

TWO HUNDRED OPERA PLOTS

By Gladys Davidson

Listing by composer - [Listing by title](#)

Composer	Title
Adam	1. The Nuremberg Doll
	2. The Postilion of Longjumeau
d'Albert	3. The Departure
	4. The Lowlands
Auber	5. The Black Domino
	6. Carlo Broschi
	7. The Crown Diamonds
	8. Fra Diavolo
	9. Masaniello
	10. The Mason
Balfe	11. The Bohemian Girl
	12. The Rose of Castile
Beethoven	13. Fidelio
Bellini	14. Norma
	15. I Puritani
	16. La Sonnambula
Benedick	17. The Lily of Killarney
Berlioz	18. Benvenuto Cellini
Bizet	19. Carmen
	20. Djamileh
Boieldieu	21. La Dame Blanche
	22. Jean de Paris
Boito	23. Mephistopheles
Brüll	24. The Golden Cross

Bungert	25. Circe
	26. Odysseus' Return
	27. Odysseus' Death
Catalani	28. Loreley
Charpentier	29. Louise
Cherubini	30. The Water Carrier
Cilea	31. Adrienne Lecouvreur
Cornelius	32. The Barber of Bagdad
Debussy	33. L'Enfant Prodigue
	34. Pelleas and Melisande
Delibes	35. The King Hath Said It
	36. Lakmé
Donizetti	37. Daughter of the Regiment
	38. Don Pasquale
	39. The Elixir of Love
	40. La Favorita
	41. Linda de Chamouni
	42. Lucia di Lammermoor
	43. Lucrezia Borgia
d'Erlanger	44. Tess
Flotow	45. Martha
	46. Stradella
Förster	47. Lorle
	48. The Maidens of Schilda
Gatty	49. Greysteel
Genée	50. Nanon
German	51. Merrie England
Giordano	52. André Chénier
	53. Fedora
Gluck	54. Alceste
	55. Armida

	56. Iphigenia in Aulis
	57. Iphigenia in Tauris
	58. Orpheus and Eurydice
Goetz	59. The Taming of the Shrew
Goldmark	60. The Cricket on The Hearth
	61. Merlin
	62. The Queen of Sheba.
Goring Thomas	63. Esmeralda
Gounod	64. Faust
	65. Philemon and Baucis
	66. Romeo and Juliet
Gramman	67. Melusine
Halévy	68. L'Éclair
	69. The Jewess
Hérold	70. Le Pré Aux Clercs
	71. Zampa.
Haydn	72. The Apothecary
Humperdinck	73. Hansel and Gretel
Kretschmer	74. The Folkungs
	75. Henry the Lion
Laparra	76. Habanera
Lecocq	77. La Fille de Madame Angot
Leoncavallo	78. Maia
	79. I Pagliacci
Lortzing	80. The Armourer
	81. The Czar and The Carpenter
	82. Undine
Manen	83. Acté
Marschner	84. Hans Heiling
	85. The Templar and The Jewess
	86. The Vampire

Mascagni	87. L'Amico Fritz
	88. Cavalleria Rusticana
	89. Iris
Massé	90. The Marriage of Jeannette
	91. Paul and Virginia
	92. La Reine Topaz
Massenet	93. The Cid
	94. Esclarmonde
	95. Le Jongleur de Notre Dame
	96. The King of Lahore
	97. Manon
	98. Thais
	99. Werther
Méhul	100. Joseph in Egypt
Meyerbeer	101. Africaine, L'
	102. Dinorah
	103. Les Huguenots
	104. The Prophet
	105. Robert the Devil
	106. The Star of the North
Millocker	107. The Beggar Student.
Missa	108. Muguette
Mozart	109. Cosi fan Tutte
	110. Don Giovanni
	111. Idomeneus
	112. The Magic Flute
	113. The Marriage of Figaro
	114. Il Seraglio
Nessler	115. The Piper of Hamelyn
	116. The Trumpeter of Säkkingen
Nicolai	117. The Merry Wives of Windsor

Offenbach	118. La Belle Hélène
	119. The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein
	120. Orpheus Aux Enfers
	121. Tales of Hoffmann
Paderewski	122. Manru
Pizzi	123. Rosalba
Planquette	124. Les Cloches de Corneville
Poldini	125. The Vagabond and the Princess
Ponchielli	126. La Gioconda
Puccini	127. La Bohème
	128. The Girl of the Golden West
	129. Madame Butterfly
	130. Manon Lescaut
	131. La Tosca
Reyer	132. Sigurd
Ricci	133. Crispino
Rossini	134. The Barber of Seville
	135. Semiramide
	136. William Tell
Rubenstein	137. Nero
	138. The Demon
Saint-Saëns	139. Henry VIII
	140. Proserpine
	141. Samson and Dalila
Schillings	142. Moloch
Schumann	143. Genoveva
Smetana	144. The Sold Bride
Spinelli	145. A Basso Porto
Spohr	146. Jessonda
Stanford	147. Shamus O'Brien
Strauss (Johann)	148. The Bat.

	149. The Gipsy Baron
	150. The Merry War
	151. The Queens Lace Handkerchief
Strauss (Richard)	152. Elektra
	153. Feuersnot
	154. Salome
Sullivan	155. The Gondoliers
	156. Haddon Hall
	157. H.M.S. Pinafore
	158. Iolanthe
	159. The Mikado
	160. Patience
	161. The Pirates of Penzance
	162. Princess Ida
	163. Ruddygore
	164. The Sorcerer
	165. Utopia, Limited
	166. The Yeomen of the Guard
Suppé	167. Boccaccio
Thomas	168. Hamlet
	169. Mignon
Tchaikowsky	170. Eugène Onegin
Verdi	171. Aïda
	172. Don Carlos
	173. Ernani
	174. Falstaff
	175. The Masked Ball
	176. Othello
	177. Rigoletto
	178. La Traviata
	179. Il Trovatore

Wagner (Richard)	180. The Flying Dutchman
	181. Lohengrin
	182. The Master-singers of Nuremberg
	183. Parsifal
	184. Rienzi
	185. The Ring - (Part 1) - The Rhinegold
	186. (Part 2) - The Valkyrie
	187. (Part 3) - Siegfried
	188. (Part 4) - The Dusk of the Gods
	189. Tannhäuser
	190. Tristan and Isolde
Wagner (Siegfried)	191. Bearskin
	192. The Kobold
Wallace	193. The Amber Witch
	194. Lurline
	195. Maritana
Weber	196. Euryanthe
	197. Der Freischütz
	198. Oberon
	199. Preciosa
	200. Silvana

1. THE NUREMBERG DOLL

Opera Comique in One Act By Adolphe Charles Adam

Libretto By Leuven and Beauplan

First Produced Paris, 1852

Chief Characters Bertha, Heinrich, Cornelius (The Miser), Benjamin

THE scene of this opera is laid in Nuremberg, where an old miser, Cornelius, a toy-shop owner, being un-able to obtain a sufficiently beautiful and virtuous wife for his very stupid son, Benjamin, has made a mechanical Doll, human size, which he hopes to endow with life by means of magic learned from the book of Dr Faustus the deed to be done some dark and stormy night.

The old miser's nephew, Heinrich, whose fortune he has unjustly appropriated, lives with him; but he treats the youth badly, and forces him to do menial work. A masquerade being held one night, the Miser and his son go forth to attend the revels, leaving the luckless Heinrich alone and supperless. On their departure, however, the nephew dons a masquerader's hired costume as Mephistopheles, and is soon joined by his sweetheart, Bertha, who sadly declares herself unable to attend the ball, having just given away her costume money to a hungry beggar.

Heinrich thereupon suggests that she shall wear the clothes of his uncle's precious Doll, the hiding-place of which he has discovered; but whilst the delighted Bertha is dressing in the secret chamber Cornelius and his son return, the night having grown stormy, and therefore propitious for the working of the former's magic spell. The nephew takes refuge up the chimney; but upon Benjamin lighting a fire, he jumps down, and, being garbed as Mephistopheles, is taken for the Demon himself by the scared miser and his son. Taking advantage of this Heinrich pretends to endow the Doll with life, conjuring forth the now dressed-up Bertha, who, also entering into the joke, leads the amazed and awed couple a fine dance, making them do her bidding, flinging their goods and chattels out of the window, and acting in a generally outrageous manner. Finally, she retires to the inner chamber, making her escape through the window; and Cornelius, shocked at the work of his hands, follows to the secret chamber to break the Doll. Heinrich, on his uncle's return, then confesses he had substituted a maiden for the Doll, to the terror of Cornelius, who now thinks he has committed a murder, having actually broken the Doll, whereupon Heinrich agrees to keep the matter secret on having his fortune returned to him. The trembling miser reluctantly hands him the money, but discovers next moment how cleverly he has been tricked by Heinrich, who brings forth his merry sweetheart and departs with her and his fortune.

2. THE POSTILION OF LONGJUMEAU

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Adolphe Charles Adam

Libretto By De Leuven & Brunswick

First Produced Paris, October, 1836

Chief Characters Madeleine (afterwards Madame de la Tour), Chapelou (the Postilion), Marquis de Courcy, Bijou

In the French village of Longjumeau, during the reign of Louis XV., Chapelou, the Postilion, is celebrating his marriage with Madeleine, the mistress of the Inn. During the festivities, Madeline having retired with her maidens, Chapelou sings to his boon companions; and he is heard by the Marquis de Courcy, Superintendent of the Opera in Paris, who, being struck by the beauty of his voice, offers him a good position as principal singer. Chapelou, being ambitious, allows himself to be tempted, and at once departs with De Courcy, leaving his friend, Bijou, to comfort Madeleine, and to say he will return to her later when he has gained his laurels. The deserted bride is filled with woe, and the scene ends with her upbraidings and laments. In the second act, Madeleine, having inherited a fortune, is living luxuriously in Paris, being known as Madame de la Tour, a rich and fashionable lady; and she is seeking means of punishing her truant husband, whom, however, she still loves and desires to regain. Chapelou is now famous, and the principal tenor at the Opera, being known as St Phar, and fêted as a popular star; and his friend, Bijou, is also with him as a basso singer, known as Alcindor. The Marquis de Gourcy, being an admirer of

Madame de la Tour, and wishing to please her, brings St Phar and his company to her house for a special rehearsal. At first the rehearsal is a farcical affair, the artiste refusing to sing properly; but on hearing he is in the house of Madame de la Tour, for whom he has much admiration, St Phar becomes serious and sur-passes himself. On being left alone with Madame, St Phar not recognising in her his village wife, Madeleine makes love to her; upon which Madame accepts his proposals, and, to his dismay, sends for a priest in haste, and has the marriage performed at once, and is therefore united to him for the second time. St Phar, who had unsuccessfully endeavoured to make it a mock marriage by arranging for his friend Bijou to act the part of priest, is now scared at his supposed bigamy; and enticing him into a darkened room, Madame still further confuses him by speaking to him first as Madeleine, and next as his new love, until he is almost driven distracted. The climax of his fright is reached on the Marquis annoyed that Madame prefers the tenor to himself bringing the police to arrest him as a bigamist; but Madame brings all to a happy conclusion by revealing her true identity, and bestowing her forgiveness and unchanged love upon her now-repentant husband.

3. THE DEPARTURE

Opera Comique By Eugene D'Albert

Libretto By A. von Steigentesch

First Produced Dresden, October, 1811

Chief Characters Louise, Gilfen, Trott

A MARRIED couple, Gilfen and Louise, have become somewhat estranged, the husband neglecting his pretty wife, who is filled with sadness, thinking that his love for her has waned. Gilfen's friend, Trott, is a great admirer of Louise, and thinks to profit by the husband's seeming indifference by paying attentions to the neglected wife; but this has come to the knowledge of Gilfen, who, in reality, still loves Louise, though doubtful whether she loves him in return and he resents the advances of Trott. When the curtain rises, Gilfen is about to depart on a journey, but is somewhat undecided whether he will really go or not. Trott, however, is very eager for him to be gone, so that he may have good opportunity for pleasant flirtation with Louise during his absence; and, very officiously, he offers to do all he can to assist Gilfen to set off as soon as possible. Gilfen, anxious to prove his friend's sincerity, takes him at his word, and sends him on many troublesome and unnecessary little errands, in order to fetch parcels and do odd jobs for him. Trott gladly does his bidding, whispering in Louise's ear that he acts the part of slave thus willingly for her sake. Louise, however, does not encourage his tender speeches, being sad at the departure of her husband; and on hearing her sing a sad little song having reference to a neglected wife Gilfen learns that his wife certainly still loves him as well as of yore, and, full of joy, he decides to remain at home with her, and give up his projected journey. However, he still continues to fool his friend, because of his unwelcome attentions to his wife; and so he sends him on more outrageous errands than ever, all of which Trott carries out without a murmur. Finally he sends him to fetch down a heavy chest from the top of the house, and during his absence he gathers from Louise's conversation that she still loves him alone, and desires for a more constant show of affection from him; but on the entrance of Trott with the chest he bids farewell to the now despondent Louise, and makes a pretence to set forth on his journey. No sooner has he departed than Trott at once proceeds to make love to Louise, who, however, turns coldly away from him; and just as the

unwelcome admirer grows bolder, Gilfen returns, declaring that his conveyance has come to grief. Trott at once hurries out to repair the damage, hoping thus to hurry the departure of his friend; and on the husband and wife being left alone, they unfold their hearts to each other, and discover, to their joy, that their love is still as strong as in the days of their courtship. When Trott returns, therefore, he finds he is no longer wanted, since husband and wife are lovers still; and the curtain falls on his somewhat disappointed departure, whilst Gilfen and Louise happily renew their joy in each other's company.

4. THE LOWLANDS

Opera in Two Acts By Eugene D 'Albert

Libretto By Rudolph Lothar (From A. Guivera's Story)

First Produced Prague, 1903

Chief Characters Marta, Nuri, Pedro, Sebastiano, Tommasso

SEBASTIANO, a rich and unscrupulous landowner, living in a prosperous valley of the Pyrenees, has a mistress, Marta, a beautiful young woman, whom he secured when quite a child from an old tramping player, for whom she earned money by her charming singing and dancing at taverns. Having practically bought the girl from the old tramp, in return for a tumble-down mill, Sebastiano made her his mistress, employing her in his house with domestic work; and being of a masterful and tyrannical nature, and having complete authority over all the village folk, Marta is compelled to submit to his will in every respect, and being kept almost as a prisoner by her master she clings to him with a certain affection, in spite of his new house with his wife; and when they are at length left alone at night, he endeavours to win her love by describing to her his mountain adventures, showing her a blood-stained coin earned by his bravery in slaying a wolf which had attacked the flocks, and telling her of his loneliness and longing for a human being to love. In spite of herself, Marta, though at first reluctant to listen to him, is gradually impressed by the simple nobility of the husband who has been thrust upon her; and as she realises that Pedro regards her as a pure and innocent' maiden, having no knowledge of her relations with her old master, a desire grows quickly within her to keep him in ignorance of the true state of affairs, since love for him is already growing up within her. Seeing a flickering light in her own chamber, therefore, and feeling that this means the presence of Sebastiano, she is filled with alarm and shame for the enforced evil of her former life; and she entreats her husband to permit her to remain the night in the kitchen, since she is nervous. Pedro, seeing that she is indeed highly-strung, humours her; and when she settles herself to rest, he flings himself on the floor and sleeps at her feet. At daybreak, Marta rises and sets about her household duties, and during her absence the village maiden, Nuri, enters, and rouses the former suspicions of Pedro by telling him that the villagers are pitying him; and Marta is made unhappy by seeing him walk out of the house with Nuri, without even replying to her own morning greetings, for, with the dawn of love in her heart, the passion of jealousy is also aroused. So overwrought is she now that when old Tommasso presently enters, reproaching her for having deceived the simple shepherd, she defends herself by telling him the whole pitiful story of her early life, and of her longing for a pure home and a husband's loving care. The old villager is touched by her passionate recital, and advises her to make a full confession to her husband; and when Pedro presently returns, she does so, though still keeping back the name of her betrayer. Pedro, who has been further goaded by the gibes of the villagers, is filled with despair on having

his suspicions thus confirmed, and is about to kill her, even going so far as to wound her; but the love he has already conceived for her, and his realisation of the helplessness of her former life, gets the better of his jealousy and wounded pride, and he embraces her passionately, declaring his forgiveness and entreating her to leave the Lowland village, with its vices and lower instincts, and retire with him to the mountain heights, where, though the life is poor and hard, they may yet live in purity and simple-minded happiness. Their declaration of love is, however, interrupted by the entrance of Sebastiano, who, disappointed of the pleasure of the night before, now comes boldly to enjoy the company of Marta; and on learning from his terrified wife that this is the tyrant who has ruined her early life, Pedro rushes upon him in a fury. The rich man's followers are at hand, however, and at the command of their master they seize Pedro, and take him away; and being left with Marta, Sebastiano first taunts her, and then endeavours to carry her away with him. Marta, in despair, calls on her husband, who, having managed to break away from his captors, dashes back to the room at this moment, and struggles with Sebastiano; and during the encounter which follows the tyrant is slain. Pedro then snatches up his hard-won bride and makes his escape to the mountains, there to dwell with her in pure content, away from the sordid, disturbing passions of the Lowlands.

5. THE BLACK DOMINO

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Daniel François Esprit Auber

Libretto By Scribe

First Produced Paris, 1837

Chief Characters Angela, Brigitta, Claudia, Ursula, Horatio di Masserena, Count Juliano, Gil-Perez

THE scene is laid in Madrid. Angela, the beautiful daughter of a noble, has been placed in a convent, being destined by the Queen of Spain to be Abbess; but not yet having taken the vows, she attends in secret a masked ball given at the Court, disguised in a Black Mask and Domino, attended by her companion, Brigitta. Here she meets a young noble named Horatio di Masserena, whom she has met before on a similar occasion, the pair having mutually fallen in love. On Masserena declaring his love, however, Angela declares she cannot listen to him; and when her lover detains her beyond mid-night, having managed to entice Brigitta to leave the ball earlier, the truant pleasure-seeker is terrified for the consequences of her bold deed, since the convent will be now locked up for the night. She refuses to allow Masserena to help her in this dilemma; and, escaping from him, she wanders forth alone on her return journey. Coming to the house of Count Juliano, a reputed roué, she craves shelter for the night from his housekeeper, Claudia, who agrees to take her in, if she will dress as a serving-maid and wait on her master's late supper-guests. This Angela consents to; and on dressing-up in the servant-maid's clothes produced by Claudia, she enters into the plan with zest, and is declared to be a most charming acquisition to the domestics of the household. Amongst the guests is Masserena, who, however, recognises her as his beloved Black Domino, and is upset at finding her in such doubtful company; and Angela, not daring to remain longer, is glad to come across the convent hall-porter, Gil-Perez, who has also stolen out for a frolic, and come to flirt with Claudia. She obtains the Convent keys from him, and hurries away; and thus she gains entrance into the convent, her absence not having been discovered, owing to the vigilance of Brigitta. In the third act Angela, greatly against her will, is about to be

made Lady-Abbess, and is already arrayed in the robes, when Masserena enters, having come to ask the Superior of the convent for a release from his arranged marriage with the Lady Ursula, for whom he has no love this lady being also an inmate of the convent. He is amazed to recognise his mysterious lady-love in the new Abbess that-is-to-be; and both are in despair that their love should be thus doomed. However, a messenger very opportunely arrives at this moment, bringing a message from the Queen, releasing Angela from taking the vows, and appointing Ursula as Abbess in her place. Thus all ends happily, Angela and Masserena being free to wed; and Ursula, having no desire for earthly joys, is also glad to escape from her projected marriage and to take up the important position of Mother Superior.

6. CARLO BROSCHI

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Daniel François Esprit Auber

Libretto By Scribe

First Produced Paris, 1842

Chief Characters Casilda, The Queen of Spain, Carlo Broschi, King of Spain, Raphael d'Estuniga

CARLO BROSCHI, a poor minstrel, has a beautiful sister, Casilda, whom he has been compelled to lodge in a convent to save her from some of the unscrupulous clergy, who have introduced her to the notice of the King, and wish her to become his mistress. He is still further anxious to keep her in hiding on hearing from Casilda that she has fallen in love with a handsome cavalier, who has also declared his passion for her; for the minstrel knows that the nobility are not wont to wed with peasant maids. The King, on being deprived of the company of Casilda, falls into a melancholy state, from which he is roused by the sweet singing of Carlo Broschi, whom he meets by accident one day, and who revives his spirits by his wonderful gift of sympathetic music. Carlo is taken to Court, where he quickly attains a very high position from his strange power of restoring the King from his frequent melancholy moods by means of his gift of song; and here he meets with Casilda's lover, Raphael d'Estuniga. The latter is so full of despair at the disappearance of his humble sweetheart that he calls on the Demon for assistance; and hearing this wild petition, Carlo presents himself before him as an impersonation of the Devil, and promises to aid him on condition of receiving half of his gains at play. Raphael agrees, and Carlo finds means to advance him at Court; and as the young cavalier is very lucky with all his hazards, the minstrel becomes rich. Shortly afterwards, Casilda suddenly appears at Court, having come to her brother for protection against her former persecutors, who are again try-ing to procure her for the King, and have discovered her whereabouts; and the King is filled with emotion on beholding her again. Casilda and her lover have a happy interview together, but are surprised by the King, who, full of jealousy, gives orders for Raphael to be executed this act of injustice, however, being averted by Carlo, who declares that Casilda is the young cavalier's wife. The King, however, soon learns that this is not true, and is furious with his favourite; but Carlo now tells him the real facts of the case, and by working on his better self persuades him to give up all thought of the humble Casilda, and to remain true to his Queen and people. The King, despising his former conduct, rises to the occasion, makes Casilda and Raphael happy by consenting to their union; and the young noble is still further relieved by discovering that his supposed Satanic partner is none other than his lady-love's brother, who has no real dealings with the Powers of Darkness. All, therefore, ends well.

7. THE CROWN DIAMONDS

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Daniel François Esprit Auber

Libretto By Scribe and St George

First Produced Paris, 1841 Chief Characters Caterina, Diana, Don Henrique, Rebolledo, Don Sebastian, Count de Campo Mayor (Minister of Secret Police)

ACT I opens on the ruins of an old castle in Portugal, near a monastery, where Don Henrique, nephew of the Minister of Secret Police, has taken shelter during a storm, on his journey to the capital for the coming coronation of the young Queen. He is also about to sign a marriage contract with his cousin, Diana, daughter of the Minister of Police. As he waits in the ruins, he hears the sound of hammers in an adjoining cave; and presently he makes the discovery that this is the haunt of a gang of coiners and brigands. He is discovered by their leader, Rebolledo, who is about to slay him as a spy, when he is saved by the entrance of Caterina, a beautiful young maiden, who has the chief influence and control over the brigands, and who, greatly attracted by the handsome stranger, gives her consent to his departure. He is surprised to find that she appears to have full knowledge of all his doings and interests. Before he has time to leave the cave, however, the royal troops surround the place, headed by his friend, Don Sebastian; and the coiners make their escape by disguising themselves in the garb of monks, and passing thus through the ranks of the soldiers, who take them for a party of the holy brothers from the monastery. Caterina and Rebolledo, however, escape by a secret passage, and take with them a box of jewels, which they guard with much care.

In Act 2 Don Henrique is found in the Minister of Police's château at Coimbra with Diana, Don Sebastian and the Count de Campo Mayor. The fact is soon revealed that Diana loves her cousin's friend, Sebastian, whilst Henrique himself has thought for no one else but the strange brigand maid, Caterina; and complications soon begin by the entrance of Caterina herself, clad in rich garments, and accompanied by Rebolledo, who have just met with a carriage accident, and have been brought into the château to recover. They are well received; and on being taken aside by Caterina Henrique declares his love for her, and, though refusing to agree to his proposals for the moment, she gives him a handsome ring as a token of her love. Presently they are disturbed by the entrance of the Count, who is in despair because he has just discovered that the Crown Jewels have been stolen; and Caterina's gift to Henrique being declared to be one of the lost trinkets, she is fearful of discovery, and entreats Diana to help her. Diana consents to effect her escape, on condition that Henrique refuses to sign their marriage contract, she herself being desirous to wed his friend Sebastian; and upon her cousin gladly agreeing to this, Caterina is successfully smuggled out of the château, whilst Henrique presently surprises his uncle by refusing to sign the marriage contract when it is brought before him.

Act 3 takes place in the Royal Palace, where Henrique Sebastian, the Count and Diana are waiting to be received by the Queen; and they are shortly joined by Rebolledo, who is introduced to them under the name of Count Fuentes, who presently, in a soliloquy, reveals the fact that he has been commissioned to make a mock set of the Crown Jewels, which have not been actually stolen, as given out, but given in pledge for the National Debt. As the others retire, the Queen who is none other than Caterina herself enters and approves of his workmanship and the carrying out of his

commission since she can now wear the imitation jewels on State occasions until the real ones can be bought back, and she nominates him as her Minister of the Secret Police. The Count de Campo Mayor next enters, declaring that it is the wish of her Council that she shall wed the Prince of Spain; but Caterina stoutly declares she will only accept a suitor of her own selection. Further complications arise, which are finally settled by the Queen revealing herself to Henrique and his friends as the mysterious and elusive Caterina, and announcing to her Council to wed none other but Don Henrique, who has loved her as a humble maiden for herself alone, and not for her exalted rank; and the play ends by Henrique being accepted as her King-Consort, the truth about the Crown Jewels remaining a secret still between those immediately concerned.

8. FRA DIAVALO

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Daniel François Esprit Auber

Libretto By Scribe

First Produced Paris, 1830

Chief Characters Zerlina, Lady Alicash, Fra Diavalo, Lord Allcash, Lorenzo, Beppo and Giacomo.

FRA DIAVALO, a daring and dreaded brigand chief, with a high price on his head, is lurking in the district of Terracina, in Italy; and being possessed of much wit and grace of manner he has made acquaintance with Lord and Lady Allcash, rich English travellers, passing himself off as a Marquis, and learning the whereabouts of their valuables. After parting with them, he joins his band, whom he leads to waylay the travellers and so relieve them of most of their cash and jewels. The robbed strangers arrive at the Inn of Terracina, where a group of soldiers are enjoying an interval of rest during their search for the brigand chief; and hearing of the outrage to which the newcomers have been subjected, they recognise the methods of Fra Diavalo, and hurry away to get on his tracks, headed by Lorenzo, their captain, who is the sweetheart of Zerlina, the pretty daughter of the innkeeper, who, however, does not favour his suit, wishing the maiden to wed a wealthy farmer. Zerlina attends to the travellers; and presently Fra Diavalo appears, again disguised as the Marquis, and indulges in a flirtation with Lady Allcash, greatly to the chagrin of her husband, who soon finds means to interrupt the amusement of the gay Marquis. On the return of the soldiers, who have now recovered most of the stolen property of the English travellers, and have hopes of securing the bold chief himself, Fra Diavalo keeps in the background, and retires to make his plans with two of his followers, who have also entered the inn in disguise.

In Act 2, the three brigands hide themselves in Zerlina's chamber, intending to retake the restored gold during the night; and after lighting the English visitors to their room, the pretty maiden of the inn returns, and proceeds to undress and retire to bed, after praying devoutly. When she is quiet, the robbers come forth, and on their movements causing her to stir, they are about to stab her; but as she only murmurs a prayer in her sleep they are awed and cannot do the deed. This delay spoils their plan, as the soldiers, who have again been out searching, now return and knock for admittance; and the commotion awakening all, the brigands hide in a cupboard. Zerlina dresses hastily, and on opening her door to hear Lorenzo's news Lord and Lady Allcash also enter to learn the cause of the disturbance. A noise in the cupboard now attracts the attention of all; and knowing he will be discovered, the pretended Marquis steps forth and coolly declares he is there as Zerlina's lover... Lorenzo is furious, refusing to listen to Zerlina's protestations of innocence; and he

challenges the Marquis to fight with him next day. Fra Diavalo agrees, having arranged a plan with his band, by means of which he hopes to entrap all the soldiers; but next morning his two followers, by carelessly repeating to each other the words of Zerlina's prayer, which she overhears, cause their disguise to be discovered, and they are forced by the soldiers to disclose their leader's hiding-place and to entice him into the very same trap he had intended for his pursuers. Fra Diavalo is thus at last captured in a dramatic manner; and he goes forth boldly to meet his doom, first having the grace to clear Zerlina's fair name. Lorenzo thereupon seeks and obtains her pardon for his suspicion of her; and Lord and Lady Allcash (who have also made up their differences) having bestowed on him a generous reward for having recovered their valuables, the innkeeper no longer refuses his consent to their marriage, and the young couple are therefore made happy.

9. MASANIELLO

Lyrical Opera in Five Acts By Daniel François Esprit Auber

Libretto By Delavigne and Scribe

First Produced Paris, February, 1826

Chief Characters Elvira, Fenella, Masaniello, Alphonso, Pietro.

THIS opera is strongly marked by the revolutionary atmosphere of the period in which it was written. The scene is laid in the neighbourhood of Naples, where the wedding of the Princess Elvira and Alphonso, son of the Duke of Arcos, is taking place. As the bride appears she is accosted by Fenella, a dumb girl, who pleads by her actions for protection from a cavalier who has betrayed and persecuted her, his servants even now seeking to drag her back to prison, from whence she has escaped. The Princess promises her protection; but during the marriage ceremony, Fenella discovers that the bridegroom, Alphonso, is her betrayer and persecutor. As the wedding party issue from the church, in dramatic dumb show she denounces the bridegroom to her protectress, and the revels end in confusion and dismay.

In Act 2 we are introduced to Masaniello, the fisherman brother of Fenella, who is the leader of a band of revolutionists; and he and his friend Pietro incite their fishermen companions to strive for liberty. Fenella appears, grief-stricken; and on learning the reason for her woe her brother's revolutionary spirit is excited even more, and he calls on his companions to aid him in putting down such tyranny of the rich and powerful over the poor and humble. In the third act, as Fenella appears amongst a merry company of street vendors, the officers of Alphonso again attempt to arrest her, but Masaniello and his followers appear in time to save her from their clutches; and this is the signal for the revolt, which now breaks forth in fury.

In Act 4 Masaniello is shown as victorious in his efforts; but he is filled with grief on listening to the tale of civil war horror, described by Fenella, who has just come in from the city. Pietro, however, urges him to fresh efforts still, telling him that Alphonso has escaped with some of his vanquished friends, and, at the moment, Alphonso and Elvira seek protection in the cottage; and on finding themselves in the hands of their enemies they are in despair. Fenella, however, kneeling, generously pleads for them, and Masaniello agrees to protect them to the anger of Pietro, who would show them no mercy. But Masaniello keeps to his word; and the scene closes with the entrance of the city rulers, who name the successful leader of the revolt as their King.

Act 5 takes place in the palace, Vesuvius being seen in the background on the verge of eruption; and during the revels of Pietro and his friends a company of fishermen enter with the woeful news that the Duke's soldiers are overcoming the revolutionaries, that the volcano is in eruption, and that their self-crowned King, Masaniello, has fallen into a state of madness. Masaniello himself appears, singing snatches of his old fisherman songs, and proving the story of his frenzy to be true; but he is once more roused to action by Fenella, and rushes forth into the fray, where he is quickly slain. Fenella is in despair at the death of her brother; and waiting only to bring Alphonso and Elvira together, she leaps into the molten lava river which flows from the burning mountain.

10. THE MASON

Opera in Three Acts By Daniel François Esprit Auber

Libretto By Scribe

First Produced Paris, 1825

Chief Characters Henrietta, Mistress Bertrand, Irma, Roger, Merinville, Abdallah

THE scene of this opera is laid in Paris, towards the end of the eighteenth century. A popular young mason, Roger, is celebrating his marriage with Henrietta, the sister of a locksmith, the proceedings being greatly to the chagrin of Mistress Bertrand, an interfering old busybody, who is jealous of Henrietta's happiness, having had a fancy for the young mason herself. During the festivities an aristocratic young nobleman, Léon de Merinville, joins the company, declaring that Roger has recently saved his life, but would take no reward for his bravery, and that he has now sought him out for this same purpose. Roger declares he needs no further reward, since the grateful young noble had surreptitiously filled his pockets with gold pieces, with which he had been able to buy necessary requirements for his marriage. Henrietta is presently led away to the marriage chamber by her maidens, and Roger being left alone a few moments meets with an unexpected adventure. He is suddenly seized from behind, blindfolded, and forced into a carriage, which conveys him to a place unknown to him, where he is ordered by his captors to do some masonry work for them. This is a plot of Abdallah, the Turkish Ambassador, who, having conceived a passion for a fair Greek maiden, named Irma, and learning that she is that night eloping with a French officer, has determined on revenging himself on the pair by kidnapping and walling them up alive in a cave adjoining his grounds. The lovers, though warned by a friendly servant, fail to escape their enemy, whose myrmidons capture them, and, bringing them to the cave, thrust them within, bidding Roger, on pain of death, to wall it up. Roger, though blindfolded, recognises the voice of the captive officer, and knows that it is his new friend and benefactor, De Merinville, whom he is about to incarcerate; but knowing that his only chance of saving this young man later on is by carrying out his abductors' orders he proceeds with the work at once, singing the while a song, by which De Merinville, recognising his voice, learns that he has a friend at hand. Immediately his work of walling up the captives is completed, however, Roger is snatched away by the strangers, who hurry back to a spot near to his own house; and by the time he has removed the bandages from his eyes his abductors have vanished, and he has therefore nothing to take as a clue for the whereabouts of his midnight adventure, and despairs of saving his benefactor. He hurries to his house, where he finds all in confusion because of his disappearance, Henrietta having been goaded into suspicions of her truant husband by the taunts of Mistress

Bertrand; and the unhappy young wife meets him with bitter reproaches, to which, however, he pays little attention, his thoughts being so engrossed with what he has just been through. Hearing Mistress Bertrand presently spitefully inform Henrietta that it was in the Turkish Ambassador's carriage that the young husband had driven away the evening before, and that the company he has been in may be guessed, Roger's thoughts begin to work, and it dawns on him whither he was taken by his abductors; and hastily seeking the aid of the police, the grounds of Abdallah are searched and the whereabouts of the buried captives discovered. They are promptly liberated from their terrible position and revived, and Roger then takes them to his house, where he explains all things satisfactorily to his newly wedded wife, and happiness is restored to all.

11. THE BOHEMIAN GIRL.

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Michael William Balfe

Libretto By Alfred Bunn (Founded on the Romance by Cervantes)

First Produced London, November, 1843

Chief Characters Arline, Gipsy Queen, Thaddeus, Devils-hoof, Count Arnheim, Florestein

THE scene is laid in Austria, where, in the château grounds of Count Arnheim, Governor of Presburg, festivities are being held in celebration of a recent victory. A hunting party sets out; and on their departure Thaddeus, a noble young Polish exile, seeks refuge from the Austrian soldiers who are on his track. As he seeks a place of hiding he is interrupted by the entrance of a band of gipsies, headed by their leader, Devilshoof, who, hearing the plight of the fugitive, induces him to join his company. Some of the hunting party now return, excitedly declaring that the Count's only child, the little Arline, is being attacked by a stag, and Thaddeus is just in time to dash forward and rescue the child. Count Arnheim. loads him with grateful thanks, and invites him to join the festivities; but on Thaddeus presently refusing to join in the toast of the Austrian Emperor, his country's enemy, the guests are about to attack him when Devilshoof drives them back for which act he is marched off to the château. Thaddeus departs with the other gipsies; and the festivities are presently again interrupted by the sight of Devilshoof who has escaped from his confinement hurrying over the ravine bridge, carrying with him the little Arline, whom he has kidnapped. The company try to rescue the child, but are unable to do so, Devilshoof holding her as a target against their shots; and thus the gipsy escapes to his band with his prize and the Count is left in despair.

In the second act twelve years have elapsed, and Arline has been brought up amongst the gipsies; and she and Thaddeus who is also still with the band are now lovers. Arline, though the secret of her high birth has been kept from her, yet believes she is not of the gipsy race, and informs Thaddeus of the fact in the famous song " I dreamt that I dwelt in Marble Halls "; but the exile, not wishing to lose his sweetheart, still does not enlighten her on the matter, though he tells her the story of how she came by a certain scar on her arm, which is, in fact, the result of the stag's attack, from which he saved her long ago. Their love passages are interrupted by the arrival of the Queen of the Gipsies, who, though compelled by the rule of the tribe to unite them at their request, does so unwillingly, being in love with Thaddeus herself, and consequently jealous of the gentle Arline, against whom she secretly vows vengeance. In the next scene the gipsies mingle with the merry-makers in a fair, and here Arline is subjected to the unwelcome attentions of Florestein, a nephew of Count Arnheim, who is of course ignorant that the seeming gipsy maid is his own long-

lost cousin. He is a silly, foppish youth, and Arline repulses him; and for her spirit of doing so the Gipsy Queen cunningly presents her with a jewelled medallion, which one of her band had stolen from the foolish youth the night before, hoping that trouble may come of this act for her rival. It does. For Florestein presently sees the jewel on Arline's neck, recognises it as his own, and has her arrested. Arline is brought before Count Arnheim for justice; and the bereaved parent is shown as a sad and broken man, who, finding his efforts to recover his beloved child to have been in vain, has resigned himself to his grief. He is struck by the appearance of the fair young prisoner, however, and soon, noticing the scar upon her arm, he asks the cause of it. Arline tells him the story of her rescue from the stag, just related to her by Thaddeus; and Count Arnheim, full of joy, realises that his long-lost child is before him and a happy meeting takes place. Arline is restored to her high position once more; but as she still loves Thaddeus she refuses all other suitors. At a great reception held by the Count, Thaddeus manages to obtain an interview with Arline, who declares she will remain faithful to him; and on the approach of the guests her lover has just time to conceal himself behind a curtain. When the guests assemble, and Arline has been presented to them, the Gipsy Queen appears, declaring that the Count's daughter has her lover concealed in the room, she having followed to spy on him in revenge for his rejection of her love; and Thaddeus is thus compelled to reveal himself. He now boldly declares his love for Arline, and asks her hand in marriage, announcing that he is of noble birth, and producing certificates to that effect to support his word; and though the Count at first refuses to permit his daughter to wed with the enemy of her country Arline's entreaties at length cause him to yield, since her happiness is at stake. The Gipsy Queen, furious at the turn of affairs, and filled with the maddest jealousy, flies to the open casement, and bids one of her waiting followers to fire at Thaddeus as he holds Arline in his embrace; but Devilshoof, who is also at hand, and has a grudge against their passionate ruler, by a dexterous alteration of the position of the gun, causes the bullet to pierce the heart of the Queen herself, who falls dead at the feet of the lovers she had vainly endeavoured to separate.

12. THE ROSE OF CASTILE

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Michael William Balfe

Libretto By Falconer and Harris First Produced Lyceum, London, Oct., 1857

Chief Characters Elvira (Queen of Leon), Carmen, Don Sebastian (King of Castile, disguised as Manuel the Muleteer), Don Pedro, Don Florio

THE action is laid in Spain during the eighteenth century. Elvira, Queen of Leon, "The Rose of Castile," has been betrothed to Don Sebastian, the heir to the throne of Castile; and learning that the Prince, who is of a bold and venturesome spirit, has the intention of visiting her city disguised as a muleteer, in order to see for himself what his prospective bride is like, the royal lady devises a similar plan. -She arrays herself and her maid, Carmen, in peasant costume, and escaping secretly from the Palace makes her way to a country inn where she knows the supposed muleteer, under the name of Manuel, will have arrived. Here the two girls are subjected to boorish treatment by the innkeeper, from which they are quickly rescued by the disguised Prince, who, being greatly impressed by the beauty and charm of Elvira, at once falls in love with her, the pretended peasant maid promptly reciprocating. As they talk happily together, Don Pedro, who wishes to secure the throne of Leon for himself, enters the inn with some of his conspirators; and part of their plan being to secure someone to represent the Queen, whom they can thus compel to do certain acts

they desire in order to compromise herself, they are immediately struck by the likeness of the charming peasant maid to their sovereign. After some persuasion they induce Elvira to carry out their wishes, little dreaming that she is the real Queen; and she departs with them to the Palace, knowing well that the adventurous Prince in disguise will follow her. Manuel is not long in appearing at the palace, still not revealing his true identity; and Elvira, escaping from the conspirators for a few moments, meets him, and learns from him that he has overheard the plotters declaring their intention to thrust her into prison. Elvira frustrates this plot by persuading one of her ladies a foolish and elderly Duchess to impersonate her and to take her place, very densely veiled, the next time she is expected to ride forth from the palace. The plotters surround the carriage and seize the Duchess, believing her to be the Queen, and she is carried away to a convent, to be kept prisoner whilst they force the mock Queen to do their will. Elvira, however, by appearing in her royal robes, spoils their plan, and they are mystified by the disappearance of their country maid; and great consternation is experienced by all, upon the Queen announcing her determination to wed none other than a certain Manuel, a muleteer. The disguised Prince, however, to prove further her real love for him, now sends a message purporting to come from Don Sebastian, and announcing his marriage with an-other Princess; and Elvira, though greatly disappointed by the news, now believing that she has made a mistake and that the Prince and muleteer are not one and the same person, yet sturdily announces her determination to wed Manuel, who is the man she loves. This is good news to Don Pedro, who sees in her stubborn intention to wed a commoner the means of gratifying his own ambition, since such a marriage would cause an uproar in the country; but his hopes are soon dashed to the ground by the appearance of Manuel, who takes his place beside the Queen, declaring himself to be the Prince of Castile. The entrance of his suite proves his identity beyond all doubt, and Elvira gladly gives her hand to the triumphant Sebastian, who is at once her royal suitor and the man she loves.

13. FIDELIO

Grand Opera in Two Acts By Ludwig van Beethoven

Libretto By Sonnleithner (Adapted from Bouilly's "Leonore.")

First Produced Vienna, November, 1805

Chief Characters Leonora (Fidelio), Marcellina, Florestan, Don Pizarro, Rocco, Jaquino

THE scene is laid in a Spanish State Prison, near Seville. A rich and high-minded nobleman, named Florestan, has made a mortal enemy of the Prison Governor, Don Pizarro, by accusing him of cruelty and injustice; and the latter, in revenge, has succeeded in kidnapping and incarcerating him in the fortress, giving out that he has died from natural causes. He is being slowly starved to death by his cruel enemy; and when the opera opens he is near his end. However, the unhappy captive has a faithful wife, Leonora, who, refusing to believe the reports of her husband's death, determines on a bold plan to learn his whereabouts and rescue him. She adopts male attire, and in this disguise presents herself at the fortress where she suspects her beloved husband is pining, and secures an engagement to assist the jailer, Rocco, who regards her as a very pleasant and amiable youth, since the new assistant is willing to help him in all his arduous duties. Rocco has a gay daughter, Marcellina, who is so struck by the charming appearance and manners of the new assistant who goes by the name of Fidelio that she endeavours to secure him for her husband, to the dismay of Leonora, who vainly tries to avoid the amorous maiden. Don Pizarro, receiving

despatches from Don Fernando, Governor of Seville, to the effect that he is about to visit the prison that evening, and fearing lest his unjust incarceration and slow torturing of Florestan will be discovered by his superior officer, at once gives orders to the jailer to find means to murder the dungeon prisoner immediately. Rocco, however, refuses to do so; whereupon Pizarro declares he will himself do the deed, and bids the jailer dig a grave in the dungeon ready for the corpse which command Rocco dares not refuse to carry out, for fear of losing his employment. Fidelio overhears this conversation; and knowing now that her husband is indeed in the dungeon, she is horrified at the new danger he is in, and determines to save him. She begs Rocco to take her with him to the dungeon; and, after some reluctance, the old man consents, being secretly glad of the supposed youth's help.

In the second act Rocco and Fidelio are discovered at their dreadful task, the poor captive lying in an emaciated and semi-conscious state upon the floor. Leonora is heartbroken at the wretched appearance of her once-gallant husband; but, concealing her distress, she proceeds to revive him with wine and bread when Rocco's back is turned. Their work is interrupted by the entrance of Pizarro, whose patience is exhausted, and fearing his superior will arrive before the traces of his villainy are hidden, has now come to despatch the captive without further delay; and he orders the jailer and the youth from the dungeon. Fidelio, however, only hides behind a pillar; and when Pizarro, after taunting the half-fainting captive, and exulting in his vengeance, attempts to stab him, the faithful wife, rendered reckless by her despair, rushes between the pair to shield her beloved husband, revealing her true identity at the same moment. As Pizarro starts back in amazement, the brave woman presents a pistol, and, keeping him covered, prevents his further advance. At this moment fanfare without announces the arrival of Don Fernando; and, choking with rage, the baffled Pizarro is forced to depart and offer greeting to his superior. Leonora and Florestan embrace with joy and thankfulness, feeling that they may now secure justice; and in the next act, on Don Fernando giving orders for all the prisoners to be brought forth to receive a free pardon granted by the King, the tortured and emaciated dungeon captive is recognised by the Governor, and the whole story of his unjust captivity and the murderous designs of his enemy is revealed. Pizarro is led away in chains; and Leonora has the joy of removing her husband's shackles with her own hands, and receives the highest praises from all for her noble fidelity. The only sad person present now is Marcellina, who is much disappointed on discovering her admired Fidelio to be an impostor; but she presently contents herself by accepting the renewed advances of humble Jaquino, the porter, who has long been her devoted slave, but has had to stand aside during her pursuit of the handsome and elegant Fidelio.

14. NORMA

Grand Opera in Two Acts By Vincenzo Bellini

Libretto By Romani

First Produced Milan, 1832

Chief Characters Norma, Adalgisa, Pollione, Oroviso (High Priest of the Druids)

THE action takes place in ancient Gaul, after its invasion by the Romans. Oroviso, the High Priest of the Druids, has a daughter, Norma, chief of the priestesses, who has broken her sacred vows, and, unknown to all, has entered into a marriage with a Roman officer, Pollione, by whom she has

had two sons. At the opening of the opera, however, the Roman's love for his Druidess wife has cooled, and he has conceived a passion for Adalgisa, one of the younger priestesses of the temple. Norma, in spite of the sacrifice and betrayal of her religious vows which she has made, still loves her secret husband, though aware of his cooling passion; but, being sincere in her sacred vocation, she performs her ceremonies and duties conscientiously, and consequently is beloved and revered by the people, to whom she reveals the will of the oracle. She prophesies the downfall of Rome, and encourages the people in their resistance to the invaders, during one of the mistletoe ceremonies. When the ceremony is over, Adalgisa has a secret meeting with Pollione, who entreats her to depart with him to Rome; but the young priestess is now overcome with remorse for her betrayal of the revered Norma, and she seeks an opportunity to confess all to the High Priestess. Norma, sympathising with a sin akin to her own, at first offers her pardon and means of escape; but when she next learns that the girl's lover is her own faithless husband, she is filled with anger and despair.

In Act 2 she determines to slay her children, but her love for them renders her incapable of doing the deed; and on the entrance of Adalgisa, who desires her forgiveness, she entreats her rival to take charge of the boys and deliver them into the care of their father, since she is resolved to die, meaning to offer herself as a victim on the funeral pyre at the sacrifice about to be offered preparatory to the warriors going forth to do battle against their invaders. Adalgisa is so touched by this noble renunciation that she declares she will beg the faithless husband to return to Norma's love once more; but all her efforts are in vain. Pollione, on the contrary, only heeds the force of his new passion; and being seen to snatch his adored Adalgisa from before the temple altar, he is seized by the priests and condemned by them to expiate his impious act as the victim for the sacrifice just about to be offered. He is brought for judgment to the worshipped High Priestess, Norma, who declares she will set him free if he will renounce Adalgisa, which, however, he firmly refuses to do. Norma, seeing thus that his love for her has indeed vanished utterly, is more determined than ever to encompass her own death; and summoning all the priests and votaries of the temple, she begs them to condemn a sinful priestess who has broken her sacred vows. She then declares herself to be the erring one; and amidst the execrations and groans of the people, she ascends the funeral pyre, willingly awaiting her doom. Pollione, overcome by her noble renunciation and generous shielding of her rival, feels remorse for his faithless conduct; and, his dormant love for the great-hearted Norma reviving, he confesses his own share in her guilt, and mounts the pyre also. Thus, after commending their children to the care of the High Priest, the husband and wife are reunited in death.

15. I PURITANI

Grand Opera in Two Acts By Vincenzo Bellini

Libretto By Count Pepoli

First Produced Paris, January, 1835

Chief Characters Elvira, Queen Henrietta, Lord Arthur Talbot, Sir Richard Forth, Sir George Walton

THE action takes place at the fortress of Plymouth during the civil war of the Cavaliers and Roundheads. Queen Henrietta, widow of Charles I., is a prisoner in the fortress, her identity not

being generally known; but the fact is accidentally discovered by a young cavalier, Lord Arthur Talbot, who has been granted admission to the fortress, in order to be united to his Puritan sweetheart, Elvira, daughter of the Governor. Elvira's hand had formerly been sought by Sir Richard Forth, a prominent officer in the Puritan army; but the maiden's love having been given so irrevocably to the young cavalier, her father has, after much tearful entreaty on her part, given his consent to their marriage, to the great chagrin of Sir Richard, who is also in attendance at the fortress in great gloom. On discovering that the unfortunate Queen Henrietta is a captive in the castle, Lord Arthur's loyalty is stirred; and a favourable opportunity unexpectedly occurring, he determines to effect her escape at once, even though his beloved Elvira is even now awaiting his presence at the altar. Snatching up the bridal veil which his sweetheart has dropped on passing into the chapel, Lord Arthur manages to envelop the Queen in it as she is taking exercise with the other prisoners; and, hurrying her to the gates, the pair are suffered to pass through by Sir Richard Forth, who is on guard there, and thinks that the veiled lady can be none other than the bride, Elvira. The deception, however, is soon discovered, but not before Lord Arthur has found means to bestow his royal charge safely in a vessel bound for the Continent. He himself is proscribed as a traitor, with a price on his head; and he is compelled to keep in hiding, being very closely hunted. Meanwhile, Elvira, thinking that her lover is faithless, because he deserted her at the moment they were to be married, has lost her reason; and she wanders forth constantly into the woods surrounding the fortress, now singing snatches of songs, and anon bewailing her sad fate. Here she is at last met one day by Lord Arthur, who has determined to see his lady-love once more, in spite of the danger he runs in exposing himself; and at the sound of her lover's voice, the distraught maiden regains her reason, and joyfully listens to his greetings and the explanation of his enforced desertion of her on their marriage day. Their joy, however, is quickly turned to dismay on the sudden appearance of Sir Richard Forth with a company of Puritan soldiers; and Lord Arthur is seized, bound, and condemned to be shot immediately as a proscribed traitor. Ere the sentence can be carried out, however, a messenger arrives post haste, bringing news of a Parliamentary defeat, and bearing a free pardon for Lord Arthur. The prisoner is released; and, full of joy, the lovers return to the fortress, where they are at last united.

16. LA SONNAMBULA

Grand Opera in Two Acts By Vincenzo Bellini

Libretto By Felice Romani

First Produced Milan, March 6, 1831

Chief Characters Amina, Elvino, Rudoipho, Lisa and Teresa

THE scene is laid in a pretty village in Switzerland, where the peasants have gathered to witness the signing of the marriage contract between Elvino, a rich young farmer, and Amina, the village belle, who is an orphan, and the ward of Dame Teresa. All are merry, except Lisa, the coquettish young mistress of the inn, who had hoped to win Elvino herself. The merrymakers are interrupted by the arrival of Rudolpho, seigneur of the village, who is at first unrecognised, and announces his intention of sleeping at the inn. He makes pretty speeches to the lovely Amina, thus rousing the jealousy of Elvino. On the Count retiring at night to his chamber, he is followed by Lisa, who, being a coquette, is ever ready for a flirtation. They are, however, soon interrupted by the entrance of Amina, walking in her sleep; for, unknown to all, she is a somnambulist. Lisa, seeing in this

circumstance a means of avenging herself upon her rival, hurries away to inform Elvino of what she has seen, in her haste leaving her kerchief behind; and the Count, overawed by the beauty and innocency of his sleeping visitant, leaves the room at once, and betakes himself to his château. Amina reclines upon the bed; and when the spiteful Lisa returns with the villagers, Elvino is furious at beholding his beloved one in such an equivocal situation, and, upon her awakening, spurns her, and afterwards accepts the advances of the triumphant Lisa. The villagers, however, having discovered the identity of the stranger, call upon the Count to declare the innocence of Amina; and Rudolpho gladly does so, explaining that the maiden is a somnambulist. All believe him except Elvino, who is, however, at last convinced by the appearance of Amina, once more in a state of trance, walking across a rickety bridge from a neighbouring mill. She awakens in his arms; and upon his craving forgiveness for his doubt she gladly grants it. Lisa's kerchief having been found in the guest-chamber of the inn, she is now looked upon askance; and the interrupted wedding festivities of Amina and Elvino are continued with great rejoicing.

17. THE LILY OF KILLARNEY

Opera By Julius Benedict

Libretto By Boucicault and Oxenford, founded on the former's romantic drama "The Colleen Bawn"

First Produced Covent Garden, London, February, 1862

Chief Characters Eily O'Connor ("The Colleen Bawn"), Mrs Cregan, Anne Chute, Hardress Cregan, Danny Mann, Myles na Coppaleen, Corrigan

THE scene is laid in Ireland, in the neighbourhood of Killarney, where young Hardress Cregan, the master of Torc Cregan, is entertaining his friends. The Cregan estates are heavily involved, a "middleman," Corrigan, holding a mortgage on them; and during the departure of the gay guests to witness a horse race by moonlight this "middleman," a low-minded, vulgar man, accosts Mrs Cregan, insisting that her son must pay court to the heiress of the neighbourhood, Miss Anne Chute, since a marriage with this lady is the only means they have of retrieving their fortunes and securing payment to himself. He offers as an alternative, however, the suggestion that he would accept the hand of Mrs Cregan, who is still attractive; but this suggestion is repelled with disgust by the widow, who promises instead to encourage her son to pay court to Anne Chute. Corrigan then tells her to prevent her son from visiting Eily O'Connor, "the Colleen Bawn," a beautiful peasant girl, whom he declares Hardress is attached to; and the call of an old boatman, Danny Mann, being heard outside, he announces that this devoted adherent of young Cregan has even now come to take his master to the girl's house. On looking through the open window, and seeing Hardress board the boat and allow himself to be rowed across the lake, Mrs Cregan is much distressed, but promises to warn her son to desist from such profitless love-making. In the next scene, we are taken into the cottage of Eily O'Connor, who lives there under the protection of Father Tom, a good old priest; and here her peasant lover, honest Myles na Coppaleen, is also visiting her. Hardress Cregan presently enters; and knowing it to be to his advantage to wed with the rich heiress, Anne Chute, he endeavours to persuade Eily to part with her marriage certificate for the pair are already actually married but Eily stoutly refuses to do so, being encouraged in this course by Father Tom and Myles, though it grieves her to vex her lover. Hardress is furious at her refusal, and departs in anger, declaring he will never see her again.

In Act 2 Cregan is paying suit to Anne Chute, though haunted by remorse for his desertion of Eily, whom he still loves; but Danny Mann, whose devotion to his master knows no bounds, determines to remove Eily by violent means, to leave the coast clear for Hardress's more profitable love-making. He therefore secures one of the young man's gloves from Mrs Cregan, which he uses as a token to deceive Eily, who believes him when he tells her that Hardress has sent it as a sign he needs her; and by this means he entices the girl into his boat, and taking her to a lonely part of the lake where the water enters a hidden cave, he makes her land on a rock, and commands her to give up her marriage certificate to him. This Eily still refuses to do; and the old boatman, maddened by her refusal, thrusts her into the water. Myles na Coppaleen, however, is within the cave, which he uses for his own secret purposes; and mistaking Danny Mann for an otter, in the dim light, he shoots at him. Then seeing Eily floating in the water, he dives in and rescues her, carrying her to the cottage of Father Tom, where she is revived and kept hidden. Meanwhile, Hardress is arrested as an accomplice of Danny Mann, who, having managed to crawl to the shore after being shot by Myles, makes a dying confession that he has murdered the Colleen Bawn, and, Cregan's glove being discovered, the young man is also involved. Corrigan, smarting from the snubs dealt out to him lavishly by Cregan and his mother, has brought the arrest about at the moment Hardress has arrived at the house of Anne Chute for his wedding with her; but in the midst of the confusion that ensues Myles na Coppaleen appears on the scene with Eily, alive and well, and introduces her as Hardress's lawful wife. The soldiers withdraw, and the husband and wife embrace joyfully; and the abandoned heiress very willingly accepts another suitor, and generously bestows a large sum of money upon Hardress and his bride, by means of which the interfering Corrigan is satisfied and sent about his business.

18. BENVENUTO CELLINI

Opera in Three Acts By Hector Berlioz

Libretto By Barbier and De Wailly

First Produced Paris, 1838

Chief Characters Teresa, Benvenuto Cellini, Fieramosca, Balducci

THE scene is laid in Rome, in the early part of the sixteenth century, during the time of Pope Clement VII., the action taking place at the time of the Shrove-tide Carnival. Benvenuto Cellini, the great sculptor, is in Rome, at work upon his great statue of Perseus, which he has promised to finish by the end of the Carnival, by command of the Pope. He neglects the work, however, having fallen in love with Teresa, the fair daughter of Balducci, an old treasurer of the Papal Court; and most of his time is taken up with love-making, though he is not favoured by the maiden's father, who desires to wed her to the official sculptor, Fieramosca, for whom Teresa has an unconquerable aversion. Despising these obstacles to their happiness, Cellini arranges with Teresa that they shall elope, selecting the night of the Carnival to carry out their design; and they arrange to meet at a certain spot, Cellini to be disguised as a white monk, while his young student, Ascanio, is to accompany him in the garb of a Capuchin. Their plans are, however, overheard by Fieramosca, who determines to frustrate them; but he himself presently gets into trouble, being unable to escape from the house before the return of Balducci, and on Teresa declaring that a thief is lurking about, the disappointed suitor is dragged forth and soundly belaboured before he can

establish his identity. When the Carnival is at length at its height, and the lovers meet on the Piazza di Colonna, as arranged, they are surprised by Fieramosca and his servant, who have donned similar dresses; and during the struggle which ensues, Cellini stabs the servant, for which act he is set upon by the crowd, who are about to hang him, when three cannon shots announce that Ash Wednesday has commenced, and during the immediate extinguishing of all lights which ensues Cellini is able to escape. He reaches his workshop, where he is presently joined by Teresa, whom he joyfully embraces. Whilst they are arranging a plan to elope to Florence, old Balducci enters, with the undesired suitor, Fieramosca, whom he commands his daughter to accept as her husband, and return to her home. This scene is interrupted by a visit from Cardinal Salviati, who sternly reminds Cellini that his promised contract with the Pope has not been fulfilled, and threatens him with dire penalties for his misdeed. Cellini is ashamed of his carelessness and neglect; and upon the Cardinal announcing that the work shall be finished by another hand, he passionately declares that he will destroy it ere it shall be interfered with. He is about to carry out his threat, when the Cardinal, not wishing so great an art treasure to be lost to the world, makes a bargain with him he is to finish the casting of the statue in an hour's time, when he shall receive as reward the Pope's pardon for his breach of contract and the hand of the fair Teresa; but should he fail to accomplish his task he must be prepared to die. Cellini agrees to the terms, and sets to work in feverish haste to complete the casting of the Perseus, using up all his other art treasures of silver and gold in the melting-pot as he proceeds; and all join their efforts to his. When at last the hour is over the work is completed, the mould is broken, and as the exquisite Perseus is revealed all bow reverentially arranged, they are surprised by Fieramosca and his servant, who have donned similar dresses; and during the struggle which ensues, Cellini stabs the servant, for which act he is set upon by the crowd, who are about to hang him, when three cannon shots announce that Ash Wednesday has commenced, and during the immediate extinguishing of all lights which ensues Cellini is able to escape. He reaches his workshop, where he is presently joined by Teresa, whom he joyfully embraces. Whilst they are arranging a plan to elope to Florence, old Balducci enters, with the undesired suitor, Fieramosca, whom he commands his daughter to accept as her husband, and return to her home. This scene is interrupted by a visit from Cardinal Salviati, who sternly reminds Cellini that his promised contract with the Pope has not been fulfilled, and threatens him with dire penalties for his misdeed. Cellini is ashamed of his carelessness and neglect; and upon the Cardinal announcing that the work shall be finished by another hand, he passionately declares that he will destroy it ere it shall be interfered with. He is about to carry out his threat, when the Cardinal, not wish-ing so great an art treasure to be lost to the world, makes a bargain with him he is to finish the casting of the statue in an hour's time, when he shall receive as reward the Pope's pardon for his breach of contract and the hand of the fair Teresa; but should he fail to accomplish his task he must be prepared to die. Cellini agrees to the terms, and sets to work in feverish haste to complete the casting of the Perseus, using up all his other art treasures of silver and gold in the melting-pot as he proceeds; and all join their efforts to his. When at last the hour is over the work is completed, the mould is broken, and as the exquisite Perseus is revealed all bow reverentially before the mighty work of genius. Cellini thus obtains his full pardon; and old Balducci, overcome by the grandeur before him, now gladly places his daughter's hand in that of the elated artist and bestows his blessing upon the happy pair.

19. CARMEN

Tragic Opera in Four Acts By Georges Bizet

Libretto By Meilhac and Halévy, drawn from Merimée's romance of the same name

First Produced Opéra Comique, Paris, 1875

Chief Characters Carmen, Micaela, Don José, Escamillo (The Toreador)

THE scene is laid in Seville, where a number of soldiers are lounging in the public square, being under the command of Don José, their lieutenant. Whilst they are laughing and joking, Micaela, a peasant girl, appears, asking for Don José, for whom she has brought a message from his mother; but though the village maiden was his sweetheart when at home he pays her no attention now, all his interest being for Carmen, a beautiful and wayward gipsy-girl, who has recently joined a cigarette factory close by. As he speaks with Micaela, the factory girls enter the square, Carmen being with them; and the lovely gipsy, singling out Don José as her new sweetheart, throws him the rose from her breast, filling the young man with delight. He falls desperately in love with her; and when the bold girl is presently arrested on a charge of wounding one of her companions he arranges her escape, and promises to meet her at a certain lonely country inn she names. In Act 2 Don José arrives at the inn, where he finds Carmen with a number of her gipsy friends, who are in reality a band of desperate smugglers. Before the arrival of Don José, Carmen has been flirting with Escamillo, the most popular toreador in Spain, who is also one of her admirers; and he and her gipsy followers persuade her to tempt the amorous lieutenant to desert his regiment and join the smugglers. They then depart, and when Don José arrives Carmen uses all her fascinating arts to coerce him from the path of duty; and the young man is so enthralled by the wiles of the handsome coquette that when his superior officer presently appears and orders him to fall into rank he joins in the ensuing scrimmage arranged by the clever Carmen, and finally escapes with her to the mountains. Here Act 3 finds him in the haunt of the smugglers, still desperately enamoured of the way-ward beauty, whose love for him, however, is rapidly cooling, her roving fancy having by this time settled upon the handsome toreador, Escamillo, who presently appears on the scene. Escamillo soon reveals himself as a rival to Don José, who, full of jealousy, challenges him to fight; but the pair are quickly separated by the smugglers, and Escamillo departs, inviting them all to attend the coming bull-fight in Seville, where he expects to gain further laurels. Micaela, who follows her faithless lover as a guardian angel, now appears, and endeavours to wean him away from the careless Carmen, whose love she knows to be but evanescent; and on learning from the gentle maiden that his mother is well-nigh dying, he is filled with remorse for his neglect of her, and returns to his home for a short time. Act 4 opens upon the ante-chamber of the circus arena, where Escamillo is making love to the willing Carmen, who has already ceased to think about her last lover; but, as the toreador is called to the arena to join in the bull fight which is now beginning, the faithless gipsy is confronted by the angry and desperate Don José, who reproaches her for her desertion, and endeavours to revive her dead love for him. Carmen, however, scornfully repulses him; and then Don José, mad with jealousy, and enraged at her reckless taunts, seizes his dagger, and stabs her to the heart, just at the moment when the triumphant toreador issues forth from the arena. Escamillo hastens forward to greet his beautiful sweetheart; but his triumph is quickly changed to grief and despair as he beholds the proud gipsy dead at his feet.

20. DJAMILEH

Romantic Opera in One Act By Georges Bizet

Libretto By Louis Gallet

First Produced Paris, 1872

Chief Characters Djamileh, Haroun, Splendiano

THE simple story of this charming romantic opera is laid in the East. Haroun, a handsome young Turk, being blessed with great riches and power, determines to enjoy everything that such good fortune can offer him. He lives the wildest and most luxurious life of feasting, gaming, and love-making; but in spite of all his pleasures and excitements he is not satisfied, but finds even the granting of his every wish of no avail to bring him contentment and real happiness. He continues to indulge in his gorgeous excesses, however; and, as an additional indulgence, he gives orders to his chief steward to purchase a new and handsome girl-slave for him every month, at the end of which time he has had all the pleasure he can enjoy from her beauty and accomplishments, and the human toy is cast aside as incapable of amusing him further. This extravagant mode of life makes serious inroads into his fortune, so that his means are quickly vanishing; and at the opening of the opera the young lord is listening with utter disinterest to a lecture from his secretary and steward, Splendiano, who reproaches him for his extravagance; but Haroun's only answer is to bid the officer to seek out his new monthly slave, since he has already tired of his last love, Djamileh. Splendiano is astounded that the exceptional beauty and talents of Djamileh were powerless to secure a firmer hold on her capricious master; but having a great admiration for the girl himself he begs Haroun to permit him to take the discarded slave himself. This Haroun carelessly agrees to; and Splendiano hurries away to bring the slave-dealer to the house with his human wares, so that he may enjoy his own prize the sooner. After he has gone Djamileh enters, looking sad and unhappy; for she has conceived a passionate love for her master, and is rendered wretched by his careless indifference to her efforts to please him. Haroun, however, has more regard for this girl than for any of his other slaves; and seeing her unhappy looks, and divining the reason, he endeavours to comfort her by a gift of jewels and her freedom. Then, fearing lest the girl's enthralling beauty and joy at his generosity should enchain him against his will, he gladly welcomes a company of his boon companions who now arrive, deliberately leaving Djamileh unveiled, and exposed to their unwelcome admiration. Seeing the poor girl weeping and distressed, Splendiano endeavours to comfort her by the offer of his own heart, and at the same moment informing her that her master is about to cast her aside. Djamileh is heartbroken on hearing this, and implores the steward to permit her to disguise herself and impersonate the new slave that night, so that she may have at least one more private interview with her beloved master; and Splendiano is so touched by her distress that, though disappointed at the hopelessness of his own chances of winning the girl's love, he agrees to her request. The slave-dealer now brings a selection of his most valuable maidens, who dance before the bored and world-sick Haroun, who, however, finally purchases the most beautiful of them all, a fair Almée, who, in her frantic efforts to please, dances until she drops to the ground exhausted. Djamileh, with the help of Splendiano, is enabled to exchange clothes with the new slave; and thus disguised and closely veiled she is brought to Haroun's chamber at night. The young man's interest is aroused by the seeming reluctance of his new purchase to approach him or accept his caresses; and when she finally unveils and reveals herself as the cast-off Djamileh, declaring herself unable to live apart from him, and entreating him to take back her freedom, he is amazed at her action. Her devotion and genuine passion, however, touch him very deeply; and feeling a true and pure love dawning in his own heart for the first time, he admits that she has conquered his lower nature, and taught him the

meaning of true happiness a perfect love. He folds her in his arms, and the opera ends with the declaration of his love for the faithful Djamileh.

21. LA DAME BLANCHE

Opera Comique By François Adrien Boieldieu

Libretto By Scribe

First Produced Opéra Comique, Paris, Dec., 1825

Chief Characters Anna, Jenny, George, Gaveston, Dickson

THE subject of this opera is founded on Sir Walter Scott's romance of " Guy Mannering "; and the scene is laid in Scotland. The Laird of Avenel, a Royalist, is proscribed after the battle of Culloden; and before going into his enforced exile, he leaves his castle and estate in the charge of his steward, Gaveston, telling him of a certain great treasure, which he has stored in the statue of an ancestress called " The White Lady," whose spirit is believed by the clansmen to haunt the old castle. Gaveston, an unscrupulous man, has caused the only son of the Laird to be kidnapped during his infancy; and as soon as he hears the report of his master's death in exile he determines to sell the estates and take the proceeds, together with the hidden treasure in the statue, for himself. The old Laird has a ward, however, Anna, an orphan, whom he had adopted; and this maiden, suspecting the evil designs of the steward, determines to frustrate them, since she believes the heir to the estates to be still living. On the opening of the opera a stranger, a young man named George Brown, has arrived in the village; and hearing the villagers talk of " The White Lady," an apparition which they declare is frequently to be seen at night around the castle, he is much interested. He is staying at the house of one of the tenants named Dickson, who has just received a command, purporting to come from " The White Lady," to meet the ghost in the castle that night; and as the tenant is nervous, yet dares not disobey the ghostly command, he volunteers to take Dickson's place, thinking that he will enjoy the adventure. Dickson gladly consents; and at the appointed time, George goes to the rendezvous. The young Anna has many times amused herself by scaring the villagers by impersonating "The White Lady"; but this time she has done it with a reason. When George, in the guise of the tenant Dickson, appears in the haunted chamber of the castle, Anna presently appears, arrayed as the ghost; and relating to him the story of the hidden treasure, and her suspicions as to the heir of Avenel being still alive, she lays on him a stern command to endeavour to frustrate the schemes of Gaveston by outbidding him at the sale of the estates next day, so that they may be saved for the true heir when he shall appear, since she knows that he is indeed alive. George promises to obey the ghostly command, feeling that it comes from human lips; and on clasping the hand of Anna in token of his fidelity the touch thrills him, and love for the hidden maiden springs up within him. Anna, also, having now realised that the visitor is not Dickson, and recognising him as a young man whose life she had once saved by her tender nursing of him when wounded in a recent battle, is filled with joy; for she had conceived a passion for her unknown patient during his illness, and had longed to meet him again. In the next act the sale of the estates takes place; and to the great chagrin of Gaveston, George Brown, the stranger who has so unexpectedly visited the village, outbids him by three thousand pounds. He declares, however, that the stranger will be unable to produce the money which is required to be forthcoming a few hours later; but on the arrival of the justice and other legal authorities, Anna appears in the garb of "The White Lady," to the awe of the onlookers, and opening the statue she

brings forth the hidden treasure, together with several documents which prove beyond all doubt that the heir of Avenel is still alive, and that, in fact, the stranger, George Brown, is the missing lord of the soil. Gaveston thereupon pulls aside the ghost's veil, revealing the features of his beautiful and clever ward, Anna; and he retires, crestfallen and defeated, as the restored heir hastens forward, and, taking the fair maid by the hand, declares that she shall be his bride.

22. JEAN DE PARIS

Opera Comique in Three Acts. By François Adrien Boieldieu

Libretto By St Just

First Produced Paris, 1812

Chief Characters Princess of Navarre, Lorezza, Crown Prince of France (Jean de Paris), Olivier the Page

THE action takes place in the seventeenth century, in a country inn in the Pyrenees. A marriage has been arranged between the young widowed Princess of Navarre and the Crown Prince of France; and both being young and romantic they are naturally anxious to see something of each other before the wedding takes place. The Prince, being fond of adventure, determines to gratify his desire; and, taking his suite into his confidence, he sends forward his page, Olivier, to the inn in the Pyrenees, where he knows the Princess is expected to stop on a journey she is taking, to make arrangements with the landlord for the reception of himself under the title of Jean de Paris, a plain citizen. At first the page meets with a cold reception from the landlord, who declares he has no room for a common citizen, since all his rooms are being prepared for the reception of the Princess of Navarre, who is expected to arrive shortly; but the host's pretty daughter is greatly attracted by the good looks and gaiety of the young page, and promises to help him all she can. Presently the suite of the so-called Jean de Paris arrive, and when the landlord sees what a grand company they are he alters his opinion of the plain citizen, whom he sees is at any rate extremely wealthy, since he can afford such smart followers; and he arranges with Olivier that his master shall have all the rooms in the inn, since he hopes they will depart before the arrival of the Princess, and he will thus have the advantage of the two visits. Jean de Paris is satisfied with the arrangements made; but the landlord is soon at his wits' end, for the Princess and her suite arrive almost immediately the Parisian citizen has taken possession. The Princess's seneschal is furious because there is no proper accommodation for his royal mistress; but Jean de Paris comes to the rescue by declaring that he will be honoured by the Princess accepting him as her host, and he will entertain her to the best that the house affords. Whilst the seneschal is still in a state of dumbfounded amazement at such impudence the Princess herself enters, and the pretended citizen of Paris, delighted with her beauty and charm of manner, at once falls in love with her. The Princess recognises in the stranger her royal fiancé, whom she has seen before, unknown to him; and, being equally attracted by him, she determines to enjoy the game a little while, and so accepts the invitation of the wealthy first-coiner, to the great delight of the landlord and the utter dismay of the seneschal, who is shocked at such an outrage of royal etiquette. The young couple, however, enjoy themselves immensely; and when dinner is announced the pretended citizen leads the Princess to the table with perfect grace; and the seneschal is amazed to find such elaborate silver and gold service, and such gorgeous appointments the property of plain Jean de Paris, and, regarding him as some adventurous rogue, he is horrified at the rapid progress towards friendship

and complete sympathy made by the handsome pair. The gallant Jean sings tender love songs to his charming guest; and the Princess, to tease her host, tells him that her heart is already engaged and that her lover is one of her own rank. The Prince is in fear for the moment on hearing this; but after keeping him on tenter-hooks a little longer the Princess allows him to see that he is her hero himself; and when the villagers presently come to offer their respects to the Princess, Jean de Paris reveals his true identity, and the royal lovers receive the benediction of the delighted people.

23. MEPHISTOPHELES

Grand Opera in Four Acts By Arrigo Boito (With Prologue and Epilogue)

Libretto Arranged by the Composer from the Faust legends as treated by Marlowe and others

First Produced La Scala, Milan, 1868

Chief Characters Marguerite, Martha, Helen of Troy, Faust, Mephistopheles.

THE story follows on similar lines to that of Gounod's "Faust" in the first three acts; but there is a complete change in the fourth act. In the prologue Mephistopheles appears and plans to secure the soul of Faust; and in the background the heavenly choirs are heard singing of the final triumph which will be theirs. The scene of Act 1 is laid in Frankfurt, where Faust and Wagner, student friends, are joining in a festival. Faust is shadowed by a grey friar, who is Mephistopheles in disguise; and when the young student retires to his laboratory the tempter follows, and, throwing off his disguise, appears as a gay cavalier, and offers all earthly pleasure to the young man in return for his promise to serve the powers of evil in hell. The compact having been made, the next act takes us to the garden of Marguerite. Here Faust (now known as Henry) makes love to Marguerite, whilst Mephistopheles professes a similar passion for Martha, her elderly companion. From this we are taken to a wild scene on the summit of "The Brocken," where the Witches' Sabbath is being celebrated; and here Faust sees in a vision the coming misery of Marguerite. This scene is realised in the next act, where Marguerite lies in prison awaiting her doom, having killed her child in a fit of frenzy occasioned by the desertion of Faust and the gibes of her companions. With her returning reason, her thoughts tend heaven-wards; and when Faust presently appears, she resists his passionate entreaties to escape with him, and on the entry of Mephistopheles she sinks back, dead, the heavenly choir proclaiming her entrance into the angelic realms. Faust's love adventures are not yet ended, however. In Act 4 he is found in ancient Greece, where he is enthralled by the beauty and witchery of Helen of Troy. In spite of the intensity of this passion, however, Faust has failed to find perfect satisfaction in life; and in the epilogue, which takes place in his laboratory, on his deathbed, he is anticipating the peaceful joys of the celestial life. Mephistopheles is still his constant companion and tempter, and even though his victim is dying he once more urges him to further paths of evil. For answer, Faust lays hold of his Bible, declaring the Sacred Book shall be his guide; and upon his voice rising in a passionate appeal for heavenly assistance, his prayers are answered, and as he falls back lifeless the angelic choir is again heard announcing his reception into their midst, and the defeat of the Evil One.

24. THE GOLDEN CROSS

Opera in Two Acts By Ignaz Brüll

Libretto By Mosenthal, adapted from the comedy of same title by Brazier and Melville

First Produced Berlin, December, 1875

Chief Characters Christine, Thérèse, Goutrau l'Ancré, Bombardon, Nicholas

THE action takes place in the village of Méln in the time of Napoleon. When the piece opens, Nicholas, the owner of the village mill, is about to celebrate his marriage with his cousin, Thérèse, when the soldiery appear, and the sergeant, Bom-bardon, summons him to join the ranks, since his name is on the list of conscripts. The bride and bridegroom-elect are in despair that their happiness should be thus shattered, and they entreat the sergeant to pass Nicholas this time; and their pleadings are supported passionately by the bridegroom's sister, Christine, who has a great love for her brother, who has always been her companion and charge. Bombardon, however, refuses to let Nicholas off unless he can find a substitute; and then Christine declares that she will marry any one who will offer himself in the place of her brother, giving him a golden cross from her neck to be given to the volunteer as a pledge for his identity on returning from the wars. Amongst the visitors to the village is a young French noble-man, Goutrau l'Ancré, who, hearing of the difficulty, and being touched by the beauty and grief of Christine, offers himself as the required substitute, and takes the golden cross as the pledge, setting out with the conscripts at once, without having been seen by the delighted and grateful sister. The scene then closes with the wedding of Nicholas and Thérèse, amidst the rejoicings of their friends. In Act 2 a couple of years have gone by, and Goutrau l'Ancré, having been severely wounded, has been brought with some other wounded comrades to Méln, where he has been very tenderly nursed back to health by Christine, who has now fallen in love with him, and whose love he returns. Christine, however, sadly tells him that she regards herself as bound to the stranger who took her golden cross in pledge; but she is filled with joy when Goutrau declares himself to be the volunteer who offered himself as substitute for her brother, though he no longer possesses the golden cross, which he gave to a companion on the battlefield when he believed himself to be dying. Their love-making is interrupted by the entrance of Bombardon, who, thinking Goutrau to be dead, presents the golden cross to the beautiful village maiden, whom he hopes thus to secure for his wife. Christine is now torn by doubts of the hand-some stranger whom she has nursed back to life and loves so dearly, fearing that he has not told her the truth, and that Bombardon himself must have been the volunteer; but when Goutrau comes up to him with friendly greetings, the sergeant at once withdraws his claim, and honestly bears witness to the fact that the young nobleman is indeed the volunteer who took Christine's golden cross in pledge, and went to the wars as her brother's substitute. Thus all ends well, and the happy Christine and her lover are united.

