OME FAMOUS SINGERS F THE XIXTH CENTURY

Francis Rogers

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XIXth Century

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MANUEL GARCIA
1775-1832

SOME FAMOUS SINGERS of the 19th CENTURY

By FRANCIS ROGERS

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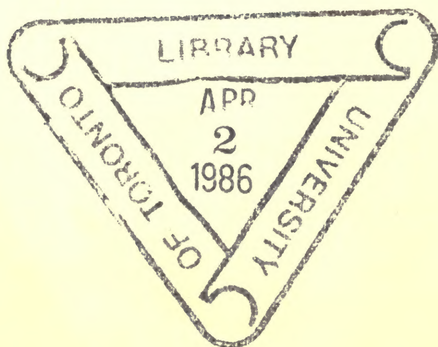

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The Two Manuel Garcias

MANUEL GARCIA (FATHER), 1775-1832
MANUEL GARCIA (SON), 1805-1906

THE name of Garcia is written large in the history of song. From 1808, when the first Manuel Garcia made his début in Paris, till the death of the second Manuel in 1906, these two men exerted directly a potent influence on the art of singing, the former as singer and teacher, the latter as teacher. In addition, Maria Garcia (better known to us under her married name, Malibran) and Pauline Viardot-Garcia, daughters of Manuel, Senior, and sisters of Manuel, Junior, had brilliant operatic careers, and Pauline achieved also success as a teacher.

It is of great interest to us lovers of singing to recall the lives of these four astonishing Spaniards, and to see how they, in especial the father and the son, transmitted the tenets and traditions of the golden age of Italian *bel canto* even down to this very day and hour. Indeed, we shall not be far from the literal truth if we call Manuel Garcia, Senior, "the father of modern singing."

Manuel del Popolo Vicente Rodriguez, only known to us under his stage name of Manuel Garcia, was born in Seville in 1775. He began his career as a singer, at the age of six, as chorister in the Cathedral, and must, even as a child, have shown the remarkable qualities of energy and musical talent that distinguished him in later years, for by the time he was seventeen he was already well known as singer, actor, composer and conductor, and his musical pieces, mostly operettas, were popular all over Spain.

Opportunities for musical study in Seville must have been extremely meager (there was not one pianoforte in that city in 1775), but young Garcia took advantage of whatever facilities for education he could find, and in 1792 made his operatic début in Cadix. His voice, already a tenor of good quality, promised much better things for the future, but his acting gave slight indication of his future proficiency in this branch of his art. His next engagement was in Madrid, where he made a great hit in an operetta of his own, "El Poeta Calculista," in the course of which he introduced, with soul-stirring effect, to the accompaniment of his own guitar, a popular national song called "A Smuggler am I."

For a number of years Garcia contented himself with the laurels to be won in his own country, but his ambitions reached far be-

yond the Pyrenees. In the first years of the nineteenth century artistic life in Spain suffered grievously by reason of the French invasion, while Paris was the most brilliant and, outwardly at least, the most prosperous capital in Europe. In 1808 Garcia signed an engagement to sing at the Théatre Italien in Paris. The fact that he had never sung in Italian did not daunt him, and in February of that year he made his *entrée* in the now-forgotten opera of "Griselda," by Paer. His success was immediate. His vivacity and fire carried all before them, distracting attention from his weaknesses as actor and musician and the inequalities of his voice. His inborn animation was infectious and aroused everybody within reach of his dynamic personality. Garat, a famous old French singer, spoke for all Paris when he said, "I love the Andalusian frenzy of the man. He puts life into everything about him."

He stayed two years in Paris and then went to Italy, where, after successful appearances in Turin and Rome, he settled in Naples. Murat, then in supreme power, made him leading tenor in the choir of his private chapel, a position of some importance. Garcia now, for the first time in his life, had the chance to acquire a sound musical training, and went zealously to work to overcome the defects in his early education. He also took up the study

of voice emission under Anzani, a distinguished tenor, who was an able exponent of the old Italian school of singing, and may possibly have been a pupil in his early youth of the greatest of all teachers, Niccolo Porpora (1686-1766). By great good fortune, young Rossini was in Naples at the same time and was quick to recognize in Garcia the qualities he needed for the proper interpretation of his music. He wrote at once a part for him in his opera "Elisabetta," and a little later the part of Almaviva in "Il Barbiere di Siviglia." Garcia's star rose together with Rossini's; Rossini was the new deity among operatic composers, and Garcia was his prophet.

An anecdote characteristic of Garcia's self-assurance, not to say spirit of bravado, is told in connection with his arrival in Naples. At his first rehearsal there with orchestra, in order to make an instant and vivid impression on the musicians, he began his opening air a half-tone higher than they were playing the accompaniment and held his pitch, without deviation, through to the end. The orchestra thought at first that he had made a bad entrance, but when they discovered that he had performed successfully a difficult feat of musicianship they gave him a hearty round of applause.

In 1816 Garcia returned to Paris as first tenor in the troupe of Catalani, one of the

most brilliant of prima donnas. The Parisians remarked at once the great progress he had made as actor and singer since they had last heard him, and straightway rated him as the first tenor of the day. With consistent success he sang in all the operas of the current repertory, in Mozart and Rossini, as well as in operas that survive now as names only; but Catalani, who was never disposed to share her triumphs with other singers, made his position so intolerable that he finally broke his contract and went to London.

In London he sang in "Il Barbiere" and other operas with Fodor, an excellent French soprano, and was most cordially received; but he soon returned to Paris, where, in 1819, he created a furore by his production of Rossini's charming masterpiece. He spent the greater part of the next five years in Paris, singing, and establishing a school for singing which achieved immediate popularity. In 1823 he returned to London for the opera season, and accepted pupils there as he had done in Paris.

The period between 1820 and 1825 marks the very zenith of Garcia's career. In both Paris and London he was held in the highest honor both as artist and teacher. In four rôles he was considered to be without a rival—Almaviva, Tancredi, Otello (Rossini) and Don Giovanni. Don Giovanni,

though written for a baritone voice, was one of his greatest impersonations, although it is hard to understand how a tenor voice could possibly encompass music of such low *tessitura.* In 1825, the fiftieth year of his life, the season in London, in the course of which he produced and sang in two of his own operas, brought him the very large salary (for those days) of £1,250.

In the autumn of the same year he was able to realize a project that had long been in his mind. Some time in the month of September he set sail for New York with a company of singers which included his wife, his son, his daughter Maria and four other singers of no great celebrity. His coming was an epoch-making event in the musical history of our country, for although performances of light opera in English were more or less popular, and New Orleans had for a number of years supported a fairly good French light opera company, the real beginning of opera in the United States was made by Garcia and his troupe. An anonymous newspaper writer of the day hailed Garcia as "Our musical Columbus"!

According to European standards, the little band of singers was not a remarkable one—except for Garcia himself and his daughter, there were no great artists among them—but it was quite strong enough to impress favor-

ably the thoroughly inexperienced public of provincial New York.

The season opened November 29, 1825, at the Park Theatre,* with "Il Barbiere di Siviglia." To make the performance even possible required a manager and a musician of extraordinary qualities. Both the chorus and the orchestra had to be selected from local musicians, who knew nothing about Italian opera or the Italian language, and drilled to at least a decent degree of proficiency. But Garcia was equal to the task and carried the memorable evening through without notable mishap and to the manifest pleasure of the public. The élite of New York was there, including James Fenimore Cooper and Fitz-Greene Halleck, the author of "Marco Bozzaris"; also Joseph Bonaparte, the ex-King of Spain. The first performance of real opera in New York was voted a great success.

During the next ten months seventy-nine performances of a dozen operas were given before responsive and encouragingly large audiences. That the public was considerably puzzled by some of the incongruities and absurdities of Italian opera is proved by the newspaper comments of the day; but, on the whole, it was open-minded and quite ready to follow, more or less blindly, the musical taste

*The Park Theatre stood in Park Row, opposite the site of the present Post-Office.

of Europe until it could develop some intelligent taste of its own. Garcia must have thought our ancestors for the most part a horde of benighted barbarians, so far as music was concerned; but he found a few Americans who had traveled and imbibed a love of art in Europe, and, in addition, a fair-sized colony of Europeans who could discriminate between good and bad in music. Of these latter the most noteworthy was old Lorenzo da Ponte, an Italian poet, who many years before had written the librettos for Mozart's "Cosi fan tutti," "Le Nozze di Figaro" and "Don Giovanni." He and Garcia had never met in Europe, but at their first meeting in New York they embraced enthusiastically and danced about the room, singing at the top of their lungs the "champagne song" from "Don Giovanni."

The total receipts of the season were about $56,000—a goodly sum for those days—and Garcia was tempted to prolong his stay in New York, but he finally abandoned the idea, and in the fall of 1826 left for Mexico. He took all his troupe with him, except his daughter, who had married a French merchant named Malibran, whose business was in New York.

The journey from New York to Mexico City ninety years ago was a long and difficult one, but Garcia accomplished it in the course of a few weeks and arrived in the capi-

tal ready, as he supposed, for business. But, on overhauling his luggage, he found that somehow and somewhere all his music had been lost. The first performance was near at hand and there was no source from which he could replace the missing scores. Most impresarios would have sat down and torn their hair, but Garcia was made of different stuff—he sat down and did not rise till he had himself written out *from memory* all the necessary parts for the first opera, "Don Giovanni." Later he repeated the feat with other operas, besides writing and producing several operas of his own and translating all the Italian texts into Spanish. I doubt if even Toscanini could do this and, in addition, sing leading tenor rôles!

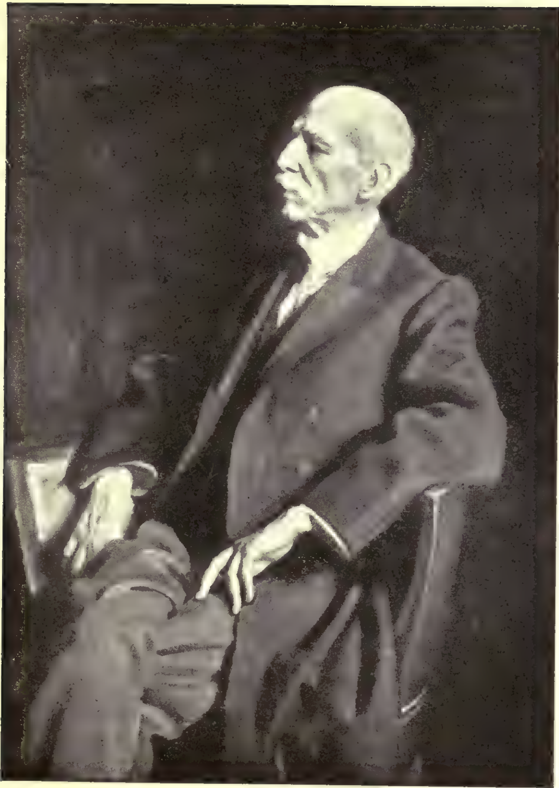
Despite the raging of a political tempest among the Mexicans, the season was a remunerative one, and at its close Garcia and his colleagues left for Vera Cruz, where they were to embark for Europe, laden with the financial reward for their hard work, but they had not gone far when they were intercepted by brigands and despoiled of everything of value, amounting to some $30,000.

Garcia finally reached Paris and resumed his career, but his voice was no longer trustworthy, and after a few performances of some of his most famous parts he gave up the stage altogether and devoted himself to teaching. He died in Paris in 1832.

Garcia was not a lovable man. His autocratic will and his fiery, domineering temper won for him respect, but not affection. Even his children he ruled by fear rather than love, and many are the tales of his relentless treatment of them and of those that came in close contact with him. One legend has it that the passers-by often would hear the sound of weeping issuing from Garcia's house. If they inquired the cause, the neighbors would tell them, "Oh, that's nothing. It's only Mr. Garcia teaching his pupils how to sing."

No singer ever had so full a life as he, or possessed such a combination of talent, energy, resource and will. He was a brilliant rather than a moving singer, and, at a time when ornamentation in singing was highly esteemed, excelled all other singers in the ease and security with which he invented and executed the most difficult ornaments. As a New York critic put it: "He is not at home in the simple melodies of Mozart. He must have a wide field for display; he must have ample room to verge enough for unlimited curvetings and flourishes."

His musicianship was extraordinarily fine for a singer. In the course of his career, he wrote some forty operas, none of which survived his own day, but which amply attest his musical facility and technical skill in composition.



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MANUEL GARCIA (SON)
1805-1906
From the Sargent Portrait

His singing and sound musicianship were greatly reinforced by his unusual skill as an actor. His vivacity and dash in comedy and his fire and intensity in tragedy were irresistible. With such a multiplicity of gifts, it is not surprising that he should have been considered the finest tenor of his time. The male soprano had been the predominant operatic figure of the eighteenth century, but when Rossini was writing his early operas he found about him a number of excellent tenors, for whom he wrote his leading parts, and this combination of circumstances resulted in a change of public taste and the speedy and complete obliteration from the operatic stage of the male soprano. Garcia, by right of his artistic qualities, was the first of the line of great tenors whose sway has endured undisputed to the present day.

Manuel Garcia, the younger, was born in Zafra, Catalonia, in 1805, and died in London in 1906. As his long life covered practically the entire nineteenth century, and as he was intimately connected with singing in all its branches from the cradle to the grave, his century-long career is an interesting one, though in no way spectacular.

From the very first his father was determined to make a singer of him, and gave him indefatigably the benefit of his own great artistry and experience. The boy was with

his father constantly during the first twenty years of his life, and if anything could have made a great singer of him, this association certainly would have done so; but Nature had given him neither a remarkable voice nor an aptitude for the stage, although he was an excellent musician by instinct, as well as by training. His bent was decidedly for the tranquil life of the teacher and for scientific research.

He accompanied his father to New York, and sang constantly during that long and arduous season. His voice was a rather high baritone, but, in addition to his own rôles, he would often have to sing such heavy parts as Leporello in "Don Giovanni," and also to substitute for his father, a tenor, in time of need. But his distaste for the career was deep-seated, and at the age of twenty-five, after his return to Europe, he abandoned it altogether, much to the elder Garcia's disgust, in order to devote himself to the work he so heartily loved and for which he was so well qualified.

In 1829 he received an appointment to teach singing in the Paris Conservatory. During the ensuing years he made a profound scientific study of everything that pertains to the emission of the human voice, the results of which he published in several authoritative treatises. In 1848 he moved to London, which

he made his home during the remaining fifty-eight years of his life.

In 1854 he gave to the world his invention, the laryngoscope, which has thrown much light on the vocal processes and has been of inestimable value in medical practice. At first it was thought that the laryngoscope would have a beneficial effect on the art of singing, but even Garcia himself soon discovered that it was useful to him only in confirming the accuracy of certain theories that he, in common with many other good teachers before him, had long held to be true. As a matter of fact, the discovery of the laryngoscope has probably been a detriment to the art of singing, because it was the origin of the school of teaching that believes, erroneously, that the human voice is, after all, only a piece of ingenious mechanism, susceptible of development and control by purely physiological methods.

Garcia was unquestionably the greatest teacher of the nineteenth century. His sister, Pauline Viardot-Garcia, Jenny Lind, Johanna Wagner (a niece of Richard), Mathilde Marchesi, Stockhausen, Santley, Marie Tempest and a host of others scarcely less renowned were proud to call him master. As he grew older and taught less assiduously, his famous pupils, Marchesi and Stockhausen, were training according to his methods many of the singers who, like Melba and Eames and

Van Rooy, are great figures in the world of song to-day.

On his hundredth birthday the sovereigns of Spain, England and Germany sent decorations and encomiastic messages to him, and his admirers in London, including many people great in the medical and the musical worlds, gave him a banquet and presented him with a portrait of himself painted by Sargent. A year later he died.

Garcia's services to the art of singing were inestimable. Inheriting from his father the methods and principles of the old Italian school of *bel canto,* he was able to add to them the fruits of his own astonishingly long experience, and to pass them on by word of mouth to the students of the beginning of the twentieth century.

Maria and Pauline Garcia

MARIA (MME. MALIBRAN), 1808-1836
PAULINE (MME. VIARDOT), 1821-1910

HAVE called Manuel Garcia, Senior, "the father of modern singing;" he was also the progenitor of two daughters, Maria and Pauline, who had operatic careers of exceptional brilliancy and wrote their names indelibly in the Golden Book of Singers. From their father they inherited musical and dramatic instincts of the highest order; from him, too, they derived a comprehensive and sound musical education, as well as love and reverence for their art. All these they possessed in common, but disparity in age, temperament and conditions of life led them into dissimilar paths and accounts for the unlike memories they left behind them.

