

PATTI AND A MAD KING.

A SOUL-TRYING APPEARANCE IN AN EMPTY THEATRE.

The Diva's Temper Roused by Her Reception in Munich and by the Command of the King.

When A'elina Patti, now Baroness Cederstrom, was spending her last honeymoon on the Riviera, she met an old friend, Mme. Fischer, a well-known German singer, at a dinner. The Baroness was most extravagant in her expression of delight at the meeting.

'You must know,' she said to the other guests, 'Mme. Fischer helped me through the worst ordeal of my life. Ah, how angry and how scared I was, and what a fool I felt, and how kind you were, my friend! Then she once more flung herself upon Mme. Fischer's capacious Teutonic bosom and embraced her. After the transports had subsided slightly some one asked for the story of the ordeal.

'Oh, it was long, long ago,' began Patti.

'Ja; thirty years,' assented Mme. Fischer, who has left the stage and grown old and fat, and isn't ashamed of it. Patti, who still contemplates farewell tours, and is insistently young, and plays the role of blushing bride most charmingly, looked depressed for a moment, but soon cheered up and went on with her story.

When she was in the first heyday of her fame and all Europe was going mad over her, Ludwig II., the mad King of Bavaria, set his heart on having her sing for him at his private auditorium in Munich. He wrote letter after letter, begging, imploring, offering extravagant sums of money, but Patti resolutely refused to go. She had heard too many stories of Ludwig's freaks, of his frenzied adorations, his curses, and his unreasonable commands, and she was desperately afraid of him. But, at last, the King offered her a sum so enormous that it seemed ridiculous to refuse it. Then the singer plucked up courage and started for Munich. She was accustomed to honors almost royal when she visited the European capitals; and, as Ludwig had been so determined to have her, she expected to be greeted with great ceremony in Munich. When she and her maid alighted at the station not even a carriage was there to meet them, and they had to inquire the name of the boat hotel and call a cab like any ordinary travellers. That was the first shock to the diva's nerves and temper. After luncheon she started out to see the town and incidentally, to examine the posters announcing the great honor conferred upon the citizens of Munich by a visit from Europe's greatest singer. Not a mention of her name could she find in the town. She rushed back to the hotel and told her maid to pack the trunks. She would shake the dust of Munich from her Louis Quinze boots at once.

Just at that moment a resplendent officer was announced. He saluted her with profound respect and admiration, which were balm to her smarting pride, and delivered a letter from the King. The letter stated curtly that his Majesty would await her, at 7 o'clock precisely, in the Royal Palace, where his singer-in-ordinary, Mme. Fischer would give her further directions. Mme. Fischer would also sing with Mme. Patti the duets which his Majesty wished to hear. A programme was inclosed.

To the utter rout and demoralization of the Bavarian army, as represented by the gorgeous officer, Patti burst into tears of rage and stamped her foot viciously.

'I have never been treated so brutally,' she said. 'I shall leave at once. Tell the King so. I will not sing—never! never! never!' The crescendo 'Never' ended on high C. The officer's knees knocked together: but, to the honor of Bavaria be it said, he retreated only to the door. Then he stopped and pleaded with the irate prima donna. She must not disappoint the King. His Majesty had been wild with excitement ever since he knew that she would come, and had not slept for three nights, so great was his joy at the prospect of hearing her. The ruffled plume subsided somewhat under this skillful treatment.

'Besides,' added the officer, 'you know our King is—is—is—well he is—'

'Crazy,' snapped Patti. 'Yes, that's very comforting isn't it? I don't know why I ever came.' Just then she caught sight of a postscript she had not read.

'The King commands Mme. Patti to appear in pure white, without any color whatever, and not by any means to wear a satin gown, but soft wool. Silk is painful to his Majesty.'

Patti fell into a chair helpless with wrath and said whatever, thirty years ago, was the equivalent for 'Well, that's the limit.' 'His majesty will have to be pained. I have no white woollen gown except my peignoir. Go tell the King I shal' not

obey any such silly orders. I'll wear a red velvet.'

'Red?' groaned the officer. 'Oh, no; no. Red sends his Majesty into fits. If you appear in red he will scream and have convulsions. Oh, do be patient, madame. I will bring Mme. Fischer to you. She understands the King's nerves. She will explain.'

