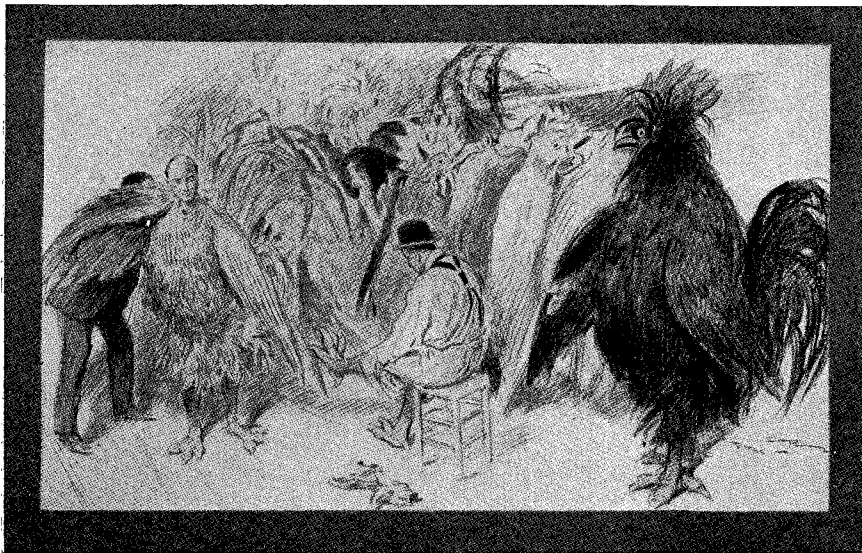


American public gallery brought to the tribunal for selling what in its day had passed for a great picture. We have come to a maturity, I believe, where we can afford to put away certain sly childish tricks. Let us cease coddling the artist by premature museum honors. Let us acknowledge that all contemporary judgments are highly fallible, and time the surest court of appeal. By buying modern work on probation we insure against its being forgotten and give it its chance to survive. Evidently no artist who shrinks from facing the verdict of a few years deserves a short cut to the abodes of the old masters."

## CARUSO AND LESSER STARS

THE male operatic idols take their turn. Placing the singers in their proper relations in the artistic scale is a task that Mr. W. J. Henderson has given himself, and a few weeks ago we quoted what he said about the women. It is a tenor who makes the most money by his voice, and this man, Enrico Caruso, "thrills



DRESSING FOR "CHANTICLEER."

French actors assuming the garbs that transform them into denizens of the barnyard.

the world by the naked glory of pure tone." For all that, it is to Jean de Reszke that Mr. Henderson awards the palm of being "the greatest male singer of our time." He won this place with a lyric instrument "not more than fairly good." His mastership, we are told in *The Ladies' Home Journal* (March), "consisted in his marvelous management of his voice, directed by a fine intelligence, exquisite artistic sensibility, and a poetic imagination." Mr. Henderson gives Mr. Caruso credit neither for "poetic sensibility nor high imagination." But—

"Enrico Caruso, let it be understood, is no mere swaggerer in the domain of vocal art. He has solid merits. His voice is, without question, the most beautiful tenor heard on the operatic stage in the last thirty years. This is his priceless gift, but he has not neglected it. The natural excellence of this voice has been carefully cultivated. From low C to high C Mr. Caruso's voice is a perfect scale and it is rich, mellow, sonorous, and intrinsically musical.

"When he sings as well as he can Mr. Caruso sings extremely well. His emission of tone is free, smooth, and natural. His treatment of phrases shows a certain musical instinct, tho it not infrequently betrays a lack of fine artistic fiber and high musical cultivation. His tone, however, is his most priceless possession, and it can not be too clearly stated that its beauty is due as much to good vocal technic as to the gift of Nature. Bad emission would—and sometimes does—destroy much of its true quality. . . .

"Mr. Caruso's singing combines marvelous beauty of tone and skill in emission with a certain dramatic feeling and some musical instinct. On the other hand, it is deficient in musical finish, in delicate sensibility, in poetic imagination, and, above all, in intellectual fiber. It is crude art, which with irresistible seduction

woos the sense rather than the intelligence. If Mr. Caruso united to his voice and tone-production the exquisite skill in light and shade of his adored predecessor, Italo Campanini, or the fastidious taste and subtle perceptions of Jean de Reszke, he would probably be the greatest tenor the world ever knew. But those who have observed his *Radames*, his *Cavaradossi*, his *Canio*, his *Nemorino*, and his *Faust* are well aware that he is most successful in rôles which permit the introduction of vociferous climaxes and ask for no daintiness of style nor nicety of comprehension."

