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MR. GEROW'S OPINION

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## MUSICAL TALKS

By C. C. Laugher, Mus. Bac. Bowmanville.

### The Opera

The Opera is a dramatic entertainment of which music forms an essential, and not merely an accessory part. Music and acting have been associated from the very early savage days when the music was only the beating of the Tom-Tom, and the acting was the wild movement of the war dance. We now regard opera as a great display of action, beautiful scenic effect, a big orchestra and fine singing. The aim of the opera is to interpret the drama, yet there is little speaking and much singing. There are various forms of opera and I will mention just the most important: opera buffa—comic or low comedy; opera dramatic—romantic; grand opera—all singing, full orchestra, high musical character.

Away back in the 16th century in a beautiful city of Italy called Florence, a few gentlemen gathered together to discuss how to discover or recover the music of the ancient Greek drama, which had been lost for many centuries. The names of these gentlemen were Galileo, father of the astronomer, Caccini, Peri, Strezzi, Renuccini and some others. They met at the palace of Giovanni Bardil and they called themselves "La Camerata." They talked of the ancient Greeks and of the Romans who sang their tragedies throughout on the stage, accompanied by an orchestra of lyres and flutes. This group of men thought it would be a great thing, and worth the effort to revive that same kind of stately entertainment.

### Renuccini

One man of this company named Renuccini, wrote a story for a drama and named it "Dafne" and produced it at the house of Count Corsi, but the score has been lost. Three years later the same man, Renuccini, wrote another poem, the story of a musician named Orpheus and the opera was named "Euridyce." Two musicians of the company, Peri and Caccini, wrote music to it, but the music of Peri was considered most appropriate. This opera "Euridyce" is considered the first opera ever written, and was presented at the festivities to celebrate the marriage of Henry IV. of France to Marie de Medici. Of this opera we know very little concerning the costumes they wore or the stage setting, but we do know that the composer sang the hero's role, and back of the stage Signor Corsi presided at the harpsichord. This little gathering of men who worked out this opera intended it to be a revival of Greek musical work, but in place of that they unknowingly became the originators of opera as we have it today. Euridyce contains the great principle of the modern opera. Renuccini seven years later wrote the libretto for the opera "Arianna" and "Orfeo." The music was written by Monteverde.

### Monteverde

The father of instrumentation is Monteverde. He was the first to put character to the orchestra. To the opera "Orfeo" he collected an orchestra of more than 30 instruments. Monteverde is the man that invented the tremolo and pizzicato in violin playing. His orchestra consisted of such instruments as flutes, lutes, viols, harpsichords or spinet, and the orchestra was always placed behind the scenes. So far all operas had been performed in large houses or castles and not until opera was in vogue thirty-seven years, was an opera house built. The first opera house was built in Venice and from this time on the growth of opera spread into other large cities particularly Vienna and Paris.

### Lulli

A boy named Lulli was brought from Italy when a child and worked in Paris in the kitchen of the niece of Louis XIV., later, being dismissed, his musical ability earned for him a position as violinist in the King's band. He afterwards became the greatest musician of that time. Lulli wrote 20 operas in less than that number of years, and he is regarded as the originator of the overture. He is also called the father of Grand Opera and is important as having put the French school on a firm basis.

### Handel

Handel was born about one month

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earlier than the great J. S. Bach in the year 1685 and lived 74 years his father was a barber, and was strong against Handel being a musician. It was his desire that young George should be a lawyer. He was not allowed to attend school because he would be taught the scale but somehow a small piano called a spinet was smuggled up into the garret and George learned to play while his father was at work. Handel was recognized as a great composer, and when I tell you that he wrote 321 musical works, it seems hardly believable and included in this was the priceless heritage "The Messiah." I trust that every music student will hear this work, it is the "King of oratorios." The former part of Handel's life was taken up in the writing of operas of which he wrote 41. Then in deep disgust at his own bankruptcy brought about by an opposing element, who pushed to the front an important musician named Bononcini, Handel gave up operas and took to writing oratorio for which we know his fame as a genius rests. Later Bononcini had to leave London, having been discovered in a dishonorable effort of claiming another's composition as his own and Handel was left master of the field.

### Gluck

Another man I wish to speak of is Gluck, a great original thinker. He made some changes in opera. He was born in 1714 in Bohemia but studied opera in Italy, but the later part of his life was spent in Paris. Gluck broadened out opera, also making the overture convey the character of the play to the spectator. Against Gluck was placed another musician named Piccini. In 1776 a man and his party sought to give Gluck by introducing the old form of Italian opera. He aroused great sensation and considerable party feeling. The musical world was split into two powerful parties, Gluckists and Piccinists, and there was a great fight, although no record of actual spilling of blood. This is the way it was settled: Each composer to write the musical part to the opera called "Iphigenia in Tauris" and the music considered the most appropriate would be pronounced the "winner of the day." Gluck produced his opera in 1779, and proved his masterpiece. Piccini's appeared some time later and suffered sadly by comparison.

### Wagner

Opera cannot be spoken without the name of Wagner. Wagner is spoken of as the reformer of Opera. He made it more real. He arranged that music be set to words and not words to music. Wagner is the most important figure in all the three hundred years of opera. He brought music to its true purpose to support the poem to strengthen the expression and feeling. The world is willing to say that the art for which the nineteenth century will doubtless be remembered is the musical and dramatic art of Richard Wagner.

