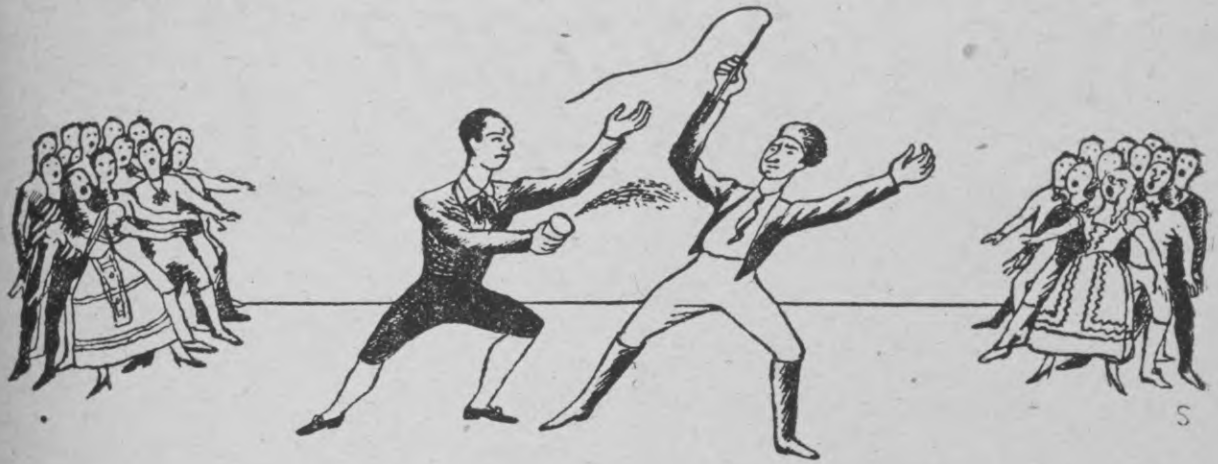


# A GUIDE TO OPERA



**C**ONFRONTED by an opera poster which advertises the bare name of an unfamiliar commodity, the prospective opera-goer may say to himself "Well, I'll try anything once." Doing so, without any knowledge of what is in store for him, may give him the impression that all opera is like the one he has just seen and heard. He may say, "If that's opera, I've had it."

All operas are, however, not alike, and even among the most popular ones there is a wide variety in theme and setting, as well, of course, as in the music. As a guide to those who are sufficiently intrepid to enter an opera house for the first time, the following condensed summary may be of some use.

**AIDA.**—Dramatic spectacle composed for the opening of the Suez Canal. Setting, ancient Egypt. Rousing music and stupendous staging.

**IL TROVATORE.**—Intricate but very dramatic plot of blue blood and gypsies. Many spectacular scenes and entertaining music.

**CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA.**—One-act opera of contemporary Italian venedetta. Light and popular music. One scene which, however, may be a very beautiful one.

**RIGOLETTO.**—Dramatic and easily followed story and tuneful music. One of the most popular of operas, and deservedly so.

**I PAGLIACCI.**—Opera in two acts. The original story of the clown with the broken heart. Well-known and popular music in a simple setting.

**MANON.**—Intrigue in the gambling hells of eighteenth century Paris. A tragically romantic plot with varied and interesting music.

**FAUST.**—The aged scholar barter his soul for a final fling of youth. Interesting story and well-known varied music.

**LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR.**—Walter Scott's baronial halls. Story of intrigue ending in madness and violent death. Haunting and very beautiful music.

**BARBER OF SEVILLE.**—The most popular comic-opera in the Italian repertory. Light and gay music and an almost incomprehensible story.

**LA TOSCA.**—Stark but spectacular drama. Settings in well-known buildings in Rome, ending in Castel S. Angelo. Intrigue, assassination, execution, and suicide. Musically memorable.

**MADAME BUTTERFLY.**—Tragically simple story of East meets West. Beautiful rather than spectacular staging. Familiar and touchingly melodious music.

**CARMEN.**—Eternal triangle with a turbulent Spanish gypsy as its focal point. Dramatic and satisfying musical spectacle.

**LA BOHEME.**—Artist's quarter of early nineteenth century Paris. A simple and plausible story with tunefully varied music.

**LA TRAVIATA.**—The Lady of the Camellias. Rich boy pursues lady of uncertain character in Paris as it used to be. Tuneful music throughout.