Alessandro Bonci has a voice that is "pretty but not noble." Mr. Henderson calls it "thin" and "pallid" and declares it is "not fitted for the proclamation of heroic phrases." Further:

"It is an almost ideal voice for such rôles as the *Duke* in 'Rigoletto,' or *Don Ottavio* in 'Don Giovanni.' His voice production is excellent, tho a characteristic habit of emphasizing nasal resonance in the preparation of certain effects mars its merit. Perhaps, for the benefit of those to whom comparisons convey most information, it may be said that Caruso has a far more beautiful organ than Bonci, and that when he is singing perfectly his tone produc-

tion is more normal throughout the entire scale than that of the other tenor, but that Mr. Bonci is, nevertheless, his superior in the details of phrasing, nuance, and musical conception. In the absolute mechanics of singing Caruso is quite the equal of Bonci, but in its purely decorative properties the art of Bonci is unquestionably the finer. More than that, it may fairly be said that when he bends himself to the finished delivery of such an air as 'Dalla sua Pace' in 'Don Giovanni' Mr. Bonci reveals a command of breath control, phrasing, coloring, shading, and musical sensibility not matched by any other tenor now before the American public."

Zenatello has a "voice of stalwart proportions," "rich, powerful, and of sufficient range"; but "his method of tone production is not that of an artist." We read:

"Instead of permitting his throat to be open and his tones to flow freely through it, he squeezes it violently together and then drives out his tones by sheer muscular force. The natural result is that he can sing only at the top of his lungs. His efforts to sing softly are

almost invariably unsuccessful and sometimes are actually disastrous. The moment he diminishes the pressure on his vocal cords he begins to sing flat. Quite as often, when he seeks to escape this by putting the pressure on again, he sings sharp. Furthermore, there is never any elegance in his style, which is simply strenuous from the beginning of an opera to its end. This explains his popular triumph in 'Otello.'"

Without either the voice of Caruso or Zenatello, Charles Dalmores "is, with certain limitations, a genuine artist." Of him it is said:

"In spite of a lack of perfect freedom in his emission of tone, he produces a quality generally good and of musical character. He can sing piano, as almost all French tenors can, and a great deal more artistically than most of them. He phrases elegantly and with insight into the nature of the music. He excels in both declamatory and flowing song. He has a certain amount of imagination and not a little poetic warmth. Above all things, he respects the written letter of the score, for he is a thorough musician. For this very reason he sings musically and not mechanically. Taking him all in all, he is the most interesting and accomplished French tenor known in either Europe or America at this time. But he seldom excites audiences as do other tenors who utterly abandon artistic poise."

This does not finish off all the tenors; the German singers are not mentioned. There are notable barytones, but no basses considered in Mr. Henderson's article. Antonio Scotti is called the dean of the barytone gild, but he is treated as a man with a losing voice because "from the start he showed that he was prone to fall into temptation to gratify the appetite of the insatiable seeker after



large effects." "Gilbert is a remarkably good singer with a very poor natural voice." "His voice is not essentially musical, but he sings like a musician and with a taste in treatment of phrase and shading that is equaled by very few vocalists now before the public." Pasquale Amato, one of the newcomers, "is the most gifted of them all in so far as voice and physique are concerned"; but to Maurice Renaud is given the highest praise. Thus:

"Maurice Renaud sings with his brains, which is something that the ordinary tenor can not do for the reason that he appears not to have any. Renaud is a consummate artist. This must be interpreted as referring to his achievements in the domain of operatic impersonation and not solely to his vocal technic. The latter may have been better many years ago than it is now, but to-day Mr. Renaud resorts to many questionable devices in the endeavor to cover up deficiencies in his voice. He is yet in the years when his voice ought to be adequate to the demands of his repertory. That it is not argues that it has not been free from abuse in the years gone by. . . . Mr. Renaud is one of the greatest actors ever seen on the opera stage, and auditors need to consider carefully whether their judgment is influenced by absolute singing or by something to which song is merely an adjunct."