25. CIRCE

Grand Opera in Three Acts with Prologue By August Bungert

Libretto adapted from Homer's "Odyssey." By August Bungert

First Produced Dresden, January, 1898

Chief Characters Circe, Pallas Athene, Eos, Odysseus, Periander, Helios, Hermes

THIS is the first part of Bungert's "Tetralogy," having a very noble subject in Homer's "Odyssey." It opens with a prologue showing the gods on Olympus, where Pallas Athene and Hermes (Mercury) plead for the welfare of the great hero, Odysseus (Ulysses) whose strength and courage

are about to be tried against great odds; but Zeus (Jupiter) declares that the gods have ordained every event in a man's life, yet he gives the pleaders permission to watch over the hero and assist him in his adventures. As the gods vanish from sight, Odysseus, the King of Ithaca who is still wandering hither and thither on his return home after the fall of Troy is found in the island of Sicily, where a dramatic representation of his cunning victory over the giant Cyclops, Polyphemus, is shown. This ends the prologue, and Act I finds us in the island of Aea, before Circe's palace, which is placed in most exquisitely beautiful and sensuous surroundings. The lovely enchantress herself is seen surrounded by her nymphs, but dis-contented with life, none of her many lovers having satisfied her longing for the love of a true hero. In her disgust at their many faults and failings, finding them to possess the aspirations or habits of the lower animals, she has transformed them by her magic arts into the forms of the various beasts they most represent; and, mingled with the enticing music of the nymphs, comes the sound of gruntings and bellowings from the background, where her transformed suitors are herded. As night falls she retires within; and presently Odysseus appears, having come in search of his companions, who, having landed on the island, have been transformed by the enchantress. Knowing the hero to be in danger, Hermes appears and gives him a magic plant, bidding him dip it into the draught which will be offered him by the temptress. When the lovely Circe presently appears, the hero is overcome by her sensuous beauty; and the enchantress, overjoyed at the sight of the world-renowned hero, makes advances to him at once, and offers him to drink from her magic cup of forgetfulness. Odysseus, however, hears the beast-like sounds of his transformed companions, and demands their release as he quaffs the draught, into which he has dipped the herb given him by Hermes. This renders the enchantress's spell unavailing; and still retaining his manly shape, the hero forces Circe to restore his companions to their rightful forms once more. This she does; but, nevertheless, her dazzling beauty and numberless seductive arts overcome the hero at last, and he becomes enthralled by a resistless passion for her. His restored companions are horrified at the lapse of their noble leader; and Periander, his chief friend and adviser, received from him a mortal wound for importuning him to escape the wiles of the enchantress, which have held him captive for a year. As his friend lies dying, however, Odysseus's conscience is at last touched; and, full of remorse for the deed of violence he has done, and for his infidelity to his fair wife, Penelope, the hero is now able to cast off the bonds of Circe, and helps his companions to prepare the vessel for the continuing of their journey. Circe is in despair, and calls on her father, Helios, the sun-god, to assist her; and between them they again overcome the hero for a while, wounding him, and sending him to visit the departed heroes in Hades, the under-world, who taunt him for being the slave of Circe, and finally fall upon him in their anger. He is, however, rescued by the enchantress, who carries him back to her garden, where she tenderly restores him to health once more. As he awakens from his healing sleep, however, Odysseus regains his self-respect with his renewed strength, and repulses his enslaver with horror; and in spite of all her passionate entreaties and enticing blandishments he breaks from her embraces and rushes to the shore to join his waiting companions. The frantic Circe calls on her father again for assistance; but the sun-god this time declares that Zeus has forbidden him to harm the hero. Then, as Odysseus and his companions depart to their ship and sail away, Helios comforts the despairing Circe by telling her that she shall have a hero-son, who shall be worthy of the great father whose loss she now mourns; and the scene closes with the enchantress sinking back, contented, whilst the song of the departing heroes is heard in the distance.

26. ODYSSEUS' RETURN

Grand Opera in Three Acts with Prologue By August Bungert

Libretto, adapted from Homer's "Odyssey."

First Produced Dresden, December, 1896

Chief Characters Penelope, Pallas Athene, Odysseus, Hyperion, Telemachus, Eurymachus, Laertes, Eumaeus

THIS dramatic opera forms the second part of Bungert's great "Tetralogy," of which the first part is entitled " Circe." The prologue opens with the song of Pallas Athene, who is still watching over the hero, Odysseus, who is even now returning to his home, unknown to all his friends. As the goddess vanishes, we see the importunate suitors of Penelope in the royal palace of Ithaca, who are hatching a plot to kill the Queen's hero son, Telemachus, whom they regard as their enemy, since he stoutly defends his mother from their undesired attentions. Telemachus, believing that his long-lost father is not far away, sets forth in a vessel to search for him in the waters round about; and before leaving he begs his friend, Hyperion, to remain behind in his place to protect the Queen, having no knowledge of the fact that Hyperion is himself in love with the gentle and virtuous Penelope. The first act takes, us to a lonely part of the coast of Ithaca, where Odysseus has landed after his many years' absence, and has fallen into a deep slumber, during which he is visited by Pallas Athene, who leaves at his side a beggar's cloak, in which she had enveloped herself. On awakening, and with joy recognising his whereabouts, Odysseus wraps himself in the beggar's cloak, and approaching an old man, whom he finds to be his own old steward, Eumaeus, he learns from him how the Queen Penelope is closely persecuted by her undesired lovers, and how her son Telemachus is even now being attacked by the conspirators, as he is about to set forth in search of his lost father. Odysseus is full of joy on hearing that his beloved Penelope has remained faithful to him all these years; and, still preserving his incognito, he makes the old man promise to lead him to the palace that night. Whilst they are speaking, the vessel of Telemachus, closely pursued by another filled with his enemies, draws near to the shore; and seeing his brave young son likely to be overpowered by superior numbers, the returned hero dashes into the water, springs on to the youth's boat, and carries him back to the shore in safety. Here they are met by the hero's aged father, Laertes, who prophesies the return of the long-lost King; and Odysseus, overcome with joy at finding his father yet alive, but still not choosing to reveal himself, announces that he will overcome the persecutors of the unprotected Queen. In Act 2 Penelope is found bemoaning her sad fate, and im-ploring the gods to protect her brave young son, whom she knows to be in danger. She is not left to her prayers long; for first Hyperion enters, and passionately declares his love for her. On being checked by the harassed Queen, however, he tells her of the plot to kill her son; and whilst the distracted Penelope is bewailing her helplessness, the impatient suitors all crowd into her chamber, insolently demand-ing that she shall choose one of them as her husband, since they declare that Odysseus will never return. In order to keep them at a distance, even until now, Penelope has been weaving a robe for old Laertes for many years, having given out that when it was done she would indeed choose one of them; but this excuse will now no longer satisfy them, since they declare she unravels at night all the web she has been weaving during the day-time. Seeing that her ruse is discovered, Penelope can no longer keep her unwelcome lovers back, who declare they will cer-tainly kill Telemachus unless she yields to them. At this moment, however, Telemachus enters with Odysseus, who still retains his disguise.

On being bidden by the stranger to save her son from murder, Penelope now declares she will give her hand to whosoever shall be victorious in the contests on the morrow at the Festival of Apollo. During the struggle, Hyperion has been mortally wounded; and as he raves of his love for the Queen during his last moments, Odysseus has a doubt of Penelope's seem-ing virtue; but on her presently entreating his assist-ance against her insolent suitors, and seeing that she has no love for any but her absent husband, he is satisfied, and promises her happiness on the morrow. He will not yet reveal himself; and on the next day, at the Festival of Apollo, the contests take place. Penelope appears, and in accordance with her word given the night before, declares that she will give herself to the competitor who shall succeed in bending her lost husband's mighty bow and shoot an arrow with it through a range of twelve rings. The suitors, all eager for the prize, try in turn; but none of them are able to bend the bow of the great hero. Then the beggar-stranger takes up the weapon, and, bend-ing it without effort, shoots the arrow clearly through the twelve rings; and amidst the acclamations of the assembled people he casts aside his humble garment and stands before them all in glittering armour, revealing himself at last as their long-lost King. But Odysseus will not acknowledge their welcome until he has punished those who have insulted his wife and conspired against his son; and he does not rest until he has slain all his enemies, who are filled with dis-may at sight of the returned hero, and with awe at the mystical figure of Pallas Athene, who appears in the air beside him. When justice has been done, how-ever, then Odysseus folds his beloved and faithful wife to his heart; and Athene bestows upon the reunited pair her Divine blessing.

27. ODYSSEUS' DEATH

Grand Opera in Three Acts By August Bungert

Libretto, adapted from Homer's "Odyssey." By August Bungert

First Produced Dresden

Chief Characters Despoina, Circe, Penelope, Odysseus, Telegonos, Telemachus

THIS is the finale of Bungert's great "Tetralogy." It opens in Circe's garden, where Telegonos, the hero-son of the enchantress and Odysseus, is amusing himself with a lion. He is now fifteen years of age, and eager to hear about his hero-father, of whom Circe has often spoken but never revealed his true identity. On now hearing from her for the first time the story of her love for the hero, and his subsequent desertion of her in favour of his own land and fair wife, Penelope, Telegonos announces his intention to take up the cudgels on his mother's behalf, and to bring back his truant father to her side once more; and bidding the enchantress farewell he sets forth on his quest. The next scene takes us to Thesprotia, where Odysseus has just returned from gaining the victory over the followers of the importunate suitors he had slain on his return from his wanderings; and here he is distressed to find that his son, Telemachus, has fallen in love with the captured Queen of Thesprotia, Despoina, an unscrupulous and dangerously fascinating woman, who has quickly gained a hold on the youth by her bewildering witcheries. Odysseus, however, orders her to be conveyed to the Grove of Dodona, there to have her fate decided by the famous oracle. Here, to the surprise and anger of Odysseus, the Pleiades appear, forbidding the execution of Despoina, who must be left for Zeus to deal with; and when the angry King still declares that the captive shall die, the mystical three prophesy that the dis-obedient mortal shall come to an untimely end and be slain by his own son. In the second act, Telegonos is seen landing at Ithaca, where, with his soldiers, he is prepared to seek out his father and demand satisfaction from him; and here he is met

by Despoina, who has managed to escape from prison, and longs for vengeance against her captors. She makes use of her arts of fascination on the young Telegonos, with whom she has now fallen in love; and her love is very quickly reciprocated by the youth, who permits her to accompany him at the head of his company of soldiers, and lead him to the royal forces. Telemachus has meanwhile become reconciled to his father, and together they meet the stranger who has dared to invade their land. Odysseus is struck by the resemblance of the young stranger to the enchantress, Circe, but knows not that he is indeed his own son; and Telegonos meets him boldly, and is quickly Overcoming him when the treacherous Despoina, fearing lest his strength should fail him before slaying her hated enemy, picks up a fallen sword and stabs the aged hero in the back. As Odysseus falls dying, she reveals to the combatants that they are father and son. Telegonos is filled with horror at finding that he has thus been enticed to fight with his own father and to innocently afford opportunity for this unscrupulous woman to murder him; and he is about to rush upon her with his weapon, all love for her having vanished at this knowledge of her evil character, when Despoina, having gained her revenge on Odysseus, and seeing that Telegonos' love for her has departed, thrusts her own dagger into her heart, and drops dead at his feet. Telegonos bends in grief over his dying father; and when Penelope and Telemachus also presently join them, he confesses for the first time the truth of his relations with and enslavement by Circe, the story of which he has kept from Penelope all these years that she might always believe him faithful. The two brothers join hands; and after bestowing his blessing upon them and the faithful and weeping Penelope the famous hero dies peacefully.

28. LORELEY

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By A. Catalani

Libretto By Carlo D "Ormeville and A. Zanardini

First Produced Turin, 1890

Chief Characters Loreley, Anna of Rehberg, Walter, Hermann, Rudolph (Margrave of Biberich)

THE scene is laid on the banks of the Rhine, about the beginning of the sixteenth century. Walter, the young Lord of Oberwesel, is betrothed and about to be wedded to Anna of Rehberg, niece of Rudolph, Margrave of Biberich; but in spite of the fair looks and purity of his bride-elect, he is unhappy, being weighed down by a heavy secret. One evening, when strolling alone beside the river, he met a strange maiden, Loreley, an orphan, who possessed wonderful beauty and powers of fascination; and the pair mutually fell desperately in love with each other. They met frequently, and enjoyed their secret love to the full, Walter never once speaking of his betrothal to the Margrave's niece; and the innocent Loreley took joy in her handsome lover without suspecting that he was bound to another. As the opera opens, it is the eve of the nuptials; and Walter, torn between his love for Loreley and his duty to Anna, in distraction sends for his friend, Hermann, a neighbouring baron, and telling him the whole story entreats his advice. Hermann himself loves Anna, and would fain wed with her; but knowing that she has set her affections on Walter, he persuades the latter to keep his word to the high-born maiden, and to renounce the unknown and mysterious Loreley. When Loreley presently appears, therefore, after a last passionate love-scene with her, during which his resolution nearly gives way before her magnetic charm, he tells her the truth that he is betrothed to the Lady Anna, and that their wedding will take place in a few hours. As he rushes away, distracted, Loreley, overcome with grief, falls in a swoon; whilst Hermann,

already regretting that he has given up Anna to one who loves her not, dedicates his soul to the God of the Rhine, whom he entreats to avenge his loved one's wrongs. When Loreley awakens from her swoon, she calls upon the Rhine nymphs and spirits of the air to help in avenging her honour and her broken heart; and they tell her that by con-senting to become the bride of the Rhine King, she shall be given the marvellous, unearthly beauty of a siren, who shall wound her faithful lover with new pangs of love, which he will be utterly unable to resist. Loreley consents to the terms, and flings herself into the Rhine, from which she presently emerges, transformed, with the glorious alluring beauty of the fabled Rhine siren, combing her long flowing golden locks with a golden comb, and await-ing her time of vengeance. In Act 2 the wedding revels have already commenced. Hermann, anxious to save Anna from a loveless union, tells her that Walter is not true to her; but Anna refuses to believe his words, and gladly goes forth to meet her betrothed, whom she passionately loves. The wed-ding procession proceeds towards the church; but suddenly a strange, brilliant light is seen in the sky, and Loreley appears in all the glory of her new and radiant siren beauty. She sings an alluring song of love to Walter, who, unable to resist her invitation, tears himself away from Anna's detaining arms, and wildly follows the lovely enchantress, as she moves before him. When Loreley reaches the river, however, she vanishes into the water, and Walter is left on the bank; whilst Anna, overcome with the shock of realising the faithlessness of her betrothed, sinks back into the Margrave's arms, dead. In Act 3 the funeral procession of Anna passes by; and Walter, on learning of the tragedy he has wrought, falls in a swoon on the river bank. As he recovers, Loreley appears on her rock, still singing her song of love and invitation. Now that she has regained her lover, her desire for vengeance is at an end; and she forgives him, eager to enjoy his love once more. But as she approaches him, and yields to his passionate em-braces, the voices of the Rhine nymphs and spirits of the air call out to her to remember her vow of vengeance and solemn pledge to become the bride of the Rhine King; and Loreley, with a last caress, sorrowfully tears herself from her lover's arms, and mounts her rock once more, as Walter, overcome with despair as he realises that she is lost to him for ever, flings himself into the river to meet his death.

29. LOUISE

Opera in Four Acts By Gustave Charpentier

First Produced Paris, 1900

Chief Characters Louise, Her Mother, Julien, and the Father of Louise

THE scene is laid in Paris, at the present time, and gives a very true picture of Bohemian life in the Gay City. Louise is a beautiful young girl, engaged in a dressmaking establishment, and is the daughter of poor but honest working folk. Julien, a young and romantic artist, falls in love with her; and, making her acquaintance, soon gains her affection in return. When he visits her parents, however, he receives a cold reception; for the father and mother of Louise doubt the gay young gentleman's intentions, and will not give their consent to his intercourse with their cherished daughter. Julien, however, will not give up his sweetheart; and in Act 2 he waylays her on her way to business and implores her to give up her hard work, and to retire with him to a little home which he has provided. Louise, in spite of her love, at first makes a firm stand against this temptation, for she knows what grief her fall would bring upon her parents; but when Julien follows her constantly to the shop where she is employed, and her companions tease and cast

insults upon her, she is unable to resist the tender invitation of her lover, and at last goes away with him. In Act 3 Louise and Julien are living happily together at Montmartre; and Louise is soon engaged in a vortex of pleasures with a merry com-pany of true Parisian Bohemians, who crown her as their Queen of Revels. Here, however, she is visited by her mother, who begs her to return to her father, who has fallen ill with grief and shame at her downfall; and Louise, filled with remorse, returns to her home. She tries to forget her recent gay life; but she cannot conquer her love for Julien. When, therefore, her father reproaches her sternly for her errors, and becomes violent in his anger, bidding her leave his sight, she is alarmed at such unaccustomed harshness, and remembering only the tenderness of Julien, she rushes out into the gloom of the night, and hastens back to the protection of her lover.

30. THE WATER CARRIER

Opera Comique in Three Acts. By Maria Luigi Carlo Zenobio Salvatore Cherubini

Libretto By Bouilly

First Produced Paris, January, 1800

Chief Characters Marcelline, Michele (The Water Carrier), Count Armand, Antonio

THE scene is laid near Paris, in the time of Cardinal Mazarin, who has a grudge against a young nobleman, Count Armand, whose estates and titles he has confiscated, and whom he has also proscribed. The Count and his wife, being closely hunted by the Cardinal's followers, are anxious to escape from Paris; but as the city gates are constantly watched, and they have no pass, they are in despair. They have a friend, however, in the water-carrier, Michele, who is grateful to the Count for past favours; and when the opera opens, he is arranging a plan for the escape of his noble friends. His son, Antonio, is just about to set off to Genesse, to wed his sweetheart, Angeline; and his sister, Marcelline, is to accompany him to join in the wedding festivities. Old Michele, however, persuades his daughter to forego her pleasure, and to give up her pass to the Count's wife, Costanza, who, by disguising herself in Marcelline's clothes, may thus pass out of the city as the water-carrier's daughter, under the charge of Antonio, who also has a pass. This part of the plan succeeds well, and the Countess, thus disguised, passes out of the city unquestioned, and awaits her husband at a certain retired spot. The Count's escape is next planned by the ingenious water-carrier, who arranges for him to be placed in an empty water-barrel, in which he is wheeled by some trusty com-panions disguised as carriers through the city gates, also without question. Outside the city, however, he soon meets with adventures. He has no sooner greeted his beloved wife, when a company of soldiers are seen approaching; and he has just time to hide in a hollow tree, arranging that Costanza shall clap her hands when all danger has passed. Costanza thinks herself safe, being still disguised as the humble Marcelline; but the soldiers, suspecting her, seize her roughly, and her cries of alarm instantly bring forth the hidden Armand to her assistance. He is at once recognised as the proscribed Count, and is about to be dragged back to the city, when Michele, the water-carrier, appears, bringing the welcome news that the Cardinal has ceased his persecution, and is friendly-disposed towards the Count once more, having restored to him his estates and freedom; and as the soldiers release their prisoner, Armand and Costanza embrace, and rejoice because their troubles are ended.

31. ADRIENNE LECOUVREUR

Opera in Four Acts By Francesco Cilea

Libretto, adapted from Scribe and Legouve's Play by A. Colautti

Chief Characters Adrienne Lecouvreur, Princess de Bouillon, Maurice (Comte de Saxe), Prince de Bouillon, Abbé de Chazeuil, Michonnet

THE scene is laid in Paris during the year 1730. Act 1 takes place in the green-room of the Comédie Française, where Michonnet, the stage manager, is being driven nearly frantic by the constant calls on his attention and services by the various artistes, who are dressing for the play which is about to be performed. The Prince de Bouillon and his friend, the Abbé de Chazeuil, enter. The former, though elderly and devoted to the study of chemistry, is paying court to the gay actress, La Duclos; and the Abbé, being a frivolous gossip and intriguer, encourages and assists him in his amour. They stay to give a cordial welcome to the beautiful and talented actress, Adrienne Lecouvreur, who now appears; and then they stroll off. Michonnet has long cherished a deep and sincere love for this beautiful actress; and he now approaches her, intending to declare his passion. His courage fails him, however; and on presently learning that she has lost her heart to another, he decides to suppress his own love and to serve her as a true friend instead. Maurice de Saxe, the lover of Adrienne, now enters; and a happy scene and mutual declaration of love ensues between the pair. As Adrienne is called away to the stage, they arrange to meet again after the performance; and the fair actress places in the hand of Maurice a bunch of violets she has been wearing, as a token of her love. Although Adrienne imagines Maurice to be a plain lieutenant in the army, he is in reality the Comte de Saxe, and holds a most important military and political position; and for diplomatic reasons, he is often compelled to accept the amorous attentions and favours of certain fair and intriguing ladies of high rank, with whom he is a great favourite. On returning to the green-room, the Prince de Bouillon and the Abbé intercept a note addressed to Maurice, and written by the actress La Duclos on behalf of the Princess de Bouillon, who has conceived a violent passion for him, and desires him to visit her at her villa that night, ostensibly for political reasons. The Prince, recognising the handwriting as that of La Duclos, and imagining that she is carrying on an amour with the popular Maurice, becomes jealous; and considering himself slighted, he determines to interrupt the appointment by visiting the villa himself and bringing a party to supper there. He therefore allows the letter to be handed to Maurice, who, on reading it, is annoyed; but, thinking it may prove of some political importance to him, he decides to keep the appointment, and so sends a note of excuse to Adrienne. The latter is much upset and disappointed on receiving his message; but when the Prince presently invites her to join his supper-party at the villa, promising to introduce her to the celebrated Comte de Saxe, she gladly accepts, thinking to interest the great man in her lover's favour, still not knowing them to be one and the same person. Act 2 takes place at the villa of the Princess de Bouillon, who awaits the arrival of Maurice. When he appears she reproaches him for his recent neglect; and, seeing the bunch of violets he is wearing, she jealously accuses him of loving another. Maurice, wishing to propitiate the lady, gallantly presents her with the flowers; and he then has great difficulty in checking the audacious love-making of the enamoured Princess. He is, however, relieved by the arrival of the Prince with his supper guests; whereupon the Princess, terrified lest she should be discovered indulging in a secret amour, takes refuge in an adjoining ante-room, which is in complete darkness. The Prince and the Abbé, however, catch a glimpse of her vanishing skirts; and, imagin-

ing the lady to be La Duclos, they determine to keep her a prisoner in the dark room, in revenge for her fickleness. When Adrienne appears, and is presented to the Comte de Saxe, she is delighted to discover that he is her own lover; and Maurice, anxious to protect the Princess's good name, manages to whisper to Adrienne that it is not the actress Duclos who is hiding in the ante-room, but another lady, who, for diplomatic reasons, he wishes to remain unknown, and he begs her to guard the door of the room. Adrienne agrees to do so; and presently she gets an opportunity to enter the anteroom, having arranged with Michonnet, who has accompanied her, to provide a way of escape for the lady through the garden. The two women now meet, but in the darkness are unable to learn each other's identity; and the Princess becomes furiously jealous on discovering that her rival is so closely in the confidence of Maurice as to be sent by him to her assistance. She nevertheless takes advantage of the means offered for escape, and so succeeds in avoiding discovery by her husband. Michonnet presently returns to Adrienne a bracelet which the unknown lady dropped on her way through the garden; and, on learning that Maurice departed with her, she is filled with grief. Act 3 takes place in the salon of the Princess, who is giving a grand fête, at which Maurice is present. On asking for some powder for her face, the Abbé brings her a box containing powder, which the Prince hastily snatches away, declaring it to be a deadly poison from his chemical laboratory. On hearing of its fatal power, the Princess is strangely interested, and determines to secure some of the poison for the destruction of her rival, whose identity she does not yet know. During the entertainment, however, Adrienne Lecouvreur appears, having been engaged to recite; and then the Princess recognises the voice of the actress as that of the lady who helped her to escape from her recent awkward predicament, and on seeing the tender glances bestowed on her by Maurice she is filled with a raging jealousy. Her anger is increased when Adrienne selects as her recitation the great speech of " Phèdre," in which the latter denounces her hostess; and she determines on a speedy and terrible revenge. In Act 4 Adrienne is seen in her own home, very unhappy, because of Maurice's recent absence from her side. Michonnet, still her devoted friend and admirer, endeavours to comfort her; and some of her companions from the theatre enter to bring her birthday greetings, and to entreat her to return to the stage, which she has almost deserted of late. She promises to do so; and when they have gone, the devoted Michonnet presents her with a casket containing her own valuable jewels, which she had recently pledged to pay certain debts of Maurice's, and which the kindly manager has redeemed as a birthday gift. Another casket is now handed to her by a servant; and in this Adrienne finds the faded bunch of violets which she gave to Maurice, and, imagining its return to be the sign that he loves her no more, she is filled with despair, and presses the dead blossoms passionately to her lips. By this fatal caress, she brings death upon herself; for the violets have been sprinkled by the Princess de Bouillon with the deadly powdered poison made by her husband, and sent by her to her hated rival. When, therefore, Maurice himself presently enters to explain his unavoidable absence of late and to declare his still passionate love for her, he is horrified at the sudden deadly pallor and convulsive agony which seizes her; and, supporting her lovingly, he loudly calls for help. Michonnet and others rush in at his cries; but the beautiful Adrienne is past all human aid, and, with a last shuddering sigh, she expires in her lover's arms.

32. THE BARBER OF BAGDAD

Opera Comique in Two Acts. By Peter Cornelius
Libretto By the Composer

First Produced Weimar, December, 1858

Chief Characters Margiana, Bostana, Nouredin, Abdul Hassan (The Barber), The Cadi Baba Mustapha, The Caliph Haroun Alraschid

THE story of this amusing opera is adapted from the "Arabian Nights" story of the barber. Nouredin, a rich and handsome young man of Bagdad, has fallen so violently in love with Margiana, the beautiful daughter of the Cadi Baba Mustapha, that, knowing how strictly she is guarded, and, fearing his suit will be in vain, he has become ill with melancholy; and when the curtain rises he is discovered lying upon a couch, utterly disconsolate and exhausted with his love-sickness. He quickly revives, however, on receiving a visit from Bostana, the old nurse of Margiana, who comes to tell him that her young mistress returns his affection, and is willing to grant him an interview that evening, as the muezzin sounds, when her vigilant father will betake himself to the mosque for prayer. The young man is delighted at the news, and proceeds to array himself for the interview; and, having neglected his toilet during his attack of melancholy, he calls for a barber to be sent to him at once. The barber arrives, Abdul Hassan, a garrulous, meddlesome old gossip, whose chatter nearly drives the impatient lover frantic. The old chatterbox, declaring himself to be greatly versed in the arts of astrology, philosophy, and alchemy, begs the youth not to go forth from his house that day, since some misfortune threatens; and when Nouredin poo-poo's his remarks, he tries to detain him by long tales of his own brothers' mishaps in love, and by delaying the completion of his toilet. On learning the name of the young man's lady-love, the old dotard leaves his client with only one side of his head shaved, whilst he sings to him an impromptu love-song addressed to "Margiana"; and it is only by calling in his servants to his aid that Nouredin can complete his toilet and prevent the meddlesome barber from hindering him. Finally, he sets out for his promised interview; and the nonpiussed old barber, determined to see the end of this interesting love affair, follows him. In Act 2 the fair Margiana is found in her apartment with her father, who, informing her that he has promised her in marriage to an old friend of his own, shows her a trunk full of rich stuffs, jewels, and other gifts, which have been sent to her as gifts from the elderly bridegroom-elect. Margiana, thinking only of her secret lover, pretends to be pleased with the gifts, in order to prevent her father from suspecting that her heart is engaged elsewhere; and as the muezzin sounds for prayer, the Cadi departs to the mosque. No sooner has he gone than Nouredin appears; and the lovers have a very happy interview. Their love-making, however, is interrupted by the unexpected return of the Cadi, who has come back to beat a disobedient slave; and, there being no means of escape, Nouredin is thrust into the trunk containing his rival's gifts. The old barber, hearing the cries of the slave who is being punished, thinks that Nouredin is being maltreated; and, having taken a real fancy to the young man, and wishing him to succeed in his love-making, he rouses the populace around, and brings an excited mob into the house of the Cadi, who is furious at the invasion, and accuses the intruders of having come thither for the purpose of stealing his daughter's treasures during his own absence. The commotion is so great that the Caliph Haroun Alraschid himself comes to inquire into the matter; whereupon the Cadi denounces the excited old barber as a robber, whilst the indignant Abdul accuses the chief magistrate of murdering his client, the young Nouredin. Upon the Cadi drawing attention to the trunk in which Margiana declares tearfully that her treasure lies, the Caliph commands his attendants to open the box; and, when the lid is removed, they discover therein the still form of the lover, who has fainted from excitement and want of air. The old barber, however, quickly restores him once more, by singing to him the love-song he had composed to Margiana; and the truth of the situation dawns upon all. The Caliph, feeling sympathy for the dismayed

lovers, asks the irate father to consent to their union; and finally the Cadi relents and bestows his blessing upon the now happy pair. The Caliph then declares that the amusing old barber shall become his chief story-teller, and the opera ends with the royal invitation to all present to feast and dance at the wedding of Nouredin and his lady-love.

33. L'ENFANT PRODIGUE

Lyrical Opera in One Act By Claude Debussy

Libretto By E. Guinard

First Produced Paris, 1884

Chief Characters Lia, Azaël, Simeon

THE story is based on the Biblical parable of " The Prodigal Son," omitting the incident of the brother's complaint, and ending with the father's forgiveness of his repentant son. The setting is a peaceful village scene near the Lake of Genesareth: From the distance comes the sound of the happy voices of merrymakers, who are singing joyful songs in celebration of a summer revel; and, contrasted with them is the drooping figure of Lia, who has left the gay scene to seek a quiet spot where she may weep undisturbed. She still mourns the loss of her best-beloved child, Azaël, the Prodigal Son, who left his home long since to indulge in wild excesses and extravagant pleasures, and is now an outcast wanderer. She constantly prays for his return, and has already forgiven him for his wrongdoing. As she weeps alone, her husband, Simeon, appears, and tenderly bids her forget her grief; and when the happy youths and maidens enter with their garlands of flowers and offerings of fruit she follows in their train with her lord. As the last of the revellers depart Azaël himself emerges from the trees and bushes where he has been hiding, and gazes upon the scene of his happy childhood with a breaking heart. He is clad in rags an outcast, indeed worn out and utterly exhausted with suffering and weary wanderings; and, after giving vent to a passionate outburst, in which he blames himself for his folly and sin, and longs for the love of his parents and the peace of his home once more, he falls to the ground unconscious, unable to bear such sad thoughts. Presently, Lia returns, having escaped again from the jarring mirth of the merrymakers; and, seeing the prostrate figure, she approaches, full of compassion for one who is an outcast as is her own erring child but, when she see that the new-coiner is her beloved Azael, she is full of joy at his return. Her joy is changed to despair, however, when, on beholding his pallor, she believes him to be dead; but Azaël presently recovers, and is filled with happiness at the loving greeting of his mother. The merrymakers now enter with Simeon, and Lia brings forward the outcast, and bids all greet him as her long-lost son. Simeon, however, hesitates, as his repentant child kneels at his feet and asks forgiveness; but he is not long able to resist the promptings of his paternal heart nor the appeals of the eager Lia, and he presently folds the prodigal in his arms with great joy. He then bids his followers give welcome to the wanderer and kill the fatted calf and make merry in his honour; and the scene ends with renewed revels and a song of thanksgiving for the return of the repentant sinner.

34. PELLEAS AND MELISANDE

Tragic Opera in Five Acts By Claude Debussy

Libretto, adapted from the lyrical drama of Maurice Maeterlinck

First Produced Paris, 1902

Chief Characters Melisande, Queen Genevieve, Pelleas, Golaud, King Arkel, Little Yniold

THE curtain rises upon a charming sylvan scene, where, beside a well in the midst of the forest, sits a lovely maiden, weeping. This is Melisande, a mysterious maiden, who has been forsaken by her friends and protectors; and she is presently accosted by a wandering huntsman, Prince Golaud, who, attracted by her loveliness, enters into conversation with her, endeavouring to discover her antecedents. The beautiful stranger, however, can give him no information beyond the fact that her name is Melisande, and that she is a friendless wanderer. Golaud tells her of his royal home, of his grandfather, King Arkel, his mother, Queen Genevieve, of his sick and suffering father, his beloved younger brother, Pelleas, and his little son, Yniold he himself being a widower; and he succeeds in somewhat comforting Melisande, with whom he falls in love, and makes his wife. Melisande, however, though grateful for her husband's love and protection, has not yet experienced true love herself; but when Golaud brings his mysterious bride home, and she meets his brother Pelleas, the tragedy begins. No sooner have Pelleas and Melisande beheld each other than a mutual and passionate love grows up within their hearts; and Golaud's jealousy is soon aroused. Melisande, however, in spite of her joy in the presence of Pelleas, firmly resolves to remain true to her husband, and endeavours to keep out of the way of the man she loves. In Act 2 Pelleas and Melisande meet beside an old fountain; and in her agitation on hearing the words of love and devotion which fall from the ardent Pelleas, she drops her betrothal ring into the water, and it is lost. She is full of fear for the wrath of Golaud, which indeed falls upon her when she returns. Golaud has met with a slight accident whilst out hunting during her absence; and when he hears that she has lost the ring he gave her, he is furious and commands her to seek for it, bidding Pelleas accompany her for he is already jealous and suspicious of his brother, and seeks proof of the latter's love for Melisande. The wretched pair therefore once more deliberately thrust in temptation's way depart to the water grotto, not daring to offend Golaud further by telling him that the ring is beyond recovery. The lovers still speak with each other at intervals, though they avoid actual meetings; and on one occasion when Melisande leans forth from her chamber window in answer to the call of Pelleas, her beautiful long hair falls down and envelops in a golden cloud the delirious Pelleas, who kisses the shining locks passionately. This interview is interrupted by Golaud; and Melisande now has to undergo the petty persecutions of her jealous husband, who even becomes violent at times, twining her hair about her body, and terrifying her by his outbursts of passionate love. Pelleas, fearing for the safety of his beloved one, pleads with his brother to be more gentle with Melisande, whose quickly failing health alarms him; but in a violent scene Golaud accuses him of treachery and Melisande of infidelity. In order to procure definite proofs of his suspicions, he forces little Yniold, his young son by his first wife, to watch the actions of the pair. In Act 4 Golaud follows Melisande to the forest fountain, where she has arranged to meet Pelleas for the last time, to bid him farewell, having resolved to see him no more; and here he interrupts their sorrowful and passionate interview, and in a paroxysm of wild jealousy springs upon his brother from behind and slays him. In Act 5 Melisande is seen on her death-bed, after the birth of her child; and here at last she gathers up her failing strength, and convinces her husband of her unflinching fidelity, declaring that her unfortunate love for his brother was innocent; and as Golaud sinks at her feet, overcome with remorse and grief, she expires.

35. THE KING HAS SAID IT

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Léon Délibes

Libretto By Edmond Gondinet

First Produced Paris, 1873

Chief Characters Javotte, Agathe, Chimène, Marquise de Montcontour, Benoit, Miton, Marquis de Montcontour, Marquis de Flarembel, Marquis de la Blulette

THE scene is laid in a château not far from Versailles. The old Marquis de Montcontour is very excited because he is at last to have an audience with Louis XIV., having obtained the coveted honour by being fortunate enough to capture an escaped parrot belonging to Madame de Maintenon. After practising elaborate court bows for some time, he 'departs'; and then there is a pretty love scene between the young lady's waiting-maid, Javotte, and her sweetheart, Benoit, a young peasant, who is eager to enter the Marquis's service, which the merry soubrette promises to arrange with Miton, an old dancing-master, who presently arrives to give a lesson to the four lovely daughters of the house. The lesson proceeds; but in the midst of it the lovers of the two elder girls, Agathe and Chimène, enter through the window. These are the young Marquis de Flarembel and the Marquis de la Blulette; and as they commence a declaration of Jove to the girls, their mother, the Marquise, enters with two elderly suitors whom she has selected for them, the one a Baron the other a rich financier. The clandestine lovers hide themselves for a short time behind the wide-hooped skirts of the young ladies; but they are discovered at last, and then the angry Marquise packs off the four girls at once to a neighbouring convent, to be out of harm's way. The old Marquis now returns from his royal interview, being in a great flutter because the King has commanded him to present his son at court on a certain day; and not daring to inform His Majesty that he has made a mistake, since he has no son, but only four daughters, the old lord is greatly distressed, declaring that he must present a son at the next audience, since "the King has said it!" The dancing-master suggests a way out of the difficulty by offering the peasant sweetheart of Javotte as a substitute for the imaginary heir; and he promises to transform the young Benoit into a gay cavalier within ten days. The old Marquis is delighted at this way out of the difficulty; and the pleased Benoit proves such an apt pupil, that he soon has the grace and bearing of a haughty young aristocrat, and even disdains his humble sweetheart, and lords it over his pretended parents. In Act 2 the bogus heir is shown in the midst of the extravagant pleasures he has taken to so readily; and a grand masked ball is in progress in his so-called father's grounds, to which he has invited everybody whose name is on the Court Almanac, many of whom have been deceased some time. Their relations are naturally hurt at such indiscriminate invitations being sent out; and the old Marquis has to smooth matters over. He has to endure other shocks, however, from the frolicsome Benoit, who plays many merry tricks on the amazed guests, committing constant outrages on the prim etiquette of the day. Finally the youth, hearing from the lovers of Agathe and Chimène that he has four charming "sisters" in the neighbouring convent, departs with De Flarembel and De la Blulette, and sets the girls free; and as the reunited sweethearts greet one another with great joy, the two elderly suitors withdraw in anger, vowing to be revenged on the boorish and indiscreet "brother." In the last act, Benoit appears, looking somewhat the worse for wear, having had a good frolic in the city, and fought with both the irate old suitors, in each case allowing his opponent to think him dead, though in reality he was unhurt; and presently the worried old Marquis is amazed to receive letters of condolence from the suitors, and also from the

King, expressing sympathy with him for the loss of his gay young son. Here, however, he now finds a way out of his difficulties; for his pretended son being reported dead, there is no need to keep up the tiresome deception any longer. Even Benoit himself is tired of the farce; and on obtaining permission to wed the charming Javotte, and receiving generous gifts of money from the young ladies for assisting them in their love-making, he is rendered happy. The King having bestowed a dukedom on the old Marquis in sympathy for his supposed loss, the delighted father feels he can afford to behave generously to his daughters; and the girls are therefore permitted to accept the gallant young suitors of their own choice.

36. LAKMÉ

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Léon Délibes

Libretto From the Poem of Edmond Gondinet and Philippe Gille

First Produced Paris, 1883

Chief Characters Lakmé, Gerald, Nilakantha, Frederick

THE action takes place in India, and opens in the sacred grounds of the Hindoo Priest, Nilakantha, who has an inveterate hatred for the English. During his absence, however, a party of English officers and ladies enter, out of curiosity, and are charmed with the lovely garden. They soon depart, with the exception of the officer, Gerald, who remains to make a sketch, in spite of the warnings of his friend, Frederick. Presently the priest's lovely daughter, Lakmé, enters, having come by the river; and as she steps from her boat, and encounters the admiring gaze of the fascinating Gerald, a mutual love springs within the hearts of the pair, who make friends, their passion rapidly increasing. They are interrupted, however, by the return of the priest, who is furious at the presence of a foreign stranger in his sacred grounds; and Gerald has to make a quick escape, being assisted by a sudden thunderstorm, which prevents Nilakantha from following. The angry priest, however, is determined to discover the intruder who has dared to make love to his daughter, and to be revenged upon him; and for this purpose, in the next act, we find him in the city market-place, with Lakmé, both disguised in the garments of beggars. He forces Lakmé to sing, hoping thus to attract the attention of her lover, should he be amongst the party of English who are buying in the bazaars; and this cunning plan succeeds, for Gerald, who is indeed present, instantly recognises the thrilling voice of the fair Hindoo maiden whose bower he had invaded, and he eagerly moves towards her. The outraged priest, however, by a dexterous movement, savagely stabs him in the back, and vanishes before the deed has been discovered. Act 3 takes place in a beautiful jungle whither Gerald has been brought by the loving Lakmé, and nursed back to health by the tender maiden with whom he passes his days in happy idleness during the healing of his wound. Lakmé, however, fearing lest his love may be but evanescent, goes forth to seek the magic water, which, according to a Hindoo superstition, will render the drinker of it eternally constant in love; and during her absence Gerald's resting-place is discovered by his English friends, who gladly welcome him, having believed him dead. His fellow-officer, Frederick, entreats him to return with them at once to his duty, being eager to entice him from the Hindoo maiden; and Gerald is at length persuaded to do so, remembering, with remorse, the fair English girl to whom he is betrothed. Lakmé now returns, and on learning that her lover is about to leave her, and that he will be lost to her for ever, she gathers some poisonous herbs, the deadly juices of which she drinks; and as Gerald hastens to her side for a last embrace, she dies in his arms. At this

moment,. the angry Nilakantha appears; but as the supposed wrath of his gods is appeased by one victim, he permits Gerald and his friends to depart, and remains alone to mourn his dead.

37. THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT

Opera Comique in Two Acts By Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto By St Georges and Bayard

First Produced Opéra Comique, Paris, Feb., 1840

Chief Characters Marie, Marchioness de Berkenfeld, Tony, Sergeant Sulpice

THE scene is laid in the Tyrol, where the French army is in occupation. Marie, a young vivandière attached to the Twenty-first Grenadiers, and toasted by them as " The Daughter of the Regiment," is believed to be an orphan, having been discovered when a tiny child upon the battlefield by Sergeant Sulpice, who took her in charge, he and his companions adopting her and bringing her up as their pet. The Sergeant, however, carefully preserves a letter which he found affixed to the child's clothes when he took her in charge, and which is addressed to the Marchioness de Berkenfeld. At the opening of the opera Marie is seen, a merry young vivandière, happy in her free life, and the darling of her many soldier " fathers," who all adore her. She has a sweetheart, a young Swiss named Tony, who has recently saved her life; and at the opening of the opera he has come to visit her. At first the Grenadiers take him for a spy; but on Marie explaining that he has saved her life, they gladly welcome him, and persuade him to join their ranks. On hearing that he loves their beloved "daughter," at the entreaties of Marie they give their consent to the betrothal of the pair; but this happy plan is frustrated by the arrival of a stranger, who is none other than the Marchioness de Berkenfeld, to whom Sergeant Sulpice hands the letter he had found on the deserted child. The Marchioness is filled with emotion on reading the letter, and announces that Marie is her own niece, who had been lost in infancy; and she therefore claims her from the regiment, refuses the humble Tony as an unsuitable husband, and declares that Marie shall accompany her to her château at once. Tony is in despair, but he cannot follow his sweetheart because he has joined the regiment and is bound to serve with them; and Marie, after taking a tearful farewell of her beloved soldier friends, is taken away by her new relation. In Act 2 Marie is seen in her aunt's château, attired as a fine young lady, and instructed in music and every fashionable accomplishment; but her heart is still with her old friends, and on receiving a visit from Sergeant Sulpice, she sings the old regimental songs with him, thereby greatly shocking her prim aunt. The Marchioness has arranged a marriage for her with a foolish young nobleman; and, after a great struggle, Marie is at last forced to consent, though her heart is still with her old sweetheart, Tony. At this moment, however, there is a sound of drums and fifes; and Marie is delighted to find that it is her beloved regiment, the Twenty-first, coming to see how their " daughter " is progressing. At their head is Tony, now a colonel, having risen rapidly by his gallant behaviour during the war; and after a loving greeting between the pair, the young colonel once more asks her hand in marriage, feeling that his new rank justifies such an action. The Marchioness, however, still refuses to permit her niece to wed one below her own rank; and when Marie refuses to obey her commands, and is arranging to elope with Tony, her stern guardian reveals to her the fact that she is in reality her own daughter, being the offspring of a marriage she contracted in early youth with an officer much below her in social rank, a mésalliance which she has kept hidden from all her relations and friends, the young man having died soon after their

union. Marie, feeling that filial duty compels her to obey her mother, now consents to renounce Tony; but seeing that she is quite broken-hearted the Marchioness at last relents, and gives her consent to the lovers' union. The company of aristocratic guests who had assembled to witness the marriage contract of the young nobleman retire in high disdain at this turn of affairs; but Marie and her beloved Tony embrace with great joy, and receive the blessings and good wishes of the gallant Twenty-first, who raise hearty cheers for the happiness of their cherished " daughter."

38. DON PASQUALE

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto adapted from Ser Marcantonio By Salvatore Gammerano

First Produced Paris, January, 1843

Chief Characters Norina, Don Pasquale, Ernesto, Dr Malatesta

THE action takes place in Rome, in the house of a rich old bachelor, Don Pasquale, who is angry with his nephew, Ernesto, because the latter refuses to accept a certain wealthy but uninteresting lady whom the uncle desires him to marry, declaring that he will wed none other than a pretty young lady named Norina, with whom he is in love. The Don has a friend, Dr Malatesta, whom he hopes will help him to manage his headstrong nephew; but Malatesta has also much affection for Ernesto, and determines to assist him to gain his heart's desire. He therefore visits Don Pasquale, and persuades him to punish his disobedient nephew by entering into a marriage himself; and he offers to provide the old bachelor with a bride in the person of a lady whom he describes as his sister, but who is in reality the young Norina, with whom Ernesto is in love. Don Pasquale thinks he will enjoy revenging himself on his nephew in this manner, and agrees to the project; and then Malatesta arranges a plot with Norina, whereby the latter shall enter into a bogus marriage contract with the old bachelor, afterwards leading him such a dance with wild extravagances and indiscreet behaviour that he will be only too glad to be rid of her, and to hand her over to his nephew. Everything is arranged; and Norina is brought to Don Pasquale's house, where, after some hesitation, she agrees to sign the contract on the arrival of the notary. The contract is of course a bogus one, and the notary a friend of the Doctor's, who has consented to masquerade in the character; but Don Pasquale thinks that matters are in regular order. Ernesto is amongst the witnesses, and though amazed at first on discovering his uncle's bride to be his own sweetheart, Norina, he is soon made acquainted with the true facts of the case, and joins in the plot willingly. After signing the bogus contract, Norina suddenly changes the quiet and demure air she has worn until now; and at once she proceeds to reveal herself in another character, as a woman of the wildest extravagance ordering expensive decorations for the house, and valuable clothes and jewellery for herself, and announcing her intention to pass a life of unbounded pleasure now that she is the wife of such a rich man. Don Pasquale is dumbfounded at her behaviour; and throughout the next scene, he is seen squirming under the absolute rule of the capricious and extravagant girl, suffering agonies of fear at her squandering of his wealth, and her unbounded coquetries with outside admirers. Finally, the limit of his patience is reached on discovering a love-letter amongst the flighty Norina's papers; and when Dr Malatesta comes in to condole with him on this ill-assorted contract, he declares he will turn the frivolous lady away from his house. Malatesta then paves the way for the revealing of his plot; and, the old Don, thoroughly wearied with his recent experiences, is only too glad to discover that he is not really contracted to such a troublesome

partner, and willingly hands her over to his delighted nephew. The lovers, having thus gained their wish, all ends happily.

39. THE ELIXIR OF LOVE

Opera Comique in Two Acts By Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto By Romani

First Produced Milan, 1832

Chief Characters Adina, Nemorino, Dulcamara, Belcore

THE scene is laid in an Italian village, where a pretty and coquettish country belle, Adina, is amusing herself by keeping on tenter-hooks her two sweethearts, Nemorino, an honest young farmer, and Belcore, a recruiting sergeant from the next village. After much lively flirtation, matters are brought to a climax by a visit to the village of a quack, from whom Nemorino purchases a bottle supposed to contain "the Elixir of Love," but which is in reality only ordinary wine, since the quack, Dulcamara, not possessing the drug asked for, still desires the simple peasant's money. Being eager to put the Elixir to a good test, Nemorino swallows the whole contents of the bottle; with the result that the wine makes him half-drunk, so that Adina is shocked at his unseemly behaviour, and declares she will marry Belcore. The marriage contract is to be signed next day; and Nemorino, in despair, seeks a second bottle of Elixir from the quack, permitting Belcore to enter him as a recruit, in order to secure the bonus money, wherewith he is able to pay for the drug, the effect of which being still merely strong wine is, however, to place him still further in the black books of his ladylove. Next day, the village girls, having discovered that Nemorino's uncle has died and left him a fortune a fact not yet known to the young man begin to pay great attention to the now eligible farmer, who is much surprised, but takes advantage of the circumstance to rouse the jealousy of Adina who has much to the chagrin of Belcore postponed the signing of the wedding contract until evening. Seeing the girl looking dejected, Dulcamara, struck with remorse, reveals to her his deception of her sweetheart; and Adina, pleased with this proof of the true love and sincerity of the young farmer, decides to reward his faithfulness by granting him his heart's desire. Belcore reminds her that the new recruit, having spent part of his bonus money, must depart to take up his military duties; but when Adina herself repays the money, the disappointed suitor retires crestfallen, whilst the triumphant village belle bestows her hand upon the delighted Nemorino.

40. LA FAVORITA

Grand Opera in Four Acts By Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto By Waetz and Royer

First Produced Paris, December, 1840

Chief Characters Leonora, Inez, Fernando, Alphonso (King of Castile), Baithasar

THE scene is laid in Spain, in the Middle Ages. Alphonso, King of Castile, has a beautiful mistress, Leonora, whom he keeps in secret splendour in the Island of St Leon, and, despite the anger of the Pope, he declares his intention to put away his Queen and to marry his paramour

instead. Leonora, however, has fallen in love with Fernando, a young novice of the monastery of St James, where she goes to worship in the cloisters; and Fernando, having observed the lovely lady at her devotions, has also conceived a violent passion for her. This he confides to his superior, Balthasar, on the eve of his initiation; and the stern monk sends him forth into the world, as unfit for the holy brotherhood. Leonora sends her maidens to bring Fernando to her retreat; and upon the enraptured young man declaring his love for her, she confesses that it is returned. Through Leonora's influence, Fernando obtains an important post in the army; and later, he returns from the wars victorious, having covered himself with glory. Meanwhile, the King has been visited by Balthasar, who again threatens him with papal excommunication unless he gives up his guilty intercourse with Leonora; and on the return of Fernando, Alphonso, having discovered the real love that exists between his mistress and the returning hero, and now anxious to avoid the papal wrath threatened, decides to make the lovers happy. He therefore advances Fernando still further, and informs him that he has found a bride for him in the beautiful Leonora. Fernando is overjoyed, knowing nothing of his beloved one's former relations with the King; but Leonora, fearing her lover's scorn on learning the truth, desires to inform him of the true facts of the case before their marriage, and sends her attendant, Inez, to tell him all. Alphonso, however, learning Inez's mission, and anxious that nothing shall happen to prevent the marriage, keeps her from giving Leonora's confession to her lover; and the marriage therefore takes place, whilst Fernando is still in ignorance of the fact that the bride he so gladly receives has been the King's mistress. After the ceremony, however, the courtiers soon reveal the truth of the matter by their insolent behaviour; and then, full of shame and grief, the deluded Fernando flees from the Court, and finds refuge once more in the monastery by taking the vows. Here, he is followed by the wretched Leonora, who tells him in broken accents of her passionate longing for a pure love, begging his forgiveness for her past life, and her unwillingness to deceive him; and having obtained his forgiveness, she dies in his embrace.

41. LINDA DE CHAMOUNI

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto By Rossi

First Produced Vienna, May, 1842

Chief Characters Linda, Madalina, Marchioness de Serval, Carlo (Viscount de Serval), Pierotto, Antonio, Marquis de Boisfleury

THE scene opens in the Chamouni valley, where an old farmer and his wife, Antonio and Madalina, are in distress, having fallen into financial difficulties; and they are in danger of being turned out of their farm by its owner, the haughty Marchioness de Serval. Their beautiful daughter, Linda, has made the acquaintance of Carlo, a young artist who has come into the valley to paint; and the pair have fallen in love. Another admirer of Linda's, the Marquis de Boisfleury, comes forward, and offers to help the old couple if Linda will show him favour. The village Prefect, however, doubts the good intentions of the Marquis, and persuades Antonio to send his daughter for safety's sake to Paris, into the guardianship of his (the Prefect's) brother. Linda is, therefore, sent on this journey under the care of Pierotto, a trusted village friend, whom, however, she becomes separated from on the way; and, on arriving in Paris, she finds that the Prefect's brother has just died, and she is therefore left stranded and friendless. But Carlo has followed her, and he

takes her to some luxurious rooms, now revealing himself as the Viscount de Serval, and declaring that they shall be married as soon as the legalities can be arranged. In the meantime, however, the Marchioness, furious at the discovery of her son's entanglement with a peasant girl, arrives in Paris, and declares that Linda shall be thrust into prison, unless he consents to give her up and accept a more suitable wife. Old Antonio, having already been evicted from his farm, has also discovered the pair, and, putting the worst construction upon the fine style in which his daughter appears to be living, he pours forth scornful reproaches upon the innocent girl. In order to gain time, Carlo pretends to fall in with his mother's wishes, with the result that the village girl believes that his love for her has vanished, and her despair is so great that she loses her reason, in which sad state she is discovered by the faithful Pierotto, who takes her back to the village once more. Here she is followed by Carlo, who, by singing to her a familiar love-song with which he had formerly delighted her, restores her reason, and the lovers embrace rapturously. The sight of their devotion melts the heart of the Marchioness, who now no longer withholds her consent to their marriage, and the old people being restored to their beloved farm, Linda's joy is complete.

42. LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Gaetano Donizetti

Libretto by Salvatore Cammerano, adapted from Scott's romance "The Bride of Lammermoor."

First Produced Naples, 1835

Chief Characters Lucy Ashton, Edgar of Ravenswood, Henry Ashton, Sir Arthur Bucklaw, Bide-the-Bent

THE story follows on somewhat the same lines as Scott's romance, but the events are much condensed. The action is laid in Scotland, in the Lammermoor district, and in Act 1 Sir Henry Ashton and his followers are plotting to arrange a marriage between his sister Lucy and Sir Arthur Bucklaw, whose wealth and influence will assist the involved lord greatly, both financially and politically, he being concerned in a somewhat dangerous plot; but he is furious on learning from Lucy's tutor, Bide-the-Bent, that his young mistress has a secret lover, who has saved her recently from the attack of an infuriated bull, and whom he has discovered is none other than Edgar of Ravenswood, Henry Ashton's greatest enemy. Meanwhile, Lucy and her lover meet secretly in the park, and as Edgar is compelled to leave for France on State business, he desires to visit her brother and ask for her hand in marriage before leaving. This, however, Lucy begs him not to do, fearing her brother's anger; and finally the pair, having plighted their troth and exchanged rings, bid each other a tender farewell. In Act 2 Henry Ashton is persecuting his sister, and endeavouring to force her to wed Sir Arthur Bucklaw, declaring that he himself is utterly lost unless she consents to do so; but Lucy declares that Edgar of Ravenswood is her only love, and vows to remain true to him. Finding her so steadfast, Henry makes use of deceit, and by showing his sister a forged letter, supposed to come from Edgar, and stating that he is false to her and has taken a new love, he gains his end. Lucy, believing that Edgar no longer loves her, and thus not caring what becomes of her, is now willing to sacrifice herself for her brother's good, and very reluctantly she consents to wed the wealthy Arthur. On the marriage night, however, just as the wretched Lucy has signed the marriage contract, and the ceremony is over, Edgar dashes into the midst of the guests to claim his betrothed, and, seeing that Lucy has actually signed the marriage contract, and believing she has played him false, he turns upon the poor girl and upbraids her passionately, finally departing,

hurling curses upon the whole family. Henry Ashton follows, and after a heated quarrel, the enemies arrange to fight a duel at dawn next morning. The despairing bride is then led away, but shortly afterwards the guests are horrified by Bide-the-Bent bursting into their midst and announcing that the intensity of her grief has caused Lucy to become insane, and that she has murdered her newly-wedded husband. The awful news is confirmed by the entrance of the distraught Lucy, who calls upon her beloved Edgar, and falls back dying. Meanwhile Edgar has been passing the night amongst the tombs of his ancestors, awaiting for the dawn to appear, that he may meet his enemy; but he is soon alarmed on hearing the funeral-bells tolling at the castle, and the followers of Henry Ashton presently enter to inform him that their young mistress is dead. Edgar is filled with despair and remorse on hearing that his beloved one is no more, and, seizing his dagger, he stabs himself, having no further desire to live.

43. LUCREZIA BORGIA

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Gaetana Donizetti

Libretto Adapted from Victor Hugo's drama by Romani

First Produced La Scala, Milan, 1834

Chief Characters Lucrezia Borgia, Gennaro, Duke of Ferraro, Orsini

THE scene is laid in Venice, where Lucrezia Borgia, wife of the Duke of Ferraro, has come in secret to pay a visit to her young son, Gennaro, the offspring of an early amour, whose existence is unknown to any of her friends. Gennaro has been brought up by a fisherman, but on entering the army has risen rapidly, owing to his gallant conduct on the battlefield, and he is the friend of the noblest young lords in Venice when Lucrezia finds means to make his acquaintance, taking care to keep her true identity and relationship from him. The young man is pleased and flattered at the pleasure taken in his society by the beautiful stranger, but when later his friends, penetrating her disguise, inform him that she is the daughter of the hated and autocratic Borgia family herself a notorious poisoner he turns from her with loathing. So furious is he at the discovery, that he tears off her name and arms from the palace gates, for which in-sulting act he is dragged before the Duke of Ferraro, who condemns him to death. Being jealous of his wife's predilection for the young man, he commands her to offer a cup of poison to the prisoner, and in spite of Lucrezia's passionate pleadings to him to show mercy, the enraged husband refuses to listen to her, knowing well that she has never shown a like interest in the fate of many others he has condemned, and believing this to be the proof that the handsome youth is her lover. The distracted mother is thus compelled to offer her son the poisoned draught, but as the Duke departs immediately the wine has been administered, bidding her follow her victim to the door, she secures an opportunity to produce the anti-dote, which she always carries, and thus saves the life of Gennaro, whom she entreats to leave the city at once. Gennaro, however, does not follow out her instructions, remaining to attend a banquet to which his chief friend, the Duke d'Orsini, has promised to take him, and which is to take place in gorgeous state at the palace of Princess Negroni. This feast, however, ends in terrible tragedy, for Lucrezia makes use of it in order to carry out her revenge on the young nobles who had spoken ill of her when first she made the acquaintance of her son, and secretly she finds means to poison the wine which they are to drink, concealing herself behind a curtain to gloat over the result of her deadly plot. After the wine has been handed round she discovers, to her horror, that Gennaro whom she had imagined to be safely out of the city is

amongst the guests, and has also swallowed the fatal draught, thus partaking of poison a second time by her hand. Having heard her order the attendants to show the coffins prepared for the five poisoned guests, he demands to be shown the sixth; but, full of grief, Lucrezia quickly offers him the antidote, entreating him to swallow it instantly, since a moment's delay is dangerous. Gennaro, however, passionately refuses to be saved, when his friends are even now dying, and he pours forth the wildest execrations upon the murderess. Then Lucrezia, in utter distraction, reveals her true relationship to him, and again entreats him to live for her sake; but Gennaro scornfully thrusts her from him, and, declaring he would rather die than own such a mother, he falls expiring at her feet. Lucrezia, with a cry of utter despair and remorse, clasps him in her arms; and as her beloved son draws his last breath, she also, overcome by her emotion and wretchedness, falls beside him, and as the Duke of Ferraro enters to behold her expected victory, she reveals to him her secret and expires.

44. TESS.

Opera in Four Acts By Frederic d'Erlanger

Libretto adapted from Thomas Hardy's novel "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," by Luigi Illica

First Produced Naples

Chief Characters Tess, Joan, Alec d'Urberville, Clare, Dark-Car, Aby, Toronton

THE scene is laid in " Blackmoor Vale, Wessex," where the Durbeyfield family live in a cottage, and are in poor circumstances. They owe money to Toronton, who duns them for it. Hearing from him that they are related to the rich d'Urbervilles, the squires of the district, they make themselves known to these relations, and the daughter, Tess, is engaged by the great family to help in the domestic work. She is not happy there, however, being persecuted by the other servants, and by the attentions of Alec d'Urberville, the unprincipled heir, who, attracted by her handsome looks, determines to amuse himself with her. Tess proudly disdains his insulting advances, all her thoughts being with her worried parents and her true sweetheart, Clare; and her coldness enrages Alec, who determines on her ruin. This he accomplishes when, owing to a cruel trick played upon her by one of the jealous servants, she is locked out one night. In Act 3. some considerable time has elapsed, and Tess is once more at home. Here she receives an offer of marriage from her old sweetheart, Clare, who has never been told of the trouble she has been through, her child having died; and at first Tess tries to resist her love for him, but finally gives way, and agrees to marry him, arranging that her father shall first relate to him the story of her misfortune. Durbeyfield, however, neglects to do his part, and after the pair are married, Tess, unaware of her father's omission, proceeds to offer grateful thanks to her husband for his kindness and nobility of heart in making such an un-fortunate woman his wife. Seeing him bewildered, she realises the fact that he is still in ignorance of her secret; but, nobly determining to undeceive him, she relates the whole story, protesting her own utter help-lessness in the unhappy affair. Clare, however, has received a terrible shock, and refuses to believe in her innocence, casting reproaches upon her, and declaring his inability to receive a fallen woman as his wife; and, full of grief and despair, the unhappy Tess wanders out into the night, leaving him alone.

45. MARTHA

Opera Comique in Four Acts By Friedrich von Flotow

Libretto By St Georges

First Produced Vienna, November, 1847

Chief Characters Lady Henrietta (Martha), Nancy, Lionel, Plunket, Sir Tristan

THE scene is laid in Richmond, in the time of Queen Anne, whose charming young maid-of-honour, Lady Henrietta, is so tired of Court life, and so heartily sick of her many insipid admirers, that she has retired to the country to refresh herself. Growing dull, she decides to attend the statute fair at Richmond; and, ripe for a good frolic, she attires herself and her maid, Nancy, in rustic garments, and sets off to the fair, attended by her foppish old cousin, Sir Tristan another admirer whom she terms a bore who also, much against his will, has decked himself in humble garments. Arrived at the fair, the spoilt beauty deftly manages to lose her escort, and then, thinking to enjoy a good joke, she stands amongst the lines of serving-wenches waiting to be hired, with the merry Nancy at her side. Amongst the hirers are two young farmers, Lionel and Plunket, who are looking for a couple of likely wenches to do the work of their house for them; and being at once struck by the beauty and charm of the two masqueraders, they at once proceed to hire them, Lady Henrietta giving her name as " Martha." The girls, entering delightedly into the joke, accept the earnest-money given by the young men; but they are soon filled with dismay on discovering that, as they have taken the earnest-money, they are legally bound to their new masters for a year. Sir Tristan, who comes up at this moment, tries to pass the matter off with bluster, though not daring to reveal the identity of his cousin, for fear of the scandal reaching the Court; but the two young farmers soon thrust him on one side, and carry off their maids in triumph. In Act 2 the two girls are in the house of the young farmers, having just arrived; and in a very short time their personal attractions appeal so strongly to their new masters that a mutual interest and admiration, rapidly deepening into love, is developed between Lionel and the supposed Martha and Plunket and the gay Nancy. Henrietta feels that Lionel is some one of higher station than he appears; and this is the truth the young man being an orphan who was left with Plunket's parents in early childhood, the facts of his parentage not being known. He now falls desperately in love with his new maid, and Martha, on being set to work at the spinning-wheel, further delights him by singing to him in a most delightful manner. Meanwhile Plunket has been vainly endeavouring to initiate the lively Nancy into the household duties he intends her to perform; but saucy Nancy will not soil her fingers, and leads him such a dance with her breakages and pretended tantrums, that he is glad to let the work go, and to enjoy her pretty coquetries instead. Finally, the new maids are told to go to bed, but on arriving in their chamber they succeed in making their escape through the window, with the aid of Sir Tristan, who has discovered their whereabouts, and come secretly to escort them home. The young farmers are filled with anger and dismay at the loss of their fair maids, and Lionel's grief is so great that he falls into a melancholy state. Wandering out into the forest of Richmond one day, he meets a royal hunting-party, amongst whom is the Lady Henrietta, and, recognising her at once as the object of his affection, he hurries to her side, and passionately declares his love for her. She repulses him roughly, and upon Lionel now reminding her of her contract to serve him for a year, she declares to the company that the young man is mad, and Sir Tristan supporting her declaration, the intruder is thrust into prison. Lionel has always cherished a ring which he has a hazy recollection was given him by his father, who told him that if he was ever in trouble he was to send the ring to the Queen, when it would quickly alter his fortunes for him; and when Plunket visits him, he begs his friend to take it at once to their royal mistress. Plunket, therefore, visits the

Court, where he sees Lady Henrietta, who has by this time repented of her conduct to Lionel, for whom she has conceived a real passion; and she at once presents the ring to the Queen, who recognises it as having belonged to one of her nobles, who had been banished from Court for some suspected offence, but whose innocence had afterwards been proved. Lionel is now declared to be the Earl of Derby, and is restored to his proper estate; but the harassing circumstances through which he has just passed have so unhinged the young man's mind that he is almost distraught, and refuses even to accept the love which Henrietta now would bestow upon him. Henrietta is at first in despair, but presently she thinks out a plan of restoring her lover's reason. She causes a mock fair to be held in her grounds, and she and Nancy once more dress themselves up as country wenches; then when Plunket brings Lionel into the make-believe fair, and calls his attention to the two pretty serving-maids, the mist clears away from the young Earl's mind, and he is restored completely to his normal state. He then gladly greets Henrietta, and the pair plight their troth with great joy; and at the same time Plunket and the gay Nancy do likewise.

46. STRADELLA

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Friedrich von Flotow

Libretto adapted from the historical story by W. Friedrich

First produced as an operetta at Paris, 1837; afterwards added to and produced as a romantic opera in Hamburg, 1844

Chief Characters Leonora, Stradella, Bassi, Malvolio, Barbarino.

THE scene opens in Venice, where Alessandro Stradella, the celebrated singer, has fallen in love with Leonora, the ward of a wealthy citizen named Bassi, who is strongly opposed to the match, being desirous to wed the beautiful maiden himself. This being so, the lovers arrange an elopement, and escape to Stradella's house near Rome. Here they are tracked by Malvolio and Barbarino, two ruffians whom Bassi determined to be revenged for the loss of the bride of his choice has despatched thither to seek an opportunity to murder Stradella and kidnap Leonora. Disguising themselves in the garb of pilgrims, they come to the house of Stradella, who is now married to Leonora; and here they are so hospitably received by the host, and are so thrilled by the exquisite singing with which he entertains them, that they cannot bring themselves to perform the dreadful task for which they were hired. Bassi, however, has followed them, and as they are about to slink out of the district, he meets them and pours forth angry reproaches upon them. He then offers them an immense sum of money for their services, and, unable to resist this bribe, the bandits conceal themselves in Stradella's house, together with Bassi, who comes himself to see that his orders are carried out. A sacred festival is to be held on the morrow, at which Stradella is to sing a hymn addressed to the Virgin Mary; and on entering his chamber he proceeds to rehearse the song, putting his whole soul into the grand music, and so touching the hearts of the would-be assassins with his liquid notes that their evil thoughts are conquered altogether. Issuing forth from their hiding-places, and casting aside their weapons, they fall at his feet, confessing all, and imploring his forgiveness; and Bassi himself joins in their entreaties, his jealous passion also being utterly subdued by the magic power of his rival's wonderful gift of song. When Leonora enters he begs her to forgive his persecution of her, and the opera ends with the acceptance of his friendship by the now happy bride and bridegroom.

47. LORLE

Opera in Three Acts By Alban Fö rster

Libretto adapted from Auerbach 's celebrated village story by H. Schefsky

First Produced Dresden, July, 1891

Chief Characters Lorle, Barbel, Countess de Matran, R emhardt, Walther, The Lindenhost, The Count de Matran, Balder

THE scene opens in a village of the Black Forest, where the prosperous Lindenhost endeavours to persuade his fair daughter, Lorle, to wed her peasant admirer, Balder. Lorle, however, refuses, her heart having been given to an artist, Reinhardt, who has been painting in the village, she herself having served him as a model. Balder is presently disposed of by being carried away, very unwillingly, by the soldiery as a recruit; and next night, being St John's Eve, Lorle and her friend, Barbel, resolve to learn the fate of their love by means of an old village custom, which consists of weaving a wreath of bluebells and grasses in the forest at midnight, then throwing it up into the branches of an old oak tree, at the same moment calling out the name of the desired lover the result being that if the wreath is caught in the boughs, the maiden will gain her heart's desire; but the reverse will be the case if the flowers fall back into her hands. The girls proceed to carry out the spell, their little play being watched by two hidden cavaliers, who are none other than Reinhardt, who has come back to seek his rustic sweetheart, accompanied by his friend, Walther; and as Lorle throws up her bluebell wreath, the young artist deftly catches it, and, clasping the beautiful maiden in his arms, he declares his love, whilst Walther makes advances to the pretty Barbel. Act 2 takes place at Reinhardt's studio in the city. He is now married to Lorle, but is already tired of his rustic bride, his attention having been diverted from her by a former sweetheart, the unscrupulous Countess de Matran, under whose fatal sway he has fallen. Complications arise by Lorle receiving a visit from her village friends, Barbel and Balder, who are discovered with her when the Count and Countess come to examine a portrait of the latter, which Reinhardt has been commissioned to paint; and her husband falls more and more under the sway of the Countess, to whom, at a grand fête, he actually declares his passion. The scene is witnessed by Lorle, who, after this final proof of her husband's faithlessness, retires, heartbroken, to her native village. Walther and Barbel are now married and happy; but poor Lorle droops more and more, until her friends see that she is dying. She entreats them to take her once more to the forest, when Midsummer Eve returns, to take farewell of the spot where her lover first declared his passion; and thither, in deep sorrow, her father conducts her, her village friends following. Here, to her great joy, she is met by her still beloved Reinhardt, who, stricken with remorse, has hurried to the village to entreat her pardon, and to beg her to return to him; and the pair are reconciled. But Lorle's strength is now utterly exhausted by the sorrow she has passed through, and, after receiving her repentant husband's eager caresses, she utters a sigh of happy contentment, and expires in his arms.

48. THE MAIDENS OF SCHILDA

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Alban Fö rster

Libretto By Rudolf Bunge

First Produced Dresden, October, 1889

Chief Characters Lenchen, Hedwig, Bernhardt, Walther, Rupelmei (the Burgomaster), Marquis de Maltracy, Prince of Dessau

THE scene is laid, during the Franco-German war, in the town of Schilda, which is ruled by a foolish, con-ceited, and narrow-minded B urgomaster, nicknamed Rupelmei (meaning the "clown"), whom the citizens, being also noted for their narrow views, regard as a paragon. He has issued orders forbidding any maiden under thirty years of age to marry, and he now goes further, by commanding all the girls in the town to be locked up every night in the town-hall, to keep them safe from intruders. His two nieces, Lenchen and Hedwig, being lively and pretty, determine, nevertheless, to have a good time, in spite of their silly old uncle; and, having fallen in love with two handsome students, Bernhardt and Walther, they arrange a plot to enjoy their company a little longer. A French refugee-courier, the Marquis de Maltracy, earlier in the evening, has begged the Burgomaster to protect him from his Prussian pursuers; and Rupelmei, being bribed by the promise of a Cross of Honour, hides him in the town-hall. Meanwhile a party of gay students have come to amuse themselves with the maidens of Schilda until sundown, and when Rupelmei blusters and tries to drive them away, they put him into a tub, and compel him to watch their frolics. When it is time for the maidens to be locked up, Bernhardt and Walther, having been arrayed in female garments by their sweethearts, are taken away with them, and they have a gay time dancing and singing with the girls. Meanwhile, the Prince of Dessau has arrived in search of the students who, in addition to their love-making, have come to Schilda to escape enlistment, and on being admitted to the town-hall, he is delighted with the bevy of pretty girls who are amusing themselves there, and he insists on joining in the dancing with his attendants. The dis-guise of Bernhardt and Walther is thus discovered, and they are dragged away to their military duty without further delay. In the third act the audacious Lenchen and Hedwig come to the barracks, where their sweethearts are being drilled, and by their wheedling of the sergeant, they quickly transform the scene into one of merriment, dancing with the delighted ex-students. The Prince, however, appears unexpectedly, and orders the sergeant and the two students to be shot for neglect of duty; but when Bernhardt, happily recollecting that the French spy is still in hiding in the town-hall, declares that they have captured this desirable enemy, they are released as the reward for their assumed zeal, as the capture of the Marquis is of much importance, since it helps the Prince out of a dangerous position. Not only are the students set free, but they are also permitted to marry the two merry girls who have sought them out, and the scene ends with their rejoicings.

49 GREYSTEEL; OR, THE BEARSARKS COME TO GURNADALE

Opera in One Act By Nicholas Gatty

Libretto By Reginald Gatty

First Produced Sheffield, March 1st, 1906

Chief Characters Ingebjorga, Gisli, Ari, Bjorn (The Bearsark), Kol

THE scene is laid in the north of Norway during the tenth century, and the action takes place outside the homestead of Ari, a farmer. As the curtain rises, Kol, a bondsman, is seen polishing his

magic sword "Greysteel," giving vent to regrets that his state of slavery prevents him from using it in battle, and resenting the fact that his master, Ari, scorns to use it either, because of its magic qualities. His mistress, Ingebjorga, talks with him; and from this conversation it is soon gathered that she is not happy with her husband, and that she has conceived a passion for his younger brother, Gisli, who returns her love, though they have never yet declared their feelings for one another. When Ari appears, Kol informs him that raids are being made in the neighbourhood by the Bearsarks, led by their famous chief, Bjorn the Black. The Bearsarks are wild, lawless, wandering tribes, who spend their time making raids on the peaceful farmer folk, and robbing them of their cattle, goods, and women, and committing many deeds of cruelty and violence; and their leader, Bjorn, is specially dreaded, on account of his gigantic size and of certain magic powers he is said to possess, being the son of a witch-woman. Ari, however, is not scared at the approach of the wild robbers, but declares he will give Bjorn a warm welcome should he dare to attack him. Even as he speaks, the war cry of the Bearsark is heard as they approach : " Bring out your wives and daughters! "The dreaded Bjorn now appears with his rough horde of raiders, and he insolently offers to engage in single combat with Ari for his wife and other chattels, the fight to take place on the Combat Isle in the next fjord. Ari fearlessly accepts the challenge, and call his carls to follow him to behold the fight. Kol implores his master to use his sword " Greysteel " in the combat; but Ari scornfully refuses to make use of magic, and hastens away, thinking more of adding to his own glory than of ensuring the safety of his wife. When he has departed, his brother Gisli appears, and gives utterance to his tender thoughts of Ingebjorga, which he has hitherto kept hidden in his own heart. When, however, Ingebjorga presently joins him, and he learns of her danger and of his brother's coldness to her, he can no longer control his feelings; and he pours forth a passionate avowal of his love, to which Ingebjorga at first gladly responds. Then, suddenly realising their position, she withdraws from his embrace, and scornfully reproaches him for disloyalty to his brother. At this moment, Kol rushes forward, bidding Gisli hasten to the scene of combat if he desires to see his brother again alive. Full of con-trition for having delayed so long, Gisli rushes off; but ere he reaches the spot loud cries are heard : " Ari is killed! " Soon after, to the sound of a sombre funeral dirge, the carls bring home the body of their dead master; and then Gisli, forgetting all thought of jealousy and resentment against his brother, and only remembering his fearless bravery, calls pas-sionately upon the dead man to forgive him, vowing to avenge his death. Ingebjorga, hearing this sincere outburst, realises that Gisli is worthy of her love, and has redeemed his recent lapse from rectitude; and she no longer withholds her tender feeling from him. According to the custom of the times, she now belongs to Gisli, who, as the next-of-kin, takes possession of the head man's goods and chattels, his wife and bondsmen being regarded as part of these; and Ingebjorga resigns herself very willingly in this case, since Gisli is the man she loves. Gisli, however, has still to do combat for her with the bloodthirsty Bearsark; and Ingebjorga entreats him to make use of Kol's magic sword, since Bjorn's magic must be met with magic, if he is to be defeated, and mere brute courage and strength will never suffice in such an unequal contest, as has been proved by the quick defeat of Ari. In order to save the woman he loves from falling into the hands of the spoiler, therefore, Gisli takes " Greysteel " in his hand, and rushes off to fight with the Bearsark, whom he is thus enabled to slay. He returns victorious to the loving arms of Ingebjorga, who receives him with joy; and the bondsman, Kol, is also made happy by receiving his freedom in return for the service rendered by his magic sword "Grey-steel," which he is now enabled to use once more in open battle.