He fled from the room, and, shortly after, Mme. Fischer appeared upon the scene. She was fat and good natured, and was a favorite with the King because of her wonderful blonde hair, which he required her to wear loose about her shoulders whenever she sang to him. She soothed Patti into good humor, and the diva really began to be interested in his nervous Majesty. Mme. Fischer also attacked the white wool peignoir, and transformed it into a most becoming Greek robe.

Before 7 the royal carriage arrived at the hotel and Patti went to the palace. She was led through dimly lighted rooms and corridors into Ludwig's private theatre, which was in utter darkness save for the moonlight that entered through the windows. Batti stood upon the dark stage, while an orchestra, somehow out of sight, began a soft prelude. Through the gloom she could just make out a white face in the royal box opposite the stage. Not another auditor was in the great hall. The whole thing was most uncanny, and Patti felt cold shivers creeping over her. She shook with nervousness and fear; but when she should have begun her aria not a sound could she make. She opened her mouth, but her throat was paralyzed from nervous terror. There was a pause. The King sprang up and leaned forward out of the box, his white face gleaming in the moonlight. The violins repeated the prelude. Patti gathered herself together and made one heroic effort. Her voice rang out into the great empty place, and the King sank back into the dark box.

'It was the effort of my life,' said Patti in telling the story. 'I was desperate; but when I found my voice, I sang against it all. I put my head back, and clinched my hands, and sang—sang well, nicht wahr,' and she turned to Mme. Fischer. 'Never better,' nodded the placid German. 'It was wonderful—a marvel.'

Patti finished the aria from 'La Traviata' triumphantly, and stood flushed with victory. Dead silence. Not a sound came from the gloom before her. She went off the stage in a temper. His Majesty might have given some sign of approbation. Mme. Fischer was behind the scenes, and Patti waited with her for the signal to sing the next number. A messenger appeared at the door. His Majesty had had enough music and had gone to his apartments. For a moment Patti stood stunned. Then she laughed. The rudeness was so colossal that it was funny. Mme. Fischer took the diva to supper, and then home.

The next morning Mme. Fischer called at the hotel once more, accompanied by

the Court Chamberlain, who bore the promised check, an autograph letter of thanks from the King and some jewels of great value. Mme. Fischer's explanation of the concert fiasco pleased Patti more than the jewels. King Ludwig, she said, was in one of his maddest moods, wild with regret, cursing himself and cursing Patti. He had walked the floor all night, groaning that he was a traitor, a damnable traitor; for Patti's voice had so ravished his senses that, for one moment, he had gone over to Italian music and had been false to Wagner—to Wagner the one musician who alone had satisfied his Majesty's soul.

'That was better than having bored him,' added Patti, shrugging her shoulders. 'There were moments when he wasn't so crazy after all, that poor Ludwig.'

LABORIOUS JOKING.

A Hotel Clerk's Attempt to be Gentle Toward an English Tourist.

'Talk about getting tired of the sunny South gag! I said the cigar stand man in an uptown hotel. It was nothing at all to me. I had to put up with while the cold wave was waving. Y' see, there's very little room back here, and I have to keep the cash register on top of the steam radiator. While the blizzard lasted the heat was on all the time, day and night, and the register naturally got hot.

'So I proceeded to dish out specially warmed specie for change, and with that my troubles began. A customer would pick up a coin, look surprised and then wink the other eye.

'Just made it, eh?' he would ask. And of course I was expected to make some playful remark about having a counterfeiting plant back of the cigar case.

'After the jest had been bandied to and fro some 500 or 600 times it began to get slightly stale, but each fellow thought it was brand new, and when I failed to grin, he set me down as a stupid ass. At last I got desperate and concluded I'd anticipate the blow. A big Englishman sauntered up and, feeling certain he'd spring the joke, I got ahead of him.

'I just made this,' I said, handing him a nickel that fairly sizzled. He looked blank.

'Ah—part of your—or—profits, I presume?' he replied.

'No,' says I, determined to make him see the point or perish in the attempt. I made it—stamped it out on my little machine. How'd ye like it?'

'He frowned, and pushed it quickly away. 'I beg pardon,' he said, but really I'll have to ask you to give me something else. I couldn't be a party to anything like that doncherknow.'

