

Swiss success at Covent Garden

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SWISS SUCCESS AT COVENT GARDEN.

Many will have read the enthusiastic notices accorded by the British Press to the art of M. Ernest Mestrallet at Covent Garden's recent performance of Carmen, without realizing that the famous bass is of Swiss nationality. His home is near Geneva, but it was at the opera of Monte Carlo that he attracted the attention of Sir Thomas Beecham, and was engaged by him to sing at Covent Garden, two parts in Carmen, doubling the rôle of the soldier in the first act with that of Dancaïro, the brigand chief in the second and third acts.

True, neither of these parts are large, but nevertheless, the *Daily Telegraph* critic wrote of M. Mestrallet's "outstanding success" before mentioning the bigger parts of Don José, Carmen's lover, and Escamillo, the Toreador.

M. Mestrallet returned to Geneva with his wife after the last performance of "Carmen" on Sunday evening, but it is more than likely that he will be re-engaged next year, probably in one of his bigger rôles.

"The success of Ernest Mestrallet," writes a correspondent who was present at Covent Garden on Sunday, "was immediate because the curtain had not risen before he had established his personality as a heavy cavalry soldier with a sense of humour and vivacity that goes with the music of the part. He had the advantage of being French-Swiss, and they alone beside Frenchmen can sing perfect French; thus every syllable he sang told in a way that a Spanish Carmen's or a Corsican Don José's could not hope to do. There was an English conductor (none other than Sir Thomas Beecham), a German stage director and an Italian "souffleur," but Ernst Mestrallet carried the France of Bizet and the Opéra Comique, across the footlights.

As Dancaïre, the brigand chief in the drinking den and later in the mountains, he must have fulfilled Bizet's dream of a huge, picturesque rascal with the saving grace of a kindly heart. Every note and gesture were true to life. Indeed, by the end of the performance, I had admitted Mestrallet into a private Olympian height where Calvé is forever Carmen, Anseau always the luckless corporal, and dear dark, swaggering Vignaud the eternal Toreador. Mestrallet is their equal."

A.G.

**ACADEMY CINEMA,
Oxford Street.**

"La Dame aux Camélias" is so well known that it would be invidious for me to tell the story of the adventures of the unhappy Marguerite, her life and death from consumption as conceived on the stage.

Some of us will remember Sarah Bernhardt as Marguerite in the play.

The present film version keeps very closely to the original story. The part of Marguerite is taken by Yvonne Printemps and that of Armand Duval by Pierre Fresnaye.

It is said that this is the first film in which Yvonne Printemps has appeared and she is certainly very charming and has made a great success of the part.

The period costumes are delightful, and there are some very fine scenic effects especially in the scenes in which Duval and Marguerite go to stay in the country.

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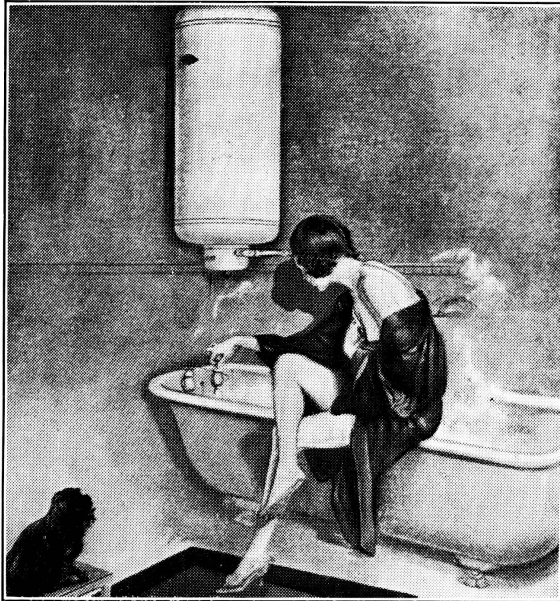
SWISS SUCCESS AT PRAGUE SHOW.

At the International Tourist Exhibition, which was held at Prague recently, a Questionnaire was handed to all visitors of the Show. According to the answers written out, the finest exhibition stand was that representing Switzerland, and the best poster Herbert Matter's new Swiss Road Placard. The Prague Press also commented upon the subject, complimenting Switzerland for its graphic art.

HOW MANY LAKES ARE THERE IN SWITZERLAND?

A glance at a map of Switzerland shows the abundance of lakes in this country, and it would be difficult to guess their number.

Leaving aside 13,000 ponds, there are 14 lakes in the Jura hills, 112 on the Swiss plateau and 1,358 in Alpine heights. Of the latter 590 are in the Grisons, 351 of which are situated in the basin of the Rhine, 157 in that of the Inn, 73 in that of the river Po, and 9 in the Adige basin. Altogether there are 1,484 Swiss lakes.



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