50. NANON

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Franz Friedrich Richard Genée

Libretto By Zell

First Produced Vienna, 1877

Chief Characters Nanon, Ninon de l'Enclos, Madame de Maintenon, Grignan (Marquis d'Aubigné), Marquis de Marsillac, Hector, Louis XIV

THE scene is laid in Paris in the time of Louis XIV. Nanon, the pretty young mistress of an inn, has gained such a reputation for her beauty and charm that she is visited by many rich and fashionable people in the city, amongst them being the Marquis de Marsillac, Director of the Theatre, and his nephew Hector, and the celebrated beauty, Ninon de l'Enclos. The latter goes because she suspects that her admirer, the Marquis d'Aubigné, admires the pretty inn mistress; but, on being told that Nanon is betrothed to a drummer named Grignan, she has no further fear. Grignan, however, is really the Marquis d'Aubigné in disguise, he having really fallen in love with Nanon, and meaning to steal her away and hide her in some hidden retreat; but, finding her bent on being wedded to him first, he escapes the ceremony by allowing himself to be arrested for fighting a duel. Nanon is in despair, thinking her lover in danger of death, which is the penalty of duelling; and she resolves to seek the assistance of Ninon de l'Enclos, whom she knows has influence at Court. The second act shows us the reception rooms of the luxurious Ninon, and complications soon arise by the arrival of Nanon, Hector, and d'Aubigné. Nanon, however, does not come face to face with d'Aubigné, whose recent arrest was merely a make-believe one, arranged for his benefit by his colonel; but a serious quarrel arises between the young Marquis and Hector, because of the latter's attentions to Nanon, whom the former, though not anxious to be united to her, still regards as his property, and the two go into the garden to fight a duel, Hector being wounded. D'Aubigné is now really arrested, and in danger of his life; and in the last act, which takes place in the private chapel of Madame de Maintenon, both Ninon and Nanon visit the royal favourite, the one to plead for the life of d'Aubigné, and the other for that of Grignan, whom she has no knowledge is the same person. Marsillac also comes to plead for his nephew, who is pardoned; and, on Nanon pleading for her sweetheart, the King grants her request, too, as well as that of Ninon. D'Aubigné, thus liberated, is sent for, and then Nanon recognises him as her sweetheart. The young Marquis is so conscience-stricken by the whole-hearted devotion and perfect love of Nanon, that his passion for her is stirred to greater and truer depths; and he now humbly asks her to become his wife. Nanon gladly admits her love and desire to grant his request, and the permission of the King and royal favourite having been obtained, the curtain falls upon the rejoicings of the happy lovers.

51. MERRIE ENGLAND

Comic Opera in Two Acts By Edward German

Libretto By Basil Hood

First Produced Savoy Theatre, London, April 2nd, 1902

Chief Characters Queen Elizabeth, Bessie Throckmorton, Jill-All-Alone, The May Queen, Earl of Essex, Sir Walter Raleigh, Walter Wilkins, Silas Simkins, Long Tom and Big Ben, The Queen's

Fool

THE scene is laid at Windsor in the time of Queen Elizabeth. Act 1 discovers the rustics near Windsor Castle enjoying their May-day festivities. The May Queen is overwhelmed by many suitors, and finally chooses between Big Ben and Long Tom, two of the royal foresters. She is soon jealous of a lonely maiden, Jill-all-Alone, a forest dweller, reputed to be a witch; for Long Tom is in love with the gipsy maid. The rustics, however, dislike Jill; and, after listening awhile to the comical talk of a couple of strolling players, Wilkins and Simkins, they all hurry off to seek the supposed witch. After they have gone, some of the Court party arrive; for Queen Elizabeth is expected to shortly take part in the revels. Her maid of honour, Bessie Throckmorton, appears, followed by her sweetheart, Sir Walter Raleigh. They are anxious lest the Queen should hear of their love-making, since her anger will then quickly fall on both, Elizabeth regarding all her courtiers and Raleigh in particular as her own admirers only. After the lovers have strolled away, the Earl of Essex appears, plotting how he may compass the downfall of Raleigh, and establish himself as first royal favourite. He is presently joined by the strolling players, who entertain him vastly with their amusing talk. They are next interrupted by the gipsy girl, Jill, who rushes to them for protection from the angry superstitious rustics, who are about to duck her in the river. Wilkins has been boasting of his bravery; but when Jill clings to him he is afraid of the approaching rustics. Jill is, however, rescued by her sweetheart, Big Ben, who then lets the craven Wilkins know his opinion of him by tossing the player into the Thames, from whence he presently emerges in a bedraggled condition, just as Queen Elizabeth lands from her royal barge. When the Queen has returned the loyal greetings of her rustic subjects, Essex produces a letter which Bessie has dropped in the woods, and which contains a love declaration from Raleigh. This letter he shows to the Queen, who is delighted at first, believing it to be addressed to herself; but when Raleigh himself undeceives her and boldly avows his love for Bessie, she is furious, and, in her rage, she condemns Raleigh to banishment, Bessie to imprisonment, and poor Jill to death. In Act 2 Jill is seen in her forest retreat, having escaped from the Castle by an underground passage she has discovered, which leads out beside Herne's Oak; and with her she has brought Bessie, the two girls having struck up a real friendship. Jill comforts Bessie, telling her that Raleigh, being still in the neighbourhood, will find a way out of their difficulties. They hide themselves as the rustics appear with the players, who are arranging a merry masque to play before the Queen. When they have departed, Elizabeth appears, closely cloaked, to meet an apothecary she has sent for. She bids him bring her a poisonous draught, intending to administer it to her captive rival, Bessie; and when the apothecary agrees she returns to the Castle. Raleigh, who has been hovering near and heard all, now comes forward, and forbids the apothecary to bring such a drug; but on the vendor turning out to be the Queen's Fool in disguise, who promises to aid him, they try to arrange a plan. When the players return, Raleigh induces them to let him take part in their play, so that he may thus get into the Castle; for he does not yet know that Bessie has escaped. However, Jill brings the lovers together again; and, at that moment, Essex emerges from behind Herne's Oak, having followed Bessie through the secret passage. He now agrees to befriend the lovers, thinking that if Raleigh marries Bessie, he (Essex) will be first favourite with Elizabeth. He therefore arranges a plot, whereby the Queen shall be frightened from her intended wrongdoing by a ghostly appearance of Herne the Hunter, whose spirit is believed to appear to the Tudor monarchs only when they contemplate an evil act. He arranges for the rustics to perform their play in this particular spot, and when the royal party is seated, and the play is proceeding, the sound of a ghostly hunting-horn is heard, and the head of Herne the Hunter appears (Long Tom having undertaken to play the

part). Elizabeth is horrorstruck at the sight of the supposed apparition, and her guilty conscience oppressing her at the same time she at once determines to make amends, and retracts her harsh sentences on the prisoners, of whose escape she has only just learned. She therefore pardons the three offenders, gives her consent to the union of Raleigh and Bessie, and accepts the advances of Essex; and the play ends with the interrupted festivities of the rustics.

52. ANDRE CHENIER

Romantic Opera in Four Acts By Umberto Giordano

Libretto By Luigi Illica

First Produced Milan, 1896

Chief Characters Madeleine de Coigny, Bersi, Countess de Coigny, André Chenier, Gérard, Roucher

ANDRÉ CHENIER, a distinguished French poet, who lived during the time of the Revolution, at first ardently supported the movement of the people, whose wrongs had his sincere sympathy; but after a while the cruel excesses of the new rulers disgusted him, and, having offended Robespierre by writing certain pamphlets, uttering scathing denunciations of his methods, he was seized, denounced as a traitor, condemned and executed a few days before the end of the Reign of Terror. The story of the present opera has been based on certain incidents in the life of the poet-patriot, culminating with his death at the hands of the Revolutionaries. The first act takes place in the salon of the Countess de Coigny, who is giving a ball; and here one of her servitors, Gérard, shows the first signs of the revolutionary spirit. He is secretly in love with Madeleine, the lovely young daughter of the Countess; but his passion is not suspected. Amongst the guests at the ball is the poet, André Chenier, who is much attracted to the youthful Madeleine, who, however, merrily makes light of his poetic gift, and also of the power of love, to which he refers in his conversation. Chenier, wishing to rouse the dormant sympathies he sees in the young girl, recites a beautiful poem to her on the subject of Love; and this makes Madeleine ashamed of her flippancy, and she forthwith evinces an intense interest in the poet, which gradually develops into love. The pair, however, do not meet again for several years, during which time many troubles visit both. In Act 2 Chenier is seen in Paris, sitting at a table outside a café, waiting for his friend, Roucher, who has gone to secure a passport for him; for Chenier has now given offence to the Revolutionary party, which he at first supported, by his denunciation of the savage Robespierre, and his life is in danger since he may be arrested at any moment. He is constantly watched by a spy, who presently sees an elderly woman hand him a letter. This woman is Bersi, the old nurse-companion of Madeline de Coigny, who after the death of her mother, since the Reign of Terror began, would have long since fallen into the hands of the Revolutionaries had it not been for the devotion of this faithful servitor, who protects and hides her, she herself being regarded as a harmless citizen. Madeleine has lovingly followed the career of Chenier and has frequently sent him letters of comfort and hope through all his difficulties; and the note which Bersi brings arranges a meeting, since she herself now desires his help. Chenier has cherished these letters which are unsigned as coming from one who must love him, and when Roucher presently arrives with the passport he refuses to make use of it, since he is determined to keep the appointment made by his unknown correspondent. In spite of the warnings of his friend he proceeds to the meeting-place, and there he is presently joined by a beautiful lady, whom he recognises as Madeleine de Coigny. The spy who

has dogged him all day also recognises Madeleine, and hurries with the news of his discovery to Gérard, who has now risen to a very high position under the Revolution and has long sought the fugitive Madeleine, since his love for her has not changed, and he longs to possess her. Meanwhile Madeleine and Chenier are declaring their love for one another, and the former is imploring the latter to protect her from the spies who constantly dog her path; and they are presently interrupted by the arrival of Gérard, who has been brought thither by his spy, and he challenges and fights with Chenier, who wounds him. Chenier and Madeleine escape from the gendarmes; but the former is afterwards captured and brought before the Revolutionary tribunal. Gérard writes out an indictment against his rival, and when Madeleine presently appears before him to plead for the life of her lover he refuses her request, and announces that she is in his power, and that he means to satisfy his own passion for her at last. Madeleine, in her desperation, declares herself willing to yield to him, if, in return, he will save her lover; and when Gérard thus realises how real and beautiful a thing her love for his rival is, his better nature triumphs, and renouncing all thought for himself, he promises to do what he can to rescue Chenier. His efforts, however, are of no avail; and Chenier is condemned to death. Finding that all hope of saving her lover is now at an end, Madeleine resolves to perish with him; and to this end she bribes one of the warders to allow her to take the place of a young woman who has also been condemned to the guillotine, and who is thus, unexpectedly, saved from death. When, therefore, the dawn breaks, and the prisoners are called one by one to the guillotine, Chenier and Madeleine step forth calmly to meet their fate, joyful in the thought that in death they will at last be united.

53. FEDORA

Opera in Three Acts By Umberto Giordano

Libretto Adapted from Sardou's play by Arturo Colautti

First Produced Milan, 1898

Chief Characters Princess Fedora Romazoff, Countess Olga Sukarefi, Count Loris Ipanoff, De Sirieux, Gretch, Borofi, Lazinski

THE first act takes place in St Petersburg at the house of Count Vladimir Andrejevreh, whose servants are awaiting the return of their master at night. His betrothed, the Princess Fedora Romazoff, arrives, looking for her lover, who has failed to keep his appointment with her at the theatre; and presently Count Vladimir is carried in, fatally wounded, accompanied by Fedora's friend, De Sirieux, who states that he found him in this condition lying in a lonely pavilion. The police-officers appear, headed by their chief, Gretch, who makes many searching inquiries, which end in suspicion falling on Count Loris Ipanoff, who lives in the house opposite, and who is known to have had an altercation with the dying Count recently, and is also suspected of being a Nihilist. The officers at once make a raid on Ipanoff's house, and in the meantime Fedora is summoned into the chamber of her betrothed, who breathes his last in her presence. At this moment Gretch returns with the news that Ipanoff has escaped their hands; and Fedora, taking a beautiful Byzantine jewelled cross from her breast, swears that she will avenge the death of her betrothed, and track his murderer until she can deliver him to justice. Act 2 takes place in Paris, in the salon of the Princess Fedora, who is living there ostensibly as a political exile, but in reality in pursuance of her vow. Count Loris Ipanoff is an exile in Paris, the suspicion which fell upon him as the murderer of Count Vladimir having resulted in his having been declared guilty and

condemned to death. He has, however, escaped to Paris, whither Gretch, the police officer, has followed, seeking proof of his guilt; and in this the latter is aided by Fedora, who, under a show of accepting the attentions of Loris, also seeks to draw from him the proofs she is seeking. Loris has fallen passionately in love with Fedora, who fights against a similar passion for him; but meanwhile she sends all the information she can gather to St Petersburg to the Chief of Police, a cruel man of great and terrible power. On the night of her reception, Loris declares his love for her; and in return she accuses him of the murder of Vladimir. Loris does not deny it, but declares that the deed was not a murder, but a punishment for evil; and he promises to visit Fedora again after her visitors have departed, and tell her the story. Fedora, full of triumph, tells Gretch that Loris has confessed to the murder; and she arranges with him to have his men in readiness to seize the Count as he issues from her house that night. Meanwhile, the entertainment proceeds gaily, Fedora's friend, the merry Countess Olga, causing much amusement by her flirtations with her many admirers, of whom De Sirieux is the most sincere, though the coquettish lady devotes her-self chiefly to an absurd musician, Lazinski, who is her latest protégé. When the guests have departed, Fedora awaits Loris, who presently appears. He tells her that Vladimir was a bad man, who had tempted his (Loris') young girl-wife to become his paramour; and it was on discovering them together that fatal night that he had challenged the Count, and shot him dead, he himself being only slightly wounded. The wife had escaped his wrath, but had fallen ill and died soon after. On thus hearing of the falseness and deception practised upon her by her once-lamented betrothed, and realising that Loris had only meted out justice to a villain, Fedora relinquishes her desire for vengeance; and, no longer seeking to hide her love, she joyously resigns herself to the embraces of the \ Count. At this moment a signal from the garden reminds her of the trap she has herself set for her lover, and, rushing to the door and windows, she locks and bolts all exit or entrance to the house, caring naught for Loris' warning that such an act will ruin her reputation, but thinking only of the safety of the man she loves. Act 3 takes place in a châlet in Switzerland, whither Fedora and Loris, now married, have escaped, and are living in great happiness. The Countess Olga is staying with them, and presently De Sirieux arrives also. The latter brings bad news, which he breaks first to Fedora, when they are alone. He tells her that the spy-work she did before wedding Loris and the information she sent to the cruel Chief of Police at St Petersburg have resulted in the arrest of Valerian, the innocent brother of Loris as a Nihilist; and the youth was confined in a fortress dungeon, to which a river had access, and the water, rising with the tide, has drowned him. Further, when the news of her young son's terrible death came to the knowledge of the aged mother, the shock was so great that it killed her; and Fedora is plunged into grief on realising the double tragedy resulting from her former desire for revenge, and she is filled with fear lest Loris shall discover that she is the spy whom he has so often declared has tracked him since his exile. Loris now enters with a telegram from St Petersburg, announcing his pardon; but, even whilst rejoicing at this, another missive arrives, telling him of the death of his mother and brother. In his utter grief, he wildly denounces and curses the spy who has brought this woe upon him; and as Fedora crouches before his anger he realises that she is the guilty one. In vain are her protestations that she has never proceeded further in the matter since he told her his reason for the act, and after her acceptance of his love; and seeing that, in his anger, he is ready to slay her, she empties a deadly poison from a receptacle in the Byzantine cross she wears, and swallows the liquid. As she falls to the ground in convulsive agony, the Count's anger vanishes; and only remembering their great love and recent happiness, he clasps her in his arms and implores her to live for his sake. But the fatal draught has already done its work; and as her friends hover round, vainly endeavouring to allay her anguish, the unhappy Fedora falls back lifeless into the arms of her despairing husband.

54. ALCESTE

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Christoph Willibald Gluck

Libretto Adapted from the Greek legend by Caizabigi

First Produced Vienna, 1767

Chief Characters Alceste, Admetus (King of Thessaly), Hercules, Plato

THE story of the opera follows pretty closely the old Greek legend. Admetus, King of Thessaly, has obtained Alceste as his bride, by the aid of Apollo, who sent him on his wooing in a chariot drawn by a lion and a wild boar. The pair are wedded, and are very happy, having great love for one another. After awhile, however, Admetus falls sick, and is like to die; and, upon the Oracle being consulted, it is learnt that his life can only be saved by another mortal offering to die in his stead Apollo having prevailed on the Fates to grant this concession. Alceste is full of grief at the thought that her beloved husband is about to be taken away from her; but, on learning the decree of the Oracle, she is filled with joy, and expresses her determination to give her own life in return for that of her lord. The devoted Alceste is therefore accepted by the Fates as a substitute for the dying Admetus; but after her death the restored Admetus is visited by Hercules, his friend, who promises to bring back the wife he mourns from Hades. Hercules then proceeds to the Underworld, where he compels Pluto to restore Alceste to her husband; and Admetus receives back his beloved wife with great joy.

55. ARMIDA

Grand Opera in Five Acts By Christoph Willibald Gluck

Libretto By Quinault

First Produced Paris, September, 1777

Chief Characters Armida, Rinaldo, Artemidor, Ubalt

THE action takes place near Damascus, during the early Crusades. Armida, a beautiful enchantress, lures the Crusaders into her garden of magic, where, by her charms and wonderful fascination, she draws many of them from the paths of duty; but the one she most desires to enthrall, Rinaldo, the noblest hero in the ranks of Godfrey de Bouillon, she cannot draw to her side. Rinaldo thinks only of his honour and duty, and even when warned by his companions to beware of Armida's power, he scorns their counsels, declaring himself proof against the wiles of any woman, whether enchantress or not. However, he is presently expelled from his leader's presence for a deed committed by a brother knight, whom he will not betray even to save himself from blame; and, wandering out into the desert, he is presently discovered in a deep slumber by the enchantress Queen, who at first intends to slay him, in revenge for having refused her wiles, but is unable to carry out her design owing to the love which presently springs up in her heart for the noble hero. She therefore sets to work to win him to her side, and by her gentleness and sweet declaration of love, she gains her wish at last. Rinaldo, separated from his warlike occupation, and fatally attracted, in spite of his strong resistance, by the alluring beauty and fascination of Armida, finally yields to the passion she stirs within him; and the enchantress is so filled with joy at having

obtained the love she craved for, that she glories in her conquest of this hero more than in that of all the others who have fallen beneath her sway. Rinaldo, however, is presently sought out by his friends, Ubalt and another knight, who, though kept at bay for a time by the spells and magic of Armida who puts all kinds of obstacles in their way, even sending a demon to attack them at length discover their comrade's retreat; and, reproaching him for his lapse, they entreat him to return to the Crusade Army, since his supposed fault has now been cleared. At the sight of his noble companions, Rinaldo's high sense of religious duty and loyalty reasserts itself; and though it is a mighty wrench, he announced his resolve to return to his charge once more. Armida passionately implores him to remain with her, using all her arts to keep him at her side; but Rinaldo has shaken himself free from her fascinations, and he bids her farewell for ever. Armida then attempts to slay him, but finds her love too strong to destroy the object of it, and in despair she transforms her voluptuous gardens into a bare desert, determining that, since her one true lover has departed, she will no longer seek to entice the affections of other men.

56. IPHIGENIA IN AULIS

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Christoph Willibald Gluck

Libretto Adapted by R. Wagner

First Produced Paris, 1874

Chief Characters Iphigenia, Clytemnestra, Diana, Agamemnon, Achilles, Calchas

THE story is adapted from the Greek legend, and follows it pretty closely. Agamemnon is in Aulis with his army, awaiting a favourable wind to carry him to Troy; and the High Priest Calchas comes to him to announce that the elements can only be propitiated by the sacrifice of his beautiful young daughter) Iphigenia, to the goddess Diana (Artemis). Agamemnon is torn between his religious and kingly duty and his love for his child, and he is in despair when he is presently joined by his queen, Clytemnestra, and Iphigenia herself, whom he had tried to prevent journeying thither by a messenger, who had not reached them. Achilles is present also, he being the lover of Iphigenia, and the pair make arrangements for their immediate marriage. When Iphigenia, however, appears before the altar in her bridal garments, the messenger arrives and delivers the dreadful announcement that she is intended for the sacred sacrifice. Achilles is furious at this interruption, and declares he will slay anyone who dares to harm his beloved one; but his stormings are of no avail, and in Act 3 Iphigenia is led to the sacrificial altar. She is quite resigned to her fate, firmly believing it her duty to her father's people to thus appease the angry goddess who keeps from them the favourable wind they desire; and when Achilles implores her passionately to fly with him, since he can secure her escape, she gently, but firmly, refuses, being determined to perform the sacred renunciation required of her. Achilles then hastens away to gather his soldiers together, whilst Iphigenia permits herself to be laid on the sacrificial stone, to the satisfaction of the stern, expectant people. Agamemnon and Clytemnestra plead passionately for their daughter's life to be spared, but their tears and entreaties are in vain to move the stony heart of the High Priest, Calchas, who seizes his knife, ready to strike the fatal blow, just as Achilles dashes into the midst of the crowd with his band of faithful followers. The hero, however, sees that he will be too late, and is in despair; but just as the cruel knife is about to fall, the goddess Diana appears in the midst of a thundercloud, and announces that she does not desire the blood of Iphigenia, but, finding her pure, fair-minded and faithful, she requires her service as a

priestess in a strange land. The mists thereupon gather around the entranced and worshipping Iphigenia, and she is borne away by the goddess, who is thus appeased, a favourable wind having now arisen. The warriors, therefore, prepare to embark, and the opera closes with their song of praise.

57 IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

Grand Opera in Four Acts By Christoph Willibald Gluck

Libretto By Guillard

First Produced Paris, 1779

Chief Characters Iphigenia, Orestes, Pylades, Thoas

THIS opera forms the finale to "Iphigenia in Aulis," the scene being laid in Tauris, where Iphigenia has been installed as High Priestess of the temple by the goddess Diana, who bore her away in triumph from the sacrificial altar of Aulis. Here, for fifteen years, she has served the savage Tauri, or Scythians, and has been compelled to offer up for them human sacrifices from time to time though many times she has succeeded in saving the lives of the intended victims. When the opera opens, Iphigenia is lamenting because she has been commanded by Thoas, King of the Scythians, to offer as a sacrifice two strangers who have been captured upon the shores it being the custom of the barbarous Tauri to so treat all aliens. Although she knows it not, one of the strangers is her own brother, Orestes, who had been seeking refuge in this wild land, after slaying his mother, Clytemnestra, as an act of justice for her complicity in the murder of her husband, Agamemnon, by her lover, Aegisthus; and the other victim is his friend, Pylades. Learning, however, that they are Greeks, she determines to save alive one of them, if possible, so that he may carry messages for her to her home, and when Orestes thereupon begs her to let his friend be the liberated one, she agrees. Pylades is therefore allowed to depart in secret, and then Iphigenia tries vainly to prepare herself for the terrible task of offering up the remaining victim. His gallant bearing, however, unnerves her, so that it requires a mighty effort for her to even raise the sacrificial knife; and when, at that moment, Orestes makes himself known to her, she flings down the weapon, and gladly greets him as her brother. At this moment the barbarian king, Thoas, comes in person to see if his command has been carried out, having already been told that one of the strangers has been allowed to depart by the Priestess; and though Iphigenia now pleads passionately for the victim to be spared, since she has discovered him to be her own brother, the King furiously refuses her request, declaring that she herself shall also be sacrificed at the same time, to atone for her guilt in permitting one of the victims to depart. Iphigenia is in despair; but assistance at this moment arrives by the return of Pylades, who has found his followers and brought them to the aid of his friend. Pylades slays Thoas, and his followers engage with the enraged Tauri; and the Greeks are enabled to gain the victory by the timely assistance of the goddess Diana, who again appears. She pronounces her forgiveness of Orestes for his deed of violence against his erring mother, since he has shown repentance; and she permits him to return to Mycenae, and to take with him his sister Iphigenia, whom she now releases from further services as High Priestess.

58. ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Christoph Willibald Gluck

Libretto Raneiro Caizabigi

First Produced Vienna, October, 1762

Chief Characters Eurydice, Orpheus, Amor

THE story is adapted from the old Greek legend, though the finale is different. As the curtain rises Orpheus is discovered mourning the untimely death of his beautiful young wife, Eurydice; but he is presently visited by Amor, the Spirit of Love, who bears a message from Zeus, to the effect that he is to be permitted to seek his lost one in the Under-world, and to bring her thence to mortal life once more. One condition, however, is imposed he must not look on the face of his departed wife until they reach the Upper-world, or she will die again, and be snatched away from him for ever. Orpheus gladly takes his lute and journeys to Hades, where the departed spirits endeavour to prevent his further approach; but Orpheus touches his lute, and overcomes them by his thrilling singing and magical gift of music, so that they let him pass. He thus reaches Elysium, where Eurydice comes eagerly forth to greet him; but Orpheus covers his eyes, and, taking his beloved one by the hand, he endeavours to quickly retrace his steps to the Upper-world. Eurydice, however, is offended and hurt because he will not look upon her; and not knowing the cause her husband having been forbidden by Zeus to tell her the reason she pleads continually for him to smile upon her, and to permit her to look into his eyes that she may know whether he still loves her. For a long while Orpheus resists her appeals; but finally her reproaches and tender entreaties are more than he can fight against, and just as they reach the Upper-world he turns and casts one passionate look of love and longing upon her. Instantly Eurydice sinks back out of his grasp, dead; and the unhappy husband, full of despair, seizes his sword, intending to slay himself. At this moment, however, the Spirit of Love appears to prevent the fatal act; and, to the joy of Orpheus, he restores Eurydice once more to life and her devoted husband's love.

59. THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

Opera Comique in Four Acts By Hermann Goetz

Libretto, adapted from Shakespeare's Comedy by J. V. Widmann

First Produced Mannheim, 1872

Chief Characters Katherina, Bianca, Petruchio, Baptista, Lucentio, Hortensio

THE story is practically the same as in Shakespeare's comedy. Lucentio and Hortensio, two young lords of Padua, are in love with Bianca, the fair and amiable daughter of the wealthy Baptista, who, however, will not listen to the suits of either gentleman until his elder daughter, Katherina, the Shrew, is married. The two admirers, therefore, are glad when Petruchio, a rich and gay gentleman of Verona, hearing of their difficulty, agrees to woo and win the hot-tempered maiden who stands in their way. In the next act the two sisters are shown in their chamber, Katherina rating Bianca roundly for permitting her admirers to pay her such marked attention, and for being, as she considers, weakspirited; but when her father presently enters with the suitor who has volunteered to risk the wooing of her, she turns on the stranger, and exhibits to him a strong distaste for his society her demeanour, however, showing not so much a vixenish character as one of great womanly pride, strong will and independence. This appeals to Petruchio, who falls in love

with her at once, and sets to work to woo her in a rough and ready manner, declaring to her friends that he will certainly marry her, and undertake to transform her into a sweet-tempered and gentle wife, quite unheeding of the angry protests of Katherina. The rest of the opera follows on the same lines as the spoken comedy, Petruchio failing to turn up early at the wedding, finally appearing in shabby garments, and, after the ceremony, carrying off the reluctant Katherina in sorry fashion. Meanwhile, Lucentio and Hortensio, still prohibited from paying their suit to Bianca, hatch separate plots for gaining access to their ladylove, the one disguising himself as a teacher of music, and the other as a professor of Latin. They are admitted to the presence of Bianca, who quickly penetrates their disguise, and has a merry time, playing one off against the other, finally, however, giving preference and the avowal of her love to the happy Lucentio. Meanwhile Petruchio and his bride are having a stormy honeymoon, the former engaging in various devices for subduing the latter's haughty demeanour and resistance to his love; and by keeping from her all those things she expresses a desire or liking for declaring none of them are worthy of her regard she leads her into a more amenable frame of mind. Finally, Katherina admits herself defeated, a growing love for her masterful husband asserting itself above all feelings of pride and independence, and in the last scene the triumphant and happy Petruchio presents her to her friends in Padua as a gentle, sympathetic and loving wife.

60. THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH

Opera in Three Acts By Carl Goldmark

Libretto adapted from Charles Dickens' Fairy Story by A. M. Willner

First Produced Berlin, June, 1896

Chief Characters Dot, May, John, Edward, Tackleton, The Fairy-Cricket

THE subject-matter of this opera is adapted from Dickens' charming little domestic fairy-tale of the same name, which it follows pretty closely in its main outlines, though the characters of Caleb Plummer and his blind daughter and Mrs Fielding are left out. The scene is laid in a village in England, and the first act takes place inside the cottage of honest John, the postilion; and the pretty little Fairy-Cricket on the Hearth comes forth and sings a merry, cheerful song, relating how it brings good-luck to all who will give it a welcome. It describes the sweet love of John and his pretty wife, Dot, who, though married for some years, are still lovers; and it goes on to divulge the beautiful secret which Dot is even now rejoicing over that at last a child will be born to them, which will make their joy complete, the absence of children having been their one crumpled rose-leaf. As the Cricket retires to its nook, Dot enters, and gives vent to the mother's joy with which she is possessed; but, wishing to preserve her precious secret a little longer, she resolves to give no hint of it at present. Her pleasant thoughts are interrupted by the entrance of May, a pretty young girl, a toy-maker, who is, however, weeping and full of woe because she has to be married next day to old Tackleton, her master, who desires to take a young wife, and whose wealth will save her old foster-father from want. May still loves her first and only sweetheart, Edward Plummer, who, however, went off to South America to seek his fortune a few years ago, and is regarded as lost, or dead. Dot comforts her, and as she retires with a gift of food for her foster-father, John the Postilion now enters, glad to reach his cheery heart once more, and to kiss his pretty wife; and he brings with him a stranger in the garb of an old sailor, who is in reality the long-lost Edward Plummer, who has lust returned, and has come to his native village in disguise to see how matters

stand with his sweetheart, May. The stranger is invited to be the carrier's guest, and the act ends with the entrance of the excited villagers, all eagerly clamouring for the letters and parcels brought by John. Act 2 takes place in John's garden, where a pretty love-scene is enacted by John and Dot. They are interrupted by the dejected May, who is followed by the pompous old Tackleton, who disgusts her with his attentions and boastings of what he will give her when they are married to the amusement of the bystanders, who know him well to be an old skinflint. The disguised Edward, on seeing the pair, is at first upset; but soon realising that May still loves him, and is being forced by duty only to wed Tackleton, he recovers his spirits, and begins to arrange at once with the sympathetic Dot to whom he secretly reveals his true identity how he will himself be the bridegroom on the morrow. Meanwhile Tackleton draws John's attention to the fact that the stranger is paying great attention to the postilion's pretty wife, and when John sees the glad greeting given to the seeming sailor by Dot who, aware that he is watching her, and, wishing to punish his un-necessary suspicion, pretends to be indulging in a mild flirtation with her old friend he is filled with jealousy. He flings himself in a dejected attitude upon a garden-seat, almost in despair; but the merry little Fairy-Cricket emerges from a rose-bush close by, and its cheery song brings to him a sweet and comforting dream, in which elves and fairies dance and sing of the joys which are coming to him for in the background he sees, beyond the fairies, a miniature John the Postilion merrily playing. Act 3 takes place in John's house, where May, arrayed in bridal garments, is vainly endeavouring to keep back her tears, in which effort she is encouraged by the happy Dot, who has now arranged with Edward that he is indeed to be the bridegroom, and that old Tackleton shall be disappointed of his youthful bride. Edward now appears and reveals himself to May, who is filled with joy at the return of her lover, and the pair presently depart to carry out the plans which Edward has made. Old Tackleton next appears in his gorgeous wedding-garments, somewhat scared now that his wedding-day has arrived, and already regretting the rash step he is taking in wedding a pretty young girl who is likely to lead him into unwonted extravagances; and when the gay villagers presently crowd around him, dancing and singing, and declaring that they have all come to make merry at his expense, he is more dismayed still. When Edward now appears, without his disguise, and clad in wedding-garments also, declaring that he intends to be the bridegroom and take the pretty May to wife, Tackleton is furious; but his protests are quickly over-ruled, and he is forced to retire crestfallen, as the merry wedding-party set off for the church in the carriage which he has provided. John is still feeling hurt at Dot's attentions to the stranger, even though he now knows her good reason for it; but he quickly surrenders to the tender words of his sweet wife; and when she now shyly reveals her precious secret to him, he is filled with overwhelming joy. Then the friendly Fairy-Cricket comes forth once more, and chirps its cheerful song of satisfaction that all the clouds have blown away, and that peace and contentment have settled down upon the happy household; and this exquisite picture of the sweet and simple joys of domestic life is brought to a close by a glad chorus of fairy voices.

61. MERLIN

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Carl Goldmark

Libretto By Siegfried Lipiner

First Produced Vienna, November, 1886

Chief Characters Vivien, the Fairy Morgana, Merlin, The Demon, King Arthur, Modred, Lancelot

THE story of the opera is based on the Arthurian legend, the scene being laid in Wales. King Arthur is engaged in a losing struggle with the heathen Saxon invaders; and in his difficulty he sends Lancelot to seek the counsel of the magician Merlin, who is the offspring of the Devil with a pure virgin. The desire of the Evil One had been to beget a child who would assist him to overcome the good in the world; but Merlin has inherited the goodness of his gentle mother, whose spirit still protects him, and he uses his energies chiefly against the evil around him, utilising his powers of calling up demons and spirits to secure good ends rather than bad. On the arrival of Lancelot, he calls up his Demon Familiar, by whose help he enables Arthur to gain many victories over his enemies. The Demon, however, being in league with the Devil, does this work unwillingly, and he presently relates his grievances to the Fairy Morgana, who comforts him by declaring that Merlin will lose all his magic power if he falls in love. The Demon, therefore, seeks out Vivien, the most beautiful woman at Arthur's Court, and arranges a meeting between her and the magician. They mutually fall in love; but for a while Merlin tries to conquer his passion, knowing that his powers will leave him if he yields. His love, however, is even stronger than his will, and when Modred, Arthur's nephew, is hatching plots against the throne during the King's absence at the wars, he fails to discover the traitor's ambitious schemes. Meanwhile Vivien is led by the Demon into the enchanted garden of Merlin, and there the lovers declare their passion, and enjoy an interval of perfect joy. When, however, the King once more sends for Merlin's help in a crisis, the enchanter makes a feeble effort to free himself from his enslaver's detaining hands, and is in despair at finding himself so weakened by the indulgence of his passion; but Vivien, angry at his desire to leave her, casts over him a magic veil which the Demon has provided for her use, and the enchanter is at once a prisoner. The lovely flower garden vanishes, and amidst a scene of desolation Merlin is seen chained to a mighty rock by ropes of fire. Vivien is now filled with remorse for her rash act, and in despair she is led away by her maidens. The Fairy Morgana, however, appears to her, declaring that Merlin can only be released from perdition by a woman laying down her life as a sacrifice for his. Meanwhile the Knights come once more to seek Merlin's aid for their harassed King, and are full of grief at sight of the tormented captive; and Merlin, fuming at his impotency, now passion-ately calls upon his Demon Familiar, recklessly promising his soul to the Powers of Evil in return for his liberty, to enable him to serve his country once again. The compact is accepted, and as his chains fall from him, Merlin dashes off with his friends into the midst of the battle. The beautiful and sorrowful Vivien appears to greet him on his return, but she is filled with despair when he is brought to her in a dying condition, having gained the victory for his King, but received mortal injury in so doing. As he lies dying, the Demon appears to claim his reward the soul of the mighty Merlin; but Vivien, remembering the message of the Fairy Morgana, and determined to save her beloved one from perdition, snatches up a dagger and stabs herself to the heart, and the lovers expire side by side.

62. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

Grand Opera in Four Acts By Carl Goldmark

Libretto By Mosenthal

First Produced Vienna, March, 1875

Chief Characters The Queen of Sheba, Sulamith, Astaroth, King Solomon, High Priest

THE subject of this opera has little to do with the Bible narrative, an original and most dramatic

plot having been evolved by the librettist. Assad, chief courtier of King Solomon, has been despatched by his royal master to escort his beautiful and celebrated visitor, the Queen of Sheba, to the palace; and on returning to announce the approach of the gorgeous Princess, he appears so disturbed that King Solomon, and also his betrothed sweetheart, Sulamith, daughter of the High Priest, inquire the cause. Assad tells his master that on his journey he met a mysterious nymph bathing in a well, who, by her alluring beauty and magic spells, won his adoration. The King is greatly disturbed, and he makes arrangements for the wedding of the young man with Sulamith on the morrow. The Queen of Sheba is now announced, and received with great pomp and state; and when she presently unveils, Assad is amazed and horrified to discover that she is the enchantress he met in the desert. At first the Queen affects not to know or be interested in Assad; but on learning that he is to wed Sulamith on the morrow a sudden jealous passion for him springs up within her, and she endeavours to lure him away from his devoted sweet-heart and secure him as her own lover. When night falls, she comes into the palace gardens with her chief slave, Astaroth, with whose sweet singing she entices the sleepless Assad to come forth; then, meeting him, she uses all her best arts to captivate the young man, who finds himself unable to resist her wiles, even though he struggles against his passion. In the next act the marriage of Assad and Sulamith is about to take place in the Temple; and here again the Queen of Sheba, who is present, exercises her arts upon her victim, luring him to her side by tenderly whispering his name in accents of love; and Assad, forgetful of his fair bride, flings himself at the feet of the siren and madly declares his passion for her. The High Priest upbraids him for thus desecrating the Temple, and the infatuated young man is condemned to death. Both the Queen of Sheba and Sulamith, however, plead for him, and finally the King changes the sentence to banishment. In the last act Assad is found in the desert, whither he has retired in despair, having now realised and repented of his foolish and guilty passion for the heathen woman; and he is overcome with remorse for his cruel treatment of the gentle Sulamith, whom he has always loved. As these thoughts pass through his mind, the enchantress again visits him, and tries her witching arts on him once more; but Assad this time scornfully repulses her advances, and after a passionate struggle between the two opposing wills, the young man finally conquers, and the Queen departs, crestfallen. Exposure to many days of burning heat has by this time utterly exhausted the weary Assad, who is dying, when Sulamith presently appears, having taken the long and perilous journey, heedless of danger and discomfort, that she may be near at hand to comfort the exile; but she has no sooner appeared than a terrible simoon suddenly sweeps down upon them, and as the blinding sand gradually clears away, and the daylight once more appears, the lovers are seen dead in each other's arms.

63. ESMERALDA

Opera in Four Acts By A. Goring Thomas

Libretto based on Victor Hugo's "Hunchback of Notre Dame," by Alberto Randegger

First Produced Drury Lane, March, 1883

Chief Characters Esmeralda, Fleur-de-Lys, Phoebus de Chateaupers, Claude Frolo, Quasimodo, Gringoire, Clopin

THE story of this charming opera is founded upon Victor Hugo's romance, "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," which it follows pretty closely in its main outlines, although, in order to fulfil the demands of opera comique, the tragic and dramatic dénouement of the original tale is converted

into the requisite happy ending for the pretty heroine and her lover. The scene is laid in Paris, during the fifteenth century, where Esmeralda, a beautiful gipsy-girl, is seen heading the revels in the Beggars' Quarter, she being respected by these careless folk as their Queen. Esmeralda leads about with her a pet goat, of which she is passionately fond; and she is gaily dressed in spangled garments, and earns her living by singing and dancing. At the beginning of the opera, Gringoire, a poor poet, is captured by the beggars as a spy who ought not to have looked upon their revels; and Clopin, the rough and hilarious King of the Beggars, nonchalantly orders his instant execution, declaring that he can only be saved from such a fate if he can find a wife amongst the lively company. None of these merry maidens, however, will consent to wed a poet, and Gringoire is about to be delivered to a summary death, when Esmeralda appears and announces that she will wed the stranger. She tells the poet, however, that she will be his wife in name only, for she has no love for him, and only does the deed to save his life; and the Beggar King then unites them in gipsy fashion, and the merry company dance off. Claude Frollo, an unprincipled and dissolute priest, now appears with his panderer, Quasimodo, the hunchback bellringer of Notre Dame, who is in his pay, and has been his tool in many evil doings; and the pair now hatch a plot to kidnap the lovely Esmeralda and take her to the abode of Frollo, who has conceived a violent passion for her. When the gipsy-girl presently appears alone, therefore, she is seized by Quasimodo, who endeavours to carry her off; but her cries of distress bring upon the scene the watch, headed by Phoebus de Chateaupers, a handsome young officer, who quickly rescues the girl, whilst his followers capture Quasimodo, whom they are about to commit to the hangman's hands when Esmeralda, full of compassion for the poor, misshapen creature, intercedes for him, and he is released. Phoebus and Esmeralda fall in love with one another, and the young officer gives the girl as a keepsake a finely embroidered scarf, which has been a present to him from his fiancée, Fleur-de-Lys, whom he has never truly loved. In Act 2 this gay and frivolous lady is seen holding a smart fête, which is attended by her many admirers. When Phoebus appears, she reproaches him for his recent absences and coldness of manner; but she soon perceives the reason for it. For, by a curious chance, the chief dancer in the ballet she has provided to amuse her guests is the gipsy-girl, Esmeralda, who charms all by her beauty and exquisite movements; and as she happens to be wearing the scarf given her by Phoebus, she is at once pounced upon by the indignant Fleur-de-Lys. A stormy scene ensues, and Fleur-de-Lys roundly up-braids her truant fiancé, Phoebus, who boldly protects the trembling Esmeralda, and, announcing his love for her, leads her away. Act 3 takes place in Esmeralda's humble chamber, where Gringoire, the poet, begs for the consummation of his unconventional union with the gipsy-girl, who, however, promptly orders him away, since the ceremony was but a meaningless farce. After he has departed, grumbling, Esmeralda goes out to watch for her lover, Phoebus, whom she is expecting; and during her absence the evil Frollo enters and hides behind a curtain as the lovers enter. Their sweet love-making so fills him with rage and jealousy that he springs out and stabs Phoebus, rushing away before he is seen by Esmeralda, who, kneeling beside her fallen lover, is so dazed by the sudden calamity that when a crowd of people enter in response to her first cries of woe, she is utterly unable to say a word explaining her position, and is consequently accused of having murdered the popular Phoebus, and is dragged away a captive. Act 4 opens with the Beggars' celebration of the Feast of Folly, after which a procession enters, leading the unfortunate Esmeralda to execution, she having been convicted of the murder of her lover, there being no witnesses to speak for her. The villain, Frollo, however, offers to rescue her if she will consent to accept his love; but upon Esmeralda scornfully declaring she would rather die than suffer his hateful embraces, she is about to be hurried to the stake, there to be burnt as a witch and murderess, when there comes a welcome interruption.

Gringoire suddenly appears with Phoebus himself, whose wound not having proved fatal after all, has recovered, and has just managed to reach the place of execution in time to save his beloved one from her awful fate. The baffled Frollo, furious at this turn of affairs, springs forward once more to stab his rival; but he is stopped by Quasimodo, who, ever since her compassionate pity for him, has been the devoted slave of Esmeralda, and who now, by receiving the blow intended for her lover, gladly gives his own life to save her happiness. The wicked Frollo is seized and led away captive, and the opera ends with the union of the now happy lovers.

64. FAUST

Grand Opera in Five Acts By Charles Gounod

Libretto By Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

First Produced Paris, March, 1859

Chief Characters Margarita, Martha, Faust, Mephistopheles, Valentine, Siebel

THE story is founded on the first part of Goethe's great drama, the scene taking place in a German town. Faust, an old and learned student, is in his study, philosophising on the unsatisfying results of his life's labours, his insatiable thirst for knowledge having brought him little reward; and, chafing at his advancing age, which will prevent his further studies, he summons to his assistance an Evil Spirit, who appears in the guise of a dashing cavalier, Mephistopheles, who persuades him to try life in a new form, promising him renewed youth, beauty, and wit, in exchange for his soul. The compact is made; and by the demoniacal powers of Mephistopheles, Faust is transformed into a handsome young cavalier, full of an eager desire for pleasure, and possessed with ample means for the gratifying of his wishes. Mephistopheles shows him in a vision a lovely village maiden, the gentle Margarita; and Faust, falling desperately in love with her, seeks an opportunity to gratify his longing. In this he is assisted by the evil Mephistopheles, who quickly finds an opportunity for bringing the pair together. Margarita, who is greatly beloved by her brother and guardian, Valentine, is left by him in the charge of an elderly dame named Martha, when he himself is called away to the wars; and Margarita being as virtuous a maiden as she is lovely, he feels that she will be safe until his return. Dame Martha, however, is not a very prudent guardian; for when Faust, having made the acquaintance of the lovely maiden, is brought to her retreat by Mephistopheles, the foolish Dame allows the lovers entire freedom for the satisfying of their passion, being herself too much occupied with the flatteries and attentions lavished upon her by the cunning Demon, in whom she only sees a very fascinating cavalier. At first Margarita resists her lover, but her own love is so strong that she is powerless to fight against it, and, being childishly innocent of the ways of the world, she is irresistibly led away from the paths of virtue. The awakening from her blissful dream comes at last, however; and when Valentine returns from the wars and hears of his sister's undoing, he furiously challenges her betrayer, and a fierce fight ensues. Faust has no wish to harm the brother of his beloved one, but Mephistopheles, by a dexterous movement, directs the sword of his protégé to the heart of Valentine, who falls dying at his feet. Margarita shrieks as her brother falls, and rushes to his side; but Valentine, with his last breath, curses her for the evil she has wrought. The poor girl is so overcome with horror at this terrible ending to her fair love-dream, and so harassed by the persecutions of her friends and neighbours, that her mind gives way, and in a sudden frenzy she takes the life of her new-born babe. For this irresponsible crime she is thrown into prison and condemned to death. Meanwhile Faust, who has been transported by

Mephistopheles into other regions of pleasure, cannot forget his beloved Margarita, for whom he had conceived a true affection; and seeing in a vision that she is in trouble and danger, he will not rest until he sees her again. He therefore gains access to her prison, accompanied by Mephistopheles, and passionately implores the exhausted and grief-stricken girl to fly with him and thus escape the shameful death before her, Mephistopheles joining his entreaties also, hoping to thus gain another soul. But Margarita is now once more in her right mind, and resists the temptations which they bring before her; and, feeling only remorse and true repentance, she refuses all their entreaties, declaring that her only hope now is in Heaven, and the acceptance of her sincere prayers for forgiveness. Her prayers are answered, and ere the time arrives for her execution, the unhappy girl dies peacefully. Faust is overcome with grief; and even Mephistopheles is cowed, and shrinks back, balked of his prey, as angel voices are heard rejoicing over the "sinner that repenteth," and welcoming the spirit of the gentle Margarita as it is carried by the angels into the realms of bliss.

65. PHILEMON AND BAUCIS

Opera in Two Acts By Charles Gounod

Libretto By Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

First Produced Paris, February, 1860

Chief Characters Baucis, Philemon, Jupiter, Vulcan

THE story is founded on the old Greek legend. Philemon and Baucis are two humble peasants, who, though now old and worn, have not ceased to love one another; and they still dwell contentedly in their poor cottage, living a simple pastoral life. They are speaking of their happiness, and only regretting that their youth has gone, and that they must soon be separated by death, when two strangers crave shelter from a sudden violent storm. These are the two gods, Jupiter and Vulcan, who have come to punish certain wicked mortals who have offended them; but they are disguised as ordinary wanderers, and the old couple merely regard them as strangers. They bid them a hearty welcome, and set before them a meal, which, though humble, is the best they can produce; and they treat their guests so well that the gods are delighted, and Jupiter proceeds to astonish them. He changes the milk offered to him into wine; and by this act Baucis recognises his divinity, and is greatly awed thereby. Jupiter, however, reassures her, and the meal proceeds; and when, later on, touched by the kindly hospitality of the good old couple, he promises to grant any request they may make, the eager Baucis declares that she has only one desire that she and her beloved husband may together enjoy the pleasures of their happy youth once more. When they retire to rest, therefore, Jupiter casts a spell over the pair; and when they awaken next morning, they are over-joyed to find themselves young and beautiful as in the days of their first youth. Not only that, but their humble cottage has been transformed into a fine palace; and the happy couple are filled with delight and gratitude at this wonderful realising of their dearest wish. Clouds quickly gather, however; for Jupiter, attracted by the fair beauty of the rejuvenated Baucis, falls in love with her himself a fact which pleases the vanity of the lovely maiden, so that she is willing to mildly coquette with him. This makes Philemon furiously jealous; and a strained state of affairs quickly comes to pass, in which the morose Vulcan gets involved, greatly to his disgust, since he has himself suffered much from such scenes with his own faithless wife, Venus. When Baucis, however, discovers that she has offended her husband, she is quickly filled

with remorse and grief, since her love for him has never changed; and humbly kneeling before Jupiter, she entreats him to restore her to her old age once more, since his gift of youth has caused her to grieve her beloved husband, for which act she only longs now to atone. Philemon hears this request, and sees that his wife still loves him; and he hurries to her side, and clasping her in his arms, also begs the god to leave them to their old age and poverty, in which state they were at least happy in each other's love. Jupiter is touched and amazed at the sight of such real devotion and perfect love; and declaring that they shall still retain their youth and beauty, he magnanimously renounces the gratifying of his own pleasure, and withdraws with Vulcan, leaving the reunited couple to happiness and contentment in their new life.

66. ROMEO AND JULIET

Grand Opera in Five Acts By Charles Gounod

Libretto, adapted by Shakespeare's Tragedy, By Jules Barbier and Michel Carré

First Produced Paris, April, 1867

Chief Characters Juliet, Gertrude (the Nurse), Romeo, Tybalt, Mercutio, Benvolio, Friar Laurence, Paris

THE story follows on very similar lines to Shakespeare's tragedy, the action taking place in Verona. The first act opens at the festival held at the house of Capulet, to which come uninvited the young lords, Romeo, Mercutio, and Benvolio, of the Montague family, in defiance of the great feud which exists between these two foremost houses of the city. Here Romeo meets and falls in love with Capulet's fair young daughter, Juliet, who is betrothed, against her will, to her kinsman, Paris; and his passion is quickly returned by the maiden. Romeo is masked, but his disguise is soon penetrated by the young Capulet lord, Tybalt, who seeks a quarrel with this rash young man for thus venturing into an enemy's house. Old Capulet, however, puts an end to the disturbance, and the festivities are renewed. After the guests have departed, we are taken to the garden outside Capulet's house, whither Romeo has come to seek his lady-love; and when Juliet presently appears at the balcony he is enraptured, and the two declare their love. They are interrupted by the girl's old nurse, Gertrude, and some of the retainers; but when all is still once more, the lovers arrange to be married in secret, knowing that the family feud will prevent them from securing the consent of their parents. In the next scene the secret marriage takes place in the cell of a friendly monk, Friar Laurence; and when Juliet has again returned to her home Romeo and his friends have a stormy meeting with the hot-tempered young Capulet lord, Tybalt, which results in a fierce quarrel. Tybalt and Mercutio fight, the latter being slain; and on seeing his beloved friend fall mortally wounded, Romeo furiously attacks Tybalt, and kills him in his turn. The noise of the fighting quickly brings around a crowd of Capulets and Montagues, each loudly defending his own partisans; and, finally, the Duke of Verona himself appears on the scene, and condemns Romeo to banishment. Before being driven to exile, however, Romeo determined to see his beloved Juliet once more; and making his way to the garden of the Capulets, he is assisted by the old nurse in obtaining a last interview with his bride. The lovers spend a short blissful interview together; and then, after a passionate farewell, they separate, Romeo departing at dawn to another city. He has been scarcely gone a few minutes when Capulet enters, bidding his daughter prepare for her marriage with the Count Paris, which he has determined shall take place that day, heedless of Juliet's entreaties for the ceremony to be delayed. Still not daring to reveal the fact that she is

already wedded, he refuses to listen to her plea, and sternly commands her to make ready. Juliet, in despair, seeks the counsel of friendly Friar Laurence, who gives her a potion, which he bids her to take just before the ceremony, and the effect of which will be that she will fall into a trance and appear as one dead. Her friends will then lay her in the vault of the Capulets; and in the early dawn she will awaken, and be rescued from her temporary prison by Romeo, who will return for the purpose and bear her away with him into exile. Juliet agrees to follow out these directions, whilst the Friar sends off a messenger to acquaint Romeo with the plan. The next scene is the wedding festival, at which the guests are presently horrified at seeing Juliet (who has taken the potion) fall to the ground, apparently dead; and the scene ends in confusion and dismay and the grief of the bereaved parents. The final act takes place in the vault of the Capulets, where Juliet has been laid, being deemed dead by her friends. Thither comes Romeo, full of woe; for the news of Juliet's death has reached him on his journey, and he has hastened back to Verona, before Friar Laurence's servant has arrived with the message giving him the true facts of the case. On entering the vault, therefore, he believes that Juliet is indeed dead, and gives vent to a passionate outburst of grief; then, determining that he will not live without his beloved one, he swallows the contents of a phial of poison he has purchased for the purpose. As he falls dying beside the bier, however, Juliet awakens from her trance, and is full of joy on beholding her husband, thinking he has come to take her away, as arranged by the old Friar; but when she grasps the terrible truth she also determines to live no longer, and, seizing a dagger she had concealed upon her before taking the potion, she stabs herself. Thus the devoted lovers die in each other's arms, and are united in death.

67. MELUSINE

Opera in Three Acts By Carl Gramman

Libretto Adapted from the Poem of C. Camp

First Produced Wiesbaden, 1874

Chief Characters Melusine, Duchess de Lusignan, Raymond, Bertram, Peter the Hermit

THE scene is laid in the Rhine-land country during the Crusade period. In a forest of the Duchy of Lusignan dwells Melusine, Queen of the River Nymphs and Fairies; and during one of the fairy revels by moonlight the bugles of a hunting-party are heard, and the young Count Raymond, son of the Duke de Lusignan, appears with his half-brother, Bertram, both of them seeking their father who has got separated from the party. Bertram is jealous of his brother, and plots for his ruin. He presently hides in the forest; and Raymond, hearing a loud cry for help, hastens to the bushes from whence it comes, thinking it is his father's voice. Melusine, however, issues from her grotto to warn him not to go, knowing that he is fated to slay his father unwittingly; but Raymond heeds her not and rushes off. He soon returns in wildest grief; for, in trying to save his father from the attack of a wild boar, his weapon entered the heart of the old Duke, instead of that of the savage beast. As the distraught young man gazes around him, he beholds the lovely nymph, who comes forward to offer him comfort and sympathy; and the pair fall in love with one another. Then Melusine offers the Count a magic draught, which, when he has swallowed it, causes him to forget what has recently happened, and to think only of his newly-born love. He implores the beautiful Fairy to be his wife; and Melusine consents on condition that he will never pry upon her should she ever leave him on the nights of full-moon. He agrees; and when the hunters presently appear he introduces the nymph as his chosen bride. On beholding the loveliness of his envied brother's sweetheart,

Bertram becomes more jealous of him than ever, for he also falls in love with Melusine. In the next act, after the burial rites of the old Duke have taken place, Raymond introduces Melusine to his mother and friends as his forest bride; but she is looked upon with suspicion by all, and Peter the Hermit, who is present, warns them against her as a fairy spirit whose lures and spells' are dangerous to mortals. Later, when Raymond and Melusine are alone, rejoicing in each other's love, seeing that it is the time of full-moon, the latter hastens from her husband's side, eager to join in the fairy revels she knows will now be held in the forest. Raymond, remembering his promise, reluctantly remains alone; but the crafty Bertram sees and follows her, to pour forth his own protestations of love for the beautiful maiden. But Melusine scornfully repulses him; and then, in revenge, Bertram finds an opportunity to accuse his half-brother of the murder of their father, since his blood-stained sword was discovered beside the dead Duke when found in the forest. Raymond repudiates the accusation, and prepares to attack his accuser; but his mother entreats him to lay aside his sword. Then, hearing sounds of singing and revels near at hand, and believing that Melusine is enjoying herself with her spirit companions, Raymond hurries to an ancient temple or arbour in the garden, and, looking within, he indeed beholds the lovely water nymph disporting herself with her fairy friends amidst the fountains, and dancing in the moonlight. Then, recollecting his broken promise, he is filled with grief, knowing that misfortune will now befall his love. Melusine is now avoided by the mortals around her; and when, after her moonlight revels, she finds her husband's portals closed upon her by orders of the Duchess, she entreats Raymond to assure her of his love once more. But Peter the Hermit has now appeared with a band of Crusaders and has gained Raymond's promise to join the Holy Wars; yet Melusine implores him to stay with her, and pleads with Bertram also. Then Raymond, seeing her kneel to Bertram, who has again threatened to prove 'that his half-brother murdered their father, is filled with mad jealousy, believing her unfaithful; and, full of anger, he repudiates and casts her off. Instantly, as Melusine flings her betrothal ring at her husband's feet, there is a terrific storm of thunder, which wrecks the palace, and causes the Rhine to overflow its banks, whilst the heartbroken nymph returns to the water once more; and' Bertram, leaping in after her, is drowned. The scene quickly changes to the peaceful forest dell, where Raymond presently appears in the dress of a pilgrim. He is seeking his lost spirit wife; and' when Melusine, hearing his voice, comes forth from her river-cave, he hastens to her side, and gladly greets her. Having once spurned the river-nymph, however, her embrace can only bring him death; and as the lovers are folded' in each other's arms, the young man dies, and Melusine lays him to rest beneath the lilies in the stream.

68. L'ECLAIR

Opera Comique By Jacques François Fromenthal Elias Halévy

Libretto By St George and Planard

First Produced Opera Comique, Paris, Dec., 1835

Chief Characters Henriette, Madame Darlbel, Lionel, George

THE scene is laid in Boston, Massachusetts, at the end of the eighteenth century. Madame Darbel, a lively young widow of Boston, and her sister Henriette, receive a visit from their cousin, George, an Englishman, who has been sent to them by a rich uncle with strict instructions that he is to marry one of the sisters, when he will divide his fortune between them. George, however, is very conceited, and proceeds to flirt with both the ladies; but the sisters are quite equal to the occasion,

and secure much good entertainment at the young man's expense. After teasing him mercilessly, they finally leave him to partake of a meal; and whilst alone he is visited by a young American naval officer, Lionel, who has come ashore for a few hours to hunt. Lionel presently departs, and takes a boat back to his ship; but he is caught by a violent thunderstorm, and his boat is struck and capsized. Lionel himself is struck by the lightning and blinded, in which helpless state he is cast on shore. He is found by Henriette and brought to her sister's house, where she nurses him back to health; but as his blindness continues, he puts himself under the care of the sister's uncle, who is a doctor. Meanwhile he and Henriette have fallen in love with one another; but George, taking it for granted that she will accept him, has by this time decided that he prefers to marry Henriette rather than her sister. Therefore, when he sees Henriette and Lionel enjoying a happy little love scene, he receives a great shock to his vanity. Meanwhile, Lionel has received such good treatment for his eyes from the old uncle that when he is at last able to remove his bandages it is found that his temporary blindness is a thing of the past. However, having never yet beheld Henriette, and happening to see her sister first after receiving back his sight, he mistakes the lively widow for his sweetheart, the voices of the two sisters being very similar. He gives her a loving greeting; and before the widow has time to rectify his mistake the pair are seen by Henriette, who, deeming her lover to be false, is filled with grief, and runs away immediately from the neighbourhood. From her hiding-place she writes to Lionel advising him to marry her sister; and at the same time she sends a message to George saying that she is willing to become his wife, and so please the uncle. She is not, however, long permitted to remain under this misapprehension; and by pretending that Madame Darbel and Lionel have been married, the friend's induce her to return; and then after hearing the true explanation of the matter, she is reconciled to Lionel, and they are betrothed. George now assures Madame Darbel that she has been his favourite from the first; and the widow therefore bestows herself on him, and the two couples are satisfied.

69. THE JEWESS

Grand Opera in Five Acts By Jacques François Fromental Elias Halévy

Libretto By Eugene Scribe

First Produced Paris, February, 1835

Chief Characters Rachel, Princess Eudossia, Eleazar, Cardinal di Brogni, Leopold

THE scene is laid in Constance, in the Middle Ages. The Cardinal de Brogni exercises much power in the city; and he is a man who suffers from a continual grief. Before entering the Church, when Chief Magistrate of Rome, he had banished all the Jews from the city. Before the harassed Hebrews had all departed, however, Rome was attacked by the Neapolitan army, and De Brogni's palace was burned, his wife and child being believed to have perished in the flames. The child, a baby girl, however, was rescued from the burning building by a Jew named Eleazar, who took her away with him into exile. When the opera begins Eleazar is in Constance, where he has become a wealthy jeweller; but he and his supposed daughter, Rachel, have rendered themselves unpopular from the fact that they belong to the Jewish faith, and have refused to join in the general holiday on the return of the Christian Emperor Sigismund. They are mobbed by the people, and are twice saved from their fury, first by the Cardinal de Brogni, and secondly by the young Prince Leopold, who has seen and fallen in love with the beautiful Rachel. He is, however, the affianced husband of the Princess Eudossia, niece of the Emperor; and so he disguises himself as a young Jew,

calling himself Samuel, and thus makes friends with Eleazar and his daughter, even joining in the religious ceremonies which are held in the jeweller's house. The simple Rachel returns the love of the supposed Samuel, who poses as an artist; and when their passion is discovered by Eleazar, the old Jew consents to their union, even when Leopold confesses that he is no Jew but a Christian. The Princess Eudossia visits the jeweller's house whilst Leopold is there; and whilst the latter keeps his face concealed from her, she orders a magnificent chain from Eleazar, bidding him bring it to the palace on the morrow, as she intends it as a gift for her affianced husband, of whom she speaks in such loving terms that Leopold is filled with remorse, and determines in his own mind to have nothing further to do with Rachel. Consequently, in the next scene, when Eleazar and Rachel bring the chain to the palace, and are shown into the presence of Princess Eudossia and the Prince, and the Jewish maiden recognises in the latter her own lover, the supposed Samuel, he refuses to acknowledge her, and basely repudiates her claim upon him as her lover. Rachel, then, indignantly denounces him, and proclaims to all the assembled courtiers that he has been guilty of a passion for her, a Jewess, being already the affianced husband of the Princess Eudossia. Thus, by the laws then 'existent, she dooms both herself and her lover to death, since it is regarded as a crime for a Christian to enter into such a contract with a Jewess. The Cardinal de Brogni therefore orders the young Prince and Rachel to be imprisoned, under sentence of death; and Eleazar is committed with them as an accomplice. The Cardinal offers Eleazar a pardon if he and his daughter will become Christians; but the Jew proudly refuses to do so, and, in revenge, taunts the Cardinal by announcing that he knows the proud Churchman's own child, so long thought to have expired in the burning palace, to be alive, re-fusing, however, to declare her whereabouts until after Rachel's execution. Eudossia visits Rachel in prison, and implores her to save Leopold's life by declaring her accusation against him to be a false one; and the Jewess, touched by the sight of another's grief, and, feeling remorse for her denunciation of the man she still loves, generously promises to grant her request. On Rachel's declaration that the young Prince has never been her lover, therefore, Leopold is liberated; but Rachel and her father are still condemned to death for conspiring against the life of a Christian, and are sentenced to be thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. Eleazar, horrified at the terrible death before his adopted daughter, now be-seeches the poor girl to renounce her faith, and, by becoming a Christian, secure the pardon offered by the Cardinal; but Rachel staunchly declares her de-termination to remain true to the faith she has been brought up in, and she willingly ascends to the place of execution. The Cardinal once more entreats Eleazar to reveal the place where his long-lost child may be found; and the triumphant Jew points to Rachel as she leaps into the seething cauldron, declaring that she is the child whom he had rescued and brought up as his own. He then leaps into the cauldron after her; and the proud Cardinal, realising with horror that he has thus condemned his own child to death, falls senseless to the ground.

70. LE PRE AUX CLERCS

Opera Comique in Three Acts. By Louis Joseph Ferdinand Hérold
Libretto by De Planard, adapted from Prosper Mérimée's Romance
First Produced Paris, December, 1832

Chief Characters Countess Isabella, Nicette, Marguerite de Valois, Mergy, Comminge, Girot

THE scene is laid in Paris, in the time of Charles IX. A young ambassador, named Mergy, is sent

from the King of Navarre to negotiate with Catherine, the Queen-Mother, for the return of his beautiful and lively wife, Marguerite, who is being compelled to remain in Paris, practically a prisoner. Mergy finds his task a difficult one, owing to the many intrigues of the French Court, and whilst he is carrying out his negotiations his own love romance brings him into fresh difficulties. He is in love with a beautiful young lady of the Court, the Countess Isabella, who also has another ardent admirer in Comminge, a particular friend of Charles IX, who quickly becomes extremely jealous of the ambassador, and tries desperately to ingratiate himself with the lady. Isabella, however, loves Mergy, and disdains the attentions of Comminge, whom she knows to be a bully and noted duellist; but by accepting the suit of the former she brings him into great danger. Comminge soon finds an opportunity to pick a quarrel with his rival; and the result is that a duel takes place between the pair at a celebrated duelling meeting-place, known as the Pré aux Clercs. Isabella is in terror on hearing that her lover has been challenged by the famous duellist, fearing that he can have no chance of coming through the meeting alive; but Mergy happens to be exceedingly skilful himself with his weapon, and in the encounter he kills his opponent. However, Mergy is still in danger, because of the edict against duelling; and he is compelled to remain in hiding. Isabella, however, meets him again, and they enter into a secret marriage. They have friends in the innkeeper at the Pré aux Clercs, Giroton and his sweetheart Nicette; and with the help also of the Queen of Navarre, the newly-married pair at length are able to escape from Paris and reach a place of safety.

71. ZAMPA

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Louis Joseph Ferdinand Hérold

Libretto By Mellesville

First Produced Paris, May, 1831

Chief Characters Camilla, The Statue of Albina, Zampa, Alfonso, Count Lugano

THE action takes place in Sicily, in the beginning of last century. Camilla, daughter of Count Lugano, is betrothed to Alfonso di Monza, a Sicilian officer; but on the day the wedding is to be celebrated neither the bridegroom nor his future father-in-law are to be found. Camilla is more than usually alarmed, since there is a celebrated and desperate pirate-captain on shore in the neighbourhood; but her maid allays this fear by announcing that the buccaneer, Zampa, has already been captured and condemned to be shot. Nevertheless, the desolate bride soon hears that both her beloved ones are indeed in the power of Zampa, who has escaped from captivity; and the pirate himself presently appears with his desperadoes at the château, and announces to Camilla that unless she will consent to marry him, and hand over her father's wealth to him, he will slay the two captives, whom he had secured for this same purpose. Camilla is helpless, and entreats for mercy, but Zampa only laughs insolently; and seeing a statue of a beautiful woman in the salon, and recognising it as representing Albina, a girl whose heart he had broken by his desertion of her, he flippantly places a ring on its finger, caring nothing when the statue, at his touch, raises its hand in a menacing attitude. In the next act the captive Alfonso is brought to the château, and soldiers also arrive to secure the escaped pirate; but when Zampa produces a letter, containing the Governor's free pardon on condition he joins in the fighting then taking place against the Turks, and announces his intention to do so, they withdraw. Zampa, however, still intends to wed the lovely Camilla, in spite of her entreaties to be sent to a convent; and finding the lives of her

beloved ones are in greater danger than ever, she gives a very unwilling consent to wed with the triumphant Zampa, who now informs her that he is in reality the Count di Monza, Alfonso's elder brother. In the third act Camilla seeks refuge at the altar in the chapel; but even here the sacrilegious Zampa follows, and roughly drags her away; but he does not secure his victim, for he is himself seized by the statue of Albina, which has become animated, and which now drags him down to the beach and into the waves, where he is drowned. Alfonso and Camilla are now free to be united; and as they stand by the shore to receive the restored Count Lugano, the spirit of Albina rises from the water to bless them.

72. THE APOTHECARY

Opera Comique By Josef Haydn

Chief Characters Grilletta, Mengino, Volpino, Sempronio (the Apothecary)

THE story centres round a young girl, Grilletta, the pretty ward of old Sempronio, an apothecary. Grilletta has two special admirers, Volpino, a rich and very conceited young man, for whom she has no liking, and Mengino, who, though not possessing a large fortune, she really cares for, since he is of a kindly, devoted nature. Mengino is of a retiring disposition also, and somewhat timid in showing his love for the pretty Grilletta; and in order to be near the object of his affection he has hired himself out as an assistant to old Sempronio, though he really has no knowledge of drugs at all. The young people find many opportunities of meeting and indulging in little love scenes; but when these are discovered by old Sempronio he is furious, since he intends to wed his pretty ward himself, and he drives them asunder whenever he sees them together. The sweethearts, however, still manage to meet, and take every opportunity of love-making whenever the apothecary's back is turned; and though Volpino also tries the same game, he is only snubbed by Grilletta for his pains. When Sempronio sees that matters are growing serious, he determines to hurry on his own marriage with his ward, despite her wishes to the contrary; and he sends out Mengino to fetch a notary at once. In a short time two notaries appear, each declaring himself to be the one engaged, and each demanding his fee; and the old apothecary bids both sit down and write out a marriage contract for him. Grilletta recognises in the two notaries her two sweethearts, who both insert their own names instead of Sempronio's in the document; and when they hand the Contracts one to each party the fraud is of course discovered, and Volpino takes to flight, whilst Grilletta is assured by Mengino that he will still gain her. Volpino still has another trick, however; and he presently appears disguised as a Turkish Pasha, with a fine suite of Turks, declaring he has come to offer Sempronio the post of Court Apothecary to the Sultan, who also desires to buy up all his drugs. He deceives Sempronio completely, the old man being quite alarmed at the rough treatment his precious drugs receive at the hands of the Turkish servants; but Grilletta and Mengino pierce the disguise, and Mengino succeeds in getting the Apothecary to promise his ward in marriage if he is able to get the intruders out of his house. Old Sempronio, who is really frightened by these strangers, readily grants this, and signs a paper to that effect; but no sooner has he signed the paper than Volpino is unmasked by Mengino and his sweetheart. The lovers therefore gain their desire; and the unsuccessful suitors are compelled to make the best of their disappointment.

73. HANSEL AND GRETEL

Fairy Opera By Engelbert Humperdinck

Libretto Adapted from Grimm's Fairy Tale by Adeiheid Wette

First Produced Weimar, 1893

Chief Characters Hansel and Gretel, Gertrude (their mother), Peter the Broom-maker (their father), The Witch, The Sleep Fairy, The Dawn Fairy

THE plot follows almost exactly the simple fairy story. In the first act the two children, Hansel and Gretel, are discovered in the hut of their father, Peter the Broom-maker. Their parents are out, and the two children have been bidden to knit and make brooms during their absence. They are, however, very hungry; but as a jug of milk is on the table they know they will get some of it for their supper later on, and they are so enlivened by the thought that they begin to dance and frolic about, singing nursery songs, and enjoying themselves mightily. When their mother presently returns, however, she is angry at seeing them idling instead of working; and in her wrath she prepares to beat them, but instead of hitting Hansel she knocks over the jug of milk, so that there is now no supper. The mother, therefore, puts a basket into Gretel's hands, and sends both children out into the forest to gather strawberries, bidding them not to return unless their basket is well-filled. After the children have gone, Peter the Broom-maker returns in high good spirits, having met with good fortune during the day, and brought back with him a good supper; but on learning that the children have been sent out into the forest, he upbraids the mother, declaring that they may fall into the clutches of the witch who dwells in the forest in a sweet-meat house, by means of which she entices children inside and then bakes them into gingerbread cakes. The mother now repents of her harshness; and, full of anxiety, the couple rush out into the forest to search for the little wanderers. In Act 2 Hansel and Gretel are shown wandering in the wood, gathering strawberries and eating them, and weaving garlands of flowers, whilst they listen to the cuckoo. They are very happy until the darkness begins to settle in; and then, dis-covering that they have lost the path, and cannot return home, they are frightened, and Gretel weeps. Hansel, however, comforts her; and finally the pair lie down, say their prayers, and go to sleep, being lulled into a deep slumber by the Sleep Fairy, who throws sand in their eyes. We are next shown the beautiful dream that comes to them; for as the night mists roll away, fourteen Angels are seen descending a golden ladder of light, and grouping themselves around the sleeping children as heavenly guardians. After a while, the Dawn Fairy appears, and awakens the pair by shaking dewdrops over them; and when she has departed, the children see that they are close to a little house made of gingerbread and sweets, and being very hungry they break off some of the pleasant sweet stuff and eat it. At that moment, however, the old witch appears, riding on a broomstick, and, seiz-ing the children, she puts Hansel into a cage to fatten up, whilst she forces Gretel to help her with her cooking. She makes up a big fire, and bids Gretel feel if the oven is hot enough; but the little girl pre-tends not to understand how to do so. The old witch then opens the oven-door herself; whereupon Gretel bundles her inside, with the help of Hansel, who has managed to escape from his cage, and on the door being closed their enemy is baked in her own oven, and is presently brought out again in the form of a huge gingerbread cake. As the witch bakes, the oven falls into fragments, and a number of children appear, rejoicing that since the old woman's magic has come to an end they are restored to their right forms once more, having been enchanted into cakes and sweets for a long time. As the merry youngsters are dancing and playing Peter and Gertrude appear, and are full of joy at finding their little ones safe and well; and the opera ends with a merry romp and a song of thanksgiving.

74 THE FOLKUNGS

Grand Opera in Five Acts By Edmund Kretschmer

Libretto By Mosenthal

First Produced Dresden, June, 1875

Chief Characters Princess Maria, Karin, Magnus, Bengt (Duke of Schoonen), Sten Patrik, Lars Olafsen, Abbot Ansgar

THE action takes place in Sweden, during the thirteenth century. The young Prince Magnus has been lured away to the lonely convent of Nydal on the mountain tops by Sten Patrik, the tool of Bengt, Duke of Schoonen, who is conspiring against the throne, hoping, by getting rid of the heir, to marry the Princess Maria, his cousin, and ascend the throne after the death of the old King Erik. The young Prince is now told that he must either prepare for instant death, or take the vows of the convent to which he has been brought; and, having no means of defending himself against the ruffian followers of Sten, the royal youth swears upon the latter's sword to forego his rights and enter the convent. He is therefore received as an orphan youth by the Abbot, who sets him, as the first test of his good faith, to keep watch outside the convent gates throughout the night during a snowstorm. During his vigil, however, Magnus is accosted by a stranger, in whom he recognises Lars Olafsen, the son of his old nurse, Karin, who has come to seek for his lost foster-brother, and has tracked him to the convent. Lars tells him that King Erik is dead, and that the heir having disappeared his cousin the Princess Maria is to be crowned in his stead, and also to be wedded to the conspirator Duke of Schoonen, who will thus gain the ruling power he desires; and when Magnus hears this, and realises the cruel plot of which he is the victim, and also learns that the Danes are invading his country, he determines to return with Lars to organise a defending party, announcing, however, that he will go in disguise, because he considers himself bound by his vow not to claim his rights, intending to return to the convent when the enemies have been driven forth. The pair therefore set off at once to join the gallant company already gathered by Lars; and when Sten Patrik learns next morning from the monks that their new member has vanished, he regards it as certain that the young Prince has been lost in the snowstorm and has died from exposure. In Act 2 the Princess Maria bids farewell to her own people, on the eve of her coronation; and when she had been led away Lars appears with a gallant army of followers, whose leader is Prince Magnus, who still retains his incognito, though he is recognised by the old nurse Karin. In the next act, the Princess Maria, as the next heir of the Folkungs, is crowned; and on being urged to name as consort the Duke of Schoonen, whom she dislikes and fears, she is suddenly arrested by the sight of the new leader of the gallant defending army, in whom she recognises Magnus, whom she has loved from childhood, and who had always loved her in return. She joyfully announces that the young Prince has come to claim his own; but Magnus, still regarding himself bound by his oath to Sten Patrik, denies his identity, to her consternation. The Duke thereupon desires her to have the seeming impostor imprisoned; but Maria refuses to do so, hoping for an opportunity of proving her lover's identity. The opportunity soon occurs; for when Magnus is led to his mother's chamber, he forgets the part he has been playing, and breaks forth into the utterance of happy recollections of his childhood, which proves beyond doubt to the hidden witnesses of the scene that he is indeed their long-lost Prince. Maria gladly comes forth to welcome him, and is passionately embraced by Magnus, who forgets all in the joy of the moment; but, when he realises presently that he has

broken his vow by admitting his identity, he so despises himself that, thinking he is dishonoured, he rushes to the balcony and flings himself into the sea below. In the last act matters are brought to a climax by a quarrel between the Duke and Sten Patrik, the latter demanding the land promised him as payment for abducting the young Prince, and which Bengt now refuses to give, because Magnus is still alive, and the country is in such a disturbed state. The arch-conspirator is about to kill his accomplice when Maria interposes, having seen and heard the altercation; and, understanding all, she calls her people around her and denounces the plotter, who endeavours to stab her, but is seized by the enraged attendants and flung into the sea. At this moment, Magnus himself returns; and Maria learns that he was rescued from the waves, and that he has been the brave leader who has defeated the invading Danes and freed the country from those dreaded enemies. Maria greets him with great joy; and upon the Abbot of Nydal setting the gallant young Prince free from his vow, the royal lovers are united and rule the country together.

