

American authors pay unless they are first published and acquire recognition through the columns of the magazines. Were it not for that one saving opportunity of the great American magazines,

which are now the leading ones of the world and have an international reputation and circulation, American authorship would be at a still lower ebb than at present."

SO TAKE MY TEARS

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

If I could sing—

And like Euterpe on the flute, express
The soul's enchantment or the heart's distress,—
Ah, then I'd sing to thee, by thee inspired;
And from the treasury of song I'd wring
The most harmonious strain that ever fired
The soul to music. And in melting praise,
Thy beauty and thy glory I would raise
To such a rare and unaccustomed height
That all the world should wonder and delight!

But sing I cannot, love, howe'er I long
To burst into an ecstasy of song,—
So take my tears.

If I could play—

And like Erato, by a naiad stream,
Weave the world together in a dream,—
Ah, then I'd play for thee, by thee inspired;
And from sweet zones of thought and love, convey
Such melody as Orpheus acquired
In constant fealty unto the Muse.
And I would paint thy virtues in such hues
That when all other things have passed away
Thy memory would endure; thy glory, stay!

But play I cannot, love, howe'er my heart
Heaves with music's wild, tumultuous art,—
So take my tears.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CARMEN

BY GERALDINE FARRAR

(AS RECORDED BY FREDERIC DEAN) "*The psychology of Carmen is the psychology of the World.*"—Prosper Merimée.

THE opera was over and Carmen was resting upon the divan in her dressing-room, after that trying last scene with José. She had flung over her a warm grey rug that completely enveloped her

up to her throat. Nothing but her face was visible—the one brilliant, colourful thing in the room, admirably thrown out from the grey background of the walls. Her make-up was still on cheek

and brow and lips, her eyes were blackened and emboldened, the red rose was in her hair, and her mouth was still the "splash of colour" so desperately fought for by José and the toreador.

"Personally," said Miss Farrar, "I do not believe Carmen to be the wanton that some would have her. Her beauty, her position, her race compelled her to be what she was. Admiration she demanded and obtained as freely as the flower demands and absorbs the sunshine that gives it life. The mere indifference of José aroused her—truly womanly—sense of injustice and pique. Homage was her birthright. And she proposed to have it—obtain it as she might. Fate threw her into José's path and her charm proved effective. The mere man fell to the fascination of the mere woman. José did Carmen a good turn and she repaid him in the only coin she possessed—herself. For a time she truly loved him. But, proud woman that she was and proud of her conquests, she could not help despising a man and especially a soldier who threw away honour, position—everything that life held for him—to become her slave—to follow weakly where she led.

"It was natural, also, that she should be attracted by the strength and courage as well as the brilliance of the toreador. Here was a dominating personality—a lover who would beat her—kill her, probably—if she were unfaithful to him, but who would never cringe and cry and beg her to return to him after she had ceased to love him. Carmen knew that her passion for José would not last and as it ebbed away she could not understand why José failed to realise the change and accept it. They had sucked their orange dry—why not throw it away and pick others? He had his devoted Michaela—she of the modest blue petticoats—why not go back to her and leave Carmen free to choose her toreador or any one else she desired?

"Carmen also knew that death was inseparably connected with her new love. Her cards had so warned her, and she, high priestess of the oracle,

knew that they never lied to her. And so resignedly, willingly, joyously, she went forth to her fate, for in it was bound a greater love, a more intense passion, a union with a man more worthy of her, more in sympathy with all that she represented, more in accord with what she demanded and desired.

"I call Carmen a 'high priestess,' and she was. This is the crux of the story. This is the key to the psychology of her character.

"There is an old story to the effect that two thousand years and more before the dawn of the Christian era the Egyptians had for their God of Speech and Divination a deity named Thoth. The walls of his temple were covered with pictures—pictures of life—representing every phase of man's existence. The initiates or high priestesses of the temple were taught the arts of divination and speech and were entrusted with them for the purpose of carrying and explaining their power and beauty to the barbarians of the West, and, for their use, copies of the pictures upon the walls were painted upon papyrus leaves loosely bound together in book form, which they could easily carry and with which they could explain their divinations as readily as from the originals upon the temple walls.

"Many archæologists are of the opinion that the gypsies of the present day are none other than the descendants of these high priestesses of the temple of Thoth and that their books of divination—these loose papyrus leaves—have degenerated into the 'Devil's Picture Cards,' or, in other words, our ordinary playing-cards with which the present-day gypsy tells the fortunes of any who cross her palm with the necessary silver.