Maria was born in Paris in 1808, a few weeks after her father's arrival from Spain. Three years later he took her with him to Naples, and when she was only five years old gave her a child's part to play in Paer's

"Agnese." In this case the child was certainly mother to the woman, for one night, during a performance, the little creature began of her own accord to sing a third part to a duet, much to the surprise and delight of the audience. As a mere infant, she spoke French, Spanish and Italian with complete ease, and a few years later became equally mistress of English and German. (Although purely of Spanish blood, she always considered herself a French woman.) Garcia had her taught the piano and musical theory under the best masters, and by the time she was eleven she could play to him all the piano music of Bach, for which he had a strong liking.

With all her extraordinary aptitude for learning and a loving and lovable nature, she was hot-tempered, impatient of discipline and indolent. Her father, with characteristic zeal and persistence, undertook to overcome these weaknesses in her make-up, in order to bring her great talents to their fullest possible development. To subdue and educate so strong-willed a child was an arduous task and productive of much suffering for the child, but Garcia's will was indomitable, and in later years Maria admitted freely that without her father's stern discipline she never could have become famous.

At the age of fifteen she began her vocal studies under her father, an incomparable

MARIA FELICITA MALIBRAN
1808-1836

master. There was much to do, because her ear had never been accurate and her voice was in some ways defective, but a year later, in 1824, Garcia felt that she was ready for a public hearing. Her first appearance before an audience was at a concert given in Paris by a musical club under the direction of the lion of the hour, Garcia's friend, Rossini. She did credit to her father's teaching and was received cordially, but made no profound impression on her hearers.

A few months later she was with her father in London. Owing to the sickness of an important singer at the opera, it was necessary to find at short notice a substitute to sing the part of Rosina in "Il Barbiere di Siviglia." This was Maria's opportunity and she seized it. June 7, 1825, she made her operatic *début*. Her success was immediate and decidedly encouraging. Her youthful charm, fresh voice and easy, spontaneous action were most winning, although there were, of course, imperfections in her performance. On the strength of this *début* she was straightway engaged for the remaining six weeks of the season for the goodly sum of £500. Although she was associated with some of the best singers of the day, including Velluti, the last of the great male sopranos to visit London, she won the approval of the public and began to show signs of the marvelous magnetism which, only two or three

years later, laid musical Europe prostrate at her feet.

A characteristic tale is told of her first performance with Velluti. He, being a singer of the old school, was accustomed to embellish his melodies with such cadenzas and flourishes as seemed good to him, but in rehearsal he contented himself with humming through his part without ornament. Consequently, Maria had no idea what embellishments he planned to use. At the performance, in the course of a duet with her, he introduced a set of brilliant vocal pyrotechnics much to the liking of his hearers. What were their delighted amazement and his disgust when, a moment later, Maria reproduced every flourish and ornament he had employed, throwing in at the end, for good measure, some dazzling skyrockets of her own invention!

In the fall of 1825 she accompanied her father to New York as leading prima donna of his opera troupe. She was very young and almost without experience, but it was she, rather than he, that carried the musical burden of America's first season of grand opera. Garcia himself, having passed his prime, could no longer count on good service from his voice, and, as the other members of the company had but slight artistic merit, Maria's load was a heavy one.

New York had never seen a performance of

grand opera in the European style, but, despite its inexperience, it was prompt to grasp the fact that the young prima donna was a remarkable and fascinating artist. The morning after the first performance the *Evening Post* said: "Her voice is what is denominated in the Italian a fine contra-alto, and her science and skill in its management are such as to enable her to run over every tone and semitone of three octaves with an ease and grace that cost apparently no effort. Her person is about the middle height, slightly *embonpoint;* her eyes dark, arch and expressive, and a playful smile is almost constantly the companion of her lips. She was the magnet who attracted all eyes and won all hearts, . . . a cunning pattern of designing nature, equally surprising us by the melody and tones of her voice and by the propriety and grace of her acting."

Her popularity increased as the season went on. Garcia realized her value as a drawing card and gave her every opportunity to display her qualities. He even wrote an operetta for her, in which she had so much singing to do that after the first two performances she fainted away from fatigue. This drew from one of the newspapers a protest to the management for subjecting a girl of such tender years to so great a strain.

While Maria was thus basking in the sun of public approbation, her life behind the scenes

was full of hard work and tempest. With increasing years Garcia had become more fractious and exacting than ever and was constantly quarreling with his high-spirited daughter. "Cannot" was a word never permitted in his household; what he said must be done *must* be done, no matter how difficult. On one occasion he told Maria to prepare a new rôle within a very few days. When she remonstrated that the time was too short, he replied that if she did not learn it he would kill her. She learned it! Again, after a hot dispute behind the scenes, they were playing the last act of "Otello." Suddenly Maria noticed that the dagger in her father's hands was a real one and that there was a murderous look in his eye. Thoroughly frightened, she fell on her knees before him, pleading hoarsely in Spanish, "For God's sake, father, don't kill me!" But murder was not in Garcia's mind, and the dagger was only a hasty substitution for a mislaid property weapon.

In March, 1826, Maria married a man of French birth named Malibran, a naturalized American doing business in New York. He was well on in middle age, but reputed wealthy. How the marriage came about is not known. Perhaps Garcia forced it through because of Malibran's apparent wealth; or, perhaps, Maria thought it the easiest way to free herself from an irksome paternal tyranny. The

marriage was a complete failure, for her husband soon showed himself to be an unprincipled rascal without either money or honor. When Garcia and his troupe left for Mexico in the fall of 1826, Madame Malibran stayed behind in New York, very likely with the idea that she could help her husband to straighten out his tangled affairs. Occasionally she sang solos in Grace Church and also took part in some performances of English operettas at the Bowery Theatre, but after a long winter of domestic disillusion and futile efforts to arrange an endurable life with her husband, she decided to leave him finally and to return to Europe. In the autumn of 1827 she arrived in Paris.

Her life during the nine years remaining to her was an unbroken series of artistic triumphs in Italy, France and England—she never sang in Germany. Her year in America had transformed her from a promising *débuttante* into a full-fledged artist. Her voice had become an organ of sympathetic timbre and extensive range, contralto in quality, but reaching upwards easily into the soprano *tessitura.* The middle part of it was inferior in quality to the lower and the upper, but Garcia's excellent schooling and Malibran's own instinct and skill enabled her to minimize its weaknesses and emphasize its beauties.

In person she was rather small, but well-

proportioned; charming, rather than beautiful. On the stage she was always most becomingly dressed, quite unlike the typical dowdy Italian prima donna of those days.

As an actress she carried everything before her. When we read in cold blood about her histrionic methods it seems as if they must have been extravagant and often bordering on bad taste, but such was not the verdict of her contemporaries, who found her acting both sincere and powerful. Behind every note she sang and every gesture she made were an audacity, a fire and a passion that stirred the emotions of her hearers to their very depths. She was frankly hungry for applause and would sometimes even stoop to meretricious means in order to win it. Like her father, she never doubted her ability to meet any emergency, and her astounding versatility enabled her to accomplish many seemingly impossible *tours de force*. Only two failures are charged to her account—one the impersonation of the Moor himself in Rossini's "Otello"; the other an attempt to dance a mazurka on the stage. In her brief career she took part in thirty-five operas, in some of which she was able to sing more than one rôle. Her mind was so acquisitive that she could master a rôle in a few hours, and her restless temperament was always urging her to add to her repertory.

In private life she was as bewitching as

she was in public. Everybody she met fell instant captive to the charm of her warm, impulsive, generous qualities. It is fatiguing merely to read the story of this amazing woman's activities. She was never still; she never rested. Her days were so full that one wonders how she could have lived through even one of them—up at dawn for a long gallop on horseback, rehearsals and social intercourse all day long, the opera at night, followed by suppers and dancing—the sturdy flame that burned so strong in all the Garcias and that brought her brother and her sister to extreme old age, Malibran seemed determined to consume in herself within a few years.

I shall not attempt to follow her in her many tours—to-day in Paris, to-morrow in London, then back to Paris by way of Brussels; a month later a triumphal progress through enraptured Italy; then England again.

In January, 1828, she made her Parisian *rentrée* in "Semiramide" and finished the season there with ever-increasing success. When her father returned from America she joined forces with him for a few performances of his favorite operas. His star was setting, but for a little while it shone as brightly as ever it had. The night he sang Otello it seemed that all his youthful fire had come back to him. No one was more delighted at this than his

daughter. At the fall of the curtain on one great scene, Desdemona lay pale and weeping on the stage at the feet of the raging Moor. When, in response to hearty applause, the curtain rose a moment later she was seen standing beside him, hand in hand, her face almost as black as his. In the brief preceding instant the happy girl had thrown herself into her father's arms and kissed his sooty face!

In 1829 she and the great German soprano, Sontag, had all London at their feet. The following year she met Charles de Bériot, a Belgian violinist of note, with whom she formed a happy and enduring liaison, and who became the father of her two children. With him she made a home for herself in Brussels, to which she always returned in her brief and infrequent holidays. In 1832, at a few hours' notice, she started for Italy with her friend, the mighty Lablache, and made a brilliant tour through the principal Italian cities. The story was always the same. Wherever she appeared her audiences were limited only by the size of the auditorium. Her fees increased by leaps and bounds. In 1835 she received from the London opera £2775 for twenty-four performances—not bad pay even for 1914!

In 1836 she succeeded in obtaining from the French courts an annulment of her marriage. This was brought about largely through the influence of our old Revolutionary friend,

Lafayette, now a very old man. He, like the rest of the world, was the devoted slave of the young prima donna, and used to say laughingly that she was both the latest and the last sweetheart of his long life. As soon as Malibran was free she married de Bériot.

In April, 1836, she was riding in the park in London and had a bad fall from her horse. She made light of her injuries, which in reality were serious, and insisted on singing the same night. If she had taken reasonable care of herself it is likely that she would have recovered completely from the accident, but she had never known how to spare herself and, although in constant pain, continued her strenuous life without abatement. In the autumn she was engaged to sing at a great festival in Manchester, England. Although in no condition to appear at all, she insisted on singing not only what was on the programme, but also all the encores that the greedy public demanded of her. On the third day she collapsed completely and was carried from the stage to her hotel in a dying condition. A few days later, September 23, 1836, she died in the twenty-ninth year of her age. She was buried in Manchester for a time and then taken to her final resting-place in the cemetery of Laeken in Brussels.

There was something so feverish, so meteoric about Malibran's career that it is hard to esti-

mate her real merit as an artist. She flashed across the heavens, dazzling all beholders and leaving them powerless to indicate coherently the path she followed. Her personal magnetism was so powerful that it rendered dispassionate criticism of her art all but impossible. Musically, she had some creative power, as her improvisations and published songs attested, but dramatically, despite her indisputable histrionic gifts, she created nothing. She left behind her no worthy followers; her artistic influence ended with her brief life. And yet so shrewd and competent a critic as Rossini said: "I have met in my life only three singers of real genius—Lablache, Rubini, and *that spoiled child of nature,* Malibran."

To turn from the study of Maria Garcia's career to that of her sister is like listening to a symphony by Beethoven after "Tristan and Isolde," or reading Wordsworth after Shelley.

Pauline Garcia was born in Paris in 1821 and came to America with her parents four years later. All her long life she retained a vivid memory of her father in the hands of the Mexican brigands, who, after robbing him of his all, compelled him, at the point of the knife, to sing them a song. She was as precocious intellectually as Maria, but as docile and amenable as her sister was impatient and rebellious; her father put it, "the one must be bound by a chain; the other may be led by

PAULINE VIARDOT GARCIA
1821-1910

a silken thread." At an early age she could speak five languages easily, and when she was eight we find her perched on a high stool playing accompaniments for her father's singing lessons. Later she became a pupil of Liszt's. She was only eleven when her father died—too young to have had her voice trained by him. She always held that her mother was her teacher, but it is more likely that she herself and her brother, between them, were responsible for her excellent method of singing.

In 1838 she made a concert tour in Germany with her brother-in-law, de Bériot, and a year later made her operatic début in both London and Paris as Desdemona and La Cenerentola. Théophile Gautier promptly hailed her as "a star of the first magnitude." Her girlish charm, despite her plain features, won all hearts at once, and her mezzo-soprano voice of wide compass, though not of strictly beautiful texture, had in it an unusual power to stir the emotions. Within a short time this girl of eighteen was singing first rôles in the company with Lablache, Grisi, Rubini, Tamburini and Persiani.

In 1840 she married Louis Viardot, a Frenchman who had made some name for himself in letters and the dramatic world, and with whom she lived happily for more than forty years.

A grand tour of the Italian opera houses of

Europe soon made her well and favorably known in Madrid, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Edinboro and Dublin, although she never sang publicly in Italy. Everywhere she was accepted as an artist of the highest rank. Meyerbeer's vogue was at its zenith, and Pauline soon became famous for her impersonation of the heroines in "Robert le Diable" and "Les Huguenots." She was, too, the inspiration and creator of the great rôle of Fides in "Le Prophète," which was first produced in 1849, and with her interpretation of it made a great sensation in the word of opera. This was one of the greatest of her rôles, sung by her in all some two hundred times, but perhaps not greater than that of Orphée in Glück's undying opera, which was revived for her in 1860 at the Théatre Lyrique in Paris, and in which she sang more than a hundred times. In 1861 Glück's "Alceste" afforded her another opportunity to display her splendid art.

She retired from the operatic stage in 1863 and lived in Baden till 1871, when she returned to Paris. There she gathered about her many pupils and friends, with whom she passed usefully and happily the remaining years of her life. She died in 1910, nearly three-quarters of a century after her sister.

Madame Viardot-Garcia's appeal was always to the *cognoscenti* rather than to the unthinking public. Neither her face nor her tall, lean

figure were ingratiating at first sight, and her voice, despite its range and technical facility, always had a somewhat thin, harsh timbre. But the noble artistic nature of the woman, her superb musicianship, her great skill as an actress and the vivid expressiveness of her interpretations won the praise of the best musicians in Europe. Liszt wrote of her: "In all that concerns method and execution, feeling and expression, it would be hard to find a name worthy to be mentioned with Malibran's sister. In her, virtuosity serves only as a means of expressing the idea, the thought, the character of a work or a rôle."

Schumann, in token of his great admiration, wrote for her the cycle of songs, Opus 24, and Wagner has recorded his approbation of the masterly fashion in which she sang for him at sight a whole act of Isolde.

She was an exemplary artist in all her rôles, but was exceptionally fine in the operas of Glück and Meyerbeer, and left the operatic world appreciably richer by means of her superb interpretation of them. As a teacher of singing, after her retirement from the stage, her influence was not so great, but she was able to pass on worthily to the present generation the great traditions and experience of her family.

Maria Garcia belonged to the romantic school of singing, poignant, exuberant and per-

sonal, making a quick appeal to the emotions and dependent, in great part, on the moods and impulses of the hour; the art of Pauline Garcia was of the classic order, impersonal, restrained, striking deep, but not less moving and all the more satisfactory because of its serenity and reposeful power.

Catalani and Pasta

ANGELICA CATALANI (1780-1849)
GIUDITTA NEGRI PASTA (1798-1865)

TWO stars of the first magnitude were shining brightly in the musical heavens in the early part of the last century—Angelica Catalani and Giuditta Pasta. Nature had bestowed on Catalani every physical gift that could contribute to her success as a singer, and, in addition, a lovable, wholesome disposition, but had neglected to endow her with musical instincts or serious artistic ambition. From Pasta, on the contrary, Nature had withheld beauty of voice and person, compensating for this lack by a generous endowment of lofty artistic ideals, sustained by unusual intelligence and perseverance. It is both interesting and instructive, in view of this absolute contrast in natural equipment, to study simultaneously the lives of these two women and to reassure ourselves once again that the race is not always to the swift, and that, without a great voice, one can sometimes become a great singer.

