Australian Artistes in Song and Symphony

Being Brief Extracts from an Article in "Cassell's Magazine," by F. Mather Burton

SOMEONE, teasing an Australian, on a recent visit to London, said, "Your violets have no perfume, and your birds no notes like those of our nightingale."

"True," she replied, "we have no feathered songster to equal your rara avis, but our human nightingales are world-famous, and have the advantage of being more frequently heard than your much-vaunted nightingale."

Australia has indeed furnished many celebrated vocalists, and each season some fresh claimant for laurels is heard on the London concert platform.

Madame Melba, the renowned prima donna, is facile princeps in the long list of singers from the Sunny South land. Mrs. Armstrong took her name "Melba" from her native city Melbourne, Richmond, a few miles out of the town, has the honour of being her birthplace. Both her parents were musical people of Scotch family. Very wisely Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell gave their daughter Nellie the advantages of a good education, at the Presbyterian College, Melbourne, where her talents, musical and otherwise, were soon recognised. Later she studied singing under Madame Marchesi in Paris; her debut was as Gilda in Rigoletto at the Theatre de la Monnaie, Brussels, October, 1887. In London she was first heard in Lucia di Lammermoor and was much admired, but it was in Romeo and Juliet that she first took London by storm. Then, and ever since, as we all

MADAME ADA CROSSLEY.

Who had "Home, Sweet Home," translated into Maori, so as to sing it to the natives of New Zealand.

know, Europe and America have been enraptured by her voice.

At the farewell performance in America last year, Madame Melba was recalled no fewer than forty times. The audience remained after the opera La Boheme was concluded. The mad scene from Lucia generously given as an encore, the people crowded around the platform and threw flowers, etc. Madame Melba came down to them, saying, "Do go home." With one voice, the reply came, "We won't go home." So, graciously accepting the situation, she sat down to the piano and sang, and played to her enthusiastic admirers. Madame Melba has been decorated with various honours from the King of the Belgians, the Emperor of Austria, etc., and from King Edward VII. has received the Order of Science, Art and Literature. She has

sung before nearly all the crowned heads of Europe, and appeared at all gala and State functions given by the late Queen Victoria and the present King. As is usually the case with the really great

ones of the world, she is singularly unostentatious. She makes no special entry, but comes on with the whole company.

MADAME ADA CROSSLEY.

Madame Ada Crossley, a native of Gippsland, Australia, is related on her

mother's side to the family of the poet Cowley, and made her first appearance in Melbourne at a Philharmonic Concert in 1892, and at Queen's Hall in 1895. Since then she has been a reigning favourite. The Sydney people say that they "discovered" Ada Crossley, and they gave her quite an ovation before she started for England, where she soon gained admiration and popularity from Queen Victoria downwards.

On one occasion the singer was suffering severely from a sprained ankle, but rather than disappoint the audience she came on with the injured member in a bedroom slipper, and endeavoured to sing "Home, Sweet Home," but the pain was so great that she was unable to continue, whereupon the audience sang to her, and the words were, "She's a jolly good fellow, and so say all of us!" Ada

Crossley is now Mrs. Francis Muecke in private life, for she married Dr. Muecke, a South Australian by birth and a throat specialist by profession. He is naturally specially interested in the throats of great singers, and it was in the practice of his profession he had the pleasure of meeting his wife.

MISS IRENE AINSLEY.

"Madame Melba helped me a great deal with my singing. She has been my 'fairy godmother.'"

Miss Alice Hollander is also a prominent and popular singer from Australia.

MISS ALICE HOLLANDER.

Who was paid by the minute for her performances in America.

where she was born and spent many years of early life. Her mother is English and her father came from Buda Pest.

MISS ESTA D'ARGO.

Her singing of "Good-Bye" led one of her hearers to make up a quarrel with his betrothed.

She does not advertise herself as Australian, because, as she says, "There have been so many Australian

MISS ELYDA RUSSELL.

The violin was her special study until Professor Lauterbach persuaded her to learn singing.