

ARE THERE TETRAZZINIS AMONG OUR CHILDREN?

THE REMARKABLE EXPERIMENT A WOMAN MADE WITH HER DAUGHTER

IT IS believed that there are in this country many children who possess capabilities, now latent, of becoming operatic stars. Is your child among them?

Did you ever realize that it might be possible for your own little girl to rise to wonderful heights in the realm of song, even though she might not quite attain the plane of Madame Adelina Patti, who at one time received \$5000 a night for singing, or of Tetrazzini, who made the most recent conquest of music lovers in America?

"Take a child—even when it is in arms—and train it, and you may produce another Patti," remarked a competent teacher of vocal music, the other day. "The divine spark may be given to few, indeed, but the vocal organ can be perfected wonderfully in a most mechanical way in almost any child."

You never knew that before, did you? Perhaps you doubt it. Well, the teacher quoted is the mother of a little girl, a living embodiment of her theory, a product of her unremitting care, a child who composed a melody at 4, and plays Bach, Beethoven and Schubert and sings Wagner at 11.

Which recalls a story.

WILLETTE WILBOURN was born in San Francisco eleven years ago.

It was one cold day in the winter of 1905 that George Henschel, the great teacher, visited Madame Rita Wilbourn, the mother, at her home in an eastern city.

The great man had been asked to come and hear the "young lady." Madame Wilbourn wished to get his verdict on her system of training—of which you shall learn presently—and awaited the master's opinion with almost breathless interest.

It was snowing outside. A glowing fire shot sparks in the grate. Rubbing his hands, Mr. Henschel waited. The door opened, and the mother, beaming with pride, led a little girl—a rather plump little girl with a freckled face and wide-open gray eyes—into the room.

"This is my daughter, Willette, Mr. Henschel," said Madame Wilbourn. The old man rose, indignation bristling from every inch of him.

Evidently here was a child of only 9—so evident, indeed, that Mr. Henschel exclaimed, raising his hands:

"That girl—that—that— That the girl you asked me to come to see? Well, well, well, well—"

But gently the mother protested that the child could sing. She begged the great man just to listen—only to listen.

Well, he was there; he sank back in his chair, impatience on his countenance; he would listen; yes, yes, let the little girl sing; he was there, it would take but a little time longer. Let her sing!

ASTONISHED THE MASTER

So Willette sang. She tra-la-laed the "Swiss Echo Song," sang "Comin' Thro' the Rye," with a cadenza, and—what was this?—arias from the Wagner operas! Like sunshine dancing on leaves the childish voice rippled and played with marvelous flexibility, wondrous sweetness and unbelievable clearness. The uttered notes rose like winged birds, and arias fell from her lips like jewels. A perfect coloratura voice was developed, absolutely free of tension.

"Wonderful! Wonderful! The little beak is filled with song."

Clapping his hands the teacher listened, entranced, laughing with the sheer delight of the artist in finding perfect art. He grasped Madame Wilbourn's hand.

For such a thing had been unheard of. Most of the great singers began to train their voices when 18 or 20. But to begin to train a child's voice when it is yet in arms! When Madame Wilbourn first explained her theory to Henschel he pooh-poohed it; he would not listen. Impossible, foolish. And then Willette sang—

Madame Wilbourn's theory is that the vocal organs of a baby, which are plastic, pliant, can be perfected into pure singing organs or hopelessly marred. Take the baby when it is in arms, train it to utter tones, teach it the scales, and instead of coaching it in "baby talk" give it song scales and you may start a Tetrazzini or a Caruso on a career.

You mould the singer as the artist moulds clay. You take the child and stir the cords so they produce golden notes. Of course you—or the person who takes the child—must be able to sing.

"The reason there are no great singers in America is because Americans have not learned to train their voices," declares Madame Wilbourn. "There are thousands of people who sing execrably. Yet if children were taught, almost every child could sing beautifully when it grew up."

"But children are not taught at home nor in most of the schools. Go to a public school; you will hear the children howling, screaming, 'The Star-Spangled Banner' or 'Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean.' They sing at the top of their voices; they strain their powers to the limit; I shiver when I hear it. This sort of thing would ruin the most talented child in the world. And I am sure countless children—who might in time sing almost as well as Patti—are blasted by this reckless disregard of the voice."