75. HENRY THE LION

Opera in Four Acts By Edmund Kretschmer

Libretto By the Composer

First Produced Leipzig, 1877

Chief Characters Clementina, Irmgard, Henry the Lion, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Conrad von Wettin

THE scene is laid in Rome and Ancona, during the twelfth century. Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of the West, comes to Rome to bestow thanks and praises upon his victorious general, Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, for his faithful and successful services during the war with the Italians. A stranger appears at the meeting, foretelling disasters to the Emperor should he continue his invasions of foreign lands, and advising him to return to his own country, to dwell there in peace and honour; and to the anger of the Emperor, Henry the Lion agrees with the stranger, and gives his warlike royal master similar undesired advice. A quarrel ensues, and Henry is thrown into prison. The next act shows the lovely young Duchess, Clementina, eagerly awaiting the return of her victorious lord to their castle; and with her is Irmgard, the sister-in-law of Henry, who is full of envy of the young wife, she herself having desired to wed the hero. She is seeking a means for bringing discredit on the gentle Clementina, and presently her chance occurs. Henry's companion-in-arms, Conrad von Wettin, comes with the sad news of his friend's imprisonment, and Clementina, full of grief, at once announces her intention to return with the young man to entreat the Emperor's pardon for her husband and Irmgard sees the pair depart with Satisfaction, intending to use the circumstance to their discredit. In the third act Henry is still in captivity; and, during a festival, the Emperor is too much upset by the absence of his favourite commander, Henry, to enjoy the gaieties. Presently, however, Conrad von Wettin appears with a youthful minstrel, who begs to be allowed to sing a German song to the lonely Emperor. The minstrel is Clementina in disguise, and when Henry is presently brought forth in chains, to repudiate his rash words, she is much agitated. Henry still refuses to retract his words; and on hearing the Emperor angrily condemn him to banishment should he still remain obstinate within an hour, the pretended minstrel begins to sing such a pathetic song about the noble service and love of a patriot, and of the devotion of a faithful wife, that the Emperor is so pleased and moved by the song that he agrees to grant any request the singer may make to him. The minstrel thereupon craves for the

release of the noble prisoner; and Frederick keeps to his word and pardons Henry, whose heart is now softened, so that he gladly renews his service to him. When the minstrel asks for guerdon, a portion of the lady's veil the freed warrior wears fastened to his helmet the love-gage of his wife Henry gladly gives him a piece of it, and the minstrel retires, contented. In Act 4 Henry the Lion returns home to his castle, where he receives a glad welcome from his wife and retainers; and on the arrival of the Emperor a short time after, he proudly presents the lovely Clementina to his royal master, praising her as the most perfect of wives. On hearing this, however, the jealous Irmgard thinks her moment of triumph has come, and, approaching the Emperor, she speaks slightly of the young wife, and declares that, during her husband's absence, she had left the Castle in company with a knight, both of them in disguise, and that she did not return until a few days before her husband's home-coming. Henry is furious on hearing this, being ever quick to take offence; and, not giving his wife time to defend herself, he passionately repudiates her, and bids her leave his Castle. Clementina goes from his presence sadly, but soon returns in her minstrel garb, and on singing the sweet German song which had so touched the heart of the Emperor before, all recognise in her the stranger musician. Henry now craves her pardon for his doubt of her, and as the husband and wife joyfully embrace, the company unite in praises of the loving and devoted Clementina.

76. HABANERA

Tragic Opera in Two Acts By Raoul Laparra

Libretto By the Composer

First Produced Paris, February, 1908

Chief Characters Pilar, Pedro, Ramon

THIS very dramatic opera deals with the love of two brothers for the same woman, and their consequent hatred for each other; and it is a very terrible story of murder and vengeance, intermixed with mystic, supernatural intervention. The wild Habanera melody, filling the listener with the forewarning of inevitable tragedy and woe, is heard at the commencement of the opera, and it keeps recurring as the tragic situation deepens until the final disaster, when it is heard once more as the symbol of inexorable fatality. The scene of the opera is laid in Spain, where two brothers, Pedro and Ramon, have both conceived a violent passion for the beautiful peasant maiden Pilar. The latter loves Pedro, and makes him happy by consenting to marry him, upon which Ramon is filled with such passionate jealousy of his brother that, driven almost mad with his own disappointment, he lures the fortunate lover out to a lonely place, and there murders him. Directly the deed is done Ramon is filled with remorse for having slain the brother he once loved; and his woe is changed to a constant, haunting fear when Pedro, with his last dying gasps, solemnly declares that on the anniversary of this fatal act he will appear to his murderer with a dread command. Ramon endeavours to conquer his fears by trying to win the love of Pilar, keeping secret the fact that he is the murderer of his brother; but the maiden is so filled with despair and grief when the dead body of her lover is brought in that she gives herself up entirely to her sorrow, only beseeching Ramon to do all in his power to avenge his brother's death, clinging to him as a friend, and little dreaming that he is the murderer. In Act 2, on the anniversary of his murder, the spirit of Pedro indeed appears to his brother, in fulfilment of his terrible threat; and he sternly commands the wretched man to atone for his evil deed by confessing it to Pilar and to the

authorities. Ramon now has to face the terrible alternative of beholding the horror of Pilar on learning the truth, or of enduring the ghostly visitations of his murdered brother; and, torn and racked by conflicting feelings, he hesitates, and puts off the evil day. Finally he proceeds to his brother's grave with Pilar, and they both kneel down to pray, full of wretchedness and woe. Then, suddenly, release comes to both; for, as the fatal Habanera melody is heard once more, Pilar, exhausted by her grief, sinks to the earth, and, as though drawn by some supernatural force she is unable to resist, expires, whilst an angelic hymn is heard above. At the same moment Ramon's intense remorse and dread drives him mad; and he roams forth alone into the darkness of the falling night. He thus pays the penalty for his sin, and the lovers are united in death.

77. LA FILLE DE MADAME ANGOT

Comic Opera in Three Acts By Charles Lecocq

Libretto By Sirarandin, Clairville and Konig

First Produced Brussels, November, 1872

Chief Characters Clairette, Madame Langé, Ange Pitou, Pomponnet, Larivaudière

THE scene is laid in Paris, during revolutionary times. Clairette, daughter of the late Madame Angot, a market-woman, is to be married to Pomponnet, the hairdresser, for whom she does not care, all her thoughts being for Ange Pitou, a ballad-monger, who is always getting into trouble for writing revolutionary songs. The market people have arranged the marriage for Clairette, whom they have adopted, and who is known as "the child of the market"; but Ange Pitou comes to protest, in which he is strongly aided by Clairette herself. However, trouble soon arises; for Ange Pitou, having written an objectionable song about the flirtations of a certain citizen, Larivaudière, with Madame Langé, the actress inamorata of Barras, the former pays the ballad-monger not to sing it; but when the people jeer at Pitou because he has no song to sing them, Clairette herself comes to the rescue, and, having secured the song, sings it herself. She is arrested for singing a revolutionary song, especially one having reference to Madame Langé and Barras; but Madame Langé, being interested in the story of the arrest, persuades her powerful sweetheart to release the girl and have her brought to the actress's salon. This is done, and then Clairette and Madame Langé discover that they were friends in childhood, and the actress promises Clairette her liberty, and the husband of her choice. Pomponnet is in the house also, having been sent for by the actress; and Ange Pitou is also presently brought in, to Clairette's joy. The lovers have a happy scene together; but when Larivaudière enters he is jealous of Pitou, whom he thinks is Madame Langé's admirer. Many other amusing complications follow quickly one after the other. The harmless Pomponnet is arrested for having the revolutionary song in his hand, and a company of real conspirators appear to hold a meeting in the salon, Madame Langé playing a dangerous game with her many sweethearts, and her dabbings in politics. When a party of soldiers arrive, suspecting she has conspirators in the house, she pretends that, instead of a meeting, it was a ball she was holding; and as all enter into the joke, she manages to hoodwink the unwelcome intruders. Many more difficulties arise, since all the company are more or less mixed up with either the political complications of the hour, or with their own astonishing love affairs; but in the end all the plots are unravelled or disposed of; and Pitou and Madame Langé being found to be accomplices, Clairette will have nothing further to do with her ballad sweetheart, but accepts the advances of Pomponnet, and the wedding of the pair is celebrated, to the great satisfaction of the market folk.

78. MAIA

Opera in Three Acts By R. Leoncavallo

Libretto By Paul de Choudens

First Produced Berlin, March 17th, 1911

Chief Characters Maia, The Bride, Renaud, Torias, Germain

THE scene is laid in the South of France, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Maia is a dairy-maid in the service of Germain, an old farmer, whose son, Renaud, has fallen in love with her. Maia returns his love; but she has another admirer, Torias, a shepherd who so longs to secure her as his bride that he poisons her mind against Renaud by telling her that the latter is weak-willed, and has already promised his old father to wed another girl of the latter's choosing. This is true, and when, next day, Maia sees the faithless Renaud appearing in the marketplace with the bride chosen for him by his father, she denounces him roundly for his infidelity, scornfully deriding him when he declares that he has only betrothed himself to another maiden in order to please his father. Old Germain, furious at this disturbance, pushes Maia aside, and makes the villagers laugh at her as an upstart who would fain have wedded one above her in station; and the poor milkmaid finds herself alone and friendless, when Torias appears and takes her under his charge. Torias entreats her to wed him; but Maia still loves the faithless Renaud, and refuses the shepherd's offer. She is just about to drown herself in the Rhone, when the weak-willed Renaud appears and asks her to forgive and wed him, as he has now quarrelled with his father, and refused to marry the bride chosen for him by the latter. Maia gladly consents, and the lovers are enjoying their renewed happiness when Torias appears, and furiously challenges his rival. As the fight begins, Maia suddenly flings herself in front of Renaud, and so receives the savage dagger-thrust aimed by Torias at his opponent. Thus the fair maiden is lost to both; and the despairing rivals utter cries of woe as Maia falls back dead into the arms of Renaud.

79. I PAGLIACCI

Grand Opera in Two Acts By Ruggiero Leoncavallo

Libretto By the Composer

First Produced Milan, May 21st, 1892

Chief Characters Nedda, Canio, Silvio, Tonio, Beppo

THE scene is laid in Calabria, at the time of the Feast of the Assumption. A troupe of travelling mountebanks arrive in the village; and, after inviting the rustics to come and see their Punchinello play in the evening, the master of the troupe, Canio (Punchinello) retires to the tavern for refreshment with Beppo, his harlequin. When he has gone, Tonio, the clown, a hunchback, being desperately enamoured of the master's pretty young wife, Nedda, now comes forward and makes love to her. Nedda, however, though coquettish and fond of admiration, hates the hunchback, and scornfully refuses his advances, even going so far as to snatch up a whip and strike him with it. Tonio retires, vowing to be revenged on her for scorning his love; and he soon finds his opportunity. Nedda is presently visited by her village lover, Silvio, a rich farmer, who has come to

persuade her to elope with him that night, after the play is over; and Tonio, having seen and overheard this pretty love-scene from behind the booth, now hurries to the village to acquaint Canio with his wife's faith-lessness. Canio, who loves his pretty wife passion-ately, is of a rough manner, and, being frantically jealous of her many admirers, he now returns in a rage and demands the name of her new lover. Nedda, however, refuses to betray Silvio, whom she truly loves, having always been afraid of her gloomy, masterful husband; whereupon Canio is about to stab her but is prevented from doing so by Beppo, who endeavours to calm him and to persuade him to pre-prepare for the performance, since the audience are already arriving. Canio is held back for the moment, and retires to make ready for the performance; but his jealousy is deep-seated and rankles in his heart, so that Nedda is filled with alarm. She, however, dresses for her part; and, the audience having taken their seats, the play begins with the second act. As it happens, the play given proves to be a burlesque on events identical with those which have just taken place that afternoon with the actors themselves. Tonio, taking the part of a silly servant, makes love to his mistress, Columbine (played by Nedda), and is repulsed by her; after which Harlequin (taken by Beppo) appears as her real lover, and the pair indulge in a pretty scene, and take supper together. They are presently surprised by the return of the husband, Punchinello (played by Canio), and Harlequin makes his retreat through the window. With the entrance of Punchinello the burlesque character of the play quickly changes, the two principals no longer acting but actually living through real tragic moments regardless of the onlookers. Directly Canio finds himself alone with his wife on the stage he no longer has thought for the play he is taking part in, but, remembering only that his wife has been deceiving him, he again angrily demands the name of her lover. Nedda still stoutly refuses to grant his request, and, terrified by her husband's wild manner and passionate words, she tries to turn him from the subject by going on with the words and actions of her part, smiling and executing the dance she is supposed to perform. Her efforts are, however, in vain; for Canio, determined not to be put off thus, seizes her by the wrists, and, wrought to the highest pitch by the maddening jealousy that possesses him, he forces her to her knees and again and again passionately commands her to reveal her lover's name. Until this moment the audience have regarded this exciting scene as a piece of splendid acting, and have applauded loudly and constantly; but now it dawns upon them that this is no play, but a piece of real, grim tragedy which is being lived through before them and they are held spellbound as they realise the dreadful truth. Nedda is now almost fainting with terror, seeing that her wronged husband is in deadly earnest; but she still refuses to betray her lover, knowing that he is amongst the audience, and that Canio would certainly kill him should she reveal his identity. She once again vainly tries to go on with the words of her part; but Canio, now driven to a frenzy of passion by her refusal of his request, seizes his dagger. In this moment of danger Nedda involuntarily calls upon " Silvio " to save her; but though the young farmer springs upon the stage at her call he is too late to save her, for Canio stabs her to the heart at that moment. With the same dagger he next rushes upon the horrified lover and slays him also; then, as the people crowd on to the stage, he delivers himself into their hands with these words, spoken broken-heartedly, as he gazes in utter grief upon the still form of the wife he loved too well: "The comedy is ended!"

80. THE ARMOURER

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Albert Lortzing
Libretto By the Composer

First Produced Hamburg, 1846

Chief Characters Mary, Stadinger ("The Armourer"), The Count of Liebenau, George ("The Count's Valet")

THE scene of this bright little opera is laid in Worms, during the sixteenth century. A famous Armourer, Stadinger, has a daughter, Mary, whose beauty and virtue has won for her the love of the neighbouring Count of Liebenau, who determines to wed her. He declares his passion first in his own name and rank as Count; but Mary is afraid to listen to the love-making of one so wealthy and noble, and the honest father flatly refuses to allow the high-born suitor to enter his humble home, having no faith at all in the sincerity of the Count, who is forced to retire baffled. He now disguises himself as a journeyman-smith, under the name of Conrad, and seeks employment with Stadinger, who accepts his services and also those of the Count's valet, George, who is likewise disguised. The Count now meets with success in his love-making, for the pretty Mary falls in love with the new journeyman, whose wooing she is not ashamed to accept. The old Armourer, however, objects to the journey-man as a suitor because he is such an unskilled work man, and he determines that Mary shall be wedded to his other new assistant, George, who is a much more expert worker. The valet vainly protests, but the Armourer determines that the wedding shall take place on the day he celebrates his own jubilee as an-Armour-Master. After hearing from George how matters stand the Count makes a pretence of storming the old Armourer's house in his true character once more; but the stubborn Stadinger, still declining to believe in his sincerity, again refuses him his daughter's hand, and announces that, since George refuses to accept her, she shall be married to Conrad after all. Mary is delighted; but she is astonished when she presently discovers that her humble sweetheart, Conrad, is none other than the dashing Count whom she had been too shy to speak with. The old Armourer is at first angry at the trick played upon him; but soon realising that all is fair in love and war, he finally gives his consent and blessing to the happy pair, and the opera closes with the merry wedding revels.

81 THE CZAR AND THE CARPENTER

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Albert Lortzing

Libretto .Adapted from an old Play by the Composer

First Produced Leipzig, December, 1837

Chief Characters Mary, Peter the Czar, Peter Ivanow, Van Bett ("The Burgomaster"), Marquis de Chateauneuf, Lord Sydenham, General Lefort

THE action takes place on the wharfs of Saardam, in Russia. Peter, Czar of Russia, being fond of wandering forth in disguise to learn for himself certain matters he wishes to know, has taken work as a carpenter on the wharfs of Saardam, under the name of Peter Michaelow, a carpenter. Here he makes friends with another stranger, one Peter Ivanow, a deserter from the Russian Army; and the two work together. Peter Ivanow has fallen in love with Mary, the niece of the Burgomaster, Van Bett; but Mary likes to tease her sweetheart, and so makes him jealous by flirting with Peter Michaelow. The Czar is enjoying his masquerade when there comes an interruption. Two ambassadors, one from England and the other from France, named respectively Lord Sydenham and the Marquis de Chateauneuf, arrive, having heard that the Czar, whom they both seek for important political negotiations, is in disguise in this neighbourhood; and they bid the

Burgomaster to dis-cover the true Czar for them from amongst the workers on the wharf. The Burgomaster is in a great flutter; and, knowing that Peter Michaelow and Peter Ivanow are the only strangers amongst them, he tries to dis-cover which is the masquerading monarch. After asking them both a number of questions, he fixes on Peter Ivanow as the disguised Czar; and finally he slyly promises to help him to gain the hand of the pretty Mary if he will confess his identity to the ambassadors. Meanwhile the Marquis has already discovered for himself that Peter Michaelow is the Czar; and, making himself known to him, he is first in the field with the negotiations he wishes to carry through whilst the English Ambassador is still being hoodwinked into believing that Peter Ivanow is the royal personage he seeks. Ivanow, having no notion why he should be suddenly taken for the Czar of All the Russias, is very reluctantly persuaded to confess the same by the foolish old Burgomaster, who still persists in believing him to be the roving monarch. A third ambassador now appears, the Russian General Lefort, who has come to advise his royal master that it is necessary for him to return to the capital; but before going on board the vessel which has come for him the Czar calls Peter Ivanow aside and gives him a paper, telling him that it is a pass-port, which he may find useful when he wishes to leave the wharf, since the deserter is somewhat afraid as to his future. After the Czar has departed quietly to the waiting vessel, still keeping up his incognito, the fussy Burgomaster brings a crowd of townsfolk to pay their loyal respects to Peter Ivanow as their monarch; but whilst he is delivering a long-winded oration cannon shots are heard. The crowd all turn to the shore, their gaze centring on the vessel on which the supposed Peter Michaelow has just stepped; and they see what a foolish mistake they have made, as the crew all break out into loyal cheers as they greet their beloved ruler. The townspeople, however, gladly take up the cry also, very lustily shouting out to the departing illustrious stranger, " Long live the Czar! " Peter Ivanow is dumbfounded at first on dis-covering that he has been hobnobbing with the Czar; but his anxiety as to the result of such familiarity is soon set at rest on opening the supposed passport which his fellow-companion had given him, for he finds this to be instead a document bestowing upon him a free pardon for his desertion and a substantial gift of money besides. So, with a free field to the favours of pretty Mary also, Peter Ivanow feels that he has good cause to bless the name of his companion in labour Peter, the Czar and the Carpenter.

82. UNDINE

Romantic Opera in Four Acts By Albert Lortzing

Libretto Adapted from the Abbé Fouqué's Romance

First Produced Hamburg, 1845

Chief Characters Undine, Bertalda, Huldbrand von Ringstettin, Kühleborn, Tobias the Fisherman, Veit

THE plot follows on almost exactly the lines of Fouqué's charming romance, the first scene being laid on the shores of the Danube on the borders of a haunted forest. Huldbrand von Ringstettin, a noble young knight, has been sent forth to seek adventures by the proud Lady Bertalda, adopted daughter of a Duke, she having already bestowed her scarf on him at a tournament in token of her regard, but wishing to make further trial of his bravery before honouring him with her hand. After meeting with many mysterious folk in the magic forest, Huldbrand seeks a lodging in the cottage of an old fisherman named Tobias, where he remains some months owing to the spring floods.

Here he sees Undine, a lovely but mysterious maiden, who has been brought up by the old fisherman and his wife, having been left on their doorstep when a little child by some unknown person. The beautiful maiden is very wayward and wilful; but, in spite of her strange ways, Huldbrand is so enthralled by her loveliness and charm that he falls in love with her, and the pair are wedded by a priest who happens to pass by one day. The Knight and his strange bride then return to the city on the other side of the forest. Meanwhile the lovely maiden reveals to her husband that she is a water-nymph, one of the "Undines," dwellers beneath the waves, who have no souls, but who may obtain the same, and so become mortal, by gaining the love of a man and she herself, having been destined by her father, the Water King, for this great honour, and sent to dwell with the fisherfolk, has secured her great desire. Loving the Knight with her whole heart, she now begs him to remain faithful to her, since, otherwise, her relations in the water will take her back to the river; and should she afterwards be sent by them to visit him it would only be to bring him death. Huldbrand promises to be faithful to her; but his body-servant, Veit, is visited by Kühleborn, the powerful King of the Water-Spirits, and Undine's uncle, who is much enraged on hearing from the valet that his master was formerly enamoured of the proud Lady Bertalda, and that he does not expect his love for Undine will be lasting. On the return of the newly-wedded pair to the city Bertalda is filled with wrath and disappointment that the task she had set her chosen Knight to do has resulted in her own love being slighted; and she is about to wed with the King of Naples, in order to hide the hurt to her pride, when she receives another shock. At the festival gathered to witness her marriage a sealed parchment is opened, which states that Bertalda is the long-lost daughter of the old fisher-couple who brought up Undine, and whose baby girl had been stolen away by Kühleborn to make room for the fulfilment of the destiny of his niece, the water-nymph, Undine. Bertalda is now filled with anger and dismay, scorning to go forth with her peasant parents, who have come to claim her; and when Kühleborn presently appears in the place of a statue of the water-god amidst a fountain of water, mocking her, she sinks to the ground in grief as the scared guests desert her. Undine, however, tenderly comforts the fallen girl, and invites her to remain as a guest in her husband's Castle of Ringstettin. The third act takes place at Ringstettin, where Bertalda, having recovered her spirits, has once more fascinated Huldbrand with her luring charms; and the Knight, fearful of the mystery which ever hovers around his nymph-wife, is gradually led to distrust her and to find more pleasure in the love of the mortal maid. He therefore behaves unkindly to the gentle Undine, who droops and grows sad under his growing coldness, her own love still remaining deep and abiding; and finally the wrathful Kühleborn draws his neglected niece into the waters once more, where she mourns for her faithless husband. constantly, since her love for him is unaltered. Huldbrand soon feels remorse, and is constantly confronted with visions of the lovely sad face of Undine; and, fearful lest her relations should visit their wrath upon him, he orders the castle well to be covered over, this being their only means of reaching him. Finally, hoping to forget her utterly, he makes arrangements for his marriage with the triumphant Bertalda; but on the wedding-night his attendant, Veit, conscience-struck at the wrong about to be done to his gentle first mistress, removes the covering from the well. Almost immediately the lovely Undine rises from the well; and the Knight, overjoyed at the sight of her, and now realising that her love can alone satisfy him, his enthrallment by Bertalda being but a snare, hastens to clasp his returning wife in his arms. Undine, however, has been sent by the powerful Water King to bring him death as the reward for his slighting of the royal nymph; and as she now presses her lips to his he sinks to the ground and dies in her arms. At this moment the castle falls into ruins, and amidst thunder and lightning and a mighty flood Undine and Huldbrand are carried away to the palace of Kühleborn beneath the waves. Here, by

the passionate pleadings of Undine, Huldbrand is restored to life and pardoned for his offence, his only punishment being that he must dwell for evermore with his fairy wife in her watery domain a penance to which he very gladly submits.

83. ACTÉ

Opera in Four Acts By Johann Manen

Libretto By the Composer

First Produced Barcelona, 1903

Chief Characters Acté, Agrippina, Nero, Tigellinus, Marcus, Parthos

THE scene is laid in Rome, when Nero is ruling. Agrippina, the mother of Nero, begs him to give up a favourite freed slave, Acté, a Greek girl whom he passionately loves; and upon the wilful, self-indulgent Caesar angrily refusing to do so, a violent quarrel takes place between the pair. Nero's satellite, Tigellinus, encourages his master in his defiance of his mother, and aids him in his love-making with the beautiful Acté. The latter, however, comes under the influence of an old Christian teacher, Marcus, who converts her to his own faith, and persuades her to renounce the evil Nero; and Acté, becoming an earnest Christian, agrees to do so, and to join the devout company in their secret meeting-place that evening. She therefore persuades her slave, Parthos, to give back to Nero the ring he has given her as a token of his love, which she can no longer accept; and by means of a valuable gift gains the slave's promise not to betray her whereabouts. This scene has been watched by Agrippina, who happens to be passing by; and she rejoices in the circumstance as a means for revenging herself on the lovers. At a great feast that evening, she asks her son to send for his beloved one; and when Acté cannot be found she suggests that the slave Parthos may know, since she has seen him in company with the girl earlier in the day. The jealous Nero causes Parthos to be brought before him; and when the slave returns him the ring entrusted to his care, but refuses to reveal the hiding-place of Acté, the tyrant orders him to be tortured. Then Agrippina offers to give him the desired information, on condition that her son restores to her the Imperial power which she has resigned to him, and for which she still longs; but Nero violently refuses her demands, and causes her to be imprisoned. In Act 3 the tortured Parthos, having been forced to betray Acté, Nero and Tigellinus arrive with a party of the royal guards at the hiding-place of the Christians, who are seized. Acté is captured by her royal lover, who once more declares his passion and invites her to return with him. Acté, however, firmly declares her intention to renounce him, and to think only of her new Christian faith; and Caesar, furious at her refusal of his love, orders her to be led away captive with the others. Act 4 shows us Nero on the terrace of his palace, full of gloom and wrath, torn first by love, then by jealous fury against the girl who has dared to refuse his pleasure; and when as the captured Christians are being led to execution, Acté and Marcus are brought before him, the former pleading for the life of the latter, his pent-up rage vents itself upon the calm steadfast old man, whom he falls upon and kills with his own hands. At this moment, it is discovered that the houses and streets of Rome are bursting into flames, and the maddened people charge Caesar himself with the deed; and as the fire gains ground, they furiously demand the tyrant's death. Nero, hearing their angry cries, falls into a terrific passion of mingled wrath and fear; and to save himself from the onslaught of the crowd he flings the trembling Acté down into their midst, declaring that the disaster has been brought about by the Christians. The fickle populace therefore vent their fury upon the innocent captives, the lovely Acté being their first

victim; and whilst the flames leap up in the streets of Rome, Nero greets the burning city with mad cries of despair.

84.HANS HEILING

Romantic Opera in Three Acts and Prologue By Heinrich Marschner

Libretto By Edouard Devrient

First Produced Berlin, 1833

Chief Characters Anna, Queen of the Gnomes, Gertrude, Hans Heiling, Conrad

THE story is taken from an old German legend. Hans Heiling, the King of the Gnomes, has fallen in love with a mortal, a fair peasant maiden, named Anna. When he announces his intention to go to the upper earth to woo the maid, his mother and his gnome subjects endeavour to prevent him from doing so; but finding her son obstinate, and bent upon going the Queen bids him take with him his magic book without which he would lose his power over the gnomes and also some valuable precious stones which his ever-toiling subjects have obtained for him. When Hans arrives above ground, he seeks out the pretty Anna, and makes love to her, offering her a fine gold chain. Anna is somewhat afraid of the stranger, but accepts his gifts and attention, being encouraged by her mother, Gertrude, who wishes her to accept such a rich suitor. Anna is fond of gaiety, and begs her new admirer to attend a village festival with her; but Hans, being of a more sombre turn of mind, refuses to do so. Anna now finds the magic book which Hans has brought with him from the lower world; and being greatly terrified at the mysterious matter it contains, and the magical way in which it opens and shuts and turns over its own leaves, she begs her suitor to destroy the volume. So alarmed is she, and so earnestly does she plead, that Hans at last consents to destroy the book; and thus he cuts himself off from his power in the Under-world. Anna now again begs him to attend the festival with her; and at last he consents to do this also, on condition that the girl promises not to dance. Anna promises; but when they arrive at the festival she finds many of her friends there, who soon persuade her to break her word. Amongst these swains is her real sweetheart, Conrad the Hunter, who is soon at her side, begging her to have nothing more to do with the stranger; and Hans is filled with rage on seeing her go off to dance with Conrad. In Act 2 Anna is found in the forest, thinking of her true lover, Conrad. Here she is visited by the Queen of the Gnomes and her subjects, who entreat her to renounce Hans Heiling and send him back to them, since he is their King. Anna is amazed, but gives her promise to have nothing further to do with their King; and when Conrad presently appears she begs him to help her, and avows her love for him. They return to her home, where Hans Heiling presently appears with a further gift of jewels. Anna, however, now repudiates his gifts, declaring she will have no dealings with a gnome, which she knows him to be, but that she means to bestow herself upon her beloved Conrad; and Hans, in a fit of jealous rage, aims his dagger at his rival, and dashes forth into the forest. Here he is found in the last act, full of gloom and disappointment. Finally he decides to return to his Earth Kingdom once more; but when the gnomes presently appear, he realises, to his dismay, that, having destroyed his magic book, he has no longer any power over them. They add to his misery by informing him that Anna is about to marry his rival, Conrad, who has now recovered from the wound he gave him. Finally, however, they take pity on his wretched condition, and agree to receive him back as their King, swearing fealty to him once more; and on returning to the Under-world he is very gladly welcomed back by the Queen. The last scene takes

us to the wedding of Anna with Conrad, at which Hans Heiling appears, announcing that he will be the bridegroom; and when Conrad attacks him, his sword is broken asunder by the magic of his rival. Hans is just about to overcome his rival utterly, when the Queen of the Gnomes appears with her subjects, and persuades him to have pity upon these true mortal lovers. Hans listens to her pleading, his heart is touched; and having bestowed his forgiveness upon the human pair who had thwarted him, he departs with his gnomes to the underground life for ever, leaving the bridal party to rejoice.

85. THE TEMPLAR AND THE JEWESS

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Heinrich Marschner

Libretto, adapted from Scott's Romance By W. A. Wohlbruck

First Produced London, 1830

Chief Characters Rebecca, Lady Rowena, Brian de Bois-Guilbert (The Templar), Ivanhoe, Richard Coeur de Lion (The Black Knight), Cedric of Rotherwood, Locksley (Robin Hood)

THE story follows on the lines of Scott's romance pretty closely, though of course much condensed in action and dealing more particularly with the struggle between Rebecca and the Templar. In Act 1 Rebecca, the beautiful Jewish maiden, is a captive in the castle of the Knight Templar, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who has fallen in love with her; and, being unscrupulous and tyrannical, he does not hesitate to use violence for the gratifying of his passion. Rebecca, however, is in love with Ivanhoe, the wounded knight whom she has nursed after his great achievements in a recent tournament, where he was the victor, the Queen of Love and Beauty being the lovely Lady Rowena, his cousin, the ward of the Saxon knight, Cedric of Rotherwood; and though her love is not returned Ivanhoe having bestowed his affections upon Rowena she indignantly refuses to listen to the Templar's declaration of passion for her. When her captor waxes bolder and threatens force, she springs through the open window on to the parapet of the Castle, firmly announcing her determination to fling herself to the ground beneath rather than submit to the embraces of one whom she loathes and despises; and the Templar is forced to retire, baffled, and leave the gentle but brave maiden the victor. Meanwhile, the Saxon lord, Cedric, and his fair ward, Rowena, have also been captured and imprisoned in the unscrupulous Templar's Castle; but Rebecca is assured by her patient Ivanhoe that a relief party has been organised to come to their aid. These friends in need consist of the outlaws of Sherwood, headed by a stranger calling himself the Black Knight, who is in reality Richard Coeur de Lion, who, having just returned from the Crusades, is wandering in disguise through this part of the country, and thus learning of the misrule of his brother, Prince John, whom he had left in charge. He has met the famous Robin Hood, who goes by the name of Locksley, and hearing of the unjust seizure of the Saxon family he joins the outlaw band and leads them to the rescue. They gain the victory, and release the Saxon captives; but unfortunately, the Jewish maiden is again seized by Bois-Guilbert, who carries her away to the Preceptory of the Knights Templars, and continues his unwelcome love-making. Still finding her obdurate, however, he causes her to be accused by the Templars of sorcery, and of seducing him by her wiles to the performance of the violent deeds of which he has himself recently been justly accused; and the militant brethren, willing enough of an excuse to declare their companion innocent, find Rebecca guilty of the charges laid against her, and condemn her to be burnt at the stake as a witch. The unfortunate Jewess, however, demands her right to seek a champion to

defend her; and though Brian, now remorseful, offers himself to save her from her awful fate, she scornfully refuses his help, knowing the reward he would claim, which she cannot grant, all her love being given to the honourable knight Ivanhoe, to whom, though she is aware he will never return her affection, she is yet determined to remain faithful. She is allowed one day in which to find a champion; and just as evening falls, and her execution is about to take place, Ivanhoe himself arrives, having heard of the danger of the gentle maiden who had tended him so well when wounded, and he gladly offers himself as her champion. Brian de Bois-Guilbert is his adversary in the duel; and after a struggle the false Templar falls to the ground dead, even before Ivanhoe's death-thrust is given. This is regarded as the judgment of Heaven, and Rebecca is restored to liberty; and the opera ends with the arrival of Coeur de Lion, no longer disguised as the Black Knight, who comes to announce his determination to bring justice into the land once more. Ivanhoe receives the hand of Rowena, the lady of his choice; and the noble Jewish maiden retires to comfort her old father, Isaac, and to bury in filial duty the beautiful gift of a faithful love which fate has decreed shall remain unrequited.

86. THE VAMPIRE

Romantic Opera in Two Acts By Heinrich Marschner

Libretto, adapted from Lord Byron's Story By W. A. Wohlbruck

First Produced Leipzig, 1828

Chief Characters Janthe, Malvina, Emma, Lord Ruthven (The Vampire), Edgar Aubry, the Laird of Davenant, Sir John Berkeley

THE story is taken from the old Northern legend of the Vampire, an inhuman demon-monster which depends for existence upon sucking the blood of mortals. The scene is laid in Scotland, where Lord Ruthven, a secret Vampire, who has sold his soul to the Devil, is seeking three young girls as victims to his Demon Master, who has granted him a year's respite on condition that he secures three fair brides for the sake of their life's blood, he first gains the love of Sir John Berkeley's daughter, Janthe, whom he lures to his secret den amidst the mountain caves, and then slays and proceeds to drain her heart's blood. He is interrupted in his horrible orgy by the bereaved father, who, finding his beloved child lifeless, stabs her murderer, and rushes from the cave in despair. The Vampire is mortally wounded, and knowing that he can only be restored by the rays of the moon shining upon him he also is in despair, when a youth named Edgar Aubry enters the cave by accident. He implores the youth to carry him to the mountain side for air, telling him of the terrible curse he is under; and Edgar, feeling pity for the ill-fated Vampire, and thinking him about to die, complies with his request, even promising the dying monster to keep secret the story of their meeting. When Edgar has departed, however, Ruthven recovers, and sets about seeking out his other two victim's. Meanwhile, the young Aubry meets his sweetheart, Malvina, daughter of the Laird of Davenant, who desires her to accept as her suitor the Earl of Marsden, a stranger to the neighbourhood. Malvina begs her father to consent to her union with Aubry; but the Laird, having already promised her to the stranger, refuses to with-draw from his contract, and calls forward the Earl of Marsden, who has been waiting in the background. Aubry at once recognises in the stranger the Vampire monster whom he had carried out to die on the hillside, and is about to denounce him when Ruthven reminds him of his oath to preserve the dreadful secret, threatening that should he break his promise the young man himself will become a Vampire. The despairing

Aubry is thus compelled to silence; and Ruthven proceeds in his dreadful designs. He gains the attention of Emma, a simple country maiden attendant upon Malvina, by praising her beauty and promising to help her sweetheart; and finally he lures her also to his den and she becomes the second victim promised to his Demon Master, In the last scene, the marriage of Malvina, who has at last consented to wed the feared stranger, is about to take place; but when the gloomy bridegroom stands beside the almost fainting bride, Aubry, unable to hold back his dreadful knowledge any longer, and regardless of his own threatened danger, denounces Ruthven as a Vampire before all the company, At that moment Ruthven's year of respite being at an end, he is killed by a terrific flash of lightning; and his threat to the effect that the dreadful curse would fall upon Aubry should he give up the secret proving false, the old Laird consents to his union with the now happy Malvina.

87. L'AMICO FRITZ

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Pietro Mascagni

Libretto By Suarotoni, Adapted from Erckmann-Chatrion's 's Story

First Produced October, 1891

Chief Characters Susel, Fritz, David the Rabbi, Hans, Friedrich

THE scene is laid in a village in Alsace. Fritz Kobus, a wealthy bachelor, is celebrating his fortieth birthday by a feast to the tenants on his estates. Although a jovial, pleasant fellow, he is an inveterate upholder of celibacy a circumstance greatly to the distaste of old David, the Rabbi, who is himself an incorrigible match-maker. David is determined to arrange a marriage for the well-to-do bachelor; and he therefore marks with satisfaction that Fritz appears to be interested in pretty Susel, the daughter of one of his tenants, who has shyly presented him with a bunch of violets, and whom he has invited to sit beside him at the feast. Fritz is, indeed, for the first time in his life, really interested in a young girl; and he shows such real pleasure in the society of the pretty Susel, who has already lost her heart to him, that his friends Hans and Friedrich and old David tease him unmercifully. Fritz, however, indignantly denies that he has fallen in love; and he readily accepts a wager which the wily Rabbi presently suggests, by which he agrees to give the latter one of his fine vineyards should he ever be so foolish as to marry. He is, nevertheless, unable to keep away from the dainty maiden, whose sweet, winning ways have enthralled him; and in Act 2 we find him in his tenant's garden, accepting flowers and cherries from fair Susel, as love-sick as any youthful swain. His friends find him here, and are delighted at his progress; and the clever old match-maker strengthens his growing passion by telling him of the many admirers the pretty girl has, and so stirs his jealousy. The laughter of his friends, however, causes the staid bachelor to attempt to thrust this disturbing element of love from his life; and for awhile he keeps away from poor Susel, who weeps sadly at his imagined desertion. However, love conquers in the end; and Fritz, finding his life miserable and empty without his charming little sweetheart, returns gladly to her side, kisses away her tears, and entreats her to marry him and make him happy. The joyful Susel very gladly consents; and thus the old Rabbi wins his wager, his joy at this new match which he believes he has been the entire means of bringing about being so great that he bestows the vineyard he has won upon the pretty Susel as her wedding dowry.

88. CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

Tragic Opera in One Act By Pietro Mascagni

Libretto By G. Targioni-Tozzetti and G. Manasci, Adapted from Verga 's Drama

First Produced Rome, May, 1890

Chief Characters Santuzza, Lola, Lucia, Turiddu, Alfio

THE scene is laid in Sicily on Easter morning. A young peasant, Turiddu, before going on military service, has been the sweetheart of the rustic belle, Lola; but on his return he finds the fickle maiden already married to Aiflo, the carrier. In pique he makes love to another maiden, Santuzza, who returns his attentions with a deep and abiding passion. Turiddu, however, has no real affection for the devoted Santuzza, whose honour he has betrayed; and on receiving encouragement from the flighty Lola to renew his attentions to her, he deserts his new sweetheart with-out compunction and gladly returns to his first love, Lola, who is ready enough for such a flirtation, even though well-treated by her husband, who adores his pretty wife. The deserted Santuzza complains of her ill-treatment to Turiddu's mother, Lucia, the mistress of the inn, telling the whole of the wretched story of her betrayal, and begging the dismayed mother to intercede for her with her faithless son. At this moment, however, Turiddu himself appears; and as Lucia retires within Santuzza approaches her truant lover, and implores him not to cast her aside. Turiddu, however, is deaf to her reproaches and entreaties; and when she clings passionately to him, he flings her angrily away from him, so that she falls to the ground, as he hurries away to keep an appointment with the pretty Lola. When Santuzza recovers, she determines to be revenged by informing Adfio of his wife's intrigue. This she does; and when the light-hearted, happy Alfio hears of his beloved Lola's return to her old sweetheart he is filled with despair and deep jealousy. Consequently, when Turiddu presently appears, in good spirits, after his happy interview with Lola, and invites his friends to drink with him, Alfio sternly refuses to do so. Turiddu now sees that Alfio is aware of the intrigue; and he resigns himself to the inevitable with a good grace. Alfio gives the betrayer of his honour the challenge in true Sicilian fashion by embracing him and biting his left ear; and then the pair retire to the fields to fight, whilst the terrified Lola is led away by her friends. Almost immediately some of the rustics rush back with the dread news " Turiddu is slain!" And as the announcement is made the unhappy Santuzza falls to the ground in a dead swoon. Thus the "Village Honour" is appeased.

89. IRIS

Japanese Opera in Three Acts By Pietro Mascagni

Libretto By Luigi Illica

First Produced Rome, November, 1898

Chief Characters Iris, Osaka, Kyoto, Cieco

THE scene is laid in Japan, where Iris, the lovely daughter of a blind man named Cieco, is playing with her dolls in true Japanese fashion, and greeting the rising sun in simple terms of joyful adoration. Though now grown to fair maidenhood, Iris is as simple and innocent of the world as a little child; and she is kept away from society by her doting father. She is, however, seen by a bold

and unprincipled man of the world, named Osaka, who, greatly struck with her wonderful beauty, determines to steal her away; and with the aid of his friend, Kyoto, he carries out his plan. The pair disguise themselves as the owners of a puppet-show, with which they entice the childlike Iris into the street; and whilst she is gazing in delight at the show they seize her, wrap her in a cloak, and hasten away with her. They next send a gift of money to the father, who, when he is also informed that she has gone to the ill-reputed district of Yoshimara, and is led to think that she has gone thither at her own desire, is filled with indignation as well as grief and sets off to seek her out that he may curse and disown her. In Act 2 Iris awakens in a palatial chamber in the Yoshimara, the dazzling luxury of which leads her to believe that she has been suddenly transported to Paradise. Presently Osaka appears and pours forth passionate protestations of love for her; but Iris is too childlike to understand the meaning of his ardent expressions, and is, in fact, so mystified that Osaka is held back involuntarily, and being awed by such innocence, he loses interest in her, and determines to make use of her as a street show. The first time the unhappy girl appears on the streets, however, she beholds her father, and flies to him for protection; but Cieco, thinking her voluntarily degraded, repudiates her, and flinging mud upon her to show his contempt, he pours forth curses and railings upon her. The poor girl, overwhelmed with grief, and not knowing what she has done to offend her beloved parent, is so filled with despair that she throws herself in the flooded gutters to die. In Act 3 the wretched Iris is discovered by the rag-pickers and beggars, who despoil her of her finery, believing her to be already dead; but when the swooning girl recovers somewhat they flee from her in terror. Iris, however, is dying; but once more beholding the glory of the rising sun, she stretches out her arms entreatingly, and greets the golden orb with loving words as though greeting a welcome friend. Then, as she draws her last breath, fair blossoms spring up on every side of her; and her released spirit is seen winging its way joyfully to its celestial home in the golden heavens.

90. THE MARRIAGE OF JEANNETTE

Opera Comique in One Act By Felix Marie Massé

Libretto By Barbier and Carré

First Produced Paris, February, 1853

Chief Characters Jeannette and Jean

THE plot of this opera is quite a simple little story; and its chief charm lies in its dainty simplicity. The scene is laid in a rustic village in France, where Jean, a simple and exceedingly shy young peasant, has fallen in love with the equally simple Jeannette. They arrange to be married; but when the wedding-day arrives Jean is attacked by a sudden fit of shyness, and hastily changing his mind he refuses to sign the contract, and beats an ignominious retreat to his cottage. Here he is promptly followed by the disappointed Jeannette, who takes him to task. Seeing, however, that the matter will require careful dealing with, she announces that she believes he was really willing to marry her had his shyness not made him too nervous to go forward with the ceremony; and she asks him amiably to prove this to her by signing another contract, from which she will refrain from writing her name, and also promising to refuse his proposals before all her friends. Jean falls into the trap; but when he has signed the new contract Jeannette, in her turn, announces to him that she has changed her mind, since he has set her the example of being so irresolute, and she declares that he is already her husband and that she means to be his wife. The shy Jean falls into a passion at this

trick which has been played upon him; and after destroying most of his furniture in his rage, he rushes out of the house. When he has gone, Jeannette replaces all the broken goods with fresh furniture from her own stock; and having set the cottage tidy, she makes a nice dinner and prepares to receive her husband with a smiling face. When Jean presently appears, therefore, and beholds his renovated house, and sees what a useful and charming little housewife is waiting to greet him with a smiling welcome, he is greatly relieved, and gladly welcomes the now happy Jeannette as his bride, rejoicing that the nuptial knot has been tied.

91. PAUL AND VIRGINIA

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Felix Marie Massé

Libretto By Carré and Barbieri, Adapted from St Pierre's Romance

First Produced Paris, November, 1876

Chief Characters Virginia, Meala, Madame de la Tour, Margaret, Paul, St Croix

THE scene is laid in an African Coast island. Paul and Virginia are the children of Madame de la Tour and her friend, Margaret, respectively, two ladies who have come to reside in the island, the former having been renounced by her noble relations in France. The two children love one another dearly and can scarcely bear to be separated; and as they grow to riper years their affection deepens to a strong and abiding passion. In the first scene the parents are discussing the education of their children and grieving at the sorrow they will feel on being separated from each other; and when they have departed Paul and Virginia themselves enter, making the wonderful discovery that their childish affection has developed into the sweet love of early youth. Whilst they are rejoicing in their happiness a slave girl named Meala flies to them for protection from her cruel master, St Croix; and, moved by her misery, the lovers return with her to the planter, and intercede with him. St Croix grants their request; but, being struck with the beauty of Virginia, and being determined to satisfy his sudden passion, he persuades them to remain awhile with him. Meala, however, knows of his evil designs, and warning the youthful pair they are able to escape, whilst the enraged master wreaks his disappointment upon the hapless Meala. In Act 2 Madame de la Tour receives a letter from her relatives in France, pardoning her for her offence against their family pride, and offering to introduce the beautiful Virginia to the fashionable world, requesting the maiden to be sent to them at once. Virginia, however, firmly refuses to be parted from her beloved Paul; and whilst her mother is endeavouring to persuade her, the slave Meala again appears for protection against her harsh master, who presently appears also, demanding his slave, whom he considers deserves the punishment he is determined to mete to her. Paul, however, is present, and indignantly refuses to give up the poor girl; and finally St Croix agrees to sell the slave for a sum of money which the sympathetic Virginia produces. When St Croix has departed the grateful Meala reveals the fact that the unscrupulous St Croix means to abduct Virginia on her way to the vessel, having heard that she is to depart to Europe that night; but by the young girl stoutly refusing to take the journey his base designs are again foiled. But Virginia is not left long in peace; for the Governor of the Island presently appears, being the bearer of a signed order from the King of France commanding Madame de la Tour to force her daughter to obey the request of her relatives without further delay. The heart-broken Virginia is now compelled to take the journey; but before her departure, the lovers vow to be true to each other always, the young girl promising to return to the desolate Paul without fail. Act 3 finds Paul upon the shore, eagerly awaiting the

return of his beloved Virginia, whom he has been expecting for many weeks to arrive by the next vessel, which is now due, and which he can see struggling with the heavy seas. A terrible hurricane arises, however, during which the ship is wrecked; and as the anxious lover frantically endeavours to pierce the gloom a body is cast up on the shore at his feet. As Paul bends reverently over the lifeless form, he gazes into the beautiful dead face of his beloved Virginia; and the curtain descends upon his despairing cries of woe.

92. LA REINE TOPAZE

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Felix Marie Massé

Libretto By Lockroy and Battu

First Produced Paris, December, 1856

Chief Characters Topaze (Queen of the Gipsies), Rafael, Hannibal

THE story is a very slight and simple one, with little dramatic action, the chief humour and interest being supplied by the amusing antics of the gipsies and the charming setting of the piece. The scene is laid in France, in a picturesque district of which there is an encampment of merry gipsies, who are ruled over by their Queen, a beautiful young maiden, named Topaze. Queen Topaze is, however, not of gipsy birth, being in reality a nobleman's child. She was stolen in babyhood by the gipsies, who soon became so attached to her that they made her their Queen. The story of the play centres round the sweetheart of Queen Topaze, a young captain of high birth named Rafael, who, having fallen desperately in love with the beautiful gipsy, woos her very successfully, Topaze returning his passion with equal fervour. Rafael is betrothed to a wealthy lady of high birth, from whom the attractions of the charming Topaze quickly take him; so that he breaks his engagement with her to their mutual satisfaction. He does not, however, win his fair Gipsy Queen immediately; and complications arise amongst the gipsies, who are not anxious to part with their pretty leader. Finally, Topaze reveals her true birth, and all obstacles being cleared away the happy pair are united.

93. THE CID

Romantic Opera in Four Acts By Jules Emile Frederic Massenet

Libretto By Gallet, Dennery, and Blau

First Produced Paris, November, 1885

Chief Characters Chimène, Infanta of Spain, Rodrigue (The Cid), Count Gormas, Don Diego, Ferdinand IV. (King of Spain)

THE action takes place in Spain, in the time of Ferdinand IV., who, at the opening of the opera, is just bestowing knighthood upon Rodrigue, the Cid, the latter being thus honoured for the glory he has gained in the recent warfare. A Governorship is also promised to Count Gormas, whose daughter, Chimène, is in love with the Cid, who also returns her passion. The Infanta of Spain has also conceived a passion for the gallant warrior, but her high rank prevents her from making advances to him, and with noble resignation she withdraws from him and bids Chimène take the happiness she herself can never enjoy. Rodrigue receives further honours still; but Count Gormas

is overlooked by the King, who bestows the promised Governorship upon Don Diego, the father of the Cid. In his disappointment and anger, Gormas pours abuse and insult upon Don Diego, even violently assaulting him; whereupon the latter calls upon his warlike son to avenge the insult. Rodrigue is torn both ways when he discovers that it is Chimène's father whom he is desired to punish; but, obeying his filial instincts, he feels called upon to challenge Don Gormas, whom, in the ensuing duel, he kills. Chimène appears as her father falls, and vows vengeance upon his slayer. In the next act, during a great festival, she entreats the King to bring Rodrigue to justice, even though her love for him is still as great as ever, but Ferdinand, receiving news of fresh attacks by his enemies, declares that the Cid must lead his forces to victory once more, promising her justice on his return. Rodrigue seeks Chimène before his departure; and for the moment the wavering maiden quells her desire for vengeance, and resigns herself to the joy of her lover's presence, so that they part in peace. The Cid meets with reverses at first and fears defeat; but being encouraged by a heavenly vision, he rallies his forces, and gains a splendid victory. A false report of his supposed death, however, reaches the Court, which plunges Chimène into the deepest grief; but when the news is proved false, and the victor appears in triumph, she now claims her right to demand justice, and pleads for the instant execution of the hero, who, in spite of her love for him, she believes she must bring to punishment to satisfy her filial duty to her dead parent. Her wavering, however, is perceived by the perplexed King, who cunningly declares that she shall pronounce the sentence herself upon the returning conqueror. Thus compelled to make the fatal decision, once for all, the tender-hearted Chimène cannot bring herself to condemn to death the man she truly loves; and though when Rodrigue hastens joyfully to her side, eager to claim her hand, she proudly declares she cannot wed her father's slayer, yet, upon her lover preparing to stab himself rather than live without her, she passionately prevents the deed, and resigns herself unreservedly to a love which she is unable to resist.

94 ESCLARMONDE

Romantic Opera in Four Acts By Jules Emile Frederic Massenet

Libretto By Blau and De Gramont

First Produced Paris, May, 1889

Chief Characters Esclarmonde, Parseis, Roland, Phorcas, Bishop of Blois

ESCLARMONDE, the beautiful daughter of Phorcas the Magician, Emperor of Byzantium, has received the powers of ruling the Kingdom from her father; who has grown weary of government. Esclarmonde has been versed in the arts of magic by her father, who has also imposed upon her certain conditions before handing over his kingdom to her. He has commanded her to veil her beautiful face from the gaze of all male beholders until she attains the age of twenty years, when a grand tournament shall be held, with her hand as the prize to the victor. Should she fail in the conditions imposed, she is to be deprived of her privileges, both regal and magical. Esclarmonde conceives a deep passion for a gallant knight named Roland, whom she causes by means of her magic to be conveyed to a fairy island, where she visits him in a mysterious manner and gains his love, without, however, revealing her identity, or permitting him to look upon her face. Meanwhile there is trouble in France, the country having been invaded by infidels; and Esclarmonde, wishing her lover to gain glory, bestows upon him an enchanted sword, which has the magic power of achieving victory so long as its owner is faithful. Roland is a brave and stainless knight; and he

gains such glory by means of his magic sword, driving all enemies from the land, that the King of France offers him his daughter's hand as guerdon. This reward, however, Roland declines; and on being questioned as to his reason by the Bishop of Blois, he confesses his dealings with the mysterious visitant of the enchanted island. Esclarmonde now visits him again; and during their interview the Bishop appears, and denouncing the veiled lady as a sorceress he tears off her covering and reveals her wonderful beauty to the awestruck Roland. She is then driven from the presence of Roland by the stern Bishop; and she is now in despair, having lost both her royal and magical powers, as well as her lover. The Emperor, however, does not abandon her, but promises to restore her to her lost powers if she will renounce Roland, declaring that the latter shall forfeit his life should she refuse to obey the conditions imposed. Esclarmonde, wishing only to save her lover's life, agrees to give him up, even though it breaks her heart to do so. It is now the time of the tournament, however, the victor's prize for which is to be the hand of Esclarmonde; and the gallant Roland enters the lists, and by defeating all who come against him gains the much-coveted reward. Thus the lovers come together at last, and all rejoice in their union.

95. LE JONGLEUR DE NOTRE DAME

Miracle Opera in Three Acts By Jules Massenet

Libretto Poem by Maurice Lena

First Produced Monte Carlo, February, 1892

Chief Characters The Virgin (Apparition), Jean (The Juggler), Boniface, The Prior, a Poet Monk, a Painter Monk, a Musician Monk, a Sculptor Monk

THE action takes place in the Place de Cluny, in the fourteenth century; and the first act opens in the Square before the Abbey. It is market-day, and a crowd of busy, merry folk gather about the stalls of the vendors of fruit, vegetables, and country produce, whilst a goodly portion of the youthful rustics are amusing themselves with songs and dances. Presently, it is announced that a mountebank is approaching; and Jean, the Juggler, enters, playing upon his hurdy-gurdy. The merry folk gather eagerly around him; but they soon fall back as they behold his worn-out looks. For Jean is thin and poorly clad; and, being very hungry, he has not by any means a cheerful countenance. He nevertheless announces himself as the "King of Jugglers," and makes a brave show of his powers of entertaining. But the careless revellers only laugh at this tumble-down "King of Jugglers"; and they derisively tell him to choose his Queen. But Jean goes round with his wooden bowl, and offers to perform his juggler's entertainment; and when they tell him that they are tired of his songs and know all his old tricks off by heart he offers once again to dance and sing for them. Nothing he suggests, however, meets with approval; and at last, in desperation, he offers to sing them a new drinking song, an "Alleluia du Vin," which they loudly acclaim, and insist he shall sing in the form of a sacred chant. Jean first bows humbly before the statue of the Virgin which stands above the door of the Abbey, and asks pardon for his sacrilege, declaring himself to be at heart a good Christian, and only forced by hunger to do the deed. He then begins the song, which meets with great applause; but in the midst of it the door of the Abbey opens, and the Prior appears on the steps, full of righteous indignation. He drives away the crestfallen revellers, and then proceeds to pour maledictions upon the hapless Jean, who falls on his knees and entreats forgiveness, also pleading to the Virgin for pardon. Finally the Prior is convinced of the sincerity of his humble penitent, and declares that he may yet save his soul alive by entering

the convent as a brother and re-nouncing his foolish juggling for ever. Jean at first declares himself loth to renounce his liberty, for he is still young and loves the beauties of nature, and also has a real affection for the poor trappings of his trade; but on presently seeing the monk-cook, Boni-face, carrying generous fare into the Abbey for the brethren, the pangs of hunger make him accept the asylum offered. He manages, however, to conceal his juggling baggage and his beloved hurdy-gurdy in a safe hiding-place; and then he enters the Abbey, eager for his expected meal. Act 2 opens in the studio of the Abbey, where the monks are all busily engaged with some special work for the Virgin; for it is the morning of the Assumption. The Sculptor Monk has completed a beautiful statue of the Virgin, which the Painter Monk is tinting; and the poet has composed a holy song, which the Musician has set to music, and the other brethren are engaged in singing it. All are happy and busy, except Jean, who sits disconsolate and uncomfortable in his unaccustomed robes, grieving because he has nothing to offer to the Virgin, and cannot even join in the songs and prayers to her, since he does not understand Latin. The Artist Monks each offer to teach him their own particular art; but they squabble so loudly as to which is the highest art, that Jean is glad when the Prior calls them away to bring their offerings to the Chapel for dedication. The kindly Boniface remains behind to relate a fable to the despondent Jean, in which the humblest action and offering is stated to be acceptable to the Virgin, if offered sincerely as the best the giver has to offer. These words bring comfort to poor Jean, who declares he would die happy if the Virgin would only bless him and accept a humble offering from him; and he now secretly determines to make the only offering he can, and which is of his best his juggler's entertainment. He therefore goes cautiously to his hiding-place and brings forth his juggler's baggage; and having attired himself in his old beloved dress, he bows before the statue of the Virgin, and begins his entertainment of song and dance, offering it with true sincerity, and gradually working himself up into a state of feverish excitement and exaltation. The Prior and monks presently appear, and are scandalised at what they consider to be a piece of sacrilege; but as they are held in check by the gentle Boniface, the sound of angel singing is heard, and an apparition of the Virgin is seen, extending her hand in blessing over the head of the juggler, in token of her acceptance of his gift, which the angelic voices announce has opened to him the gates of Heaven. The monks, no longer proud of their own achievements, now kneel before the blessed and honoured Jean, who at first does not realise what has happened, but is only full of joy because he now understands the Latin song of triumph which the monks have raised. When, however, he beholds the Virgin mounting towards the sky, with her hand still held in blessing over him, he is filled with joyful ecstasy; and, overcome with the effort he has just made to give of his best, he falls back dying, with a smile of peace upon his face, whilst the angel voices are heard once more giving welcome to the humble juggler, whose sin-cerity of heart has gained for him the joys of Heaven.

96. THE KING OF LAHORE

Romantic Opera in Five Acts By Jules Emile Frederic Massenet

Libretto By Luigi Gallet

First Produced Paris, April, 1877

Chief Characters Nair, Aïim (King of Lahore), Scindia, Timour the High Priest

THE scene is laid in India. Alim, the young King of Lahore, has fallen in love with Nair, a beautiful priestess in the Temple of Indra, who, though sworn to the life of a vestal, cannot restrain

her passion for the King, who visits her in secret. The King's chief adviser, Scindia, also has conceived a passion for the beautiful priestess, and declares his love for her; but when she refuses to accept his advances, his love turns to hate, and, learning that his royal master is his rival, he determines to revenge himself upon the pair by betraying their secret. He therefore informs the High Priest, Timour, that the revered Nair has committed sacrilege by permitting a lover to visit her in the Temple; and a trap being set for the young King, he is captured on his next visit. For committing such an offence, the High Priest lays upon him the penance of going to the wars against the Moslems; and Alim is thus compelled to part from his beloved Nair, and goes forth to the campaign. Scindia, however, is fearful lest he should return un-harmed and triumphant; and he therefore lays a plot, by means of which the young King is betrayed into the hands of his enemies and slain. Alim awakens from his earthly death to find himself in the beautiful garden paradise of Indra; and here he entreats the gods to grant him permission to return to earth again, so that he may still be near his beloved Nair. The gods take pity upon him; and being anxious to reward such perfect love, they permit him to return to earth, but shorn of his former wealth and power, on condition that when Nair draws her last breath he also shall die again. Alim therefore appears in Lahore once more as a humble traveller; and here he finds that his dominions have been seized by the traitor, Scindia, who has also forced the unhappy Nair to be his wife. Full of fury, and forgetful of his present helpless condition, Alim denounces Scindia as the betrayer and murderer of his King; but Scindia causes him to be driven from his presence with contumely. Nair, however, has seen that the stranger is her lover; and rejoicing that he has been permitted to return to her, she escapes from the palace and joins him in the country beyond. Her flight is, however, quickly discovered by the jealous Scindia, who follows the lovers with his guards; and overtaking them, they are soon in a desperate position. Then Nair, seeing that all is lost, and determined not to fall into the hands of the hated tyrant, bids farewell to her lover and stabs herself; and Alim's life being thus forfeited at the same time he falls dead beside her, the opera ending with the glad welcome of the faithful lovers into the Paradise of Indra.

97. MANON

Opera in Four Acts By Jules Emile Frederic Massenet

Libretto By Meilhac and Gille, Adapted from Abbé Prévost's Story

First Produced Paris, January, 1884

Chief Characters Manon Lescaut, Des Grieux, Guillot Monfontaine, De Bretigny

THE scene is laid in France in 1721. Manon, a beautiful young girl, is destined for a convent, her guardians thinking her of too light a turn of mind; but stopping on her journey at the courtyard of an inn, she comes in contact with a gay party of travellers. Her brother, Lescaut, who has come to meet her, leaves her for a short time; and during his absence she makes the acquaintance of the Chevalier des Grieux, and the pair fall in love with one another. The beautiful girl is also accosted by Guillot Monfontaine, a disreputable old roué-gambler, who endeavours to persuade her, with promises of a gay life, to go away with him; but Manon will have nothing to do with him, and finally elopes with Des Grieux in Guillot's carriage. In Act 2 the lovers are traced to Paris by Lescaut and De Bretigny, who also is in love with Manon; and when the latter learns that Des Grieux has little wealth, and further, that his friends intend to abduct him that night, in order to withdraw him from her influence, she is persuaded to accept De Bretigny as her lover instead,

since he has the means to provide her with all the luxuries in which she delights. She endeavours, however, to prevent Des Grieux from being abducted, but fails; and when the young man disappears, leaving no clue, she is tempted to accept the advances of De Bretigny. With him she attends many festivals and indulges in extravagant pleasures; but hearing at one of these entertainments that Des Grieux is about to take the vows of a priest, her smouldering love for him breaks out afresh, and she hastens at once to the church of St Sulpice, where he has already gained the reputation of a great preacher. Here she meets with her former lover, and pleads so passionately with him to renounce his intentions of retiring from the world, and to return to her loving arms once more, that Des Grieux unresistingly yields to her will; and the pair return together to their gay friends, and once more indulge in pleasure-seeking. In Act 4 Manon and Des Grieux are seen in a gambling salon, where the latter is having a fine run of luck, winning a considerable sum from Guillot, who has again sought out Manon with a view to securing her love. Manon, however, still rejects his advances; and in revenge the old roué now brings in the police, and accuses Des Grieux of cheating and criminal gambling, denouncing Manon as his accomplice. The pair are at once arrested and thrust into prison; but Des Grieux is soon released owing to the influence of his father, who pays all his debts. Manon, however, having no influence to save her from her dangerous position, is condemned to transportation. Des Grieux and Lescaut make desperate efforts to rescue her as she journeys with the other prisoners; and they even succeed in getting her away from the soldiers. The poor girl, however, has suffered much during her imprisonment, and is already in a dying condition; and as her sorrowful lover clasps her in his arms she implores pardon for her past follies and errors, and once more avowing her real love for him she expires.

98. THAÏS

Opera in Three Acts By Jules Massenet

Libretto By Louis Gallet, Poem, adapted from the Romance of Anatole France

First Produced Paris, 1894

Chief Characters Thaïs, Crobyle, Myrtale, Albine, Athanaël, Nicias, Palemon

THE action takes place in Alexandria, and in the Theban Desert, in Ancient Egypt. The first act opens on the banks of the Nile, where the huts of the Cenobite monks are seen. A number of the monks are seated outside at a long table, partaking of their frugal supper and offering prayers for the safe return of one of their number, Athanaël, who has taken a journey to the neighbouring city, in the hope of gaining converts to the service of the one true God from amongst the Pagans there. Presently the wanderer appears, weary and depressed; and as the brethren crowd around, he tells them sadly that his task has been hopeless, since all the city is given up to sin, and the nobly-born youths are under the influence of the beautiful actress-courtesan, Thaïs, a priestess of Venus, whose loveliness and seductive charms none seem able to resist; and day and night alike are spent in voluptuous pleasures, of which the fair siren is the Queen. Athanaël himself admits that in his own early youth he nearly crossed the threshold of this lovely temptress, but had found strength to resist; and Palemon, one of the aged brethren, tells him not to venture again into the evil city for fear of ruining his peace of mind for ever. But Athanaël longs to rescue the soul of this sinful woman; and as he lies sleeping that night, he has a vision in which he sees the lovely Thaïs performing in the theatre before her admirers, posing in light attire, as Aphrodite. He awakens, full

of shame and horror; and calling the brethren together, he bids them farewell, declaring that he will return to the city, and never rest until he has rescued Thaïs from her evil life of pleasure, and brought her to the White Nuns of a neighbouring convent as a penitent and convert to the service of God. The monks give him their blessing, and pray for his success; and the exalted Athanaël sets out on his mission. In Act 2 he arrives in Alexandria at the house of the gay young noble, Nicias, whom he knew when a youthful student, and who he now finds amusing himself with two pretty slave-girls, Crobyle and Myrtale. Nicias laughs incredulously at the monk's declaration that he intends to convert Thaïs, the Queen of Pleasure; but he good-naturedly invites him to make his vain attempt that evening, since the lovely courtesan is even now coming to a banquet at his house, this being his own last night as her lover. Athanaël gladly accepts the invitation, and allows the slave-girls to throw a gala robe over his rough monk's gown; and when Thaïs presently enters with a crowd of revellers, he accosts her boldly, praying inwardly for strength to resist her glorious beauty. He courageously upbraids her for her evil life, and implores her to save her soul by renouncing her careless lovers and devoting herself henceforth to the service of the one true God, declaring that the spiritual love of Christ can alone bring her lasting peace and happiness. Thaïs, though she laughs scornfully at him, is impressed by his earnestness in spite of herself; and as she turns aside to rejoin the revellers she bids him come to her house late that night, when she will listen further to him. When the revels are over, therefore, Athanaël visits Thaïs in her house; and there, by his glowing words of religious devotion, he finally wins her over to repentance; and she begs him to take her to the convent of the White Nuns, that she may spend the remainder of her life in acts of penitence for her many sins of the past. The triumphant Athanaël first bids her destroy all traces of her former life; and together they set fire to her house, and then make their escape from the angry crowd of disappointed lovers who gather outside. Act 3 takes place in the Theban Desert, where Athanaël and Thaïs arrive at an oasis, weary and worn. Athanaël sternly prevents his penitent from resting; but when Thaïs presently sinks down fainting his compassion is aroused, and he fetches her fruit and water from the well. At this moment the Abbess, Albine, approaches from the neighbouring convent with her nuns; and into the hands of the White Sisters, Athanaël delivers the repentant sinner. Thaïs is now filled with the highest religious feeling; and as she bids Athanaël "farewell for ever," a deadly chill strikes at his heart, and he realises in a flash that he loves her with the irresistible earthly passion he has just taught her to despise and reject as a vile thing. On his return to his brother monks, therefore, he is full of woe, and confesses to them that he now has no other thought in his heart but Thaïs and his love for her; and old Palemon sorrowfully reminds him of his wise warning to leave the evil city and its temptress alone. Later, in a vision, the wretched monk beholds Thaïs in a dying condition; and, full of grief, he hastens to the convent at once. He finds that Thaïs, having carried her fasting and deeds of penitence too far, is indeed dying; and falling on his knees beside her he entreats her to live and smile on him, declaring his overwhelming love for her. But Thaïs is already beyond all earthly passion; and with her thoughts fixed steadfastly on the eternal joys of Heaven she passes peacefully away, whilst the unhappy Athanaël sinks, heart-broken, at her feet.

99. WERTHER

Opera in Three Acts By Jules Emile Frederic Massenet

Libretto By Blau, Hartmann and Milliet, Adapted from Goethe's Novel

First Produced Vienna, 1892

Chief Characters Charlotte, Sophia, Werther, Albert

THE story is adapted from Goethe's novel, the scene being laid in Wetzlar about the middle of the eighteenth century. Charlotte is the attractive daughter of the chief bailiff of the city; and in the first act she is seen adorned for a village dance. Before departing for her festivity, however, she gives the children of the family their evening meal, distributing slices of bread and butter to the eager little folk who crowd around her. This pretty domestic scene is witnessed by young Werther, a stranger to the town, who has come to visit the bailiff. Werther is greatly attracted by the pretty Charlotte, and asks permission to accompany her to the dance, which she grants. After the pair have departed, the second sister, Sophia, takes charge of the children; and she is presently interrupted by the entrance of Albert, Charlotte's betrothed, who has just returned from a journey. Albert is not pleased to hear that Charlotte is absent; but he presently departs. When the pleasure-seekers return, Werther has by this time fallen passionately in love with Charlotte; and on Sophia announcing to them that Albert has returned, he is full of grief on hearing that his adored one is betrothed. He begs her to say it is not true; but Charlotte declares that it was the last wish of her dying mother that she should bestow herself upon Albert, a wish which she intends to carry out, without considering her own feelings. Werther is terribly cast down by this announcement; but finding her firm in her resolve he departs sorrowfully. In Act 2 Charlotte is the wife of Albert; and having made up her mind to drive the disturbing image of Werther from her mind, she is already living happily enough with her devoted husband. At a festival, however, Werther appears again, and being received by Albert in a friendly manner he once more has means of being near his beloved Charlotte. He pays no attention to her sister Sophia, who loves him, and is full of grief on observing that her passion is hopeless, since Werther only lives for her sister. Charlotte, however, endeavours to conquer the love which she has before vainly tried to stifle, and so treats her forlorn lover with coldness; but in Act 3 we find her reading through his many love-letters, whilst her tears fall fast, and she refuses to be comforted by the sympathetic Sophia, who has no jealousy, but only grieves for her sister's woe. As she departs, Werther is announced; and seeing Charlotte with his letters before her he realises that she still loves him in spite of her recent coldness, and he breaks forth into a passionate appeal for her to respond to his glowing words. This time Charlotte cannot resist; but as her lover folds her in his arms she quickly conquers her momentary weakness, and tearing herself from him seeks the safety of her own chamber, whilst the distracted Werther dashes outside, full of despair. When Albert presently returns, he finds Charlotte greatly disturbed, and his jealousy is aroused, a knowledge of the unhappy state of affairs having already dawned upon him; and when a messenger appears from the wretched Werther, asking for the loan of his pistol, the husband sternly commands his wife to hand the weapon to the messenger herself. No sooner has Albert departed, however, than Charlotte hastens to the abode of Werther only to find that she has arrived too late, for the unhappy young man has already shot himself, and is dying. At the sound of his beloved one's cry of distress, however, he recovers sufficiently to entreat her to kiss him once before he dies; and as she gathers him into a loving embrace he utters a deep sigh of contentment and happiness, and expires in her arms.

100. JOSEPH IN EGYPT

Opera in Three Acts By Etienne Henri Méhul
Libretto Alexandre Duval

First Produced Paris, 1807

Chief Characters Joseph, Simeon, Benjamin, Jacob, Utobal

THE story of this simple but impressive opera follows very closely upon the Biblical narrative. Joseph has been sold into Egypt by his brothers; and having saved the country from famine by his wise forethought he has become the chief governor of Pharaoh. In Act 1 he is seen in all his glory, treated with the highest honour, and known by the name of Cleophas; but in spite of his wonderful fortune, luxury, and great power, he still pines for the home of his childhood, and for the love of his old father Jacob, and his favourite brother, Benjamin. He relates to his attendant, Utobal, the story of the cruel treatment meted out to him by the jealous brothers; and whilst they talk news comes of the arrival of a party of strangers, who have come to buy corn. Joseph at once recognises the strangers as his own brothers; but he does not reveal himself to them yet. He soon sees with pleasure that they are now filled with remorse for their cruel treatment of him; and Simeon, in particular, is so weighed down by his guilty conscience that he is always grieving. Joseph gives instructions for the brothers to be well cared for; and after feasting them he accompanies them in Act 2 to the Hebrew camp, where his deep emotion on beholding his old father, Jacob, and his young brother, Benjamin, once more, and learning from them how their hearts still yearn for the lost Joseph, almost causes him to betray himself. He manages, however, to hide his feelings, and insists on the whole family returning with him to his palace for a great banquet he has ordered to be prepared. In Act 3 we see the guests arriving, the old, blind patriarch, Jacob, led tenderly by the young Benjamin; and the other brothers all follow after, and take their places at the feast. Simeon, however, is now tormented by remorse for his evil deed, the memory of which has been so sharply revived by the close questions of the great Egyptian Governor; and at last, unable to bear his guilty conscience longer, he approaches his father, and makes a full confession of the selling of his brother Joseph. On hearing this, old Jacob is filled with anger and horror at such a heartless crime; and he pours out upon the brothers his solemn patriarchal curse. At this moment, however, Joseph reveals his true identity, and magnanimously entreats his father to forgive the brothers, and to remove the curse he has uttered. Jacob very gladly does so; and the opera closes with the joyful reunion of the family and their hymn of praise and thanks to God for His wonderful goodness in the preservation of the lost Joseph in the land of Egypt.

101. LAFRICAINE

Grand Opera in Five Acts By Giacomo Meyerbeer

Libretto By Scribe

Chief Characters Selika, Inez, Vasco di Gama, Don Pedro, Nelusko

THE action takes place first in Portugal and after in Africa, the period being towards the end of the fifteenth century. Inez, daughter of the King of Portugal, is affianced to the great explorer, Vasco di Gama; and on the opening of the opera she is bewailing his long absence from her side. Her royal father wishes her to forget the explorer, declaring that he must now be dead, since nothing has been heard of him for so long a time; and he expresses his wish that she should marry his chief minister, Don Pedro, who is in love with her. Inez, however, declares she will remain faithful to her lover; and she is presently overjoyed by the sudden appearance of Vasco di Gama, who has just returned. He brings news of a new and wonderful country he has discovered, and produces

two of the inhabitants, a male and a female, Nelusko and Selika, whom he has captured and brought away as slaves. The King of Portugal, however, is not pleased at the reappearance of Vasco, and so causes doubt to be thrown upon his story of the new land; and this so enrages Vasco that he speaks out violently against the injustice shown him, and is cast into prison for his intemperate speech. In his dungeon he is watched tenderly by the dusky Selika, who loves him; but Nelusko, who is jealous of her attachment to the white man, makes an attempt to stab him. Selika, however, prevents him from doing so; and on Vasco awakening, she gives him all the information he will require as to the course he must take when he sets forth on his next voyage, for she desires him to return to the island of which she is the Queen. When Vasco is released he finds that in order to save him from execution Irez has been compelled to betroth herself to Don Pedro; and the latter, wishing to wrest the glory of proving the existence of the new land from Vasco, has put himself in charge of the vessel which has been prepared for the new expedition, and sets forth, having kidnapped the native, Nelusko, as a guide. The native, however, smarting at the separation from his beloved Selika, in revenge guides the vessel on to a dangerous reef, where it is wrecked. Vasco di Gama meanwhile has set out on another vessel with Selika, and follows close on the track of Don Pedro; and seeing that he is drifting towards the reef he approaches and warns him of his danger. Don Pedro, however, believing his rival has only followed to steal from him the Princess Inez, whom he had forced to accompany him, does not heed his warning; and when his vessel is presently wrecked on the reef it is boarded by savages, who slay him and most of his crew. Inez, however, escapes to the neighbouring island, where she remains in hiding, and Nelusko, being one of the natives, is also unmolested. Selika is the queen of this island, and in order to save Vasco from the fury of her people, who would sacrifice him, she declares him to be her husband. An elaborate marriage ceremony is then arranged, but as it is about to take place the voice of the wandering Inez is heard not far away, and Vasco, recognising it with joy, rushes away to seek her. In the last scene he has found her, and the lovers have also succeeded in reaching his vessel in safety, and as they set sail for Portugal, full of joy at their reunion, the unhappy Selika flings herself beneath the drooping boughs of a poisonous tree, no longer desiring to live. Here she is found expiring by the faithful Nelusko, who, seeing that she cannot recover, clasps her in his arms and dies with her.