'I tried to make him understand that it was simply a joke, for I didn't know how soon he might go to the police about it. But, phaw! It was a hopeless job.



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'I can't see anything comic in the plain statement that one is engaged in counterfeiting,' he insisted.

'Neither can I,' I replied, 'and that's exactly why I made it.' That happened to be the actual truth, but it gave a final twist to the situation that floored the Englishman completely.

'Then you consider it comic to get off something comic because it isn't actually comic in the least,' he repeated in great bewilderment. 'Pon me word,' says he, 'this American humor is too deep for me.'

'I restrained myself and allowed him to escape alive, but I'm going to have the cure of the next man that starts a continuous performance joke in this hotel!'

One Way of Getting a Dinner.

A certain magistrate was in the habit of affixing his signature to all sorts of papers without taking the trouble to examine them.

One winter evening, about six o'clock, our worthy magistrate was comfortably seated by the fire-side, wrapped in a dressing gown, when a friend was announced.

'Ah! delighted to see you,' he said to the visitor, as he entered the room.

Shortly after there was another ring at the door bell, this time a couple of his old comrades came in together.

'You see, my dear B——' they both said, in one breath, 'we are punctual to the time.'

Just then three other friends were shown into the room, and thanked the magistrate for his kind invitation.

'Why, what is the meaning of all this?' exclaimed the latter in utter bewilderment.

'You have invited us to supper, and here we are,' cried the visitors, in chorus. 'We were certainly surprised at your sending us the invitation on stamped paper. Quite an original idea!'

Hereupon each produced a document of portentous dimensions, bearing a legal stamp and the signature of the magistrate. The documents, instead of representing writs or indictments, contained an invitation to supper, the menu of which, consisting of cold meats (readily obtainable), oysters, etc., was distinctly specified. A

list of the wines to be drunk on the occasion was also given.

The magistrate had to give in. He had signed these documents along with the rest that were submitted to him from day to day. He behaved handsomely on this occasion, and the supper was a grand success. Since that time, however, he has been more careful.

Brutes not Deceived by Illusions.

'It's a singular fact,' said a man in the show business, 'that "illusions," as we call 'em, don't fool animals. I've seen that proven over and over again. A few years ago I had what is known as the "Mystic Maze" at the Nashville Exposition. It was simply a small room filled with mirrors, so arranged that you seemed to be in a narrow corridor, full of turns. It was very puzzling and I used to get lost in the place myself, but it never bothered my dog a moment. He would run through it from end to end at full speed and never bump against a mirror.

'I saw something on the same line in 'Frisco not long ago. A friend of mine had an illusion called "The Hamlet Swing." You get in what seems to be an ordinary swing, hung in the centre of a good-sized room, and the thing begins to move. It goes back and forth and finally clear over the top—that is to say, it seems to. What really turns round is the room itself—the swing stands perfectly still. It is a good illusion, and when the room is revolved rapidly there never was a man who could keep his head in the swing. It seems as if he must certainly pitch out, and if the motion is kept up he gets deadly sick. But a pet cat belonging to my friend used to lie on the edge of the seat and never turn a hair, no matter how fast the thing was worked.

'The elder Herrmann told me that animals were never deceived by false table legs, built up with looking glasses, and used in stage tricks. They always passed around on the other side. I guess they must see better, than men.'

Woolly Ones.

There are many ludicrous stories about the extreme respect excited by the smaller German princes, but the following really illustrates it very well.

A tutor was out walking with a young princeling, when they met a flock of sheep. Said the tutor: 'Can your Transparency tell me what those animals are?'

'Figs,' was the prompt reply.

Now came the trouble. His Transparency must not be contradicted, nor could he be allowed to grow up ignorant. But the tutor was a man of resource.

'Quite right; but your Transparency will please to observe that, when pigs are covered with wool like that, they are called sheep.'

Thus was the difficulty successfully got over.

'Excuse me,' said the detective, as he presented himself at the door of the music academy, 'but I hope you'll give me what information you have, and not make any fuss.'

'What do you mean?' was the indignant inquiry.

'Why, that little affair, you know.'

'I don't understand.'

'Why, you see, we got a tip from the house next door that somebody here has been murdering Wagner, and the chief sent me down to work up the case.'

Some people seem to pass all their days in continual expectation of the expected.

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