

Tetrazzini Sends Message of Affection to Americans

Famous Coloratura, Returned to U. S. After a Long Absence, Tells of War Work in Italy and France—Decorated by Two Governments—Established Hospital for Consumptive Soldiers.

By CLARE PEELER

WILKIE COLLINS would begin the story this way: "The Scene, a private sitting room in the Bellevue-Stratford, Philadelphia. The Time, a late spring afternoon in 1913. The Personages, a Manager, a Secretary, a Woman Writer, and One Other."

Suddenly there rushed into the room a little, plump, bright-faced, chestnut-haired woman, with big golden-brown eyes that were dancing with excitement.

She hurried over to the open window and—no, dear reader, she didn't throw herself out; but one spectator, then unused to the ways of the temperamental, thought she was going to, and that what was a great enough event to the said onlooker already was going to be made greater by the sensational suicide of a great coloratura. For the little woman was Luisa Tetrazzini, and the commotion grew out of the fact that a band was passing, which the soprano insisted was "soldiers." Finally convinced against her will that there were no soldiers, she sighed out, settling herself in the corner of the sofa, "Forgive me, Madame. We will now talk—yes? I am so excited; I think it was the soldier. Ah, how I love a soldier!"

Many, many times has Tetrazzini's love of "the soldier" since that spring afternoon six years ago found its expression in compassion, in tender sympathy and in all the help that her singing could give. For throughout the world war the famous soprano has given herself generously to the cause of the wounded among the soldiers of her country and of France. Both countries have shown her highest honor in gratitude. Set in diamonds, the Royal Italian Cross, given her by Queen Elena, glistens, and next it hangs what she perhaps values even more, the medal of the Red Cross for distinguished service. France made her a member of the Institute de Beaux Arts.

It was not an unusual event in her career that a concert that she gave after the war in Paris netted for the Red Cross half a million francs, nor that the Queen of Roumania had Marshal Foch as a box guest; nor that the wives of the Presidents of the France and of the United States lent their presence. Mme. Tetrazzini is, as the Paris *Excelsior* remarked, "accustomed to sing before queens." It is much more surprising that this little person who travels in state that is close to pomp, who has all luxuries that the artist nature almost invariably demands, that such an one should sing for hours to men so repulsively wounded that she shudders when she now recalls their poor faces, so maimed that they were helpless.

Singing for Wounded

"Oh, how I cry!" she said to me last week when in her room at the Knickerbocker in New York we renewed our acquaintance of six years ago. "When the war began and first I sing, I cry all the time for a year to see the soldier so hurt. But then, afterward!"

She gave that most expressive little shrug of hers, that goes with lifted eyebrows and outspread hands; the most Latin thing, instinct with resignation, to queer human nature.

"Afterward, maybe I care just-a so much, but I no cry any more. I work-a too hard to cry."

Mme. Tetrazzini left her pretty little home at Lugano when her country entered the war. "I not want to stay in Switzerland when my country he go to war," she remarked. Near Milan she established a hospital for the soldiers who had contracted tuberculosis, and here she worked for a long time.

"They would not let me go away," she said. "I say to them, now I sing-a enough. You will go to sleep. They catch my dress (she illustrated on mine how they did it) they say, 'Oh, Madame, please stay and sing? And I stay. But



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the wounded! Once I sing to a boy. He have not the arm; he have-a no leg. Just he have the face and the nice bright eye. And he say to me, 'Madame; go away for half an hour and come back.' And when I come back! Oh, my dear, he have-a the arms, the legs, and he say, 'See, I show you,' and he light-a the cigarette. They have make him the what you call, yes, the artificial arm and leg. And he smile at me, and I cannot speak for a while. Then I sing to him as I nevere sing to anyone in all my life."

She has not changed at all in these years in the bubbling, childish mirth of her at the little things of life; in her overflowing jollity and graciousness. She sang at Venice when the bombs were dropping into the city, and she seems to have enjoyed it thoroughly. "The cannons were going boom, boom!" she said delightedly. "And people they say to me, 'Why do you not go back to Florence? You are Florentine; go to your own city. We are afraid for you.' But I say, 'No! I can stay here if you can.'"

