

Maid Marian

[Comic opera, in three acts; text by Harry B. Smith. First produced at Chestnut Street Opera House, Philadelphia, Pa., November 4, 1901.]

PERSONAGES.

Sheriff of Nottingham. Little John. Robin Hood. Will Scarlet. Friar Tuck. Allan a Dale. Guy of Gisborne. Dame Durden. Giles, }
Geoffrey, } gamekeepers. Yussuf, a slave merchant. Sir H. Vere de }
Vere, } Sir Hugh Montford, } Knights of St. George. Amina, a snake-
charmer. Lady Vivian. Maid Marian.

[Huntsmen, men at arms, Saracen warriors, mummers, Crusaders, etc.]

The scene is laid in England and Palestine; time of Richard the First.

The story of "Maid Marian" introduces most of the familiar characters in "Robin Hood" and some new ones, and the scene alternates between Sherwood Forest and Palestine. It is intended as a sequel to the latter opera. The plot begins at the point where Maid Marian and Robin Hood were betrothed. Robin has joined the Crusaders and left Marian on the eve of the wedding. He also leaves a letter for Marian in Little John's charge, directing her in case of trouble to apply to him for help. This letter is stolen by the Sheriff of Nottingham, who substitutes for it a forged missive calculated to make her believe that Robin is false. The first act closes with the arrival of Little John and the forest outlaws, who leave for the holy war. Marian joins them to seek for Robin.

The second act opens in the camp of the Crusaders, near the city of Acre. Maid Marian has been captured by the Saracens and sold into slavery, but is rescued by Robin Hood. Then the Sheriff of Nottingham and Guy of Gisborne, the latter still intent upon marrying

Marian, appear in the disguise of merchants and betray the camp into the hands of the Saracens. Dame Durden's encounter with the Sheriff and Friar Tuck's antics as an odalisque add merriment to the story.

In the last act all the principals are back in England and the scene opens with a Christmas revel in Huntington Castle. Robin thwarts all the schemes of the Sheriff, comes into his rights, and is reunited to Maid Marian.

While the story lacks in interest as compared with that of "Robin Hood," the music gains in dramatic power and seriousness of purpose, and at the same time is full of life and vivacity. The overture is notable for being in genuine concert form,--the first instance of the kind in comic opera for many years past,--and thus naturally sets the pace, as it were, for the opera, and gives the clew to its musical contents. The most noticeable numbers in the first act are the Cellarer's Toast, "The Cellar is dark and the Cellar is deep," a rollicking song for Scarlet, Friar Tuck, and chorus; the charmingly melodious "Song of the Falcon," "Let one who will go hunt the Deer," for Maid Marian; the Sheriff's song, "I am the Sheriff Mild and Good," which is always popular; and a delightful madrigal, the quintette "Love may come and Love may go." The second act contains many pleasing and characteristic songs, among them "The Monk and the Magpie," sung by Scarlet and chorus; the "Song of the Outlaw," a spirited ballad by Robin Hood; the Sheriff's serenade, a popular tune, "When a Man is in Love"; "The Snake Charmer's Song," by Maid Marian; and the vigorous "Song of the Crusader" by Robin; but the two most effective numbers are a graceful song, "Tell me again, Sweetheart," sung by Allan a Dale, and the duet in waltz manner, "True Love is not for a Day," by Robin and Marian. The third act is largely choral, the introductory Christmas carolling and dance rhythms being especially effective, but it contains one of the best solo numbers in the work, the dainty song with chorus, "Under the Mistletoe Bough." The music throughout is dramatic, strong, and well written. While the opera has not been as popular as its predecessor,

yet the music is of a higher order, and occasionally approaches grand opera in its breadth and earnestness.