

The Home Forum

Elgar And Satire.

Cambria (Nelson).—In the current number of the "Record" I was disagreeably surprised to find a scathing reference to that widely-known and stirring British anthem, "Land of Hope and Glory."

The perpetrator of this unseemly criticism, Mr. Gordon Mirams, usually devotes his activities to reviews of current films and to matters pertaining to the motion picture industry generally, this being presumably the work to which he has been assigned. That his capabilities in this respect are recognised to the full by your readers, I have no doubt. His talents in this direction, however, do not in my opinion, allow him licence to pen such phrases as "That accursed jingoistic tune" and "treating Land of Hope and Glory with the disrespect it deserves"; neither will his "chortlings of joy" and

expressions Caloo! Calay! etc., in evidence of his pleasure at hearing the late Sir Edward Elgar's immortal composition played in "Swing Time" gain him a great deal of prestige with his readers.

Possibly Mr. Mirams does not realise that his remarks infer a denunciation of one of England's most illustrious musicians. Sir Edward Elgar's reputation was firmly established by his composition, "The Dream of Gerontius." His other works include two orchestral symphonies and the opera "Falstaff." The composition in question was produced in 1902. As a culmination of the honours bestowed upon him the composer became Master of the King's Musick in 1924.

It will thus be seen that the subject of Mr. Mirams's ill-advised rantings has an eminent origin, and despite his avowed dislike, it seems safe to assert that it will be sung with patriotic fervour, as in the past, long after the swing music of which he seems so enamoured has been forgotten.

The foregoing remarks are written in order to act as a possible deterrent upon Mr. Mirams's inclinations, if any, which might ultimately lead him to make, for example, the sentiments expressed in "God Save the King" the object of his further vituperations.

Gordon Mirams Replies.

"The writer apparently failed to recognise that my remarks were satirical, in keeping with a review of a highly satirical picture. In fairness, I think he should also write in protest to the producer of "Nothing Sacred" who, after all, was the first to treat "Land of Hope and Glory" with the disrespect I still think it deserves. And I think that, not because Sir Edgar Elgar wrote it (I have full admiration for his reputation as a composer) but because this particular composition, in itself very stirring, has become hackneyed by being played from the screen—and elsewhere—nearly every time there is a reference to anything particularly British. That was the point of the joke in this picture. By the way, has "Cambria" seen it yet? If not, mightn't it have been fairer to have controlled his patriotic urge until he had? Nor do I think he has given me enough credit for having used the phrase "jingoistic tune" instead of "patriotic tune"—there is a world of difference, which "Cambria," however, could perhaps not be expected to recognise. Have another look, my friend, at the words of "Land of Hope and Glory"—particularly those about "wider still and wider shall her bounds be set"—and then tell me if they aren't a trifle too rampantly Imperialistic for this modern age? It is suggested that this subject is outside my sphere, but I hasten to point out that, to a conscientious critic, there is nothing sacred.

Negro Singer Who Is Against Fascism

PAUL ROBESON, the great American negro singer, made a stay of 24 hours in Barcelona on his return journey from Madrid. He was visited by the Commissioner of Information of the Generalitat (Government) of Catalonia, Jaume Miravittles, and by the well-known folklorist and musician, Joan Gols i Soler, with both of whom he discussed the music of Catalonia, both ancient and modern.

A number of songs collected by Senor Gols are already in Mr. Robeson's repertoire, and arrangements were made for him to obtain others.

"Spain," said Mr. Robeson, in an interview with the "Manchester Guardian," "is fighting the cause of all the human race. As an anti-Fascist I think any other political distinctions should be sunk, as they are being sunk here in Spain, while the common enemy of all liberty is attacking us all."

"My own case is an example. Because of my race, and for no other reason, I should never have been permitted to develop my voice and create my career in any country under Fascist rule."

"In the democracies the negro has to struggle against prejudices, but not against an actual crushing law."

ITALIAN OPERA

Impresario Will Choose N.Z. Singers For Chorus

OF special interest to choral societies is the news that Signor Franco Izal, noted Italian opera singer and impresario, will be arriving in New Zealand early next month for the purpose of holding auditions and selecting singers for use in the chorus of the Dal Verme-Moretini Italian Grand Opera Company, which will be presented under the direction of Sir Benjamin Fuller in this country later in the year.

The company will begin a tour of Australia early in June, and it is proposed to pick the chorus from among Australian and New Zealand singers.

Signor Izal will be remembered for his association with the Imperial Grand Opera Company which toured New Zealand about five years ago.

There is a romantic flavour to his coming visit to the Dominion, for not only will he be choosing singers and arranging the New Zealand end of the tour, but he will also be on his honeymoon. Just before he comes here he is marrying—in Sydney—Evelyn Hall, the contralto who took the place of Evelyn Gardner in the J. C. Williamson Gilbert and Sullivan Company when Miss Gardiner left in the middle of the season to take up a contract in New York.

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