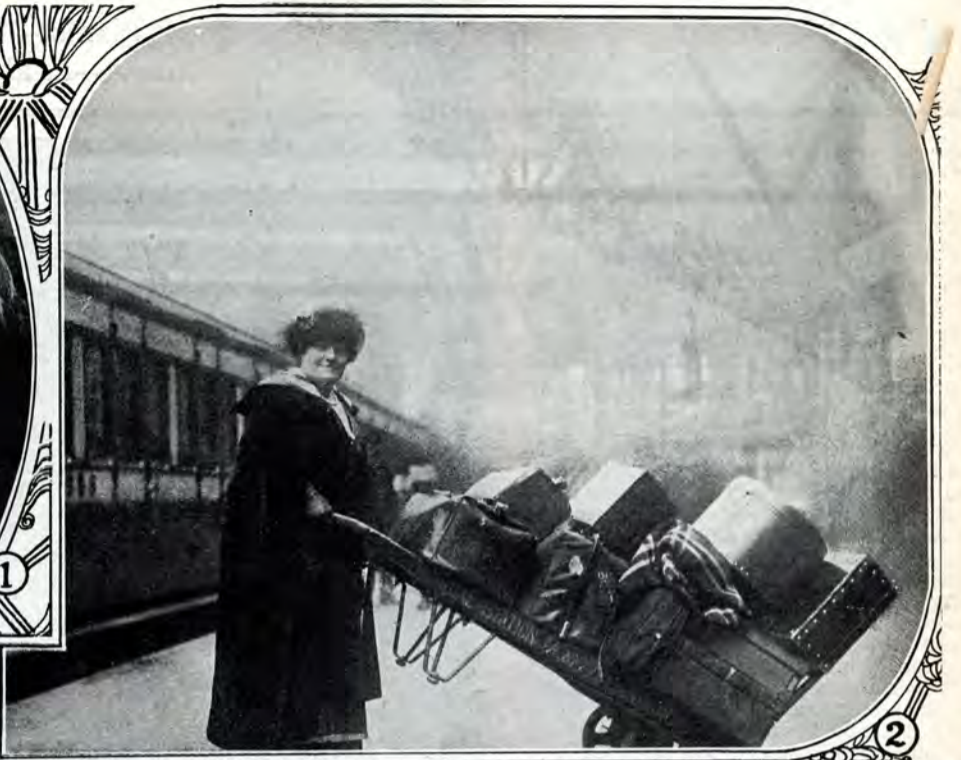
How She Travels

To sing in New York on Sunday, Nov. 30, and in San Francisco on Sunday, Dec. 7, is something of a record, but it is one which opens Tetrazzini's visit to this country. I asked her manager who was going with her, and he heaved a sigh.

"One personal representative, one lady secretary, one baggage master, one accompanist, one maid, and one little dog," Mr. Daiber said feelingly. "Mayo Wadler, the violinist; Warren Proctor, the tenor, and my wife and I are going, incidentally."

The small dog she had acquired in emulation of her sister, Mme. Campanini, who "has one just like him." He was an animal of charming manners, but labored under the unfortunate delusion that ankles were a desirable article of diet. I commiserated the manager on his prospects, but he said cheerfully:

"Oh, bless you, that's nothing! If she doesn't add more than ten to the bunch before we get to San Francisco, we'll



No. 1—Luisa Tetrazzini, Noted Soprano. No. 2—Mme. Tetrazzini "Carries On" During the Recent London Railway Strike. No. 3—The Singer Photographed on Landing in the United States Last Week

manage beautifully. But you see she's so big-hearted and so fond of having her friends about her that Heaven only knows how big the troupe will be by that time. However, one thing one can always count on, Madame's good humor. She's the nicest person! No matter what happens, she's as jolly as a lark."