Angelica Catalani was born in Sinigaglia, Italy, in 1780. Her father was, at the time of her birth, a well-to-do man with social ambitions, and, in order to give her the proper start in life, he sent her early to school at the fashionable convent of Santa Lucia at Gubbio. Music was an important feature in the school curriculum, and the singing of the choir enjoyed considerable celebrity in the neighborhood. It was not long before Angelica, with her lovely voice and person, became the central figure in the choir, and people came from far and near to hear and look at her. Sometimes she would sing a solo so exquisitely that the congregation would break into applause, much to the horror of the bishop, who remonstrated solemnly thereat with the mother superior. The good lady hearkened dutifully to his words, and withdrew Angelica to the rear row in the choir, where she was less visible, even if no less audible.

Everybody advised an operatic career for the gifted girl, but her father was ambitious to marry her brilliantly, and finally renounced these worldly ideas only when business reverses forced him to yield. At the age of fourteen Angelica was sent to Florence to study singing under Marchesi, a male soprano and teacher of great renown. She was with him for about two years and undoubtedly

learned from him much that was worth knowing, but also acquired the florid style that, later, she developed to the point of absurdity. In 1795 she made her operatic début in Venice in an opera by one Nasolini. Her success was immediate with the general public, who went into raptures over her beauty, her noble bearing and her superb voice. The *cognoscenti* alone took notice that she was no actress and no musician. From Venice she went to other large Italian cities, and everywhere was welcomed as a rising star of transcendent brilliance.

As all through her long career she owed all her success to Nature and practically nothing to art, her singing must have been nearest perfection in those early days, before too easy triumphs, flattery and fatigue had tarnished the luster of her unequaled gifts. Her voice was powerful, rich and clear, nearly three octaves in compass and extending upwards easily to the G *in altissimo*. Such flexibility was without precedent—runs, trills, roulades, every vocal flourish, were accomplished without apparent effort. Her chromatic scales, both ascending and descending, adorned with incidental crystalline trills, were simply awe-inspiring. No singer before or since has carried such a variegated and bewildering box of vocal tricks. Knowing and cool-headed critics observed that a curiously per-

sistent oscillation of the lower jaw in rapid passages detracted from the perfection of her *coloratura,* but her vocal excellences were so many and so extraordinary that it seemed hypercritical not to accept the voice as a practically perfect instrument.

In her early days she affected a sentimental style of singing, which, as her voice was neither passionate nor sympathetic in quality, fitted her ill; but later she was wise enough to abandon her attempts at tenderness and became what Nature planned her for—the greatest of all *bravura* singers. To the end of her days, she never learned to read music, to play any instrument or to sing strictly in time.

In 1804 she went to Lisbon to sing, and there fell in love with a French military man named Valabrègue. He was not in any way a desirable match, but to all expostulation she replied simply, "But what a fine-looking man!" and before long married him. If her husband had possessed some of the worthy ambitions that she lacked, he might have made a great artist of her, after all; but for art he cared not a fig—his only aim in life was to fill and empty his pockets with all possible celerity. To him his wife's voice was merely a source of income. The result was that, although Catalani remained before the public for nearly a quarter of a century after

her marriage, the passage of years added not an inch to her artistic stature.

In 1806 she gave three concerts at the Paris opera before enraptured audiences. Napoleon himself made her an offer that would keep her in Paris on her own terms, but she took a dislike to him and stole away to London, never to return to France so long as he was in power.

She possessed every quality likely to please the British public, including a hatred of Napoleon, and from the very first was treated by them as a goddess descended from Olympus to delight them with her voice. In 1807 her total profits in England were $80,000. For singing "God Save the King" or Rule, Britannia," she was sometimes paid as much as $1,000, and for a festival $10,000—there were no phonographs a century ago to augment these modest emoluments! Sometimes, after one of Napoleon's victories, His Majesty's Government would engage her to sing patriotic songs in her best broken English at public meetings, in order to instil new courage into the hearts of the people.

In February, 1815, after the abdication of Napoleon, she returned to Paris; and, later, during The Hundred Days, followed the court into exile at Ghent. After Waterloo, she made a triumphal progress through Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Belgium. The

ensuing winter Louis XVIII granted her the Théatre Italien in Paris, with a yearly subvention of $32,000 and a free hand as manager.

This arrangement was entirely to Valabrègue's taste, and he proceeded without delay to squeeze the Parisian public for the benefit of his own pocket. He held that his wife and "four or five puppets" constituted a sufficiently good opera company, and selected his artists on this basis. He reduced the orchestra in size and quality, and mounted the operas in most parsimonious fashion. In every way he could devise he sought to gain money with which to gratify his wife's and his extravagant tastes. For a time everything prospered with them and they were able to live like millionaires. (The bill for their servants' beer alone amounted in one year to about $600!) It must be added, in Catalani's favor, that all her life she was ready to sing and to give her own money for charity.

Catalani's operatic repertory was a meager one, and now was reduced to a number of so-called operas, which were, in reality, nothing but a hodge-podge of songs gathered from all sources for the purpose of displaying her vocal tricks. She paid little or no attention to the action of the piece and wandered on and off the stage at her own sweet will. It is not surprising that such treatment did not wear

well with the Parisians and that before long she was singing to empty houses. Within two years the theatre was ruined and Catalani's own fortune seriously impaired.

To refill her depleted purse, Catalani started on a tour through the countries of Northern Europe, which was destined to last about ten years. Her voice had begun to lose some of its finer attributes, but it was still a splendid organ, and her beauty was as queenly as ever. She sang mostly in concert, occasionally in opera. In 1824 she reappeared in London, where the most loyal of all publics gave her a hearty welcome. She continued her wanderings, with ever-diminishing returns, till 1828, when, in Dublin, she appeared in public for the last time.

The remaining twenty years of her life she spent at her villa near Florence, active in good works and her family life, a kindly, pious woman. She died in 1849.

Of Catalani's voice I have said enough—only a marvelous organ could have rendered tolerable a style of singing and an attitude towards a great art so meretricious and fantastic. In her small repertory were two of Mozart's operas, "Le Nozze di Figaro" and "La Clemenza di Tito," but they were not favorites with her, because in them she was obliged to sing in time. She much preferred operas, or arrangements of operas, in which

she was free to take such liberties with the music as suited her momentary impulse. Although a majestic figure in serious opera and a charming one in light parts, she was completely at ease only in concert.

In both opera and concert she wished always to be "the whole show," and, to achieve this end, did all in her power to prevent good artists, who might win applause for themselves, from appearing on the same stage with her.

Her most famous song was an air with elaborate variations called "Son Regina" ("I am Queen"), by Rode. In later life, when her voice had lost something of its flexibility, though not its power, she used to sing an arrangement of the bass air in "Le Nozze di Figaro," "Non più andrai," in which her clarion tones pierced the loudest orchestra with thrilling effect. Another *tour de force* was the imitation of the swell and fall of a bell, which she would execute with superhuman clearness and control of power. Then there was a sort of double falsetto *in altissimo,* which enthusiasts likened to the highest notes of a nightingale.

It may already have been surmised that she was not attentive to criticism from any source. Once, in Germany, a musician of standing ventured to speak unfavorably of her musicianship. "He is an impious man," she said,

"for when God has given to a mortal so extraordinary a talent as mine, everybodv should honor and applaud it as a miracle. It is profane to depreciate the gifts of Heaven."

A final pen-picture is worth reproducing. It was written by a journalist contemporary with her:

"When she begins one of the interminable roulades up the scale, she gradually raises her body, which she had before stooped almost to a level with the ground, until, having won her way with a quivering lip and a chattering chin to the very topmost note, she tosses back her head and all its nodding feathers with an air of triumph; then suddenly falls to a note two octaves and a half lower, with incredible aplomb, and smiles like a victorious amazon over a conquered enemy."

Just as extraordinary as the beauty of Catalani's voice was Pasta's power as a dramatic singer. Catalani's life is a record of great gifts unused or squandered; Pasta's one of mediocrity transformed into excellence.

Giuditta Negri, known in history as Pasta, by reason of her marriage with an obscure singer of that name, was born of Jewish parentage in Como, near Milan, in 1798. Little is known about her early life and surroundings, except that she studied first under the chapel-master in her native town and later in

the Conservatorio in Milan. In 1815 she made her professional début in Brescia, singing a little later in Parma and Leghorn, without arousing any enthusiasm for her voice or art. In 1816 she was in Paris as one of Catalani's "puppets," and in 1817 in London with Fodor; but she made no impression in either city and returned to Italy practically as unknown as when she left it.

The cause of these early failures was not far to seek. Her voice was coarse, inflexible, inclined to huskiness and often off the pitch; her features were commonplace and her figure squat and awkward. It needed some years of severe self-discipline to impart to her person that air which made her, like the diminutive Garrick, seem six feet tall, and to render her voice one of the most expressive and stirring of which we have any record. In the young Jewess was the consciousness of power, the germ of the great artist; her failures but furnished her with the key to her own problems.

After two years of hard study, in 1819 and 1820, she sang in Milan and Rome with success, and in 1821 and 1822 reappeared in Paris, where even the most critical now accepted her as the greatest dramatic singer of the day. Her principal rôles were in "Otello" (Rossini), "Tancredi" (Rossini), "Romeo e Giulietta" (Zingarelli) (in which she took

GIUDITTA NEGRI PASTA
1798-1865

the part of Romeo), "Nina" (Paesiello) and "Medea" (Mayer), in all of which she was held to be incomparable.

The refractory voice was now a soprano of good range, almost docile, almost beautiful, wholly convincing and frequently thrilling. In an epoch when singers strove to outdo each other in opulence and fantasy of ornament, Pasta created a new fashion by the restraint and chastity of her embellishments. She never improvised. Whatever she did on the stage had been conceived and elaborated in her studio. The labor she had to expend in order to master her music gave to her renderings an authority and dignity quite her own, while a fine instinctive sense of rhythm furnished a solid foundation for the loftiest musical superstructure.

She had no capacity for comedy, but in serious or tragic parts was thoroughly at home and able to stir her audiences profoundly. The majesty of her carriage and the sweep of her gestures were superb. She was the classic artist *par excellence*. In men's parts she was especially convincing. Talma, the great French actor, once watched her play in "Tancredi" (an operatic setting of Voltaire's tragedy) with intense interest, and said to her afterward: "You realize my ideal; you possess the secret I have sought to discover. To touch the heart is the aim of the true artist."

For six years she alternated between London and Paris and then returned to Italy. The self-restraint of her style did not altogether please the Neapolitans, but in the North she was accepted at her real value and the recipient of every possible honor. Bellini wrote for her "La Sonnambula" (1831) and Norma" (1832), in both of which she achieved memorable successes. Into every part she played she poured her creative power so generously that her impersonations seemed to be real people. Even Amina in "Sonnambula," a rôle quite different from those that had made her famous, was invested by her with a grace and a girlish charm as delightful as they were unexpected.

In 1833 she returned to Paris with an enlarged repertory, including "Anna Bolena" (Anne Boleyn), which Donizetti had written for her. In this new work, with Lablache, a superb Henry VIII, at her side, she won a fresh triumph.

Since her departure for Italy, six years ago, a new star had swung into the heavens —on the lips of everybody now were the names of Pasta and Malibran. The two prima donnas sang the same serious rôles and each had her ardent and argumentative partisans. Malibran had the better voice and made a quicker appeal to the public by means of her fervid talents, but she was the creature

of impulse, whose most striking effects were often the fruit of sudden inspiration, and, consequently, not, in the truest sense, creative. Pasta, in contrast, created, because her inspiration was guided by premeditation. Inspiration, when left to itself, is often only a flash in the pan; it needs the discipline of premeditation to make its expression consistently true. The singer must never trust to chance for his effects. He should prepare his interpretation line by line, note by note, so that when, before the public, though every external circumstance be against him, his offering shall clearly indicate the intention behind the manifestation. This capacity always to express the intention was Pasta's to an unusual degree and raised her above all the singers of her time, even above "the spoiled child of Nature," Malibran.

Unfortunately, Pasta's prime was short—scarcely more than ten years. So early as 1833 her voice was often untrue to pitch and had lost something of its expressiveness, although as an actress she was greater than ever. Four years later, in London, the voice was a mere wreck. Pasta was not yet forty, and it is probable that the early failure of her voice was due to the severe discipline to which she had always had to subject it in order to keep it obedient. Whatever the cause, the voice had gone, and shortly afterward Pasta

retired from the stage. A professional visit to St. Petersburg in 1840 was a complete fiasco.

In 1850 she returned to London for two appearances, at which she essayed scenes from her most famous parts. Many of her old admirers were on hand, and many younger people, who had come to hear for themselves the great artist of whom they had heard so much from others. Rachel, the French tragedienne, was there, and Pauline Viardot-Garcia, neither of whom had ever heard her. In the voice itself survived no trace of its former eloquence, but the old spirit and the old artistic intention remained to delight those that could penetrate the outward seeming. Rachel saw only the ruin and was outspoken in her ridicule; but Manuel Garcia's daughter was quick to separate the apparent from the real. At the conclusion of the programme she turned to her companion and, with tears in her eyes, said: "It is like the Last Supper of Da Vinci—a wreck, but still the greatest picture in the world."

In 1829 Pasta had bought a villa near Lake Como, which became her permanent home. Here, surrounded by family, friends, pupils and flowers, she lived quietly till her death in 1865.

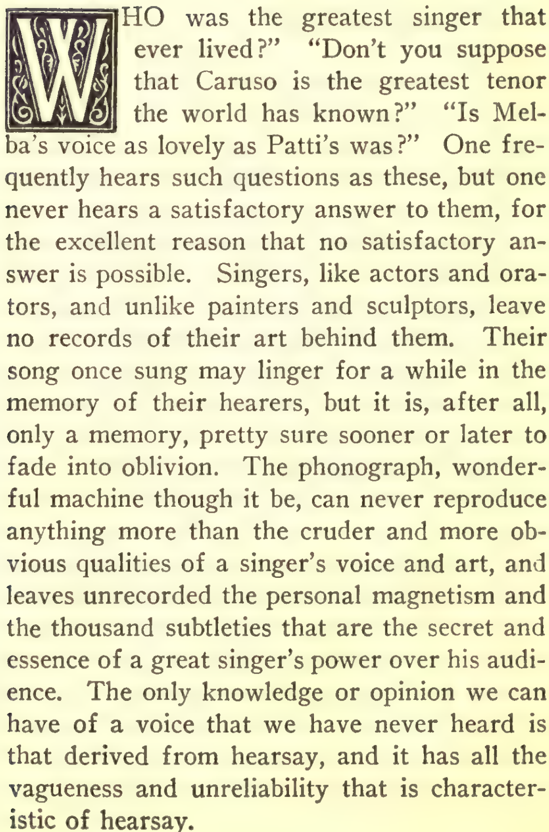
Few great artists have left behind them as few memories of their private lives as has

Pasta. But, after all, it is the artist, not the woman, that concerns us. We shall search musical history in vain to find among female singers her superior in serious rôles. Viardot-Garcia, in equipment and artistic point of view, bears a certain likeness to her, for both women, triumphing over physical disabilities, rose to lofty heights by means of the strength and truth of their artistic natures.

If Catalani had only had Pasta's artistic nature; or if Pasta had only had Catalani's glorious voice and beauty—but how vain it is to hope for perfection in this imperfect world!

Luigi Lablache

(1794-1858)



"WHO was the greatest singer that ever lived?" "Don't you suppose that Caruso is the greatest tenor the world has known?" "Is Melba's voice as lovely as Patti's was?" One frequently hears such questions as these, but one never hears a satisfactory answer to them, for the excellent reason that no satisfactory answer is possible. Singers, like actors and orators, and unlike painters and sculptors, leave no records of their art behind them. Their song once sung may linger for a while in the memory of their hearers, but it is, after all, only a memory, pretty sure sooner or later to fade into oblivion. The phonograph, wonderful machine though it be, can never reproduce anything more than the cruder and more obvious qualities of a singer's voice and art, and leaves unrecorded the personal magnetism and the thousand subtleties that are the secret and essence of a great singer's power over his audience. The only knowledge or opinion we can have of a voice that we have never heard is that derived from hearsay, and it has all the vagueness and unreliability that is characteristic of hearsay.

LUIGI LABLACHE
1794-1858

Nevertheless, it is interesting to rummage in the dusty volumes of musical history and reminiscence and to exhume the estimates of old singers as recorded by their contemporaries. Although a singer's fame is fleeting, we find in musical history the names of a score or two of singers who, by means of their voices and their art, made upon their own generation such a profound impression that their fame and triumphs have come down to us with a completeness of description that enables us to form for ourselves some sort of understanding of their great qualities.