102. DINORAH

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Giacomo Meyerbeer

Libretto By Barbier and Carré

First Produced Paris, April, 1859

Chief Characters Dinorah, Höel, Corentin, Tonick

THE action takes place in Brittany, in the early Middle Ages. The villagers of Ploermel undertake a yearly pilgrimage to the Virgins shrine, and on one of these occasions two lovers, Höel, a goatherd, and Dinorah, his sweetheart, join the procession, and proceed to the shrine to ask a blessing on their union, which they are about to consummate. During the proceedings a terrific thunderstorm takes place, and Dinorah's cottage is utterly destroyed by lightning. In order to comfort the weeping Dinorah, Höel determines to seek a magic treasure guarded by a goblin race known as the Korigans, of which he has learned the existence from an old wizard named Tonick. The wizard informs him that before he can gain power to take the treasure from its guardians he

must spend a year in absolute solitude and silence in a far-off barren land; and the goatherd is compelled to set off on his quest immediately, without seeing his sweetheart again. Dinorah, on learning that her affianced has disappeared, imagines that he has wilfully abandoned her, and loses her reason; and when the opera opens she is found wandering through the woods with her pet goat, seeking her lost lover. She visits the cottage of Corentin, a bagpiper, who has himself just returned from three months wandering in uncanny regions, where he has been terror-stricken by the pranks of gnomes and elves; and being attracted by his music, she entices him to continue. Corentin, believing her to be connected with the supernatural folk he has just seen, dares not refuse her request, and the half-witted Dinorah accompanies his music with her own wild singing, now gay and now plaintive. They are interrupted by the entrance of a stranger, and the easily-startled Dinorah makes her escape through the low window. The newcomer is Höel, who has just returned from his year of solitude, and is now anxious to secure the treasure; but having further learnt that whoever first touches the magic gold will die, he has planned that he will persuade Corentin to fetch it from the weird Korigan folk. He therefore relates the story of the treasure to the bagpiper, omitting to mention the fate in store for the seizer of it, and Corentin gladly agrees to take the magic gold and share it with Höel, who sends for wine to put heart into his somewhat scared accomplice. In Act 2 Höel and Corentin appear in the wild and rocky district where the treasure is to be found, and here Corentin, at the thought of the unearthly beings he is about to encounter, and alarmed by the wild aspect of the place, is afraid to venture further. He is further determined to give up the quest by hearing a female voice in the distance singing the story of the legend, and revealing the fact that whosoever first touches it shall die; and then a violent altercation takes place between the pair, which is interrupted by the sudden appearance of Dinorah with her goat. It is she whose voice they heard singing the story of the treasure, and Höel, at the moment believing her to be a supernatural messenger sent to warn him against sending Corentin to his death, is filled with awe and shame for the deed he was about to do. As Dinorah approaches over a narrow unguarded bridge he recognises her as his beloved one, and at that moment the distraught girl, startled at the presence of the pair, loses her balance, and falls into the rushing torrent below. Höel dashes into the stream and rescues her with great difficulty, and bearing her to a place of safety sings to her the old familiar songs they had sung together in the old days. The intensity of his singing, and the tones of his well-remembered voice, aided by the shock of her fall, has the effect of restoring Dinorah to her reason once more; and Höel, allowing her to believe that she has just awakened from a troubled dream, determines to renounce his quest, since he is now satisfied that love is better than gold. Just as he has made this resolve, the chant of the Ploermel pilgrims again wending their way to the Virgins shrine is heard in the distance; and the reunited lovers depart hand in hand to join them in the chapel, and to celebrate their interrupted nuptials.

103. THE HUGUENOTS

Grand Opera in Five Acts By Giacomo Meyerbeer

Libretto By Scribe and Deschamps

First Produced Paris, February, 1836

Chief Characters Valentina, Marguerite de Valois, Raoul de Nangis, Count de St Bris, Count de Nevers, Urbane, Marcel

THE scene is laid in Tourairie and Paris during the August of 1572, when the patched-up truce

between the Catholics and Huguenots is nearing its dreadful close. Raoul de Nangis, a young Protestant nobleman, has been invited to a festival in the house of the Count de Nevers, a Catholic gentleman, and during the revels he describes his meeting with a beautiful lady whom he rescued recently from the insults of a crowd of unruly students, and with whom he has fallen in love, not knowing her name. As the feast proceeds a mysterious, veiled lady arrives and asks for an interview with De Nevers; and as the pair retire to the garden Raoul is shocked and grieved to see that the lady is his own beautiful unknown, whom he thus believes to be a person of bad character. The lady is in reality Valentina de St Bris, the betrothed of De Nevers, and she has come to beg him to release her, as she has fallen in love with the gallant young stranger who rescued her from insult recently. De Nevers, though much grieved, grants her request, and then returns to his friends. A second interruption shortly follows, this being caused by the entrance of Urbane, the favourite page of Marguerite de Valois, who brings a message from his royal mistress inviting Raoul to visit her at Court, as she desires to speak with him. The guests are all amazed that the somewhat despised young Protestant should receive such marked favour, and they treat him with increased respect. The next scene takes place in Marguerite de Valois apartments, where the royal lady informs Raoul that she has arranged a marriage for him with a Catholic lady, wishing thereby to cement the pre tended good feeling between the two contending parties; and Raoul, believing his own love affair at an end, and thinking it his duty to help the Protestant cause thus, agrees to carry out the august lady's wishes. When, however, he is introduced to the lady who is to be his bride, and he discovers she is none other than his fair and - as he imagines - false unknown, he refuses point-blank to wed with her.

Valentina is filled with grief, and her father, the Count de St Bris, furious at the insult offered his daughter, challenges Raoul, the scene ending in great confusion. Valentina is now commanded by her father to marry De Nevers, who is attached to her; and the unhappy girl, full of grief at the insult offered her by Raoul, whom she loves, and believes still loves her, though compelled to acquiesce, begs to be permitted to pass the night in the chapel, that she may pray there in peace. Meanwhile St Bris has been persuaded to lay a plot for the assassination of Raoul, when he comes for the duel arranged between them; but Valentina overhears this plot, and finds means to send Raoul's servant, old Marcel, to warn his master. Marcel is too late, however, to prevent Raoul keeping his appointment; and the young man is surrounded by the plotters and about to lose his life when Marguerite de Valois herself happens to pass with her retinue and rescues Raoul from further danger. Valentina now issues from the chapel, and explanations follow, by which Raoul is overjoyed to learn the real reason for his loved ones' visit to De Nevers on the night of the feast, and to realise that she returns the passion he himself has conceived for her. He begs her to accept him as her suitor, but he is again plunged into despair by the appearance of St Bris, who announces that his daughter's nuptials with De Nevers are about to be celebrated, the latter stepping forward and leading away his reluctant and weeping bride. Raoul, however, is determined to see his beloved one once again, and that night - the fateful Eve of St Bartholomew - he visits her in De Nevers mansion. Even whilst the lovers are in each others arms a party of Catholic conspirators approach for purposes of settling details of the massacre which is to take place that night; and the terrified Valentina conceals Raoul behind the tapestry. The Catholic leaders enter and arrange their plans for the slaughtering of the Huguenots on the tolling of the great bell at midnight, the noble De Nevers alone refusing to join in the dreadful work, and when they have departed to be in readiness the lovers come forth, horrified at what they have heard. Valentina implores Raoul not to venture forth into the streets again that night, promising to keep him in

hiding until the danger shall have passed, but her lover nobly declares he must warn his companions in the faith, and with a last passionate embrace he rushes forth as the great bell tolls out the signal for the massacre to begin. In the last act the horrors of the massacre are depicted, and Raoul, having warned those of his friends whom he could reach, is about to enter a chapel where a number of them are concealed, when he is joined by his old servant, Marcel, who brings the news that De Nevers has been killed. As they speak together Valentina comes to them, beseeching her lover once more to accept her help in escaping the dreadful fate before him; but finding Raoul firmly resolved to remain faithful to his religion and suffer with his Huguenot brethren she determines to remain with him, and accepts his belief. As the lovers kneel down to pray for strength old Marcel solemnly joins their hands and blesses them, and at this moment they are discovered by a party of the Catholic soldiery, headed by St Bris, who gives the order for them to be shot down at sight, not knowing that his own fair daughter is amongst them. Raoul and Valentina fall dead in each others arms, Marcel dropping beside them; and the opera closes with the frantic grief of St Bris on discovering that his beloved child has been slain by his own misdirected zeal.

104. THE PROPHET

Grand Opera in Five Acts By Giacomo Meyerbeer

Libretto By Scribe

First Produced Paris, April, 1849

Chief Characters Fides, Bertha, John of Leyden, Count Oberthal, Zacarie, Gione, Mathisen

THE action takes place in Holland and Germany, in the time of the rise of the Anabaptists, in 1534. John, a citizen of Leyden, is betrothed to Bertha, a vassal of Count Oberthal; and as the maiden cannot be taken to Leyden without the consent of the Count, she prepares to make her request, accompanied by Fides, the mother of John. At this time the Anabaptists, headed by their leaders, Gione, Zacarie and Mathisen, stir up an insurrection in Holland, and incite the peasants on the estates of Count Oberthal to rise against their lord. They attack the Counts castle, but are unsuccessful. Fides and Bertha now appear before the Count with their request for the maiden to proceed to Leyden to be united to her betrothed; but the Count is struck by the beauty of Bertha, and being seized with a sudden passion for her, he refuses to grant her request, and causes her to be retained as a captive, together with Fides.

In Act 2 John of Leyden is discovered in an inn by the Anabaptists, who are greatly impressed by his likeness to the traditional paintings of the Hebrew King, David; and on learning also that he is somewhat of a mystic and believes himself to have visions, they show him great reverence, and entreat him to become their leader, promising him great power and even regal honours. John, however, has only thought for his beloved Bertha at this time, and refuses to listen to their persuasions; and at this moment he is alarmed by the entrance of Bertha, who has made her escape from the castle and seeks protection. John thrusts her into hiding only a moment before the entrance of Count Oberthal, who, furious at his disappointed passion, demands the lover to instantly give up the girl, threatening to kill his mother, Fides, whom he has brought with him, unless his order is obeyed. John is now torn between his filial love for his mother and his passion for the beautiful Bertha, but finally he agrees to save his mothers life, and so yields up the weeping

and despairing Bertha to the tyrant. Whilst Fides endeavours vainly to comfort her son the Anabaptists appear again and once more make their offer to the visionary; and John, smarting under his wrongs, no longer hesitates, but gladly joins them in their rebellion. Fides having already departed before their entrance, he decides to let her believe that he has been slain, and so leaves a bloodstained garment behind him; and he then departs with the Anabaptists, who make him their leader and cause him to be regarded as a prophet.

In Act 3 the Anabaptists are found encamped in the forest near the German city of Münster, where provisions are brought to them by skaters over a frozen lake. Amongst the prisoners brought in is Count Oberthal, who is about to be executed, when John of Leyden interferes, and he agrees to spare the captive's life in return for news of Bertha. Having learnt that she is not only still alive but is actually in Münster, he calls his forces together, and proceeds to storm the city at once.

Act 4 takes place in a street of the captured city, where Fides appears begging for food, as she searches for her son, whose bloodstained garments did not deceive her, and whom she believes to be with the Anabaptists. She is presently joined by Bertha, in a pilgrim's dress, who is seeking means to revenge herself upon the Prophet, who she believes slew her lover, not knowing that he is in reality John himself, and the pair betake themselves to the Cathedral, where the ceremony of crowning the victorious Prophet is about to take place. The ceremony commences amidst a scene of great splendour and pomp, but it is quickly interrupted by the joyful voice of Fides declaring that the great leader is her son. John does not wish to be recognised by her, being desirous that the people shall regard him as a Heavenly Messenger, and he repudiates her statement utterly, commanding his followers to slay him should she continue to assert her relationship. Rather than that her son should thus lose his life, Fides withdraws her assertion, and is carried away to prison for her rash declaration. In prison, she is visited by John, upon whom she pours forth strong reproaches, and whom she finally persuades to realise the wickedness of deceiving the ignorant people by representing himself to them as a Prophet; and they are soon interrupted by the entrance of Bertha, who unfolds a plan for destroying the Prophet and his supporters. She is, however, filled with amazement and despair on discovering that the despised Prophet and her beloved John are one and the same person; and overcome with grief at the fall of her idol, she stabs herself, and as she expires pours forth curses upon him. In the last scene the Anabaptist leaders have learnt that their enemies are about to overpower them, and they basely plan to save their own lives by betraying their leader. Consequently, when John is holding revel in the palace they enter with the leaders of the opposing force, including the Bishop of Münster and Count Oberthal; but John has learnt of their treachery, and has means for revenge at hand. As he is about to be seized a terrific explosion is heard, and the palace bursts into flames, and John of Leyden, his mother, Fides - who forgives him ere she dies - and all his enemies die together in the burning palace.

105. ROBERT THE DEVIL.

Grand Opera in Five Acts By Giacomo Meyerbeer

Libretto By Scribe and Delavigne

First Produced Paris, November, 1831

Chief Characters Isabella, Alice, Robert Bertram, Raimbaud

THE scene is laid in the early part of the eleventh century. Robert, Duke of Normandy, has earned for himself the title of " Robert the Devil," owing to his wild and reckless life and also because he is supposed to be the son of a fiend who took on human shape and married the Princess Bertha of Normandy, whose child was Robert. The young Dukes wild extravagances are all incited by his constant companion, a mysterious and strange knight named Bertram, who finally entices him to such excesses that he is at last driven forth from his State by his indignant subjects.

When the opera opens he is discovered at Palermo taking part in a grand tournament being held there, the prize for the victor being the hand of Isabella, Princess of Sicily, with whom Robert is desperately in love, and who returns his passion. Isabella, however, is alarmed and offended by the wild conduct of her strange lover, for Robert recklessly indulges his passion for gambling with the assembled cavaliers, to whom he finally loses all his possessions, his folly being always encouraged by his constant companion, Bertram, who is in reality his demon-father, who is thus dogging his steps in the hope of securing his soul. A great struggle is shown throughout the opera between the evil which Robert inherits from his fiend-father and the good which he has received from his mother. His better nature is aroused and encouraged by the influence of Alice, a simple peasant maiden, who is his foster-sister, and who appears at Palermo in company with a minstrel named Raimbaud, who is her sweetheart, and who brings for Robert a message from his dead mother. In the presence of the gentle Alice, Roberts better nature prevails, and at his entreaties she intercedes for him with the offended Princess, to whom she reconciles him. However, the evil Bertram will not leave his hoped-for victim in peace, and on the day of the tournament he prevents Robert from attending and taking his part in the contest for the hand of the Princess by luring him away by means of a phantom, which takes the form of his great rival, the Prince of Granada. Robert, being now once more under the influence of Bertram, the latter takes him to a cavern, where he calls up demons and evil spirits to assist him in securing the mastery of the young man; and afterwards he persuades him to visit the Abbey of St. Irene, where the Princess Bertha is buried, and to pluck from thence a magic bough which will give him marvellous powers. In this latter place the fiends call up the spirits of the departed nuns, giving them the shapes and allurements of enticing nymphs, and Robert, though saved from the dangers of the cavern by Alice, who has come there to meet her beloved Raimbaud, is so overcome by the promise of magical powers in his second temptation that he seizes the enchanted bough and seeks to make use of it at once. By means of this charm he enters, unseen, the apartments of the Princess Isabella, and putting her attendants into a magical slumber, rushes forward to seize his beloved one in his arms, passionately declaring that he has come to claim her as his own, and means to carry her away by force. Isabella, however, pleads so piteously for him to resist his ungovernable passion, and to have mercy upon her unprotected state, that his better nature prevails once more, and breaking his talisman he flies from her presence. Once again Bertram decoys him away and endeavours to make him sign a contract binding him to the demon for ever, but in this struggle Alice also appears and seeks to overcome the evil influence which endangers her foster-brother. The struggle between good and evil is a very severe one, but in the end good triumphs, when Alice produces a letter from Roberts dead mother, in which the sorrowing and repentant Princess warns her son against the allurements of the demon who is seeking to obtain his soul. Robert now finally repudiates the baleful influence of his dark companion, and seeing that he is defeated in the struggle the fiend-father vanishes into the earth and molests him no more. Robert then returns repentant to the Princess Isabella, who gladly receives him, rejoicing at his victory over the evil influences which had dragged him down; and the opera ends with the union of the now happy

lovers.

106. THE STAR OF THE NORTH

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Giacomo Meyerbeer

Libretto By Scribe

First Produced Paris, February, 1854

Chief Characters Catharine, Prascovia, Peter (The Czar), Danilowitz, George, Gritzensko

THE scene is laid in Wyborg, Finland, and in the Czars palace. Peter, the Czar, disguised as a carpenter, is working in the shipyards in Wyborg for purposes of seeking certain information first-hand. Here he makes the acquaintance of Danilowitz, a baker, with whom he becomes great friends; and he also falls in love with Catharine, a vivandière, who is a very beautiful maiden, with great influence over all she comes in contact with. Her brother George is about to marry a village maiden, Prascovia, when his wedding is interrupted by the arrival of some wild Cossacks and Kalmucks, who would force the bridegroom to take service with them at once; but Catherine arranges that George shall find a substitute within a certain time, and she also calms the angry soldiery by revealing herself to them as the daughter of one who was formerly their priestess, and who foretold for Catharine a dazzling future. Peter hears this and hopes to make the beautiful and inspired girl his Empress in due course; but Catherine disappears, having disguised herself in male attire and departed to serve in the army in the place of her brother, so that the latter may continue his nuptials.

In Act 2 Peter is discovered in a tent with the army, still in disguise, and accompanied by Danilowitz, whom he has persuaded to attend him by promising him promotion in the Czars service, and Catharine is also there, in her soldiers dress, doing sentry duty. Peter and Danilowitz grow hilarious and pay rough attentions to a couple of vivandières who are serving them, the former anxious to keep up his disguise by copying the conduct of ordinary soldiers; and Catharine, hearing the noise, peeps within the tent, being terribly grieved at beholding her beloved Peter behaving in such a boorish manner, believing that he never could have had any love for her. She is discovered by the corporal, who reprimands her for neglecting her duty, supposing her to be the male recruit she appears; and Catharine, responding by an angry cuff, is chased by the corporal and others of his companions until in despair she flings herself into the river. Meanwhile Peter has been roused from his pretended revelry by a serious insurrection in the camp, and now revealing himself as the Czar he quells the discontent and receives the loyal homage of all. He is, however, plunged into the deepest grief on learning that Catharine has been near him in the garb of a recruit, who is reported missing, having jumped into the river to escape the angry superior officer; and full of grief he gives orders to Danilowitz to scour the country for the missing girl, refusing to believe that she is drowned. Act 3 takes place in the palace of Peter, who has returned from the campaign victorious, but very unhanpy because the one person he wished to share in his triumph is missing - the lovely Catherine. In order to forget her he takes up his carpenters work again, and whilst engaged in this humble work Dan ilowitz - whom he has raised to a high position - enters with the joyful news that he has found Catherine, who has been rescued from the river by a country woman. The poor girl has, however, lost her reason, owing to her recent danger and unhappy feelings; and Peter is in despair again. Danilowitz, however, hits on the plan of trying to restore

her by bringing her old friends and home surroundings about her once more, and this has the desired effect. George and Prascovia are brought in to go through part of the events connected with their marriage; and Peter also appears in his carpenters garb. As Catharine thus beholds this well-remembered scene her memory returns and she recognises Peter as her lover; and the now happy Czar folds her in his arms with joy and introduces her to all as their future Empress.

107. THE BEGGAR STUDENT

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Carl Millöcker

Libretto By Zell and Genée

First Produced Vienna, 1882

Chief Characters Laura, Bronislava, Countess Palmatica, Symon, Janitsky, General Ollendorf

THE scene is laid in Kracow, in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Governor of the City, General Ollendorf, is offended with the Countess Palmatica and her daughter Laura because the latter has scorned his advances, and in order to revenge himself upon the pair he determines to play a trick upon them. He induces a military prisoner convicted for some petty offence, a poor student named Symon Symonovicz, to masquerade as a wealthy young Prince, providing him with ample means and introducing him to the Countess and her two daughters. Symon agrees to secure his liberty even though under such false pretences as these, but only on condition that his friend, Janitsky, shall accompany him. This being agreed to, the pair are forthwith introduced to the Countess, who, believing Symon to be a wealthy Prince, shows him great favour, hoping to secure him as a husband for her daughter Laura - this being the desire of the offended General, who does not intend to undeceive them until the marriage is consummated. The Countess and her daughters have been living for a long time in genteel poverty; and consequently the mother rejoices greatly when Laura captures the supposed Prince, and her sister, Bronislava, secures his friend, Janitsky. The two couples are, however, genuinely in love with each other; and in the second act Symon determines to undeceive Laura before the marriage takes place, and writes her a note telling all. This note is, however, intercepted by the watchful General; and, therefore, the marriage takes place, Symon imagining that Laura is still willing to marry him even though knowing him to be merely a beggar student. But the triumphant General, as soon as the ceremony is over, discloses all, enjoying the great shock given to the scandalised Countess and her aristocratic friends on discovering that the gay bridegroom is but a penniless student, whom they thrust from the house with contumely.

In Act 3 Symon is in despair, having now been deserted by his temporary benefactor and not permitted to see his bride; and he is about to take his life when his friend Jenitsky appears, revealing himself in his true character as an important Polish officer who is engaged in a conspiracy the object of which is to re-establish King Stanislaus upon his throne. He asks Symon to join the party, which is a very strong one; and the Beggar Student agrees and distinguishes himself so well by his daring and bravery that the plot succeeds, chiefly owing to his efforts. He is, therefore, rewarded with wealth and the honour of nobility; and the Countess is now willing to forgive him for his deception and to acknowledge him as Lauras husband. Janitsky secures the hand of Bronislava, and the two pairs of lovers are made happy.

108. MUGUETTE

Opera Comique in Four Acts By Edmond Missa

Libretto By Carré and Hartmann

Founded on "Ouidas" "Two Little Wooden Shoes"

Chief Characters Muguette, Melka, Lana, Lionel, Klotz, Jean

THE scene is laid in Antwerp and Paris, about 1820. The first act opens in the market at Antwerp, where Muguette, a pretty flower-girl, is seen selling her lovely wares. She is an orphan who lives in a tiny cottage left her by a kindly, pleasant foster-father, who had found her in infancy in a bed of lilies-of-the-valley, from which fact she had derived her name. She is desired as a wife by Jean, a fellow-worker in the market; but Muguette declines his offer, having no love for him. Presently two strangers appear, Klotz, a travelling art-dealer, and Lionel, an artist. The latter seeks a model for his new picture, and on beholding Muguette he sees that she has the exact frail, ethereal beauty he desires, and he at once secures her promise to sit for him. The pair fall in love with each other, and Lionel gives Muguette books to read, so that she improves rapidly under his tuition. After a while, however, Lionel has to return to Paris, and as he bids her a tender farewell Muguette has a foreboding he will not return.

In Act 2 Muguette is seen, ill and unhappy, grieving for the loss of Lionel, whom she has never heard of since he left her; and she has to suffer the gibes of her companions for her loverless state - especially those of the jealous Jean, who is rendered furious because she still refuses his advances, from which he is protected by her one girlfriend, Lina. One day Klotz, the art-dealer, appears in the neighbourhood once more; and learning from him that her beloved Lionel is in Paris she resolves to seek him, and sets off one night in a blinding snowstorm, sinking exhausted by the way. She is, however, found by the kindly Klotz, who brings her safely to Paris.

In Act 3 they arrive at the studio of Lionel, who now has another model, Melka, a showy but good-natured girl, who knows well enough that the artist has thought for none other than his lost flower-girl. When Muguette presently appears on the scene, therefore, she lets the pretty flower-girl realise that Lionel still loves her; and then she arranges for her to poise on the dais in her stead whilst she takes Klotz away. Then, when the absorbed Lionel looks up from his work and beholds his beloved Muguette standing before him, he is filled with amazement and joy, and the opera closes with the happy embrace of the reunited lovers.

109. COSI FAN TUTTE "THE SCHOOL FOR LOVERS"

Opera Comique in Two Acts By Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto By Da Ponte (Afterwards revised by L. Schnider and E. Devruent)

First Produced Vienna, January, 1790

Chief Characters Fiordiligi, Dorabella, Despina, Don Ferrando, Don Guglielmo, Don Alfonso

THE story in its revised form is as follows :-Two cavaliers, Don Ferrando and Don Guglielmo, have great faith in the fidelity of their betrothed ladies, Fiordiligi and Dorabella; but being laughed at for their confidence by a cynical old bachelor, Don Alfonso, they allow him to persuade them to put the two ladies through a severe test. They consequently pretend to depart on a long journey with their regiment; but in a few days they return disguised as officers of another regiment, and, having altered their appearance entirely, they procure an introduction to the two ladies and proceed to pay them great attention, each making love to the betrothed of his friend. Fiordiligi and Dorabella are very indignant at the attentions paid to them by the new-comers, and their lovers are consequently delighted, and triumph over the unbelieving Don Alfonso; but the wily old bachelor arranges a deeper plot still. He persuades the two young men still to keep up their disguise but to feign such despair at the indifference of the ladies that they recklessly pretend to poison themselves in their presence. Ferrando and Guglielmo agree to this also, and secure the aid of Despina, the attendant on the two ladies, to assist them. In this plot Don Alfonso very nearly succeeds; for when the strange officers feign to poison themselves in their presence Fiordiligi and Dorabella are terribly concerned, and show great pity for the love-sick swains. Despina, however, at last considers it unfair that her young mistresses should be thus deceived further, and she finds means to reveal the secret of the plot to them. The two girls now carry the war into the enemys camp, and play a fine trick upon their lovers. They boldly accept the new suitors, and even go so far as to sign the marriage contracts, taking care, however, that these shall be false documents, the notary being Despina in borrowed garments; and then when Ferrando and Guglielmo appear in their own form once more, furious at their supposed fickleness, they tease them still further, keeping up the deception a little longer, and then at last laughingly reveal the fact that they have cleverly turned the tables on them. The young men are now ashamed that they should have even pretended to doubt the fidelity of their chosen ladies, and very contritely sue for pardon; and this being readily granted the happy couples are reunited, and the old bachelor is compelled to retire crestfallen.

110. DON GIOVANNI

Opera Comique in Two Acts By Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto By Da Ponte

First Produced Prague, October, 1787

Chief Characters Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Zerlina, Don Giovanni, Don Ottavio, Leporello, Masetto

THE scene is laid in Spain, in the city of Seville. Don Giovanni, an unscrupulous, reckless and licentious young nobleman, with the aid of his servant, Leporello, enters the chamber of Donna Anna, the beautiful daughter of an old Spanish Grandee, the Governor of the City, and attempts to carry her off as he has already captured many other fair ladies of Seville. The ladys father, however, hearing his daughters cries, comes out to defend her, together with her betrothed, Don Ottavio; and in the struggle which ensues the Governor is slain by Don Giovanni, who makes his escape with his servant. Donna Anna makes a vow to bring her fathers murderer to death, and her lover agrees to assist her in her search for the libertine, his reward to be the hand of the lady he loves, and who now refuses to wed him until her vow is consummated. Don Giovanni, however, is not the least disturbed by the pursuit of the lady who seeks revenge on him; and, ignoring also the

fact that he is pursued by another distressed maiden, the Donna Elvira, a former victim of his fleeting passion, he proceeds to continue to amuse himself with wild festivals and orgies, in all of which he is aided and abetted by his equally gay and rascally servant Leporello. He endeavours to steal the honour of a pretty peasant maiden, Zerlina, who is about to be wedded to her humble lover, Masetto; but this vile plan is thwarted by the timely appearance of Donna Elvira, Donna Anna and Don Ottavio, who have joined their forces against the libertine, who is compelled at last to make a hasty retreat from their presence. As he wends his way through the streets of Seville at midnight in company with the rogue Leporello he passes a statue which has been erected to the memory of the late governor, whom he slew; and as he proceeds to mock this representation of his dead victim, the statue replies to his words of scorn, warning him that he will die before the morrow. The cowardly Leporello is filled with terror, and beseeches his excited master to hasten from the spot; but Don Giovanni has no fear, and recklessly invites the statue to join him at supper that night, passing on his way with laughing indifference. Later on Don Giovanni is seated at supper with his wild companions; and in the midst of the revels Donna Elvira appears, having come to give her callous betrayer another chance of forgiveness if he will agree to repent of his excesses, for she fears that some terrible fate is in store for him if he continues in his wild and careless folly and wickedness. But all her loving entreaties are in vain, and Don Giovanni only laughs at her fears and repudiates her advances. At this moment, however, the sound of a heavy and unaccustomed tread is heard without; and, to the terror of all except the reckless libertine himself, the animated statue of the dead governor enters the banquet-hall, declaring that he has come in answer to the hosts invitation. The statue endeavours to turn the wild young man from his evil ways; but finding that all his warnings and threats are in vain he bids him prepare to meet his just doom. Even now Don Giovanni refuses to repent; and as a result the statue suddenly vanishes and the ground opens, from whence issue fierce flames and a horde of demons, who seize the libertine and drag him down to their own dreadful regions.

111. IDOMENEUS

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto By Abbate Gian Battista Varesco

First Produced Munich, 1781

Chief Characters Ilia, Elektra, Idomeneus, Idamantes, Arbaces

THE scene is laid in the Island of Crete, immediately following the Trojan War. Ilia, Priams daughter, weeps in captivity; but when her captor, Idamantes, son of Idomeneus, the King of Crete, sets her free, with the other captive Trojans, she regains her interest in life. The tender-hearted and brave young Prince falls in love with her; and though Ilia at first fights against it she soon returns his affection. This rouses hate and jealousy in the heart of Elektra, the daughter of Agamemnon; for she loves Idamantes, and had received his attentions before the arrival of the captive Princess. The news is brought that Idomeneus has been shipwrecked, and all the people are plunged in grief. The report proves a false one, however; for Idomeneus has been saved by the god Neptune, to whom he had prayed in his distress, and who saves his life on condition that he offers up as a sacrifice of thanksgiving the first person who meets him on his return. Unhappily Idamantes, hastening to the beach to greet his rescued father, is the first person he greets, and Idomeneus is filled with grief and despair. He says nothing to his son about his vow, but tries to

save him by sending him on a foreign journey with Elektra, who is delighted that her beloved one should be removed from the company of her hated rival, Ilia. As the ship is about to set sail, however, a terrific storm arises and prevents them from starting; and at the same time they see near the shore a terrible monster of the deep, which presently begins to work havoc amongst all who approach the waters edge. This monster has been sent by Neptune, whose anger has been kindled because Idomeneus has not offered up the sacrifice demanded; and Idamantes boldly announces his intention to slay the beast or perish in the attempt. The High Priest, Arbaces, now commands the King to name the victim for the sacrifice, reproaching him for bringing trouble on the land by holding back the information; and the wretched Idomeneus is at last compelled to admit that his own son was the first person to greet him on his return from the wreck. As Idamantes returns from his fight with the sea monster, which he has successfully disposed of, he hears of the vow made by his father, and he at once announces his willingness to offer himself as the sacrifice demanded by Neptune. Ilia, however, despairing at the fate in store for her lover, falls on her knees and frantically entreats to be permitted to take his place. This Idamantes will not listen to; but Ilia finally wins the consent of the High Priest in her favour, and is about to be offered as the sacrifice when the god Neptune himself intervenes and announces that Idomeneus shall be released from his vow, but that he must resign his sovereignty in favour of the brave Idamantes. This condition is gladly accepted by the relieved father, and all the company join in a hymn of praise to the magnanimous god, with the exception of the unhappy Elektra, who beholds with renewed jealousy and grief the union of Idamantes and Ilia.

112. THE MAGIC FLUTE

Grand Opera in Two Acts By Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto By Schikaneder

First Produced Vienna, September, 1791

Chief Characters Queen of the Night, Pamina, Papagena, Tamino, Sarastro, Papageno

THE scene is laid in ancient Egypt. The Queen of the Night is furious with the High Priest of Isis, Sarastro, because he has taken away her daughter, Pamina, in order to bring her up in the temple in the paths of purity and goodness, away from the evil influence of her mother. Tamino, a young Prince wandering forth in search of adventure, is saved from a monster by the attendants of the Queen of the Night who, in return for the service rendered him, sends him on the mission to rescue her daughter from the hands of the High Priest. Tamino eagerly undertakes the task; and he is joined by a merry bird-catcher, Papageno, who wears a feather dress as an aid to his profession. The Queen gives a magic golden flute to Tamino, which he is to play in times of danger, when the trouble will vanish; and to his companion she gives a peal of bells for the same purpose. As the pair approach the Temple of Isis they succeed in saving Pamina from the unwelcome attentions of a negro slave, who is terrified at the unusual appearance of the feather-garbed Papageno. The newcomers are brought before Sarastro, who proves to the young Prince that he is really doing right in detaining Pamina from her mother; and, seeing that the pair are already in love with one another, he promises them future happiness if they are only willing to go through many ordeals to purify their hearts and prove themselves worthy of the great gift of Love. The lovers agree to all the conditions, and they go bravely and without hesitation through the many ordeals placed in their way, finally even making their way through a fiery lake, which leads them to the altar. Even now,

however, their trials are not over, for the Queen of the Night still determines upon revenging herself upon Sarastro; and she visits her daughter in a vision and commands her to slay the High Priest. This Pamina refuses to do, still calmly going forward with her sacred duties; but her courage is further tried by the absence of Tamino, who is taken from her side to be initiated into the mysteries of the rites of the goddess Isis. For a while Pamina is tempted to believe her absent lover false, since he fails to return to her; but once again she is reassured and permitted to join in the trials to which he is next exposed. Papageno accompanies Tamino in most of his adventures; and in all their times of difficulty, by the use of the magic flute and the peal of bells, they are able to conquer the dangers that beset them, since the music of the fairy instruments has the power to change anger into loving-kindness and storm into calm. Finally all the plots of the Queen of the Night are frustrated, and Pamina and Tamino come through all their trials and troubles cleansed and purified. Even the merry Papageno secures a reward by finding a helpmeet in a pretty little feather-clothed maiden, who appears at the sound of his magic bells. As soon as the evil of the Queen of the Night is finally conquered Sarastro appears, and, making a sign, the sunshine of goodness and joy drives away the former darkness; and as a reward of their true love and faithfulness throughout all their trials Pamina and Tamino are united. Thus love and integrity conquer all that is evil and dark.

113. THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

Opera Comique in Four Acts By Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto By Lorenzo da Ponte (Adapted from Beaumarchais Comedy)

First Produced Vienna, May, 1786

Chief Characters Susanna, Countess Almaviva, Marcellina, Count Almaviva, Figaro, Cherubino, Dr Bartolo, Basilio

THE story of this opera forms a continuation of the plot of "The Barber of Seville," and the same characters are met with. The scene is laid in Spain, the action taking place in Count Almaviva's château and grounds. The Count is now married to the fair Rosina, whose hand he secured through the help of the merry Figaro, the quick-witted Barber of Seville; but in spite of his real affection for his wife the amorous Count cannot yet refrain from flirting with every pretty woman he meets. He is here seen paying attentions to Susanna, the Countess's dainty, coquettish maid, who is betrothed to Figaro, who has now entered the Counts service. The happy pair are only awaiting the latter's consent to their marriage, their household arrangements being already completed; but the Count keeps putting them off from day to day whilst he enjoys his little flirtation with the bride-elect. In order to punish him, Susanna and the Countess arrange a plot. The latter pretends to encourage the attentions of her page, Cherubino, who adores her, so that the Count becomes jealous of the youth. In order to get the page out of the way the Count gives him a commission and commands him to join the army at once; but the Countess and Susanna come to the aid of the crestfallen young man by dressing him up in female garments so that he shall escape the notice of his master. Whilst they are engaged in this masquerading the Count, whose jealousy has been aroused afresh by a note which has been handed to him as being a love-letter from Cherubino to the Countess, comes to the door of the latter's room and, finding it locked, angrily demands entrance. As soon as Cherubino has managed to jump out of the window the Count is admitted and is nonplussed at finding his wife in the company of Susanna only. His suspicions return, however,

on the entrance of the old gardener, who is aggrieved at the damage done to his window-plants and flower-beds by some one choosing to make his exit through the window; but Figaro now appears and declares mendaciously that he did the damage himself. Complications quickly follow; for old Doctor Bartolo and his housekeeper, the elderly Marcellina, are also bent on flirtation, and the latter now appears with a written promise of marriage from the lively Figaro, on whom she dotes, and who has signed the paper for a joke. The merry Barber is relieved from his quandary, however, by the discovery that Marcellina is his mother whilst his father is none other than Dr Bartolo. More shocks are in store for him, however; for the Countess and Susanna determine to punish both him and the Count for their roving fancies for the opposite sex by means of another plot. Susanna invites the delighted Count to meet her in the grounds after dark, and then she changes gowns with the Countess, and the two plotters repair to the rendezvous. The Count presently appears and begins to make love to the Countess, whom he mistakes for Susanna; and upon Figaro presently appearing on the scene he is rendered furious at beholding his betrothed accepting these attentions willingly. Young Cherubino also appears, and on making a declaration of love to the person he imagines to be his beloved mistress, he promptly receives a smart box of the ears from the merry Susanna. Having played out their little farce with much enjoyment the Countess and Susanna finally reveal themselves in their true characters as lights are brought on the scene; and the now repentant Count sues for the pardon of his fair wife, who very readily grants it. Figaro and Susanna also make up their little differences, and the opera ends with their union.

114. IL SERAGLIO

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Johann Chrysostomus Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Libretto By G. Stéphanle (Adapted from Bretzner)

First Produced Vienna, 1782

Chief Characters Constanza, Blonda, Belmonte, Selim Pasha, Pedrillo, Osmin

THE scene is laid in the East. Constanza, a beautiful lady betrothed to one Belmonte, has to undertake a journey, in which she is accompanied by her maid, Blonda, and Pedrillo, the servant of her lover; and, to their dismay, they are kidnapped by pirates, who sell them as slaves to a rich Eastern Governor named Selim Pasha. The latter falls in love with Constanza and causes her to be brought to his harem with her maid, Blonda, who is quickly marked out for favour by his steward, Osmin. The man-servant, Pedrillo, is made a gardener; and, by means of a bribed messenger, the latter is able to bring the news of their capture to the notice of his master. In despair Belmonte seeks means to rescue his beloved Constanza, and at length he disguises himself as a traveling artist and endeavours to seek work in the abode of the Pasha. The steward, Osmin, is suspicious of the stranger, and tries to prevent his admission to the house; but Pedrillo perseveres in his scheme and finally the pretended artist is installed. Belmonte soon makes known his identity to the relieved Constanza, and by his aid the captives all make their escape. They are, however, pursued and recaptured by the vigilant Osmin, who brings them back in triumph to his master; and on being brought before Selim Pasha, the despairing Constanza confesses that the supposed artist is in reality her lover, to whom she declares she will always be true, Belmonte also firmly announcing the same resolve. The Pasha retires to consider their sentence, and the four prisoners, expecting nothing less than death, take a loving farewell of each other. But Selim Pasha is of a noble disposition, and being greatly impressed by the faithfulness of the lovers and their brave

determination to die rather than be separated, he announces on his return that they are free to depart to their own land once more. Osmin is disappointed and full of wrath at losing the pretty Blonda, who, however, very gladly departs with her sweetheart, Pedrillo; but Selim Pasha generously wishes the happy lovers, Belmonte and Constanza, joy in their union, entreating them to regard him ever as their friend.

115. THE PIPER OF HAMELYN

Fantastic Opera in Five Acts By Victor E. Nessler

Libretto By F. Hoffmann (From the Legend of Julius Wolff)

First Produced Leipzig, 1879

Chief Characters Regina, Gertrud, Hunold (*The Piper*), Ethelrus, Sunneborn, Rynperg

THE story is taken from the old legend, the time being the thirteenth century. The Burgomaster and Council of the ancient town of Hamelyn are consulting how they shall rid themselves of a plague of rats, when one of their clerks, Ethelrus, brings in a stranger, who has offered to lure all the rats away for them. The stranger is a mysterious individual named Hunold, and he bargains with the Council to rid the town of all the rats for the payment of one hundred marks, stipulating that he shall be permitted to carry out the work in silence and alone. The terms are agreed upon, a drink of wine at the end of his work being added to the reward; and the Piper departs until the night of the full moon shall arrive. Meanwhile the Burgomasters daughter, Regina, receives a visit from her sweetheart, Sunneborn, the son of the Chief Magistrate, whom she is seen greeting affectionately by Ethelrus, who is filled with jealousy at the sight, he himself having sought the love of this maiden, who has repulsed him with scorn; and he seeks means to be revenged upon his rival.

In Act 2 Hunold, the Piper, is found playing his pipe in the inn, where he meets with a lovely maiden named Gertrud, whom he has seen in visions and fallen in love with. Gertrud returns his love, though she is fearful lest he should be dealing in magic in his agreement to rid the town of the rat plague; but when the lovers meet again alone Hunold assures her that he does not dabble in magic.

In Act 3 Ethelrus finds means to mortify his rival Sunneborn by making a wager with Hunold that the latter will entice Regina to give him a willing and uninvited kiss, the Piper having boasted that with his music he can make any woman love him. In the next scene he gives proof of his power by playing a wild tune, which causes all the rats in the town to come forth from their hiding-places and follow him to the river, where they are all drowned. When he comes to claim his reward, however, the Burgomaster and Council do not wish to part with so much money, and pretend that there is still the Rat-King in a cellar; but Hunold indignantly demands his due, and insists also that instead of the drink of wine promised him in addition he shall receive a kiss from the fair Regina. Finding his insistence of his promised reward being received with scorn and indignation he at once commences to play on his pipe; and so tender and enthralling a tune does he play, that all the maidens around immediately fall in love with him, and the once-proud Regina, quite overcome by her infatuation, comes of her own accord to his side and gives him a loving and uninvited kiss. Hunold has therefore won his wager with Ethelrus, who is filled with mortification and rage; and,

declaring Hunold to be a sorcerer, he causes him to be flung into prison by the Magistrates, who are only too glad to thus be rid of the necessity of paying the money demanded by the Piper. The fair maiden, Gertrud, however, determines to save him; and when Hunold is brought before the Judges she comes forward and claims his life, it being an ancient custom of the place to set free a captive should a maiden of the town choose to claim him. Hunold, however, is banished, and has to promise never to return; and Gertrud is so filled with despair at his sentence that she drowns herself in the river. Hunold now vows vengeance on the citizens for being the cause of his sweethearts death, and for refusing to pay him his promised reward; and whilst they are at their devotions, he pipes such a merry dancing tune that all the children come running out of their homes and follow him wherever he cares to lead them. When the citizens come out of church they are just in time to see the hillside open and all their children following the piping Piper into its very heart. As soon as the last child has crossed the threshold the hillside closes; and the Piper has thus claimed his reward, the citizens of Hamelyn being left desolate.

116. THE TRUMPETER OF SAKKINGEN

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Victor Nessler

Libretto By Rudolf Bunge (Adapted from the Poem of Scheffel)

First Produced Leipzig, May, 1884

Chief Characters Margarita, Countess Wildenstein, Werner Kirchoff, Konradin, The Baron von Schoenau Count Damian

THE scene is laid in Heidelberg and Säkkingen on the Rhine, about the middle of the seventeenth century. The opera opens in old Heidelberg, where the students are indulging in a very noisy and unruly frolic. One of their number, Werner Kirchoff, the adopted son of one of the professors, is an excellent player on the trumpet; and he presently serenades the Princess with a solo performance on his instrument. His playing is admired by Konradin, the trumpeter of a recruiting company, who endeavours to engage his services. The young man laughingly declines; but when presently the students are all expelled from the University for their unruly behaviour, he decides to throw in his lot with the soldiers, and joins the company as trumpeter. On arriving at Säkkingen on the Rhine Werner makes the acquaintance of the Baron von Schoenaus daughter, the beautiful young Lady Margarita, whom he protects from the incivility of the rough peasantry of the district, who are in rebellion against her father. Margarita is accompanied by a cousin of the Barons, the Countess Wildenstein, a lady who is separated from her husband, and whose only child, a son, was stolen by gipsies in his early childhood; and she is struck by the resemblance of Werner to her lost child. Margarita and Werner fall in love with one another at first sight, and the former persuades her father to appoint Werner as his trumpeter. The Baron agrees, being greatly pleased with the young mans fine playing; but when the Countess Wildenstein later on discovers the new trumpeter and the Lady Margarita indulging in a pretty love scene Werner is sternly forbidden to enter the castle again. Meanwhile the Baron has arranged a marriage for his daughter with Count Damian, the son of Count Wildenstein by his second wife; and, in spite of the suitor proving to be a weak-minded, foolish young fop, poor Margaritas approaching union with him is publicly announced at a festival, and her protestations of everlasting fidelity to her beloved Werner are unheeded. However, the castle is presently stormed by the peasant rebels; and upon the Baron calling upon his future son-in-law to lead the retainers against them the weak Damian is terrified and proves

himself an arrant coward. The situation is saved, however, by the timely arrival of Werner, who, with a *few* of his military companions, dashes bravely into the midst of the rebels and disperses them. He is slightly wounded in the fray, and on his wound being dressed by the grateful ladies a birthmark upon his arm proclaims him to be indeed the kidnapped son of the Countess Wildenstein. The craven-hearted Damian is therefore declined as a suitor by the indignant Baron, who is now willing enough to bestow his fair daughter. upon the gallant young lord, Werner, and the happy lovers are united.

117. THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Otto Nicolai

Libretto By Mosenthal (Adapted from Shakespeare's Comedy)

First Produced Berlin, March, 1849

Chief Characters Mrs Ford, Mrs Page, Ann Page, Sir John Falstaff, Ford, Page, Fenton

THE story is adapted from the comedy of Shakespeare, dealing chiefly with the fooling of Falstaff by the Merry Wives and the love-making of Anne Page and Fenton. In the first act the Merry Dames of Windsor, Mrs Ford and Mrs Page, having received identical love-letters from the jovial and amorous old rake, Sir John Falstaff, hatch a plot to punish him by bringing upon him the rage of Mrs Fords very jealous husband. They invite the fat knight to the house of Mrs Ford, who pretends to receive him as a gallant; but Mrs Page presently enters in a flutter to announce the approach of the already suspicious Ford, and they bundle the visitor into a huge " buck-basket " containing some soiled linen, in which he is carried away by a couple of serving-men, who, acting on the whispered instructions of the merry ladies, contrive to drop their victim into the Thames, from whence he emerges in a sorry state. When Ford arrives at his house, he is nonplussed at finding no lover there as he expected; but, being still suspicious, he later on seeks an interview with Falstaff himself, disguising himself and taking another name, and so bribes the old reprobate to assist at his own undoing. Meanwhile pretty Mistress Anne Page has fallen in love with Fenton, a charming but somewhat poor suitor; and, in spite of the fact that her parents have chosen a foolish but rich old fogey as a likely husband for her, she stoutly declares her intention to marry her own chosen sweetheart, and the lovers meet constantly, finally arranging an elopement. The Merry Wives now invite Falstaff to visit them a second time, and upon the jealous Ford again appearing inopportunely they disguise the scared knight as a deaf old countrywoman who is, nevertheless, very roundly chastised by the irate husband, who disapproves of her supposed fortune-telling propensities. Not content with having twice caused their would-be lover to be roughly handled, the Dames now take their husbands into their confidence and all join in a final frolic. They arrange a masque in the Forest of Windsor, persuading the jolly knight to join them in the disguise of Herne the Hunter, with horns on his head; and when he appears at the rendezvous beneath Hernes Oak, they scare him nearly out of his wits by bringing on the scene a number of merry colleagues disguised as demons, fairies, goblins, wasps and mosquitoes, who swarm about the victim, pinching and teasing him to their hearts content. Finally he yells for mercy and pardon, which is readily enough granted, his punishment having been quite sufficiently thorough; and as Anne Page and Fenton, in the disguise of Oberon and Titania, have managed to elude the other stupid suitors for the fair maidens hand and have secured an obliging priest to marry them, the merry opera ends with general forgiveness all round and renewed festivities.

118. LA BELLE HÉLÈNE

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Jacques Offenbach

Libretto By Meilhac and Halévy

First Produced Paris, December, 1864

Chief Characters Helen of Troy, Paris, Menelaus, Calchas

THE story of this opera presents in humorous fashion the love passages of Helen of Troy and Paris, dealing with these and certain other mythical heroes of Greece in present-day burlesque form as in "Orpheus aux Enfers."

In Act 1 Helen is seen trying to devise with Calchas the Augur a means to avoid the decree of the oracle, which has announced that she is destined to desert her husband, Menelaus, and to elope with Paris, the handsome son of Priam, King of Troy. Even as they confer Paris himself appears in shepherd garb and begins his wooing at once; and in a very short time the pair are passionate lovers. Their love is strengthened by a second meeting at a comical tournament, in which Paris defeats the most illustrious heroes; and the oracle encourages them by decreeing that Menelaus must set off on a journey to Crete at once. When he has gone Helen makes an attempt to struggle against her destiny, and she refuses to accept the further eager advances of Paris. The latter, however, bribes the augur to admit him one night to the chamber of the sleeping Queen; but here their pretty love scene is cut short by the unexpected return of Menelaus, and a stormy interview ensues.

In Act 3 Menelaus and Helen are seen engaged in a lively squabble, the former being still jealous and suspicious of his beautiful wife, who indignantly repudiates his insinuations; and in the midst of this domestic altercation a golden galley is seen approaching, in which a new augur is announced as bringing a message from Venus. This augur is Paris in disguise, and he announces that Venus is much offended that Helen has not yet obeyed the command of the oracle. The goddess will only be appeased if Helen will at once return with this new augur to sacrifice at her shrine; and the beautiful Queen, unable to longer resist the decrees of fate, finally decides to obey the command of the intriguing goddess. She therefore enters the galley and sails away with her lover Paris to Troy; and the opera closes with the declaration of vengeance by the deserted and furious Menelaus, which reaches its fulfilment in the famous Trojan War.

119. THE GRAND DUCHESS OF GEROLSTEIN

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Jacques Offenbach

Libretto By Meilhac and Halévy

First Produced Paris, April, 1867

Chief Characters The Grand Duchess, Wanda, Fritz, General Bourn, Baron Grog, Baron Puck, Prince Paul

THE Grand Duchess of Gerolstein attends a review of the troops and is greatly struck with the

good looks and gallant bearing of a young recruit named Fritz, much to the chagrin of the Commander, General Boum, a fussy old beau, who is ambitious, and desires to stand first in the great lady's favour. Fritz, however, is in love with a beautiful peasant girl, Wanda, whom the Duchess endeavours to separate him from by raising him first to the rank of corporal, next to that of lieutenant, and finally to that of general, with the title of Baron. Her own royal suitor, Prince Paul, a somewhat dull and feeble wooer, she neglects entirely; and she sends out her new favourite to lead a campaign against an enemy. Fritz returns covered with glory; but when the amorous Duchess almost openly offers him her hand and heart he gently but firmly declines her advances, and announces his intention to remain faithful to his beloved Wanda. This resolution so enrages the Duchess that she joins the deposed General Boum, Baron Puck and Prince Paul in a plot against the new commander's life. She is further encouraged in her change of conduct by the arrival of Baron Grog, an Ambassador sent by Prince Paul's father to bring the desired marriage about; and she is so pleased by the new-coiners' willingness to join the conspiracy that she gives her consent to her union with the young Prince. She afterwards relents, however, and refuses to allow the assassination to proceed, agreeing instead to permit Fritz to marry Wanda; but the young man is nevertheless set upon by the conspirators and very roughly handled. The Grand Duchess adds to his troubles by depriving him of his command and reinstating General Boum. Finally, however, the petty quarrels and misunderstandings are all settled, and the relieved Fritz is free to marry his simple peasant sweetheart Wanda, whilst the Grand Duchess accepts Prince Paul as her future husband.

120. ORPHEUS AUX ENFERS

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Jacques Offenbach

Libretto By Crémieux

First Produced Paris, October, 1858

Chief Characters Eurydice, Juno, Venus, Diana, a Shepherdess, Orpheus, Aristeus (Pluto in disguise), Jupiter, John Styx, Public Opinion

THE fantastic plot of this opera is a clever burlesque upon the classical story of Orpheus and Eurydice, many modern references being introduced. Orpheus and Eurydice are seen in the first act to be each carrying on a flirtation—Orpheus with a pretty shepherdess and Eurydice with Aristeus, a reputed shepherd, who is really Pluto in disguise. When they make a mutual discovery of each other's infidelity a quarrel ensues, and they separate. Eurydice, on going to her shepherd for protection, learns that her lover is none other than the god Pluto, who now boldly carries her off to his infernal regions. Orpheus is rejoicing at the disappearance of his somewhat shrewish wife when he is commanded by Public Opinion to immediately demand her return from Jupiter, the chief god of Olympus; and, much against his will, he is compelled to obey.

In Act 2 much amusing by-play is afforded by the petty squabbles of Juno, Venus, Jupiter, Diana and Pluto, which is presently ended by the arrival of Public Opinion, who brings the reluctant Orpheus to demand the restoration of his wife. Jupiter grants his request and bids him follow him to Hades, where Eurydice is found, watched over by John Styx. Jupiter takes on the form of a fly, which Eurydice catches, whereupon he reveals himself and transforms her temporarily into a merry bacchante on the arrival of Pluto. Presently Orpheus appears sailing up the Styx in a boat,

and playing upon a modern violin instead of a lyre; and Jupiter now promises that he shall lead forth Eurydice to his boat, adding the condition that, if he looks back, she will be snatched back from him once more. Orpheus therefore proceeds to lead forth his runaway and reluctant wife; but upon sly Jupiter dropping a thunderbolt in his path he turns round, and Eurydice is instantly snatched back to Hades. Public Opinion is much upset by this turn of affairs; but Orpheus sings a song of rejoicing at what he considers his happy release, and he returns in high good humour to his pretty shepherdess.

121. TALES OF HOFFMANN

Fantastic Opera in Three Acts with Prologue and Epilogue By Jacques Offenbach

Libretto By Jules Barbier (Adapted from three of E. T. A. Hoffmann's Tales)

First Produced Paris, February, 1881

Chief Characters Olympia, Guilietta, Antonia, Hoffmann, Nicklaus, Spallanzani, Coppelius, Dapurtutto, Dr Mirakel, Schlemil, Crespel

THE scene of the prologue is laid in Nuremberg in Luthers celebrated wine-cellar, where Hoffmann and his friend, Nicklaus, meet their boon companions and make merry between the acts of the opera, which is being performed in the adjoining theatre. Hoffmann, being charged by his companions with sadness, offers to explain to them the reason by relating the stories of his three unfortunate love-affairs; and the students all desert the opera and remain to listen to the three enthralling love-stories, which are now revealed to the audience by the three acts that follow.

In Act 1 we have the story of Hoffmanns first love. The young man has fallen in love with the beautiful Olympia, who is believed by him to be the daughter of a well-known physiologist, Spallanzani; and, accompanied by his friend Nicklaus, he offers himself as a pupil to the scientist, in order to be near the object of his affection. Olympia is, however, only a marvellously life-like automaton made by Spallanzani, who has been assisted in the work by Coppelius, a mysterious man who sets up to be a magician, and who now claims a substantial share in the profits which may accrue, he having supplied the doll with her beautiful eyes. Spallanzani, however, agrees to buy his partner out; and to that end he gives him a draft on a Jew whom he knows to be already bankrupt. Coppelius accepts the cheque with pleasure; and he then contrives to sell a pair of magic spectacles to the love-sick Hoffmann, by means of which inanimate objects appear to be endowed with life. Spallanzani now gives a party to his friends, at which he introduces them to the doll, Olympia, who, on being wound up, sings, speaks, and dances. The guests are all filled with admiration for the wonderful piece of work; but Hoffmann, wearing his magic glasses, believes her to be a living maiden, and having already conceived a violent passion for her, declares his love for her at the first opportunity, regardless of her mechanical replies of " Yes! Yes! " He next engages her to dance with him; but the doll, having been over-wound, gets out of control, and Hoffmann is whirled with her about the room until he falls in a faint. On recovering, he learns that Coppelius, having discovered the deception practised on him by his colleague, is at that moment destroying the doll in revenge; and as Hoffmanns spectacles have been broken during his swoon he now realises the foolish mistake he has made, and retires crestfallen before the jeers of the laughing guests.

In Act 2 we are taken to Venice, where Hoffmann and Nicklaus are found in the luxurious palace of the beautiful courtesan, Guilietta. Hoffmann loves Guilietta, and seeks to win her, in spite of Nicklaus wise warning that she will deceive him. Dapurtutto, a demon-magician, has obtained the mastery of Guilietta, who, at his command, has obtained for him the shadow of Schlemil, one of her lovers, and now agrees to take the reflection of Hoffmann in a magic mirror he gives her. It is in this way the demon gains the soul he covets. Guilietta encourages Hoffmann to make love to her, and soon persuades him to gaze into the magic mirror. When Dapurtutto presently places another looking-glass before him, Hoffmann is much alarmed on finding that it gives back no reflection-a sure sign that magic is at work; and he grows suspicious. Schlemil, his rival, now appearing, he challenges him; and, by the influence of Dapurtutto, he kills Schlemil. Almost immediately after, a gondola passes by, in which the laughing, faithless Guilietta is seen reclining in the arms of a new lover; and Hoffmann is a second time unsuccessful in his love-making.

In Act 3 Hoffmann is seen to be passionately in love with Antonia, the fair but frail daughter of Councillor Crespel. She has inherited from her mother the gift of a beautiful voice; but her father has forbidden her to sing, as the exertion and excitement is too great for her and may cause her death. For the same reason he disapproves of her love for Hoffmann; but during his absence the lovers meet in Crespels house. When the father returns, Hoffmann hides behind a curtain, and overhears an interview between Crespel and Dr Mirakel, a mysterious person whom the former dislikes and distrusts, believing him to have been the cause of his wifes early death. Mirakel is in reality an evil spirit, who has dogged the path of Hoffmann throughout his three adventures under different names-first as Coppelius, secondly as Dapurtutto, and now as Mirakel - and from him he now learns that Antonia has a fatal disease. He therefore, when they are next alone, begs her to sing no more; and she promises not to do so. She is, however, presently visited by Dr Mirakel, who invokes the spirit of her dead mother, whom he causes to persuade her that it is wrong for her not to use such a wonderful gift. Antonia is therefore persuaded to sing once more; but the effort is too much for her, and she expires as Hoffmann rushes to her side.

In the epilogue Hoffmann is shown overcome by his sad recollections of the three love episodes he has just related to his friends; but upon the students calling for their wine-cups to be refilled he joins them once more in an uproarious carousal, upon which the curtain falls.

122. MANRU

Opera in Three Acts By Ignaz Jan Paderewski

Libretto By Alfred Nossig (Adapted from Kraszewski s Novel)

First Produced Dresden, May, 1901

Chief Characters Ulana, Hedwig, Asa, Manru, Urok, Oros

THE scene is laid in the mountains of Hungary, where Manru, a gipsy, is seen living in a hut with his wife, Ulana, a peasant girl, for love of whom he has abandoned his own people, and whom he has married against the wishes of her mother, Hedwig. Ulana is disowned by her mother, who, however, agrees to receive her back if she will leave her gipsy husband. This Ulana refuses to do; and her only friend now is Urok, a hunchback dwarf, who loves her, and endeavours to entice her from her husband by declaring that the latters gipsy blood will not permit him to remain faithful to

her for long, but that he will soon have the roving fever upon him once more. Ulana, who passionately loves Manru, begs Urok to procure for her a potion which will cause her husbands already waning love to revive again; and this Urok very unwillingly does.

In Act 2, whilst Ulana is soothing her child with a crooning song, Manru is shown in a restless mood, already tired of cabin life, and longing for freedom and wanderings once more; and his longings are increased by presently hearing the exquisitely wild music of a violin, played by one of his old gipsy companions, who has been sent to entice him back to his people. Ulana begs her husband not to desert her; and finally her entreaties prevail, and Manru drinks the potion she offers him, upon which his love for her returns for a season.

In the last act, however, the old wandering fever returns with such irresistible force that Ulanas entreaties and potions can no longer prevail against it; and Manru rushes away to join his people. He is soon found by his former gipsy sweetheart, Asa, who receives him joyfully, and for whom his old-time love is passionately renewed; and though the tribe at first refuse to admit the deserter, their objections are at length over-ruled by the eager Asa, who promises to make Manru their leader. The leadership of the tribe has, however, been assumed by Oros, a former rival of Manrus; and he is furious at the return of the wanderer, who is now gladly acclaimed by the gipsies. Ulana, seeking her faithless husband, and seeing him caressing Asa, is filled with despair; and she flings herself into a lake near by, as the gipsy pair stroll away together. Manru, however, is not long left to enjoy his liberty; for Urok the dwarf, determined to be revenged for the death of the unhappy Ulana, creeps up behind the lovers, and, with a sudden movement, thrusts Manru into the lake, where he perishes.

123. ROSALBA

Opera in One Act By Emilio Pizzi

Libretto By Luigi Illica

Chief Characters Rosalba, Firmiani, Ezio Colonna

THE scene is laid in Venice, about the middle of the sixteenth century, and the opera opens in the studio of Firmiani, who is at work trying to finish a song he is to send in for a musical competition at St Zaccaria. Bending over him is Rosalba, the beautiful Roman singer, whose love and fair personality inspires his work; but the soul of the artist is not yet satisfied with his efforts to clothe in song the beautiful thoughts suggested by the inspiring presence of Rosalba, who is a veritable Queen of Love and Beauty. Though Firmiani is unaware of the fact, Rosalba has been a celebrated courtesan in Rome; but having now conceived a real passion for the young Venetian, she hopes to enter upon a new and better life with him, and has therefore kept him in ignorance of her old life. She is so anxious for Firmiani to secure the prize in the competition that she presently sings to him a beautiful melody which was composed by her last Roman lover, Ezio Colonna, which she now states to be the production of Firmiani, declaring that she heard him murmuring it in his sleep one day. Firmiani is so fascinated by this lovely melody, and so delighted by her declaration that it is his own composition, that he agrees to give it in the competition; and as a bell announces that it is now time for the competitors to assemble, he passionately kisses Rosalba, and hurries away to put

it to the test. When he has gone, Rosalba is overcome with shame and remorse for the base deed she has done; and she determines to write a note to her lover confessing the deception she resorted to in his interest. Before the confession is written, however, the bell again announces that the competition is over; and the passing gondoliers cry out the name of the winner - Firmiani. Realising that it is now too late to carry out her good resolve, Rosalba destroys the letter she began to write; and as Firmiani hurries in, flushed with the triumph of his success, she accepts his joyous embrace, and resigns herself to the happiness of the moment. Firmiani now entreats his beloved one to marry him that day; and Rosalba consents, and retires to don her bridal garments, whilst Firmiani orders a perfect bower of exquisite exotic flowers to be brought into the room to celebrate the occasion. Presently the musician hears the sound of a scuffle on the piazza below; and seeing a man fighting for his life with a gang of ruffians, he seizes his sword and goes to his assistance. He soon returns with the rescued man, who is none other than the once famous composer, Ezio Colonna, of Rome, who is now in a state of poverty. He relates to Firmiani the story of his fallen life, his bright prospects having been ruined by a beautiful courtesan, who, by her fascinations, lured him into the wildest excesses, and then cast him aside for a new lover. This courtesan is the famous singer, Rosalba; and he has come to Venice to track her down. Firmiani at first passionately refuses to believe that his loved one has been a false woman of this description; and whilst the two hotly argue, Rosalba herself enters clad in bridal array. The singer receives a terrible shock on beholding her old lover, and at first refuses to recognise him; but when Colonna reminds her of the song he wrote in her honour, and sings the opening lines of it, she is overcome with confusion and stands convicted. Firmiani now realises how he has been tricked into gaining the prize under false colours; and full of grief and disappointment at this rude awakening from his rosy love-dream, he resolves to live no longer. When Colonna has gone, he ceases to upbraid Rosalba, whom he still loves in spite of all; and he determines they shall die together on their wedding-night. He therefore closes the windows and doors; and then, clasped in each others arms, the unhappy lovers are gradually overcome by the poisonous exhalations given out by the exotic blooms which crowd the room. Firmiani is the first to succumb; and the last sound heard by the expiring Rosalba is the voice of Colonna on the piazza beneath, singing the fatal song which has been the means of bringing woe and death upon her lover and herself.

124. LES CLOCHES DE CORNEVILLE

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Robert Jean Planquette

Libretto By Clairville and Gabet

First Produced Paris, April, 1877

Chief Characters Serpolette, Germaine, Henri (Marquis de Villeroi), Old Gaspard (The Miser), Jean Grenicheux

THE scene is laid in the old Norman village of Corneville during the reign of Louis XV. Henri, the young Marquis of Villerci, has just returned from exile, and goes to the fair to engage servants to take to his château, which is reported to be haunted, strange lights and weird sounds having been seen and heard by the villagers. At the fair he meets Serpolette, a pretty girl who has lived in the village all her life, but of whose parentage nothing is known. Here also comes Germaine, the niece of an old miser named Gaspard, who desires her to marry the rich sheriff. Germaine, however, declines to do so, declaring that Jean Grenicheux, a young fisherman, has more claim upon her

favour since he once saved her life. In order to escape the unwelcome attentions of the sheriff, Germaine engages herself as a servant to the young Marquis; and she persuades Jean and Serpolette to join her as companions. The Marquis, on introducing his three new servants to the château, determines to fathom the mystery of the supposed ghost; and after a grand search at midnight, after the ringing of the bells, they discover old Gaspard, the Miser, who has been using one of the rooms as a store place for his ill-gotten gains, having found a secret way into the closed castle. The discovery of his hiding-place drives him half-crazy for the time being. Some papers are now found, giving information as to treasures in the château belonging to a lost heiress; and all points to the fact that Serpolette is the missing heiress. When the Marquis presently gives a grand ball to his tenants, Serpolette therefore appears in the garb of a great lady. Germaine is also there, and she and the Marquis fall in love with one another and agree to marry. Old Gaspard now comes forward, his reason having returned, and confesses that it is Germaine who is the missing heiress, and that she is a Marchioness in her own right; also that the treasure he has hoarded is hers. Germaine, therefore, comes into her fortune and title, and marries the Marquis; and she keeps the merry Serpolette with her as her companion.

125. THE VAGABOND AND THE PRINCESS

Opera in One Act By E. Poldini

Libretto By A. E. Seligman (Adapted from one of Hans Andersens Fairy Tales Chief)

Characters The Princess, The Prince, The King, The Ambassador, The Court Astrologer

THE scene opens in the garden before the Kings palace. The King and the Princess are seated on thrones upon the terrace, surrounded by their courtiers; and before them stands the Ambassador from the Prince of Pallagonia with his suite. The Ambassador brings an offer of marriage from his royal master, who, having once seen the fair Princess, has fallen in love with her, and desires to make her his Queen; and as his lovers gifts he has sent to her a rose-bush crowded with exquisite blooming roses - the symbols of love-and a poem he has written, in which he bids the roses reveal to her by their beauty and sweetness the message of his burning love and devotion for the mistress of his heart. The Ambassador calls upon a minstrel in his suite to step forth and sing his masters love-song; and the troubadour - who is the Prince himself in disguise - sings the beautiful song of love with all the fervour and depth of a true devotion. The courtiers express great admiration of the roses and the song; but the Princess, who, though fair, is proud and unappreciative of true beauty, disdains the offering which has been made to her, and, declaring the roses and the song to be "shabby gifts," declines to accept a suitor who has nothing better to offer her. She therefore departs with her ladies, leaving the Ambassador and the rejected suitor in a state of amazement. The young Prince, realising that the haughty Princess is unworthy of his love, now determines to be even with her by humbling her pride, and at the same time to teach her the folly of despising the beautiful gift of love, which she shall now court in vain. He therefore procures a puppet-show, and disguising himself as a gipsy showman he again enters the palace gardens at dusk, accompanied by his Ambassador, also similarly disguised, who plays a hurdy-gurdy. The Princess and her ladies have been laughing together over the humble gifts brought by the Ambassador, and are now playing at "Blindmans Buff"; but hearing the sound of the hurdy-gurdy they hasten to the garden wall, and cry out with delight at the sight of the marionette show. Eager for a change of amusement, the Princess bids the gipsy bring his puppet-show into the garden and perform before

her. The disguised Prince obeys with alacrity; and the play he makes his puppets act is a picture of his own experiences, and is as follows : The shepherdess, Phyllis, is beloved by two shepherds. As she sleeps on the grass, the sincere lover, Philidor, awakens her with a kiss, offering her his devoted heart; but she rejects him, and sends him away with a box on the ear. Then Punchinello appears, and awakens her by striking the ground with his wand; and she is delighted with all the foolish pranks he plays before her, and, accepting his admiration, lets him kiss her. The two suitors then meet and fight a duel, in which both fall dead; and when Phyllis appears and sees the tragedy which has taken place, and realises that she has lost both lovers, she falls dead beside the two. This is the end of the play; and the Princess, not perceiving the lesson it has for herself, is so delighted that she desires to buy the show. The gipsy, however, refuses all offers of money for his show, and declares he will only sell it for one hundred kisses from the Princess. The royal maiden is most indignant at his daring to ask such terms, and refuses the offer at first; but when the gipsy prepares to depart, her longing for the toys is so great that she calls him back, and declares she will give him the payment he requires. The pretended showman thereupon returns, and bids the ladies count the salutes and not cheat him of his dues; and the toll of the kisses begins, and proceeds to the increasing joy of the Princess, who feels her heart strangely stirred for the first time. It has now grown dark; and presently the King and his attendants appear on the terrace above with torches; and the King is so enraged and disgusted at beholding his daughter in the arms of a vagabond gipsy, whose kisses she is accepting so willingly, that he casts her off for ever, and declares she shall never darken his doors again. As the King and his attendants retire into the palace the Princess remains alone, weeping; and then the vagabond, stripping off his outer rags, reveals himself in his true character as the Prince of Pallagonia, and scornfully tells her that by refusing his gifts of song and roses, which told the story of his true love for her, and by showing herself willing to let a mere vagabond kiss her for the sake of securing a worthless toy, she has forfeited his love and regard for ever, since he now has only contempt for her. He then proudly walks out through the gate, and, too late, the Princess realises that through her own haughty scorn of a lover's true offering she has lost love and home and rank; and as she wanders forth from her father's palace, an outcast, she sadly plucks off a bloom from the once-despised rose-bush and kisses it tenderly in remembrance of the love which is now lost to her for ever.

126. LA GIOCONDA

Opera in Four Acts By Amilcare Ponchielli

Libretto By Tobic Garrio (Adapted from Victor Hugo's Drama, "The Tyrant of Syracuse")

First Produced Milan, April, 1876

Chief Characters Gioconda, Laura, La Cieca, Emzo, Barnaba, Aloise

THE action takes place in Venice in the seventeenth century.

In Act 1 a great festival is taking place; and as the revellers wander forth from the Duke's palace, the Inquisitor spy, Barnaba, comes forth. He is in love with a beautiful maiden, Gioconda; and when she presently appears with her blind mother, La Cieca, he endeavours to seize her, and declares his violent love for her. Gioconda, however, repulses him, for she is in love with Enzo, whom she knows only as a young noble, but who is in reality the exiled Prince of Santifior. Barnaba, enraged at Gioconda's coldness, accuses her mother of witchcraft, and an angry crowd

gathers. Enzo appears opportunely, and endeavours to protect the distressed maiden and her helpless mother; and in this he is assisted by one of the Inquisition chiefs, Aloise, who now appearing with his wife, Laura, sets free the terrified La Cieca, who, in gratitude, gives her rosary to Laura. The latter now recognises Enzo, who was once betrothed to her before his exile, and for whom she still cherishes a passionate affection, and who also loves her in return; and she reveals this fact to Barnaba, who decides to assist the lovers, in order to secure an open field in regard to Gioconda. He therefore arranges that Laura shall elope with Enzo that night in the latter's vessel; and at the same time he warns the husband, Aloise, of his wife's intention, for he is treacherous, and desires also to stand well with the Inquisition. Gioconda is meanwhile filled with grief on discovering that Enzo has no love for her, as she had imagined; and she is quickly jealous of Laura.

Act 2 takes place in the vessel in which Enzo intends to elope with Laura. As he waits anxiously for her, she approaches in a small boat, accompanied by Barnaba, who is still playing his double game; for as the lovers are rejoicing in each other's arms he departs and presently returns with Aloise. Gioconda has also managed to secretly board the vessel, and she has a passionate scene with Laura, whom she attempts to stab, but refrains upon the latter holding up the rosary which La Cieca had given her. Gioconda now makes friends with Laura; and when they see Aloise drawing near, she manages to get the terrified wife away before he boards the vessel. Enzo sets his vessel on fire when he finds himself surrounded by the State galleys; but he and Gioconda manage to make their escape.

In Act 3 Aloise has captured his runaway wife, and commands her to drink a cup of poison he places before her; but when the angry husband departs Gioconda appears, and, pouring out the poison, gives Laura a potion, which makes her fall into a deep slumber, so that she appears to be in a trance. When Aloise returns, therefore, and sees the empty cup, and Laura lying still, he thinks he has gained his revenge; but when he has again departed, Gioconda comes once more, and carries the sleeping Laura away to her own abode in a ruined palace.

Here, in Act 4, the temptation seizes her to slay the helpless sleeper; but her better feelings prevail, and she cannot do the deed. Enzo presently enters, and believing the still and silent Laura to be dead he at once suspects Gioconda of having murdered her, and is about to destroy her in his despair; but at this moment Laura awakens from her trance and explains how Gioconda has really saved her life. The lovers now depart together, leaving Gioconda full of grief at her unrequited love. But she nevertheless dresses herself in gay wedding apparel, having promised herself to the cunning Barnaba as a bribe for his help in her plans for the escape of the lovers; but when he presently appears to claim his reward she stabs herself in his presence. Before she dies, however, she has to endure the additional woe of learning from the angry and disappointed Barnaba that he has strangled her blind mother.

127. LA BOHÈME

Opera in Four Acts By Giacomo Puccini

Libretto By Giacosa and Illica (Adapted from a series of Scenes taken from Murgers "La Vie de Bohème")

First Produced Turin, February, 1896

Chief Characters Mimi, Musette, Rudolphe, Marcel, Schaunard, Colline

THE subject-matter of this opera is more a series of character sketches, giving a vivid picture of Paris student Bohemian life than a story containing any very definite plot.

In Act 1 the happy-go-lucky, but desperately poor students, Rudolphe the Poet and Marcel The Artist, are shown at work in their garret, cold and hungry. Rudolphe sacrifices his MSS. to keep the fire alight; but presently their comrade, Schaunard the Musician, appears, having had an unexpected windfall, which he proceeds to share with his friends in true Bohemian fashion. He brings with him quite an extravagant feast which they at once proceed to enjoy, being joined by another friend, Colline the Philosopher. When the landlord comes angrily to demand his long-overdue rent, they merrily force him to join them at supper, and soon make him jolly and forgetful of his rent by copious draughts of good wine. After supper three of them go off to join in the fun of a fair being held in the streets opposite the celebrated Café Momus; but Rudolphe remains behind to finish a MS., promising to join them later. When the hilarious students have gone, Rudolphe is interrupted by the entrance of pretty little Mimi, an embroiderer, who has come for a light, and who half-faints on her entrance, being very frail, and, in fact, consumptive. Rudolphe has before been struck with the ethereal beauty of this girl; and he now contrives to extinguish the light, and as they both search for a key which Mimi has dropped, their hands meet in the dark, and, being thrilled by the touch, they confess their love for one another. Rudolphe now takes Mimi out to the fair with him.

Here we find all the merry friends taking refreshment outside the Café Momus; and here also Marcel meets his sweetheart, the coquettish Musette, who is at the moment accepting the attentions of a rich but foolish old banker. She soon manages to hoodwink her aged admirer, however, by despatching him to buy her a new pair of shoes; and then she quickly makes friends with her beloved Marcel once more, and departs with him.

In Act 3 we have many little quarrels and reconciliations between the two pairs of lovers; and in this act, also, we see that Mimi's malady is gaining a fatal hold upon her.

In Act 4 Rudolphe and Marcel are shown in their garret once more, very wretched because their sweethearts seem to have deserted them altogether; but their commiserations with each other are presently interrupted by the hurried entrance of Musette, full of anxiety and excitement, who announces that she has brought Mimi to bid them farewell, as she is now in a dying state. Very tenderly the two students carry in the exhausted girl, and Rudolphe lays her upon his bed and folds her in his arms, weeping. The other students enter, and one by one they go out to pawn their coats in order to buy wine and restoratives for the dying girl. But Mimi is beyond all human help; and after uttering a tender farewell to her beloved Rudolphe she expires happily in his arms, and the curtain descends upon the despairing collapse of the bereaved lover and the sympathising sorrow of his faithful companions.

128. THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST

Opera in Three Acts By Giacomo Puccini

Libretto By Guelfo Civinni and Carlo Zangarini (Adapted from the Drama of David Belasco)

First Produced New York, 1911

Chief Characters Minnie, Wowkle, Dick Johnston (Ramerrez), Jack Rance, Nick, Billy Jackrabbit, Castro

THE scene is laid in California, the action taking place in a mining camp at the foot of the Cloudy Mountains during the period of the gold fever, about the middle of the nineteenth century.

Act 1 shows the inside of the " Polka," a rough-and-ready miners tavern and gambling-house; and a number of the miners are gathered there, drinking, smoking, and playing cards. Nick, the bar-tender, is kept busy serving the " boys," some of whom are suffering from an attack of homesickness, which is increased on the arrival of the mail with letters from home. Their spirits are, however, presently revived by the entrance of a beautiful young woman-Minnie, the Girl of the Golden West, who is adored by all the rough miners, who regard her as their " Good Angel." Minnie is the mistress of the " Polka"; and she cares for the miners with great affection, and permits them to keep their precious gold in a barrel at the back of the bar. She even holds a school for the great rough fellows during the winter months, teaching them what little she knows herself, and endeavouring to keep them steady and honest. Minnie, on entering, scolds the miners for their rowdy conduct, since a squabble was proceeding as she appeared; and then, all smiles again, she accepts from them several little gifts they have brought her-the one a ribbon, the other a scarf, etc. Rance, the Sheriff, has conceived a violent, passion for her, and now begs her to accept him s her lover; but Minnie dislikes and distrusts this man, and coldly keeps him at arms length. Presently another interruption comes, by the arrival of a stranger, who gives his name as Dick Johnston, and comes for refreshment and rest. Minnie at once recognises him as the stranger she has met once before on a lonely hillside, where they struck up an acquaintance and were mutually drawn to each other; and Johnson also recognises her, and seems much upset at finding her here. On seeing that Minnie is acquainted with the stranger, Rance is filled with jealousy; and the miners also are not pleased. Soon, however, a report is brought that the famous Ramerrez, the leader of a gang of " greasers," or bandits, who existed at that time by plundering the various gold-mining camps of California, as well as by highway robbery, has been seen with some of his company skulking in the district; and the miners all depart to search for this despicable enemy, leaving Minnie in charge of their gold, with Nick the bar-tender, and the stranger, Johnson, with whom she has a pleasant chat when they haye gone, inviting him to visit her later in her own little home on the hillside.