"The original story of *Carmen* is from the pen of one of the most picturesque and most mystic of the nineteenth century writers. Prosper Mérimée was one of the leaders of that brilliant little coterie of Romantists whose centre was the French capital. As novelist, archæologist, and essayist he was a master of French style. An unusual linguist, a

man of ripe scholarship, and a lover of accurate historic data, Merimée's two great loves were Egypt and the Pyrenees. He was of those who insisted upon connecting the two—linking old Egypt to the modern gypsy. In his mind the roving bands of fortune-telling folk, with whom he delighted to associate in Andalusia, were the descendants of these initiates in the temple of Thoth, who had been entrusted with the sacred mysteries of the temple, and this is interesting for it gives—as I said—the key to the story and to the psychology of *Carmen*, for Merimée believed that their greasy playing cards were the last decadent symbols of the papyrus leaves of the books of the oracle, delivered to their predecessors. And he believed that the Carmen of his story, the Carmen he met on the quay in the twilight, the Carmen who told his future with the 'dirty cards that had seen much service,' the Carmen who was so fascinated with his gold repeater that she stole it while he was dreaming by her side, even the Carmen whom José Maria persisted in calling 'the daughter of the devil,' was a high priestess of Fate and a descendant of those other high priestesses who—thousands of years before—had learned the meaning of the Pictures of Life from the walls of Thoth's temple—reproductions of which were Carmen's cards of Fate.

"In the stage story Carmen tells not José's fortune, but her own. And so the note of Fate is sounded with far greater clarity than in the original. It is also interesting to note that from the moment that Carmen sees her fate in the cards she recognises it, accepts it unconditionally, and carries the picture with her to the end of the chapter. In Merimée's story this Fate motif is continually sounded; and the same note is proclaimed just as persistently in Bizet's music.

"There is still another connecting link between the original story and its stage setting—another link of Fate. When Bizet decided to set *Carmen* to music he discarded the conventional *libretti* of

Scribe and gave the story into the hands of Meilhac and Halévy, those twin dramatists whose partnership lasted for two decades and whose joint pen had turned out many *opéra comiques* of the lighter sort—*La Belle Helene*, *Barbe Bleue* and dozens of their ilk—but never before a *Carmen*. And so enamoured of the psychology of this new, strange story did these librettists become that they dared to introduce a character that did not figure in Merimée's original—a character that embodied in a person the 'blue skirt and braided hair' to which José Maria so constantly referred as belonging to 'the modest girls of his Basque home.' In other words they were brave enough to create a character out of a constantly reiterated allusion and so doing heightened the colour of Merimée's psychological study and turned it—with this and other subtle theatric touches—into a dramatic character sketch, equalling in intensity and stage action the best of *libretti* ever offered to the operatic composer.

"The reason that so many modern stage singers have attempted the rôle of Carmen is simply because there is so much in the character to be expressed—or, rather, so many different things. Each one of us probably sees something that the others have not seen—or thinks she does—and that 'something' is *her individual Carmen*.

"When I was a school girl we used to read in our psychology primer the story of the ten men looking at the moon. The ten men *seemed* to see the same moon but, in reality, every one saw a different moon—a moon that he personally desired to see—a moon that he projected from his own personality. Let the moon represent the rôle of Carmen and let us who would interpret it represent the ten men. I have to push the simile one step further, for we are not only obliged to *see* our individualistic Carmens, but we must so 'visualise' them—as the New Thinkers express it—that we can reproduce these individual conceptions in our presentations. Since that memorably disastrous night

forty years ago when Mme. Galli-Marie presented that first *Carmen* in the Salle Favart, innumerable variations of the character have been offered to the public. Minnie Houck, Trebelli, Marie Roye, Selina Delaro, Camille Seygard, Calvé, de Lussan, Fremstad, Maria Gay, Bresler-Gianoli—all have expressed their own idiosyncratic *Carmen* in stage symbolism. Even my own teacher—Lilli Lehmann—made her American début in the part—trying to give—as all the rest have tried to give—something new by presenting her individual idea. And the end is not yet. For, structurally, *Carmen* has, seemingly, as many variants as there are stage folk ready to express their varying ideas of her. Prosper Mérimée is quoted as saying that ‘the psychology of *Carmen* is the psychology of Life.’ If this be true, then every ‘expression’ of his variable heroine will be a new expression of Life. So why should the procession of *Carmens* ever end? There is so much in the character to commend it as a study, and Bizet’s music is so vital, so ever new and so illustrative of the person and her surroundings there seems to be no reason to think that either *Carmen* or *Carmen* will ever grow old.

“In the first place, the setting of the scene—in old Seville—gives the opera an especial charm. Writers of tales of daring have loved to display their heroes and heroines in this busy kaleidoscopic centre. *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Barber*—to mention but three master works—had their scenes laid in this delightfully romantic city—a city particularly suitable to this story of *Carmen*, as it has always been a favourite haunt of gypsies. Just across from the city proper, over on the west bank of the Guadalquivir in the suburb of the Triana, the gypsies congregate to this day; here are the Calle Candelego, the shop of Lillas Pastra, and many another lure of the Romany tribe.