Of all the singers of the nineteenth century none has left behind him such a fragrant and delightful memory as has Luigi Lablache. Big in voice, stature, mind and heart, rich in musical and histrionic talent, he was the dominating personality whenever and wherever he sang. To hear him was to provide one's self with a never-fading memory of complete musical satisfaction; to know him personally was to love and to admire him.

Lablache was born in Naples in 1794, and died in the same city in 1858. His father, a French merchant, had been driven from his home in Marseilles in 1791 by the Revolution; his mother was Irish. His musical gifts showed themselves early, and as a child he was taught the elements of music, as well as singing, at the Conservatorio della Pietà dei

Turchini in Naples. In addition, he developed considerable skill in the playing of stringed instruments, and might well have had a successful career as a violinist or 'cellist, if his voice had not led him into operatic paths. The soundness and thoroughness of his early musical training were of great value to him all through his life. In 1809, when he was fifteen, he sang the contralto solos in the performance of Mozart's Requiem, given in Naples on the death of Haydn. Shortly afterwards his voice broke and within two or three years developed into a truly magnificent bass.

As a boy, Lablache was full of mischief and good spirits, and but little disposed towards study and hard work. His great passion was for the stage and no less than five times he ran away from the conservatory, in order to take part in operatic performances in small theatres. Each time he was brought back in disgrace, but in 1812 he was graduated from the conservatory and made his debut in "La Molinara," by Fioravanti, at the San Carlino Theatre in Naples, a small opera house where they gave two performances a day. At this time, too, he married Teresa Pinotti, the daughter of an actor, who, in the course of a long wedlock, not only bore him thirteen children, but also exercised a thoroughly beneficial influence on his life. Perceiving the excellence of his natural parts, she awakened

in him a whole-hearted ambition to develop them to their utmost, which within a very short time placed him on the very pinnacle of operatic success, and kept him there until old age.

Just a hundred years ago, in 1813, he made his real professional debut in Palermo in the now forgotten opera of "Marc Antonio" by Pavesi. It is a delight to pause for an instant at this point and to try to picture to ourselves this radiant youth on the threshold of a career in which every early promise was fully realized in the mature artist. At his birth only good fairies had presided; the bad ones all stayed away! Lablache was very tall and nobly proportioned. His head was large and well-shaped; his features clean-cut and expressive. His voice, both powerful and flexible, ranged from the E-flat below the bass staff to the E-flat above. It could be dramatic or tender, majestic or humorous, a trumpet or a 'cello. As a comedian Lablache was inimitable. His laugh alone, full-throated and hearty, was enough to put a theatre in lasting good humor. His comic play, while never descending to buffoonery, was incomparably laughable. On the other hand, he could play tragic parts with true pathos and Olympian dignity, his superb physique lending itself perfectly to such impersonations. What wonder that, with such a combination of natural gifts and cultivated tal-

ents, his career during the next forty years should have been but one long series of triumphs in all the great opera houses in Europe!

After several years in Italy he filled his first operatic engagement in Vienna, where, incidentally, in 1827 he sang the solo bass part in Mozart's Requiem after the death of Beethoven—the work in which he had sung as a child, eighteen years before, when Haydn died. In 1830 he sang for the first time in both Paris and London. During the next twenty years it was his custom to pass a portion of each year in these two cities, visiting between times some of the other important European opera houses. For several seasons he sang in company with Malibran, Pasta, Grisi, Rubini and Tamburini—a quartet of singers never equalled in the interpretation of the music of Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti.

Voice, physique, musicianship and histrionic talent seem never to have been blended so happily in any singer as they were in Lablache. If there were weak spots in his equipment I do not know what they were—his contemporaries do not appear to have discovered any. His most famous rôles were in "L'Elisir d' Amore," "Don Pasquale," "La Rinegata," "La Cenerentola," "Il Matrimonio Segreto," "Semiramide," "La Gazza Ladra," "Norma," "Anna Bolena," "Zaira," "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," "Moise," "I Puritani," and "Don Giovanni."

Most of these operas are merely names to us nowadays, but we can easily picture him in the still familiar "Don Pasquale" and "Il Barbire," as well as in what was one of his most famous impersonations, Leporello in "Don Giovanni." If he had been born forty years later what a Hans Sachs, what a Wotan and what a Falstaff he would have made!

Lablache retained his voice practically unimpaired till he was quite sixty years of age, although he grew so corpulent as to become towards the end all but immovable. Indeed, in his later days he used to sit in a capacious chair placed in the center of the stage and sing his music without attempting to rise to his feet. The incongruity of a *basso buffo* singing his part from a fixed point on the scene must have been striking, but Lablache was a privileged person with the public and at liberty to sit or stand, just as he pleased, provided only that he would lend the luster of his voice to the musical performance. His death was mourned universally, and left vacant in the operatic world a place that has never been completely filled.

The size and sonority of Lablache's voice were its most obvious characteristics, of which many stories are told. Once, it is said, his wife was awakened at night by the sound of what she took to be the notes of the fire-tocsin—it was only her husband uttering in his

sleep the staccato notes in a duet from "Puritani," which he had been singing with Grisi that same night. His upper D was a stupendous note, with which, in great dramatic climaxes, he used to split the ears of the groundlings. But he never used the full strength of his voice at inappropriate times; with unerring taste and skill he always adjusted its power and quality to the artistic necessities of the situation.

This trumpet-like D of his used to recall to the veterans the same note in the voice of Cheron, the glory of the Paris Opera towards the end of the eighteenth century. Cheron by merely blowing into a glass goblet could crack it; by singing into it his great D he burst it into a thousand pieces.

Lablache was famous for his skill in selecting and wearing costumes and took the greatest pains in regard to all the details of make-up. On the stage he seemed to be a real person and never had the unnatural, upholstered look so common to opera singers in costume. Whether in comedy or in tragedy, until his size became excessive, his appearance was always harmonious with the ideal stage picture.

Although not an educated man in the usual sense, he managed to acquire a great deal of general information which, combined with his innate good sense, geniality, humor and tact, made him a welcome guest in the best society

everywhere. Emperor Alexander II of Russia was most cordial in his relations with him, and Queen Victoria, who at one time studied singing with him, mentions him in her published diaries with affection and esteem. Until his day it had been the custom in England at musical parties where professional musicians performed to stretch a cord across the drawing-room in order to separate the musicians from their hearers of the social world, to segregate, so to speak, the goats from the sheep. One evening, after Lablache had sung, he was talking with somebody on the other side of the cord. Suddenly and unostentatiously he reached down, untied the cord and dropped it quietly on the floor. The tradition was broken once for all. The cord was never stretched again in London.

Of Lablache's great size and strength there are innumerable stories. One day, in the course of a wearisome rehearsal, he reached lazily into the orchestra, seized a double bass by the neck with one hand, lifted the instrument from the ground at arm's length, held it there for a minute or two, and then replaced it gently, all as easily as if he had been playing with a walking-stick. Often, as Leporello, he would tuck the importunate and squirming Masetto, though a full-sized man, under his arm and carry him off the stage without the least apparent effort.

His sense of humor was delicious. He was once lodging in the same hotel in London with General Tom Thumb. A lady who was anxious to make the midget's acquaintance called one day at the hotel and, by mistake, knocked at Lablache's door, which was opened by the gigantic singer himself. Somewhat startled, the lady said:

"I should like to see General Tom Thumb, if you please."

"I am he," answered Lablache in his deepest voice.

"Oh! but I thought he was a very small man?"

"So I am, Madam, when I am on exhibition, but when I am at home I always make myself comfortable."

Many men and women have been born well equipped for a singer's career, but have been content to win the easy successes that come in youth to such as they and cease when youth ceases. Others, but poorly endowed by nature, have, by means of unsparing, intelligent labor, achieved for themselves honorable niches in the musical Hall of Fame. Lablache is almost unique in that, despite his royal inheritance of talents, he never during his long career relaxed his effort to bring his art to the full flower of perfection, and, in consequence, attained to an artistic excellence that has seldom been equalled in the history of song.

Three Tenors

GIOVANNI BATTISTA RUBINI (1795-1854)
ADOLPHE NOURRIT (1802-1839)
GILBERT DUPREZ (1806-1896)

ANUEL GARCIA, the elder, was the first of the dynasty of tenors that has ruled the operatic kingdom for the past hundred years. We of this day perceive his importance more clearly than did his contemporaries, many of whom were disposed to criticize certain imperfections in his voice and temperament and to overlook his superlative excellence as an all-round artist. The second of the line was Rubini, who was crowned "King of Tenors" by his coevals, and whose name now, seventy years after his retirement from the stage, is still symbolic of a glorious vocal art.

At the time that Rubini was playing on the heart-strings of the public through the medium of Italian song Adolphe Nourrit, at the Paris Opera, was developing and fixing the standards of a noble art in harmony with the

French artistic taste. He was succeeded by Gilbert Duprez, who, after brilliant successes in Italy, returned to his native Paris to carry on the admirable work of Nourrit. These two Frenchmen were in no sense rivals of Rubini, for Rubini had no rivals, and the passing years have dimmed the luster of their once great renown, but they were, both of them, fine artists whose services to vocal art are well worthy of remembrance.

Giovanni Battista Rubini was born in Romano, near Bergamo, Italy, in 1795. His father, an obscure music teacher, had faith in his son's future from the first and spared no pains to bring to flower a talent that to the rest of the world was at first scarcely perceptible. At the age of eight Giovanni was able to fiddle in an orchestra and sing in a choir. His first singing teacher dismissed him for his lack of promise, but, notwithstanding, the boy, at the age of twelve, was given a girl's part in the theatre at Bergamo. Then he became a member of the chorus in the Bergamo Opera and was allowed to fiddle between the acts. On one occasion he substituted for a solo singer and acquitted himself so well that the manager added to his usual stipend the munificent sum of one dollar.

Encouraged by this modest triumph, Giovanni went to Milan to seek an engagement, but was not found worthy of even a

GIOVANNI BATTISTA RUBINI
1795-1854

place in the chorus. A concert tour, in company with a violinist, was a complete failure. These rebuffs must have been disheartening to the young man, but he had faith in his own powers and, like Pasta, utilized his early failures as a foundation for a great career.

Finally, he obtained a small engagement as solo tenor in the opera at Pavia at a monthly salary of ten dollars. From there he passed progressively to Brescia, Venice and Naples. The opera at Naples under Barbaja's able management was one of the most important in Europe. It had been especially rich in tenors, one of whom had recently been Garcia himself, but, nevertheless, young Rubini made a favorable impression on the difficult Neapolitan public. Even now Barbaja did not perceive his potentiality and would only re-engage him at a reduced salary. Rubini could have returned to the smaller theatres at increased rates, but was shrewd enough to see that the development of his art needed just such surroundings and opportunities for study as Naples offered him. So he accepted Barbaja's terms, promising him the while to get even with him later.

Barbaja sent him to Rome, where he achieved his first substantial success in Rossini's "La Gazza Ladra." Not long afterward Palermo confirmed the verdict of Rome. Little is known about those early days and it was

not till 1825, when Rubini made his début at the Théatre Italien in Paris, that the Muse of History began to take copious notes on his doings. "La Cenerentola," "La Donna del Lago" ("The Lady of the Lake") and "Otello," all by Rossini, served to present him to the French metropolis. His triumph was immediate and undisputed, but Barbaja, to whom he was still under contract, would yield him to the Parisians for six months only and then recalled him to Naples, Milan and Vienna.

Garcia was the greatest interpreter of Rossini's operas and it was in the same repertory that Rubini first made a name for himself, but it was not till Rubini fell in with Bellini that he found the perfect medium for his peculiar gifts. On his return from Paris the two men met for the first time, discovered a strong mutual sympathy and retired together to the country. There Bellini, with Rubini at his side, composed "Il Pirata" ("The Pirate"). In 1826 Rossini's florid style was all the vogue, but Bellini, probably prompted by the tenor, incorporated in his opera a number of simple, emotional melodies in the style by which he is now remembered.

The opera was produced in 1827 with Rubini in the cast and Rossini's star began to set as Bellini's rose above the horizon. The older man was the greater musician, but Bellini's skill as a melodist outweighed with

the public his weaknesses as harmonist and dramatist. Rubini's exquisite voice and art in such tuneful music were irresistible and the production of this now obsolete opera marked the beginning of a new school of singing. Within a few years "La Sonnambula," "Norma," "I Puritani," and Donizetti's "Anna Bolena" (written for Pasta and Rubini) brought it to its fullest growth.

In 1831 Rubini was free from his contract with Barbaja and sang in England for the first time. From then till his final retirement, a dozen years later, he divided his time between Paris and England. He was as popular in the English provinces as in London and much in demand for concerts and festivals, as well as for opera. He added to his repertory the Donizetti operas as they appeared and scored characteristic successes in "Lucia," "Lucrezia Borgia" and "Marino Faliero."

During these twelve years he was constantly associated with what was probably the most wonderful group of singers ever assembled—Malibran, Grisi, Persiani, Viardot-Garcia, Tamburini and Lablache, not to mention others who in less brilliant company would have been considered remarkable. Perhaps the most perfect cast of all was that of "I Puritani" (1835), Bellini's last opera, written for Grisi, Rubini, Tamburini and Lablache and sung by them over and over again in London and

Paris. Ah, those were the golden days of purely lyric singing!

In 1843 Rubini sang in London and Paris for the last time. His voice was beginning to show signs of wear, and, with a wisdom too rare among singers, he decided to retire before it should fail him altogether. But many of the large cities of Northern Europe had never heard him and he was persuaded to undertake a concert tour with Liszt, then in his early prime, through Holland and Germany. They parted company in Berlin and Rubini went on to St. Petersburg. At his first concert in the Russian capital he cleared over $10,000. Every honor was heaped on him and Czar Nicholas appointed him not only "Director of Singing," but also a Colonel in the army!

The following year, after a tour through Italy and Vienna, he returned to Russia, but the climate did not agree with his voice and he announced his immediate and final retirement as a singer. He was a rich man. During his last active years he is said to have derived from his singing an annual income of $40,000, and from these large receipts he had thriftily laid by a capital of something like $600,000. He passed his last years on his estate at Romano, where he died in 1854.

In all respects but one Rubini was insignificant. He was short, rather stout, and awkward; his features were plain and dis-

figured by small-pox. He had no taste in dress and would wear anything his costumer chose to put on him. He had neither skill nor ambition as an actor and strolled about the stage much as Catalani had done, regardless of his fellow-singers and their doings. His delivery of recitative and dialog was slovenly, although he took some pains with concerted pieces. But when it came time for him to sing a substantial solo, this commonplace little man was transformed into an angel of song, Israfel himself. Then, indeed, the whole world held its breath and listened, for none could resist the emotional appeal of his singing.

Rubini's voice ascended from E of the bass clef to high B in chest quality, and then in a thrilling falsetto to the F or G above. His breath control was so complete that even the observant were often unable to detect when he replenished his lungs. His mastery of the florid school of vocalization, acquired as an interpreter of Rossini, contributed to the perfection of his delivery of Bellini's melodies. Every resource of technique was at his command. One of his most characteristic effects was a sudden passage from loud to soft, or from soft to loud—an effect that in later years he much overworked. He was the first to use the *vibrato* for the expression of emotion, and the first, too, to employ the sob that ap-

peals so irresistibly to the many admirers of Caruso.

Other tenors have had voices as beautiful as Rubini's and, possibly, technical skill as great as his, but none has equaled him in his ability to move the hearts of his hearers. By means of his voice alone he could crowd into his rendering of a song a whole world of love and pathos. For this reason he was remembered not by his rôles but by his songs, and was just as effective in concert as in opera. Toward the end of his career his style became full of mannerisms and exaggerations, but, despite them all, he never lost his power over the public. His singing spoke to the hearts of both the simple-minded and the sophisticated. He sang his last note seventy years ago, but his power to stir the tender emotions that too often lie dormant in our breasts seems still to live to prove to us what Talma said to Pasta—"The aim of the true artist is to touch the human heart."

A hundred years ago the art of singing among the French was at a low ebb. The instinctive love of the Frenchman for drama had developed a vocal style noisy, exaggerated and quite neglectful of the amenities of *bel canto*. Fifty years later some of the most perfect performances of opera in all Europe were to be heard at the Paris Opera. This ameliora-

tion was due, in large measure, to the art of two French tenors, Adolphe Nourrit and Gilbert Duprez.