CLOSE ATTENTION REQUIRED

"From the age of 4, children should be given tone study in the school. The most delicate attention should be given to the vocal cords. Parents with cracked voices should not teach their children to sing, however, but should get some one who can sing."

"In this country singing is lost art. Not one person in ten uses the vocal cords correctly, even in speaking. Singing and elocution go hand in hand, and the child should be taught to speak as well as to sing; the most wonderful voices are ruined by violent treatment."

If parents, instead of teaching baby talk and letting children sing the execrable so-called popular songs, would begin teaching their sweet lullabies and good music, wonderful voices could be developed in America.

And undoubtedly one has been developed in Madame Wilbourn's own little girl. At the age of 3 or 4 Willette was familiar with the themes of operas, and composed a number on the piano, "Birds up a Tree." She sings arias from the operas and after only a year's proper training at the piano plays from Bach, Beethoven, Poldini, Schumann, Grieg, Scharwenka and other composers.

Willette grew up in a musical atmosphere, naturally her soul absorbed it. Her fairy world was that of the "Nibelungenlied," and her fairyies and childhood gods were Siegfried and Brunhilde.

When a child of 3 she was told the story of how Alberich stole the magic gold from the bottom of the Rhine, how he bent and mistreated poor Mime, the forger of the Tarnhelm and the baby girl listened entranced to the story of Brunhilde, the shining Valkyria, who, because of her pity for Siegmund and Sieg-



Willette Wilbourn at 11 Years.



Willette Wilbourn at 18 Months Began Piano Exercise.



At 2 1/2 Years She Began Singing Melodies.

linda, was condemned by Wotan to mortality and to sleep until awakened by the kiss of the lover who was to come to her.

This magic world was Willette Wilbourn's child world, and you may rest assured that she loved Wagner more than taffy on a stick and spearmint candy. Even her dolls were named after the heroes and

heroines of Wagner.

But just how Madame Wilbourn trained the little child, using her own theories of development, is what is particularly interesting.

"When Willette was a baby," she said, "I let her use a nipple. One day, as I stood by the cradle, I noticed the action of the tongue. I studied it for ten

minutes. I realized that this movement could ruin her voice for life. So I did not give her the nipple. I relate this to show the extreme care that should be taken so that the muscles of the mouth and the vocal organs are not made defective."

"From the time the child was 2 to 6 months old I would sing fifteen minutes each day the tune of 'Old Aunt Tabby.' Soon the tiny mouth began to grunt the tune after me, and in two to three months the child began to coo the tone. And in six months she had perfected it. By this method I developed the child's ear for music; she got the theme of the melodies, and as a result could carry tones at the age of six months."

"Six months later I began to nourish the baby on scale practice, and sang selections from 'Habenera,' 'La Boheme' and 'Cavalleria Rusticana.' From the age of two years I trained the child with scale practice, with the idea of giving pure tone, and by the time she was 3 to 4 years of age she was familiar with the themes of the operas. At 4 she sang Mozart's 'Lullaby.'"

With infinite attention, Madame Wilbourn uttered intonation and tones—day after day, tirelessly, until

she was successful, and the child repeated them. At 6 years of age Willette's voice was flexible, clear, perfectly relaxed; she sang scales and trills and achieved perfect coloratura singing.

At the age of 18 months Madame Wilbourn put the little girl at the piano. Oh, no, she did not mean to teach her to play, but she wanted to train the little fingers, so that the muscles would gain agility on the keys.

Taking the tiny hand in her own, Madame Wilbourn would train the baby fingers, and this went on year after year. Willette naturally took to music as a duck to water, and at the age of 4 would go to the piano alone and ripple off simple melodies—one her own composition.

"Willette never knew a 'popular song,'" said Madame Wilbourn. "Once, when quite small, she went out on the street and heard some one singing 'There'll be a Hot Time,' and she came dancing home, shouting 'There'll be a Hot Time' with great gusto and glee. Her throat was tightened, and, unconsciously, she had adopted the frightful way of singing she had heard."

"I gave her the severest scolding she ever knew, and then I sang the song as she had. She realized how terrible it was, and laughed. Then I sang it softly and sweetly, and she never forgot that lesson."

According to Madame Wilbourn, a child should be taught tone at from the age of 4, while teaching articulation should be begun soon after it is born. From the age of 13 to 15 there should be an absolute rest and unremitting care, and study should be resumed at 15 or 16.