## ROSTAND THE SYMBOL OF FRANCE

PLATO described man as "a two-legged animal without feathers"; Rostand has presented the cock as a two-legged man with feathers. That in this simple and strong stroke of logic Rostand well represents the mind of his native country is the theme Mr. Chesterton works out in *The Illustrated London News*. He praises Rostand not only as "a very great man" but "a very great symbol." He sees him, in other words, as "the flower in our age of the infinite energy of France." The best French spirit is substantially "that logic is a living and creative thing, that it bears children." The French take one small idea and do a very strange thing with it—Rostand as symbolically French has done the thing with "Chanticleer." Mr. Chesterton writes:

"I speak first of the mere theatrical arrangement and scheme of the play. Rostand noticed one tiny unquestionable fact about men and birds. He knew that no other creature on this planet can be even remotely compared to man in the matter of what man has done. He is inevitably Christian enough to perceive that beavers build dams, but they do not build bridges, still less suspension-



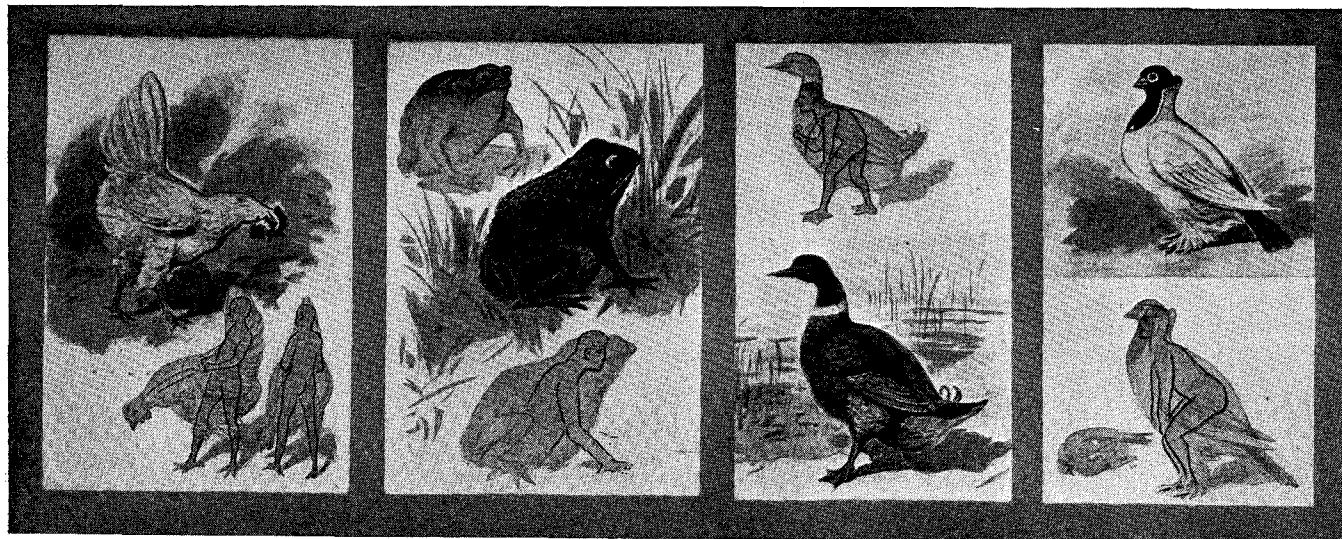
THE DOG,

The part assumed by Jean Coquelin. This diagram shows how he managed to play his four-legged part. Mr. Chesterton overlooked this part in saying the human couldn't be turned into the quadruped.

bridges. Ants build ant-hills, but they do not build ant-cathedrals or ant-statues or ant-Nelson Columns. He also knew (if he is the man whose works I have enjoyed) that the animals nearest to man in soul are not those that are most like him in civilization. It is the horse that has given his name to chivalry, not the beaver. The attempt of some romantic cavalier to ride upon a beaver would be (to say the least of it) as dubious as the proposal that a horse should build a dam. Man loves the lonely animal, not the civilized and gregarious animal. You pat a dog; you do not pat a rat. Nor do you pat an ant—you do not even try. If an ant were as big as an omnibus, it would certainly be easier to pat him; but even then I doubt if you would. All these alleged parallels between human society and beehives or beaver-dams are really quite objectless, tho very provocative. Well, through all this welter of wild biological comparison M. Rostand has seen, with the strange, abstract good sense of the Frenchman, that there is one connection between man and the other animals that could be put to theatrical effect. It is at once a trivial and a tremendous example of how France sees through all tangles the only practical thing—the idea."

The fancy of this English writer plays with the problem of enacting quadrupeds or beetles and dismisses both as unpractical because there would be needed four legs in one case and six in the other. But—

"In our slow English manner, by a process of exhaustion, we come within sight of that simple fact which the Frenchman saw suddenly in a flash. There is in the world another race, remote



Pictures from "L'Illustration," Paris.

HOW SOME OF THE ACTORS IN "CHANTICLEER" LOOKED INSIDE THEIR DISGUISES.