

and 'Mignon,' in which last opera I sang with her. Nilsson is an exceedingly bright, intelligent woman, and has given herself to thoughtful development of her dramatic ability with fine results. You can hardly believe how much she has improved in this direction. She was always, to me a pleasant actress; but she has developed that talent to a delightful degree. There are wonderfully good bits of acting, refined, intelligent effects, here and there, which she has created in her chief roles since she was here, that are wonderfully effective. She has a true dramatic sense, and has drawn upon it with judgment and at times with really brilliant effect. You will like her more than before, and think her greatly improved in that direction."

"And has she retained her vocal powers unimpaired?"

"There was always about Nilsson's voice a something—what shall I call it?—perhaps I might say a sort of halo, that gave it almost a divine charm, and there were five upper notes, especially, in her voice that seemed almost heavenly—as divine notes as ever were given to a woman. Do you remember them? Do you remember how full and clear and sweet they were always? How lovely they were as she sustained them and allowed them to swell out grandly? Those notes still have that divine halo about them they are still as sweet and clear and charming as ever. Throughout almost the full extent of her voice there is little change. I must, much as I regret to say it, say that there is a little deterioration in her lower register, some of the notes of which had been injured. And this I lay to the fondness she has for intensely dramatic singing and to the fault she has contracted of forcing her lower notes. She looks the same as when she was here. I see no change in her personal appearance and her popularity with her public seems undiminished."

LUCCA.

"Lucca must have been singing in Vienna when you were there?"

"Yes; and of course I heard her."

"And in what role?"

"As *Carmen*. She did not dress the part as we are accustomed to seeing it, nor did she act it with that dash and snap, that vim and abandon, which we look for in the character. It was too tame a performance, and she seemed to catch nothing of the true inspiration of Prosper Merimee's creation. There was a little of the Spanish atmosphere about it. It was a quiet, reserved, but a pretty *Carmen*—as pretty as a doll—lovely and dreamy rather than bewitching and dashing. Lucca sang the music well, though. That is, even though it lacked dash, it was sweetly and charmingly sung. Her voice is as good as it was ten years ago, not in the least injured. She has grown very thin, in form rather than in face, but her features and her manners are prettier than ever."

MATERNA.

"And the great Materna? Surely you saw her?"

"Yes, and was disappointed. Perhaps because I expected too much. I expected to see a more dramatic actress and a more dramatic singer. She is a fine looking woman, with a clear, sweet musical voice. There is little of the soft Italian warmth about her, and I expected to find, as an equivalent, more of the German breadth and strength of dramatic power. But in this I was disappointed—perhaps,

as I said, because I expected more. To be sure, if I heard her in the Italian school of music—in "*Aida*"—and in the more rugged German music she would, perhaps, have been better. Still all I can say is, that I was disappointed."

VAN ZANDT.

"I will tell you of an evening which was a decidedly pleasant one to me. That was the one I passed at the Opera Comique, Paris, when I saw Miss Van Zandt's debut as *Mignon*. Her success was decided, and she is certainly full of promise and a most talented girl. She has not a large voice, not one of grand proportions, but it is even and pleasant and sweet, and she fairly 'walked into the good grace of the French people at once. The house was very kind in receiving her, and for a Paris audience I was really surprised to see how they encouraged and led her on to an emphatic success. They saw quickly that she was worthy of favor and accorded it generously. It was no small test to put a young American girl to—to debut in Paris at the Comique, where much of the opera had to be 'spoken' and in French. The little accent she has the audience took good naturedly, as though it added a little additional charm to her speech, and Miss Van Zandt went home from the opera house a happy girl."

BONHEUR AND NEVADA.

"Another American whom I heard was Stella Bonheur, in Milan, as *Carmen*, who also was a success. I liked her exceedingly. But a debutante whom I was pleased with almost as much as I was with Van Zandt was Nevada, who has been taught by Marchesi, the teacher of Gerster. I heard her in '*La Smonambule*,' and it was an exquisite performance. The '*Ah, non credea*' was fascinatingly, wonderfully done. Her voice is thin and light and sweet; lacking in those qualities for dramatic effect, but its purity and clearness have an indelible fascination, and her artless, girlish manners and youthful appearance made the performance one of the most enjoyable I have ever seen of the character."

CAMPANINI.

"Campanini, whose tide of popularity seems still at the full with American audiences, was in England when you were there I believe? Do the English public receive him as warmly as that of America?"

"Yes and no. They admire him as a great actor, and of all things, they admire him for his wonderfully artistic skill in his so delicately phrasing his music when his voice happens to be 'under the weather' as to conceal the temporary 'indisposition.' Don't you know how true a test that is of a singer's artistic strength? Did you ever hear Gounod sing? Then you remember how charming an effect he can make in singing some of his own songs, though he has little or no voice. The charm rests in the spirit, the expression, the delicately artistic finish he gives to his song, which goes so far toward making a charming effect that you forgot how small and insignificant a voice the man has. It is this gift, the grace of perfectly artistic phrasing, which Campanini's English admirers lay special stress upon. 'His voice I do not think as perfect as it was,' said one critic to me, 'but his faultless art more than makes up the difference.' I do not think England is as enthusiastic as it once was over Campanini's voice—that is, the actual vocal value of each note he sings—but is as delighted as ever over his presentation of an entire role.—*American Art Journal*."