“Seville has always been a joyous place; within her boundaries the formal court barriers of Madrid are let down, even the politics of Barcelona and Va-

lencia are forgotten. The Sevillians live as if they loved life. Pleasure is their God—a God worshipped daily, hourly. Their bull-fights are the best in all Spain, their carnivals the gayest. Even the church festas are gorgeous out-of-doors affairs, brilliant and full of colour. In the cathedrals ceremonies are countenanced that would shock the worshippers of more decorous communities. On Corpus Christi the altar boys perform a dance to castanets before the high altar. The dance was instituted as a church rite centuries ago and neither the padres nor their parishioners see any good reason for omitting it. To-day, the streets of the city are filled with happy southerners in the gaudy cloaks and skirts of their forebears of centuries ago. Life—full of colour—full of sunshine—full of laughter—and full of fateful tragedy—this is Seville.

“With such a stage setting how easy it is to drop into Mérimée’s evolution theory of *Carmen*. Here the High Priestess, as well as the coquette of the world, is at home. ‘I am Carmencita—you have heard of me?’ she asks Mérimée as they sit and smoke together down on the river bank.

“‘Carmen! Carmencita!’ proclaim the youths of Seville as their queen and favourite swaggers upon the scene in the stage version of the story, and from that moment she dominates the play as she dominates the hearts of her admirers. There is one, however, who does not feel her power—who does not even see her. And upon him are concentrated all her powers of fascination. For *Carmen* claims *all* hearts; universal must be her allegiance; no one may escape her lure. And when José remains sublimely unconscious of her beauty—of her very presence—the other ‘canaries,’ officers and men, the young gallants and the old beaux, are brushed aside. Selecting the most intimate thing she has about her—the rose that is being kissed by her own warm mouth—*Carmen* flings it against José’s cheek—and rushes off. These are the manners, doubtless, of a common cigarette girl desiring to at-

tract attention. But the underlying idea is hardly that of a street favourite. Carmen the beautiful, the all powerful, the Queen of Love, is demanding her rights. Cleopatra was never more tenacious of her prerogative. Old Egypt, the Sorceress, is asserting her demands of universal allegiance. Carmen must become the dominant factor in the heart of this Basque soldier.

"As the story progresses, see also how clearly the idea of the Seeress is brought out. The fate of the world lies in Carmen's hand—why not see what it may have in store for herself? With perfect faith in the future as it shall be told her among the shuffled spades and hearts, she deals her cards anxiously and with many forebodings—and once realising the message moves on to her destiny as one who knows and delights in the knowing.

"And as to the music. It seems as if no one else could so enter into the spirit of the story as has Bizet. A follower of Felicien David in Oriental feeling and a devout disciple of Wagner in his musical realism, Bizet was better equipped to picture *Carmen* in music than any other modern. More than this, Bizet, like Merimée, was a fatalist. He, also, was a believer in the evolution theory of the gypsy and eagerly grasped the recurring thought in Merimée of Carmen's Egyptian descent. And so, in his score, the union of word and music is as intimate and complete as that between Maeterlinck's poem of 'Pelleas et Melisande' and Debussy's setting of the mystic Belgian's tragedy.

"Years before *Carmen* was conceived, Bizet had painted many bits of Oriental colour. They were but small canvases, to be sure, but, small as they were, they were not so far in advance of the times to fail to receive at least a portion of the distinction they deserved. The orchestration of *Djamileh* pulsates with waves of Oriental passion, the incidental music to Daudet's *L'Arlesienne* mirrors the same breath of the East.

"Just how much of the dramatic force of the element of Fate that was

squeezed out of Merimée by Meilhac and Halévy was suggested by Bizet I do not know, but certain it is that he was quick to seize it and build his entire score upon it.

"Just as *Carmen* was Merimée's last word in his striking story form—for after finishing it he laid down his pen not to take it up again for twenty years and then only to find that it was irrevocably rusted—so was its musical setting Bizet's swan song. The failure of the opera broke his heart. Galli-Marie's portraits represent a handsome, gay, vivacious, artistic woman. There is nothing in them to suggest anything particularly 'devilish,' but the reports of her performance of *Carmen* are unanimous in denouncing the devilishness of her interpretation. Parisian matrons, accustomed to the more decorous tales of *opera bouffe* upon which they had so long been fed, drew aside their skirts and vowed never again to set foot within the precincts of their home of 'innocent amusement' until that dreadful Carmen creature was banished. The critics saw no symbolism in the character—saw nothing but a woman of the boulevards who had stepped from the street to the stage to vaunt and vend her wares. Fortunately, time has opened the eyes and the ears of the opera-goers and they have learned to love the beautiful in Merimée's story as well as in Bizet's music. And, as the public is seeing more and more the beauty of the story, so is it realising more and more how perfectly the story is mirrored in the music. Bizet caught the real meaning of Merimée's heroine and pictured her a heroine of Fate. Fate trembles in the violin strings in the orchestral introduction; it is at your elbow, oftentimes but faintly heard, whenever Carmen appears; it proclaims itself more insistently in the card scene and sweeps everything before it in those leaping crescendos of the final scene in the tragedy. It is often sounded, too, with that truly Egyptian combination of flute and harp. Here again is the same subtle connection between the Nile and the Guadalquivir—