By this method five or six years' time would be saved the ordinary singer. The usual period of study is ten years. The average person spends from one to two years in a studio attaining an ordinary tone. Had training been begun in childhood, it would not require more than two or three months.

SHOULD ACQUIRE THE THEORY

A knowledge of the theory of music, Madame Wilbourn declares, is essential to the great singer. Children should learn to play the piano. Little more than a year ago Willette began taking lessons and progressed so phenomenally that at her first recital, a short time ago, she played a program of fourteen classics. Among them were the "Eighth Invention," by Bach; Beethoven's "Rondo," Poldini's "Harlequin," Von Wilm's "Toccata," and the "Dance of the Elves," by Grieg. And there were two original compositions—"The Witches' Dance" and "The Pixies' Dream"—by herself.

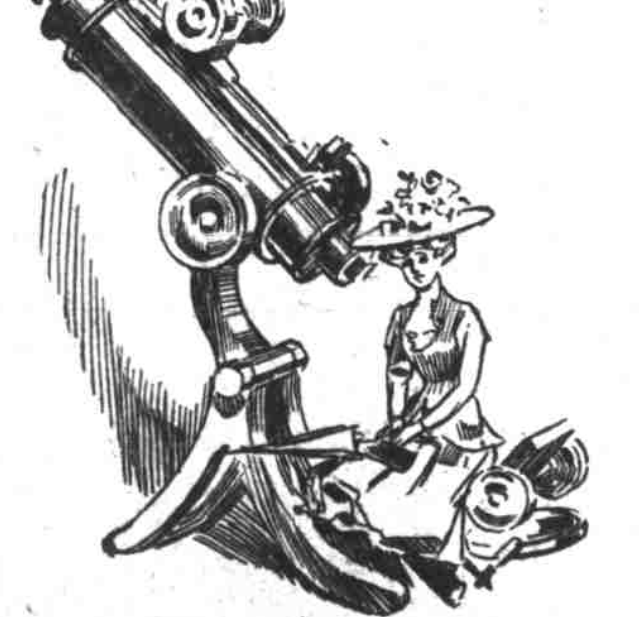
Three years ago Willette was taken to hear "Parsifal," and was so moved by the ravishing melody that she broke down and wept. The following day Madame Wilbourn, on returning from an errand, saw Willette in the bedroom with her dolls, giving a miniature performance of "Parsifal."

So familiar and intimate are Wotan, Siegfried and Mime to her that she would play with them. Siegfried was her hero, and when she would become frightened would excuse herself by saying, "Well, that might have scared Siegfried, too." You ask her about it, and she'll tell you: "I'm going to be Brunhilde when I grow up."

Willette goes to a private school, and although her world thunders with the chariots of Toner and the fires of Loki and the walling of the Rhine Maidens, she enjoys diabolo and roller skating as much as any other child. She is a chubby, healthy little girl, and so normal that there are days when she frets because she must practice from one and one-half to two hours—like any other child.

What has been done for this little girl could be done with many other children, according to the theory of the mother. "I expect American mothers to be wakened to the possibilities of their children," she says, "and when they do begin to make singers by teaching their singing at an early age, America may lead in vocal art."

Woman Under a Misogynist's Microscope



But it isn't well, always, to feed on flattery. Mental and moral indigestion may ensue. Now and then a man appears who is bold enough to announce the results of a cold-blooded, scientifically analytical study of woman—such as is given below, for example. Perhaps he has rushed in where angels fear to tread—but that is his business. Here are his conclusions.

By a Man Unafraid

"**W**OMAN, lovely woman," has, as a rule, been most generously treated, most extravagantly eulogized, in the domain of literature. In private oral discussion she is usually handled in a less rhapsodic fashion, and confined more nearly to her just dues.

Yet, even in this latter, less formal arena, she frequently carries away more than her honest share of the spoils of adulation, gathered in from the generous and unresisting hands of infatuated masculinity, basking still in the glow of passion's spring time.

Let us see if we cannot supply some of literature's omissions by holding in cold print an unbiased clinic on certain portions of the moral anatomy of our "gentle" sisters.