Nourrit was born in Montpellier, in the south of France, in 1802. His father, Louis Nourrit (1780-1831), was first tenor at the Paris Opera, a position that he held for a number of years, despite a complete lack of imagination and fervor, because of his excellent voice and reliable habits. Through all his operatic career he carried on a business in diamonds and was determined that his son should be a man of affairs and not a singer. The boy was sent early to a reputable school, where his intelligence and love of study made a good record for him; then, after some training in bookkeeping, he became a clerk in a life insurance office.

But Adolphe had the artistic temperament, as well as a tenor voice, and, unknown to his father, began the study of music outside of office hours. One day he was practicing in his room at home when Manuel Garcia, who was a friend of Louis Nourrit's, chanced to hear him. Garcia talked with him and was so much impressed by his earnestness that he undertook to persuade the father to allow his son to follow his natural bent. His plea was reluctantly granted and Adolphe became the pupil of Garcia himself.

The young man made such good prog-

ress that in 1821, through his father's influence, he made his début at the Paris Opera in a small rôle in Glück's "Iphigénie en Tauride." He was received cordially by the public, who discovered in him all his father's good qualities, plus the artistic instincts that the older man lacked. The physical resemblance between father and son was so exact that in 1824 Méhul wrote for them "Les deux Salem," the plot of which turned upon this likeness. The opera was withdrawn shortly, but better opportunities to test Adolphe's mettle soon presented themselves.

Rossini divined the young tenor's talent and wrote for him a part in his new opera, "Le Siège de Corinthe." With Garcia to coach him, Adolphe was able to make a success in this, his first good rôle, and when, in 1826, his father, said to be jealous of his son's first triumph, retired permanently from the stage, he was appointed first tenor of the Paris Opera.

He was only twenty-four years of age, but he made his value felt at once. During the next ten years, in addition to singing in all the standard repertory, he was the creator and often the inspiration of no less than eight great rôles. He was the original Arnold in Rossini's "William Tell" (1829), Robert in "Robert le Diable" (Meyerbeer) (1832), Eléazar in "La Juive" (Halévy) (1835), and

Raoul in "Les Huguenots" (Meyerbeer) (1836)—all creations of first-rate importance. Only a man of substantial gifts and accomplishments could have borne such responsibilities, but Nourrit's voice, head and heart equipped him well for the task.

His figure was short and rather too rotund for comeliness, but he carried himself with dignity and grace and dressed with rare taste. His face was sympathetic and expressive. As an actor he was equally skilful in both comedy and tragedy. His voice was not so full or rich or flexible as the best Italian voices, but it was under admirable control and unusually effective in the head and falsetto registers. His style was energetic, without being vociferous; elegant and resourceful, rather than impassioned. Indeed, Nourrit was the embodiment of all that the French still consider most desirable in a singer.

But what made him exceptional in his profession were his intellectual versatility and his attitude toward his art. He was a serious student of literature and philosophy and a capable critic of painting. He had poetic gifts and wrote librettos for ballets danced by Fanny Ellsler and Taglioni. He was an acknowledged authority on stagecraft, to whom the composers of the time, especially Meyerbeer, were indebted for much valuable constructive criticism. He was the first French

singer to recognize and publish the beauty of Schubert's songs.

His art was a religion, of which he was a priest, bound to serve it with affection and reverence. He ordered his private life in accordance with this point of view and tried to ennoble the lives of his associates. He was in sympathy with the ideals of the Revolution of 1830 and when the crisis came went about the city singing patriotic songs on the barricades and in the theatres. Most singers have been singers and nothing else—Catalani and Rubini, for instance; Nourrit, quite aside from his art, was a useful and brilliant member of society.

We have now reached the year 1837. Till then nothing had happened to give warning of the pathetic end of this admirable artist and worthy man. Since 1826 his supremacy at the Paris Opera had been unshared, undisputed; no rival or serious hostile influence had crossed his path; he had been spared the battle for recognition that most opera singers have to fight. It would have been better for him, probably, if his nerves and will had undergone the toughening influence of strife and hardship. He was only thirty-five years old; his powers gave no sign of deterioration; he was the idol of the public; his future seemed full of rich promise.

But the management of the opera had begun

to think that an institution as important as theirs had grown to be ought to have more than one tenor of first rank in its employ. Gilbert Duprez, a young Parisian, had been making a name for himself in Italy. One day Nourrit was told that Duprez had been engaged to share with him his onerous duties. He made no remonstrance, but his spirit seemed utterly broken. A few nights later, in the midst of a performance, he suffered a nervous collapse when he saw Duprez enter the theatre. The next day he sent in his resignation. Every argument was used to dissuade him from this step, but to all expostulation he replied that the mere thought of competition on a stage where for so long he had been free from all rivalry was intolerable. His decision was final and on April 1, 1837, he sang in Paris for the last time. An overflowing and enthusiastic public testified heartily to its love and admiration for the retiring artist, with whom it was sincerely grieved to part.

Nourrit wished to quit the stage altogether, but the love of it was so deep in him that before long he undertook a tour through Belgium and the French provinces. Everywhere he was welcomed cordially, but one night, while he was singing in Marseilles, his voice, probably because of a cold, broke. Completely unnerved, he rushed from the stage and in a frenzy tried to kill himself. His friends

managed to control him, but it was evident that his fine, sensitive mind had become permanently unbalanced.

In 1838 he was sufficiently recovered to go to Naples, where he undertook to alter his method of singing according to the Italian taste. He also wrote the book and Donizetti the music for an opera in which he himself was to sing, but the performance was, for political reasons, prohibited by the censor. He made a few appearances in some of his old rôles, and sang as well as ever he had, but he persuaded himself that the public applauded him only to deride him. One night, after singing at a charity concert, he went home and either fell or jumped from the roof of his house. Such was the pitiable end, at the age of thirty-seven, of one of the most versatile and creative of all operatic tenors.

Gilbert Duprez, the involuntary cause of the passing of Nourrit and his successor at the Paris Opera, was born in Paris in 1806. His father, a perfumer by trade, was a poor man, and it would have been hard for the boy to get an education if he had not early attracted the attention of Choron, a distinguished musical pedagog, who discovered in him evidence of a real musical talent, which he himself undertook to develop.

Duprez's first attempts to win recognition as

a singer were, like Pasta's and Rubini's, in-effectual. At the age of fourteen he sang in the chorus at a performance of Racine's "Athalie," given at the Théâtre Français. A visit to Italy somewhat later brought him no renown and in 1825 he returned to Paris, where he sang through a season at the Odéon. The public continued apathetic to his efforts, though Choron never lost faith in his pupil. He was equally inconspicuous at the Opéra Comique in 1828. About this time, despite his poverty, he took unto himself a wife with a voice and once again crossed the Alps. In Milan the two of them obtained an engagement for four months for the sum of $175 all told.

But the tide was about to turn. Duprez's voice and dramatic skill were expanding rapidly and soon enabled him to make a brilliant tour through Italy. For a time he was Malibran's leading tenor and in 1835 Donizetti wrote for him the tenor part in "Lucia." Tales of his prowess reached Paris and in April, 1837, less than a month after Nourrit's retirement, he made his début at the Opéra in "William Tell."

It is not surprising that he did not win immediate recognition from the Parisians, who were accustomed to the grace and finesse of Nourrit. Duprez's stature was insignificant, his features plain, almost to ugliness. Besides,

the part of Arnold had been written to fit Nourrit's high falsetto and, consequently, was not thoroughly suited to Duprez's more robust organ. But, all the same, there were a spontaneity and a fire in his interpretation that worked in his favor, so that even the most loyal admirers of Nourrit had to admit that the début was a promising one.

As time went on and Duprez was heard in other operas, the Parisians came to the conclusion that he was a worthy successor to their former favorite. His Italian-trained voice was more virile in quality than Nourrit's and included in its range a robust high C. Where he lacked in facility he gained in force. Nourrit's style had been polished almost to the point of affectation; Duprez's had a broader and more convincing sweep. Duprez could never achieve the air of elegance for which Nourrit had been famous, but his dramatic instincts were so true that, as in Pasta's case, his bodily presence seemed to increase in majesty with the crescendo of a dramatic situation. In matters of diction the two men were equal.

It is worth recording that Henry Chorley, an admirable critic, who heard both singers many times, considered Duprez the most satisfactory of all contemporary tenors, not excepting Rubini.

For ten years Duprez was the dominating singer at the Paris Opera, although his only

really important creation during that period was in "La Favorite," by Donizetti. His rule was so absolute that Berlioz himself attacked him in print, charging him (and all singers, for that matter) with being unprogressive, even reactionary. But his prime was a short one. He was still young when his voice began to fail him, probably for the same reason that Pasta's had failed her prematurely—a too severe discipline of a naturally refractory organ. Before he was forty-five he retired from the stage.

He had already had some success as a teacher, and to teaching and the composition of music of no especial value he devoted the remainder of his days. His most famous pupil was Madame Miolan-Carvalho, who later did so much to illuminate and beautify the operas of Gounod. Duprez published two treatises on the voice, which, like most attempts to define the art of singing in words, accomplished but little. He died in Paris in 1896.

Ruskin tells us that the art of painting reached its perfection in the Raphael Rooms in the Vatican, and that, following the universal law of growth, this attainment of perfection was the inception of decay. As Raphael was the perfect painter, so Rubini was the perfect singer—in Rubini mere vocalism attained its highest possible development.

Rubini had many imitators, but as none of them possessed his genius, the art of singing according to his tradition soon tended to become mannered and lifeless. Progress could be made only along new paths. Nourrit and Duprez, though inferior to Rubini as singers, by means of their versatility, energy and creative power succeeded in establishing a new school of operatic art, of which some of the best features culminated, at the end of the century, in the glorious achievements of Jean De Reszké and Victor Maurel.

Sontag and Lind

HENRIETTE SONTAG (1806-1854)
JENNY LIND (1820-1887)

MOST of the world's best singers have come of Latin stock, but a few have belonged to the Germanic race. Of these daughters of the North none are more deserving of remembrance than Henriette Sontag, a German, and Jenny Lind, a Swede, both of whom, after many triumphs in Europe, made extensive tours through the United States.

Sontag was born in Coblentz, on the Rhine, in 1806. Both of her parents were actors and at the age of six she made her theatrical début at the Darmstadt Theatre. Her musical talent declared itself early, and at the age of eight the little thing is said to have sung the great air of "The Queen of the Night" for the delectation of her parents' guests. In 1815 her mother, now a widow, took her to Prague, where she came under the notice of Weber, and where, despite the fewness of her years, she was accepted as a student in the

conservatory. She made rapid progress, and when in 1821 she was unexpectedly substituted for the prima donna in Boieldieu's "Jean de Paris" she charmed everybody by her lovely voice, her sure musicianship and her girlish grace.

Shortly afterward her mother took her to Vienna, where she sang for four years in both German and Italian opera. The German method of singing was not more admirable in those days than it is now, but Sontag's voice grew constantly in beauty and her operatic style was greatly benefited by her association with Fodor, the French prima donna. Weber took an interest in her, and in 1823, though she was still only a slip of a girl, entrusted her with the soprano rôle in his new opera "Euryanthe." Beethoven, too, was her devoted admirer, and after the first performance of Weber's opera, from which he was absent, his first question was, "How did little Sontag sing?" A year later he selected her to sing the soprano parts in the first performances of the Ninth Symphony and the Mass in D.

By 1825 she had sung in Berlin and Leipsig, as well as in a number of the smaller German cities, and had been accepted everywhere as a singer of exceptional quality. The enthusiastic populace and students of Göttingen, when she left them, threw her car-

HENRIETTE SONTAG
1806-1854

riage into the river, declaring that nobody was worthy to occupy it after her.

Her growing fame had already crossed the Rhine, and the Parisians, though somewhat incredulous as to the possibility of any good singing of German provenance, were anxious to hear her. In 1826 they had a chance to judge her merits for themselves. She made her Parisian début in the part of Rosina and had not been on the stage five minutes before her audience was completely captivated.

Her figure was slender and graceful, her features delicate, her eyes large and expressive, her hair rather blonde, her smile bewitching, her hands and feet perfection itself. Nature had molded her expressly to play the part of a coquette. Her voice was a lyric soprano of exquisite charm and sweetness, encompassing two flawless octaves and able to execute the most florid passages with delicious facility. In vocal fluency, though not in power, she surpassed even Catalani. When one adds to these qualifications skill as an actress and a musicianship that satisfied Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Weber and Beethoven, it is not surprising that the Parisians approved without reserve the verdict of the Germans.

In parts requiring suavity, tender sentiment and archness of expression Sontag was adorable; as a singer of Mozart's lighter rôles she

has probably never been equaled. Her physique and temperament precluded complete success in portraying the deeper emotions, although, as she matured in style, she added to her repertory commendable impersonations of Desdemona and Donna Anna.

In 1828 London heard her for the first time and capitulated at once. A few months later she was again in Paris battling with Malibran for the crown of Queen of Song. The Spaniard was all fire and passion, the German mistress of a serene and perfect art. The question of supremacy could of course never be settled, because it was one of kind, not of degree, but the rivalry was none the less intense, even acrimonious, for a time. Finally some tactful person persuaded the two prima donnas, who were performing on the same programme at a private concert in London, to commingle their voices in a duo from "Semiramide." The result of the combination was so happy that Spain and Germany declared peace on the spot and sealed the treaty with a kiss. This was the first of their many joint appearances in opera and concert. In 1829 Malibran, Sontag and Damoreau, joining forces for a benefit performance at the Paris Opéra, brought the receipts to the astonishing total of $27,000.

As a captivator of the hearts of men Sontag was irresistible; Germans, French, Eng-

lish, she enslaved them all. An English diplomat in Berlin was known as Lord Montag, because Montag always follows Sontag. In 1826 the aged but still susceptible Goethe wrote, "I would gladly sit to-day and all day to hear her. Her talent has more confused than comforted me. The good that passes by without returning leaves behind it a vacuum."

Offers of matrimony were of almost daily occurrence, but to all her wooers the enchantress said a kindly "no." It was thought that her heart was impregnable, but early in 1830 her recent secret marriage to Count Rossi, a young Italian diplomat, was announced. Of course she had to give up the stage and, in order that her humble birth might not jeopard her husband's career, the King of Prussia bestowed on her a patent of nobility. After a few farewell performances she retired, apparently forever.

For nearly twenty years the Countess Rossi led the mundane life of a diplomat's wife, accompanying her husband to Holland, Germany and Russia, where he was successively accredited. Her innate gentility enabled her to grace her new position as it had enabled her to grace the stage. Occasionally she sang in public for charity, and it was noticed that her lovely art had in no way deteriorated. Her domestic life was thoroughly happy and it is probable that Europe

would never have heard her in opera again and that America would never have heard her at all, if it had not been for the revolutionary movement of 1848.

Jenny Lind's retirement from the operatic stage in 1849 left a void in London that Lumley, the manager of Her Majesty's Theatre, felt should be filled at once. The social disorders of the previous year had played havoc with Count Rossi's finances, so that when Lumley made the countess an offer of $30,000 for a six months' season, she decided to accept it, though it necessitated her husband's retirement from diplomacy.

Great was the interest of the public in the return of the famous singer after so many years of absence, and great was its delight to find that, although the voice had lost a little of its bloom, their former idol was the same exquisite artist as of old. Time had dealt kindly too with her beauty and added only a little plumpness to her girlish figure.

She made her rentrée in "Linda di Chamonix," following it with several operas from her old repertory. All went well and before long she was winning new laurels in "Don Pasquale," "I Puritani" and "La Figlia del Reggimento," all of which had been written since her retirement twenty years before. After England Paris and Germany welcomed her back into their hearts.

In 1852 she was called upon again to follow in the wake of Jenny Lind. The Swedish soprano, after two remunerative years in the United States, sailed homeward from New York, never to return. Some American managers, feeling that a singer of Sontag's reputation could make a profitable tour through the territory just covered by Lind, engaged the German prima donna for a long season of concert and opera.

Sontag landed in New York in September, 1852. On the night of her arrival she was given a public serenade, according to the best Barnum-Lind traditions, but the affair lacked the strong guiding hand of Barnum and quickly degenerated into a street riot, something on the order of the second act of "Meistersinger." Sontag was so upset by the uproar and excitement that she took to her bed and had to postpone her first concert for a week or two.