In Act 2, therefore, Minnie is seen in her little house, which only consists of one room, with a loft above it; and here she is waiting for her visitor. She is attended by Wowkle, an Indian squaw, who prepares the supper whilst her mistress decks herself in all her little bits of finery, ready for her expected guest. Wowkles lord, Billy Jackrabbit, also appears, but is soon dismissed by Minnie; and when the latter has completed her toilet, and her guest arrives, she sends away the squaw and her papoose also. Johnson and Minnie soon make a mutual declaration of the love they have felt from their first meeting; and they are so happy that they are utterly oblivious of time. When they presently discover that a terrible blizzard is raging outside, Minnie invites her visitor to remain the night beneath her roof; but they are soon interrupted by a loud knocking on the door, and are surprised to hear the loud voices of the miners demanding entrance. Not wishing to arouse the

jealous anger of her rough friends by letting them find the distrusted stranger in her house, Minnie makes Johnson hide behind her bed-curtains; and then she admits the clamouring miners, who rush in excitedly, and are relieved to find her safe, declaring that they have discovered that the stranger, Johnson, who had visited the "Polka " that evening, is none other than Ramerrez, the infamous chief of the " Greaser " band, who evidently intended to rob them of their gold, but had been prevented from so doing by the presence of Minnie herself. Fearing lest he had now followed her to her home, they have come to assure themselves of her safety, and to continue their search for the robber. Minnie is struck to the heart on thus learning that the man to whom she has given her love is a thieving bandit; but being nevertheless unable to betray him, she controls her feelings for the moment, and contrives to despatch the miners once more on their search. When they have gone, however, she turns upon Johnson, and scornfully denounces him for obtaining her love under false colours; but the wretched man implores her forgiveness, declaring that his love for her is sincere. He explains that he has been brought up in this evil course of life by his thieving father; but now that Minnie's sweet and pure influence has come into his life he is determined to make a fresh start and earn an honest living. Minnie's outraged feelings and pride, however, are not easily soothed; and Johnson recklessly rushes outside to give himself up to the prowling miners. He instantly receives a pistol shot in the dark and falls wounded; and Minnie, unable to let the man she loves be taken after all, rushes out and drags him back, half-fainting, into the house. She just has time to help him into the loft above when Rance, the Sheriff, enters, declaring that she is hiding the refugee, since he saw him fall outside her door after the pistol shot. Minnie holds him at bay for a short time; but drops of blood fall upon the Sheriff from above, and in triumph he drags forth the wounded man. Minnie, in despair, now makes the bold proposal that they shall play a game of poker - the best two out of three - which shall decide the fate of the captive. If Rance wins his reward shall be the man's life and her own hand into the bargain; and if Minnie wins, Johnson shall be hers. Rance agrees, gambling being his greatest passion; and the game begins. Minnie manages to conceal a set of high cards about her person; and after she has gained one point she complains of faintness, and whilst Rance is fetching brandy for her from the shelf, she has an opportunity to place the concealed cards in such a way that they shall fall to her, and consequently she wins the game and wager. Rance keeps to his bargain, but departs in rage and disappointment. Minnie nurses her lover tenderly for a week, until he has recovered from his wounds; and then his hiding-place having been discovered by the miners, Johnson is forced to take to flight.

In Act 3 an exciting chase takes place, which ends in Johnson being captured by the miners, who, furious at the robberies he has committed, clamour that the summary justice of lynch law shall be meted out to him. The Sheriff, Rance, readily agrees; and as the noose is being prepared, he triumphantly boasts over his fallen rival. Johnson faces his awful position calmly; and he only begs the miners not to tell Minnie of his fate, but to let her think he has escaped. Just as the lynching is about to take place, Minnie herself rushes to the spot, and flinging herself in front of her lover, she entreats the miners to spare his life, telling them that he was even now on his way to another country, there to earn an honest livelihood. Finding the sullen men still obdurate, she begs them for her own sake to release their victim, reminding them of her loving devotion to them in the past, which they can now repay by granting her request. This last appeal is effectual, and the miners over-rule the baffled Rance and set their prisoner free; and as Johnson and Minnie depart hand in hand to seek a new and better life together elsewhere, the rough men are left sad and forlorn, and are overcome with the deepest emotion as they realise that the Girl of the Golden West has now passed out of their lives for ever.

129. MADAME BUTTERFLY

Opera in Three Acts By Giacomo Puccini

Libretto By Illica and Giacosa (Adapted from the Romance of J. L. Long and D. Belasco)

First Produced Milan, 1904

Chief Characters Cho Cho San (Butterfly), Suzuki, Kate Pinkerton, Lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton, Sharpless, Goro, Yamadori

THE action takes place in Nagasaki, Japan, during the present time.

In Act 1 Lieutenant B. F. Pinkerton, a young American naval officer, is being shown round a pretty Japanese house, which has just been secured for him by Goro, the marriage broker, who has also made the arrangements for his "Japanese" marriage with Cho Cho San, a pretty little geisha maiden, known by her friends as " Butterfly," which ceremony is about to take place in accordance with the easy Japanese law - the husbands absence for even so short a time as a month constituting divorce. When Goro has departed Sharpless, the American Consul, appears, who, having learnt of the real love which Butterfly has for her American sweetheart, begs Pinkerton to do nothing rashly, and, above all, not to hurt such a sensitive and loving nature. Pinkerton, however, only laughs at this serious talk, for he thinks only of the pleasure of the moment; and when Butterfly presently appears with her girl companions he welcomes her with all the ardour of a young mans first love. For a moment, when the generous-hearted Butterfly tells him that she has cut herself off entirely from her past life by giving up the gods of her people and accepting the religion of her lover, he has some slight qualms of conscience; but these soon disappear on the arrival of the brides relations and the officials, who unite the happy pair in Japanese style. After the ceremony the guests are enjoying the feast provided by the rich young American, when they are interrupted by the sudden entrance of a Bonze, or Japanese Priest, who is Butterflys uncle, and who now denounces her for having forsaken her religion. On hearing this the other relations also hurl forth curses upon the now weeping bride; but Pinkerton promptly turns them all out of the house, and soon succeeds in comforting his pretty little wife by making love to her in the moonlight.

In Act 2 three years have elapsed, and we find Butterfly alone with her maid, Suzuki, Pinkerton having returned to America long ago; but as he has promised her to come back "when the robins nest," she still hopes constantly for his return, and refuses to listen to a word against his fidelity. A rich young Japanese noble, Yamadori, who has long loved her, entreats her to marry him, announcing that Pinkertons desertion of her constitutes divorce according to Japanese law; but Butterfly firmly refuses, proudly declaring that she considers herself bound by the laws of America to her husband, whom she still loves passionately. Even when Sharpless enters and endeavours to induce her to accept Yamadoris offer, knowing only too well that Pinkertons desertion is intended, he makes no impression on her; and when she shows him her bonnie fair-haired boy (Pinkertons child), his pity for the poor little deserted wife is increased. He bears with him a letter from Pinkerton, whose ship is now due, announcing his lawful marriage to an American girl, and begging him to break the news to Butterfly; but he has not the heart for such a cruel task. Just then a cannon shot announces the arrival of the vessel; and as Sharpless hurries away to meet his friend, Butterfly, full of excitement and joy at the probable return of her beloved

husband, and trustfully expecting his speedy entrance, at once bids her maid decorate the house with flowers from the garden. Then, having decked herself and the child in bravest array, she sits down with him to await Pinkertons entrance, watching for him through holes which she makes in the " shosi," or blinds.

In Act 3 Butterfly, Suzuki and the child are found still in the same position, having watched vainly throughout the evening and night; and now in the early morning Suzuki begs her drooping but still hopeful mistress to retire to her chamber and take a little rest, adding that her lord must not find her weary-looking on his return. These last words alone induce Butterfly to take her maids advice, and she retires upstairs, taking the sleeping child with her. Soon after, Pinkerton and Sharpless enter and eagerly greet Suzuki, whose fears for her mistresses happiness are confirmed by observing a lady outside, who Sharpless informs her is Kate Pinkerton, his friends lawful American wife. Pinkerton himself is so upset and conscience-stricken on beholding all the signs of his little Japanese sweethearts constancy and undying love that he rushes away, leaving Sharpless to settle matters. Kate Pinkerton now comes forward and says she wishes to adopt her husbands little son; and whilst she is speaking Butterfly herself comes down into the room. At a glance she at last understands all; and as the dreadful truth dawns upon her she bears the blow with wonderful calmness, and listens quietly to the gentle request of Kate to adopt the boy. She has no jealousy of her rival, but sweetly wishes her joy; and then she adds that Pinkerton shall have his child if he will himself return to fetch him in half-an-hour. Kate, overcome with pity at the sight of such resigned suffering, retires weeping, with Sharpless, who is also greatly affected; and when they have gone Butterfly sends her child out to play in the garden with Suzuki, whilst she herself takes down from the wall a Japanese sword with which her father had committed " Harikiri "(compelled suicide). She kisses the blade, welcoming it as a kindly friend; for now, deprived of husband and child, she has no further desire for life. When, therefore, Pinkerton at last enters and calls for his "little Butterfly," he finds that she has slain herself with the " sword of honour," and that her loving, faithful heart has ceased to beat.

130. MANON LESCAUT

Opera in Four Acts By Giacomo Puccini

Libretto arranged by the Composer from Abbe Prevosts Novel

First Produced Turin, February, 1893

Chief Characters Manon Lescaut, The Chevalier Des Grieux, Lescaut, Geronte de Ravoire, Edmond

THE action takes place towards the end of the eighteenth century, and Act 1 opens in the courtyard of an inn at Amiens, where a number of merry students are gathered awaiting the arrival of the diligence. Amongst these is the Chevalier des Grieux, a handsome young student, who is destined for the Church, and who is now teased by his companions for his lack of a sweetheart, they themselves having already secured favours from the pretty work-girls who are passing. Presently the diligence arrives, and Des Grieux immediately becomes interested in a beautiful maiden who alights, and whose grace and irresistible charm so completely entralls him that he instantly falls in love with her. This maiden is Manon Lescaut, whose brother is conveying her to a convent to take the vows, this being the fate ordained for her by her parents. Manon, being young and fond of life, and desiring to taste of all that pleasure has to offer, is sad at the thought of her

impending incarceration; and the brother, Lescaut, is also reluctant to throw so fair a life away. He therefore determines to disobey his instructions, and to use Manon's beauty as a means for securing wealth for them both. To this end he encourages the attentions of Geronte de Ravoire, a rich old libertine, who has travelled with them in the diligence, and is so attracted by Manon's loveliness that he desires to possess her; and he invites the pair to join him at supper. Des Grieux, meanwhile, has found means to speak with Manon, and is overjoyed to find in her an answering sympathy, which also quickly develops into love, and he secures her promise to meet him a little later. The old roué, Geronte, now determines to elope with Manon that evening, and he arranges with the landlord of the inn to have a postchaise in readiness at a certain hour. He is pleased on presently seeing Lescaut closely engaged in gambling with some of the students, and he endeavours to keep him thus occupied, so that he may abduct Manon the more readily. His arrangements, however, have been overheard by a friendly student, Edmond, who, having noticed the quick passion which has sprung up between Des Grieux and Manon, at once informs the former of the proposed abduction, and advises him to run off with the maiden first, making use of the carriage which will be in waiting. When Manon presently appears, therefore, Des Grieux entreats her to fly with him to Paris, and thus escape the convent and also the clutches of the elderly beau into whose arms she is likely to be driven by her unscrupulous brother; and upon Manon, after some hesitation, accepting, the lovers jump into the waiting postchaise and drive off, leaving the deserted Geronte and Lescaut speechless with fury. The latter, however, knowing well his fair sister's passionate love of luxury and hatred of poverty, bids Geronte not despond, since Manon may yet be won by him when her student lover's slender means have been spent; and in Act 3 his selfish schemes have triumphed, and Manon is shown living as the mistress of Geronte in a sumptuous house and surrounded by all the luxuries and extravagances which her pleasure-loving soul craves for. She has been thus tempted to leave the humble cottage in which she has lived a short, happy time with the devoted Des Grieux; but in spite of her every whim being gratified by her elderly admirer, she still loves Des Grieux and pines for him. Lescaut knows this and is disturbed, not desiring to lose the means of gratifying his own low tastes and love of gambling which his sister's luxury affords him the means to do; and he therefore seeks out Des Grieux, and encourages him to gamble desperately and thus secure the wealth which will enable him to win back the radiant Manon, whom he still so fondly loves. He even arranges an interview between the pair; but dire misfortune comes of this. As Manon and Des Grieux embrace one another on the latter's arrival at the roué's hotel they are interrupted by Geronte himself, who is furious at the sight, and in revenge he at once denounces Manon to the authorities, and she is condemned to deportation. Lescaut, for his own selfish ends, endeavours to save her from her awful fate, but he is unsuccessful. Des Grieux is overcome with grief and despair at the fate which awaits his beloved one, and rather than be parted from her, when the last chance of rescue has vanished, he offers himself as a cabin-boy on the vessel which conveys her to America. But even here fate is still against the lovers, and Manon and Des Grieux are compelled to make a sudden, hurried flight to escape a worse danger. In the last act they are shown as fugitives in a vast, solitary wilderness, far from human habitation and aid, and here Manon sinks to the ground dying from exhaustion. Des Grieux vainly seeks water and refreshment to save her life, but Manon, knowing herself to be past human aid, calls him to her side once more, and folded in his embrace she expires, declaring her love for him with her last breath. As the curtain descends, Des Grieux, with a cry of woe, falls senseless beside the dead body of his beloved Manon—that Manon so fair and so alluring; such a bewildering contrast of passionate love and dainty coquetry, a sunshine-loving butterfly, with the heart of a true woman.

131. LA TOSCA

Tragic Opera in Three Acts By Giacomo Puccini

Libretto By Illica and Giacosa (Adapted from Sardou's Tragedy)

First Produced Rome, January, 1900

Chief Characters Floria Tosca, Mario Cavaradossi, Scarpia, Cesar, Angelotti, Spoletta

THE scene is laid in Rome in 1800, at the time of the battle of Marengo. Cesar Angelotti, a political prisoner, has escaped and takes refuge in the Church of Saint Andrea Alla Valle, where he surprises the painter, Cavaradossi, at work. Cavaradossi, recognizing in him the Consul of the late Roman Republic and an old friend of his, arranges to convey him through a secret passage in an adjoining chapel which leads out to his own villa garden, where he can hide in a dry well. Whilst making these arrangements he is interrupted by his sweetheart, Tosca, a singer, who demands admission; and thrusting Angelotti into the chapel, Cavaradossi admits the beautiful singer, who is of a jealous disposition, and whose suspicions have been aroused by the closed door. He soothes her ruffled feelings, however, and at length sends her away happy. Then, as he enters the chapel, a cannon shot announces that the prisoners escape has become known, and, knowing that every moment's delay means danger, the painter decides to accompany the refugee himself. Angelotti by this time has arrayed himself in some feminine garments left in the chapel by his sister for his disguise, and the pair escape through the secret passage just as a crowd of citizens pour into the church, headed by the wicked Scarpia, Chief of Police, by whose malice Angelotti had been unjustly imprisoned, and who has now tracked him to this spot. The crowd are rejoicing in a rumour that Napoleon has been defeated at Marengo; and with them comes Tosca, whose jealous suspicions of her lover are stirred afresh by Scarpia showing her a lady's fan he has discovered in the chapel. Scarpia has conceived a violent passion for Tosca, and determines to make her his mistress; and as he suspects Cavaradossi of aiding the escaped Angelotti, he thinks to rid himself of his rival by bringing him to execution for his present shielding of a State prisoner. He therefore bids his chief spy and attendant, Spoletta, follow Tosca, believing that she will seek her lover. This ruse is successful, and Cavaradossi is found and brought to a chamber in the Palace Farnese, where Scarpia is expecting Tosca, who is to sing at the Queen's festival that evening in honour of the supposed victory.

When Cavaradossi is brought in he refuses to reveal his friend's hiding-place, and manages to whisper to Tosca to keep the secret also; but the cruel Scarpia orders him to be tortured in the chamber beyond, whilst he himself makes his infamous proposals to Tosca. The singer scornfully refuses to listen to his advances; but her anger is soon changed to grief and despair on hearing the groans of her tortured lover in the room beyond. The vile Scarpia now offers to release her lover from the torture if she will reveal the hiding-place of Angelotti, and at last Tosca, unable to bear more, gasps out that the refugee is in the well in Cavaradossi's garden. The tortured man is then brought forth, but is full of grief on learning of Tosca's forced betrayal of his friend; but the news is now brought that Angelotti had, before her confession, been taken, and has killed himself, and that the news of Napoleon's defeat is false, and that he has gained a victory instead. The furious Scarpia therefore gives orders for Cavaradossi to be instantly shot, but as he is led away Tosca, on being left alone with the tyrant, passionately pleads for his life. Scarpia now offers to save her

lover if she will grant his evil desires and become his; and at last the despairing Tosca consents. Scarpia declares that a mock execution will have to take place, but that blank cartridges shall be fired; and Tosca also persuades him to write a passport for herself and her lover to leave the city. Whilst Scarpia is writing this, Tosca snatches up a knife from the table, and when he flings down the pen and prepares to embrace her she plunges it into his heart.

In Act 3 Tosca appears at the place of execution and tells her lover of the mock death he is to feign; for Scarpia had pretended to give the promised instructions to his attendants before signing her passport, but-alas for poor Tosca ! - he has bidden them make the execution a *real* one after all. Cavaradossi therefore parts calmly from his sweetheart when the soldiers come to lead him forth, and Tosca remains to see him fall, as arranged, intending to escape with him afterwards when the soldiers have gone. Cavaradossi is put in place and, as the volley rings out, he falls to the ground and remains motionless, as though dead; and after awhile the soldiers cover him with a cloth and depart. Then Tosca hastens to her fallen lovers side and eagerly pulls aside the cloth, awaiting his expected caress; but to her horror she finds that real shot has been used and that he is dead. As she utters a cry of grief and despair, Spoletta and a crowd of officials enter the courtyard, full of excitement, having discovered that Scarpia has been killed, and suspecting the singer as his slayer; but before they can reach her Tosca rushes to the parapet of the tower, and casting herself over the battlements falls dead on the pavement below.

132. SIGURD

Opera in Four Acts By Ernst Reyer

Libretto By Blau and Du Locle

First Produced Brussels, January, 1884

Chief Characters Brunnhilde, Hilda, Sigurd, Gunther, Hagen

THE story of this opera is taken from the ancient Northern legends of the Eddas, and deals with most of the incidents which are contained in the final portions of Wagners " Ring," the same characters appearing under slightly different names. Hilda, sister of Gunther, a powerful German King, is secretly in love with the famous hero Sigurd (which is the same as Siegfried), but she is betrothed to Attila, King of the Huns, whose alliance is desired by her brother. When Attilas messengers arrive they are gladly welcomed by Gunther, who feasts them, and afterwards they relate the story of the Sleeping Valkyrie, Brunnhilde, who lies on a rock, surrounded by re and waiting for a hero ardent enough to brave the flames and awaken her. Gunther is very eager to secure the lovely war-maiden as his bride; and whilst he is deciding on his plans a hunting-horn sounds, and the radiant hero, Sigurd, appears. Hilda, greatly desiring the new-coiners love, presents him with a horn of wine in which she has mixed a magic potion, and after drinking it Sigurd at once falls in love with her and asks her hand in marriage. Gunther consents to this, and to the breaking of his word to Attila, on condition that the hero will aid him in turn to win the Sleeping Valkyrie; and upon Sigurd agreeing the pair set out upon their adventure, accompanied by Hagen, the half-brother of Gunther.

In Act 2 they are shown near Brunnhildes fiery rock, and Sigurd leaves his companions and proceeds on his adventure alone. He has many struggles with spirits and other supernatural beings

sent to tempt him from his enterprise, but he overcomes all, and dashing through the flames awakens the sleeping war-maiden with a kiss. The pair instantly fall in love with each other, Sigurd's transitory feeling for Hilda fading before his great passion; but he remembers his promise to Gunther and, restraining his feelings, he leads the beautiful Brunnhilde away, keeping a drawn sword between them.

In Act 3 Brunnhilde has been brought in Gunther's palace garden in a deep sleep, and when she awakens and finds Gunther at her side she accepts his protestations of love, believing him to be the hero who rescued her. Their betrothal is announced, and at the same time Sigurd claims Hilda, still determining to keep faith with his friend. But when Brunnhilde, at Gunther's desire, places Hilda's hand in that of Sigurd, her own fingers touch those of the hero and, being thrilled by the touch, she knows that it is Sigurd whom she loves and who loves her. In the fourth act, therefore, she is shown stricken with a strange sickness, which is, however, only her passionate and unsatisfied love for Sigurd; and when Hilda approaches her, wearing a girdle which Sigurd had taken from her when he awakened her on the rock, a passionate altercation takes place between the pair. Brunnhilde, by means of a magic charm of her own, obtains the entire love of Sigurd; and Gunther, now furiously jealous of the hero, whom he declares has played him false, invites him to go hunting, intending to kill him. Hilda reveals this to Brunnhilde and offers to prevent this deed of violence if the Valkyrie will renounce the love of the hero; but, even as they confer, the murder has taken place, and as Sigurd's body is brought in and placed upon a burning funeral pyre Brunnhilde plunges into the flames and perishes beside her dead lover.

133. CRISPINO

Fairy Opera Comique in Three Acts By Luigi Ricci

Libretto By Piave

First Produced Venice, 1850

Chief Characters Annetta, a Fairy, Crispino, Dr Fabrizio

ACT 1 introduces us to Crispino, a poor cobbler, who has such difficulty in making both ends meet that his loving wife, Annetta, helps to bring in a few coppers by singing ballads in the streets. Although so poor, however, the pair are happy in their love and their children; but at last things get so bad that Crispino determines to end his life. He is about to drown himself when a fairy suddenly appears and, giving him a large gift of gold, bids him set up as a doctor, in which profession he is bound to work wonderful cures, if only he is careful to see that she herself is nowhere about when he is giving advice. The delighted Crispino follows out the instructions given, and in Act 2 he is seen as a famous physician working wonderful cures and making a great fortune. The other doctors of the place are, of course, jealous of his sudden and strange success, and there are many amusing scenes with them. His sudden change from poverty to wealth, however, spoils the temper and character of the one-time cobbler, and he grows proud and snobbish, and when the gentle Annetta invites his old friends to the new fine house he disdains to recognise them, and turns them all out. This brings on him the disapproval of his fairy benefactress, who, in Act 3, takes him to her secret cave and tells him that he must prepare for death in a very short time. The cobbler begs for at least one little half-hour longer in which to bid farewell to his wife and children, thus proving that his natural loving nature is still stronger than

his new-born pride of wealth; and as the fairy consents the scene suddenly changes, and the cobbler awakens in his old hut once more to find that all the recent events have been but a dream. He is only a poor cobbler, after all, but he still has his loving wife, Annetta, and his merry little children, and so is perfectly happy, thus proving that love is best of all.

134. BARBER OF SEVILLE

Opera Comique in Two Acts By Gioacchini Antonio Rossini

Libretto By Sterhini (Adapted from Beaumarchais Comedy)

First Produced Rome, February, 1816

Chief Characters Rosina, Berta, Count Almaviva, Figaro, Dr Bartolo, Basilia

THE characters in this opera are the same as in Mozarts " Marriage of Figaro," and it forms, in fact, an introduction to that opera. The scene is laid in Seville, where Count Almaviva, having fallen in love with Rosina, the charming ward of old Dr Bartolo, is found serenading his lady-love, and seeking an opportunity of getting into her presence. This is no easy matter since Bartolo, desiring to marry his fair ward himself and thus secure her somewhat considerable dowry, guards her jealously, being assisted in his schemes by his friend Basilio, a music-master. Finally Almaviva enlists the sympathy and clever wits of Figaro, the lively and gossiping barber and general factotum of the town, who is not long in devising various wild schemes for bringing the lovers together. For Rosina has also fallen in love with the handsome cavalier who so often serenades her, and whom she only knows as plain Lindoro the Student, by which name Almaviva signs the love-letters he sends her, not wishing to dazzle her by his rank. Acting on the suggestion of the cunning Figaro he first gains entrance into Bartolos house by pretending to be a drunken soldier, who presents an order for quartering upon the old Doctor, who indignantly resists the order and goes off to seek for a licence he has for immunity from such undesired visitors. During his absence Almaviva reveals himself as her lover to Rosina, who joyfully responds to his eager love-making. On the return of Bartolo, however, he is forced to retire, being in fact arrested by the guards, for whom the sly Doctor has sent.

In Act 2 the Count, again acting on the suggestion of the resourceful Figaro, gains entrance a second time into Bartolos house by representing himself as a music-master and declaring he has been sent as a substitute by old Basilio, whom he announces to be stricken with a sudden fever, and he thus obtains a delightful interview with Rosina, making love to her whilst pretending to give her a music lesson in the presence of her duenna, Berta. This ruse, however, comes to a sudden end by the inopportune entrance of the real music-master, Basilio, who, by declaring that he is in the best of health, reveals to the furious Bartolo that he has again been imposed upon by the supposed student, who is obliged to beat a hasty retreat, but not before he has managed to whisper to Rosina a plan for their elopement the next evening. After this Bartolo manages to rouse Rosinas jealousy and suspicions of the supposed Lindoro by showing her a letter which he declares the latter has written to another lady, and by stating that the student is also endeavouring, with the aid of Figaro, to betray her into the hands of Count Almaviva, who is, as she thinks, a stranger to her; and finally she is so upset that she says she will see Lindoro no more but will wed her guardian next night instead. Bartolo, delighted with his clever manoeuv-ring, hurries away to arrange for a notary to come at the appointed time; but Rosinas love for Lindoro soon overcomes

her transitory suspicions, and next night she makes her way to the balcony, where she has arranged to meet her lover. Here he quickly joins her, with Figaro; and she is overjoyed to learn that Lindoro and Almaviva are one and the same person. Upon the appearance of the notary whom Bartolo has engaged, who now arrives on the scene, the lovers bribe him to take their part, and so sign the contract he has brought. When Bartolo presently arrives, therefore, he finds his ward already united to Count Almaviva who, however, pacifies him by permitting him to retain the lady's dowry, of which he himself has no need.

135. SEMIRAMIDE

Tragic Opera in Two Acts By Gioacchini Antonio Rossini

Libretto By Gaetano Rossi (Adapted from Voltaire's "Semiramis")

First Produced Venice, February, 1823

Chief Characters Semiramide, Azema, Arsaces, Assur, Idreno, Oroe

THE scene is laid in ancient Babylon. Semiramide, the beautiful and powerful Queen of Babylon, has murdered her husband, King Minus, and in this dreadful deed she has been helped by Assur, an ambitious Prince, who aims at securing the throne for himself, being desperately in love with the passionate Queen, and desirous of wedding her. But Semiramide, having made use of this tool, disdains to use him again, and treats him with haughty coolness; and she desires to secure for her new lover one of her bravest warriors, a noble young man named Arsaces, for whom she has conceived a violent passion. Arsaces is supposed to be a Scythian, being a stranger to Babylon, but in reality he is the son of Semiramide, being the offspring of an early love intrigue. The fact that he is her son, however, is unknown to the Queen; and she seeks eagerly to gain his love. Arsaces, on the contrary, refuses to accept her advances, being in love with one of the royal princesses, Azema, whom he seeks opportunity to woo. But Semiramide is determined to win him as her second consort, and when the people gather together in the temple to swear allegiance to their Queen, she announces to them it is her will that Arsaces shall reign at her side as Consort-King. Assur is furious at this announcement, and he secretly resolves to murder his unwilling rival. The people also are astounded that the Queen should choose a plain and unknown warrior as her consort, even though Arsaces has lately returned from the wars covered with glory, but their astonishment is changed to awe when suddenly the tomb of Minus is opened and the spirit of the dead King appears and announces that Arsaces shall indeed succeed him on the throne. Arsaces has, however, no desire to wed the criminal Queen, and he arranges a meeting with her at midnight at the tomb of Minus, in order to tell her of his love for Azema. Here they are presently joined by the jealous Assur, who springs forward to stab Arsaces, but, in the darkness, he slays the Queen instead. Arsaces, turning upon the unexpected assassin, slays Assur; and when the chief ministers of Babylon, Idreno and Oroe, now appear, with the other lords, the true birth of Assur is discovered, and he is at once acclaimed as King, and is united to his beloved Azema.

136. WILLIAM TELL

Opera in Three Acts By Gioacchini Antonio Rossini

Libretto By Etienne Joug and H. Bis (Adapted from Schillers Drama)

First Produced Paris, August, 1829

Chief Characters Mathilde, Arnold, William Tell, Gessler, Leutold

THE scene is laid in Switzerland, during the thirteenth century, at the time of the persecution of the Swiss by the tyrannical Austrian Governor, Gessler. The opera opens with the revels attending a country wedding, which is attended by William Tell, a bold archer, who has already given signs of his intention to lead a rising of his countrymen against their oppressors. The revels are interrupted by Leutold, a herdsman, who enters, half-distracted, declaring that he has slain an Austrian officer, because he has offered insult and outrage to his only daughter; and he seeks the protection of Tell, who readily renders his aid, and places him in safe hiding. When the Austrian pursuers appear and find their quarry gone they seize old Melchtal, the village wise man, and because he refuses to give information of the fugitive, they put him to death, by order of the tyrant Gessler. Melchtals son, Arnold, is in love with Mathilde, daughter of Gessler; but when he hears the dreadful news of his fathers murder, his filial duty prevails, and he swears to be revenged for the old mans death. He therefore joins with Tell, who has gathered the indignant and persecuted peasants together; and they all swear a solemn oath to attack their cruel oppressor and set their country free. On hearing of the insurrection, Gessler is furious, and determines to bring the peasants into further subjection; and in order to discover the ringleaders he sets his hat on a pole and bids all who pass by to bow down in homage before it. When it comes to Tells turn he proudly refuses to do homage to the tyrant; and the enraged Gessler, thinking to break his spirit and heart at the same time, commands him to shoot an arrow at an apple placed upon the head of the archers own beloved little son. But Tell is a clever archer, and after passionately embracing his son he takes a calm and careful aim and his arrow splits the apple in two without harming the child. The people raise the echoes with their acclamations at this remarkable feat, but the glowering Gessler sees a second arrow half-concealed in Tells clothing, and on learning from the fearless archer that he would certainly have aimed this at the heart of the tyrant had his first shaft slain his child, the furious Governor causes him to be cast into prison. But Arnold quickly gathers together a brave company of those who have sworn to join in the liberation of their country, and they succeed in storming the prison and rescue Tell, whom they place at their head to lead the insurrection. Mathilde, meanwhile, has now left the side of her tyrant father and gladly bestows herself upon Arnold. Tell and his hand slay the cruel oppressor, and finally succeed in bringing freedom to their country; and the opera closes with the union of the now happy lovers, Arnold and Mathilde.

137. NERO

Opera in Four Acts By Anton Gregor Rubinstein

Libretto Jules Barbier

First Produced Hamburg, 1879

Chief Characters Chrysa, Epicharis, Poppoena, Agrippina, Nero, Vindex, Saccus

THE scene is laid in Ancient Rome, and the opera opens in the house of the courtesan, Epicharis, where a number of licentious Roman lords are gathered. They are presently joined by Vindex, Prince of Aquitania, who is conspiring with several of his friends against the life of the tyrant Nero. They are interrupted by the sudden entrance of a beautiful maiden, Chrysa, who is flying from pursuit by a party of revellers and begs protection. She does not know of her mothers real

character, and is herself leading a pure life and is a secret Christian. Vindex offers to protect her, but when the -revellers burst into the room and Nero himself is found to be the ringleader all are amazed. Vindex, who has fallen in love with Chrysa, is filled with grief on now learning that she is the courtesans daughter, and thinking her of the same class, protects her no longer; but when he sees her fall senseless from a drug administered by her mother, who, in order to save her beloved child from the tyrant, now announces that she has poisoned her, his love overcomes all, and he furiously denounces the licentious Emperor.

In Act 2 we are taken to the house of Poppoea, who has been Neros favourite mistress until the advent of Chrysa, and she is bemoaning her fall from favour when an astrologer enters and tells her that Chrysa has been poisoned, and that the Empress Octavia has also been commanded to end her life. When Nero enters she reproaches him for his recent desertion of her, but is quickly consoled on learning that she now has a chance of sharing his throne. Chrysa, meanwhile, has recovered from the potion, and has fallen into the hands of Agrippina, Neros mother.

In Act 3 she is visited by Vindex, who now declares his love for her, to which she gladly responds. Epicharis also gains entrance, and the pair comfort each other. Finally Poppoea and the lord Saccus burst into the apartment, the latter announcing that Rome is burning; and the scene ends with the half-crazed Nero singing and playing on his lyre as he watches the flames, whilst Chrysa, on declaring herself to be a Christian, meets her death at the hands of the angry mob, her mother, Epicharis, also being crushed beneath the ruins of a smouldering house.

In Act 4 Nero is shown in a passionate and frenzied state, the people having risen against him; and as Saccus announces the approach of his enemies he slays himself as the victorious revolutionaries, headed by Vindex, appear on the scene. As the tyrant falls a brilliant cross is seen in the heavens, being the symbol of the end of Paganism and the dawn of Christianity.

138. THE DEMON

Opera in Three Acts By Anton Gregor Rubenstein

Libretto By Wiskowatofi (Adapted from Lermontoffs Dramatic Poem)

First Produced St Petersburg, January, 1875

Chief Characters Tamara, The Demon, The Angel of Light, Prince Sinodal, Prince Gudal

THE scene of this fantastic opera is laid in Grusia in the Caucasus Mountains. The arch-fiend is shown in the prologue, defying the power of the Angel of Light, and engaging in endless strife against Heaven. He is weary of everything, even of strife; but soon a new interest arises for him. He beholds Tamara, the beautiful daughter of Prince Gudal, and falls in love with her; and his fury against the Power of Good at once vanishes, and he endeavours to win the mortal maiden for himself. He therefore visits her as she waits outside her fathers castle for the arrival of her bridegroom, Prince Sinodal, and makes passionate love to her; but Tamara is alarmed and hastens into the castle, though she is thrilled by the hot words and supernatural beauty of the stranger, whom she realises is a being from another world, and his tender voice rings constantly in her ears. Meanwhile Prince Sinodal, as he journeys to the side of his betrothed, is set upon at night by a

horde of wild Tartars, sent by the Demon to destroy him, so that there may be no rival in his path; and the young Prince is slain, and his followers robbed. In the next scene Tamara is shown mourning over the dead body of her lover; but presently she once more hears the thrilling tones of the Tempter whispering passionate words of love into her ear and promising her the dominion of the whole world if she will yield to his embraces. Finally the tempted girl, feeling her powers of resistance growing weaker as she becomes more strangely attracted to her mysterious wooer, enters a convent for protection, but even here the Demon forces an entrance, and revealing his true identity entreats her to show pity on him since his love for her is sincere. Tamara is torn by many conflicting feelings, and in her turn implores her passionate wooer to renounce the paths of evil; but she is terrified as the Demon folds her in a hot embrace. At this moment the Angel of Light appears, and as Tamara flies to him for protection she falls lifeless. The arch-fiend has thus lost the soul he coveted, and as he vanishes amidst wild lightnings, full of despair and cursing the world afresh, the freed spirit of the gentle Tamara is borne up to Heaven by the Angel of Light and other seraphic guardians.

139. HENRY VIII

Historical Opera in Four Acts By Camille Saint-Saëns

Libretto By Delroyat and Silvestre

First Produced Paris, March, 1883

Chief Characters Queen Katherine, Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII, Don Gomez, Dukes of Norfolk and Surrey, Papal Legate

THE first act takes place in the royal palace, where Don Gomez, the Spanish Ambassador, is introduced and reveals his love for Anne Boleyn, to whom he has written a letter- containing love passages, which letter has come into the possession of Queen Katherine. The Dukes of Norfolk and Surrey warn him to walk warily, since the King himself has shown a predilection for Anne Boleyn, and, making no secret of his passion for her, is seeking a divorce from Katherine in order to make the former his Queen. When the King enters, he informs Katherine that he has a new Maid of Honour for her, who is Anne Boleyn, whom he introduces to her, and creates Marchioness of Pembroke. The Queen is compelled to accept the new maid; and then she pleads for the life of -the Duke of Buckingham, who has been condemned to death. The King, however, refuses her request, and turns instead to his love-making with Anne, being displeased when he finds that she is acquainted with the Spanish Ambassador.

Act 2 takes place in Richmond Park, where Anne meets Don Gomez, whom she assures that she still loves, in spite of the Kings infatuation for her; but when Henry presently appears, and Don Gomez retires, she does not refuse to listen to the armourous monarchs protestations of love. She even consents to marry him, on condition that she is made Queen; and as Henry is already negotiating this matter of his divorce from Katherine, he is filled with delight. Queen Katherine presently appears and charges Anne with ensnaring the King in her toils; but the favourite heeds not these words of reproach, but rejoices in her newly gained power.

Act 3 is occupied with the interview between Henry VIII and the Papal Legate; and when the latter announces the Popes refusal to consent to the divorce of Katherine, the King shakes off the

shackles of Rome and proclaims himself the Head of the Church in England, and free to act in religious matters as he pleases. His divorce from Katherine is now consummated, and he chooses Anne Boleyn as his new Queen.

In Act 4 Anne is shown as Queen, but full of anxiety as to what her fate may be, the King having become jealous of Don Gomez. Her anxiety is doubled when Gomez enters and informs her that Katherine still holds the love-letter he wrote to her when she was Maid of Honour; and she is in despair, after a stormy scene with Henry, whose fickle affection is already waning, and he is only waiting for an opportunity to rid himself of her and take another Queen. The last scene takes place in the chamber of Katherine, who is dying, and who is visited by Anne, who entreats her to give up the compromising letter she holds. For a long time Katherine refuses to yield up the letter to her rival, this being her hour of revenge; but when the King himself enters and tries to persuade her to give him any information which he may use to bring discredit upon Anne and serve as an excuse for him to make a definite charge against her, her better feelings triumph, and she not only refuses his request, but also throws the incriminating document into the fire. Then as the divorced Queen falls back dying, Anne is shown as only temporarily relieved, her anxiety as to the future and the premonition of her own approaching fate being indicated in the closing passages of the final chorus.

140. PROSERPINE

Opera in Four Acts By Camille Saint-Saëns

Libretto By Louis Gallet

First Produced Paris, March, 1887

Chief Characters Proserpine, Angiola, Sabatino, Renzo, Squarocca

THE action takes place in Italy during the sixteenth century. Sabatino, a young lord, is in love with Angiola, whose brother, Renzo, advises him to put his affection to the test by bringing himself under the fascinating influence of the celebrated courtesan, Proserpine, so that he may prove himself impervious to the seductive temptations of any other woman but Angiola. Sabatino, therefore, pays his court to the beautiful Proserpine, who falls desperately in love with him, and uses all her arts to gain his affection, Sabatino, however, only treats her with the scant courtesy accorded to her class; and this greatly grieves and enrages the courtesan, whose anger against him increases when she learns the true reason for his attentions to her. Having discovered that he loves the gentle Angiola, she instructs a bravo, Squarocca, to kidnap the girl on the day she is to leave her convent to be wedded to Sabatino. Squarocca carries out her instructions, and manages to seize Angiola; and the frightened girl is immediately confronted by the jealous courtesan, who, by relating false and evil tales of Sabatino, endeavours to persuade her to renounce him. Angiola, however, will believe no evil against the man she loves; and the baffled Proserpine is preparing to kill her when Renzo appears, and she is forced to beat a retreat. The courtesan next forces her way into the house of Sabatino, and telling him of the sincere love she has conceived for him endeavours to persuade him to give up Angiola; but Sabatino repulses her, never having felt true affection for her. Proserpine, now beside herself with disappointment and jealousy, appears at the wedding; and as soon as the nuptial knot is tied, she springs forward and stabs the bride. Instantly Sabatino turns upon the courtesan and stabs her with her own dagger; and as Proserpine falls dead

Angiola, who is not fatally wounded, recovers consciousness, and is folded in her husbands arms.

141. SAMSON AND DALILA

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Camille Saint-Saens

Libretto By Ferdinand Lemaire

First Produced Weimar, December, 1877

Chief Characters Dalila, Samson, The High Priest of Dagon, Abimelech (Satrap of Gaza)

THE subject-matter of this opera is founded on the Biblical narrative, but the love passages and dramatic incidents predominate.

In Act 1 we are introduced to Samson, the mighty warrior-hero of Israel, who is cheering the drooping spirits of his people by inciting them to make a bold attempt to shake off the galling Philistine yoke. Abimelech, Satrap of Gaza, insults and jeers at the down-trodden people, upon which Samson, furious at the blasphemous epithets thus uttered by the heathen intruder at the God of Israel, calls his companions to avenge the insult, and himself slays the Satrap, the scene ending with an attack upon the Philistine soldiers by the Israelites, who gain the victory. As Samson comes forward as the conquering hero, he is greeted with acclamations; and amongst the welcoming crowd is the lovely Philistine enchantress, Dalila, who heads a procession of dancing maidens outside the temple of Dagon. She also has a smiling welcome for Samson; but her fair front is not sincere, for she is full of resentment against the Israelite hero, who has been her lover once, and whom she had loved until this conscience had forced him to desert her. She therefore determines to cast her spells of fascination over him again, and to bring him to ruin thus; and in Act 2 she has an interview with the High Priest of Dagon, whom she promises that she will win from Samson the secret of his marvellous strength, and by her seductions will deliver him into the hands of the Philistines. When Samson presently appears, therefore, she approaches him, adorned in her richest attire and sparkling with jewels; and by her seductive wiles and tender speeches she entices him to her side once more. As the scene closes, Samson, intoxicated with love, and powerless to resist her tender appeals to his passionate nature, yields, and follows her into her dwelling-place. Here his ruin and degradation are soon consummated; for Dalila, coaxing from him the secret of his strength, loses no time in betraying him to the Philistine lords.

In Act 3, therefore, he is found in the abject condition of a slave - a captive, blinded, and shorn of his long locks and mighty strength, forced to grind at the mill; and from this servile task he is taken out to the Temple of Dagon. Here we find him in the last scene, propped up against the pillars of the temple, forced to submit to the gibes and taunts of his enemies. Dalila, herself, joins in the mocking chorus, rejoicing in the revenge she has achieved. Samson, however, seeks renewed strength the pillars of the temple, forced to submit to the gibes mandated by the High Priest to offer sacrifice to Dagon he proudly refuses, but, reaching out his arms, grasps the pillars of the temple, which he lifts in one last mighty effort, and thus brings down the building in ruins upon himself and his enemies.

142. MOLOCH

Opera in Three Acts By Max Schillings

Libretto By Emil Gerhaeuser Adapted from Hebbel s "Moloch"

First Produced Dresden, December, 1906

Chief Characters Theoda, Velleda, Teut, Hiram (a Carthaginian Priest), The King of Thule

THE scene is laid in the island of Thule, just after the fall of Carthage. Hiram, the Carthaginian Priest, has made his way to Thule, bearing with him the idol, Moloch, by means of which he hopes to gain great power in his new land, and to entice the people to make war upon the hated Romans. At first the people of Thule will have nothing to do with the new god offered them; but at last Teut, the Kings son, comes to believe in the supposed power of Moloch, and accepts Hiram as a great teacher. By degrees Hiram gets other converts; and by teaching the novices the more advanced social arts known to Carthage, he gradually gains great influence in the land. The old King, however, will not forsake his ancient religion, and is greatly grieved and angered by his sons acceptance of the new god; and also his mother, Velleda, and his sweetheart, Theoda, and his friend, Wolf, all plead in vain with the royal youth to give up his apostasy.

In Act 2 Hiram has gained such ascendancy over the people that he has built a fine temple for the idol Moloch; and he forbids them to approach the sacred building at night on pain of instant death at the hands of the god. He next proceeds to cut down the ancient and sacred yew-tree of Thule, which is closely bound up in the old religion of the people. Then the old King appears, and sternly forbids Hiram and Teut to touch the yew-tree; and as Hiram disdains the command, the king is about to stab him, when he is prevented by Teut, who wrestles with him, and finally overpowers him. In despair the old King goes out into the wilderness as an exile; and here he is joined by Theoda. The Queen, Velleda, on hearing of her sons undutiful conduct, flings herself into the sea.

In Act 3 the harvest is being celebrated, and Wolf appears to announce that the King has gathered his most loyal subjects together and is about to make war upon Hiram and Teut, who have now made ready some fine ships in which to sail against Rome. When darkness falls, Teut, being on guard at some little distance from the Temple of Moloch, hears a womans voice calling; and, drawing nearer, he recognises Theoda, who is standing close to the building. In horror lest Hiram's threat of the gods wrath shall fall upon the maiden he loves, Teut rushes to her side to rescue her; but the joy of the lovers at thus meeting once more makes them forget all danger, and they talk happily together. Then, when the first joy of meeting is over, and Teut sees that the dreadful fate foretold for those who ventured near the temple at night has never come to pass, but that they have come to no harm, he realises that the idol has no power after all, and that Hiram is a false teacher. He therefore denounces Hiram, who, in despair at thus losing the power he has gained, casts himself from the rocks into the sea. The Kings party now appear, and Wolf, not knowing that Teut has forsaken the false religion of Moloch, falls upon him as a traitor and stabs him. Theoda is in despair when, on presently appearing with the old King, she finds her lover lying fatally wounded; and as she reaches his side and embraces him, he expires in her arms, whilst the grief-stricken father commands his followers to break up the hideous idol, Moloch, which has brought such disaster upon him.

143. GENOVEVA

Romantic Opera in Four Acts By Robert Schumann

Libretto By Hebbel and Lieck (Adapted from the old Legend)

First Produced Leipzig, June, 1850

Chief Characters Genoveva, Margaretha, Count Siegfried, Golo, Drago

THE scene is laid in the Palatinate during the time of the Emperors of the West. The reigning Emperor, having commanded Count Siegfried to depart to the wars against the Saracens, the young noble leaves his beautiful wife, Genoveva, in charge of his friend Golo. The latter has conceived a violent passion for Genoveva, and being thus left in charge of her, he endeavours to gain her love and satisfy his desires; and in his evil design he is aided by an old nurse, Margaretha, who is in reality his own mother, who has ambitious plans for her sons future. Genoveva, however, loves her absent lord, and scornfully repulses the passionate declaration of Golo; and when the latter still persists in forcing his odious attentions upon her she staggers him by flinging the word "bastard" at him. This galls Golo to desperation; and his passion changing to hatred, he entices the servants and retainers to rebel against their mistress, and when they speak ill of her good name he refuses to defend her, but declares that their slanders are true. He even goes further by bringing the faithful steward, Drago, into her chamber, and then sending the other servants to discover him there. Drago is killed by his orders; and the innocent and persecuted Genoveva is cast into the castle dungeon. Margaretha, having heard that Count Siegfried has been wounded, now goes to Strasbourg to nurse him; and she attempts to put an end to his life by giving him small doses of poison, hoping thus to gain his wealth for her own son. The Count, however, is young and healthy, and her drugs have no effect upon him; but he is plunged into despair when Golo presently visits him and relates the trumped-up story of his wifes supposed unfaithfulness. In his grief and rage he gives his sword and ring to Golo, and bids him slay Genoveva; and after Golo has departed Margaretha fans his wrath further by producing a magic-mirror, in which she shows him false pictures of the pretended love-making of the Countess and the steward Drago. Presently, however, the mirror breaks into fragments, and the ghost of Drago appears, and sternly commands the hag to speak the truth. Full of abject terror, Margaretha now confesses that the whole story is false; and Siegfried rises distractedly from his couch and sets forth immediately to intercept Golo and to save his wife from an untimely death. Meanwhile Golo reaches the castle first, and causes the unhappy Genoveva to be led out into the forest by two ruffians; and there he meets her, and showing her Siegfrieds ring and sword, announces his authority to slay her. In despair, Genoveva falls on her knees, and, holding up a cross, begs for mercy, and prays for help; and at this moment Siegfried rushes upon the scene and rescues her from the baffled and furious Golo, who, seeing his consciencestricken and repentant mother also approaching, and realising that their perfidy is discovered, takes to flight, and loses his life by falling over a precipice. Meanwhile Siegfried humbly implores the pardon of Genoveva for his doubt of her; and the opera ends with the reunion of the loving husband and wife.

144. THE SOLD BRIDE

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Frederick Smetana

Libretto By R. Sahina

First Produced Prague, 1866

Chief Characters Mary, Agnes Micha, Esmeralda, Mother Kruschina, Hans, Wenzel, Kezul, Father Kruschina

THE action takes place in a Bohemian village, where Mary, daughter of a rich peasant, Kruschina, has been promised by her parents to a bridegroom whom she has never seen. The marriage was arranged by the professional match-maker, Kezul, who has persuaded Kruschina to wed his daughter to Wenzel, the son of the wealthy farmer, Micha, by a second wife. When farmer Micha married again, his elder son, Hans, not liking the stepmother, ran away from home, and has long been regarded as dead. He is, however, alive; and in the guise of a humble servant has arrived in the village where the Kruschinas dwell, and has fallen in love with the charming Mary, who declares she will marry none other but the handsome, though seemingly poor, Hans. This upsets Kezul's arrangements very much; but Father Kruschina insists nevertheless that his daughter shall marry the rich suitor, Wenzel. The latter is, however, but a foolish boor; and when he arrives at last in person, and Mary scolds him roundly for daring to aspire to the hand of a girl who loves another man, he is so alarmed by her flashing glances that he promises to leave her alone, especially when she confuses him further by teasing and flirting with him. Hans in the meantime has been lectured by the disturbed match-maker, Kezul, who wishes him to pay no further attention to Mary; and he at first flatly refuses to give her up. But when Kezul announces that he is wooing Mary for "Michas son," he decides to play a merry trick on the mercenary old meddler. He therefore agrees that "Michas son" shall certainly wed Mary; and he even signs a contract to that effect. In Act 3 a troupe of strolling players and acrobats are amusing the villagers; and the stupid Wenzel /is so amazed and impressed by their antics that he leaves his half-hearted wooing to watch them. He falls in love with the spangled dancer, Esmeralda; and when the master of the troupe offers him the post of dancing bear in his company he very gladly accepts it, so that he may be near the coquettish E Esmeralda, whose hand is also promised him as an additional inducement. When, therefore, Farmer Micha and his wife appear on the scene with the wedding contract, Wenzel flatly refuses to sign it, and rushes away. Mary now is in distress not because of the disappearance of her boorish wooer, but because she believes her beloved Hans to be false, since he has consented to give her up to "Michas son." Presently, however, Hans appears, and is recognised at once as the long-lost son of Farmer Micha, who receives him gladly, and willingly consents to allow him to marry Mary, promising to provide him with ample means of support in his married life. Kruschina also readily consents to give his daughter to Michas eldest son, since, when the foolish Wenzel presently appears in his ridiculous garb as a dancing bear, he is too disgusted to desire him as a son-in-law any longer. Agnes Micha, the stepmother, is angry at the failure of her stupid son to make a desirable marriage; and the match-maker, Kezul, is also disappointed of his expected reward. But the rest of the parties concerned are very well satisfied; and the scene ends with the rejoicings attending upon the union of Mary with "Michas son," whom she is glad enough to wed, when he turns out to be her beloved Hans.

145. A BASSO PORTO (AT THE LOWER HARBOUR)

Opera in Three Acts By Niccola Spinelli
Libretto By Eugene Checchi

Chief Characters Maria, Sesella, Luigino, Cicillo, Pascale, Pichillo

THE scene is laid in Naples at the Lower Harbour; and Act 1 takes place outside the Inn of Pascale, where a number of sea-folk and idle youths are gambling. Amongst these is Luigino, the son of Maria, who complains that his vicious habits are ruining her. His sister, Sesella, also remonstrates with him; but the youth only replies roughly to these reproaches, and, taking no heed, presently continues his play and loses ten lire to Pascale. Maria pays the money out of her scant means, and retires sadly into her house; whilst Sesella has an angry scene with her brother, who threatens her with his dire vengeance should she continue to accept the attentions of a new admirer, Cicillo, whom he declares to be a spy upon the Harbour band of the Camorristi, of which he, Luigino, is one. Cicillo presently enters, declaring that the Camorristi members have been betrayed to the authorities by a traitor in the camp; and he infers that Luigino is the spy, although, as a matter of fact, he is himself the false member. Cicillo has an interview with Maria, and it then transpires that there is a blood feud between the pair, who were once lovers. Cicillo, however, deserted Maria for another girl, Carmela; and when Maria learnt of this, in her rage and grief she accused Carmela of many base crimes and secured her execution. She then married; and after the death of her husband endeavoured to find comfort and happiness in her two children. But Cicillo is determined to revenge himself upon Maria; and he intends to strike at her through her children. He therefore leads Luigino into every kind of extravagance and vice; and he also proceeds to make love to Sesella, intending to compass her dishonour and leave her to her fate. Maria, suspecting his evil designs, implores him to spare her children; but Cicillo only spurns her and laughs scornfully at her own threat of denouncing him as a traitor to the Camorristi band—a fact which she strongly suspects.

In Act 2 Cicillo meets Sesella again, and gets her to promise to elope with him, telling her a version of his former relations with her mother, which shows up Maria in a very evil light, and so overcomes the girl's reluctance to leave her home; but after he has retired, Maria herself comes forward, and, suspecting the conversation which has taken place, implores Sesella not to trust to Cicillo, who has only evil designs on her, and by telling her the true facts of the bygone sordid story she enlists the girl's sympathies with herself, so that she determines to renounce her false lover.

In Act 3 Maria denounces Cicillo to the members of the Camorristi as the real traitor who has betrayed them, so that Luigino is released from suspicion; and the latter, now repenting of his vicious conduct, pleads forgiveness of his mother and promises to aid in bringing Cicillo to justice. The Camorristi determine to slay Cicillo, and appoint Luigino to do the deed; and in spite of Maria's prayer to spare her beloved son from performing such a terrible task, they keep to their intention, and make all arrangements for lying in wait. Maria, however, determines that her repentant son shall not do the deed; and at night, just before the Camorristi band approaches, she intercepts Cicillo, and telling him of the fate that awaits him at the street corner, she offers to save him yet if he will promise not to molest her children again, but to leave her to dwell in peace. Cicillo laughs her warnings to scorn, believing himself to be safe from the Camorristi; and he vows that he will pursue his evil designs on her loved ones until he brings them both to the dust in disgrace. Then Maria is in despair; and hearing the signal of the hidden assassins she springs forward and stabs Cicillo to the heart as the Camorristi band rush forward, headed by Luigino.

146. JESSONDA

Opera in Three Acts By Louis Spohr

Libretto By Henry Gehe

First Produced Cassel, July, 1823

Chief Characters Jessonda, Amazili, Tristan d Acunha, Nadori, Daudon

THE scene is laid in Goa, on the Malabar coast, early in the sixteenth century. Jessonda, the young widow of the old Rajah, who has just died, is condemned to ascend her husbands funeral pyre, according to the barbarous custom of "Suttee." She is full of despair, for, being young, she longs to live. Also, she is in love with Tristan dAcunha, a young Portuguese general, from whom she has been separated, having been forced to marry the old Rajah against her will by the High Priest, Daudon, who is now determined she shall carry out the dreadful law of "Suttee." Jessonda, however, hopes she may yet be rescued by Tristan, as the Portuguese are even now besieging Goa; but she is plunged into despair on learning that a truce has been called, and that Tristan, therefore, cannot enter the city. Daudon now hastens on the sacrifice; and Jessonda is sent down to bathe in the Ganges with her maidens, as the first part of the ceremony. Help, however, is at hand. A young Brahmin priest, Nadori, has been sent to break the news of her quickly-approaching fate to the widow; but, having no real desire for the priesthood, and having seen and fallen desperately in love with Amazili, the fair sister of Jessonda, he determines to baulk the plans of the High Priest. He therefore comforts Amazili with glowing words of love, and promises to do his best to save her helpless sister.

In Act 3 he pays a secret visit to Tristan and tells him that Daudon has sent spies into the Portuguese camp, in order to fire their vessels, in spite of the existing truce; and rejoicing that this galling truce is thus broken, and that he is now freed from his oath, Tristan gathers his troops together and leads them into Goa through a secret passage shown to him by Nadori. By this means the Portuguese gain a quick entrance into the city; and Tristan arrives in time to save his beloved Jessonda from her awful fate, at the moment when the sacrifice is about to be made. Daudon is thus baulked of his prey, and Tristan carries away the rescued Jessonda to be his bride; whilst Nadori, renouncing the priesthood, gains his hearts desire and weds the grateful Amazili.

147. SHAMUS OBRIEN

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Sir Charles Villiers Stanford

Libretto By Sheridan Le Fanu (Adapted from the Poem)

First Produced London, March, 1896

Chief Characters Nora OBrien, Kitty O'Toole, Mike Murphy, Captain Trevor, Father OFlynn

THE action takes place in the village of Ballyhamis in Cork, just after the Irish rebellion of 1798. Amongst the ringleaders is Shamus OBrien, who is now an outlaw with a price on his head, having managed to elude his enemies for some time. He has, however, an enemy in Mike Murphy, who loves Nora, the wife of Shamus; and having a grudge against his rival for the hand of the village belle, he turns informer and brings the English soldiery, headed by Captain Trevor, to the

house of Shamus, who is at the moment encouraging the peasants to rebel again. Shamus, however, cleverly assumes the character and bearing of the village "natural," or fool, and deceives the English Captain so successfully that he even allows him to act as a guide in his own search. After he has departed Nora is full of fear for his safety, having heard the mysterious "Banshee" twice; and she trembles lest she should hear it a third time, which will mean dire misfortune, or even death to one she loves. She is comforted by the cheery words of the good old priest, Father O'Flynn; and presently, to her joy, Shamus returns. He has scarcely kissed his wife and little child, however, when the weird wailing of the "Banshee" is heard again; and at that moment the soldiers rush into the house, brought thither by the base Mike, and Shamus is captured and dragged away to await execution as a rebel.

In Act 2 Captain Trevor is harried first by Mike Murphy, who demands his prize, disgusting the honest soldier by his eager claiming of "bloodmoney"; and secondly, by the entreaties of the distracted wife, Nora, and her pretty sister; Kitty O'Toole, the latter having already caused him to succumb to her charms. In spite of his love for Kitty, however, his duty prevents him from granting the release of the doomed man; but he permits Nora to visit her husband and take a last farewell of him. When Nora comes weeping from this pathetic interview, she is accosted by Mike Murphy, who suggests that if she will accept his love and elope with him he will give evidence which will save Shamus. Nora declines to listen to such a vile suggestion; and consequently the patriotic rebel is tried-and condemned to death.

In Act 3 the unhappy Nora and Kitty await with Father O'Flynn near the scaffold where Shamus is to be hanged; and here the treacherous Mike again vainly tries to persuade the weeping wife to agree to his infamous proposals. When Shamus appears in the cart with the soldiers, he bids a tender, last farewell to his wife and friends; and then Father O'Flynn steps into the cart to pray with the condemned man. But the good old priest, who has known and loved Shamus from childhood, and admires him as a true patriot, has determined to give him a chance of escape; and by a dexterous movement he manages to cut the cords which bind the captive. Freed from his fetters, Shamus makes a bold dash for liberty, and succeeds in getting to a safe distance almost before the soldiers have realised that he has gone. Mike Murphy springs forward in order to stop the daring fugitive; and as the soldiers fire at, that moment, he receives the volley intended for Shamus and falls dead. Shamus, therefore, gets safely away, to the great joy of all - not excepting Captain Trevor, who rejoices for the sake of his pretty sweetheart, Kitty, and her thankful sister, Nora.

148. THE BAT

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Johann Strauss

Libretto By Hofiner and Genée

First Produced Vienna, July, 1874

Chief Characters Rosalind, Adele, Baron Eisenstein, Dr Falke, Franck, Prince Orlofsky

ADÉLE, the maid of Rosalind, Baroness Eisenstein, desires to attend a grand ball to be given by the rich Russian Prince, Orlofsky, an invitation having been sent to her by her sister, who is a ballet dancer; and, after much persuasion, she receives permission to go. Baron Eisenstein has

been sentenced to a weeks imprisonment for contempt of Court; but before undergoing his sentence he is persuaded by his friend Dr Falke to attend the Russian Princes ball and indulge in a merry time, unknown to his wife. Falke arranged this out of a merry desire to be revenged upon the Baron, who had once played him a trick which had made him the laughing-stock of the city when he had been attending a carnival in the disguise of a Bat-the title of "The Bat" having stuck to him ever since; and he hopes now to get his friend into domestic hot water by slyly introducing the Baroness at the ball also, in disguise, in order that she may look on at his flirtations. Rosalind, after the departure of her husband, whom she imagines is on his way to prison, is visited by her former lover, Alfred, a music-master, who has lately been serenading her; and upon her granting him an interview he proceeds to adorn himself in the Barons dressing-gown and smoking-cap, and to make himself very much at home. Presently however, they are interrupted by the arrival of Franck, the Prison Governor, who has come for the Baron, his prisoner; and, in order to save the ladys reputation, Alfred gallantly declares that *he* is Baron Eisenstein, and gaily goes off to prison.

In Act 2 we are introduced to the ball at Prince Orlofskys house, where the Baron is not long in discovering his wifes pretty maid, Adéle, who is dressed up in her mistresss finest gown; and he soon engages in a desperate flirtation with her. Presently, Dr Falke introduces Rosalind, masked and disguised as a Hungarian Princess; and the lady is furiously jealous on beholding the attentions paid by her truant husband to her own flighty maid. Eisenstein, however, now deserts Adéle for the charming and mysterious Hungarian lady, and makes love to her; and Rosalind, during their ensuing *tête-à-tête*, manages to take from him a watch, with which he had pretended to count the pulse-beats of her heart. Finally, Eisenstein remembers that it is time he departed to prison; and he proceeds to give himself up.

Act 3 takes place in the prison, where all the various complications are cleared up. The Baron is furious on finding that his place in prison has been taken by Alfred, and that his wife has been flirting with her old lover; but the tables are quickly turned upon him by Rosalind producing his watch and revealing herself as the Princess with whom he had flirted at the ball, and where, also, she had seen him paying attentions to her maid, Adéle. Finally, both admit themselves to be delinquents, and the opera ends with mutual forgiveness by all the parties concerned.

149. THE GIPSY BARON

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Johann Strauss

Libretto By Schnitzer (Adapted from the old Romance of M. Jokai)

First Produced Vienna, October, 1885

Chief Characters Arsena, Saffi, Sandov Barinkay, Zsupan

THE scene is laid in a country district of Austria, where, at the beginning of the opera, Sandov Barinkay, a handsome young man, has just returned to the home he left in childhood. To his sorrow, he finds that his friends have all deserted the place, and that a band of gipsies have taken possession of the neighbourhood. The nearest civilian is a man named Zsupan; and he makes friends with him, and visits his house frequently. Zsupan has a fair daughter, Arsena, to whom Barinkay presents himself as a suitor; but the maiden is proud, and haughtily declares that she will wed none other but a Baron. Barinkay is filled with anger and disgust on hearing this; and,

determining to see the ambitious Arsena no more, he goes away and joins the gipsy band. He soon becomes so popular with the gipsies that they make him their Gipsy Baron; and presently he falls in love with a beautiful gipsy maiden, Saffi, and is married to her. In Act 2 the Gipsy Baron discovers some buried wealth, and keeps the matter secret for some time; but when the hidden treasure is found out by the Government he is arrested for having held treasure trove. On making over the treasure to the State, however, he is allowed to go free; and then he joins the Austrian Army and goes to the wars. In Act 3 he returns from the campaign, having covered himself with glory; and for his mighty deeds of valour he is created a real Baron. His gipsy wife, Saffi, is also now discovered to be the child of a famous Pasha; and she and her husband become great people in the land.

150. THE MERRY WAR

Opera Comique in Three Acts Johann Strauss

Libretto By Zell and Genée

First Produced Vienna, November, 1881

Chief Characters The Countess Violetta, Artemisia, Umberto, Balthasar, Groats

THE scene of this operetta is laid in Genoa. A quarrel has arisen between the States of Genoa and Massa Carrara, for the absurd reason that a celebrated dancer has accepted engagements to perform at the theatres of both places at the same time; and because the authorities of each theatre claim the dancer, a quarrel has arisen, and a comical warfare is carried on. Every day one harmless grenade is solemnly fired from both camps; but beyond this the "merry war" proceeds no further. One day, however, the charming Countess Violetta appears in one of the camps in mistake for the other, to which she desires to pass in order to take up the command of the Castle. Finding herself in a fix, she makes use of her many fascinations to deceive the commander, Colonel Umberto, and so coaxes him to give her a safe conduct through the lines into the opposing camp, where she desires to be. After she has gone Umberto discovers the trick she has played upon him; and in order to be even with her he determines to make her marry him, since he is already in love with her. Having learnt that she is about to be married by proxy to the Duke of Limbourg, he dons a disguise, and passes himself off as the Duke, and is thus married to Violetta without further trouble. In all his schemes he is assisted by a comical Dutchman, Balthasar Groats, a dealer in bulbs, who, having been mistaken for a spy, and arrested, is anxious enough to help the Colonel in his love-making and so gain his release. After the wedding is safely over, there are many amusing complications, since the Dutchmans wife, Artemisia, appears on the scene, and becomes jealous because she cannot understand her husbands interest in the pretty Countess; and Violetta herself, having fallen in love with the obliging Umberto in his first character as Commander, treats her new husband (whom she believes to be the Duke of Limbourg) with scant ceremony and much show of pettish dislike. Finally, however, all the misunderstandings are explained away, and Violetta is delighted to find that the man she has married is none other than the fascinating Umberto; and the Dutch couple are also reconciled to each other. At the same time the dancer, about whom The quarrel between the two States had arisen, announces her refusal to keep her engagement at either theatre; and the *casus belli* being thus removed, the "merry war" comes to a happy end.

151. THE QUEENS LACE HANDKERCHIEF

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Johann Strauss

Libretto By Genée and Bohrnann-Reign

First Produced Vienna, October, 1880

Chief Characters The Queen of Portugal, Irene, King of Spain, Cervantes, The Prime Minister, Sancho

THE scene is laid in Portugal during the sixteenth century. The Prime Minister has gained great influence and power, and being in league with Philip II of Spain endeavours to retain his almost autocratic ascendancy by stirring up squabbles and jealousies between the young King and Queen, enticing the former to indulge in many amours and intrigues. The poet, Cervantes, having been banished from Spain, is at this time at the Court of Portugal, where he has been appointed Reader to the Queen, and where he falls in love with Irene, a Waiting-Lady. The Queen being young and fond of seeking admiration shows great favour to Cervantes, and even goes so far as to write a sentimental love message upon her lace-trimmed handkerchief, which she places in his book, "Don Quixote," hoping he will see and read it. The book, however, is found by the Prime Minister, who, regarding the characters in the story as drawn from existing ministers, causes Cervantes, whom he distrusts, to be arrested for libel. Irene implores the King - who has been showing her considerable attention - to save her sweetheart; and the two, by proving him to have been mad when he wrote the book, secure his release. The Prime Minister, however, now produces the lace handkerchief, with the Queens foolish message on it; and this leads to the Queen being sent to a convent and to Cervantes being once more arrested. The latter makes his escape, however, and throws in his lot with a party of brigands, whom he persuades to kidnap the Queen as she is being conducted to the convent. Cervantes leads the Queen to a country inn, where they persuade the landlord to allow them to masquerade as the host and waiting-maid, having heard that the King is expected to call there after a hunting expedition; and when the young monarch appears they both serve him. They soon make themselves known to him, and then proceed to explain matters, and make him see that no dishonour has been offered to him. The Queen, now ashamed of her indiscretion and sentimentality, leads her royal husband to suppose that the message written on the handkerchief was addressed to himself and given to Cervantes to deliver to him; and the King, mindful of his own shortcomings, graciously accepts this explanation. All ends well, therefore, peaceful relations being restored between the royal pair, and Cervantes and Irene are left happy in each others love.

152. ELEKTRA

Tragic Opera in One Act By Richard Strauss

Libretto By Hugo von Hofmansthal

First Produced Dresden, January, 1901

Chief Characters Elektra, Clytemnestra, Chrysothemis, Orestes, Ægisthos

THE story follows closely the old Greek classical myth, and the scene is laid in Mycene, where Elektra is seen mourning the murder of her royal father, Agamemnon, by her mothers lover,

Ægisthos. The Princess is seen in rags, having been thus reduced to degrading poverty by her mother, who hates her and her gentle sister, Chrysothemis, both of whom she compels to feed with the slaves. Elektra longs to avenge her beloved fathers death by bringing her mother and the infamous Ægisthos to justice; but her only hope is in the return of her lost brother, Orestes, who had been sent away in early youth by the unprincipled Queen, for fear he should hamper her evil designs. When Clytemnestra presently appears, a stormy scene ensues between the pair, and the Queen is terrified when the Princess sternly foretells a disastrous end for her and her illicit love. As the Queen departs Chrysothemis enters with the news that Orestes is dead, this report having been brought by a stranger; and full of despair that their brother therefore cannot be the avenger of their father, Elektra entreats her sister to aid her in the slaying of the bad Queen and her lover. But the gentle Chrysothemis has no desire for revenge, and declares she cannot help in any such deed of violence; and then Elektra determines to do the deed herself and produces the axe with which her father had been killed. At this moment a strange man appears who announces to her that her brother is indeed dead; but upon Elektra scornfully denouncing him for being yet alive himself to bring the news of the death of the young Prince, for whom he should have been ready to give his own life, the stranger, recognising her as his noble sister, in spite of her rags, reveals the fact that he is none other than her brother, Orestes, himself. Overjoyed at his return Elektra entreats him to avenge their fathers death; and Orestes enters the chamber of Clytemnestra and her lover, Ægisthos, and slays them both. All rejoice at the death of the tyrannical pair, and the young Prince Orestes is brought forth in triumph amidst general acclamations. Elektra, in her exultation, performs a marvellous dance of triumph, which waxes ever wilder and more passionate, until at last she drops lifeless as the curtain falls.

153. FEUERSNOT

A Lyric Poem Opera in One Act By Richard Strauss

Libretto By Ernest von Wolzogen

First Produced Weimar, October, 1902

Chief Characters Diemuth, Kunrad, Iorg Poschel, Kunz Gilgensloch, Tulbeck, Hamerlein

THE story is based upon an old Dutch legend, and the action takes place in Munich, in the mediaeval "no-time" age, on Midsummer Night, when the lighting-up of the "Johannis Fires" is about to be celebrated. The children of the town are merrily collecting wood and fuel for their bonfires, and they finally come to the "Wizards House." Here they find a young dreamer-philosopher, Kunrad, who, suddenly realising that he has missed the real meaning of life and wasted his time by indulging in abstruse study and thought instead of making practical use of everyday life and things, determines at once to mend his ways. He therefore gives the children his books to burn, and helps them to cut down the shutters for their fires; and a crowd of curious spectators soon gather to gaze upon the handsome young recluse, whom they have never had the chance of seeing before. Amongst the spectators is the Burgomasters beautiful daughter, Diemuth, who gazes upon the stranger with unusual interest. Kunrad, never having experienced any earthly passion before, is seized with an overmastering love for the fair maiden and, suddenly seizing her in a tender embrace, kisses her passionately. Diemuth, however, though still enthralled by the spell of the handsome stranger, is now filled with indignation at the liberty he has taken, and determines to play a trick upon him as a punishment. When, therefore, he later on appears beneath her

chamber window she listens to his protestations of love with pretended interest, and offers to grant him a closer interview if he will permit her to draw him up into her room by means of a sliding basket in which wood had been lowered to the children in the street. Kunrad gladly agrees and steps into the basket; but, after drawing him up half-way, Diemuth leaves him dangling there in mid-air and exposed to the jeers of the crowd gathered below. In a fury at this treatment Kunrad calls upon the spirit of his dead master, the Wizard, whose power he invokes, and by exerting his magic he suddenly extinguishes all the midsummer bonfires and plunges the whole town in darkness. The people are greatly alarmed at finding themselves without fire or light, but the form of Kunrad is presently thrown into relief by a moonbeam, which shows him on the balcony where he has managed to drag himself, and from which point of vantage he proceeds to deliver a lecture to the people upon their shortsightedness. This is really a satire upon the people of Munich for their early neglect of the great musician Wagner, whom he refers to under the name of the Wizard, and whom they drove from their town without recognising his power and genius. Himself (Strauss) as Kunrad he announces as the successor of the great master, whose work he intends to continue, and as his life partner he has chosen Diemuth (who represents Munich) to help him, declaring that until the maiden shall consent to love him and accept his love, he will leave them in their darkness, thus pointing out that without love and an appreciation of the true and beautiful in art, there can be no light or warmth. Even as he speaks, Diemuth, on hearing his burning words, can no longer hold aloof from the stranger, whose first glance had enthralled her, even though she had refused the true dictates of her heart, and as his speech comes to an end she comes forth and confesses her love for him. Then as Kunrad and Diemuth appear hand in hand, happy in each others love, the light appears in the windows and all the fires burn brightly once more; and the city, which in its blindness drove forth the first great master, now receives his successor with joy.

154. SALOME

Tragic Opera in One Act By Richard Strauss

Libretto By the Composer *Adapted from Oscar Wildes Drama)

First Produced Dresden, December, 1905

Chief Characters Salome, Herodias, Jokanaan, Herod, Narraboth

THE subject-matter of this opera is taken from the Biblical story, but the character of Salome herself is much more freely developed, and she is the central figure of the drama. In Act 1 the Jewish prophet Jokanaan is held captive in Herods palace courtyard, and his fearless voice is heard now and again still sounding forth his prophecies and denunciations. The beautiful and passionate young Princess Salome is greatly struck by the bold, manly tones of the captive, and she begs to have him brought forth for her to gaze upon. The soldiers, however, refuse her request, having strict instructions from Herod to keep the prisoner out of sight since he is afraid of his denunciations; but Salome exercises her great powers of fascination upon a young Syrian soldier, Narraboth, who, being desperately enthralled by her beauty, disobeys his orders and brings forth the prisoner. As Salome gazes upon the stern and noble features of the fearless prophet, his fine bearing and true force of character appeals to her so strongly that, seeing his superiority to the pleasure-seekers around her, she is seized with a sudden wild passion for him, and exerts all her powers of seduction to win his love. Jokanaan, however, is utterly untouched by her beauty and her wiles, and calling upon Herod and Herodias, denounces them in fiery language for their evil

lives, uttering the most scathing rebukes. Neither does he spare Salome, but when she smiles upon him and endeavours to enthrall him with her allurements, he turns from her in scorn, and rebukes her sternly as he is borne back to his prison. This disregard of her charms enrages the passionate Salome, and her sudden love changing to jealous and unreasoning hatred she resolves to be revenged upon the prophet. Meanwhile Narraboth, the Syrian officer, having seen that the lovely princess has no real regard for him, but only desires the love of Jokanaan, is filled with despair and kills himself; and when Herod and Herodias presently appear, the former, having conceived a violent passion for his step-daughter, and guessing from the Syrian's dead body the state of affairs, is filled with a gloomy jealousy. He nevertheless begs Salome to dance for his amusement in order to distract his thoughts, for Jokanaan now is once more heard uttering denunciations, and the monarch is greatly in awe of the prophet. Salome, however, refuses to dance, but suddenly forming a daring and dreadful scheme, she changes her mind and declares herself ready to thus entertain him if he will afterwards grant her anything she may desire. Herod, intoxicated with her beauty and charm, rashly agrees, and the famous Dance of the Seven Veils is performed by Salome. When the dance comes to an end Herod again promises to give the maiden anything she may desire, even to the half of his kingdom; and Salome boldly demands the head of Jokanaan the Prophet, whom she hates for despising her love, to be brought to her on a silver charger. This dreadful request staggers Herod with horror, for he fears to slay the Prophet; but when Salome repeats her request and taunts him by scornfully accusing him of cowardice he is so goaded to desperation by her stinging words that he agrees to grant her wish, and commands the executioner to bring forth the head of the prisoner, as desired. Salome never wavers from her resolve to be revenged upon the man who has disdained her proffered love, and waits with an awful calmness and determination for her wish to be carried out; but when the head of Jokanaan is at last brought to her in the silver charger she is filled with remorse, and kisses the silent lips with passionate fervour. This act so enrages and horrifies Herod that he bids his guards slay the now weeping girl, and the opera closes with the fall of the beautiful and passionate Salome beneath the weapons of the soldiers.

155. THE GONDOLIERS; OR, "THE KING OF BARATARIA"

Comic Opera in Two Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced London, December, 1889

Chief Characters Gianetta, Tessa, Casilda, Duchess of Plaza Toro, Inez, Guiseppe, Marco, Luiz, Duke of Plaza Toro, Don Alhambra (Grand Inquisitor)

THE scene is laid in Venice, where the pretty contadini have brought showers of roses for the two most popular gondoliers, Marco and Guiseppe, who presently appear; and, both being unable to select a wife from amongst so many pretty girls, the young men blindfold themselves, and take the first they capture. Marco snatches Gianetta, and Tessa falls to Guiseppe; and the merry couples hasten off to be married at once. As they depart a party of strangers arrive. These are the Duke and Duchess of Plaza Toro, their daughter, Casilda, and their one attendant, Luiz. They are Grandees of Spain, very proud, and great sticklers for etiquette; but, in spite of the grandeur of their ancient

lineage, they are desperately poor and shabby, and the Duke is about to form himself into a limited company in order to retrieve his fallen fortunes. They have come to interview the Grand Inquisitor, Don Alhambra; and Gasilda is now informed by her parents that the object of their present visit is to discover the young Prince of Barataria, who is her husband, she having been married by proxy to the royal heir when they were both infants. Soon after the contract was completed, the King of Barataria, having suddenly become a Wesleyan Methodist, the Grand Inquisitor managed to steal away the baby Prince, and has kept him hidden in Venice ever since, so that he might be kept from a similar fate. The Methodist King having recently died, the throne now awaits the hidden Prince, and the Duke is anxious to find him and introduce Gasilda as his Queen. Casilda, however, is not pleased at this prospect; for she and Luiz, the Dukes sole attendant, are secret lovers, and are filled with dismay at the thought of their coming parting. When the Grand Inquisitor presently appears, they learn that he is not sure which of the two gondoliers, Marco and Guiseppe, is the real King, since he gave the royal child into the charge of a merry gondolier, who was such a roystering "tippler " that he was never able to tell the adopted baby from his own son of the same age. The only person who could now identify the Prince is his own old nurse, Inez, who happens to be the mother of Luiz; and she is at once sent for. The Grand Inquisitor then decides that until her arrival Marco and Guiseppe shall both reign jointly, and they are promptly separated from the two contadini they have just married, and conveyed to Barataria.

