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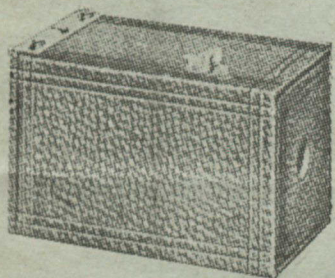
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AMELITA GALLI-CURCI

(Continued from page 22)

scored his great coup by securing her on a long term contract for the Chicago Grand Opera. Campanini is the brother-in-law of Tetrizzini and obviously knew what he was about. She made her American debut at Chicago on November 18th last, which happened to be her twenty-seventh birthday, and the news that a new and great singer had arisen spread like wildfire through this continent.

The question naturally arises as to whether Galli-Curci is as great or greater than her predecessors in her particular field. It is generally admitted by critical listeners, that she is the greatest singer of her generation. The number of men who can boast of having heard Patti, in her prime, is rapidly growing less, and their memories are naturally coloured by the glowing enthusiasm of youth. But it is such men who are most enthusiastic in praise of Galli-Curci. She seems to have restored emotions they never expected to enjoy again. Those who cannot make comparisons are content in the knowledge that her voice is divinely beautiful, and her gift to this generation is the more acceptable because it is so rare. The tendency to give dramatic interpretation a preference above vocal art, pure and simple, has led to a condition whereby the operatic manager finds increasing difficulty in casting the older works which demand the highest vocal accomplishment.

The singers whose names have been most frequently mentioned in association with that of Galli-Curci are, however, those of Patti and Jenny Lind—the latter because her conquest of America sixty-seven years ago, resembled the present acclaim given Galli-Curci. Dr. Fuller Maitland, the Dean of British musical critics, says that Jenny Lind was the greatest soprano singer of the nineteenth century and that Patti comes immediately after. Manuel Garcia, the great singing master who lived in possession of all his faculties for over a century, gave the palm among all great singers he had heard to Giuditti Pasta, who was born in 1789 and died in 1865. He would often speak of the ravishing beauty of her voice and the perfection of her *fortituri*. Since he was the brother of Malibran, and the teacher of Jenny Lind, this was authoritative praise, though Malibran, the most popular *prima donna* of her day was not in a real sense a *coloratura* singer. She was a phenomenon, great in soprano roles and still greater in contralto roles. In Great Britain the seal has been set on the fame of Jenny Lind by the fact that she is the only vocalist who has ever been honoured by a memorial in Westminster Abbey.

THE twentieth century is not likely to produce anything greater than Galli-Curci. After hearing her Dr. M. L. Bartlett, of Des Moines, Iowa, who is styled the Grand Old Man of Music, in the Middle West, a man who has heard most of the great singers of an elder day, put the case of the past and present very happily. In his opinion, none of the singers of the nineteenth century touched the sublime heights, in all respects, reached by Adelina Patti, but he adds, "In the world of art it seems that every generation sends forth one with a message, coming with divine authority and command. Taking into consideration times past and present a star of such radiance and brilliancy as Galli-Curci is an epoch-making event."

As yet I have had no opportunity to hear this artist save in a single concert at Toronto, in which, it will assuredly surprise some who heard her on that occasion to learn, she was not at her best. In fact, she was suffering deep distress from a cold, and was afraid to let her voice out in its full volume for fear of a break. Yet this furnished but the greater proof of her rare artistry; for with conditions against her she managed to evoke a tone so ravishing and pure, to interpret a wonderfully varied programme with such feeling and *finesse*, that every listener felt supreme satisfaction. This is ample proof that while she may have been self-taught, her capacity to school herself was phenomenal and unquestionably aided by her fine ear and complete grasp of music as an art. It is not generally known that Patti's method was also largely intuitive. Hermann Klein, in his delightful book "Thirty Years of Musical Life in London," says, "Patti tells you that she never studied the art of producing or emitting the voice. Nature, alone and unaided, accomplished that marvel. Her vocalization is one of those miracles that cannot be explained. Its wondrous certainty and finish are assuredly not arrived at without some labour; but in the end the miracle seemed to have accomplished itself." Patti, too, is gifted with a phenomenal ear for tone and pitch, and so is Sembrich, who in early life was an excellent violinist, for which a sense of pitch is absolutely essential.

It is not advisable, however, to carry a belief in self-instruction to undue lengths. It is a matter of record that if Jenny Lind had not had the good fortune to meet with Manuel Garcia, who gave her lessons after she had become a noted singer, her voice would have broken down early in her career, owing to her faulty method of production. But, history, as well as her own experience, justifies the view of Galli-Curci, that the singer who wishes to win high distinction should obtain an all-round musical education, including a thorough knowledge of the piano, rather than devote herself to mere singing exercises.

A woman with a voice of impeccable beauty, whose tones have a true, spontaneous, emotional appeal; a woman of high artistic intelligence, with youth and fortune on her side; such is the Galli-Curci of to-day. The favourite alike of nature and of destiny, there is abundant hope that her voice may long be preserved to be the delight of the present and the rising generation; and to become the theme of musical annals in epochs yet to come.



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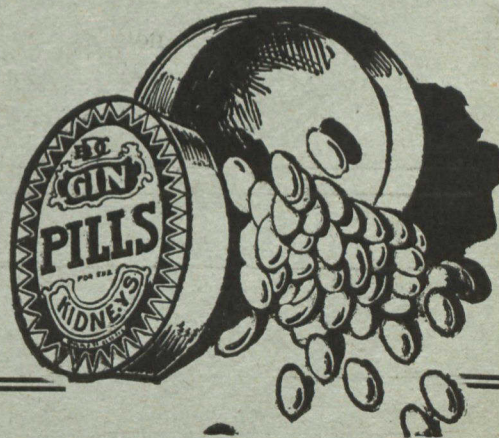
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