

LAST ACT OF THE HAMMERSTEIN DRAMA

Watching the Motley Crowd at the Auction Sale of the Impresario's Music and Art Trophies--Like a Parody of the Company's Other Days

BY CLARE PEELER

HUNNERANTWENTYFIVE — humner-antwenty-five—nothin' finer in this entire country today—don't I hear more than humnerantwentyfive—' inflectionless wails the auctioneer. The last curtain is being rung down on the drama entitled: "Oscar Hammerstein; His Life and Works," in a stage setting composed of bronzes, paintings, chairs, tables, statues, tapestries and humans various.

Very various they are; I think every type of person in our New York has contributed his or her wandering presence to the Broadway auction room this goldenest of October afternoons. Blonde ladies of pronounced and frescoed portent inspect the jewels in their glass case, and pass on their settings, age, genuineness and other qualifications; beside me, a dark greasy youth diligently chews gum. Wristwatched, furocollared, opulent, pompadoured, the young man next him holds a catalogue and languidly bids at intervals. He must be doing it for a sort of exercise, in technique, it may be; for nothing ever is knocked down to him. With a triumphant swish to her skirt, a woman of acquisitive demeanor passes down the aisle and out. She has just bought something, and her skirts and her eyes say: "Wonderful bargain. Wait till my husband sees it." Over in the corner opposite me, a fair-haired man with glasses and of a Teutonic stolidity watches the proceedings as being afraid they might get away.

We all have the air of the chorus in the opera. We look about us languidly while the auctioneer declaims his aria in a continuous recitative. Beside him on his little dais sits a gray-haired man, who holds a book, as it might be the prompter. He is really entering each sale; but he falls in with my errant fancy. Once I thought I heard the orchestral accompaniment; but it was only the noise of Broadway. And somewhere in the wings is sitting Oscar, in his old kitchen chair; and when the scores that he gathered together with such care and patience and with such splendid hopes go for such pitifully small sums in their new titles of "Lot 1256," "Lot 1206" or what not, I am sure Oscar smiles his old faintly amused smile at this *opera bouffe* we call Life.

Old Friends There

Old friends and old rivals of the dead man are here in this queer parody of other times. Andres de Seguro, monocled and amiable; Giuseppe Bamboschek, eyeglassed, scholarly-

looking; William Thorner, creator of prima-donnas; Mapleson, court of last resort in matters of music-lore. The dead man's widow is here also.

The music-sale is over. Comes a short argument between a sharp-eyed man and the auctioneer as to whether the marble copy of the Venus de Medici does or does not lack a finger. The attendant, inspecting, reports: "Absolootely perfect"; and "Absolootely perfect—absolootely perfect"—chants the auctioneer by way of varying his song. "Lotsa seats up front," says the attendant wearily. He sees possibly more of human nature than anyone outside of tailors and doctors, and to judge from his expression, he doesn't like the view. He particularly objects to females coming there and scribbling in little books. It looks suspicious to him; he thinks probably I am in the pay of his rivals. Not that he has any; but what would business be without real or imaginary rivals in New York?

The supper scene in "Louise" comes to one's mind, with Oscar's splendid realistic staging; with the clatte rof plates. (They are selling the plates now.) And the time long ago, when something (no one ever knew what) happened during that scene to upset Mary Garden's gravity when she sat at supper with her *Mother* (Bressler-Gianoli) and her *Father* (Gilbert) and the two women laughed helplessly all through Gilbert's aria, until the audience laughed with them. How Oscar raged! Now three out of that four can compare notes over the joke; only *Louise* is with us still.

A Motley Crowd

A young couple come in with the look of those whose wedding-presents have not done what was expected of them; obviously, these are here with the intent to pick up something to finish the furnishing of the flat. "Three dollars *each!*" finishes the auctioneer on so high a note that I involuntarily listen for applause. Swiftly he turns this versatile one, to high comedy. "Oh, all right!" he remarks, when the demand is made to "have the plates passed around." "Show 'em to your father and your mother and your sister an' the whole family, an' then buy 'em for a dollar 'n a half!" But they only bring one dollar. Enter a young girl, whom I suspect to be a rising prima donna. She makes straight for the jewel case, and I know I am right. Diligently, though far from home and food, the tortoise-shell-glassed dark man across the aisle chews a toothpick. They have reached the wine-glasses now and I am at the Omar Khayyam stage:

"*They say the Lion and the Lizard Keep The Halls where Jamshi Gloried and Drank Deep,*"



The Auctioneer and his Assistant, as sketched by Gianni Viafora. (Below) Andres de Seguro, baritone and impresario, attending the sale of the late Oscar Hammerstein's music scores

passes up the aisle, looking not to right or left and vividly they bid on diningroom chairs.

The auctioneer's song ends, temporarily. Attendants are re-arranging the scenery now for the last act, the disposing of jewels and rugs. The furniture is gone; the pictures have each received their tribute of commiseration from the auctioneer as they go at prices that he professionally calls a crime. We sit about, as waiting for our cues. The twilight falls and as I go out in the dusk, I stumble over what looks like an old kitchen chair.

GALLI-CURCI AMAZES SOUTH CAROLINA THROG

3000 Hail Diva At Her First Visit to Greenville—Record Enrolment at College

GREENVILLE, S. C., Oct. 18.—Mme. Galli-Curci, at Textile Hall, last night, set 3000 South Carolinians wild with joyous enthusiasm. It was singing that will remain in the minds of the vast audience, that had never heard such flawless beauty of tone, such delicate and lovely phrasing.

It was Mme. Galli-Curci's first appearance in South Carolina and she was greeted by an audience that was representative of the state. People came in large numbers from near and distant points to hear the marvelous soprano. Before leaving Greenville, she commented most enthusiastically regarding the wonderful reception given her here.

The Greenville Music Club held its first meeting on Oct. 6. An interesting program of music, written during the war, was successfully given.

The Department of Music at the Greenville Woman's College has the largest enrolment in the history of the institution. A number of new practice pianos have been secured, to meet the large demand for them, also two additional faculty members have been added. The latest addition to the faculty is Mabel Sullivan of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., an artist pupil of Kate Chittenden of the Institute of Applied Music, New York.

J. O. M.

Master Classes Popular at Institute of Applied Music

The Master Classes in Piano, which are being given at the American Institute of Applied Music, Kate S. Chittenden, dean, under the tutelage of Mr. Schmitz, are meeting with an unqualified success. The classes are well attended and the students have evinced an unusual interest in the work.

Edwin Hughes, the American pianist, a his first recital of the season, Nov. 4, at Aeolian Hall, will present compositions of Fannie Dillon, a California composer. Among other numbers Mr. Hughes will include a composition by Grieg rarely heard in any concert program.



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