The attempt to tread in the footsteps of the triumphant Swede might easily have resulted in a disastrous anti-climax; besides, Alboni, whose opulent voice and genial temperament always made a strong popular appeal, arrived in New York about the same time as Sontag. But, despite these adverse circumstances and uncertain health, Sontag was accepted at once by the public at her real value. She made her American début September 27, 1852, in

Metropolitan Hall, a fine new concert auditorium, situated on Broadway, opposite Bond Street, which had recently been inaugurated by Lind. Later she appeared in several of her favorite operas at Niblo's Theatre, and although Alboni's simultaneous appearances with another company must have divided a public at best none too numerous, her affairs continued to prosper.

From New York she made a number of visits to the nearer large cities and then left for the West and South. Conditions of travel in our country were the reverse of luxurious sixty years ago and must have been especially taxing to a woman as delicately constituted as Sontag, who for so many years had led a life of ease. But the little woman was determined to restore the family fortunes and continued her tour month after month. She was offered an engagement in Mexico that promised to be highly remunerative. She knew there was danger in accepting, because of the widespread prevalence of cholera, but would not listen to the voice of prudence and in the spring of 1854 set sail from New Orleans with her husband. Her engagement opened auspiciously, but soon after her arrival she was struck down by the disease and died in Mexico City on the 17th of June.

Jenny Lind was born of humble parentage

in Stockholm in 1820. She began to sing almost as soon as she could speak and at nine years of age was admitted to the singing school connected with the Court Theatre. At ten she was singing children's parts in public and at eighteen made her début as Agathe in "Der Freischütz." Her performance was so good that she soon became a regular member of the company, singing leading rôles in such operas as "Euryanthe," "Robert le Diable" and "La Vestale" (Spontini). In all she attempted she acquitted herself well and was assured of an honorable career in her native city, but she was ambitious and perceived that, if she was ever to become a great artist, she needed a schooling much more comprehensive than any she could find in Stockholm. She was already a good pianist and thoroughly acquainted with all the standard operas, oratorios and songs, but of the art of *bel canto* she knew but little.

So in 1841, after three years as prima donna, she resigned her position and went to Paris to study singing with Manuel Garcia. He told her that her voice had been sorely fatigued, possibly permanently injured, by reason of her ignorance of right methods and would accept her as a pupil only after she had taken several weeks of complete rest. With characteristic energy and intelligence she worked with Garcia for nearly a year, at the

same time availing herself of the many opportunities of hearing the wonderful singers, both French and Italian, who at just that time abounded in Paris. The results of this year of study were so substantial that Meyerbeer, struck by her talent, arranged an audition for her at the Opéra. A number of musical celebrities were there to listen to her, but the manager himself failed to put in an appearance and the hearing came to nothing. For this discourtesy Lind bore Paris a grudge till the end of her days and never again, even when she was asked to write her own contract, would she consent to sing there.

She now returned to Stockholm, where during the next two years she was again a member of the opera company. Her art was growing rapidly, and when in December, 1844, through Meyerbeer's influence, she was given a chance to sing "Norma" in Berlin, she achieved an unqualified success. She followed this up with performances of other rôles and then made a tour of some of the principal German cities, including Leipzig, where she made Mendelssohn's acquaintance.

Her fame by now had penetrated as far as England and caused Bunn, an English impresario, to make her a tempting offer to sing in London under his management. She accepted his terms and signed the contract. The signature was hardly dry when Lumley,

another English manager, persuaded her to sign a contract with him. Whatever the rights of the question, the struggle between Bunn and Lumley for the honor of presenting "the Swedish nightingale" to the British public, furnished most wonderful advance advertising for the songbird. Such lawsuits, charges and recriminations, such backing and filling, all duly reported in the newspapers, never before or since have covered the pages of musical history. Incidentally, all England became acquainted with every detail of Lind's private and public life, her virtues, her generosity, her voice, her musicianship—nothing was left untold. The curiosity of the public in regard to her grew to white heat. Finally, the courts awarded to Bunn a forfeit of $12,500 and on May 4, 1847, under Lumley's management, Jenny Lind made her London début at Her Majesty's Theatre as Alice in "Robert le Diable."

Every inch of space in the auditorium was occupied; every opera enthusiast in London was there burning with expectancy. At first Lind was a little unsteady, but she soon gained confidence and sang her first air in her best style. The last note had not ceased when a mighty *"Brava!"* emitted from the throat of Lablache himself, who was in a box, gave the signal for a pandemonium of applause. From that moment till the end of her life Jenny

Lind was the idol of the English public, its incomparable singer, its standard of all womanly virtues. In opera or concert the story was always the same; the fever of approbation never cooled. Those that could not afford to enter the theatre stood for hours by the stage door just to see her pass. Royalty petted her, the populace adored her.

Her operatic career in London covered just two years, during which she appeared in many parts. Early in 1849, although she was not yet thirty and the future seemed to promise her a long vista of triumphs, she announced her approaching retirement from the operatic stage. Her last appearance on any operatic stage took place May 10, 1849, in "Robert le Diable."

The reasons for her early retirement from opera have been much discussed, but never clearly established. They are probably to be found in certain temperamental peculiarities which I shall touch upon presently.

Jenny Lind's voice was a soprano of wide compass, a little husky and sometimes untuneful in the lower part, but increasing in power and beauty as it ascended. Her breath-control was exemplary. Her own intelligence and industry, supplemented by the excellent instruction received from Garcia, made her so completely mistress of her voice that even the most difficult technical feats seemed well

JENNY LIND
1820-1887

within her powers. Her musicianship was above criticism, her artistic ideals of the highest.

Her appearance was in no way striking. Her eyes were, perhaps, her best feature and imparted, especially when she was singing, a pleasing expression to her plain features.

In physical gifts she was, therefore, not above the level of a number of other female singers, but in temperament she differed so widely from all as to place her in a class apart. Compared with such singers as Pasta and Malibran her singing might be called cold, but through this same coolness of style there seemed to pierce a mystic flame that was quite as emotional in its effect on her audiences as the most glowing Latin fervor. There was in her something of the moral intensity that one discovers in the writings of her compatriot Swedenborg. Like Nourrit, she felt herself to be a priestess in the service of her art and spared no pains to make her service perfect. This determination to give out only her best resulted often in apparent self-consciousness and over-emphasis. Further, she was always so intensely herself that she had no capacity to enter into an operatic part of which the general character was not in harmony with her own nature. With her keenness at self-analysis she must have recognized this deficiency and have been

anxious to abandon dramatic singing before the public should perceive for themselves her unfitness for it. Whatever the real cause of her retirement—and I offer here one that is, perhaps, not much more plausible than a number of others—Jenny Lind after 1849 was heard in concert only.

The next chapter in the life of our prima donna brings her to our own shores for the most sensational and triumphal concert tour ever made by anybody. Enter Phineas T. Barnum, the world's greatest showman, past or present. (The entrance of Barnum necessitates the free use of superlatives!) He was now in the prime of life, keen-witted, resourceful and ambitious. He had already made a tidy sum exhibiting Heth Joyce, a 161-year-old (?) negress, who swore she had been the mammy of George Washington himself, and a small fortune out of General Tom Thumb. Now, looking about him for new wonders to show, he bethought him of Jenny Lind, whom he had never heard, but whose renown had reached even his unmusical ears. He also had heard of the purity of her private life, of her piety and of the extraordinary generosity with which she had always shared her prosperity with her less fortunate fellow-creatures. Barnum himself says that had it not been for her virtues, especially her generosity, he never would have brought her to

America, and that his experience as a showman persuaded him that her voice and virtues in combination would prove a gold mine for all concerned. And he was right.

The contract was signed in England early in 1850. It called for a maximum of 150 concerts and guaranteed to the singer $1,000 a concert, plus one-half the receipts in excess of $5,500. To the singer was granted the right to sing for charity, when she wished. Barnum undertook to provide a musical conductor, Julius Benedict, a baritone singer, Belletti, both selected by Lind, and such other musicians as should be required on tour. All the expenses of advertising, travel, etc., were assumed by Barnum.

In 1850 the great American public knew little about musical doings in Europe and six months before the arrival of Jenny Lind even her name was almost unknown. But Barnum had learned how to reach the public through the newspapers and at once inaugurated a campaign of education that soon familiarized the entire country not only with the Swedish singer's name, but also with every detail of her life from her birth to the present moment, her musical gifts and her love of giving.

When she arrived in New York early in September, 1850, she was certainly the best advertised woman in America and everybody was on the *qui vive* to see and hear her.

Crowds were at the dock to meet her, although it was already night. Banners of welcome were displayed everywhere, and when she finally reached her hotel about midnight she was greeted by a band of 130 pieces, preceded by 700 firemen—everything prearranged by the ingenious impresario. Publicity continued to be the watchword day and night. Everywhere that Jenny went the crowds and the reporters were sure to go. It is surprising that she did not resent this constant intrusion on her privacy, but, so far as we can judge, she seems to have adapted herself easily and without apparent annoyance to her circumstances.

Her first concert took place September 11, 1850, in Castle Garden (now the Aquarium). The best seats cost nominally three dollars, though the right of choice was sold at auction. The first seat had gone to one Genin, a hatter, who paid a premium of $225, which soon came back into his pocket through the sale of hundreds of "Jenny Lind" hats. When the overture began there were said to be 7,000 people in the house. There was an excellent orchestra of sixty under the leadership of Benedict; also Belletti, the baritone, and Richard Hofmann, a young English pianist, who afterward settled in New York as a teacher of piano and died there only a few years ago.

But the audience had ears only for Jenny Lind. Her share of the programme consisted of "Casta Diva," a duet with baritone, a trio by Meyerbeer for two flutes and voice, an echo song (in which she performed some astonishing vocal feats bordering on ventriloquism) and some Swedish melodies. She sang also a "greeting to America," the words of which had been written by Bayard Taylor in competition for a prize of two hundred dollars offered by Barnum and set to music by Benedict. The audience applauded rapturously everything the singer did and also called out the seemingly reluctant Barnum, who announced that the prima donna had determined to divide her share of the evening's profits, $10,000, among a number of local charities. The total receipts came to $26,000.

New York was now more than ever "Jenny Lind" mad. During the next few months she gave no less than thirty-five concerts in the city. She also made a long tour that carried her to all the large cities east of the Mississippi and even to Havana. Her reception was the same everywhere, except in Havana, where the taste was all for Italian opera. Richmond, Virginia, with only a few thousand inhabitants, gave her a $13,000 house. Everywhere she went she gave away liberal sums in charity. In nine months she appeared in ninety-three concerts, the total receipts of which were, ac-

cording to Barnum, $700,000, of which her net share was $175,000. The gross balance went to Barnum.

In June, 1851, Lind decided, for reasons not altogether clear, to leave Barnum's management and, in accordance with a clause in her contract, obtained her release from him on payment of a forfeit of $30,000. She was now her own manager and continued her touring for another year with unabated success.

It is a pity that no competent writer ever undertook to describe the many interesting and amusing adventures of these two wander-years. The few sketches that have come down to us make us long for something more detailed and complete. Benedict, for instance, used to tell how in remote parts of the country the troupe would follow a water-course by steamer. When they came to a town of sufficient size, they would disembark and send through the streets men bearing banners announcing the arrival of the world-famous Jenny Lind, who would within a few hours give a concert in the principal hall of the place. There would be an auction sale of tickets, the musicians would arrive at the hall, bringing the pianoforte with them. The concert would be given and an hour afterward all hands would be sailing down stream again bound for the next port.

In 1852 she was married in Boston to Otto Goldschmidt, the successor to Benedict in her concert company. She was a Protestant, and he a Jew, as were many of her most helpful friends, including Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Moscheles, Lumley and Benedict. The marriage was a happy one.

In 1852 she returned to Europe, where, it is said, she distributed all the profits of her American tour in charity. From 1852 to 1855 she lived in Dresden and then removed to England, where she made her permanent home. She continued to sing in concert, but her appearances became gradually less frequent and ceased altogether in 1883. Surrounded by her growing family, she lived a full and happy life, devoted to the good of others and to the art she had served so nobly. She died at Malvern, England, in 1887.

To make a just estimate of Jenny Lind's worth as a singer is difficult. Though the most described of all the great prima donnas, her exalted reputation is the hardest to explain. In voice and in dramatic talent she was certainly inferior to her contemporaries Sontag and Grisi; she was supreme only as a concert performer. Cool, expert criticism was never applied to her by the general public. Her early successes in Sweden and Germany mean little, because of the low standards of singing in those countries. England and

America never heard her till their critical faculties had been numbed by the blast of advance advertising that, in both cases, preceded her coming. The Parisian public, the most knowing and sophisticated of all, never heard her sing a note. She was only thirty-five when she ceased to sing regularly and resolved herself into a glorious tradition above the reach of adverse criticism; after that her infrequent appearances took place only before the English, the most unquestioningly loyal of all publics.

And yet the praise she won from such musicians as Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Robert and Clara Schumann, and Mendelssohn warns us that it is not safe to apply to her the word "overrated." Mendelssohn wrote the soprano part in "Elijah" for her and said, "In my whole life I have not seen an artistic nature so noble, so genuine, so true; natural gifts, study and depth of feeling I have never seen united in the same degree." This is certainly high praise from a high source. Our own Theodore Thomas, too, always maintained that of all the great singers that sang in America during his long lifetime, and he heard them all, Sontag and Lind were certainly the greatest.

Sontag won her victories by obvious means —a lovely voice and person, combined with a highly developed, exquisite art. Jenny Lind,

on the contrary, gained hers by means so little obvious that we, who never heard her, cannot quite account for the tremendous impression she made on her own generation. The careers of the other great prima donnas can be explained and classified; Jenny Lind's puzzles the imagination and assigns to "the Swedish nightingale" a unique place in the Golden Book of Singers.

Grisi, Mario and Tamburini

GIULIA GRISI (1811-1869)
MARIO DE CANDIA (1810-1883)
ANTONIO TAMBURINI (1800-1876)

IN THE previous chapters I have tried to revive the careers of some of the stars in the great constellation of singers that made the first half of the nineteenth century especially memorable in operatic history. All of these artists, except Nourrit and, possibly, Pauline Garcia, owed their fame in greater part to their interpretations of the operas of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. Rossini, whose first important opera, "Tancredi" (1813), marks the passing of the old-style Italian opera and the inception of the modern, produced his last opera, "Guillaume Tell," in 1829; Bellini's last, "I Puritani," was first given in 1835; the last of Donizetti's sixty-three operas had its first performance in 1844. The first of these dates, 1813, is coincident with that of Garcia's first meeting with Rossini; the last, 1844, marks also the final retirement of Rubini.

For reasons that cannot be gone into here, the popularity of the operas of this school began to wane almost as soon as the singers for whom they had been written retired from active service. Most of them are now quite dead and forgotten. Of Bellini's, not one survives; of Donizetti's, "Lucia," "Don Pasquale," "La Favorita" and, perhaps, one or two others are occasionally resuscitated for a few performances, and found increasingly old-fashioned and decrepit; of the whole school there is only one, Rossini's "Barbiere" (1816), whose still youthful vigor seems to promise immortality.

In 1854, when Grisi and Mario visited the United States, they were practically the only survivors of the famous "Old Guard," which for more than twenty years had been the delight of Western Europe. Through death or voluntary retirement, Catalani, Pasta, Malibran, Sontag, Garcia, Rubini, Nourrit and Duprez were completely silent; Lablache and Tamburini, although occasionally to be heard, were all but superannuated; Jenny Lind had left the operatic stage for good and all, in order to devote herself to concert singing; Pauline Garcia was focussing all her talents on the interpretation of Meyerbeer and Glück.

So it is fitting that we should bring this series of biographical sketches to a close with brief studies of the careers of Grisi and

Mario, adding thereto a few paragraphs on Tamburini, their colleague, who, after Lablache, was the greatest bass of the period.

Giulia Grisi was born in Milan in 1811. Her father was a military engineer, who had served under the great Napoleon. Her mother had, in all probability, been a singer before her marriage, and her mother's sister, Josefina Grassini (1773-1850), was one of the best singers of her day. Giulia's older sister, Guiditta, too, was a singer of some repute; her cousin Carlotta a celebrated dancer. With such a professional atmosphere about her, it is not surprising that she, with an excellent natural voice and dramatic instincts, should have heard and accepted the call of the stage.