But it is a mistake to assume that the singer is an untutored good-natured songbird, with no thorough knowledge even of her own specialty. She can and does take an opera for practice, and sings every part in it, transposing the men's and the contralto parts, of course. No "untutored" or "unmusical" person is apt to find amusement in that species of diversion, it would seem. And she has been very thoroughly schooled in the art of singing by actual lessoning only, it is said, for six months; but when one has a prima donna for a sister, Italo Campanini, at one time the greatest of tenors, for one, brother-in-law, and Cleofonte, the impresario-conductor, for another, and one's own voice develops at three, one can hardly remain ignorant of the art of singing if one tried.

When Patti died, last September, London assumed the attitude of "The queen is dead; long live the queen!" But not so the woman whom Adelina Patti had herself openly acclaimed as her successor after Tetrazzini's first appearance in 1907 at Covent Garden.

Weeps Over Patti's Death

"I was singing at Leeds," she said, the tears thick in her eyes, "when somebody come and say, 'Patti, she is dead.' Just quick like that. Oh, I feel, I feel, I feel—I cannot tell you. I cry for three days. That great, that wonderful woman! That voice! And so good to me, I cannot tell you. *Ouf!* I love Patti. Just the same as mother she act to me. After my first night in Covent Garden she comes to me and says, 'You are the Patti now.' And she brings me to her hotel to the Ritz, and says to all the gentlemen and ladies, 'This is my Luisa.' I knelt down and kissed her hand, as if she was queen and she look like a little queen, I tell you. Not big, but so like a queen. And always after that when I sing in London I get from her the letter, the telegram, always at Christmas the beautiful cards. She was my dear, dear friend. And now—"

Again the expressive Latin shrug.

"Now it is all gone, that wonderful voice, that god heart, that noble woman—And I, well, I stay here a while and then it will be my turn to go—"

I think it is not very often that one sees a woman and a singer weep heartily at the death of another woman singer. Perhaps it may be cynical, but the rarity of such a happening was what touched one even more than the thing itself.

Will Not Sing in Opera

Asked whether she will appear in opera, Mme. Tetrazzini said emphatical-

ly, "No." The fatigue of traveling, the incessant demands of opera have disposed her in favor of concert. "It is not so expensive," she says with a twinkle, for she is as readily moved to laughter as to tears. "I buy one costume, and it is good for one, two, six, eight concert. But opera!" And she lifts her eyes expressively to heaven. One of the last times that she appeared in Europe was at a Trieste performance of "Rigoletto," with Titta Ruffo in the name part, for the Red Cross. As the performance netted the cause 100,000 crowns, it is to be assumed that her popularity in opera has remained the same.

It seems a pity to lose her vivid personality from the music-drama. She is like all Italians, intensely dramatic. When she spoke of her debut in the rôle of *Violetta*, and of singing in the third act, she immediately assumed the pose on the sofa, immediately *looked Violetta*, as much as so "plump and pleasing" a person could. I expected her to demand an *Alfredo* from me on the spot.

"Will you give from me a message to my dear American people?" she asked instead. "Will you tell them that I am so ver' happy to come back to them?"

Eccola!

BRILLIANT OPENING OF THE RUBINSTEIN CLUB

Huge Audience at Season's Inaugural Recital Greets Galli-Curci with Marked Enthusiasm

If the opening concert of the Rubinstein Club was an augury of its coming season, the augury was an auspicious one. The audience that gathered to hear Mme. Amelita Galli-Curci, at the Waldorf on Thursday afternoon, Nov. 22, overflowed every available bit of space, and was as profuse in its expressions of approval as it was in point of numbers.

Mrs. William Rogers Chapman, president of the Rubinstein Club, and her assisting officers have held high musical standards for their organization, and the results are abundantly evident in the worth of the programs presented and the support they have won from earnest musicians.

Mme. Galli-Curci was assisted in her program by Manuel Berenguer, flautist, and Homer Samuels, pianist, who in addition to providing accompaniments for the singer, appeared in the Chaminate Concerto in D Minor. The prima donna's offerings included a Fifteenth Century French song, "L'Amour de Moi," a group of Bergerettes of the Eighteenth Century, and songs by Debussy, Delibes, Auber and Samuels. Benedict's "La Capinera" and the "Shadow Song" from "Dinorah" were given with flute obbligato. She was in splendid voice and responded to encores with a number of additional offerings.

M. S.