Be it understood, however, that we shall be speaking only of the "middle" and "upper" class members of the sex; that we shall not be making universal, but only fair average generalizations, and above all, that we acquit the management of this journal of even the slightest complicity in the violation of chivalry (in the interest of truth) which is about to be perpetrated. And now, "unto the breach, dear friends!"

Impious—as our friends, the lawyers, would say—woman is distinctly mercenary in her attitude toward

marriage. She looks upon a prospective husband first and fundamentally as a prospective "provider," and appraises his value mainly by that standard.

When he appears in the role of suitor, plump down upon his skin, in a figurative sense, goes her little, petty, selfish microscope, while she figures out just how much of money, how much of fine clothes, how much of theatergoing, and of envy-arousing display she may expect from him, in return for her physical surrender; for the absence of the transaction of any but the most attenuated sort of "love" reduces the contemplated relationship very nearly, if not quite, to this crass and material basis.

If he doesn't look good to her from her calculating viewpoint, it's adieu to his aspirations, but if he says well things are at once made unanimous, and in return for being "well kept" she will graciously permit herself to be loved.

Moreover, she will even begin, at times, to feel in herself the feeble glow and tepid warmth of an emotion which she imagines to be love, but whose main prop is her view of the prospective husband as the source from which are to flow all the tinsel blessings of ease, luxury and fine dress, which to her seem to constitute so large a measure of the things worth having.

DISCONTENT A COMMON LOT

A man—the average man—approaches marriage with his fountains of affection running over, ready and anxious to give all, asking only love, fidelity and appreciation in return.

Woman, on the contrary, advances willing to receive all, nay, expecting and demanding it in her secret heart, and requiring the moral assurance that she will get it, before she will begin to pass out even the debased coin of counterfeit love in exchange.

Even in those more or less exceptional cases where the women of today allow themselves to be apparently mastered by a genuine passion, they will in thousands of instances, with Spartan self-control, or moved by the counsels of sophisticated sisters or mothers, tear the holy emotion from their hearts, or insult it by cautious dalliance and delay, rather than forego the "pomps and vanities of this wicked world" to enter a meager life of self-denial with the object of their affections.

How rarely, moreover, does this genuine passion, even when it has obtained the mastery—still less that counterfeit presentment of it which is the only dowry of

multitudes of women—endure through the pro-ano course of the later years of married life, when the false glow of the honeymoon or honey-year is past, and when the burdens of children come, and household cares and enforced economies supervene, and when it gradually forces itself upon the woman's mind that her husband, though devoted, is doomed to mediocrity, and that there is little or no hope in the future that he will be able to "give her things like other women."

This mute but noble tragedy is written, in the streets and in public conveyances, on the features of thousands of married pairs bearing the outward signs of a scanty existence. The physiognomies of these present an interesting, though not a cheering study.

On the other hand, the husband is apt to be subdued, humbly solicitous, and mutely apologetic in demeanor, as though humiliated and depressed by the fact that he has not been able to pay the full price which the modern woman demands of a man for the valuable privilege of working for her.

But enough of marriage, as many a benedict has occasion to say when too late.

The lovely goddess presents some other striking contrasts to the "hardened male wretch." She has a distinctly lower standard of honor than her voracious and candor are less to be depended on than his; she has less of Christian charity and more of petty spitefulness than he; and she has more contemptible a attitude for prying into other people's business than he.

Illustrations could be adduced by the hundred if space permitted, which it does not; but for a simple exemplification of the relative standards of honor of the sexes, a fact may be mentioned which the experience of thousands will confirm.

In a game of cards for a prize, ten women will cheat to one man. Women will squirm and seek to evade the payment of a lost bet, but they are veritable shylocks in collecting. A more unfair and one-sided transaction than a game of cards for value between men and women is hard to conceive. Some will think this a narrow basis for a broad conclusion, but I know of no better test of the ingrained moral bias than this very one I have used.

Who will deny, moreover, that deceit is woman's peculiar weapon? and while men will lie, too, I know without fear of successful contradiction that for every man who will tell a lie about some particular matter, his duplicate can be found in the gentler sex, while thousands, yes, hundreds of thousands of women will lie industriously in matters upon which the average man would scorn to say aught but the naked truth.

NOW then it is well to "see ourselves as others see us." The fair ones of earth should certainly be pleased to do this, as a delightful reflection may usually be expected.