he was sensible enough to let you think it over. Tell him you spent the night at the hotel, and you do not know where the man spent the night. Tell him you went back home the next day."

She sighed and threw out her hands in a little gesture of hopelessness. "I'm afraid," she said slowly.

"Afraid?" he laughed, scorning the idea.

"Afraid of his people, of his training. They think so much of birth and conventionality."

"You need not tell them. He is the only one who has the right to know. Why, he's the hero of this place! What do you care how all the rest of them crack their heels on the tombstones of their ancestors, if he knows—and understands? And he will understand. The hero always understands."

"I can't do it!" she repeated, defiant again.

The Englishman went over and put his cool hand on hers. "If you do not tell him," he said, smiling into her eyes, "there will never be the truth between you—never. And some day, somebody who knows the story will tell him. I will not always be there to help, as I was tonight. I know you, as everybody else in Detonade knew you. There is none finer or better than you. He loves you, you say. If he does love you, he will take you into his arms when he hears the story. He knows you're too good for him."

"But suppose—suppose," she said fearfully, "he distrusted me?" She moved restlessly in the big chair, as if the thing was too heavy for her brain. "Ah, Mr. Harleigh," she breathed softly, "this is my first great happiness! You know what my life out there was,—poverty and privations. And my father—why, he struck me once, Mr. Harleigh! He beat me!" She shuddered, and put a hand to each of her cheeks.

"Now I am about to be repaid for all I endured. I can dream out the dream of my girlhood. When my father struck me, I felt two things,—the crushing shame of such treatment, and the desire, the yearning, for happiness in the future. When a man is humiliated, he is kept up, I believe, by his confidence that some day he will conquer. When a woman is thrust into misery, her salvation is the savage desire for the happiness she knows the world owes her."

Her words came very fast, and she gripped the arms of the chair until she whitened the tips of her fingers.

"And now I am about to be given that happiness for which I longed, of which I felt so confident even in my degradation. It is the happiness that carries with it protection, consolation. You don't know what that means to a woman, Mr. Harleigh, the first glittering bubble of happiness. Do you ask me to break it, to throw it away? Shall I tell George that my father beat me and abused me, and that I—I compromised myself in an insane desire to escape it all by marrying a man who, out of pity, asked me to be his wife? What would he think of me? He worships me now, Mr. Harleigh. If—if— It would break my heart. It would—really!"

Harleigh stood up straight, taking his hand from Miss Berry's and laughing. "In the first place," he said, "Nielson will know that any man who asked you to marry him was in love with you. In the second place, you exaggerate the consequences of that episode. It doesn't look so bad as you think. It's all your imagination."

"Anyway," she concluded, "I will not tell him."

The Englishman walked the length of the room and back. "If you don't tell him," he said, "I shall."

"You!" she said sharply. "Why would you dare to interfere?"

"For your own future happiness," he answered, hands in his pockets, his lips wreathed in smiles. "Just think what it would mean if somebody who had been in Detonade met your husband in New York or Washington and told him the story. You think such a thing impossible. You remember Sam Walcott? He's a millionaire now, with homes in New York and San Francisco. And Dick Jackson, he struck it rich and hangs around Washington half the year. You see you won't escape it. Isn't that true?"

"I suppose so," she assented sadly.

"You know," he supplemented, "these little things make no difference before you're married; but matrimony multiplies past mistakes."

He paused; but she did not answer, and he walked to the window, pulling aside the curtain so that he might look out. Above the sound of the fiddles in the ballroom there rang out from the thicket the tumultuous song of the mockingbird.

A TRAP drew up at the gate, and a tall, heavily built man with his left shoulder perceptibly higher than the other stepped to the ground.

"Come here!" said the Englishman, for the first time making his words a command.

She went to the window.

"Look!" he said, and pointed to the big man, who had his hand on the latch of the gate.

"Who is it?" she asked. Her hand on his shoulder was like a leaf blown by the wind.

"Billy Templeton," he answered quietly, "the Templeton nobody liked in Detonade."

"Oh!" she said miserably. She went back to the big leather chair, almost sobbing.

He let the curtain fall. "He's the nice fellow who brought the story here," he said contemptuously.

"I suppose so," she dragged out the words. "I heard this afternoon that a Mr. Templeton had taken the old Ransom place; but I never thought—thought it was he."

He went near her and half sat on the table. "We're making a tragedy out of nothing!" he exclaimed. "Really, we are." Now, more than ever, his laugh was like the foam that laces the edge of deep waters. "You see, the thing is past hiding from young Nielson. So far as Templeton is concerned, I'll attend to him. Before morning he will tell Mrs. Nielson that he was grievously mistaken. He isn't the bravest man in the world. I can manage him easily—quite easily."

The glow from the lamp lit up his ugly, irregular features, and showed, above the laughing lips, the anguish of anxiety in his eyes. She stood up slowly and ran her thumb mechanically along the edge of the table.

"You will tell him?" he asked again. "It's really nothing at all. And remember, unless you do, you will have deceived him."

"You think—you think he will believe—" she hesitated.