CARMEN. OUTSIDE THE BULL RING

Merimée's gypsy thought set to Bizet's Egyptian music—an echo of the chants of Osiris in the tents of the smugglers of Cordova. There is a constant recurrence of Egyptian glints even in the Spanish rhythms that sway the dancers in Sillas Pastia's cabaret and in the final wild merrymaking in the open public square.

"In the original story, you will remember, Carmen willingly accompanies José Maria to the woods and there meets death at his hands as her punishment, possibly, but as the only outcome of her infidelity and the only fulfilment of her life.

"'Kill me, if you will. You cannot take away from me my joy of a greater love than I ever felt for you. I die a free woman.'

"In the opera this is changed for mere theatric interest. It is far more direct, far less subtle, for an operatic heroine to struggle for life in the glare of a public square than tamely to submit to being stabbed by a discarded lover in a lonely wood. But the idea is the same. It is the climax, the only end possible for this Fate-driven woman.

"And so, Carmen openly challenges José to do his worst, laughs at his threats, calls him a weakling, a detestable, whimpering sentimentalist, and flings his ring into his face as he plunges his knife into her heart. It is a dying but still defiant Carmen that stumbles across the threshold of the arena in which her toreador is receiving the plaudits of the public. The toll is paid."

THE CHRISTMAS CASKET

BY ALGERNON TASSIN

NOT only in the absence of European travel books, customarily so abundant at Christmas, may we, still safe and sound and at our daily tasks and pleasures, divine that the world is dislocated by war. Most of the eighteen books upon the reviewer's desk, far away in subject as they may be, have their valedictory chapters smeared by it. Even at Christmas, "here's the smell of blood still"; and all the perfumes of Arabia, wafted to us generally as we open the Christmas casket, may not sweeten the season's record of the world's work. But, ungracious as is the philosophy of the "ill wind," let us take what comfort we can that pen and brush, stayed unwillingly at home, have fared along our own roads and byways; and although, as Mrs. Hale breezily consoles herself, there are no historic chateaux or castles or walled towns by the way, there can be plenty of conversation with interesting folks that you meet. To this solace another may be added: you can be sure that—unlike many incurious or disdainful European natives—they will be equally interested in you. It has been Hobson's Choice for the Christmas writers to chat of American trips this year; and perhaps we shall live to misapply smilingly the familiar strain about the falling out that all the more endears. And if it be to a Western Booster that we owe the slogan "See America First," let us give the dev— dear one his due.

Mrs. Louise Closser Hale laughs as pertly at herself and you in her Christmas annual as she does in its title *We Discover New England*. And Mr. Walter Hale, who is the Man of Wrath to her Elizabeth, supplies contrast to its pages as well as many of his interesting and accomplished sketches. Both have mastered the art of the casual impression. There is also (How nice and

practical trippers are getting!) a route-map. Whichever way you take to get out of New York into New England, she writes, your friends will tell you that you had better have taken the other. Whichever way you go, history begins the moment you leave; but especially if you go to Yonkers. Westchester has a road which cost twenty thousand dollars a mile, but millionaires do not line it forever, and it soon gets worse. Some of the places at Lenox are so insufferably beautiful that you nearly become anarchistic because you can't get in. Pittsfield is a plain old lady with a heart of gold. In Williamstown a minister drinking tea reminded her that they are the only men in America who can drink it without self-conscious effort and stopping. A New Englander is like a Briton in that one feels at first that they are not to be endured and then finds them absolutely sound and simple. In Great Barrington the hot water wouldn't run and the clerk superiorly begged her to recollect that the house had been built in 1776. Mrs. Hale is much amused, as well she may be in a country so generally slipshod about such things, that everywhere one has to register for luncheon. In Vermont you are always in a stone's throw of luxury even if you'd never guess it; but with a little connivance the traveller can avoid all the big hotels and live excellently at the country hostelries. Not a single walking-party did they meet in New England, whereas on their motor trips abroad they were always coming across them. But on the other hand, you can ask your way with some assurance that if the person be ignorant he will admit it and not unbenevolently direct you wrong. But this, many lying signs in Maine will do, in order to get you to put up at their hotels for luncheon. At Poland Springs three