."

"But there are other ways to conserve the forests. One way is to limit the present waste of forest products. The forests can be made to produce three or four times as rapidly as they do at present. This is the case with the virgin forests and the cut-over lands. Virgin forests are often fully stocked with first-class timber, but this stock has been laid in very slowly, on account of the wasteful competition which is carried on constantly between the rival trees. Then, too, in the virgin forests there are very many trees which have reached maturity and stopped growing, and these occupy space which, if held by younger trees, would be laying in a new stock constantly. As regards the cut-over land, severe cutting, followed by fire, has checked growth so seriously that in most cases reproduction is both poor and slow, while in many other cases there is no true forest reproduction at all at present, and there is but little hope for the future."

Price the Candidates Must Pay.
Once my mother thought I was dead.
Once she spoke of me with pride.
That was the day I was born.
That was the day I was born.
Once she happily believed.
That I was dead.
Now she sits downcast, aggrieved.
For a stain is on my name.
Once she thought the day
Should be numbered with the great.
But her hair is swept away—
I've become a candidate.

Once my wife had faith in me,
I was her hero, her life.
Once she thought that I was free
From the ties of the law.
Once she thought I was clean,
Once she would have thought you lied.
Had you not been so mean
Or old Nick poisoning?
Once she did not think my touch
Might, or would, stain her name.
Now she doubts me very much.
I've become a candidate.

Once my children thought me grand,
Once they vied for my arms.
Now they turn my profit hand,
Thinking of my abominations.
Once they met me at the door,
Thinking I deserved their trust,
But they run to me no more.
They regard me with disgust.
Once I urged them to the top,
From the narrow path and straight,
Now, alas, I never may
I've become a candidate.

Room at the Top.
Robert T. Hardy in Lippincott's.
"The man who says room at the top, you know!"
The friend of an artist cried.
Said to me, "That's where they mostly go."
But I don't like my pictures asked!