Here, in Act 2, the two ex-gondoliers are seen in the palace, seated upon the throne, feeling very awkward and uncomfortable in their unaccustomed grandeur; hut they soon regain their merry spirits once more on the arrival of Tessa and Gianetta, who, unhappy at the absence of their husbands, have come to look them up. Whilst they are engaged in revels and dancing the Cachuca, the Grand Inquisitor appears, and tells the two girls that they can neither of them be Queen, since, whichever gondolier is presently proved to be the real King, he is already married to the Lady Casilda, to whom he was united in infancy. The Duke and Duchess now arrive with Casilda and Luiz and the three pairs of lovers are in the direst dumps when the old nurse, Inez, arrives, and settles all the complications most unexpectedly and satisfactorily. She states that when the baby Prince was put into her charge, she was so afraid that he might be stolen that she substituted her own baby boy for him, and allowed the royal child to be regarded as hers. She therefore now declares that the real Prince is Luiz, greatly to the delight of Casilda, who rushes joyfully into his arms; and the now happy pair mount the throne as King and Queen. Marco and Guiseppe very gladly discard their royal trappings and irksome grandeur, and, taking their pretty contadini wives with them, they step into a gondola, and merrily sail back to their beloved Venice.

156. HADDON HALL

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sidney Grundy

First Produced London, 1892

Chief Characters Dorothy Vernon, Lady Vernon, Dorcas, John Manners, Sir George Vernon, Oswald, Rupert Vernon, The MacCrankie

THE plot of this charming opera is adapted from the famous story of Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall; but several liberties have been taken with the actual events, time, etc., with the object of

producing a dramatic ensemble. The scene takes place at Haddon Hall in Derbyshire, where the retainers of Sir George Vernon are gathered in the grounds, engaged in revels in honour of the betrothal of the young Mistress Dorothy to her cousin, Rupert Vernon. Dorothy presently appears with her parents, when it transpires that she has already lost her heart. to the handsome yeoman-squire, John Manners; and she refuses to marry her cousin. Sir George is furious, and commands her to obey his wishes; but, when he has gone, the weeping Dorothy is comforted by her mother, who promises to aid her in her plans for avoiding the union with her hated cousin. As they retire into the Hall, Oswald, the faithful servant of John Manners, appears, disguised as a pedlar. He has a letter from his master to Dorothy, arranging for their elopement; and he soon persuades Dorothy's confidential maid, Dorcas, to deliver this to her mistress, who presently comes out to the messenger. The three talk the matter over, the two servants persuading the somewhat fearful Dorothy to follow the dictates of her heart, and not to hesitate in falling in with the directions of her lover. John Manners, impatient at his servants long absence, now appears himself; and the lovers have a passionate interview, Dorothy finally agreeing to the elopement that night during the festivities which are to be held. Rupert Vernon now appears with his Puritan friends, for he has joined the Roundheads in the hope that Parliament will favour his claim to the Vernon Estates. Sir George is a Royalist, but he has arranged for the union of his daughter with Rupert in order to keep a hold on the estates should they eventually fall into the hands of the latter. When Dorothy is brought forward and presented to Rupert, she flatly refuses to marry him; and she is sent to her chamber in dire disgrace by the angry father.

In Act 2, which takes place outside the Hall at night, the Puritan followers of Rupert are shown in a very disagreeable light; and they are looked upon with great disapproval by Sir George's Royalist retainers, who especially show their contempt for "The MacCrankie," a humbugging Scotch ultra-Puritan of the worst type. As they retire, Dorothy and Dorcas presently issue forth from a little private door, and are quickly joined by John Manners and Oswald, who hurry them away; but not before they are spied by Rupert and his Puritans, who at once give chase to them. The scene now changes to the interior of the Hall, where Sir George is entertaining his guests with the genial hospitality of "the Fine Old English Gentleman"; and the revels here are suddenly interrupted by the hurried entrance of the wrathful Rupert, who, baffled in his pursuit of the fugitive lovers, has returned to break the news and get additional help; and the gay scene ends in confusion and dismay.

In Act 3 Rupert is shown in possession of Haddon, having succeeded in getting Parliament to support his claim; and, under his Puritanical rule, the once bright and cheerful Hall has taken on a dull and sombre look. Sir George and Lady Vernon are about to take a sorrowful leave of their beloved home when Oswald suddenly enters, and, announcing the accession of Charles II., produces a document from the Merry Monarch, establishing his loyal follower, Sir George Vernon, as the legitimate owner of Haddon Hall. The crestfallen Rupert is therefore forced to retire; and when John Manners and his fair bride, Dorothy, presently appear, they are received with open arms, and freely forgiven by the now happy and thankful parents.

157. H.M.S. PINAFORE; OR, "THE LASS THAT LOVED A SAILOR"

Comic Opera in Two Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced London, May 28th, 1878

Chief Characters Josephine, Little Buttercup, Captain Corcoran, Ralph Rackstraw, Dick Deadeye, Sir Joseph Porter

THE action takes place on board H.M.S. *Pinafore*, where Captain Corcoran is worried at finding things "at sixes and sevens." A bumboat woman, known as "Little Buttercup," although she is in reality a big, buxom, rosy dame, has long preserved a secret; and when she comes on board she has a mysterious interview with Dick Deadeye, one of the seamen. A very important visitor arrives, Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., who is attended by "his sisters, and his cousins and his aunts," who all sing his praises. He desires to marry Josephine, the daughter of Captain Corcoran; but this pretty maid has fallen in love with Ralph Rackstraw, who, though but a common seaman, has attracted her by his handsome looks and gallant bearing, and she therefore declines the offer of the great personage, much to his annoyance. The lovers have a secret meeting, and arrange to elope at midnight from the vessel; but their plans are overheard by Dick Deadeye, who informs the Captain. Just as Ralph and Josephine are about to steal away from the boat, the Captain appears with Sir Joseph, and an angry scene ensues. The wrathful Sir Joseph soon orders the Captain to the ship's dungeon for using profane language, and young Ralph meets with the same fate for having dared to attempt an elopement with the Captain's daughter. Sir Joseph is just lecturing the weeping Josephine when "Little Buttercup" appears and reveals her long-preserved secret, which is to the effect that in her early days when she had charge of a baby farm she received two babies, one being well-born and the other a child of the streets. To please her fancy, she changed the infants and "mixed them up," so that no one knew their identity. She now states, however, that the well-born child was Ralph Rackstraw, and that the child of the streets was Captain Corcoran. This being so, Sir Joseph sends for the prisoners, and makes Ralph the Captain, commanding Corcoran to serve as a seaman. The latter makes no objection, but comforts himself by taking "Little Buttercup" as his wife, to her entire satisfaction, this having been the sole object of her confession; and since Sir Joseph would offend his sisters and his cousins and his aunts did he take a seaman's daughter as his bride he magnanimously bestows her upon the gallant Jack, and all ends happily.

158. IOLANTHE; OR, "THE PEER AND THE PERI"

Comic Fairy Opera in Two Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced London, November, 1882

Chief Characters Iolanthe, Phyllis, Queen of the Fairies, Strephon, The Lord Chancellor, Private Willis, Earl of Mountararat, Earl of Tololler

ACT 1 takes place in Arcady, where the fairies are assembled for the purpose of imploring their Queen to pardon one of their number, Iolanthe, who, because she married a mortal, has been condemned to pass the remainder of her life head-first in a pool of water. The Fairy Queen, who is

of the Amazonian order, grants the wish of her subjects, and commands Iolanthe to come forth from the pool, from whence she presently emerges, covered with dripping weeds and water, plants. She admits her guilt in having wedded a mortal, and tells her companions that she has a son, Strephon, who is half-fairy and half-mortal. When Iolanthe is presently left alone, Strephon appears in the garb of an Arcadian shepherd, and complains to his mother because he is such a half-and-half kind of being. He can go through a keyhole as far as his waist, but this is of no advantage, since his mortals legs are left behind. He is also unhappy because he has been forbidden by the Lord Chancellor to marry the pretty shepherdess, Phyllis, who is a ward in Chancery. Iolanthe endeavours to comfort her son by saying that things will right themselves in time; and, as she has a constituency in her gift, she promises to secure his return to Parliament as a " Liberal-Conservative." Phyllis enters, and the lovers have a pretty love scene together. As they wander off the Lord Chancellor and the Peers enter, having met together to decide which of them shall marry Phyllis, since they have all fallen in love with her. Their chief, though he fancies the lady himself, since he is "*such* a susceptible Chancellor," puts his own claim aside, that he may act as arbitrator of his charming wards fate. Phyllis is sent for, and, upon her declining to wed anyone but her beloved Strephon, she is at once separated from the latter, who calls the fairies to his aid. Iolanthe talks to her son in such familiar and affectionate terms that Phyllis becomes jealous; and, refusing to believe Strephons protestations that the fairy is his mother, she accuses him of infidelity, and declares she will now choose a husband from amongst the peers. The latter rejoice; but Iolanthe, indignant at her sons ill-treatment, announces that she will certainly send him to Parliament, where he shall cause them endless trouble by mixing up their politics into a hopeless muddle.

Act 2 takes place at Westminster, outside the Houses of Parliament, where the fairies congregate in the moonlight, their Queen being greatly attracted by Private Willis, the burly sentry. Strephon is in Parliament, where, as the Leader of both Parties, he has wrought considerable confusion, as prophesied; and Phyllis is engaged to the two Earls, Mountararat and Toeller, and cannot make up her mind which shall marry her in the end. In order to settle matters, the Lord Chancellor announces that he will marry his ward himself; whereupon Iolanthe appears, and reveals to him the fact that she is his wife, he having been the mortal whom she married, and that Strephon is his son, in whose light he cannot, as a good father, stand. The Lord Chancellor is overcome with emotion on beholding his fairy wife once more; and Phyllis, now convinced of Strephons fairy descent and fidelity, makes up her squabble with him, and consents to be his wife, casting off the two peers, who, however, quickly console themselves with new sweethearts. Iolanthe, having thus revealed the identity of her mortal husband, has again forfeited her life; but, as all the other fairies now confess that they have also utilised their sojourn in Westminster by wedding peers, the Fairy Queen is nonplussed, since she is reluctant to condemn all her subjects to death. She therefore decides to follow their example, and, leading forth the bashful sentry, Private Willis, she chooses him as her husband; and the opera closes with a merry dance of the happy peers and their fairy wives, who provide them with wings to make them more suitable partners.

159. THE MIKADO; OR, "THE TOWN OF TITIPU"

Comic Opera in Two Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced London, March, 1885

Chief Characters Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, Peep-Bo, Katisha, Nanki-Poo, Ko-Ko, Pooh-Bah, Pish-Tush, The Mikado

NANKI-Poo, son of the Mikado, arrives in Titipu, disguised as a "Wandering Minstrel," seeking Yum-Yum, whom he loves, and who is the ward of Ko-Ko, a cheap tailor, who is Lord High Executioner, and to whom he now learns she is to be married. He receives this information from Pooh-Bah, the Lord High Everything Else; and presently a bevy of pretty schoolgirls enier, amongst whom are Yum-Yum and her two friends, Pitti-Sing and Peep-Bo. Yum-Yum rushes into the arms of Nanki-Poo, who now explains his rank and position to her. He has been condemned to death by his royal father for refusing to marry Katisha, an elderly and designing lady of the court, but having succeeded in making his escape he joined the Town Band of Titipu as Second Trombone, in which capacity he met the pretty school-girl Yum-Yum and fell in love with her. They are now much upset because the latter has to wed Ko-Ko, but the Lord High Executioner is presently filled with consternation on receiving a message from the Mikado, who declares that unless an execution takes place in Titipu within the next month his high office shall be abolished. He endeavours to persuade Pooh-Bah or Pish-Tush to afford him an opportunity of exercising his new profession; but as they decline to oblige him, suggesting that he might cut off his own head as a last resource, he is in despair. When, therefore, Nanki-Poo presently appears in a doleful state, about to hang himself because his sweetheart is compelled to wed another, he begs the young man to kindly undergo decapitation instead, since he is so determined to end his life. Nanki-Poo consents to be beheaded at the end of the month if in the meanwhile he may marry Yum-Yum, and enjoy four weeks of bliss with her. Ko-Ko therefore agrees to postpone his own marriage for a month, when he may still wed Yum-Yum, who will then be a widow; and the matter is amicably settled. In Act 2 Yum-Yum is seen finishing her wedding toilet with her merry girlfriends. Nanki-Poo enters, and whilst both are expressing delight at the nearness of their happiness Ko-Ko comes in with bad news. He has just learned that, in accordance with the existing law, when a husband is beheaded, his widow must be buried alive with him, and as Yum-Yum objects to suffering "such a stuffy death," Nanki-Poo, in despair, offers to save her by committing suicide that day. As this would still leave Ko-Ko in his awkward dilemma he arranges to make a false statement of Nanki-Poo's supposed decapitation, and when the Mikado presently arrives in great pomp, he mendaciously confirms this statement. Meanwhile the Mikado learns that the Wandering Minstrel, Nanki-Poo, is his own truant son in disguise; and he therefore pours forth his royal wrath upon the unfortunate Ko-Ko for having executed the heir to the throne, for which terrible deed -he is doomed to an awful death-" something with boiling oil in it!" Ko-Ko hastily seeks out Nanki-Poo, who is on the point of eloping with the charming Yum-Yum, to whom he has just been married, and he implores the young prince to appear before his royal father. But Nanki-Poo refuses to come to life again since then he will have to wed the bad-tempered old spinster Katisha; but he suggests that if Ko-Ko cares to take the risk of marrying Katisha himself he will then appear in time to save him from the "boiling oil." Having no other choice Ko-Ko, very much against his will, pays court to the domineering and elderly Katisha, who readily consents to accept him in order to escape spinsterhood, and they are married before Pooh-Bah, who is Registrar amongst his many other offices. Nanki-Poo then appears before the Mikado, who is so pleased at finding him still alive that he makes no objection to his union with Yum-Yum, since Katisha, having just married the Lord High Executioner, is no longer available as a bride. Thus Ko-Ko is saved from his awkward predicament, and all ends happily.

160. PATIENCE, OR, "BUNTHORNES BRIDE"

Comic Opera in Two Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced London, April, 1881

Chief Characters Patience, Lady Jane, Lady Angela, Reginald Bunthorne, Archibald Grosvenor, Duke of Dunstable, Col. Calverley, Major Murgatroyd

THIS bright and pretty comic opera is a most amusing satire upon the "aesthetic" movement of the early eighties of the last century. The first act takes place in front of Castle Bunthorne, where Lady Angela, Lady Jane, and a number of other "love-sick maidens," all robed in long "aesthetic" gowns of subdued tints, are bemoaning their sad fate, for they are all in love with Bunthorne, the aesthetic, "fleshly" poet, and spend their days following him about and indulging in deep sighs, and uttering "ecstatic, transcendental" platitudes. Lady Jane, an elderly admirer of the poet, reveals the harrowing fact that Bunthorne has fallen in love with Patience, a milkmaid; and presently Patience, a matter-of-fact, healthy young girl, appears, laughing at the doleful, devoted, limp maidens, and informing them that their old admirers, the Dragoon Guards, have arrived. The love-sick ones disdain such prosaic, reasonable beings as soldiers; and when the Dragoons appear, headed by Colonel Calverley, Major Murgatroyd, and Lieutenant the Duke of Dunstable, they are much disappointed at the cold reception accorded to them by the lackadaisical ladies, who, on the appearance of the absurd Bunthorne, who is composing a poem, all crowd around him and offer him rapturous adoration. The Dragoons depart in high dudgeon at this state of affairs, their very uniform being declared "crude" and "heartrending" by their former sweethearts, who almost faint at the sight of "primary colours." Bunthorne, being left awhile alone, soliloquises, admitting to himself that he is but a sham, and his aestheticism and "fleshly poetry" meaningless; and then, on the entrance of Patience, he proceeds to make love to her. Patience, however, is frightened, and declares she knows nothing of love; but when Lady Angela presently speaks with her and explains Love to her in high-flown terms as an ennobling, unselfish passion, declaring it to be her duty to love, the milkmaid, conscience-stricken, promises that she will not rest until she has fallen in love with someone. Presently there arrives another aesthete, Archibald Grosvenor, the simple and "idyllic" poet, who is so beautiful that it is his misfortune to be loved by every maiden who beholds him; and he and Patience, having been playfellows in early childhood, now fall in love with each other in earnest. When, however, they discover that there is nothing "unselfish" or "self-sacrificing" in their love since they have no faults in each others eyes, they feel obliged to part for artistic and poetic reasons. Bunthorne now appears, decked with roses, having decided that since he cannot marry all his admirers they shall raffle for him. Just as the lottery is proceeding, however, Patience rushes forward and offers herself as his bride, considering this to be her duty since such an act entails an unselfish sacrifice on her part, and Bunthorne very readily accepts her. Then the rapturous, but disappointed, maidens, on beholding the beautiful Grosvenor, who has now appeared on the scene, immediately attach themselves to him and desert the "fleshly poet," Bunthorne, who is furious at the appearance of such a formidable rival.

In Act 2 he discovers that Patience really loves Grosvenor, and he departs in a jealous pet with the elderly Jane, who has always been his most ardent admirer. Presently the rivals meet and Bunthorne commands Grosvenor to discard his aestheticism, cut his hair, and become "an

everyday young man " at once, on pain of his own most dire and fatal curse. Terrified at such an alarming threat Grosvenor agrees, and in the final scene he appears with his hair cut, and clad in the immaculate, prosaic attire of a " matter-of-fact young man." With him come the rapturous maidens, who, following his excellent example, have transformed themselves into "everyday young girls," who very readily return to their old sweethearts, the dashing Dragoon Guards. Patience follows suit, and deserting Bunthorne, accepts her beloved Grosvenor; and even the ancient Jane is chosen, as the plainest lady present, to wed the fair-dealing Duke of Dunstable. Bunthorne, therefore, is left alone in his own aesthetic glory, without a bride, and condemned to satisfy himself with a walk down Piccadilly, With a poppy or a lily!"

161. THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE; OR, "THE SLAVE OF DUTY"

Comic Opera in Two Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced New York, Dec., 1879

Chief Characters Mabel, Ruth, Frederic, The Pirate-King, Major-General Stanley, Sergeant of Police, Samuel

THE first act opens upon a rocky coast in Cornwall, where the celebrated Pirates of Penzance are gathered to celebrate the majority of Frederic, a youth who has been apprenticed to them until his twenty-first birthday, he being released from his indentures this day. It now transpires that Ruth, a piratical maid-of-all-work, who is middle-aged, plain and sentimental, made a slight mistake with regard to Frederic, who was delivered into her hands in childhood-she being his nursemaid-with instructions to have him apprenticed until his twenty-first birthday to a Pilot; but she, mistaking the word, apprenticed him to a Pirate instead. Frederic has lived happily with the Pirates, who are so gentle and harmless that they will never attack a weaker party than themselves, and always allow all orphans to go scot-free-being all orphans themselves. Now, however, he tells them that, having been a slave to duty always, whilst their apprentice he has served them conscientiously, and he feels, on being freed from his indentures, it is equally his duty to exterminate them. The Pirates see the force of his argument, and sorrowfully agree to it; and as he is about to leave them, the elderly Ruth, who has always been devoted to him, entreats him to marry her and take her away with him. Frederic first asks if she is as beautiful as other damsels, and on being assured that such is the case he somewhat reluctantly gives his consent. At this moment, however, an interruption occurs, since a bevy of pretty girls enter, headed by the daughters of Major-General Stanley; and Frederic, instantly falling in love with Mabel, the fairest of these, thrusts Ruth from him with contempt, telling her that she has deceived him, since he now sees that she is elderly, grey-haired and plain. The fussy Major-General now arrives on the scene, and the picnic-party are at once surrounded by the Pirates, who are all very anxious to marry the pretty girls. But on learning that the Major-General is an orphan they feel bound to let him go free; and the old soldier and the pretty girls all depart, taking with them Frederic, who offers himself as a suitor for Mabel, and, being freed from his piratical indentures, desires to join the army.

Act 2 takes place in the Major-Generals ancient hall and gardens, where the old soldier is found in

a depressed state, full of remorse for having deceived the Pirates by telling them that he was an orphan when such is not the case; and presently Frederic and Mabel appear, the former bidding farewell to his sweetheart prior to setting out to exterminate the Pirates, in accordance with his strong sense of duty, although he still cherishes great affection for them. When he is left alone the Pirates appear, headed by the Pirate King, who comes to inform him that as the papers of his indentures state that he is bound to serve the band until his twenty-first birthday, and that as he was born on the 29th of February in Leap Year, he has not nearly served his time, and must return to them. Frederic is full of dismay; but again his strong sense of duty prevails over all, and he resolves to go back to his old life. He happens to mention to them that the Major-Generals statement to them that he was an orphan was only an excuse to obtain his freedom; and the Pirates determine to be revenged. They accordingly return at midnight, intending to kidnap the Major-General; but they are met by a comical company of policemen, who overcome them and are about to march them all off to prison, when they announce that they are in reality English noblemen in disguise, having taken up piracy when things went wrong with them. They are therefore released by the Major-General when they promise to be Pirates no more; and they promptly choose brides from amongst his pretty daughters and their friends. Since there are therefore no longer any Pirates for him to exterminate, Frederic remains at home to marry the charming Mabel; and even Ruth joins in the merriment, since the Sergeant of Police proves too great an attraction for her to resist.

162. PRINCESS IDA; OR, "CASTLE ADAMANT."

Comic Opera in Three Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced London, January, 1884

Chief Characters Princess Ida, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche, Melissa, Hilarion, King Hildebrand, King Gama, Florian, Cyril

THIS opera is a mild burlesque on Tennysons "Princess," and a good-natured satire on the "Advanced Woman." The first act takes place in the Castle of King Hildebrand, who is awaiting the coming of King Gama with his daughter, Princess Ida, who is to wed Hilarion, the son of Hildebrand. Gama presently arrives, alone, declaring that his daughter has foresworn marriage and refuses to leave Castle Adamant, the Womens University she has founded, and of which she is the head; and Hildebrand is so furious at this breaking of the compact between the two royal families that he seizes the three sons of Gama and holds them as hostages until the Princess Ida shall be brought as a bride for his son. Meanwhile Hilarion and his friends, Florian and Cyril, set off for Castle Adamant, determined to see for themselves if the fair Princess is so stonyhearted as given out.

Act 2 takes place at Castle Adamant, where the "advanced" ladies are all engaged in various studies, in which they are chiefly encouraged by the Lady Blanche, the Professor of Abstract Science, who is the most enthusiastic member of the College, of which she is anxious to secure the leadership. Hilarion and his two companions get into the sacred precincts by the primitive method of scaling the high garden wall; and finding a supply of academic robes, they don these and present themselves as girl-students. They are consequently admitted to the College, agreeing to the rules with great glee when they find that one of them binds them to love all the inmates. Their

disguise, however, is presently penetrated by the Lady Psyche, who recognises Florian as her brother; but she promises to keep the secret, for, truth to tell, she, like most of the other inmates, is already tired of her man-excluded life, and gladly welcomes the intruders. This interview is overheard by Melissa, the daughter of Lady Blanche, who relates all to her mother; but the latter also decides to keep the secret since, if Hilarion should succeed in winning the Princess Ida, the College will then fall to her own leadership, and her life's ambition will thus be gained. But when the Princess at last discovers that the three new-comers are men she is furious, and runs from their presence at once; and in crossing a bridge she falls into a stream, from which she is rescued by Hilarion. In spite of his ready gallantry, however, she still refuses to marry him, and, instead, orders him to be thrust into a dungeon with his two companions. This command has no sooner been carried out than King Hildebrand storms the Castle, and commands the Princess to set his son at liberty and marry him without fail by noon next day.

In Act 3 the lady students prepare to defend their liberty; but they grow very half-hearted in the task on beholding the King's many followers and realising that life holds other joys beside the study of Abstract Science. Finally it is decided to settle the whole matter by a contest between the three sons of Gama and Hilarion and his two companions, the Princess to be freed from her marriage contract should the latter be defeated. The contest takes place and ends in the victory of Hilarion, who claims Princess Ida as his bride; and the latter, whose growing love for him has gradually broken down all her "advanced" notions, has no longer any objection to the union. Cyril and Florian also find brides in Lady Psyche and Melissa; and the ambitious Lady Blanche is left in possession of her coveted office as leader of the Womens College.

163. RUDDYGORE; OR, "THE WITCHS CURSE."

Comic Opera in Two Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced London, January, 1887

Chief Characters Rose Maybud, Mad Margaret, Hannah, Robin Oakapple (Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd), Sir Despard Murgatroyd, Richard, Adam

"RUDDYGORE" presents us with a very amusing satire upon the mid-Victorian highfalutin melodrama; and the plot centres round the working out of a Witch's Curse laid upon Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, the first of the Murgatroyd Baronets, who was an inveterate foe and persecutor of the sorcery of his day. The curse compels the holder of the title to commit a crime every day, and it has continued in the family through all the succeeding generations. At the beginning of the opera the present Baronet, Sir Ruthven, in order to prevent the curse falling upon him, has vanished from the Castle, and, disguising himself as a rustic youth under the name of Robin Oakapple, is dwelling in the neighbouring village; and the title has consequently fallen upon his younger brother, Despard, upon whom the curse also descends, causing him to commit a crime every day. Robin Oakapple has fallen in love with Rose Maybud, an orphan, who is the belle of the village; but as he is very shy his love-making does not progress very well, greatly to the disappointment of a bevy of pretty "Professional Bridesmaids," who have come to the village hoping to render their services at the expected wedding. Robin's foster-brother Richard, a sailor, arrives in the village, and, seeing the state of affairs, tries to hurry matters by pleading Robin's cause with Rose; but the

coquettish maiden, in order to punish her backward lover, shows great favour to the ambassador, and even announces that she thinks seriously of marrying him, to the great dismay of the disconsolate Robin and the huge delight of the jolly gobetween. At this moment Sir Despard arrives in the village, and, recognising Robin as his brother, compels him to return to the Castle and take on his rightful title, together with the family curse, of which he is himself heartily sick, and greatly relieved to be rid of. Rose Maybud, though sorry for the fate of her lover, flatly refuses to wed a " Bold, Bad Baronet," and is inclined to show favour to the released Sir Despard; but the latter is soon seized upon by Mad Margaret, a village girl whose undoing has provided scope for one of his daily crimes when under the Witches Curse.

In Act 2 Robin is found installed at Ruddygore Castle as Sir Ruthven, where, being now under the family curse, his servant, Adam, is kept constantly busy hunting up daily crimes for him to commit. The unhappy and bored Wicked Baronet, having had quite enough of crime at the end of the first week, retires to the Portrait Gallery of the Castle; and here, to his surprise and dismay, the various dead and gone Murgatroyd Baronets, whose portraits ornament the walls, all come to life again, and, stepping down from their frames, declare that Robin will presently meet with a terrible and lingering death unless he at once makes arrangements for the abduction of some unwilling lady. Finally, however, the brilliant discovery is made that the Baronets of Ruddygore, according to the correct reading of the curse, can only die by declining to carry out the daily crime; whereupon the revived ancestors, realizing that, since they did not refuse to perform the evil deeds required of them, they ought none of them to have died, and that as the curse has thus never been properly carried out, it is now null and void. Having, therefore, come back to life they now refuse to return to their frames; and when the Professional Bridesmaids presently appear on the scene they pair off very contentedly with them. Mad Margaret and Sir Despard also pair off; and since Robin, being freed from the curse, can no longer be regarded as a Bad Baronet, Rose Maybud very gladly consents to marry him, and the scene ends with a merry revel.

164. THE SORCERER

Comic Operetta in Two Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced London, November, 1877

Chief Characters Lady Sangazure, Aline, Constance, Mrs Partlet, J. W. Wells (The Sorcerer), Alexis, Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre, Dr Daly

IN Act 1 the villagers are gathered in the grounds of Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre to witness the signing of the marriage contract between his son Alexis, and Aline, daughter of the aristocratic Lady Sangazure, with whom Sir Marmaduke was himself in love in his early youth. Amongst the merry-makers is Constance, the daughter of Mrs Partlet, the pew-opener; and of all the gay throng she is the only unhappy one. On inquiring the reason for her sadness Mrs Partlet learns that the girl has fallen in love with the elderly vicar, Dr Daly; but the worthy doctor is too dense to realise the conquest he has made, in spite of the broad hints given him by the matchmaking old dame. When the notary arrives, with Sir Marmaduke and Lady Sangazure, the betrothal contract is signed; and when the lovers are left alone Alexis tells Aline that, in order to test the working of his pet theory that love and marriage should always be consummated without any regard to the worldly

considerations of rank, wealth or age, he has ordered Mr J. W. Wells, of the famous firm of J. W. Wells & Co., family sorcerers, to bring down a good supply of their Special Love-potion, which is guaranteed to cause any person who partakes of it to immediately fall in love with the next passer-by of the opposite sex. Wells presently appears, and, after a comical description of his wonderful wizard powers, he proceeds to administer the potion to all the company in cups of tea, which he hands round, and the guests, one by one, come under the magic spell and fall asleep. In Act 2 they awaken from the strange trance; and immediately the potion begins to work, and most amusing scenes follow, as incongruous couples get together. Sir Marmaduke, beholding old Mrs Partlet, the pew-opener, falls in love with her and announces his intention to marry her; Aline and Dr Daly walk off as sweethearts; Constance and the old notary rush into each others arms; and Lady Sangazure swears eternal love to the embarrassed sorcerer, who is astounded at the potency of his drug, and at the same time dismayed at the havoc he has wrought amongst the peaceful guests. Finally Alexis, furious at the defection of his betrothed, and realising the failure of his theory, commands the sorcerer to undo the mischief he has caused; and Wells explains that this can only be achieved by sacrificing someone to Ahrimanes as a peace-offering. It is unanimously decided that *he* shall himself be the victim, and the sorcerer therefore vanishes into the ground amidst red fire. At the same time the various couples return to the rightful objects of their affection, and the operetta ends with the wedding revels of Aline and Alexis.

165. UTOPIA, LIMITED; OR, "THE FLOWERS OF PROGRESS."

Comic Opera in Two Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced London, October, 1893

Chief Characters Princess Zara, The Twin Princesses Nekaya and Kalyba, Lady Sophy, King Paramount, Scaphio and Phantis, Tarara, Captain Fitzbattleaxe, Lord Dramaleigh, Capt. Sir Edward Corcoran, K.C.B., Mr Goldbury, Sir Bailey Barre, Q.C., M.P., Mr Blushington

THE scene opens in the tropical palace gardens of King Paramount of Utopia, an absurd King, who is supposed to be an autocratic tyrant, but is actually ruled with a rod of iron by his two Wise Men, Phantis and Scaphio, whose will he is forced to obey on pain of being blown up with dynamite by the Public Exploder, Tarara, who, in such a case, would succeed him on the throne. The King has been seized with a frantic desire to model his kingdom on the plan of England, and he encourages everything English. His eldest daughter, Princess Zara, is just expected to return home from England, where she has been to school, with a view to becoming as English as possible. The two younger twin Princesses, Nekaya and Kalyba, are being educated by an English governess, Lady Sophy, who is very prim and proper, and has taught the girls to be likewise. King Paramount admires Lady Sophy, and desires to marry her; but the Governess is so terribly shocked at reading in the *Palace Peeper* of the improper doings of her royal admirer that she will not encourage his advances. The King himself is the author of these scurrilous "pars," which he is compelled to write by his two Wise Men, in order to keep up his reputation as a supposed tyrant and evil-living monarch; but he does not dare to inform the scandalised Governess of this fact for fear of being instantly blown up with dynamite - the regulation fate of autocratic tyrants.

Meanwhile the Princess Zara arrives from England, bringing with her six typical Englishmen, whom she calls "The Flowers of Progress," being representatives of the principal causes that have tended to make England the enlightened power she is; and with these she hopes to remodel Utopia on British lines, to the great delight of her father, who is tired of being a bullied autocrat. Her new friends at once set to work. Captain Fitzbattleaxe (of the Life Guards)-who is in love with Zara, who returns his affection - is to remodel the Army; Captain Corcoran, R.N., is to renovate the Navy; Sir Bailey Barre, Q.C., M.P., will attend to Law matters; Lord Dramaleigh will show them what a Lord Chamberlain ought to do; Mr Blushington, a County Councillor, will do wonders in Sanitary and Health Reforms; whilst Mr Goldbury, a financier and company promoter, immediately takes the Government and Exchequer in hand, and transforms the Country into a Limited Company. Strange transformations at once take place, greatly to the wrath and dismay of the two Wise Men, who, finding their antiquated laws utterly disregarded and their cherished authority over the puppet King vanished, make a great outcry. Everything has become so perfect in Utopia that the country is "swamped by dull prosperity." The Army and Navy are so efficient that war is impossible; the sanitary and health reforms have worked so well that the doctors are dying of starvation; the remodelled laws have extinguished crime, and the lawyers are also starving; and something is therefore still needed to make things quite right. The Princess Zara-who has been holding Court Drawing-rooms in the approved English fashion-solves the difficulty by declaring that she had forgotten the principal factor in the new scheme, which is Government by Party. This being established, things are righted; and Utopia, from being a Monarchy (Limited), becomes a Limited Monarchy. The King, freed from his tyrannical Wise Men, is free to tell Lady Sophy the truth about the libels on himself which he had been compelled to write, and is made happy by her now considering him sufficiently respectable as a husband for an English governess; the two young Princesses respectively wed Lord Dramaleigh and Mr Goldbury; and Princess Zara, who has brought the whole reform about, is very gladly united to her dashing English sweetheart, Captain Fitzbattleaxe.

166. THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD; OR, "THE MERRYMAN AND HIS MAID."

Comic Opera in Two Acts By Sir Arthur Seymour Sullivan

Libretto By Sir W. S. Gilbert

First Produced London, October, 1888

Chief Characters Elsie Maynard, Phoebe, Dame Carruthers, Colonel Fairfax, Jack Point, Wilfred, Leonard, Lieutenant of the Tower, Sergeant Meryll

THE action takes place within the precincts of the Tower of London, in old English times. Colonel Fairfax has been sentenced to death through the malice of a kinsman. He has accused him of sorcery in order to inherit his estates, which can only be claimed by him, however, should Fairfax die unmarried. To disappoint his accuser, therefore, Fairfax asks the Lieutenant to grant him, as a last favour before his execution takes place, permission to be married; and the Lieutenant consents, if a maiden can be found in time to go through such a ceremony with him. Sergeant Meryll, whose life Fairfax has saved in battle, endeavours now to save his in return; and he arranges for the prisoner to mingle amongst the Yeomen of the Guard in the place of his own son,

Leonard, who manages to slip out of the Tower unnoticed. Meanwhile a strolling jester, Jack Point, arrives and sings and dances with his pretty gipsy companion, Elsie Maynard; and the latter is so interested in the talk about the unfortunate Fairfax that she consents to gratify his last wish by wedding him, on condition that they are both blindfolded and separate immediately after the ceremony. She is therefore blindfolded and taken into the prisoners cell, where the marriage ceremony is hastily performed, after which she returns to Jack Point, who is greatly relieved to see her safely back; for the Jester loves Elsie, who, however, has only pity for his passion. Meryll now endeavours to get the yeomans uniform into Fairfaxs cell so that he may join in the ranks; and as the keys of his cell are in possession of Wilfred, an extremely dour jailer, Phoebe Meryll undertakes to obtain them. Wilfred loves Phcebe, in spite of the latters saucy delight in teasing him; but the merry maiden now encourages her gloomy sweethearts clumsy love-making, and during the interview slyly abstracts the keys from his pocket unnoticed, returning them when the deed is done. Fairfax dons the disguise which is thus brought to him, issues from his cell, and falls into the ranks of the Yeomen of the Guard; and the scene ends with the discovery of his escape as the executioner waits for him at the block.

In Act 2 Dame Carruthers, a comely widow, is seen scolding the jailer for the escape of the prisoner; but as Wilfred moves sheepishly aside Jack Point, at Elsies instigation, persuades him to fire his gun outside the courtyard and then return and announce that he has shot the escaped prisoner dead - and as a reward Jack will teach him how to become a jester. Wilfred agrees, and when the noise of the report has been heard with surprise, Wilfred hastens back and declares that he has killed the escaped prisoner. Meanwhile Fairfax still mingles with the Yeomen; and from the ranks he watches the beautiful gipsymaiden, Elsie, with ever-increasing interest, being strangely thrilled on hearing Dame Carruthers gossiping that she believes Elsie to be the unknown maiden who, blindfolded, married the prisoner before his escape. Seeing that Jack Point loves the girl, however, he approaches her and tries to plead the Jesters cause with her; but before the end of the interview he has fallen desperately in love with her himself, and is overjoyed to find his passion returned. Matters are brought to a climax by the arrival of a belated pardon for Fairfax, who now steps forward and reveals himself, claiming Elsie as his bride. Phoebe also now consents to marry Wilfred, whilst Sergeant Meryll is captured by the buxom Dame Carruthers, who has long had her eye on him; but the opera ends in tragedy, nevertheless, for the faithful Jack Point is filled with woe at the loss of his beloved Elsie, and as the curtain descends he falls dead at her feet, a poor, broken-hearted "Merryman," who has "died for the love of a Ladyee!"

167. BOCCACCIO

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Franz von Suppé

Libretto By Zell and Genée

First Produced Venice, February, 1879

Chief Characters Fiametta, Peronetta, Boccaccio, Pietro (Prince of Palermo), The Duke of Naples, Lutteringhi (a Cooper), Lambertuccio (a grocer)

THE action takes place in the neighbourhood of Florence during the time of the Italian poet and romance-writer, Boccaccio. Fiametta, who is in reality the Princess Maria of Naples, has been brought up by a grocer, into whose hands she was placed by her father, the Duke, who has special

reasons for his resolve. He has, however, betrothed her in early childhood to Pietro, Prince of Palermo, and at the opening of the opera Pietro is proceeding to Florence to claim his bride. On his way he joins a company of wild, hilarious students, the merry ringleader of whom is Boccaccio, the famous romancer and poet. Boccaccio also is in love with Fiametta, who returns his affection, and he leads Pietro into many wild escapades in order to get his rival out of the way. On one occasion Pietro is encouraged to make love to a cooper's wife, whom he is led to believe is a single woman; and this leads to amusing complications for him. He also gets a severe beating by being mistaken for the mischievous Boccaccio. Finally, however, he arrives in Florence, still accompanied by Boccaccio, and the arrangements for his marriage with Fiametta are prepared. The dashing Boccaccio, however, seeing with joy that his own love for Fiametta is returned by her, slyly arranges for the performance of a play, in which he causes all the wild frolics and flirtations of Pietro on his journey to Florence to be set forth in exaggerated colours; and Fiametta affects to be so greatly shocked at the misdeeds of her betrothed that she now flatly refuses to wed with him. When, therefore, the ardent Boccaccio puts in his plea for her regard she admits that she loves him and gladly bestows her hand upon him.

168. HAMLET

Opera in Five Acts By Charles Ambroise Thomas

Libretto By Carré and Barbier (Adapted from Shakespeares Tragedy)

First Produced Paris, March, 1868

Chief Characters Ophelia, Queen Gertrude, Hamlet, King Claudius, Horatio, Laertes, The Ghost of Hamlets Father, Polonius

GREAT liberties have been taken with Shakespeare's text in this opera, and in many places rank absurdities occur.

In Act 1 Hamlet is shown grieved and shocked at his mothers marriage with Claudius so soon after the mysterious death of the late King. Ophelia, daughter of the crafty minister, Polonius, tries to bring comfort to him, and Hamlet is grateful for her love, which he returns, and on the departure of her brother Laertes he promises to cherish her. At midnight the scene with the ghost occurs, and Hamlets former suspicions are confirmed on thus learning from the spirit that his father was murdered by Claudius at the instigation of the Queen. He now seeks to avenge the murdered King, to which end he arranges the famous play scene, in which the actor pours poison into the ear of a sleeping rival, and seeing, by Claudius guilty countenance, that the ghosts words were true, he passionately accuses him of the murder of his father. He has, however, no definite proof, but later he receives further confirmation by overhearing a conversation, by which he learns that Polonius was the accomplice of Claudius. This makes him turn from Ophelia, whom he suspects also; and he now disdains her love and treats her with such cruel coldness that the gentle girl, in her grief at his conduct, becomes crazed.

In Act 4 we see her decked with flowers, playing with the village girls; and after they have left her she crouches amongst the reeds be-side the lake, into which she presently casts herself, being drawn thither by the song of the sirens, which she sings as she floats away.

In Act 5 the funeral procession of Ophelia comes by, followed by the unhappy Hamlet, who is now filled with grief and remorse for the fate of the loving girl who was to have been his bride; but upon the ghost once more appearing and urging him to avenge his wrongs he falls upon Claudius and kills him. Explanations follow, and the opera closes with the people acclaiming Hamlet as their King.

169. MIGNON

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Charles Ambroise Thomas

Libretto By Barbier and Carré (Adapted from Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister")

First Produced Paris, November 1856

Chief Characters Mignon, Filina, Wilhelm Weister, Laertes, Lotario, Giarno, Frederick

THE plot is based upon Goethe's novel, "Wilhelm Meister." and the scene is laid in Germany and Italy. In Act 1 we are introduced to an old wandering harper, Lotario, who is in reality a rich Italian nobleman, whose beloved and only daughter, Sperata, *was* stolen in childhood by gipsies, and the distracted father has since spent his life wandering about Europe in minstrel garb, seeking for her, his wife having died before the loss of the child. As the curtain rises he is seen resting in the courtyard of a German inn, where a band of gipsies presently arrive and begin to entertain the bystanders. Giarno, the leader of the band, commands Mignon, a pretty young gipsy maiden, to perform the egg dance, and upon the girl refusing because of utter weariness, he proceeds to beat and ill-treat her. Lotario hastens to the assistance of the poor girl, but is too feeble to help her; and at this moment a young student, Wilhelm Meister, approaches with some strolling players, and, beholding the scene, at once comes to the rescue and drives off the bully. Mignon, full of gratitude, entreats him to keep her with him, and Wilhelm, full of pity for the ill-used girl, gives the gipsy a sum of money in compensation, and takes her away with him, providing her with the dress of a page. Mignon soon falls in love with her gallant young preserver, who, however, does not notice the fact, having himself fallen under the fascinations of the pretty and coquet-tish strolling actress Filina, who, knowing him to be a young man of good family, desires to wed him. The players proceed to the castle of a neighbouring prince, where they are to perform, taking with them Wilhelm and Mignon, being also followed by the harper, Lotario, who is strangely attracted to the lovely maiden, in whom he fancies he traces a likeness to his own lost child. At the castle Wilhelm falls deeper into the toils of the gay Filina, greatly to the grief of Mignon, who, in despair at the hopelessness of her own love, is about to drown herself in a lake, when she is prevented from doing so by Lotario, who endeavours to comfort her. In her misery Mignon expresses the wish that the castle and all the players might be destroyed; and Lotario, in sympathy with the girl's grief, secretly enters the castle and sets fire to the place. As the players and guests run out in alarm into the grounds, Filina sends Mignon back to fetch a bouquet she has left behind; but when it is discovered that the girls return is cut off by the fire all are filled with consternation, and old Lotario is in despair. Wilhelm, however, dashes into the burning building and presently returns through the smoke and flames bearing the unconscious Mignon in his arms.

Act 3 takes place in Italy, whither Lotario has brought Mignon to his own château to recover from the effects of the fire, and here also Wilhelm has followed the pair, having now learnt of his little *protégées* love for him, and conceived a like passion for her, having freed himself from the toils of

the coquette Filina, who soon consoles herself with her other lovers, Laertes and Frederick. When Mignon recovers, therefore, he succeeds in winning her hand; and when Lotario presently appears in his rightful garb as an Italian noble it is proved by Mignons production of a girdle and trinket she has always preserved that she is indeed his long-lost daughter, as he had hoped and believed.

170. EUGÈNE ONEGIN

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Peter Ilyitch Tschaikowsky

Libretto By Kashkin (Adapted from Poushkin's Poetic Romance)

First Produced St Petersburg, May, 1877

Chief Characters Tatiana, Olga, Madame Larina, Philipjewna, Eugène Onegin, Lenski, Prince Gremin

THE scene is laid in Russia in the present time.

Act 1 opens upon the terrace of Madame Larinas country abode, where the lady of the house is picking fruit with the old nurse, Philipjewna, and watching her two daughters, Olga and Tatiana, who are singing and moving about the garden. Olga is lively and merry; but Tatiana is of a more pensive and sentimental nature. Presently visitors arrive. These are Olgas fiancé, Lenski, and his friend, Eugène Onegin, whom he introduces to the family, and who is given a hearty welcome. Onegin is a somewhat blasé man of the world, who has drunk deep of the pleasures of life, and has lost faith in most things; but his air of gloomy sadness makes him doubly attractive to the dreamy Tatiana, who at once conceives a violent attachment for him, which deepens as she strolls in the garden and talks with him. So great is the young girls infatuation that she sits up all night composing a letter to him, in which she artlessly confesses her love and begs him to meet her in the garden next day; and this she gives to the old nurse to deliver to the guest. When the pair meet, however, Onegin, being merely amused at the young girls romantic outburst, coolly declares that he has only a friendly feeling for her, and he advises her to learn to restrain her emotions in future. This leaves Tatiana overcome with shame at her own foolish conduct, and she endeavours to avoid Onegin and to bury her love for him.

In Act 2 Madame Larina gives a ball, at which Onegin, for the mere sake of amusement, gets up a flirtation with Olga, who, being of a merry and somewhat frivolous disposition, very readily responds, in order to punish her fiancé, Lenski, whose serious passion often bores her; and this so rouses Lenskis jealousy that he finally challenges his friend. Onegin, seeing that he has gone too far, and sorry for the trouble he has so carelessly caused, tries to soothe the angry lover; but Lenski refuses to listen to his protestations and the duel is arranged. In the next scene the duel takes place, and Lenski falls dead, to the great grief of Onegin, who departs at once, more world-weary than ever.

In Act 3, which takes place five years later, we are introduced to a brilliant assembly at the Palace of Prince Gremin; and here Onegin appears, having just returned from his wanderings, during which he has always been haunted by remorse for having caused the death of his friend Lenski. He is gloomy and uninterested in the proceedings until Prince Gremin introduces him to his wife, and

in this beautiful and charming lady he recognises Tatiana, now developed into a brilliant lady of society. The sentimental girl has grown into a sympathetic and high-souled woman, and Onegin now falls deeply in love with her, and is grieved when she merely speaks to him in cold and polite tones. He, however, in his turn, cannot control his passion, and later on he seeks an opportunity of entering the Princess's boudoir, where he confesses his love and begs her to respond. Tatiana is strongly tempted, for her love for him has not altered, in spite of her pretended coldness; but she has a deep regard and respect for her husband, and she firmly declares that she will not forsake him. Finally Onegin's passionate outpourings and entreaties are more than she can bear, and again utterly refusing to accept his love, she rushes away. Onegin is in despair on thus realising that the love he craves for, and which was once so generously offered to him, and which he then despised, is now lost to him for ever; and as the curtain falls he shoots himself.

171. AÏDA

Opera in Four Acts Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto Antonio Ghislanzoni

First Produced Cairo, December, 1871

Chief Characters Aïda, Amneris, Radames, Amonasro (King of Ethiopia), Ramphis (High Priest of Isis), The King of Egypt

THE scene is laid in Memphis and Thebes in the time of the Pharaohs. Aïda, daughter of Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, has fallen into the hands of the Egyptians, and is given as a slave to Amneris, the proud Princess of Egypt. She attracts the attention of the young military commander, Radames, who falls in love with her, and whose affection she returns. Amneris also has conceived a violent passion for Radames, who, however, only treats her with cold respect; and she becomes jealous of Aïda when she suspects that he loves the new slave. Radames heads a campaign against the Ethiopians, who are vanquished, and amongst the captives brought to Memphis is Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, who passes himself off as a plain officer. Radames, on his return, is received with acclamation; and the King of Egypt as a reward, bestows upon him the hand of his daughter, Amneris. Radames, however, has thought for no one but Aïda, whom he meets secretly at night and Amonasro, being allowed considerable liberty and discovering the love of his daughter for the young commander, persuades her to get information from him as to the plan of war, which he hopes to find means to despatch to his own general. Ramphis the High Priest of Isis, overhears this conversation between the lovers; and, issuing forth with his guards, he arrests Radames, who is now accused of high treason, and condemned to death by being buried alive in a tomb beneath the temple of the god Ptah. Amneris, in her mad jealousy, has also joined in the denunciation of Radames; but now eager to save his life, she offers to secure his pardon if he will wed with her and renounce Aïda. Radames refuses to give up his beloved one; and, consequently, he is compelled to face his awful doom. As he is walled up in the tomb, however, he finds the faithful Aïda at his side; for she has crept within, unnoticed, preferring to die with him rather than live on without his love. The lovers, therefore, calmly await death in each other's arms; whilst Amneris, now full of remorse, sinks heartbroken beside the tomb.

172. DON CARLOS

Opera in Four Acts By Guiseppe Verdi

Libretto By Méry and Du Locle

First Produced Paris, 1867

Chief Characters Elizabeth of Valois, Princess Eboli, Don Carlos, King Philip of Spain, Marquis de Posa, The Grand Inquisitor

THE scene is laid in Spain during the sixteenth century. Don Carlos, the Crown Prince of Spain, has conceived an unfortunate passion for his stepmother, the beautiful young Elizabeth of Valois; but he is advised by the Chief Minister, the Marquis de Posa, to withdraw from temptation and engage in a special mission to Flanders, since his father, the cruel, ambitious King Philip II, already suspects the attachment between the two, and is jealous, having always treated his son harshly. Carlos, though securing an interview with the Queen—who returns his love and also begs him to depart on the mission for safety's sake—puts off the evil day; and in Act 2 he unfortunately betrays his unhappy passion to the Princess Eboli, whom, at a garden fête, he mistakes for the Queen. The Princess herself is in love with Carlos; but, now seeing that she is nothing to him, she determines to be revenged for her slighted affection, and hands over to the King a miniature of Carlos, which the Queen cherishes as a keepsake, and of which she manages to get possession. The King, now more jealous than ever of his son, seeks to bring him into trouble with the Inquisition, when, on Carlos passionately protesting against an *auto-da-fé* of heretics, he is denounced as a traitor. The Grand Inquisitor, however, seeing the influence which is exerted over the young Prince by Posa, demands the latter's life instead; and the King has to consent to the death of his favourite Minister. Meanwhile, Elizabeth is accused of infidelity by the jealous King; but her innocency is proved by the Princess Eboli, who, now filled with remorse for her betrayal of the gentle Queen, confesses her misdeed, and is dismissed from Court. Posa is not put to death at once, and he now obtains the release of Carlos by making the King believe that he himself committed the deeds of which the young Prince is accused. Posa is shot by one of the guards, and the King pardons his son, whose release is loudly acclaimed by the people. In the final scene, the Queen meets Carlos once more in a convent, to bid him a last farewell; and here the King, suspecting that they are still lovers, follows them in company with the Grand Inquisitor, to whom he again accuses his son of rebellion against the Church and State. Carlos is therefore borne away to face the awful Inquisition, from the dread condemnation of which there is no escape; and the unhappy Queen is left in despair.

173. ERNANI

Opera in Four Acts By Guiseppe Verdi

Libretto By Piave (Adapted from Victor Hugos Drama)

First Produced Venice, March, 1844

Chief Characters Elvira, Ernani, Don Carlos (King of Spain), Don Gomez de Silva

THE scene is laid in Arragon during the early part of the sixteenth century. Ernani, an exiled Castilian Duke, has become a bandit, and has won the love of Lady Elvira, niece of Don Gomez, a Gofandee of Spain, who, though advancing in years, intends to marry her, and has forced her into a betrothal. Ernani disguises himself, and gains entrance into the castle of De Silva, having formed

a plan to elope with the willing Elvira; but, on the unexpected arrival of Don Carlos, the newly-ascended King of Spain, he hides in an adjoining cupboard. Don Carlos, being young and dashing, has been greatly attracted by the beauty of Elvira, and has now come to make love to her, endeavouring to carry her away by force. Elvira calls for help, upon which Ernani comes forth to her assistance; and, at the same time, De Silva enters, and furiously challenges both intruders, but, finding one of them to be the King, he humbly asks forgiveness, which is readily granted. The King banishes Ernani on a distant mission, and they both depart from the Castle; and then De Silva makes arrangements for his early marriage with Elvira, in spite of her protestations. Just as the ceremony is about to take place, however, Ernani returns in the disguise of a pilgrim; and, thinking Elvira false to him, he reveals himself, and demands that De Silva shall give him up to the King, since he no longer desires to live. De Silva, however, declares himself bound by the laws of hospitality not to betray a guest; and, when the King at this moment is heard clamouring for admittance, he conceals the bandit in a secret cupboard, though he vows to be revenged upon him later when he surprises the lovers in each others arms, Elvira having found an opportunity of explaining how she had been forced to agree to her uncles plans. When the King enters and demands Ernani to be given up to him, having learned that he has been seen there in the disguise of a pilgrim, De Silva, proudly determined to adhere to the ancient laws of hospitality, refuses to reveal the bandits hiding-place; and he even goes so far as to give Elvira into the hands of Don Carlos as a hostage for the safe delive ring up of her lover later on. When the King has departed with Elvira, De Silva brings forth Ernani, and informs him that the Kihg also is his rival. The pair, having now a common cause against Don Carlos, determine to join their forces, and gather the nobles together in a conspiracy against the newly-ascended monarch; but upon De Silva declaring that Ernani's life is still forfeited to him, the latter agrees to kill himself at any time his death shall be demanded, and gives De Silva a horn to sound whenever he desires him to carry out his promise. In the third act Don Carlos, knowing that the conspirators are to meet in the Catacombs, hides himself behind the tomb of Charlemagne, and hears their plans; and then, stepping forth, as he is joined by his own party, he condemns them to death, but afterwards magnanimously pardons them all. During his vigil in the vaults he has made the resolution to renounce his youthful follies; and he now presents Elvira to Ernani, and gives them permission to marry, at the same time creating the bridegroom a Duke. In the last act, therefore, Ernani and Elvira are seen celebrating their nuptials; but, just as the guests have departed, and they are rejoicing in their happiness, the weird sound of a hunting-horn is heard, and De Silva appears to claim the fulfilment of Ernani's promise to yield up his life when called upon to do so. Though full of grief and disappointment, Ernani faces this terrible blow calmly, too proud either to plead for mercy, or to seek escape from the keeping of a sacred promise; and, seizing the dagger offered by the inexorable De Silva, he stabs himself in the heart, and expires, as Elvira falls senseless beside him.

174 - FALSTAFF

Opera in Three Acts By Guiseppe Verdi

Libretto By Arrigo Boito (Adapted from Shakespeare's Comedy "The Merry Wives of Windsor")

First Produced Milan, March, 1893

Chief Characters Mistress Ford, Mistress Page, Nannetta, Mistress Quickly, Falstaff, Fenton, Ford, Dr Caius, Bardolph, Pistol

THE story is based on Shakespeares Comedy and follows on very similar lines to the libretto of Nicolais " Merry Wives of Windsor," with some slight alterations in the names and action - Anne Page in this version appearing as Nannetta, and being represented as the daughter of Ford.

Act 1 takes place in the Inn at Windsor, where Falstaff treats with merriment the complaints of Dr Caius relating to the tricks played on him by the fat Knights rascally followers, Bardolph and Pistol. Falstaff then sends the famous duplicate love-letters to the Merry Wives, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, who, on receiving them, are very indignant, and arrange their amusing plot to make a laughing-stock of their old admirer, and to bring on him the righteous wrath of the jealous Ford. A side plot is also unfolded here, relating to Nannetta, who, though desired by her parents to accept as a suitor old Dr Caius, is in love with a handsome but poorer lover, Fenton, and determines to marry the latter at all costs.

Act 2 is taken up with the reception by the lively dames of their elderly would-be lover, Falstaff, his concealment in the washing-basket on the approach of the jealous husband, and his subsequent sousing in the river Thames.

In Act 3 the Merry Wives send a further invitation to the jolly old Knight by the hands of Dame Quickly, who entices him to meet the ladies in Windsor Forest, where they have arranged a Masque for the better carrying-out of their plot for his undoing. Falstaff accepts the invitation, and arrives at the rendezvous in the disguise of Herne the Hunter; and here he is assailed by the colleagues of the Merry Wives, who, in the guise of gnats, wasps, fairies and gnomes, tease, and pinch, and plague him until he roars for mercy. Finally, having played out the farce, and punished him well for his ridiculous impudence in posing as the lover of two respectable dames, the ladies desist, and explanations and mutual pardons follow. Also, the dainty and clever Nannetta has during the Masque succeeded in eluding her elderly and undesired admirer, Dr Caius, and, joining her lover, Fenton, she is united to him.

175. THE MASKED BALL

Opera in Three Acts By Guiseppe Verdi

Libretto By M. Somma

First Produced Rome, February, 1849

Chief Characters Adelia, Ulrica, Riccardo, Renato, Edgar

THE scene is laid in Boston, Massachusetts, during the Colonial Period. Riccardo, Earl of Warwick and Governor of Boston, has fallen in love with Adelia, the beautiful young wife of his Creole Secretary, Renato, who is unaware of this state of affairs. Adelia returns the love of the Governor ; but, full of dismay at the guilty passion she has conceived, she seeks the aid of Ulrica a fortune-teller, who bids her gather a certain herb at midnight in a desolate spot. Riccardo overhears this, having also visited the gipsy in disguise in order to learn his own fate, in spite of the warnings of Renato that a serious conspiracy against his life is afoot; and he determines to follow her. The gipsy also prophesies that the governor will shortly be assassinated by the next person who touches his hand; and it is Renato who, unwittingly, takes his hand on coming to seek

him. Adelia, on searching for the magic herb at midnight, is joined by Riccardo, who declares his love for her; and here they are interrupted by Renato, who bids his master fly from the conspirators, who are on his track. Adelia is closely veiled, and Renato takes her in charge, unaware of her identity. They meet the conspirators, who taunt Renato; and Adelia, on coming to his assistance, reveals the fact that she is his wife. Renato, furious at Riccardos betrayal of their friendship, now joins the conspirators; and when they later on draw lots for the assassination of the Governor, he draws the winning number. Adelia, though not admitted to her husbands confidence, suspects danger, and sends a message to Riccardo, entreating him not to attend the masked ball at the palace, at which he had intended to preside. Riccardo, however, has now determined to cut himself off from all further temptation by giving Renato a high commission in England, whither he may retire with his wife; and, in spite of Adelias warning, he decides to attend the ball, in order to place the commission in his secretarys hands at once. Renato, learning fromn a page, Edgar, of the disguise which Riccardo has adopted, tracks him to the spot where he has just met with Adelia, who, anxious for his safety, is begging him to depart, whilst he is taking a last farewell of her; and, full of jealous rage at the sight of the pair, he stabs his master in the back. As Riccardo falls dying, he declares to Renato that Adelia is innocent, and that they were even then parting for ever; and, having also handed him his new commission, he falls back, dead.

176. OTHELLO

Opera in Four Acts By Guiseppe Verdi

Libretto By, Arrigo Boito (Adapted from Shakespeare s Tragedy)

First Produced Milan, February, 1887

Chief Characters Desdemona, Emilia, Othello, Iago, Cassio, Roderigo

THE story follows very closely that of the great Shakespearean drama,. especially in the finale.

Act 1 opens in Cyprus, with the landing of Othello, the Moor of Venice, after his victory over the Turks. Iago, his Ancient, or General, a cross-grained evil pessimist, refusing to believe in any human goodness or fidelity, soon changes the happiness of his chief into woe. He begins by leading Cassio, a young captain, into excesses which lead to his disgrace and loss of office; and then he determines to undermine Othellos perfect joy and faith in his pure and beautiful wife, Desdemona. He sends Cassio to the gentle lady, to beg her to plead for him with her husband; and then he brings Othello to look on at their interview, and by cunning insinuations sows the first seeds of jealousy in the Moors heart. When Desdemona, therefore, pleads for Cassio, he angrily refuses her request; and upon her dropping a lace handkerchief, with which she had endeavoured to cool her lords heated brow, Iago picks it up and makes use of it to further his evil designs by telling Othello that he found it in the possession of Cassio, whom he also declares often murmurs the name of " Desdemona " in his sleep. He fans the flame of Othellos jealousy still further by causing him to overhear a conversation between Cassio and himself, in which the former speaks of his own lady-love, Bianca, in affectionate terms; and by letting Othello believe that it is Desdemona of whom they have been speaking his cruel object of wrecking the domestic happiness of his general is accomplished. Othello is now madly jealous of his gentle wife, who is filled with grief on seeing his - to her, unaccountable - change of manner. In the last act Desdemona, in her chamber, talks of the matter sadly with her waitinglady, Emilia, the wife of Jago; but after a

fervent prayer for the return of her husband's love she retires to rest. When she is asleep, Othello, goaded to the deed by Iago, comes into the room with intent to destroy her; and after awakening her with a kiss, he passionately accuses her of infidelity with Cassio. The unhappy Desdemona in vain protests her innocence; for the Moor is beside himself with jealous passion, and seizing the cushions and bedclothes, he smothers the wife whom he loves so dearly that the thought of her supposed infidelity is more than he can tolerate. Emilia entering, and beholding the dreadful deed which has been done, shrieks for help; and when several officials and lords enter with Iago, she discovers the perfidy of her husband, and revealing to Othello the fact that he has been deceived, is slain by her furious husband for her boldness. In despair at having thus been enticed into slaying the sweet innocent wife he loved so well, the Moor seizes his dagger, and, stabbing himself, falls dead at the feet of the cruelly wronged Desdemona.

177. RIGOLETTO

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto By Piave (Adapted from Victor Hugo's Tragedy "Le Roi s'Amuse")

First Produced Venice, March, 1851

Chief Characters Gilda, Maddalena, Rigoletto, Duke of Mantua, Count Monterone, Count Ceprano, Sparafucile

THE scene is laid in Mantua, where the gay, licentious young Duke of Mantua lives a life of great extravagance and frivolity. In all his love intrigues he is assisted by his jester, Rigoletto, a dissolute and unscrupulous hunchback; and in the opening scene, the Count Monterone appears at Court to demand the restoration of his daughter, the Countess Ceprano, who is the latest victim of the vicious young Duke, who treats him with tyrannical insolence and orders him to be conveyed to the dungeons. Rigoletto callously makes fun of the outraged father; but he is terrified when the latter utters a deadly curse upon him as he is being led away. Even the gay courtiers hate Rigoletto, since he has assisted in bringing dis-honour on many of their families; and having learnt that he visits a mysterious and beautiful maiden, they hatch a plot to steal her away, and actually entice the Jester to help in the abduction by leading him to suppose it is the wife of Count Ceprano whom they are seizing. This unknown maiden is in reality Rigoletto's daughter, Gilda, whom he loves passionately and has kept hidden safely, as he thinks, from the sight of his covetous royal master; but, unknown to the Jester, the Duke has seen Gilda at Church, and, in the disguise of a student, he has already made love to her and gained her affections in return, frequently visiting her in secret. Rigoletto, unaware of the plot against him, assists in the proposed abduction, allowing himself to be led blindfold to his own house, against the walls of which he holds the ladder, whilst his companions bring out the fainting Gilda, and dash off with her to the Palace, leaving him behind. As he snatches away the handkerchief from his eyes, and, seeing where he is, realises that his beloved and innocent daughter has been conveyed with his connivance to the chamber of his infamous master, he becomes nearly mad with rage and grief; and he rushes to the palace, wildly demanding the restoration of his daughter, only to meet with laughter and scorn, such as he has himself so often meted out to like sufferers. Finally, Gilda escapes from the Duke's room and returns to her father, whose entreaties, however, are powerless to keep her from still thinking kindly of her royal sweetheart, whom she loves passionately, in spite of the deception he has practised upon her. Rigoletto now determines to be revenged upon the ravisher of his daughter,

and he bribes Sparafucile, a bravo, to murder the Duke on his next visit to a certain lonely inn. Sparafucile's sister, Maddalena, however, loves the Duke, who has also paid her attention; and when he retires for the night, she begs her brother to spare his life. Sparafucile agrees to do so, if any other stranger shall arrive, whom he may murder instead and pass his dead body off as that of the Duke when Rigoletto comes for the sack into which it is to be placed. Meanwhile, Rigoletto brings Gilda, disguised as a page, to the outside of the inn, bidding her listen at the keyhole to the tender speeches made by her faithless lover to the pretty Maddalena; but Gilda, in spite of this proof of his perfidy, still loves the Duke, and refuses to leave the spot, though her father desires to send her to another city for safety. When Rigoletto retires for a short time, she listens again, and overhearing the plot to murder the Duke, who has now gone to the chamber upstairs, she determines to save him. She therefore boldly knocks at the door of the inn; and Sparafucile, on opening it and seeing as he supposes a youth outside, he stabs the new-comer on entering. He then places the still body of the stranger in a sack, which he hands over to Rigoletto when the hunchback presently appears and demands his victim. Rigoletto drags the sack to the river side, and is about to cast it into the water, when he hears the voice of the Duke singing gaily as he walks by in the distance with Maddalena; and furious at the deception which has been played upon him, he tears open the sack, and is horrified on beholding the pale features of his beloved daughter, who recovers for a few moments, and then expires in his arms. Overcome with grief and dismay at this dreadful fulfilment of Monterone's curse, the despairing hunchback falls senseless beside the corpse of his murdered child.

178. LA TRAVIATA

Opera in Three Acts By Giuseppe Verdi

Libretto By Piave (Adapted from Dumas "Dame Aux Camélias")

First Produced Venice, March, 1853

Chief Characters Violetta Valéry, Flora Bervoix, Annina, Alfred Germont, The Elder Germont, Baron Duphol

THE scene is laid in Paris, and the first act takes place in the house of the beautiful courtesan, Violetta Valéry, who, although she knows herself to be the victim of the fatal disease of consumption, and has not long to live, yet determines to indulge in every possible pleasure. Amongst the guests enjoying her hospitality is Alfred Germont, a young man of good family, from Provence, who loves her passionately; and Violetta, loving him also, determines to give up her present life, and retires with him to her country house, where they spend a long time together in deep happiness. During the absence of Alfred one day, however, his father arrives, and entreats the courtesan to renounce his son, since her connection with him will bring disgrace on their family, and already prevents his sister from making a suitable alliance; and Violetta is so overcome by the evident distress of the elder Germont that she gives him the promise he requires, and, leaving a letter of farewell to her lover, she returns to Paris and tries to drown her grief in the excitements of her old life.

In Act 2 Alfred follows her to the house of her friend, Flora Bervoix, who is holding a ball; and seeing her accepting the attentions of Baron Duphol, a former admirer, he is furious, and thinking this to be the real reason for her desertion of him he insults her openly before all the guests, and is

challenged by his rival.

In Act 3 Violetta is seen in a dying state, awaiting the arrival of Alfred, who, having now heard of the sacrifice she has made for him, is gladly returning to her once more, having received permission from his father to make her his wife. When he arrives, however, he sees that she is dying, and is filled with the utmost grief; and Violetta herself begs the doctor to save her a little longer to enjoy the happiness now offered to her. But when she realises that there is no hope for her, she gathers her courage together, and, bidding a tender farewell to her lover, quietly expires in his arms.

179. IL TROVATORE; OR, "THE GIPSY'S VENGEANCE"

Opera in Four Acts By Guiseppe Verdi

Libretto By Cammarano

First Produced Rome, January, 1853

Chief Characters Leonora, Azucena, Manrico, Count Luna, Ferrando, Ruiz

THE scene is laid in Biscay and Arragon during the Middle Ages. The Count di Lunas infant son having fallen ill with some childish complaint is believed to have been bewitched by an old gipsy-woman, who has been seen hovering around the castle, and who is consequently seized and burnt at the stake as a sorceress. Her daughter, Azucena, full of frantic grief at her mothers fate, is determined to be revenged. She therefore makes her way to the castle at once, and steals away the sick child, whom she casts into the still-burning fire which has consumed the gipsy; but, too late, she discovers to her horror that, in the confusion and blind passion of the moment, she has thrown her own infant into the flames by mis-take, and that the Counts child is still alive. She still cherishes her desire for vengeance; but she now clings to the strange child, and has him brought up as her own son, no one else knowing of his true birth. He is named Manrico; and as he grows up he goes to the wars, and distinguishes himself by his bravery. At the opening of the opera he has just won the chief honours at a grand tournament, where he is crowned the victor by the beautiful young Countess Leonora. The pair fall mutually in love and Manrico afterwards visits Leonora several times, disguised as a troubadour, whose serenades are the introduction to many stolen love-meetings. Leonora also has another suitor, the reigning Count di Luna, who is in reality Manricos elder brother, and who, little dreaming of their relationship, is filled with a violent jealousy against his rival, and treats him with deadly enmity. The Count appears on the scene during one of the lovers twilight meetings; and when Leonora firmly announces her love and preference for Manrico, he challenges the latter to fight. Manrico is wounded; but, in the end, he gains the advantage over the Count, whose life, however, he spares. Azucena seeks out Manrico, and takes him to the gipsy encampment in the mountains, where she nurses him back to health; and here, in Act 2, he learns that Leonora, having heard a report of her lovers death, is, in despair, about to enter a convent. He at once hurries to the convent, where he is just in time to save Leonora from falling into the hands of Count di Luna, who has planned to kidnap her. The lovers take refuge in the Castle of Castellar, which Manrico s troops are at the time defending against an opposing party headed by the Count di Luna. The latter succeeds in storming the castle, and Manrico is taken

prisoner and thrust into a dungeon to await execution. Azucena, seeking him, is taken as a spy; and being recognised by the Counts attendant, Ferrando, as the daughter of the burnt gipsy, she is doomed also to the stake, and is imprisoned with Manrico. Leonora, who has been set at liberty, visits the outside of the castle at night, and by singing a sweet and passionate love-song, she discovers that her lover is still within and alive, since he answers her also in song. She now seeks an interview with Count di Luna, and entreats him to spare her lover's life; and this he agrees to do, if, in return, she will promise to become his bride. In despair, Leonora agrees to the terms, and Luna bids her go and set her lover free; but on the way she swallows some poison, in order to escape marriage with the Count. Manrico receives her with open arms; but, soon guessing the terms upon which his liberty has been secured, he repulses her. As she falls dying, however, he discovers her sacrifice; and, with a few tender words of farewell, she breathes her last in his arms. The Count now enters; and, furious at being thus balked of his desire, he orders Manrico to be instantly beheaded, forcing the grief-stricken Azucena to witness the execution of the man he believes to be her son. His vengeful exultation, however, is quickly changed to utmost horror, when Azucena now reveals the fact that it is his own long-lost brother whom he has thus brought to an untimely death. Her own long-desired vengeance being thus accomplished, the gipsy falls lifeless at the feet of the remorseful and grief-stricken Count.

180. THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Richard Wagner

Libretto By the Composer (Adapted from Heine's version of "The Flying Dutchman" Legend)

First Produced Dresden, January, 1843

Chief Characters Senta, Mary, The Flying Dutchman, Daland, Erik

THE scene is laid in Norway and deals with the famous legend of "The Flying Dutchman," a Dutch sea-captain who, having sworn that he would double the Cape of Good Hope during the progress of a wild gale, is overheard by the Devil, who condemns him to furiously sail the seas for ever, unless he can find a maiden who will love him faithfully unto death, when the spell will be broken. Once in every seven years he is allowed to go on shore, to seek a maiden who will be true to him; but although he has suffered his penalty for many ages he has not yet found the faithful love he seeks.

In Act 1, another seven years having just elapsed, he brings his enchanted vessel into a bay on the coast of Norway, where he meets with Daland, a Norwegian captain, whom he greets; and on learning that Daland has a fair daughter he begs to be permitted to woo her, offering immense treasures for the privilege. Daland agrees; and the pair set out for the latter's home.

Act 2 takes place in the house of Daland, whose daughter, Senta, sits spinning with her maidens and her old nurse, Mary. Senta is a dreamy, romantic girl, and has been strangely attracted by the well-known story of "The Flying Dutchman," for whose sad fate she has great pity, and whose image appears to her in her dreams. She has another suitor, Erik the Huntsman; but she does not return his affection with much fervour, having already conceived a secret love for the sad wanderer, whose fate haunts her sleeping and waking thoughts. When, therefore, her father presently enters with the stranger, she at once recognises him as the hero of her dreams, though his

identity is not as yet known to the others; and when he, equally attracted by her sweet and pure beauty, woos her, she eagerly responds, and the pair are betrothed. Erik, however, is very distrustful of the stranger; for mysterious phenomena take place upon the phantom ship, the crew of which reveal their demoniac origin by indulging in eldritch laughter, and by the sudden electrical illuminations in which their vessel is at times enveloped. He therefore endeavours to persuade Senta to renounce the stranger who has enthralled her, and to accept his own love instead; and when she still declares that her heart is entirely given to her unknown suitor, he angrily reproaches her with unfaithfulness to him, since he has regarded her as his sweetheart from early childhood. The Dutchman overhears this conversation, and is filled with despair, thinking that if Senta has deserted one lover, she will also forsake him, and his cruel fate will thus remain unchanged. He therefore rushes off to his vessel like one distraught and forsaken; and Senta, imploring him to remain, and passionately assuring him that her love has always been his alone, flies after him, but is caught and held back by Erik, whose calls for help quickly bring others on the scene. The Dutchman now stops and reveals his true identity to the astonished and horrified bystanders; and then, hastening on board his vessel, he bids Senta a tender farewell and sets sail. Senta, however, is determined to link her fate with the doomed man, whose image has been in her heart since childhood, and to save him from his dreadful fate, even at the sacrifice of her own life; and breaking away from the detaining arms of Erick, she hastens to the edge of the cliff and casts herself into the sea, calling upon her beloved hero. By her loving sacrifice and true proof of faithfulness until death, the magic spell is broken; and the phantom ship immediately sinks beneath the waves. Then, as the awed bystanders still gaze at the seething whirlpool, they behold the revived forms of Senta and the Flying Dutchman, folded in each others arms, rising from the sea, and soaring upwards into the heavens.

181. LOHENGRIN

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Richard Wagner

Libretto By the Composer (Adapted from an old German Legend)

First Produced Weimar, August, 1850

Chief Characters Elsa, Ortrud, Lohengrin, Teiramund, Henry the Fowler (King of Germany)

THE scene is laid in Brabant during the early days of chivalry, when King Arthur and his Knights flourished. Henry the Fowler, King of Germany, on arriving in Antwerp, finds the State in great disorder, and on the verge of rebellion. The Duke having recently died, and his young son, Gottfried, having mysteriously disappeared, the dukedom is claimed by Frederick Telramund, through the direct descent of his wife, Ortrud; and he now accuses Elsa, the sister of Gottfried, of having murdered her brother, in order that she might win the crown for herself. The royal maiden is therefore summoned before the King, to be tried by the ordeal of single combat, and is bidden to name a champion to fight for her. The innocent Elsa enthusiastically declares that she has seen a noble and glorious Knight in her dreams, whom she already loves; and as she calls upon him to champion her cause a skiff appears, drawn by a swan, in which stands a Knight in shining silver armour, who announces that he is ready to do battle for her. This stranger is the pure and stainless Knight, Lohengrin, who, however, makes Elsa promise never to ask him to divulge his name or origin, or he will be compelled to leave her, since he is bound by a vow to conceal his identity; and having obtained her promise, the pair are betrothed. The Knight of the Swan then engages with the

scheming Telramund, whom he defeats, and who is consequently disgraced and sent to wander forth with his wife, Ortrud, who is his evil genius and a secret sorceress, who is determined to get back their lost power.

In Act 2 the disgraced pair appear outside the palace, where Ortrud cunningly succeeds in attracting the attention of Elsa and gaining her sympathy for their fallen state; and the gentle maiden promises to obtain pardon for Telramund, and takes Ortrud into her train once more. The sorceress now proceeds to put doubts of her betrothed's good faith into Elsa's mind, and to insinuate that he must be bad if he will not reveal his identity; and Elsa, though passionately loving the noble Knight, is made so uneasy by these cruel and jealous suggestions, that she determines to have her doubts and curiosity set at rest.