In closing it will be seen that Italy is first responsible for opera and Italy is just proud of the honor due that Verdi, the grand old man in opera of the 19th century is an Italian. Verdi was born in 1813 and died 1901. He wrote many operas and his opera Falstaff is supposed to be his masterpiece and was written when he was 80 years of age.

## War-Made Millionaires

### Duped by the Dealers

### Who Reap Rich Harvest

DURING the war the art dealer has reaped a rich harvest, and there is no reason to believe that he is not reaping it still, for the demand for valuable oil and water-color paintings is unprecedented. War-made millionaires, says London Ideas, who openly admit knowing more about a bale of cotton than art, have paid stupendous sums for alleged "old masters" which in reality are not worth the canvases they are painted on.

There are at the present day art factories and studios in France, Belgium and Austria which are turning out these show "old masters" by the carload. Paintings by Rubens, Hals, Vandyke and Rembrandt have all been duplicated innumerable times, and even yet the game goes merrily on.

The painting of these spurious masterpieces employs a large number of broken-down artists, who work on what is known as the "part-picture" principle. One artist paints the head and arms, another the masses, whilst others touch up draperies and fill in back-grounds. By this method the painting occupies less time and looks more realistic than if performed by one man. The brilliant colors, marked in "old masters" are easily obtained by first impregnating the canvas with special chemicals, whilst the dirt of centuries is applied with a mixture of gum and powdered black cinders.

The finished canvas is now ready for framing, and here again the spurious art manufacturer shows his ingenuity by placing it in an old worm-eaten frame, the material of which was probably obtained from a neighboring barn door, or secured at the demolition of an ancient cottage or church. The completed masterpiece—of trickery if not of art—now passes into the hands of the crafty art dealer, who, if he has no customer with more money than sense, on whom to palm the picture, invariably takes it to a second-hand shop, where, by arrangement with the proprietor, the faked painting is placed in the window, probably upside down, or under a heap of old books.

Soon after a "green" collector, looking for a bargain, will rush in and, in his excitement at having discovered an apparent Rubens, will not realize how the price is being run up until it is too late to draw out. Only on getting his worthless painting home, is he left to meditate upon his folly.

Cleaning up and revivifying old pictures is another trick of the trade which brings a substantial increase to the art dealer's income. It is by no means an extraordinary thing for an art dealer to buy a collection of worthless paintings for a few pounds and afterwards sell them for as many hundreds. Wielded by a competent man, a brushful of black oil paint will soon force the name of some dead artist whose work is in constant demand, whilst experts on art declare that there is nothing like the pulp of a raw potato to tone up and bring out the colors of a faded painting. A small quantity of picture varnish is now cleverly applied, the frame regilded, and once again the crafty art dealer has a real, genuine, "old master" for sale.

### Female Magistrates.

Seven women have been appointed magistrates in Great Britain, in pursuance of an Act of Parliament making members of their sex eligible to such an office. They are: Mrs. David Lloyd George, wife of the Prime Minister; the Marchioness of Crewe, younger daughter of a former Prime Minister; the Earl of Rosebery; the Marchioness of Londonderry, who recently opened a political salon; Mrs. Humphrey Ward, a famous author; Mrs. Sidney Webb, who has been active in investigating social and industrial conditions, upon which she has written important works, and who has served on Government missions; Miss Elizabeth Haldane (sister of Lord Haldane), who has been conspicuous for many years in welfare and educational work, and Miss Gertrude Truckwell.

They are to constitute also a Women's Advisory Committee to advise the Lord High Chancellor as to the fitness of other women for magisterial office when vacancies occur.

These appointments were made by the Lord High Chancellor (Lord Birkenhead, better known as Sir Frederick E. Smith), the highest judicial officer of the British crown, who appoints all judges as well as justices of the peace. He regards women as especially qualified for work in children's courts.

### He Had to Play.

The best story ever told by Major Regan, veteran bandmaster of the British army, concerns a music hall manager of the old school who once entered the place during a band rehearsal. Soft music was being played, and the trombone player was not required. "Why ain't that chap playing?" demanded the manager. "Well, they are play pizzicato, you see," was the explanation volunteered. "I don't care a hang what they're playing," roared the irate one. "Tell him if he cannot play pizzicato or any other dashed tune that is put in front of him, he's to get out of my band."

### A Dreamy Journey.

When the projected trans-Australia line from Oodnadatta to Port Darwin is completed the traveller on it will be confronted with what will be, probably, the longest railway journey in the world. The greater part of the route lies through a desert region, practically devoid of life, and utterly uninteresting.

## Man Perishes in Severe Blizzard

Louis Michaud, a former resident of Madawaska county, perished in the recent blizzard which buried the country districts on both sides of the upper St. John river. Michaud, who was a farmer of Caswell plantation, had been to Caribou with a load of potatoes and was caught on his way home by the heavy storm. A day or two later George Walson, another farmer, noticed a pair of horses belonged to Michaud and with the aid of neighbors went in search of the owner.

The tracks in the deep snow indicated that the horses had become stalled in a drift, that Michaud had attempted to dig them out and that finding this impossible threw the blankets on the animals. He had evidently removed his heavy coat and taking his lantern started for shelter. His body was found in the snow a short distance from John Brown's barn. The man was apparently too exhausted to reach the barn. The medical examiner pronounced death due to cold, exposure and exhaustion.

J. V. Albert, a farmer and potato dealer living near Caribou, almost perished in the same way. He was caught on the road, and his horse became exhausted when he luckily stopped near the home of another farmer, where he obtained shelter.



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