

# NATURE'S CERTAIN



*Tetrazzini Said to Get \$5,000 a Performance.*

## VOCAL CHORDS THAT ARE AS VALUABLE AS GOLD MINES

**I**T WAS in Toulouse, in France. Before the judges of this year's group of candidates, in the public competition for the discovery of new tenors, a dark, handsome man, clad in the humblest of garb, advanced and began to sing. "It is Nicaut Villeneuve, the sand-dredger, the dog clipper," they remarked. "Oh, brave; but very ignorant." As brave as he was poor, for he saved many lives during the flood that devastated wide areas in the south of France; as poor as he was brave, for his repeated risk of his life brought him not a centime of reward to keep handsome body and daring soul together; and as ignorant as he was presumptuous, for he knew, with his eyes, not one note from another of the music he aspired to sing.

But when he sang! When the clear, crystal purity of his unequalled tenor notes welled, bell-like, upon the thrilling air, what a change in the attitude of the judges!

The cable heralded his name to distant lands. All France rejoiced, as though it had acquired a new government or another fashion. Riches—fabulous, uncountable—the homage of the multitudes, the passionate admiration of women, the luxuries of monarchs, the castles of their nobles, await the magic of his voice.

For he owns the great tenor's vocal chords, which make words golden, whose very breath is riches.



*Caruso, the High Salaried Italian Tenor.*



*Jean de Reszke, Retired from the Stage to Train Singers.*

warbling trials of her wondrous voice, preparatory to the glorious flights she must take in "Lucia." "The secret! There is no secret. The voice is an endowment, not a reward to be acquired.

"Ah, yes; a fairly good voice can be made more pleasing by expert cultivation; but it can never astonish, never inspire the supreme delight. The voice is not all, perhaps; to make the artist, there must be, in the temperament, the feeling for music, an instinct for the emotions of the heart. Yet these, without the vocal chords—alas, it is the poet born dumb.

"I? See—I have always had the voice. For sixteen—seventeen years I have sung, in Italy, in South America, in Russia. I do not take great care of my throat. I simply live the life that is natural to me, going and coming as it pleases me, rejoicing in the open air, enjoying the natural foods my appetite craves, letting my voice take care of itself, which is all that kindly Nature demands of me."

And through Nature's kindness, the diva draws \$3000 from Oscar Hammerstein every time she sings.

Adelina Patti—to hark back to the conjuring name—declared she never studied at all the art of the voice; it was born in her baby throat. Her sisters, both, were singers. One was Carlotta, a miracle in coloratura, whose lameness, from hip disease, alone debarred her from operatic rivalry with Adelina.

When the once peerless songbird was accumulating the \$3,500,000 which she has earned by her voice, and when people were being crushed to death in the frantic struggles waged nightly in New York to hear her nightingale notes, she was the cause of the contention between Mapleson and Abbey which resulted in the "high salary crime" that was supposed to be destined to hold the record forever in musical extravagance.

Abbey offered her a contract, with W. H. Vanderbilt as guarantor, at \$5000 a night; Mapleson offered her \$4000, and wooed her with flowers. Shylock as she can be, Patti has loyalty in her nature. She chose Mapleson's offer. But the price marked the beginning of the era of great music for the United States; it set a level to which others might aspire.

Yet only a few years ago, in what is regarded now as positively "her last appearance" here, when she had staid that unapproachable voice, Patti herself surpassed the record, in a concert tour, under the auspices of Robert

Grau, which was notoriously a failure.

She contracted for a minimum recompense of \$5000 a concert, with sixty in the series; and, every time she sang, she got the money. She was on the stage for no more than forty minutes. Apart from the royally splendid accommodations furnished her, at a cost which the unhappy impresario alone can estimate, she received \$125 a minute while she was at work.

She sang an average of 1800 notes during a concert, at the rate of \$2.77 a note. If she breathed every second, she earned \$2 every time she drew her breath. For all the failure of the enterprise, Patti returned to Europe with \$200,000 to add to her hoard—the rich gleanings from the last, exhausted vein of the gold mine she carried in her throat.

Melba has already attained the level of Patti's high salary of years ago. When she last came to the United States, with a corps of detectives waiting at the pier to undertake the safeguarding of her half-million dollars' worth of jewels, her opera contract with Hammer-

stein called for a payment of \$4000 a night, and she was to sing in a number of concerts at the same price.

She was expected to do little more concert singing than Patti; and, at the same average of notes, her earnings must have reached \$2.32 a note.

When the opera season ended in New York a calculation was made of the money that single city had paid for the pleasure of listening to the more or less famous singers of the Metropolitan and the Manhattan companies.

Included in the list were such sums as \$1000 for Caruso at every performance in which he sang; \$1500 each for Calve and Mary Garden, the latter the one woman on the operatic stage who has made daring costume and intense dramatic power replace, in a measure, the wonders of the perfect singing voice; \$1000 each for Jomelli-Renaud and Challepine; \$500 each for Emma Eames and Zenatello; \$700 for Geraldine Farrar, and \$200 for Ellen Beach Yaw, whose astounding high notes are esteemed less as legitimate vocalization than as preciosities of music, curiously interesting rather than potently thrilling.

When all was said and done, when the full account was taken, it appeared that New York's opera enjoyment had cost \$2,310,000; for the directors, the musicians, the minor singers—all the vast ensemble that makes up the opera—had to be included.

### \$4,000,000 A YEAR FOR MUSIC

Yet the season's music in Carnegie Hall, which cost \$650,000, and the miscellaneous concerts, that brought to their promoters a million more, were still to come into the account, until the musical expense bill of one great American city was only a trifle under \$4,000,000.

Yet of all these singers, from the great Grisi, whom childish Patti reproved, to the great Jean de Reszke, with his recompense of \$1250 a night, none has ever approached the enormous wealth which has come to one man, utterly unknown to fame as a singer.

Charles M. Schwab, with his fortune variously estimated at from \$12,000,000 to \$25,000,000, can look at the Carnegie residence on Fifth avenue and thank his lucky stars that, if his old patron was born with an ear for music, he himself was born with something like the vocal chords of a Caruso.

At 8 o'clock every morning a master organist takes his place at the great organ in the main hall of the Carnegie residence. For an hour, while the owner enjoys his breakfast, his taste for music is gratified. He is the same Carnegie to whom, years ago, bellicose "Bill" Jones sent the daily reports of the Braddock mills by messenger, because Jones and his chief always quarreled when they discussed them.

The messenger was a lad of 18, "Charley" Schwab, whose first appearance with the Jones report coincided with Carnegie's immurement in his home with an injured ankle. The boy, apparently, cared not a red cent about the mighty Carnegie; he was all eyes for the grand piano, in one corner.

"Can you play?" inquired the steel master. "Some," answered the non-dalant Charles. "Go ahead, then."

He went ahead, reveling in the splendid instrument, and speedily launching his strong and sweet tenor voice into songs that delighted Carnegie. He was held at the piano for two hours that evening, and Jones received word to keep on sending in his reports by the tuneful messenger.

The "Charley" Schwab who was Carnegie's songbird remained with him to become his partner.