She studied under various masters, including her sister, and at the age of seventeen made her début in Rossini's "Zelmira." Despite her youth and inexperience, her voice, beauty and innate aptitude for the career won for her the applause, not only of the public, but also of Rossini himself, who predicted for her a brilliant future. Bellini, too, was so favorably impressed by her performance that he wrote for her the part of Adalgisa in "Norma," which she had the honor of singing in the company with Pasta, the first Norma.

Grisi's success brought her engagements in other cities, and all Italy was soon open to her,

GIULIA GRISI
1811-1869

but at this point she took a step which, seemingly rash, proved in the event to be most beneficial to her career. Before she could realize that wealth and fame were already within her reach, she had signed with a perspicacious manager a contract for several years, on terms sufficiently liberal to satisfy an untried débutante, but quite disproportionate to the important position that she soon began to occupy in the operatic world. She tried to release herself from this contract, and when the manager undertook to hold her to the letter of her bond, escaped across the frontier and posted to Paris. Never again did she sing in Italy.

Her aunt Grassini and her sister Giuditta were in the French capital just then, and, what was even more fortunate, Rossini, who gave her at once the chance to sing the title rôle in "Semiramide" at the Théâtre des Italiens. The début was completely successful, and from that year, 1832, till 1849, without a break, Grisi sang every winter in the same theatre.

London heard her first in 1834 in "La Gazza Ladra," and found her to its liking; a little later, when she sang Anna Bolena, one of Pasta's best parts, it proclaimed her a dramatic singer of the first order. From 1834 till 1861, excepting only 1842, she was engaged every season as a member of the Royal Italian Opera.

In 1835 Grisi was one of the famous quartet for whom Bellini had written "I Puritani," and showed herself worthy to be associated with her celebrated colleagues. In the following year she married a Frenchman, from whom she was divorced after a brief and unhappy union.

Grisi's voice was a clear, sonorous soprano, homogeneous throughout and under excellent control. It was somewhat lacking in sympathy, but splendidly effective in dramatic scenes. Her musical taste was good and entirely free from trickery and affectation. She was a resourceful and spirited actress in both comedy and tragedy, but unquestionably at her best in such dramatic parts as Norma and Lucrezia Borgia. It was said that she owed much to her early association with Pasta, of whose art she was a reverent admirer. She was short in stature, but was well proportioned and carried her handsome head so nobly on her shoulders that she gave the impression of being much taller than she really was. Taken all in all, she was richly equipped for her long and resplendent career. Heinrich Heine, who heard her in Paris in 1840, called her "a rose among nightingales, a nightingale among roses."

Grisi and Mario first met in London in 1839 as members of the Italian Opera, and each recognized at once in the other a

twin soul. Marriage followed soon after and the affinity proved to be a thoroughly happy one. As their professional association was constant during the next thirty years, and the story of one now becomes the story of the other, it seems best at this point to narrate the principal events of Mario's previous life.

We do not know with certainty either Mario's full name or the exact time and place of his birth. This uncertainty is all the more curious because he was of noble family. Some authorities hold that his name was Giovanni and that the name of Mario, under which he always sang, was wholly assumed; others aver that Mario was really his name and that when he went on the stage he merely dropped his patronymic, de Candia. Whatever his exact name, he will always be remembered under that of Mario, without title or surname. He was born somewhere in Piedmont, probably in Turin, in or about 1810.*

His father was a general in the army of Piedmont and Mario, too, after an education suitable to his high social position, entered the army. In 1836, piqued by his punishment for an escapade of no great seriousness, he resigned from his regiment, and, when the authorities refused to accept his resignation, hied him boldly to Paris. There his good

*Mario's daughter fixes these points as follows: Giovanni Matteo de Candia, born October 18, 1810, in Cagliari, Sardinia.

breeding, his beauty and his great personal charm opened for him every door. To complete his equipment as a captivator of hearts he possessed a tenor voice, untrained, but of exquisite suavity and mellowness.

His qualifications for the lyric stage were so many and so obvious that on all sides he was urged to appear in opera. All his family traditions were against such a step, and for two years he withstood the blandishments and offers of the managers, but finally gave his consent, and in 1838 made his début in "Robert le Diable" at the Paris Opéra, singing in French. He had had no systematic training in music or singing, his acting was amateurish and the French language somewhat impeded his utterance, but his radiant person and his lovely voice more than counterbalanced his shortcomings. In 1839 he made his London début with Grisi in "Lucrezia Borgia" (in Italian), and the following year joined the Italian company in Paris.

At the age of thirty Mario could have played the part of Orpheus to perfection. He was of medium height, graceful in line and carriage. His features were clean-cut and noble, his hair and beard glossy black. His eyes were large and dark, full of fire and passion. His voice was a ringing tenor, even in quality throughout, and including in its compass the high C. It was equally eloquent in

MARIO DE CANDIA
1810-1883

the expression of both the fire and the passion that shone in his eyes. One French critic records that the emission of the upper notes was not quite free, but, with this possible exception, the voice must have nearly approached perfection.

Happily, Mario was as conscientious and ambitious as he was gifted, so that, despite his lack of early training, the record of his career is one of constant artistic growth. His association with Grisi was most influential in this development, for she was born into the traditions of the stage, and, besides, was as ambitious for him as he was for himself.

As an actor he never attained the skill and versatility of such innate histrions as the Garcias and Lablache, but his elegance of bearing and a taste for costume equalled by that of Lablache alone made his stage presence always a delight to the eye. No other tenor, not even Nourrit, was so successful as he in playing the high-born gentleman—it was instinct with him, both off and on the stage.

He was matchless, too, as a stage lover and as a drawing-room singer. His personality and voice were profoundly disquieting to the peace of mind of unattached ladies. It is related that once he was singing in a salon in Paris. The last line of his song was, "Come, love, with me into the woods." As he uttered

the final syllables a young woman, who had been listening in a state of semi-hypnosis, rose to her feet and tottered toward him, murmuring, "I am coming."

After the retirement of Rubini, Mario succeeded to the position so long held by the older man. As a singer he was not Rubini's equal in poignancy of expression or in technical resource, but he surpassed him in sweetness and elegance of style and was immeasurably his superior as an actor. His art was at its best in "La Favorita" and in the fourth act of "Les Huguenots," but he was almost as successful in a number of other operas. His turn of mind was not originative, and the only "creation" credited to him in all his long career was the small tenor part in "Don Pasquale."

After their marriage, Grisi and Mario divided their time between Paris and London, in both of which cities they continued to be great favorites. Mario never sang in Italy. Grisi was most conscientious in her attitude toward the public, always seeking its approbation and proud of her reputation for reliability. Mario was much more sensitive by temperament, and reserved to himself the tenor's privilege of giving out at the last moment.

For two such eminent singers to live and work together for thirty years without a trace

of artistic jealousy gives to our two artists a unique place in operatic history. This element of domestic felicity was a considerable factor in their popularity, especially in England. Grisi adored her husband and received from him in return a loyal affection undisturbed by the feminine adulation of which he was always the object. His greatest pleasure was to stay at home with his wife and children; his only weaknesses were an inordinate love of tobacco and a dread of the number 13. According to all rules of vocal hygiene, smoking ought to have ruined his voice, for he was never without a lighted cigar, except when singing, sleeping and eating; but as he was still singing at the age of sixty, we shall have to write him down as an exception beyond the law. Nor did the dreaded 13 ever seem to work him serious injury.

Six daughters were the fruit of the marriage, of whom three only lived to maturity. One day, when Grisi was walking in the park with them, she met a lord of high degree whom she knew. He stopped and said, jocosely: "These, madam, are, I suppose, your little *grisettes?*" "Oh, no, sir! These are my little *marionettes.*"

For fifteen years Grisi and Mario sang only in Europe. In 1842 they, with Albertazzi and Tamburini, formed the first quartet to sing Rossini's "Stabat Mater." Rubini's re-

tirement gave Mario ample scope for his talents, and no new prima donnas of power appeared to imperil Grisi's supremacy; but as time went on they began to yearn for new worlds to conquer, and in 1854 completed arrangements for a visit to America, which had recently shown itself so hospitable to Jenny Lind and Sontag.

In August, 1854, they arrived in New York, under contract for six months for the sum of about $85,000. In September they opened their season at Castle Garden with "Lucrezia Borgia," best seats three dollars. In the supporting company were Susini, an excellent bass, and Barili, the mother of Adelina Patti. The performance went off smoothly and the company was accepted as thoroughly competent, but there was a coolness on the part of the public, quite different from the hearty welcome accorded to Jenny Lind and, after her, almost as generously to Sontag. "Norma," given in the course of the second week, was received a little more cordially.

In October the company was engaged to inaugurate the present Academy of Music on the corner of Irving Place and Fourteenth Street. October 2, 1854, was the date, "Norma" the opera. The best seats were two dollars. It would seem as if New York would have been keen to hear a performance of one of the most popular operas of the day by the

best opera company that had ever come to town, especially in a theatre as handsome and commodious as it was new. But all signs failed, and the two most famous singers of Europe had to sing one of their favorite operas to a half-empty house. Richard Grant White, who was there, thought it, on the whole, rather a dull evening; Mario and Grisi had passed their prime, both of them, he decided, and had nothing striking or novel to offer the American public.

The success of the season did not increase as time went on, but there was a financial guarantee to ensure the completion of the tour. The company visited other cities, but no detailed account of the winter is available. One amusing story, however, has survived, to the effect that a performance of "Norma" was given in Washington during a heavy rainstorm, and that the roof was so leaky that Norma (Grisi) had to clothe herself in a heavy fur coat, while Pollione (Mario) warbled his loveliest beneath the shelter of a huge coachman's umbrella. After seventy performances, all told, Grisi and Mario returned to Europe.

Twenty-five years of hard and continuous service had by now decidedly impaired the freshness of Grisi's voice, and Mario's powers, too, were on the wane; it was time to think of retirement. So they bought them a com-

fortable villa near Florence, in which to pass their declining years. Rubini said, when he retired: "It is time to retire, because it is too soon," and never sang in public again. But Grisi and Mario were less firm in their resolution to withdraw. They had grown to love the stage too well to be able now to resist the call of the footlights and the craving for the applause of the public; besides, although they had made a great deal of money, they were extravagant in their way of living and always had hard work to keep their outgo within the limits of their income.

So they continued to sing wherever they saw a chance to turn an honest penny. In 1861 Grisi signed an agreement with a manager not to sing again in London for five years. For a woman of her age, such a pledge seemed tantamount to a final farewell, but in 1866 she was singing "Lucrezia" once more at Her Majesty's Theatre. Her voice was gone, but not her ambition and zeal. In 1869 she died suddenly in Berlin, while Mario was singing in St. Petersburg.

In 1872 Mario came again to the United States to sing in concert. He was now old and all but voiceless; the tour was a pitiful failure. Poor and broken, he retired, first to Paris, and then to Rome, where he died in 1883.

Although Grisi and Mario sang much too

long for the good of their reputations, the very length of their careers serves as an interesting link with a remote past. Many elderly people still living heard in their youth Grisi, the colleague of Pasta and Malibran, and Mario, the immediate successor, almost the contemporary, of Rubini.

There is no denying to Grisi a very high place among the galaxy of prima donnas of her era. She was inferior to Pasta in dramatic instinct, to Malibran in versatility and spontaneity, to Sontag as a vocalist and musician; but her talents were, on the whole, so considerable and so well balanced that her achievements will bear comparison with those of any singer in history.

The name of Mario, too, will always be held in honorable memory. Inferior to Garcia and Rubini in creative qualities, he became, nevertheless, by virtue of his powers to charm and delight, the legitimate heir to their laurels and prolonged worthily the traditions that they had created. The sun itself set with Rubini; Mario was the mellow afterglow, which is quite as lovely in its way as the radiance of day itself. With Mario the line of great lyric tenors came to an end.

Between 1825 and 1850, no bass in Europe, except Lablache, was held in higher esteem than Antonio Tamburini. He was born in

Faenza in 1800. His father was a bandmaster, who aimed to make a horn-player of him, but his aptitude for singing announced itself early and made him, at twelve years of age, a member of the opera chorus, which took part also in the choral music of the church.

The boy had many opportunities to hear the great singers of the day, and profited by them so well that at eighteen he was engaged to sing bass parts in the opera in Bologna. This led to an engagement at Naples, which, in turn, paved the way for Florence, Venice, Trieste, Rome, Milan and Vienna. At Vienna he and Rubini were awarded the Order of the Saviour, an honor hitherto granted to no foreigner but the Duke of Wellington.

Tamburini's voice was a noble *basso cantante* of two evenly developed octaves, and of such extraordinary flexibility as to win for him the title of "the bass Rubini." We may judge of its power from the fact that it was able to hold its own with "the human ophicleide," Lablache, in the popular duet for two basses in "I Puritani." Rossini, writing to a friend in Italy about the first performance of this opera, said: "I need not describe to you the duo for two basses—the sound of it must surely have reached your ears."

Tamburini was a handsome man and an excellent, though not an inspired, actor. He

was chiefly celebrated as a singer of Rossini's music, but he was almost equally successful in other operas of the repertory, including "Don Giovanni."

As an instance of his versatility, an amusing story is told. He was singing in Palermo during the Carnival. The theatre was full of merrymakers, much more intent on making a noise themselves than on listening to music made by others. Tamburini's first attempts to make himself heard were vain. Suddenly he ceased to use his natural voice and began to sing in a *falsetto* so shrill and clear that it surmounted the racket made by the roysterers. The crowd was delighted with the novelty and received the prima donna on her entrance with such an uproar of enthusiasm that she lost her nerve completely, rushed out of the back door of the theatre, and was seen no more that night. The manager was in despair—no prima donna, no opera! But Tamburini was equal to the occasion. Clothing himself in as much of the soprano's costume as he could find and squeeze into, he returned to the stage, where he sang all her music in falsetto and played her part with mirth-provoking fervor. He played and sang *both* parts in a duet for soprano and bass. To cap the climax, in response to the demands of the audience, now quite hysterical with delight, he executed a spirited dance with the *corps de ballet*.

In 1832 he was heard for the first time in London and Paris, and for a number of years was an important member of the "Old Guard." In 1840 the London manager, in a futile attempt to break the power of this coterie, did not engage Tamburini—an omission that resulted in a series of riots and the reengagement of the favorite bass for the following season.

Like Grisi and Mario, Tamburini continued to sing long after his voice had lost its beauty. In 1852 he was singing in London with only an echo of his former sonorous tones. Paris heard him, too, at that time, and Holland. In 1859 he sang in London for the last time. He made his home in Nice, and died there in 1876.

Some Conclusions

IN selecting for review the lives of a few of the famous singers of the nineteenth century, I have limited myself to the group of memorable artists that shared with Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti the operatic glories of their epoch. Lack of space has forbidden me to do more than refer to Alboni, whose contralto voice may well have been the most perfect of the whole century, and I have not even mentioned Pisaroni, another contralto, whom Chorley named as worthy of a place in his ideal quartet, in company with Pasta, Duprez and Lablache. Then there were Persiani, the most accomplished coloratura singer of the period, for whom Donizetti wrote the part of Lucia, and Ronconi, too, the baritone whose artistic quality made one oblivious to the mediocrity of his voice. But, without fuller or further reference to these four worthy singers, we shall find that the careers of those I have written about furnish ample material from which to draw some interesting and instructive conclusions.

How did these singers compare with those of our own time? Were their voices better in quality, or better trained in technique? Were they better musicians or more resourceful actors? Such questions as these are unanswerable, but of one thing we may be sure: the qualities that made these old singers famous in their day and generation, would, if they were living and singing now, make them just as famous as they were then. We could count upon Garcia and Malibran for a performance of "Carmen" as thrilling as any we have ever had in America. What an Isolde would Pasta make, and that Lablache died too soon to sing Verdi's "Falstaff" deprives the world of what unquestionably would have been one of the most perfect impersonations in all operatic history!

