

ART IN ADELAIDE

CHATS WITH MUSICIANS

NO. XXXIX.—MADAME
DELMAR HALL

By Presto

Adelaide concertgoers have, unfortunately, not had many opportunities of hearing Madame Georgina Delmar Hall (Mrs. H. Winsloe Hall). Her public appearances in Adelaide have not been conspicuous ones, but it is hoped and expected that during next season this favored vocalist will appear at more than one concert. One day last week I sought an interview with Madame Hall, and found her with a few moments to spare in her room at the Elder Conservatorium. "I want to know something about your musical career, if you don't mind!" It was thus that I began my quest for information.

"Where do you wish me to commence?" she smilingly queried.

Born — I paused.

"A true Cockney," she filled in. "I was born at Balham, just outside London." She continued to inform me that the earlier days of Miss Georgina Delmar-Cavendish were spent in the proximity of the "big smoke."

The interview had commenced, and from that point I went on inexorably, discontinuing my interrogations, but for the purpose of chatting on different musical works and subjects.

Your first acquaintance with music, please?" I requested.

"I played the piano when I was only four years old," she answered, "and really I played quite nice little tunes, or rather they told me later that I did."

And your first lessons?

"Were on the pianoforte. I studied quite earnestly at school in Germany and also at the Bedford High School."

When did you find your voice?

"When I was 16. At that time I was at Bedford, and I then went to the Royal College of Music. That institu-

tion held a scholarship open to anyone in Great Britain. Three scholarships were offered, and I think there were over 500 entries. I was very lucky; I happened to get one of the scholarships, which provided for four years' tuition at the college. I had a delightful time while I was there, and did a lot of interesting work. I sang under the name of Georgina Delmar. While I was at the college I played in all the students' operatic performances."

Any special appearances?

"Yes, at the Henry Purcell bi-centenary we presented his 'Dido and Aeneas' at the Lyceum Theatre. I played Aeneas and Agnes Nicholls was my Dido." (Miss

Agnes Nicholls, it will be remembered, was one of the Quinlan Opera Company's leading artists on the occasion of the combination's first visit to Australia.) "Then," Madame Hall continued, "I sang at Windsor before the late Queen Victoria."

What was the next step?

"I wanted to get some experience in acting, so I joined the company which was producing Sir Charles Villiers Stanford's 'Shamus O'Brien.' I played a minor part and understudied Kirkby Lunn, who was singing the leading role. She fell ill and I was given my opportunity. I played the heroine's part for a month and received some very fine press notices. I think that was my beginning."

And when the run of the opera terminated?

"I went to Paris and studied under Jacques Bouhy—he has taught most of the big singers of the day—and I had a delightful time working under him. His first remark in hearing me was something in the way of a surprise. 'You have a very beautiful voice,' he said, 'but you don't know much about singing.' That was rather disappointing after I had studied for four years, don't you think?"

I agreed that it was, and pressed for a continuation of the interesting narrative.

"Well," Madame Hall went on, "when I returned to London I went straight to Covent Garden, where I appeared in secondary roles with Melba as prima donna. Among other parts I sang Siebel in 'Faust.' There was a very interesting performance of 'The Valkyrie' that season. I sang one of the eight war maidens with Kirkby Lunn, Agnes Nicholls, and Edith Walker as some of my sister valkyries. People said it was the finest performance of the war maidens' chorus they had ever heard."

Would you enumerate some of your other parts?

"Yes. I played Sandman in Humperdinck's 'Hansel and Gretel,' singing in German. I also sang in Donizetti's 'Lucia di Lammermoor,' the latter in Italian. I recollect the last rehearsal on account of a rather painful incident. Caruso was the leading tenor in the production, and he accidentally trod on my toe. He is a rather weighty individual, you know, and I did not think I would be able to go on that night."

What happened after your recovery?

"I did a very stupid thing; I got married." Madame Hall smiled as I looked up, and then added sincerely, "But I have never regretted it. I went on an operatic tour to the Canary Islands with my husband, and then when we returned I played three seasons at Covent Garden. The Royal Carl Rosa Company was looking for a Carmen a little later, and on the recommendation of the Covent Garden people I was engaged. For two years I played in Bizet's opera and other works throughout the provinces and in London."

And what was the next step?

"I did not get much scope for acting in grand opera, and I thought I would try something lighter. George Edwardes gave me a good salary to play Madame Sans Gene in 'The Duchess Danzig.' I then sang at all the leading concerts in the big halls. Just before I came to Australia with my husband in 1910 Edwardes made me another offer, this time to play Consuelo in 'Havana,' but my mind was set on the Southern Cross, and so we soon arrived here, bringing with us the son and heir."

What do you think of music in South Australia?

"I thought there would have been very much more to do in the way of professional concert work. In Sydney there are many more opportunities for one, but even there the local artists do not get many chances. Australian audiences like to hear people who come out from home. I sang in Sydney for a time, but naturally concert managers do not care to pay fares between Adelaide and the harbor city on the top of fees. I went there twice and sang with the Sydney Philharmonic Society in a concert presentation of Saint-Saen's 'Samson and Delilah.' Andrew Black was the tenor. I also undertook an engagement to sing Carmen with the Amy Castles Opera Company, under J. C. Williamson management."

And now?

"Well, I have settled down to teaching. How long have I been on the Conservatorium staff? Oh, two years. I have a lot of private pupils also."

GENERAL NEWS.

THE WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

Mr. Albert Mansbridge, M.A., the general secretary and founder of the Workers' Educational Association of England, arrived in Adelaide by the express from Melbourne on Sunday morning. He has been touring the eastern States and Tasmania to promote the adult education movement, and while in South Australia he will give addresses at the University, at the School of Mines, and at the Trades Hall, besides holding conferences with leading educationists in this State. Mr. Mansbridge, who is accompanied by his wife, was welcomed at the railway station by most of the members of the joint educational committee appointed in connection with the visit. The personnel of the committee is as follows:—University—Professors G. C. Henderson (chairman of the committee), Darnley Naylor, and Jethro Brown; School of Mines—Sir Langdon Bonython (president of the council) and Mr. L. Grayson; Trades Hall—Messrs. T. Ryan (president), A. McInnes (past president), and T. B. Merry (secretary). Mr. Mansbridge will deliver his first address to-night in the presence of the University council and of representatives of the School of Mines and of the Trades Hall on the aims and methods of the association. Mr. Mansbridge comes with very high testimonials from educational authorities at Oxford and other parts of England. In New South Wales, Victoria and Brisbane he has left the impression of a man who has an inspiring personality, and also a definite knowledge as to the manner in which his work is to be carried on in a practical way. The accommodation of the Prince of Wales Theatre, in which to-night's lecture will be given, is limited, and it is necessary to restrict admission to ticket-holders. A notice giving further particulars appears in another column.



MADAME DELMAR HALL