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THE NORCROSS OPERA COMPANY.

We have had for Toronto an unprecedented season of opera. Three entire weeks, besides Wednesday and Saturday matinees, to good houses, is an event heretofore unknown in the history of the city. During this time the cast has undergone several changes and four operas have been performed. Opening on 11th July, at Horticultural Gardens, the company played "Olivette," an opera of the French comique school, composed by Audran, and which has met with considerable success in the United States. There seems, however, little to recommend it beyond some light but pretty music and a funny plot. Not so with the "Mascot," an opera by the same author, which was performed during the entire second week. The plot of this opera may be briefly told as follows: Rocco, a farmer (Mr. Crompton) complains of his ill-luck, and after several vain appeals to his wealthy brother he at length sends him Bettina, his keeper of turkeys (Mrs. Carter). Rocco complains that his brother but laughs at him and sends him one more mouth to feed. Rocco's shepherd, Pippo (Mr. Laurent), however, is glad, because he and Bettina are lovers. Rocco catches them kissing and dismisses Bettina, who, before going, asks if there is any reply to the letter. Rocco then reads the letter and learns that Bettina is a Mascot; he is at a loss to know what a Mascot is, but the letter explains that it is one upon whom the blessings of heaven rest, and who will bring good fortune and happiness to those with whom she lives. Having made this discovery, he tells Bettina to stay and not to think of going away. Fortune already begins to smile upon him, when Prince Lorenzo (Mr. Sidney Smith) while hunting, rests at the farm. The Prince is attended by his daughter Princess Fiametta (Miss Carlton) and her lover, Frederic, Prince of Pisa (Mr. Wilkie). While at the farm Prince Lorenzo discovers that Rocco possesses a Mascot, and determines to take her to court; Rocco pleads his ill-luck and begs to be allowed to retain her, but the Prince tells him that his petty ill-luck is nothing compared to his royal ill-luck. A bargain is made by which the Prince is to take Bettina (whom he then and there creates a Countess) to Court, and by way of compensation makes Rocco Grand Chamberlain. Bettina begs that her shepherd lover may be allowed to accompany them, but in vain, and poor Pippo is left behind. Now, the tradition is that should the Mascot marry other than a Mascot, all good influences cease, much merriment is caused by conflicting interests. Prince Lorenzo and Rocco having the strongest interest in preventing a

marriage. Bettina pining for her freedom, and her shepherd lover watching an opportunity to carry her off, Pippo at length obtains admission to the palace disguised as an acrobat, makes himself known to Bettina and arranges with her to escape; he is discovered and sentenced to be summarily hanged. The Princess Fiametta, (who much to the disgust of her *fiancée*, Frederic, had fallen in love with Pippo when meeting him at the farm,) discovering him a prisoner, dismisses his guards, declares her love for him, summons her father and insists on his permitting them to be married. The old Prince says it is a terrible *mesalliance*, but reasons that if Pippo were married to Fiametta, Bettina won't want him, so he creates him a Duke and gives his consent. The marriage ceremony is about to take place (both Bettina and Pippo having been made to believe each other false) when their eyes meet and instantly they perceive their mistake, a few words and they understand each other. The Prince perceiving this orders Pippo's arrest, when to avert such a catastrophe, the lovers spring into the river which flows by the palace windows, and escape. The third and last act discovers the Prince Lorenzo and his daughter, fugitive, and disguised as itinerant musicians, having been beaten and dethroned by Frederic (all his ill-luck having returned when the Mascot escaped). Pippo and Bettina, (the latter disguised as a soldier), have been winning distinction in the army of Prince Frederic. Frederic is asked to permit the ceremony of the marriage between Pippo and Bettina upon the battle field, he consents, and hasty preparations are made and they are forthwith married. At this moment, Rocco discovering what is going on, and finding that he has nothing more to hope from Lorenzo, informs Frederic that Bettina is a Mascot, and that although married, she will not lose good influence until she has given up the orange blossoms and received the first bridal kiss. Upon hearing this, Frederic becomes as anxious to preserve the Mascot to himself as he had previously been to marry her to his once rival Pippo; to secure this end he orders a guard to be placed at the door of Bettina's chamber, whither she has entered to change her bridal robes, at the same time Rocco informs Pippo that she is a Mascot, and that at the first bridal kiss all his distinction, position and wealth will vanish and he become again a poor shepherd. Bettina calls him and he is permitted to see her; Rocco warns him that he will be watched, and should he show any weakness, he will play the legend of the Mascot. Old Prince Lorenzo finding that he cannot keep the Mascot, is determined, if possible, to prevent Frederic from possessing