As I have said, the operas in which these old singers achieved their celebrity are all, except one, dead or moribund, "But in Music we know how fashions end" and, likely enough, in the year 2000 the repertory of 1900 will be in like state, without in the least diminishing thereby the great names left behind them by Lehmann and Jean de Reszké, who artistically are the lineal descendants of Pasta and Garcia. Rossini and his school understood thoroughly the possibilities of the human voice and were in considerable part instrumental in forming a method of singing

founded upon principles that are just as sound and admirable to-day as they were eighty years ago. Lili Lehmann mastered these principles in her youth, and so late as 1899 sang Norma with the same noble artistry that illuminated her Isolde. Jean de Reszké, too, surpassed all other Wagnerian tenors by virtue of the vocal means that he owed to his knowledge of *bel canto*.

The treatment of the human voice as a solo instrument for the interpretation of art music dates back only to the end of the sixteenth century, the birth-time of opera, and from that time down to our own we shall find the history of singing closely interwoven with that of opera. All the greatest singers have made their names in opera chiefly, and have devoted themselves to concert singing incidentally only. We know very little about methods of singing previous to 1700, but the ever-growing popularity of opera has produced since that date a voluminous literature, which furnishes us with an interesting, though tantalizingly incomplete, knowledge of the subject.

Since 1700 the art of singing has reached two climaxes. The date of the first of these may be fixed about 1740, when Handel's vogue as an operatic composer was at its height. Opera then had drifted far away from the spirit of drama and had crystallized

into a conventional form of lyric expression. The singer had nothing to do but sing; as Victor Maurel puts it, "the singer was not required to render the sentiments of the *dramatis personæ* with verisimilitude; all that was demanded of him was harmonious sounds, the *bel canto*." Of this school of singing Farinelli, Senesino, Cuzzoni and Pacchiarotti were typical and in them vocal technique and skill in phrasing must often have touched perfection itself.

The second climactic point was reached about a century after the first—1835, the birth-year of "I Puritani," marks, perhaps, the time when the modern school of *bel canto* was at the very zenith of its excellence. The singer was now responsible for something besides the perfect emission of his voice; he was expected to interpret dramatically, as well as musically. Such librettos as those of "Otello," "Norma" and "Lucrezia Borgia" required of the singer a substantial minimum of skill in the portrayal of human emotions, and the public estimate of the value of an operatic artist was much influenced by his dramatic competence. In fact, the success of many singers, including Pasta and Pauline Garcia, was largely due to their capacity as actors, which outweighed their vocal shortcomings.

These increasing histrionic demands might

easily have lowered the vocal standard had not the composer borne in mind the novel conditions. In the eighteenth century the singer had been allowed an almost unlimited license in the matter of ornamentation; the melody was only a skeleton, which the singer might dress with such embellishments as his own taste or fancy might dictate. It is told of Garcia that he disapproved of a melody that had been assigned to him in a new opera and absolutely refused to rehearse it, saying that there need be no uneasiness on that score, because he should be quite ready with it at the first performance. Finally, when the time came, he substituted a melody, entirely his own, which harmonized perfectly with the accompaniment composed for the original melody. Such effrontery would, of course, be simply impossible under modern conditions.

Rossini was the first composer to prescribe the notes and ornaments exactly as he wished to have them sung, but he was, none the less, an opportunist, as well as a man of genius, and neither he nor Bellini nor Donizetti ever wrote anything that could overtax the vocal powers of their singers. The orchestra, then a much smaller body of instruments than now, was the loyal, self-obliterating follower of the voice, and never, as in the later Verdi and Wagner, the jealous and aggressive rival. In their mutual relations the voice always took

precedence. Furthermore, the opera houses built before 1850 were less spacious and less richly decorated and upholstered than those of the present day. Altogether, all the conditions for an unstrained emission of the voice were so favorable that Mr. W. J. Henderson, an authority on such matters, is of the opinion that the old singers employed habitually a much smaller volume of tone than that used to-day. If Mr. Henderson's theory is correct, we have ground for thinking that the lowering of vocal standards during the past fifty years is due to the attempt on the part of the singer to increase the size of his voice in direct ratio with the increase in the size of orchestras and auditoriums.

We may, if we will, characterize the operas of Rossini and his immediate successors as silly, insincere, old-fashioned, or obsolete, but we cannot deny that they gave satisfaction to a generation that knew not only the music of Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn, but also the dramatic art of Talma, Kemble and Siddons. The fact that so sophisticated a public as that of Paris during the reign of Louis Philippe considered the operas of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti fit mediums for the indisputable talents of Pasta, the Garcias, Duprez and Lablache counsels us to accord to these old and mostly-forgotten operas something of the reverence that we hold for

the great artists for whom they were written.

Certain it is that Tamagno and Maurel never stirred their public more profoundly in Verdi's "Otello" than did Garcia and Malibran theirs sixty years earlier in Rossini's version of the same tragic story; nor did Lehmann or Ternina arouse the sympathies of their hearers more surely in "Tristan und Isolde" than did Pasta move her audiences in Mayer's "Medea." The combination of qualities that makes an artist great is rarely to be found, but it is quite unrelated to time or place. Pasta would have been a great artist if she had been born a hundred years later, and, equally, Ternina's splendid gifts would have been recognized and admired a century ago.

But what are the qualities that go to make a great singer in this or any generation? Difficult as it is to answer this question conclusively, we have enough data before us to form a safe opinion as to how the various members of one group of famous singers achieved their renown.

Was it Rossini, or was it some earlier authority that asserted for the first time that the three requisites for success as a singer are Voice, Voice and—Voice? Whoever it was, the man uttered at most no more than a half-truth. Catalani was a beautiful woman

with a beautiful voice and nothing more, while Pasta was a plain woman with an untuneful voice, but Pasta is ranked much higher than Catalani among the world's great singers. Maria and Pauline Garcia and even Jenny Lind possessed voices not more beautiful than many another. Rubini in his early days was not thought worthy of even a place in the chorus and Duprez was more than thirty before he won recognition in his native city, Paris.

As every singing teacher knows, mere beauty of voice is by no means rare; what is rare is the effective will to develop the voice to its utmost capacity. Natural beauty of voice is often even a detriment to its possessor, for it may tempt him to rely on nature, rather than on art, for his victories. The solidest foundation of all for a career is an artistic ambition that will not be denied. This ambition includes the qualities of self-denial, patience, and industry; it needs to be guided by a keen intelligence and fortified by a sound, vigorous body; then, if it be furnished, too, with a voice of good quality and power, we have the wherewithal to build a great career.

The early struggles of Pasta, Rubini and Duprez offer a precious lesson to young singers that believe the world cruel in refusing to accept them immediately at their own valuation. Even those of their colleagues to whom

recognition came speedily (excepting Catalani, whose attitude toward her art was in no way commendable) made and sustained their reputations by virtue of their unswerving devotion to high artistic ideals. The attainment of every height was but the point of departure for a loftier flight. Sontag, after twenty years of retirement, won a new celebrity in an entirely new repertory. Malibran was always learning new rôles and perfecting herself in those she had already sung. Jenny Lind, to use Paderewski's phrase about himself, stood in humility and reverence before God and her art. I have spoken more than once of Pasta's indomitable will and, as for Garcia, there never was a man so ready to undertake any new labor, no matter how onerous, in order to broaden his artistic scope. Even Lablache, the perfect artist, to whom all gifts had been given, was as conscientious in the preparation and performance of his rôles as if he were an unrecognized novice. With such examples as these before us, we shall not be far from right if we change the recipe for success from one of having into one of doing—"Voice, Voice and—Voice" into "Work, Work and—Work."

It is worth noting how completely ready these singers of the past were for stage careers. A number of them were, so to speak, born on the stage. Sontag, Malibran and Jenny Lind

appeared publicly in children's parts almost as soon as they could toddle, and all of the women were full-fledged prima donnas before they reached the age of twenty. Rubini, Duprez and Mario were men grown when their success came, but Garcia, Nourrit, Tamburini and Lablache were still boys in their 'teens. Nowadays training for opera begins only when a young man or woman has shown unmistakable signs of having an exceptional voice, and more often than not there has been no general musical education at all. Such a situation is not altogether different from that of a young man who, though without musical aptitude, should decide to become a professional violinist, simply because he has inherited a Guarnerius violin.

All of the singers in our group, except Catalani, the unambitious, and Mario, the gifted amateur, were thoroughly versed in everything connected with the operatic stage. Several of them were capable instrumentalists, several were skilful with the pencil, several were respectable composers, one, even, was a poet. All of them, except Catalani and Rubini, were competent actors; some of them might well have made names for themselves in the spoken drama. In our own time singers are rarely so completely equipped for their work. The old way certainly produced a high standard of all-around excellence.

This long and thorough-going intimacy with their profession developed in the old singers a trait, the importance of which cannot be too highly recommended to the student and the young artist—self-dependence. I do not underrate the value of preparatory study under the guidance of teachers; indeed, no singer ever reaches the point where he can dispense altogether with criticism from others. The voice is so much a part of one's self that one cannot listen to it objectively, and objective criticism is what every singer needs from time to time as long as he sings. But students are much too apt not to rely enough on their own initiative and to believe that great artists can be turned out ready made from the studio of a good teacher. The untried novice who feels that he is already competent to assume first rôles in New York or Berlin or Paris is met with too frequently in musical circles. This belief is fraught with danger. All of the old artists mastered their art through practising it. They were trained first as musicians, learning even as children something of the proper use of the voice in the chorus and in church choirs. Then, as their voices matured, they took small solo parts in unimportant companies, advancing, according to their fitness, until they were assigned first parts in the large theatres. By some such route as this nearly all of the world's great singers have

journeyed from the lowlands of obscurity to the heights of fame.

From the records of the past, as well as observations of the present, I am disposed to assert in a general way that the term of a singer's professional life is two score years and ten. Singers themselves are the poorest judges of the proper moment for their own retirement, because they cannot hear the ravages that time has made in their voices. They cannot accept the fact that, though the intellectual mastery of their art is on the increase, their physical resources may be diminishing. Catalani, Grisi, Garcia, Mario and Tamburini all continued to sing after they had past the half-century mark, although their voices had suffered a noticeable deterioration. Pasta's voice had gone at forty, Duprez's at forty-five. Pauline Garcia retired at the age of forty for reasons unknown; Jenny Lind withdrew even earlier. That Lablache was able to give pleasure with his singing till he was sixty was probably owing to the fact that the bass voice is the most durable of all voices. Rubini retired at forty-eight, his voice already somewhat impaired. Singing belongs to youth. When the feeling and the physique of youth are gone the only pleasure that singing can give to the hearer is either that of reminiscence, the echo of sounds heard on an earlier day, or that of admiration for

mastery over an instrument no longer perfect.

The more we study the history of singers the more clearly we perceive that there is one thing that a singer must possess if he is to travel far in his career. Alone it can do but little for him, yet without it the greatest gifts come to nothing. He must have vigorous health. He needs a body capable of resisting severe physical and nervous strain, of adapting itself easily to changes of temperature, and of quick recuperation after fatigue. He needs a vigor that always "bids not sit nor stand, but go." It was this inward flame of energy that made so fruitful the life of the elder Garcia, that enabled Maria Garcia to crowd a repertory of thirty-five operas into ten years on the stage, and that gave to Pauline Garcia and to the younger Manuel respectively ninety and one hundred full, active years. Even Sontag, who appeared so frail, had an unsuspected supply of endurance to draw upon, or she never could have kept the youthful freshness of her voice through forty-five years of use. Operatic work makes such great drafts on the strength of the singer that none but the rugged can hope to succeed in it, and this is quite as true to-day as it was in the days of the giant Lablache and the dynamic Garcias.

The question of health brings us naturally to that of self-denial, the power to eschew all indulgences and pursuits that weaken the fiber of the body and divert the mind from the main business in hand, which is the perfecting of one's art. Art is a jealous mistress, who can be wooed, won and held by unswerving and single-minded devotion only. Self-denial means character, a quality not often enough credited to the account of singers.

The popular idea is that life behind the operatic scenes is looser than elsewhere. This may be true in the case of artists not of the highest standing, but is not true of the very best. Artists live in history mostly by their public achievements and it is, therefore, possible that in the private lives of those I have been writing about there were scandals. The only scandal that I have unearthed is that of Malibran's liaison with de Bériot, but even this irregularity is easily condoned. Malibran, while still a young girl, was married, probably against her will and certainly under false pretences, to a man more than twice her age, for whom she never could have had any love and whose conduct soon made even respect impossible. A few years later she met her real mate in de Bériot, whom she married formally as soon as the courts released her from the earlier tie. No shadow of scandal hangs over the story of the other Garcias and

an atmosphere of blissful domesticity pervades such records as remain of the conjugal experiences of Grisi and Mario, Lablache, Jenny Lind, Sontag and Catalani. Of the private lives of the others little is known. Whether it was chance, expediency or moral principle that underlay such respectability I cannot say; but the fact remains that the entire group seems to have maintained a standard of private conduct that would be considered exemplary in any society.

Opera written by Italians and sung by singers trained according to the Italian traditions, even when they were not Italian by birth, practically monopolized the operatic field during the first half of the nineteenth century; the influence of Wagner, Gounod and even Meyerbeer, Rossini's contemporary, belongs to the latter half. The best singing of to-day is derived from the earlier period through the medium of such teachers as Manuel Garcia, Jr., Marchesi, Stockhausen, Lamperti, delle Sedie and Vannucini, who in their turn were nurtured in the school of Sontag, Rubini and Lablache. What is best in vocal technique we owe, therefore, to the Italians; to the French we owe that part of technique that concerns *"l'art de bien dire";* to the Germans we owe nothing. Why such bad singing should come from Germany, the most profoundly musical of all nations, is a puzzling question, but it must be admitted

that very few German singers ever acquire the art of *bel canto.* Sontag, Lehmann and Hempel shine as brilliant exceptions from this generalization.

Unfortunately, Italy of the twentieth century appears to have forgotten the traditions of its noble past. The operas of the later Verdi, Ponchielli and Mascagni have bred too many leather-lunged singers, who are at their happiest only when most vociferous. Wagner, too, with his mighty orchestra, has invaded the musical precincts once sacred to the dulcet harmonies of Rossini and Bellini and engendered a type of singer who, unmindful of the example set by Lehmann and Jean de Reszké, believes that the only way to interpret Wagner's music is to shout it. The result of all this has been the sacrifice of vocal control, the very essence of *bel canto* for the sake of the big tone. Even Caruso, the splendor of whose voice surpasses anything heard by our generation, has lost quite as much as he has gained through his determination to acquire the big tone. The acquisition is now complete and it is impossible to withhold one's admiration from the clarion tones that ring out so true and free, but to many that recall the fine restraint that used to render his delivery of "Spirto gentil" and "Una furtiva Lagrima" so eloquent, the loss in sweetness outweighs the gain in power.

But we need not despond or be hopeless for better things in the future. Lord Mount-Edgecumbe, an English connaisseur in music, writing ninety years ago, wagged his head as despairingly over the noisy, unmelodious, iconoclastic operas of Rossini, which he held to be a sad deterioration from the pure and noble style of Sarti and Cimarosa, as the critics fifty years later wagged their heads over the degenerate Wagner. With his and many another similar example before us, I, for one, shall not proclaim that the true art of singing has come, or ever will come, to a full stop. The success of John McCormack, the Irish tenor, whose lovely art, which embodies the principles of *bel canto* as they were practised by Garcia, Rubini and Mario, appeals to the sophisticated as well as to the popular taste, goes to prove that the worship of the big tone has not exterminated our power to enjoy the controlled tone.

The art of singing is the art of expressing the emotions musically by means of the voice, and the voice that is able to express truthfully through its tones the greatest variety of emotions is the greatest voice. There are emotions that require for their expression a mellow, restrained tone; there are those that require an explosion of tone; and there are, besides these, countless tone-qualities, all of which enrich the capacity of the voice

for emotional expression. Rubini seems to have possessed a greater capacity for such expression than any other singer of the nineteenth century. The greatest singer of the twentieth century will be one who, a master of *bel canto* like Rubini, can sound all the notes within the scale of human emotion.

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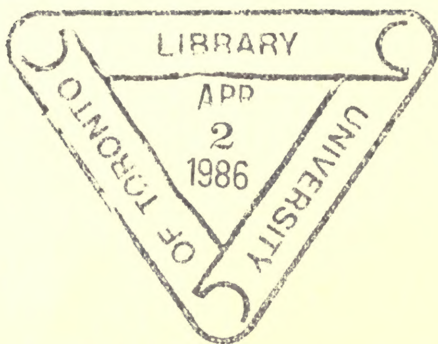
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