

The Bat

(Die Fledermaus.)

[Opéra comique, in three acts; text by Haffner and Genée. First produced in Vienna, July, 1874.]

PERSONAGES.

Eisenstein. Alfred, singing-master. Frosch, court usher. Frank, prison director. Dr. Blind, attorney. Dr. Falke, notary. Ivan, Prince Chamberlain. Ali Bey, an Egyptian. Murray, an American. Cancorney, a Marquis. Rosalind, wife of Eisenstein. Prince Orlofsky. Adele, Rosalind's maid. Lord Middleton.

[Dancers, masqueraders, etc.]

The scene is laid in Germany; time, the last century.

Strauss' "Die Fledermaus," or "The Bat," is founded upon Meilhac and Halévy's "Le Revillon." In music it is Viennese; in dramatic effect, it is French. The scene opens with Adele, maid of the Baroness Rosalind, seeking permission to visit her sister Ida, a ballet-dancer, who is to be at a masked ball given by Prince Orlofsky, a Russian millionaire. She receives permission, and after she has gone, Dr. Falke, a notary, who has arranged the ball, calls at the house of the Baron Eisenstein, and induces him to go to it before going to jail, to which he has been sentenced for contempt of court. The purpose of the doctor is to seek revenge for his shabby treatment by the Baron some time before at a masquerade which they had attended,-- Eisenstein dressed as a butterfly, and Falke as a bat. The doctor then notifies the Baroness that her husband will be at the ball. She thereupon decides that she will also be present. An amusing scene occurs when the Baron seeks to pass himself off as a French marquis, and pays his devotions to the ladies, but is quite astonished to find his

wife there, flirting with an old lover. There are further complications caused by Falke, who manages to have Alfred, the singing-master, in the Baroness' apartments when the sheriff comes to arrest the Baron, and arrests Alfred, supposing him to be Eisenstein. In the last act, however, all the complications are disentangled, and everything ends happily.

It would be impossible to name the conspicuous numbers in this animated and sprightly work without making a catalogue of them all. The opera is a grand potpourri of waltz and polka motives and fresh, bright melodies. The composer does not linger long with the dialogue, but goes from one waltz melody to another in a most bewildering manner, interspersing them with romanzas, drinking-songs, czardas, an almost endless variety of dance rhythms and choruses of a brilliant sort. It is a charming mixture of Viennese gayety and French drollery, and, like his "Roman Carnival" and "Queen Indigo," is the very essence of the dance.