In Act 3, therefore, after the wedding ceremony is over and the bride and bridegroom have been conducted to their nuptial chamber, Elsa, unable to restrain her feelings longer, the seeds of doubt and suspicion sown by the crafty Ortrud having taken complete possession of her, now beseeches her husband to reveal himself to her. Full of grief at her distrust, Lohengrin begs her to desist from questioning him; but Elsa, losing all control of herself, declares she is unsatisfied, and finally passionately demands to be told his name and origin. At this moment Telramund breaks into the room with some of his followers, in an attempt to murder the stranger Knight, against whom he has such a bitter grudge; but Lohengrin, with a single blow of his sword, stretches the assassin dead at his feet. Then, as the commotion brings in the attendants, he gives the fainting Elsa into their charge, announcing that he will declare his identity before the King and his lords on the morrow. The last scene takes place on the banks of the Scheldt, where, in the presence of the King and Court, the stranger Knight declares that, compelled by the rash demands of Elsa, he is bound to reveal himself; and he announces that he is Lohengrin, the son of Parsifal, and a Knight of the Holy Grail, whose Knights are only permitted to be absent on good works so long as they remain unknown, and having revealed his identity he is now compelled to return to his holy companions. He takes a sorrowful farewell of Elsa, and is about to sail away, when the triumphant Ortrud hastens forward and declares that the swan is the young Prince Gottfried, whom she had herself thus transformed by means of her sorcery, and who would have regained his human form now had Elsa not yielded to distrust of the noble Knight he served. Lohengrin, however, hears her words; and by his own heaven-given powers, he disenchant's the swan, and presents the transformed prince to his weeping sister. A white dove now flutters down to draw the skiff; and as Elsa beholds the dazzling Knight sailing out of her sight, she is filled with such grief and despair that she falls lifeless into her brother's arms as the curtain descends.

182. THE MASTER-SINGERS OF NUREMBERG

Opera Comique in Three Acts By Richard Wagner

Libretto By the Composer

First Produced Munich, June, 1868

Chief Characters Eva, Magdalena, Hans Sachs, Walther von Stolzing, Beckmesser, David Pogner

THIS opera was intended by Wagner as a humorous and satirical protest against the critics of his time, who, hidebound by the old conventional forms of opera, were only too ready to kick against

the unaccustomed and original methods of Music Drama as developed by this great master; and in the story it unfolds, the character of the narrow-minded, pedantic Beckmesser stands for the shocked and outraged adherents of the old school, whilst the nature-loving free-souled Walther stands for the new school represented by Wagner himself. The scene is laid in Nuremberg during the seventeenth century, where the famous and historical Master-singers are still a great power. In order to become a Master-singer countless pedantic and pettifogging rules had to be learned and observed; and the restrictions on free composition were so great that the candidates could not boast of much originality in their work. During their examination a marker would chalk up every fault and slip against the established rules; and seven such marks prevented the candidate from being admitted to the honoured ranks of the Master-singers.

In Act 1 Walther von Stolzing, a gallant and noble young Knight, having fallen in love with Eva, the beautiful daughter of the rich goldsmith Pogner, desires to wed her; but upon the maiden, who returns his love, declaring that her father has already offered her hand as a prize to the winner in the contest of Master-singers to be held on the Festival of St John, the handsome stranger resolves to enter the competition, since he is a sweet singer, and a true lover of poetry and music. To this end he seeks information as to the Master-singers methods and rules from Pogner's apprentice, David, who, however, is a giddy youth, and endeavours to scare him with exaggerated descriptions of the difficulties to be overcome, and who finally rushes off to engage in a frolic with Magdalena, his sweetheart, who is Eva's attendant. Walther nevertheless boldly presents himself for examination before the Master-singers, who are, however, so greatly shocked by his utter disregard of their miserable petty rules and restrictions, and so offended by his heated defence of the free and natural methods he has studied in the secluded woods and dells, that they raise a chorus of indignation against him. Beckmesser, the pedantic marker, has also scored against the daring candidate such countless black marks that he is declared to be ignominiously outshone; and the only person who defends and believes in him is Hans Sachs, the shoemaker, a large-hearted, broad-minded man, who recognises the true musician in the despised candidate, and determines that he shall yet secure the prize. The pretty Eva he loves as his own child; and knowing of her love for Walther, he is eager for her happiness to be consummated. He therefore sets to work to instruct Walther in the more correct forms of true poetry, and is again delighted at the aptitude and excellent singing of his gifted pupil, for whom he arranges a beautiful theme for his prize song on the morrow. He also takes the opportunity of teasing the conceited marker, Beckmesser, who comes to serenade Eva, whose hand he feels confident of gaining, since he fully expects to be the winner of the contest; and later on, Beckmesser, seeing the poem on Hans Sachs' table, and considering it better than the one he has composed himself, takes it away, and determines to make use of it. Walther, however, has already mastered the useful hints given him by the benevolent Sachs, and has developed his prize song into a most noble composition; and in the last scene, at the contest on the Festival of St John, he appears in shining armour, full of enthusiasm, and ready for his trial. Beckmesser, however, in spite of his former conceit and confidence, gives a most wretched performance, and is obliged to retire, crestfallen; but when Walther's noble song rings forth, he is listened to with awe and rapt wonder, and as the people revel in the exquisite music he makes, they at last recognise his genius, and, to the joy of Hans Sachs and Eva, they greet him at the finish with enthusiastic acclamations of delight. Thus true art and freedom of thought triumph over convention and pedantry; and Walther, who but a short time since had been refused admittance to the ranks of Master-singers, is now awarded the much-coveted Festival prize - the hand of his beloved Eva.

183. PARSIFAL

Sacred Festival Music-Drama in Three Acts By Richard Wagner

Libretto By the Composer (The Poem, based on the famous Grail Legend)

First Produced Baireuth, July 22nd, 1882

Chief Characters Kundry, Parsifal, Gurmanez, Amfortas, Klingsor

It will be plain to all that the story of " Parsifal "is an allegory, and that the incidents and characters of the piece are symbolic of human development, of the conquest of Good over Evil, and of the revived spirit soaring triumphant above the baser instincts that struggle to draw it back. Amfortas represents suffering and guilty humanity. The body of humanity, grievously wounded by the throbbing, burning poison of sin, can only be healed by the restoration of the Genius of Good, which is symbolised by the Spear, which has obtained mastery over the powers of Evil. Klingsor represents everything opposed to Good, being the mainspring and source of all evil. Kundry, the instrument subject to the power of the instigator of ill, signifies the temptations that beset the seeker after Truth-the evil moral law, which the pilgrim can only resist with the strength which is given by purity and faith. Finally, Parsifal himself is typical of the Saviour of the world, the pure and blameless One, the Conqueror of temptation, whose pity and love for wounded, guilty humanity brought salvation to all, and by redemption threw open the way to eternal Life and Love.

THIS noble work was the last and most wonderful composition of the great master, and was the crowning triumph of his life. By means of it Wagner has given us a perfect picture of the real meaning of Christianity, and of the true beauty of the mighty Gift of Love bestowed upon the world by the great Father of all. The outline of the action is as follows : - The Holy Grail, or Chalice, from which our Saviour drank at the Last Supper, and which afterwards received the blood that flowed from His pierced side as he lay on the Cross, has been brought, together with the spear which wounded Him, by angels to Monsalvat, in Northern Spain, where the good King Titirel has built for it a Temple-Sanctuary and Castle, and provided for its service a number of pure and stain-less guardians, known as the Knights of the Holy Grail. The faithful service of the latter brings great reward, for the Holy Grail possesses miraculous powers of healing; and with the sacred spear Titirel keeps at bay the Infidels and all opposed to the Power of Good. But, owing to his declining powers with advancing years, Titirel resigns the kingship to his son, Amfortas; and then great trouble falls upon the Grail guardians, which is explained in the first act. As the curtain rises Gurmanez, one of the chief Knights of the Holy Grail, awaits with his esquires the approach of the wounded King, Amfortas, who is presently brought up the mountain-side on a stretcher, to bathe his wound in a healing spring. He has been wounded by the wicked sorcerer, Klingsor, the greatest enemy of the Holy Grail, who has set up a Palace of Magic, surrounded by an Enchanted Garden of Pleasure, in which dwell lovely sirens, who, by their fascinating wiles, lure the Grail Knights from the paths of honour and duty; and Amfortas, having yielded after a great struggle to Kundry, the most beautiful and enticing of these witch-maidens, the Sorcerer, her master, thereby gains possession of the sacred spear, dealing the fallen Knight a wound which will never heal until the holy relic is once more restored to its ordained guardians. Amfortas, full of repentance and grief for his sin, was rescued and brought back to the Sanctuary, where he has since dwelt in

agony from his unclosed wound; but he has heard in a vision that the only person who can bring back the sacred spear, and thus cure him, is one who is " A Blameless Fool" - one who, simple and pure, shall, from perfect whole-hearted sympathy with the sufferers agony, realise the woes of suffering humanity, and by such loving pity bring redemption. As the opera opens this deliverer is at hand, though not recognised. First the witch-maiden, Kundry, appears, bearing a healing balm which she entreats shall be laid upon the suffering Kings wound; for the siren, though having fallen a slave to the evil sorcerer Klingsor, is at times released from her servitude, and at such seasons endeavours to atone for the sinful deeds by performing acts of kindness to all she comes in contact with, her better nature being ever at war with the evil, which latter is encouraged by her ruthless master. She is under this curse because she mocked the Saviour on the Cross, and she longs passionately for release, which can only be achieved when some man shall be strong enough to resist her seductive temptations. Her present gift to Amfortas fails to bring him relief, for he knows only too well that none but the promised " Guileless Fool " can save him. At this moment exclamations of anger arise from the Knights as one of their sacred swans falls dead, pierced by the shaft of a stranger, whom they drag forward. This is Parsifal, a beautiful youth, who is, however, so simple and ignorant of the world and of the human heart that he does not even know that he has done wrong, since he has never yet experienced the human feeling of pity. Kundry, who has been a world-wanderer, explains that the youth has been brought up in the forest, and has no knowledge of the outside world nor of any woman except his own mother, whom he recently left in order that he might wander forth alone; and on learning from Kundry that his mother has since died of grief at his loss, his heart is stirred for the first time by this, his first grief. Gurmanez, seeing the noble qualities which lie undeveloped in the youth, whom he thinks may perhaps be "The Guileless Fool " who is so eagerly expected, takes him into the Sanctuary to behold the sacred service of revealing the Holy Grail; and here again, on beholding the agonies of the wounded King, who is commanded by his aged father, Titurel, to perform the ceremony, the stranger places his hand with a convulsive movement over his heart, as though filled with an emotion entirely new and strange to him. The holy ceremony of the beautiful Feast of Love, however, makes no impression upon him, nor does he understand the agonies of conscious guilt as expressed by the unhappy sufferer; and Gurmanez, impatient at such seeming stupidity, and deeming him a fool indeed, thrusts him outside once more, knowing that he must first experience the stabs of passion and temptation in himself, and conquer the same, before he can understand and feel sympathy for the woes and sins of others. But Parsifal has already begun to realise his mission in life, and the wish grows up within him to bring healing and relief to the suffering King; and he therefore sets out to storm the stronghold of Klingsors Evil, and to bring back the sacred spear.

In Act 2 he is seen in the Magicians Enchanted Garden of Pleasure, where lovely maidens of enticing beauty use all their endeavours vainly to seduce him. When Kundry appears, however, in a form more beautiful and irresistible than any of the others, and at the command of Klingsor is compelled, against her will, to lure him within her toils, although he resists for long, she at last appears to conquer; but as she bestows on him the first kiss of love he springs to his feet and repulses her. For this kiss has awakened in him world-knowledge, and he realises the great truth of redemption by grace, and understands that, by conquering temptation, he can become worthy of bringing salvation to the stricken King, whose sufferings have awakened such sweet pity within his heart. He therefore now sternly resists the further temptations of Kundry, who calls upon her master for help; but when the enraged Klingsor, recognising in this noble youth the Blameless and

Loving One who shall crush his own evil power utterly, flings the sacred spear at him, it remains hovering in the air. Parsifal at once boldly seizes it, making the Sign of the Cross; and immediately the enchanted palace and gardens are demolished by an earthquake, and Parsifal issues forth triumphant from his temptation. For many years he wanders forth; and then at last, when grown to perfect manhood by suffering and sorrow, he returns to the domain of the Holy Grail, where he is seen in Act 3.

He is gladly greeted by Gurmanez, who tells him that Titurel has just died, and that the power of the Knights is dwindling because the pain-racked Amfortas refuses to perform the sacred rites of the Love Feast and revealing of the Holy Grail - and, deprived of its revivifying nourishment, they have no power. The witch-maiden, Kundry, also appears, having, in her moments of release from the power of Klingsor, devoted herself more lovingly than ever to the service of the Grail Knights, in atonement for her many sins; and she now performs the humble service of washing the feet of the wanderer, Parsifal, who announces that he has at last made himself worthy to bring salvation to the wounded King, and to restore the sacred spear he has wrested from the Sorcerer. His first act as the Bringer of Salvation is to baptise the humble and repentant Kundry, and then the three enter the Sanctuary. Here the wounded Amfortas is found in the extremity of agony; but Parsifal touches his bleeding side with the sacred spear and immediately the wound closes, and the restored King falls on his knees before his preserver, and pours forth a prayer of praise and gratitude for his deliverance. Parsifal now assumes the office of King, which is henceforth his right; and as he performs the ceremony of revealing the Holy Grail a dazzling purple light floods the hall, and a white dove slowly descends and hovers over the head of the rapt Parsifal, whilst the witch-maiden, Kundry, sinks dying to the ground, at last released from the doom of evil by the noble Knight who has been strong enough to resist her wiles. Thus is the sacred spear restored to the Sanctuary of the Holy Grail and salvation brought to its guardians by the "Blameless, Guileless Fool," the true and simple one, whose purity and faith has overcome temptation, and whose pity for the sufferings of others has awakened the real spirit of brotherly love.

184. RIENZI

Opera in Five Acts By Richard Wagner

Libretto By the Composer (Adapted from Bulwer Lyttons Novel)

First Produced Dresden, October. 1842

Chief Characters Irene, Rienzi. Adriano, Colonna, Orsini

THE scene is laid in Rome during the fourteenth century. Rienzi, an ambitious but noble-hearted plebeian, has gained much power amongst the people, and receives encouragement from the Church in his lofty schemes for restoring the ancient power and glory of the Eternal City.

In Act 1 Irene, the fair sister of Rienzi, is insulted by a party of nobles, headed by Orsini and Colonna, but is rescued by the latter's son, Adriano, who is in love with the beautiful girl; and when Rienzi afterwards learns of the (attempted) outrage, he heads a rising of the people against the oppression of the nobles. Adriano, [although his patrician blood inclines him to side with the nobles, cannot resist his love for Irene, and so joins the party of Rienzi, who is at first victorious, overcoming the nobles and forcing them to submit to the authority of the people, over whom he is

himself elected Tribune. The nobles, though at first appearing submissive, are furious at the success of the hated plebeian, whose death they twice try to accomplish by treachery. On one occasion Orsini stabs him in the back; but Rienzi wears a coat of mail, which turns aside the dagger and saves his life. Twice the patrician ringleaders are condemned to death, and at the intervention of Adriano are pardoned; but at length, after several dramatic incidents, success and popular opinion turn against Rienzi, who is filled with grief on beholding his noble schemes for the aggrandisement of the city and the elevation of the people fall to the ground. A report of supposed treachery on his part turns even his own partisans against him; and Adriano now deserts him also. The latter, learning that Rienzi's life is in danger, seeks out Irene and entreats her to leave her fallen brother and accept his own protection and love, since he has the means to save her; but Irene, though strongly tempted by her lover, still passionately loves her brother, and staunchly refuses to leave him in his hour of need, announcing her resolve to remain with him until the last. In the final scene she is shown with Rienzi in the Capitol, whither the defeated Tribune has taken refuge. As the mob storm the place, Rienzi makes a last passionate appeal to them in vindication of his plans for their welfare; but his words are in vain, and the angry people set fire to the Capitol, yelling forth execrations upon the man whom they had but a short time since idolised. Irene and her brother, folded in each others arms, calmly await their fate; and as Adriano beholds the courageous pair he is filled with remorse for his desertion, and, dashing into the midst of the flames, he meets his death with them.

185-188. THE NIBELUNGS RING

[This colossal work was first produced in its entirety on August 13-16th, 1876, at Baireuth, in the theatre which had been specially constructed in accordance with the wishes of the great composer. Though described as a trilogy, "The Ring" is actually in four distinct parts, each of which is given as a separate opera; but the four dramatic poems -which were written by the composer himself and based on the great German myth, "Die Nibelungen Lied" - are, nevertheless, one complete whole, each depending on the other, and forming an exquisite allegory, descriptive of the failure of wealth and power to satisfy the highest aspirations of the human soul, and showing that self-sacrifice and a true and pure love alone make for happiness and the conquest of evil.

The following gives a short outline of the action of the four portions of this noble work.]

PART I. THE RHINEGOLD

Music Drama in Four Acts [By Richard Wagner]

Chief Characters The Rhine Maidens (Woglinde, Wellgunde and Flosshilde). Fricka, Freia, Erda, Alberich, Wotan, Loge, Fasolt, Fafner

IN Act 1 the three Rhine nymphs, Woglinde, Wellgunde and Flosshilde, are seen revelling in the depths of the Rhine, where they guard a treasure of glittering, magic gold, which is displayed upon a rock. They are visited by the gnome, Alberich, whose advances they make light of and treat with contempt. They inform him that whoever can take the gold from the rock and fashion it into a Ring, can, by renouncing Love, gain mighty wealth and magic power. The Nibelung Dwarf is the

symbol of Evil; and in revenge for his contemptuous treatment by the Rhine maidens, he suddenly makes a dash for the rock, and, snatching away the magic gold, departs once more to Nibelheim, leaving the nymphs disconsolate.

In Act 2 Wotan, the father of the gods, is seen with Fricka, his wife, gazing upon the mighty Castle of Refuge, Valhalla, which he has commanded the giants, Fafner and Fasolt, to build for him, having agreed to give them in payment Freia, the Goddess of Youth. When the giants come to claim their reward, however, he endeavours to avoid his contract; but when the cunning builders tell him of Alberich's newfound treasure, and suggest that he shall seize this for their payment instead, he angrily refuses to demean himself by such an act. The giants thereupon snatch Freia, and lead her away; but with her departure the gods immediately begin to grow old and decrepit, since the Golden Apples of Youth are thus removed from their reach. Wotan therefore commands the giants to return Freia, and now promises to secure for them instead the wealth of Alberich; and for this purpose he departs to Nibelheim with Loge, the God of Fire.

Act 3 takes place in the Under-world, where Alberich, having forged his Ring of Power, has gained mastery of the race of gnomes, whom he has compelled to amass for him mighty treasures and wealth. His brother, Mimi, too, he has reduced to slavery, and forced to make him a magic cap, or "Tarnhelm," by means of which he can render himself invisible, and transform himself into the shapes of beasts. Here Wotan and Loge arrive, the latter using his cunning and persuading Alberich to show them the powers of his wonderful "Tarnhelm." The Gnome, flattered by the request, puts on the magic cap, and changes himself into sundry beasts, finally taking on the shape of a toad, in which form he is seized by the two gods, who convey him to the mountain outside Valhalla.

Here, in Act 4, on regaining his rightful form, they compel him to yield up all his treasures, even including the "Tarnhelm" and Magic Ring of Power, as the price of his liberty. Alberich, in his rage, pronounces a deadly curse upon all who shall afterwards possess the Ring, which shall always bring them misery and death. The giants now take possession of the coveted treasure; but Wotan refuses to part with the Ring, until urged to do so by Erda, Goddess of the Earth, who warns him to let it go, since he is already under the curse, and must endeavour to avoid his fate as long as possible. He therefore gives up the Ring to the two giants, who immediately fight for its possession, Fasolt being killed; and Wotan, seeing that the curse is already at work, is filled with gloom until he realises that a great hero, who will spring from a human race of which he will be the father, will eventually slay Fafner, the possessor of the Ring, and so delay his own fate further. Comforted by this thought, he takes Fricka by the hand and leads her into Valhalla, across the rainbow bridge set up by Donner, after a thunderstorm he has sent; and thither they are followed by the rest of the gods, whilst the song of the Rhine-maidens comes up from below, imploring the return of their lost treasure.

PART II. THE VALKYRIE

Music Drama in Three Acts By Richard Wagner

Chief Characters Brünnhilde, Sieglinde, Fricka, Siegmund, Wotan, Hunding

SIEGLINDE and Siegmund are the twin children of Wotan by a mortal amour, and have been separated by misfortune since childhood, having both married in the interval; and in Act 1 they meet again. Siegmund, flying from an enemy, takes refuge during a stormy evening in the hut of another enemy, Hunding, a warrior, whose wife is Sieglinde, from whom the refugee begs refreshment and rest. The pair, not recognising each other, fall in love; and though their guilty passion is noticed by Hunding, he is bound by the sacred laws of hospitality not to harm his guest until morning. During the night, however, Sieglinde, having given her husband a drug to make him sleep heavily, comes down to the waiting Siegmund, who has just pulled out from a tree trunk in the room a mighty sword left here by Wotan when he wooed his mortal spouse, and which he had declared should only be plucked out by his offspring; and the pair thus discover themselves sister and brother and the twin children of Wotan. The passion they have conceived for each other, however, is so overwhelming that they are powerless to resist it; and, folded in a happy embrace, the guilty lovers step forth into the night, full of joy, and regardless of the sin they are committing, and of the wrath of the abandoned husband.

In Act 2 Fricka, who is the goddess and defender of Marriage, has an angry scene with the fickle Wotan for suffering such disregard of her laws; and she forces him to refrain from protecting the runaway, Siegmund-which he is eager to do - and to break the magic sword he carries. Wotan, therefore, reluctantly recalls his favourite Valkyrie, Brünnhilde - one of a race of strong and heroic war-maidens, the children of Wotan, who employs them to bring the corpses of warriors who fall in battle to dwell in glory in Valhalla-whom he had despatched to the assistance of the lovers, who are now flying from the righteous wrath of the pursuing Hunding. Brünnhilde, however, has much pity for the sad plight of the hunted lovers, and is so attracted by the courage of the hero that she disobeys the commands laid upon her; and when Hunding overtakes the pair she helps Siegmund against his enemy. Wotan now appears; and though in sympathy with his disobedient daughter, he is bound by his promise to Fricka to the opposite course, and so joins in the combat, and, breaking the magic sword, he causes the death of Siegmund. Full of grief for the loss of the hero, he continues the fight with the wronged Hunding, and slays him; and then he pursues the disobedient Valkyrie, who has snatched up the exhausted and terrified Sieglinde, and, mounting her horse, has ridden away with her burden.

In Act 3 Brünnhilde meets with a band of her sister Valkyries, and begs their assistance. Finding them afraid to offend the mighty All-Father by so doing, she directs Sieglinde to a place of hiding near the cave of Fafner the giant, who, in the form of a dragon, still guards the Magic Ring; and she tells her that she shall become the mother of a mighty and glorious hero, Siegfried, who shall reforge the broken sword of Siegmund, the pieces of which she gives her. As Sieglinde totters away Brünnhilde awaits courageously the coming of Wotan, and hears his reproaches unflinchingly. As the punishment for her disobedience, the god commands her to lie upon a neighbouring rock in a charmed sleep, to be the prize of any passer-by; but upon Brünnhilde passionately pleading for protection from such indignity, he relents so far as to concede to her a barrier of fire around her resting-place, through which none but the greatest and noblest of heroes would dare to penetrate. Full of gratitude for this concession, which will ensure that she can only be awakened by one worthy of a pure virgins love, the penitent Valkyrie stretches herself upon the rock and falls into a charmed sleep; and, after kissing his beloved child tenderly, Wotan invokes Loge, the God of Fire, at whose command flames spring out on every *side*. The god then departs; and the beautiful Brünnhilde is left sleeping upon the rock, surrounded by the protecting wall of

leaping flames-to be awakened by the unborn hero, Siegfried, in the years to come.

PART III. SIEGFRIED

Music Drama in Three Acts By Richard Wagner

Chief Characters-Brünnhilde, Erda, Siegfried, Wotan (the Wanderer), Mimi, Fafner

IN Act 1 the young hero, Siegfried, is shown in the abode of Mimi, the gnome, who, having found the dying Sieglinde in the forest, has since taken charge of the child whose birth cost the despairing fugitive her life. The youthful Siegfried is young and enthusiastic, and soon proves his superiority over the dwarf, whom he despises and compels to serve him; and, regarding with contempt the weapons made for him by the gnome, he sets to work to forge the broken pieces of his father's magic sword, which Sieglinde had given into the charge of Mimi when dying. On beholding the bright, finished sword, Mimi is filled with fear, the forging of it being a task he has himself many times tried to perform and failed; and, recognising the strong and beautiful youth before him as one destined to be a mighty hero, he is filled with jealousy, and endeavours to think out a plan for his destruction.

In Act 2, therefore, he entices Siegfried into the forest and leads him to the cave of Fafner the giant, who, in the form of a dragon, still guards the Magic Ring and Nibelungs treasures; but the young hero boldly attacks the terrible beast, and slays it with his magic sword, taking possession of the treasures and the Magic Ring. Then, accidentally tasting the dead dragon's blood, he gains the power of understanding the language of the forest birds; and from these feathered friends he learns of Mimi's contemplated treachery. He therefore slays the offending dwarf; and then, hearing from the birds the story of the beautiful Valkyrie who lies sleeping on the fire-encircled rock waiting for a hero to awaken and claim her as his bride, the radiant hero sets forth eagerly to win the prize, being guided to the spot by the singing-birds.

On his way he is intercepted by Wotan, the father of the gods, who has come forth as a wanderer to seek advice from Erda, Goddess of the Earth; and, meeting the dazzling hero and knowing his quest, he seeks to detain him, since the hero's quickly-developing powers and achievements will bring his own approaching fate nearer. Siegfried, however, quickly overcomes the stranger in his path, breaking his opponent's spear with his own magic sword; and the defeated Wotan, realising that his once mighty power has vanished, gloomily retires to Valhalla to await his end, knowing that the Dusk of the Gods is now not far away. Siegfried, exulting in his victory, hastens forward with eager expectation; and on arriving at the fire-encircled rock, he fearlessly dashes through the flames and awakens the beautiful Valkyrie, Brünnhilde, with a kiss. The pair fall in love with each other; and thus the hero woos and wins the dazzling bride who has been kept in a charmed sleep ever since his birth, waiting for him to awaken her to love and joy once more.

PART IV. THE DUSK OF THE GODS

Music Drama in Three Acts By Richard Wagner

Chief Characters Brünnhilde, Gutrune, Valtrauta, Siegfried, Gunther, Hagen, Alberich

IN Act 1 the Three Norns, or Fates, are shown weaving their rope of runes-the Cord of Destiny-which presently breaks, causing the weird sisters to depart with cries of woe, as they realise that the Twilight of the Gods is at hand. As daylight breaks Siegfried comes forth from his rocky bride-chamber and departs to seek fresh adventures. Before going, however, he gives his mighty Ring of Power to Brünnhilde, as the token of his love.

Act 2 takes place in the palace of Gunther, King of the Gibichungs, on the Rhine, whose sister, Gutrune, though betrothed to a neighbouring Prince, desires the love of the hero Siegfried, of whom she has heard. When Siegfried presently appears, therefore, he receives a glad welcome; for Gunther has heard the story of the beautiful sleeping Valkyrie, and longs to win her, a feat he desires to be undertaken for him by the hero. Siegfried is therefore presented with a cup containing a magic potion which, when he has partaken of it, causes him to forget his beautiful warrior-bride and to fall in love with the triumphant and scheming Gutrune, whose hand he now asks in marriage. Gunther consents on condition the hero shall bring him the enchanted Valkyrie as his bride; and this Siegfried agrees to do, and sets out upon his enterprise, being still under the influence of the magic potion. With Gunther there lives his half-brother, Hagen, who is the child of the gnome Alberich; and the latter visits his son in a vision and bids him slay the hero, Siegfried, and secure from him the famous Ring. It was at Hagens suggestion that the potion was given to Siegfried, and he now awaits his opportunity to kill him. Meanwhile Brünnhilde is visited by her Valkyrie sister, Valtrauta, who implores her to give back the Magic Ring to the Rhine Maidens from whom it was taken, and thus save the threatened gods from their quickly-approaching doom; but Brünnhilde will not part with the gift of her beloved hero, and Valtrauta returns to Wotan in despair. Siegfried now appears as Gunther, whose shape he has assumed by means of the " Tarnhelm," or Magic Wishing-Cap; and, to the grief and dismay of Brünnhilde, he deprives her of the Ring and forces her away to be the bride of Gunther, who takes his place whilst the Valkyrie, sleeps. When, therefore, Brünnhilde sees Siegfried in his proper shape making love to Gutrune, and finally learns from the latter how she has been deceived and betrayed by her hero-lover, she is filled with grief and righteous indignation; but presently realising that he, too, has been tricked, she longs only for his death, knowing that in death alone can they be united and regain each others love.

The evil Hagen is the means by which her hope is realised; and in Act 3 Siegfried is invited to join in a hunting party, during the progress of which Hagen assassinates the hero by stabbing him in the back. When the dead body of the once-radiant hero is brought back to the Hall of the Gibichungs, Gunther and Hagen fight for possession of the Ring, and the latter kills the former; but when Hagen afterwards tries to draw the mighty talisman from the finger of the dead hero the arm is suddenly raised in a forbidding attitude, so that he falls back dismayed. Then Brünnhilde nobly deter-mines to break for ever the Curse of the Ring by offering herself as a voluntary sacrifice as a propitiation for the evil it has wrought; and she commands a funeral pyre to be lighted at once. Then she mounts her favourite horse, Grani, with the dead body of her beloved hero, and, leaping into the flames, she is consumed with him. At the same moment the Rhine river rises and overflows its banks, enveloping the burning pyre, and the nymphs eagerly seek their treasure, which Brünnhilde has tossed to them in her last dying effort; and Hagen, on plunging into the waves after the Ring, is drowned. Thus the Rhine Maidens regain their lost treasure; and

as they exultingly carry it away a crimson glow appears in the sky - for on Wotan also the Curse of the Ring has at last fallen for the last time, and the Dusk of the Gods has come. But Mankind survives, with the knowledge that he is free by the power of his own will and courage, to work out his own salvation, and that the Curse of Evil has been overcome by the Sacrifice of Love, which latter gift is bestowed on the world as a priceless boon for all time.

189. TANNHAUSER

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Richard Wagner

Libretto By the Composer (Adapted from an old German Legend)

First Produced Dresden, October, 1845

Chief Characters Elisabeth, Venus, Tannhäuser, Wolfram, Walther, The Landgrave

THE story is based on an old German legend, and the scene is laid in Thuringia, in the early days of chivalry. Tannhäuser is a famous and respected Minstrel-Knight who, having given way to the temptations of youth, has sought refuge in the Venusberg, or Hall of Venus, where the beautiful goddess, surrounded by her court of sirens and nymphs, is represented as holding everlasting revels, destroying with her voluptuous pleasures the souls of all men who fall under her sway. In Act Tannhäuser is discovered in this abode of sensual love, having been with the goddess a year; and now, satiated with such monotonous pleasures, his better nature reasserts itself, so that he longs to return to earth and to endure once more the ennobling influences of duty and suffering. Venus exerts all her fascinations to retain her lover; but Tannhäuser succeeds in tearing himself away from her toils, and secures his freedom. He presently finds himself in a pleasant valley, where, on offering up a prayer of thanksgiving for his deliverance, he is discovered by the Landgrave and some of his former companions, the Minstrel-Knights, who all rejoice at beholding him once more, and persuade him to rejoin their ranks.

In Act 2 Tannhäuser takes part in a grand Tournament of Song in the Palace of the Landgrave, whose pure and beautiful daughter Elisabeth is to bestow her hand on the victor in the contest, the subject of which is to be "The Nature and Praise of Love." Elisabeth loves Tannhäuser, who returns her affection, and was, indeed, her lover in the old days before his fall; and it is fully expected that the prize will be his. Tannhäuser scornfully disputes the other minstrels ideas of love, telling them that their cold praise proves they have never experienced the passion; and, having himself indulged in profane love for a year, his revelations of what he regards as the nature of love outrages the feelings of the stainless Knights, who, on now learning where he has gained his forbidden knowledge, are filled with dismay and horror, and they are about to slay him as unfit to live when Elisabeth interposes to save him from their wrath. Tannhäuser, now awakening from his passionate outburst and realising too late that his yielding to evil temptation has placed a gulf between himself and the pure Elisabeth, is filled with despair; and he joins a company of passing pilgrims, his only hope being that by penance and repentance he may obtain forgiveness for his sin. Elisabeth prays for his welfare and hopes for his return with the pilgrims; and she daily watches on the hillside for him with the minstrel, Wolfram, a noble knight who loves her devotedly, but does not intrude his passion, knowing all her thoughts to be with the absent sinner. The pilgrims at last return, but Tannhäuser is not with them; and Elisabeth, worn out with watching and waiting, and believing her lover is now lost to her for ever, solemnly consecrates

herself to the Virgin. As Wolfram remains on the hillside, however, Tannhäuser appears in woeful state and tells his faithful friend that, in spite of all his penances, remorse and repentance, the Pope, on hearing his humble plea for forgiveness, refuses to grant it to so great a sinner, declaring that it is as impossible for him to hope for heavenly absolution as for the Holy Staff in his hand to put forth new leaves. Filled with despair, and seeing no other course but to return to his old evil ways, Tannhäuser is just invoking the goddess Venus once more, when there passes by the funeral procession of Elisabeth, who, overcome with grief at the non-return of her beloved one, has just expired; and at the same time a second band of pilgrims appears on the hillside, bringing the wonderful news that a miracle has taken place and that the Popes Staff having put forth fresh green leaves during the night the Holy Father therefore announces heavenly absolution for the repentant sinner. All raise a hymn of thankfulness, and the pardoned Tannhäuser falls dying beside the bier of his beloved Elisabeth.

190. TRISTAN AND ISOLDA

Grand Opera in Three Acts By Richard Wagner

Libretto By the Cormposer (Adapted from the old Celtic Legend)

First Produced Munich, June, 1865

Chief Characters Isolda, Brangaena, Tristan, King Mark, Kurvenal, Melot

THE scene is laid on board a vessel, in Cornwall, and in Brittany during the time of the Arthurian Knights. Act 1 takes place on board a vessel, in which Tristan, a brave and stainless Knight, is conveying the Irish Princess, Isolda, to Cornwall, to become the bride of his uncle, King Mark, to whom she has been betrothed against her will. Tristan is himself in love with the beautiful Princess; but there being a blood feud between them, and owing to his own high sense of honour, he will not betray his trust by divulging his passion. Isolda is also in love with him; and, furious at his cold treatment of her, she is about to poison him, when her attendant, Brangaena, horror-struck at such a deed, changes the fatal draught for one containing a love potion, of which the pair both partake, unwittingly, and which so inflames their unfortunate passion that they are utterly unable to control it further, and fall into each others arms in an ecstasy.

Act 2 takes place in the palace gardens of King Mark, to whom Isolda is now united; and here the unhappy wife enjoys stolen meetings with her lover, Tristan, the passion between the pair being so great, owing to the magic draught they have swallowed, that they cannot keep apart. At one of these clandestine meetings, during a royal midnight hunt, the lovers are seen by the Knight, Melot, who, being jealous of the royal favour shown to Tristan, betrays them to King Mark, whom he brings upon the scene. The stern and sorrowful reproaches of the noble King fill Tristan with such grief and despair that he challenges Melot to a duel, in which he is himself mortally wounded.

In Act 3, Tristan has been conveyed by Kurvenal, his faithful henchman, to his own castle in Brittany, where he lies dying, torn between remorse for his betrayal of his royal master and his love and longing for Isolda. Kurvenal meanwhile has sent for the latter, who is skilled in the art of healing; and, when she presently arrives, the lovers are quickly folded in a last passionate embrace, for the joy of her presence is too much for the wounded man, and he dies in her arms. King Mark has followed closely on the track of Isolda, having learnt the truth of their love-story

from Brangaena, and come at once to bestow forgiveness upon the lovers and to magnanimously permit them to be united; but Kurvenal, thinking he comes as a foe, gathers the attendants, and, giving battle at the gates, is slain. King Mark, on entering, finds that he has come too late, since his beloved Knight is already no more; and upon his dead body Isolda now falls expiring, her heart breaking with the woeful grief she has been called upon to suffer.

191. BEARSKIN

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Siegfried Wagner

Libretto By the Composer (Adapted from one of Grimms Fairy Tales)

First Produced Munich, January, 1899

Chief Characters Louise, Hans Kraft (Bearskin), The Devil, The Stranger (St Peter)

THE scene is laid in the Hummelgau district. Hans Kraft, a soldier, returns from the Thirty Years War to his native village, where he learns that his mother and all his relations are dead, and his own existence is completely forgotten by the villagers, who treat him with such scant ceremony that he goes forth into the forest, full of indignation and misery. Here he is met by the Devil, who, in the guise of a merry fellow, soon makes his acquaintance, and endeavours to get him into his toils, and so gain his soul. Hans, seeing his horns and hoofs, recognises the true identity of his companion, but is nevertheless so friendless and reckless that when the Devil presently offers him a job, he accepts it, and begins work at once. His duties are to stoke the fires in the infernal regions, and to keep boiling the great cauldrons in which the souls of the Devils victims are being tormented. The Devil, being well satisfied with his new assistant, leaves him in entire charge; and Hans works contentedly enough, being specially pleased on discovering that one of the tormented souls is that of a surly corporal who in the old days had treated him very badly. One day he receives a visit from one who calls himself "The Stranger," or Peter the Doorkeeper, who is, in reality, Saint Peter, who has come to try and save some of the lost souls from the seething cauldron, and who therefore offers to throw dice with the stoker - the stake to be money if Hans wins, and the lost souls if the Stranger wins. Hans agrees, and the game begins, with the result that the stoker loses; and the Stranger departs rejoicing with all the souls from the cauldron, which he has won. He tells the disconsolate Hans to bear patiently the punishment which will presently fall upon him, and to keep out of the Devils way in future, when great happiness will be his. The Devil now appears, and, furious at the loss of his souls, he transforms Hans into a hideous black creature, covered with a grimy bearskin, and condemns him to remain in this repulsive state until he can find a maiden who will love him in spite of his dreadful appearance, and remain true to him for three years. He gives him a gold ring, which he is to split on obtaining such a maidens promise, each keeping half; and at the end of the three years, if the gold is still bright, it will be a sign of the girls fidelity, and the sufferer will be free from his punishment and will obtain his rightful form once more. Full of despair, Hans wanders forth in his hideous guise, feeling he will never gain release; for all the maidens fly from him in terror, and he receives the name of "Bearskin." The Devil has, however, given him a magic scrip, or pocket, from which he can always draw forth gold pieces; and, in Act 2, he is seen at a village inn, where he succeeds in making friends with the Burgo-master, by paying for him a heavy debt he owes to the innkeeper. In return, on hearing his story, the Burgomaster, impressed by his evidently unlimited wealth, declares he shall take the chance of asking his three daughters in turn if they will accept the half of

his ring. Next day, the girls are brought forth by their father; but the two elder shriek at the sight of the ugly monster, and turn from him with loathing. The youngest maiden, however, whose name is Louise, is so filled with pity for the unhappy stranger that, on hearing his appeal to her to be his saviour, her heart is deeply touched, and she agrees to accept the half ring he offers her, and promises to remain true to him for three years, at the end of which time he will return and wed her. Full of gratitude, Hans breaks the ring and gives her half, putting the other half upon his own finger, where it clings firmly; and then, after a sharp struggle with the villagers because they think him to be closely in league with the Devil, and are furious because of his compact with the maiden, Louise, Hans hastens away.

In Act 3 the three years of waiting are over; and, the ring on Hans finger being still found bright, the Devil, very much against his will, is forced to permit his imps to wash off the black and grime from the sufferers face, and to relieve him of his hideous bearskin disguise. He tries to gain his soul in other ways, by various temptations; but Hans, determined not to fall under such evil influence again, firmly resists all, and hastens away to the wars once more, where, with his renewed moral and physical strength, he gains great honour and glory. Finally, he returns to the neighbourhood of Louises home, and wins the gratitude and praise of the peasants by saving their village and the adjacent town from enemies who have long besieged it. He is now acclaimed as a great hero by the thankful people; but Hans leaves them to their revels and seeks out Louise, whom he finds bemoaning her sad fate, because, having given her word to remain faithful to a hideous stranger for three years until he returns to claim her, she dares not come out to greet the hero, to whom her heart has already gone out, having beheld him from a distance. Hans, however, soon brings joy to her by revealing himself as the one-time miserable Bearskin, whom she has restored to honour and happiness by her loving fidelity; and the opera ends with the betrothal of the happy pair.

192. THE KOBOLD (THE GOBLIN)

Fantastic Opera in Three Acts By Siegfried Wagner

Libretto By the Composer

First Produced Harmburg, January, 1904

Chief Characters Vevena, The Countess, Friedrich, The Count, Seelschen (The Goblin), Eckhart, Trutz

THE story of this opera is not very well constructed, many of the incidents being somewhat irrelevant and meaningless; and consequently the action is not so clear and satisfactory as might be desired.

In Act 1, Vevena, a beautiful maiden, is seen sleeping in a garden, where she is visited by Seelschen, a Goblin, who implores her to rescue him from a curse under which he suffers, by giving her life for one she loves; and he throws into her lap a talisman-jewel, which he hopes may lead her into the snares he desires. The sleeping maiden pays no heed to him, however; but when the Goblin has departed, believing his talisman will work his will, Vevena is awakened by Eckhart, one of her attendants, to whom she relates the foregoing incident as a curious dream. Vevena has fallen in love with Friedrich, a strolling player; and when her mother opposes the

match, unable to conquer her passion, she escapes from home, and joins the troupe of players, of which Friedrich is the leader. Complications soon arise, when a handsome Countess also falls in love with Friedrich, and manages to steal Vevenas talisman, by means of which she succeeds in getting him into her snares. Meanwhile, her husband, the Count, is attracted by the beautiful Vevena, and he invites Friedrich and his company to perform in the Castle. Here he finds opportunity to persecute Vevena with his unwelcome attentions, offering her wealth as his mistress; and, when she refuses, he attempts to use force, upon which she turns upon him with her dagger, and wounds him. Trutz, a member of the company, who also loves Vevena, comes to her rescue; and, in order to save her from the consequences of her act, he declares that it was he who stabbed the Count. Not waiting to be seized, however, he hurries away, taking with him the talisman, which he has managed to get out of the Countesss possession, and which he now flings into a lake. A fairy form immediately rises from the water, and floats away into the sky with the talisman; and, at the same time, the Goblin appears, uttering cries of woe, since he thinks his doom will never be averted, now that the talisman has gone. The sacrifice he requires, however, is very shortly consummated, and by the maiden he had fixed upon.

In Act 3 Trutz is hunted by the retainers of the Count, who set fire to the apartments of the players, and a scrimmage follows, during which Friedrich engages in a hand-to-hand fight with one of the retainers, who quickly overcomes him. Seeing the man she loves is in danger Vevena flings herself between the struggling pair and receives the death-blow intended for Friedrich. She falls dead at his feet; and having thus sacrificed herself for one she loves, she has unwittingly fulfilled the request of the Goblin, who is now freed from his curse.

193. THE AMBER WITCH

Romantic Opera in Four Acts By William Vincent Wallace (Adapted from Dr Meinholds Romance of same name)

First Produced London, 1861

Chief Characters Mary, Elsie, Rudiger (Lord of Raven-stein), The Commandant, The Pastor, Claus, The King

THE scene of this opera is laid in Coserow, a small town in Pomerania, during the fifteenth century. The town is visited by a famine, and whilst many of the people are suffering from hunger there is yet food in plenty in the house of the old Pastor, whose fair young daughter, Mary, has discovered an amber vein on the wild Streckelberg hill, and who, by selling this, gains sufficient money to buy food for her own household and for the poor whom she feeds. She will not reveal the secret of her source of wealth, and the neighbours become jealous. Elsie, a servant in the employ of the Commandant of the town, hates the gentle Mary, who has won the admiration of her master, who desires to make her his paramour, and the pair concoct a scheme for getting Mary accused of witchcraft-such superstition being firmly believed in in those days-so that she may fall into the Commandants hands. Their cruel plans are, however, overheard by an honest, but half-witted, postman, who resolves to save the innocent girl from her enemies. Mary meanwhile has met Rudiger, the young Count of Ravenstein, who has rescued her father from wayside ruffians, and seeks a nights lodging at their house in return; and the pair fall in love. Rudiger, however, has a tyrant father, who ill-treats him, and since he will never consent to their union the lovers are only

able to meet in secret. When the King visits the town presently Mary is chosen to present an address to him, and receives a gold chain from the monarch; and this rouses still further the jealousy of Elsie.

In Act 2 Mary and Rudiger meet on the Streckelberg, which is reputed to be haunted by witches, who are supposed to hold their revels and " Witches Sabbath " there; and here their sweet love-making is seen by the malignant Elsie and her evil companions, who are themselves secret "witches," and they triumph in the knowledge that it will be easy to accuse Mary of witchcraft now, since she has been seen on the Streckelberg. The lovers depart, and a violent storm ensues.

In Act 3 Mary has been taken to prison on the charge of witchcraft made by Elsie, and she is visited in the dungeon by her old father, the Pastor, who brings her a letter from the Commandant, in which the latter offers to secure her release if she will become his mistress. Mary indignantly refuses such shameful terms, and the Commandant, full of anger at her refusal, causes her to be brought at once for trial. Poor Mary declares her innocence, but as she is utterly unable to prove the source of her recent abundant means - the vein of amber having been closed by the last great storm - the charge of sorcery is proved against her, and she is ordered to be tortured in order to make her confess. To save her beloved father the woe of beholding her sufferings Mary now says boldly that she *is* a witch, and has had intercourse with the Devil, whom she indicates by gazing unflinchingly upon the evil Commandant; and she is condemned to be burnt at the stake. The friendly Claus, however, determines to save her, and he proceeds to the Castle of Ravenstein, where Count Rudiger has been kept a prisoner by his tyrant father during the time of Marys trial. The old Count, however, is brought home dead that morning, having been killed by a fall from his horse, and as the retainers set their young lord free Claus rushes in to tell him of Marys dire peril. Instantly the Count sets off with his soldiers to seek the aid of the King. Meanwhile, in the marketplace, Mary is already tied to the stake, though the faggots have not yet been fired, and the crowd, headed by the triumphant Elsie, are dancing around her, eager to see the witch burn. The Commandant again makes his base proposals to the half-fainting Mary, and upon her still refusing he tells her mockingly that she shall yet be his since he has bidden his troops to presently rush forward and rescue her from the stake, and convey her to his castle, where she will be compelled to submit to him - not knowing that Elsie, furious that her hated rival should come beneath her masters roof, has sent the troops off on a wildgoose chase elsewhere. At this moment, however, Count Rudiger appears with the King, who, hearing the whole story of the amber vein from Mary, believes in her innocency, and orders her immediate release, declaring that the real witch is Elsie, who shall be burnt in her stead. But the stake claims no victim that day, for the wretched Elsie is discovered to be already dead; and the opera closes with the thankful joy of the rescued Mary, who is united to her lover, Count Rudiger.

194. LURLINE

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By William Vincent Wallace

Libretto By Fitzball

First Produced London, February, 1860

Chief Characters Lurline, Ghiva, Count Rudolph, The Baron, The Rhine King

THE story is founded on an old German legend, the scene being laid in the Rhine country. Lurline, the lovely Rhine nymph, has fallen in love with Count Rudolph, whom she has seen sailing in his skiff above her watery domains; and she determines to win his love in return. Rudolph, unaware of this, seeks marriage with Ghiva, daughter of a Baron, whom he believes to be wealthy, and with whose riches he hopes to retrieve his own fallen fortunes and restore his half-ruined castle. The Baron and his daughter, also believing in their turn that the Count is wealthy, are very anxious for the union; but when they discover their mutual poverty, the proud and ambitious Ghiva withdraws, and sends her suitor away with contempt. Rudolph, to restore his dejected spirits, indulges in wild revels with some gay companions at his castle; and there he is one day visited by the mysterious Lurline, who places a ring on his finger, and casts her lures and magic spells of love around him so successfully that the young Count, unable to resist her marvellous beauty, falls desperately in love with her, and follows her to the shores of the Rhine, where he is drawn towards a whirlpool, into which he vanishes with the lovely nymph.

In Act 2 Rudolph is found in the Rhine Kings watery palace, where he is happy in the love of Lurline, whose magic ring renders him as a being of the water-world; but happening one day to hear the songs of some of his old companions, who are sailing above him, he longs to see them once more, and entreats the beautiful nymph to permit him to visit the earth for a short time, promising to return to her. Lurline agrees to part with him for three days, saying that at the end of that time she will wait for him on a rock which rises out of the river, and is known as the "Lurleiberg"; and at her request the Rhine King also allows him to take away with him some of the vast treasures from his palace. Rudolph therefore returns to his castle, where the news of his marvellous treasures quickly brings his old companions around him. Ghiva, on learning the secret of his wealth, now seeks his love once more; and by cunningly stealing his magic ring, which she flings into the river, she hopes to win him for herself. Rudolph, deprived of his magic ring, forgets his beautiful fairy wife, and indulges once more in wild excesses. His companions soon became jealous of his unbounded wealth, and lay a plot to murder him, after which they intend to plunder the castle. Meanwhile, Lurline waits vainly for her truant lover, and is filled with woe, when one of her attendants brings her the magic ring she gave to him, and which Ghiva had flung into the river; but, determining to win him back, she appears once more at a festival the Count is giving to his friends on the banks of the river. She pours reproaches upon Rudolph, who, however, quickly falls under her fascination once more, and announces his love for her. Ghiva, furious at the prospect of losing the wealthy Count she had hoped to wed, reveals to him the evil designs of his jealous friends; and she and her father beg him to escape with them. Rudolph, however, has thought for no one else but the beautiful, mysterious Lurline, who now invokes the spirits of the Rhine to aid her lover. Immediately the river rises and overflows its banks, destroying the base conspirators; and with the subsiding waves Rudolph, once more wearing the magic ring, is borne back with Lurline to the Rhine Kings dazzling palace, where they are reunited.

195. MARITANA

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By William Vincent Wallace

Libretto By Fitzball (Adapted from the Play "Don Caesar de Bazan")

First Produced London, November, 1845

Chief Characters Maritana, Marchioness de Montefiore, Don Caesar de Bazan, The King of Spain,

THE scene is laid in Madrid, during the reign of Charles II of Spain. In Act 1 a band of gipsies are entertaining the holiday-makers in a public square, having with them a lovely young Gitana, Maritana, whose beauty and sweet voice attract the attention of the gay young King, Charles II, who has joined the revellers in disguise. He speaks with her, praising her beauty; and then, giving her a handsome gift of money, he hastens away, but not before his disguise has been penetrated by his Chief Minister, Don José de Santarem, who being himself anxious to make love to the Queen, determines to aid his plans by encouraging the King to secure Maritana as his mistress. He therefore talks to the girl, promising that she shall attain to great wealth and joy if she will put herself under his direction, and follow out his wishes, which Maritana, eager to improve her position, and quite unsuspecting of his evil designs, agrees to do. Just then Don Caesar de Bazan comes rollicking forth from a tavern, where he has gambled away his last penny; and having known Don José in his early days, he greets him as a friend. Don Caesar is a handsome, debonair cavalier; but having yielded to gambling and pleasure, he has squandered his fortune, and become a poor and shabby roysterer, who, however, in spite of his reckless conduct, has still managed to preserve his nobility of character, lively manner, and generosity of heart. Whilst the pair are talking a wretched youth rushes into the square, seeking protection from a cruel master; and Don Caesar at once takes the lad's part, and fights a duel in his behalf. He soon finds himself in trouble for this act; for it is Holy Week, and duels have been prohibited on pain of hanging during this week, and he is at once marched off to prison, together with the youth, Lazarillo.

Here we find the pair in Act 2, Don Caesar wonderfully lively for a man condemned to death, and Lazarillo full of woe at the thought of losing such a kind friend. Don Caesar is only grieving because he is doomed to be hanged like a dog; and when Don José presently enters, he begs him, as a last service, to procure for him the favour of being shot, as becomes a Grandee of Spain. Don José agrees to do so, on condition that Don Caesar will consent to an immediate marriage with an unknown bride; for he has planned to wed Maritana to the prisoner, so that he may introduce her at Court as the widow of a Spanish nobleman. Don Caesar laughingly agrees, and attires himself gaily for the ceremony in the wedding garments provided for him, and indulging in a feast with his guards; and presently, Maritana, in bridal garments, her face completely hidden by a thick veil, is led in, and the marriage ceremony is performed, after which Maritana is led away, and Don Caesar is taken out to be shot. The latter, however, having been told by Lazarillo that the lad has abstracted all the bullets from the guns, feigns death when the volley is fired; and then, when left on the ground for dead, he calmly gets up and goes off in search of his mysterious bride, with whose sweet voice he has fallen in love. Having discovered that she has been taken by Don José to a ball given by the Count de Montefiore, he forces an entrance, and demands his bride. Don José though much disturbed at seeing him again, having believed him to be dead, still keeps his wits; and by persuading the elderly Marchioness de Montefiore to aid his plans, he presents her to Don Caesar as his bride. When the old Marchioness removes her veil, therefore, the bridegroom is filled with dismay, but declares he has been cheated; and presently, hearing the voice of Maritana, who is singing in the next salon, he recognises it as the voice of his mysterious bride, and makes a dash for the salon. He is, however, prevented from going another step, and is held back, foaming with impotent rage, and cast out into the street.

In Act 3 Maritana is seen in one of the royal villas, full of anxiety about her dubious position, and

fearing she has been deceived. When the King presently enters and makes love to her, she is filled with horror at his infidelity to the Queen, whom she loves; and she proudly and firmly resists the advances he makes, though inwardly full of fear at her helpless position. At this moment Don Caesar, having learnt through Lazarillo of her whereabouts, bursts into the chamber, to the great chagrin of the King, with whom he has a most amusing, though dramatic, interview. Finally, the King is called away to the garden, to meet the Queen; and then Don Caesar and Maritana recognising each other by their voices and falling promptly in love, are filled with joy at their meeting, and indulge in their first love scene. The Kings infatuation for Maritana is, however, still a menace to their happiness; but on proceeding to the garden, Don Caesar overhears the vile plans of Don José, upon which he challenges him as a traitor, and kills him. He then returns to Maritana; and upon the entrance of the King reveals to him the villainy of his scheming Minister; cunningly adding that since he, Don Caesar, has thus preserved the Kings honour, surely the King can no longer attack the honour of a loyal subject. Charles is now so impressed by the behaviour of Don Caesar that, ashamed of his own ignoble designs, he determines to renounce his own pleasure, and places Maritanas hand in that of her eager husband, to whom he also presents a rich governorship. He then departs to seek the pardon of his own neglected Queen; and the opera closes with the joyful embrace of the now happy husband and wife.

196. EURYANTHE

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Carl Maria Von Weber

Libretto By Helmina Von Chézy

First Produced Vienna, October, 1823

Chief Characters Euryanthe, Eglantine, Adolar, Lysiart, The King of France, Louis VI

THE scene is laid at the Court of King Louis VI of France, where Count Adolar gives vent to enthusiastic praises of the beauty and fidelity of his flancée, the Lady Euryanthe, extolling her virtue above that of all other maidens. His praises are met with contempt from the Count Lysiart, a cynical, scheming courtier, who provokes the young lover so greatly by his refusal to believe in the virtue of any woman, that he finally stakes his lands and all he possesses on the constancy of his fair Euryanthe against Lysiarts declaration that he will shortly bring him a token which he has himself won from the lady. The next scene takes place in the Castle of Nevers, where Euryanthe is seen with Eglantine, a fugitive lady who has sought refuge there and been treated as a friend by the former, who is indeed a gentle and virtuous maiden. Eglantine, however, is an ambitious schemer; and having conceived a passion for Count Adolar, she plots to take him away from her new friend. She therefore cunningly leads her to talk of secret matters which a stranger has no right to pry into; and the innocent Euryanthe, led away by the others seeming sympathy, in a rash moment, tells her of the secret sorrow which her lover has recently had to suffer and which he has made her promise never to reveal. This secret refers to his dead sister, the Lady Emma, who poisoned herself on the death of her lover in battle, having taken the poison from a certain ring which is laid with her in the tomb, and which must be wet with the tears shed by a pure and constant maiden in her hour of deep sorrow, ere the suicides soul can find rest. The tomb of the Lady Emma is not far distant from the Castle; and Eglantine determines to make use of this information for her own needs, whilst Euryanthe is already filled with remorse at having, in an unguarded moment, revealed her betrotheds secret to a stranger, and thus broken her promise to

him. Presently, Lysiart arrives on a mission to conduct Euryanthe to Court for her wedding; and he at once makes use of all his powers of fascination in order to gain the favour of the gentle maiden, and compass her ruin. He meets with no success, however, since Euryanthe has thought only for her betrothed; but he is soon joined in the plot by the crafty Eglantine, who, having stolen the ring from the tomb of the Lady Emma, gives it to him to take as the token of Euryanthes favour to himself. When Lysiart therefore presents Euryanthe at Court, he shows the ring to Adolar, declaring that the much vaunted virtue of his lady had not been proof against his advances, since she gave him the jewel as a love token. Adolar is filled with grief and rage at this seeming proof of the infidelity of his betrothed, whose betrayal of his family secret, as well as his own honour, he cannot forgive. Euryanthe vainly protests her innocence of the charge of infidelity, though she tearfully admits the rash revelation of the secret to Eglantine; and her tears of innocence and woe fall upon the ring which condemns her. Adolar, however, refuses to believe her defence; and he drags her out to a wild, desolate place, where he intends to slay her. Here they are attacked by a deadly serpent, and Euryanthe flings herself in the path to save her lover, who is thus enabled by a quick movement to kill the monster. His life having thus been saved by his intended victim, he cannot take hers; and he therefore leaves her to her fate in the wilderness. Here she is found by the King, who has come forth on a hunting expedition, and to whom she relates the whole story of Eglantines treachery; and the kindly, monarch at once takes her under his charge, and sets off with her to the Castle of Nevers. As they approach the neighbourhood, they see a wedding procession moving towards the chapel, the bridegroom being Lysiart, and the bride Eglantine, who, still scheming for a position, has won the favour of her fellow-plotter. When Adolar presently appears, he is led to believe that Euryanthe is dead, though in reality she is only in a swoon; and then, Eglantine, at last overcome with remorse, leaves the side of her betrothed, and declares her love for the man her treachery has injured, at the same time revealing her misdeeds. This enrages Lysiart, who springs forward and stabs the false woman who has helped him in his baseness. He is at once seized by order of the King, and removed to a dungeon to pay the penalty of his evil deeds. Adolar now realises that Euryanthe has never been unfaithful to him, but has been more sinned against than sinning; and he receives her into his arms once more, craving pardon for his doubt, and thanking her for having saved his sisters soul by her innocent tears shed upon the fatal ring.

197. DER FREISCHUTZ; OR, "THE SEVENTH BULLET"

Romantic Opera in Three Acts By Carl Maria Von Weber

Libretto By Friedrich Kind

First Produced Berlin, June, 1821

Chief Characters Agatha, Annchen, Max, Caspar, Zamiel (The Demon), Kuno and Prince of Bohemia

THE story is adapted from an old German folklore tale, in which a forest demon gives magic bullets to one in league with him, with which he never fails to hit the mark. The Prince of Bohemia requires a new Chief Ranger, his last man, Kuno, having grown too old; and the latter, on retiring, suggests Max, a clever young marksman for whom he has a great affection, and who is betrothed to his fair daughter, Agatha. Max, however, has a rival in Caspar, who not only desires

to be Chief Ranger, but also covets the charming Agatha, notwithstanding that the maiden has no affection for him, all her love being given to her betrothed, Max. Caspar is in league with the forest demon, Zamiel, and, in order to gain his ends, he plots to get Max into the toils of his evil master, in his stead, and so secure his own release. He therefore invokes the assistance of Zamiel, who causes Max to perform badly at the shooting matches; and when the latter is in despair, fearing failure at the final contests, Caspar slyly advises him to call on the name of " Zamiel " when next shooting. Max, unaware of danger, follows out the suggestion, and at once hits the mark, upon which Caspar has no difficulty in persuading him to attend him at midnight on a visit to the Wolfs Glen, a place of evil repute, where he may obtain a supply of magical, never-erring bullets, with which he cannot fail to secure the position he covets.

In Act 2 Agatha is shown with her cousin, Annchen, in a state of unrest, being anxious about her betrothed, whose manner has been strange of late, and who she fears is getting under some evil influence; but she is somewhat comforted on receiving from an old hermit a wreath of magic roses to wear on her wedding-day as a protection from evil. Max, who has been troubled by horrible dreams and weird apparitions, proceeds to the Wolfs . Glen at midnight, where Caspar invokes the Demon, Zamiel, who appears and casts seven bullets, , which he presents to Max to fire at the competition, six of which will take their flight as the marksman desires, and the seventh to take the direction desired by the demon. In the last act Agatha has again been troubled by strange dreams, which terrify her; but on her wedding day, which is also the day of the shooting contest, she arrays herself in her bravest attire, and dons the wreath of magic roses given to her by the hermit. She then proceeds to the place of the shooting contest, where all the neighbouring folk have gathered to witness the marksmanship of the chosen candidates. Max fires his six shots unerringly, each one hitting the mark; and then, being directed by the Prince of Bohemia to aim at a white dove hovering near, he fires the seventh fatal bullet in accordance with the command. At the same moment, the white dove appears to him to be Agatha, who, indeed, falls at the report; and Max is in despair, thinking he has shot his bride. The beautiful maiden has, however, only fainted; for the bullet being unable to harm her, owing to the magic wreath she wears, and being at the disposal of the demon, Zamiel has himself directed it to the heart of the false Caspar, whose soul has long been forfeited to him, and who, in spite of his scheming, has thus been unable to escape his doom. Max, overcome with this tragic end to the contest, confesses all, upon which the anger of the Prince falls upon him; but, owing to the pleadings of Agatha, he obtains pardon and his lovely bride into the bargain.

198. OBERON

Fairy Opera in Three Acts By Carl Maria Von Weber

Libretto By J. R. Planché

First Produced London, April, 1826

Chief Characters Reiza, Fatima, Titania, Oberon, Huon, Puck, Scherasmin, Barbekan, Roschana

THIS fantastic story is adapted from an old French romance; and out of the strange medley of fairy, Eastern and chivalric elements a very fascinating plot has been evolved. Oberon, King of Fairy-land, having quarrelled with his lovely Queen, Titania, they vow not to be reunited until a pair of lovers shall be found who will be true to each other through many exceptional dangers,

temptations and difficulties. Both are eager for reconciliation; and Oberon sends out his merry sprite, Puck, over the world, to seek the wonderful pair of lovers he requires. Puck comes back with news of the noble knight, Huon, who, having been insulted by Carloman, the son of Charlemagne, has slain him in single combat, for which deed the Emperor has condemned him to proceed to Bagdad and there to slay the favourite minister, and to wed the Caliph's daughter, Reiza. Oberon immediately determines to use these two young people for his ends; and he causes each to appear to the other in a vision, and to fall in love with one another. He then visits Huon, and bestows on him a magic horn, with which he can always summon the Fairy King to his assistance, and compel merriment; and to his armour-bearer, Scherasmin, he gives a magic cup, which fills with wine at pleasure and also reveals treachery by issuing forth flames when put to the lips of a traitor. Huon and his servants are now transported to Bagdad, where in Act 2 they are found performing many marvellous acts by means of their magic gifts. The Caliph's favourite, Prince Barbekan, is about to marry his royal master's lovely daughter, Reiza, who hates him, all her love being given to Huon, of whose coming to Bagdad she soon learns from her maid, Fatima. Huon makes acquaintance with Barbekan, whom he puts to test by means of his magic cup, which issues forth flames as his lips touch it, and so proclaims him to be a traitor and evil-doer. The gallant knight therefore challenges him to fight, and slays him. He is thereupon attacked by the Caliph's soldiers; but Scherasmin promptly blows upon the fairy horn, which immediately plays such merry tunes that the soldiers cannot refrain from dancing, during which revels Huon and Reiza escape together, being closely followed by Scherasmin and Fatima, the two latter having also fallen in love with one another. As they make their escape, Oberon again appears to the happy pair, making them promise to remain faithful to each other through every danger and temptation; and having secured their promise, he proceeds to put them to the test. The four fugitives board a vessel, which is presently shipwrecked; and Reiza is rescued by pirates, who sell her as a slave to the Emir of Tunis, who puts her in his harem and vainly sues for her love. In Act 3 Scherasmin and Fatima are found as workers in the garden of the Emir, to whom they also have been sold by the pirates who captured them; and here they are presently joined by Huon. And now the lovers are exposed to many temptations; and their fidelity is put to very severe tests. The handsome Huon attracts the attention of the Emir's Eastern wife, Roschana, who sends for him and endeavours to win his love by exercising all her wiles and lures of fascination upon him; but finding him steadfast in his refusal of her favours, and discovering that he loves the hated new slave in her lord's harem, she is filled with rage and accuses him to the Emir as having tried to force her to accept him as her lover. Upon this, the unhappy Huon is condemned to be burned alive by order of the Emir, who, also being enraged by Reiza's resistance to his own love-making, condemns her to be burned with him. The lovers are, however, rescued by Oberon, who appears when Scherasmin, fearful for his master's life, blows the magic horn. The Fairy King appears with his lovely Queen, Titania, to whom he is now reconciled owing to the constancy of the lovers he has put to the test; and he now transports the four exiles to Charlemagne's Court, where the gallant knight, Huon, receives the pardon of the Emperor, and is united to his beloved Reiza. Scherasmin and Fatima are also united; and the opera ends with joyous revels.

199. PRECIOSA

Romantic Opera in Four Acts By Carl Maria Von Weber
Libretto By Pius Alexander Wolff

First Produced Berlin, March, 1821

Chief Characters Preciosa, Viarda, Donna Clara, Alonzo, Eugenio, Don Francesco, Don Azevedo

THIS composition is really more a romantic drama with incidental music rather than an opera; but it is nevertheless regarded as showing all the best characteristics of Webers work. The scene is laid in Spain, and the first act opens in Madrid, in the house of Don Francesco, whose son, Alonzo, has fallen in love with Preciosa, a lovely and virtuous gipsy maiden, who returns his passion. Their love is not known to the proud nobleman, who is, however, anxious to see the celebrated gipsy maid, whose praises are on everybodys lips; and he therefore sends for her to dance and sing before him, being delighted with her performance, and astonished to find her so gentle, accomplished and refined.

In Act 2 Alonzo has followed Preciosa to the gipsy camp; but being unable to convince her of the sincerity of his love and intentions, and in order to prove his fidelity to her, he decides to remain a year or two with the gipsies, who regard Preciosa as their Queen, and obey her in all things.

In Act 3 Don Azevedo, a friend of Don Francesco, is about to celebrate a festival; and his son, Eugenio, offers to secure the services of the pretty Gipsy Queen for the entertainment. But when he arrives at the gipsy camp he quickly arouses the jealousy of Alonzo, and a violent quarrel ensues, which ends in the latter being flung into prison. Preciosa, full of anxiety for her lovers fate, hastens to the Castle of Azevedo; and here, in Act 4, all the characters in the drama are gathered. Donna Clara, the wife of Don Azevedo, is greatly attracted by the sweetness and high-born air of the gipsy-girl, who, now seeing the folly of Alonzos attachment to one of such a lowly position as hers, bravely announces her intention not to see him again. Meanwhile, the old gipsy-woman, Viarda, whose husband is also being detained in the castle, comes for news of him; but when Preciosa begins to weep after her renunciation of Alonzo, the old fortune-teller is filled with remorse, and surprises the company by revealing the fact that the pretty maiden is the long-lost daughter of Donna Clara, she herself having stolen the child, who was believed at the time to have been drowned. A mark on the girls shoulder proves the truth of the statement; and Preciosa is received back with great joy . by her relations. Alonzo is released from captivity and betrothed to the beautiful maiden he has served so faithfully in the gipsy camp; and all thus ends happily.

200. SILVANA

Romantic Opera in Four Acts By Carl Maria Von Weber (Left unfinished by the Composer.

Completed by Ferdinand Langer.)

Libretto By Ernest Pasque

First Produced Frankfurt, September, 1810

Chief Characters Silvana, a Forest Nymph, Gerald, Count Boland, Ratto

THE story is adapted from an old German Rhine legend, which tells of two brothers who lived, one in the Castle of Steirnberg, and the other in the Castle of Liebenstein. They hated each other, because the elder, Count Boland, loved his brothers wife, who refused to give her love to him in return; and in his rage and jealousy Count Boland slew his brother and set fire to his castle in

which it was believed that the fair young mistress and her child were burned to death. After this terrible deed, Boland retired to his castle, a prey to Constant remorse, living the life of a hermit; and here his son Gerald has been brought up alone, and, his mother having died in his early childhood, he has never come under the influence of a woman. On attaining manhood, his father desires him to marry, since it is the wish of their vassals; but Gerald has never yet seen a maiden who pleases him. One day, however, when out hunting, he meets Silvana, a lovely maiden who lives with Ratto, a collier, whom she regards as heir father; and the pair fall mutually in love with each other. A forest nymph, who follows Silvana as a guardian wherever she goes, endeavours to lure the young Count away from the maidens side; but Gerald is determined to wed the lovely girl, and with the help of his followers, he makes the collier drunk, and then steals Silvana away whilst he is sleeping. Silvana is not left unprotected, however; for the forest nymph still accompanies her in the disguise of a troubadour, and guards her from all harm. The old Count Boland, only too pleased that his son should consent to take a wife, receives Silvana with kindness, being attracted to her by a strange influence which he cannot fathom; and he even consents to attend the ceremony, and to watch the peasants revels which are to accompany it. When the wedding party gathers together, the nymph, still in troubadour attire, asks permission to sing; and this being granted, she begins to relate the story of the old Counts crime as the introduction to her story. Old Boland is filled with horror that his dreadful deed should become known; and he forbids the minstrel to continue, even making an attempt to kill him. Gerald for the first time has doubts about his unknown bride, and asks an explanation of the story; but Silvana gently informs him that she is not at liberty to speak on the matter. Ratto the collier now appears and claims Silvana as his daughter; and when it is seen that the bride comes of such a low family, she is treated with contumely, and the mystery about her deepening, she is accused of witchcraft, and thrust into prison. As she still refuses to speak of her ancestry, she is declared to be a child of the devil, and is condemned to be burnt at the stake. Gerald, however, firmly believes in her innocence, and still loving her passionately resolves to perish with her; but when the lovely maiden is led out to meet her awful death, the minstrel nymph appears once more, and continuing her interrupted song-story, relates that when Count Boland fired his brothers castle, the fair mistress and her child, who were supposed to have perished in the flames, in reality escaped to the distant forest, where they took refuge in the hut of the poor collier, Ratto, who, when the distracted mother died, brought up the little girl, Silvana, as his own child. The old Count now understands his strange attraction to the lovely maiden; and with a cry of joy he welcomes her as his beloved niece, whom he very gladly bestows upon the now happy Gerald as his wife, the opera ending with the wedding revels of the peasants.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF OPERAS

OPERA	COMPOSER
Acté	Manen
Adrienne Lecouvreur	Cilea
Africaine, L'	Meyerbeer

Aïda	Verdi
Alceste	Gluck
Amber Witch, The	Wallace
Amico Fritz, L'	Mascagni
André Chénier	Giordano
Apothecary, The	Haydn
Armida	Gluck
Armourer, The	Lortzing
Barber of Bagdad, The	Cornelius
Barber of Seville	Rossini
Basso Porto, A	Spinelli
Bat, The	Strauss, Johann
Bearskin	Wagner, Siegfried
Beggar Student, The	Millöcker
Belle Hélène, La	Offenbach
Benvenuto Cellini	Berlioz
Black Domino, The	Auber
Boccaccio	Suppé
Bohemian Girl, The	Balfe
Bohème, La	Puccini
Carlo Broschi	Auber
Carmen	Bizet
Cavalleria Rusticana	Mascagni
Cid, The	Massenet
Circe	Bungert
Cloches de Corneville, Les	Planquette
Cosi Fan Tutte	Mozart
Cricket on the Hearth, The	Goldmark
Crispino	Ricci
Crown Diamonds, The	Auber
Czar and the Carpenter, The	Lortzing

Dame Blanche, La	Boieldieu
Daughter of the Regiment, The	Donizetti
Demon, The	Rubenstein
Departure, The	D'Albert
Dinorah	Meyerbeer
Djamileh	Bizet
Don Carlos	Verdi
Don Giovanni	Mozart
Don Pasquale	Donizetti
Dusk of the Gods, The (Part IV. of "The Nibelungs Ring")	Wagner, Richard
Eclair, L'	Halèvy
Elektra	Strauss, Richard
Elixir of Love, The	Donizetti
Enfant Prodigue, L'	Debussy
Ernani	Verdi
Esclarmonde	Massenet
Esmeralda	Goring Thomas
Eugène Onegin	Tschaikowsky
Euryanthe	Weber
Falstaff	Verdi
Faust	Gounod
Favorita, La	Donizetti
Fedora	Giordano
Feuersnot	Strauss, Richard
Fidelio	Beethoven
Fille de Madame Angot, La	Lecocq
Flying Dutchman, The	Wagner, Richard
Folkungs, The	Kretschmer
Fra Diavolo	Auber
Freischütz, Der	Weber
Genoveva	Schumann

Gioconda, La	Ponchielli
Gipsy Baron, The	Strauss, Johann
Girl of the Golden West, The	Puccini
Golden Cross, The	Brull
Gondoliers, The	Sullivan
The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein	Offenbach
Greysteel	Gatty
Habanera	Laparra
Haddon Hall	Sullivan
Hamlet	Thomas
Hans Heiling	Marschner
Hansel and Gretel	Humperdinck
Henry the Lion	Kretschmer
Henry VIII	Saint-Saëns
H.M.S. Pinafore	Sullivan
Huguenots, The	Meyerbeer
Idomeneus	Mozart
Iolanthe	Sullivan
Iphigenia in Aulis	Gluck
Iphigenia in Tauris	Gluck
Iris	Mascagni
Jean de Paris	Boieldieu
Jessonda	Spohr
Jewess, The	Halèvy
Jongleur de Notre Dame, Le	Massenet
Joseph in Egypt	Méhul
King Hath Said It, The	Délibes
King of Lahore, The	Massenet
Kobold, The	Wagner, Siegfried
Lakmé	Délibes
Lily of Killarney, The	Benedick

Linda de Chamouni	Donizetti
Lohengrin	Wagner, Richard
Loreley	Catalani
Lorle	Förster
Louise	Charpentier
Lowlands, The	D'Albert
Lucia di Lammermoor	Donizetti
Lucrezia Borgia	Donizetti
Lurline	Wallace
Madame Butterfly	Puccini
Magic Flute, The	Mozart
Maia	Leoncavallo
Maidens of Schilda	Förster
Manon	Massenet
Manon Lescaut	Puccini
Manru	Paderewski
Maritana	Wallace
Marriage of Figaro, The	Mozart
Marriage of Jeannette	Massé
Martha	Flotow
Masaniello	Auber
Masked Ball, The	Verdi
Mason, The	Auber
Master-singers of Nuremberg, The	Wagner, Richard
Melusine	Gramman
Mephistopheles	Boito
Merlin	Goldmark
Merrie England	German
Merry War, The	Strauss, Johann
Merry Wives of Windsor, The	Nicolai
Mignon	Thomas

Mikado, The	Sullivan
Moloch	Schillings
Muguette	Missa
Nanon	Genée
Nero	Rubenstein
Norma	Bellini
Nuremberg Doll, The	Adam
Oberon	Weber
Odysseus' Death	Bungert
Odysseus' Return	Bungert
Orpheus and Eurydice	Gluck
Orpheus Aux Enfers	Offenbach
Othello	Verdi
Pagliacci, I	Leoncavallo
Parsifal	Wagner, Richard
Patience	Sullivan
Paul and Virginia	Massé
Pelleas and Melisande	Debussy
Philemon and Baucis	Gounod
Piper of Hamelyn, The	Nessler
Pirates of Penzance, The	Sullivan
Postilion of Longjumeau, The	Adam
Pré Aux Clercs, Le	Hérold
Preciosa	Weber
Princess Ida	Sullivan
Prophet, The	Meyerbeer
Proserpine	Saint-Saëns
Puritani I	Bellini
Queen of Sheba, The	Goldmark
Queens Lace Handkerchief, The	Strauss, Johann
Reine Topaze, La	Massé

Rhinegold, The (Part 1. of "The Nibelungs Ring")	Wagner, Richard
Rienzi	Wagner, Richard
Rigoletto	Verdi
Robert the Devil	Meyerbeer
Romeo and Juliet	Gounod
Rosalba	Pizzi
Rose of Castile, The	Balfe
Ruddygore	Sullivan
Salome	Strauss, Richard
Samson and Dalila	Saint-Saëns
Semiramide	Rossini
Seraglio, Il	Mozart
Shamus O'Brien	Stanford
Siegfried (Part III of "The Nibelungs Ring")	Wagner, Richard
Sigurd	Reyer
Silvana	Weber
Sold Bride, The	Smetana
Sonnambula, La	Bellini
Sorcerer, The	Sullivan
Star of the North, The	Meyerbeer
Stradella	Flotow
Tales of Hoffmann	Offenbach
Taming of the Shrew, The	Goetz
Tannhäuser	Wagner, Richard
Templar and the Jewess, The	Marschner
Tess	D'Erlanger
Thaïs	Massenet
Tosca, La	Puccini
Traviata, La	Verdi
Tristan and Isolda	Wagner, Richard
Trovatore, Il	Verdi

Trumpeter of Säkkingen, The	Nessler
Undine	Lortzing
Utopia, Limited	Sullivan
Vagabond and the Princess, The	Poldini
Valkyrie, The (Part II. of "The Nibelungs Ring")	Wagner, Richard
Vampire, The	Marschner
Water Carrier, The	Cherubini
Werther	Massenet
William Tell	Rossini
Yeomen of the Guard, The	Sullivan
Zampa	Hérold

E-mail me at opera@mrichter.com

[Return](#) to Mike's home page