

EMMA JUCH.

[Metropolitan Review.]

A recital of the incidents in the career of this young cantatrice would fill a volume and unfold an interesting story of the endeavors of a brave girl seeking self-improvement and a high standard in musical art. Nature, notwithstanding her munificence in other directions, vouchsafes to few the ultimate genius of song. Among those thus gifted, Miss Juch has won for herself a commanding position and now ranks as the foremost American soprano upon both operatic and concert stages.

Born in Vienna during a visit to that city by her parents, who were citizens of the United States, called abroad to testify in a suit involving an estate (left the Juch heirs by their grandfather, General von Juch of the Austrian army), the little Emma was brought back to America when scarcely two years old. To quote *Harper's Weekly* of January 9th, 1886, "America may fairly forgive Miss Juch for coming into the world abroad since she was sufficiently patriotic to be born on the Fourth of July." As come the priceless tapestries in the ateliers of the Gobelins only from the hands of those artists the father and grandfathers of whom have in preceding generations plied the matchless looms, so only the fruit of the muses ripens in one the ancestors of whom have prepared the soil. The passionate blood of Italy mingled with that of Austria in the veins of Justin Juch. He was inventor, artist, musician, and from the famous Von Juch inherited indomitable will and lofty ambition. From the French-Hanoverian mother Emma Juch unquestionably received the gift of voice, for the exquisite singing of her maternal grand-dame is one of the traditions of the family. With a perversity that almost broke the spirit of the little Emma, the father refused to permit her to follow the dictates of nature and study to become a singer. With a determination equal to that of her parent, she worked in secret, and finally was asked to appear at a "pupils' concert." The unusual preparations at home awakened the father to the truth as to the nature of the occasion, and, much to the consternation of the young songstress and her assisting relatives, in one of the most conspicuous seats sternly sat Mr. Juch. Courage returned to the small debutante as she gazed across the footlights, and her resolution to succeed and win even her father, was as definite and inflexible as the military mandates of the old General von Juch. Emma's triumph was quite complete. The *New York Herald* said: "The principal feature of the concert was the singing of little Miss Juch. She has a rich, pure soprano voice, extensive of range and great power. She executes the most florid passages with artistic skill and possesses all the qualifications of a brilliant artist." The father arose from his seat and left the hall. Upon reaching home he folded Emma in his arms and wept, upbraiding himself for his blindness and neglect. From that time Mr. Juch devoted his life to training his daughter's voice. For two years no singer ever passed through severer discipline. Miss Juch is indebted to her father's rigid schooling for that charming quality of voice likened to a silver bell. The possession of an unfailingly even tone, bird-like execution, intelligent phrasing, distinct pronunciation, pathos, passionate declamation, and charming stage manners form a unique cluster of gifts.

Mme. Murio-Celli early recognized the talent of the girl, and gave to Miss Juch that training for a successful operatic career which her large experience made her peculiarly able to impart.

In May, 1881, when she was not yet eighteen years of age, Emma Juch was engaged for leading soprano roles in Her Majesty's Grand Italian Opera, in London, under the direction of Col. Mapleson. In June, 1881, she made her debut as Felina in Thomas's "Mignon," and continued her success as Gilda in Verdi's "Rigoletto," Queen of Night in Mozart's "Magic Flute," Martha in Flotow's melodious opera of that name, Marguerite in "Faust," the Queen in "Les Huguenots," and Isabella in "Robert le Diable." She continued with Col. Mapleson during three seasons with unvarying success. Her work was of the most arduous character. Obstacles that would have crushed a less resolute girl melted into air before the calm determination of this young American. Disraeli wrote: "The greatest advantage a writer can derive from music is that it teaches most exquisitely the art of development." The same law applies to the studious singer. She advanced rapidly, and when convinced that Italian opera offered no further progressive work, she took advantage of a lapse of contract committed by the impressario.

Shortly thereafter, having been favorably brought to the attention of Theodore Thomas by Mr. William Steinway, she accepted an offer from Mr. Thomas's manager to share the arduous duties imposed upon Mmes. Nilsson and Materna, on the famous tour of the Wagner artists—Materna, Winkelman and Scaria. Miss Juch alternated with Mme. Nilsson in singing the role of Elsa in "Lohengrin." Her fresh, sympathetic voice fascinated all. Since that time, in the three seasons of grand opera, thousands have been thrilled and touched to tears by the ideality, pathos and poetic beauty of her rendering of Elsa. So thoroughly did she deserve the plaudits given her throughout that famous tour of Wagner music, that Mr. Thomas has since intrusted the young artist with much of the important soprano work in his exacting concerts. She has never failed the confidence placed in her ability by the great conductor.

After the inception of the American Opera Company, Miss Juch was the first artist engaged. At that time Dr. Leopold Damrosch also endeavored to secure her for the Metropolitan Opera House. London and German impressarios offered most favorable conditions. All were refused, to sing in the National Opera. Her admirable work in that enterprise had greatly to do with the noble standard in excellence of representations for which it became so famous. In the three seasons Miss Juch sang in six roles one hundred and

The Celebrated Steinway Piano used by The Emma Juch Grand English Opera Company.