"I wouldn't do him the injustice of thinking anything else," he said quickly. "He's the hero, and you're the heroine. It can't go wrong."

He stood up straight, the laughter rippling from his throat, a flush upon his cheeks, and in his eyes a half commanding, half diffident audacity.

"Yes," she said finally, "I'll tell him. Ask him to come here, if you will."

Without a word, he started from the room. At the door he was stopped by her voice.

"Please come back with him!" she said dully.

WHEN the two men found her, she was standing beside the table, opening and shutting her fan with trembling fingers. She was more beautiful than young Nielson had ever seen her.

She wasted no time. Now that she had made up her mind, she rushed into the story. "George," she said, her voice at first tremulous, "there is something I want to tell you, and I want Mr. Harleigh to be here, because he knows all about it."

While she went through with it, Nielson stood dumbfounded. He was a handsome, dark haired man, a little under the Englishman's thirty-two years, with kindly eyes. Only his mouth showed the inheritance of his mother's pride and temper. Once he looked at Harleigh in amazement; but after that he kept his eyes on the girl, who told her story in low tones that had become steady after the first few sentences.

"That is all, I think," she ended. "Yes, all—quite. It was nothing but folly on my part. But my father, George—he had beaten me, and I had some pride!"

She stood perfectly still, feverish light in her eyes as she looked at the man she was to marry. For a moment he was silent.

Her head went up with a jerk, and anger came into her voice. "Oh," she burst out, "you do not understand! You are doubting me! If you had dared doubt me out there, where there were real men, brave men, you would never have—"

"Can't you see she's waiting for you to speak?" cut in the Englishman, his words cold as steel.

Young Nielson advanced a step. "I am dumbfounded," he said, "that she should ever have thought it necessary to tell me the story at all. What have you to do with it?"

"Nothing—nothing at all," replied Harleigh, the laugh again in his throat. "She merely asked me to be here."

Young Nielson took her in his arms and looked over her shoulder at Harleigh.

THE Englishman went out of the library and down the walk leading to the gate. As he walked, there was about him the silver splendor of the moon, with the big red roses breathing fragrance to the midnight air. From the ballroom came the sound of the violins playing the song of a lover to a Bohemian girl, the song begging for remembrance when other lips and other hearts tell her their tales of love.

The Englishman leaned on the gate and took from his breast pocket an official looking document worn at the edges, yellowed by handling. It was a marriage license issued in the State of Nevada. It bore the names Elise Berry and John Harleigh.

He struck a match and set fire to the paper, holding it in his hand until the last fragment fluttered to the ground and flamed into a black crisp.

Then he went back to the ballroom.

LET YOUR CHILDREN SING

BY JOHANNA GADSKI

SO much is talked and written these days of singing actors and acting singers, of impersonations, of star conductors, of orchestral readings, that the art which is at the very foundation of opera only too often appears to be totally forgotten—I mean the art of song. And yet, without the art of song, opera never could have existed, and, despite the enthusiasm of certain modern composers, there seems little reason to suppose that conditions will change in the future. Yet how many operatic singers today really understand the art of song, are true masters of its mere technic? I fear they are fewer than most people believe. It is true that at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York conditions are different; but this is only because the wealth of that institution allows it to draw the very best from all over the world. Go to the various opera houses in Germany, France, or even Italy, and the truly capable singers are few and far between.

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Johanna Gadski.

The reasons for this state of affairs are several; but first and foremost comes the unwillingness of young singers to study sufficiently before appearing on the stage. We are living in a feverish, quickly moving age. Everyone wants to get ahead as fast as possible; a little faster than his or her neighbor. In America this is particularly the case. Nowhere in the world are there such good voices as in America. On my last trip to the Pacific Coast I listened to about eighty young singers, and of these at least twenty had really remarkable voices. Such a proportion is unknown in Europe. Yet many of these young singers ruin their voices simply by trying to get ahead too quickly.

Hard work is an excellent thing, and American singers are not averse to it; but they must realize that intelligent work is even more necessary. In their anxiety to get ahead they work day and night, not realizing that learning to sing is very different from learning a language; that the throat is an exquisitely delicate organ and must be treated with the greatest care. Young singers will study two years and work six hours a day, when they should study six years and work only two hours a day. How many beautiful voices are ruined by this forcing process! It is truly pitiful to think of it.

And even those who survive often arrive on the stage absolutely unprepared for the work they are called upon to do. This is specially the case in Germany. There most young singers wish to make their début in Wagner; whereas Wagnerian roles are the very last parts a singer should undertake. These singers after a short period of study—say a year, or often only six months—appear on the stage, shout through their parts, and after a few seasons retire with hopelessly damaged voices.

I firmly believe that a singer should study at least five or six years before thinking of appearing on the stage. Neither do I believe that a child can begin too young. If a child has a voice, she will sing anyhow, and it is better that she be taught to sing correctly than to be allowed to ruin her voice by singing incorrectly. I began to study at seven, despite opposition from those who told my parents I would ruin my voice; yet I have never for an instant regretted it.

A singer, before appearing in opera, ought to be thoroughly grounded in *bel canto*, no matter whether she intends to sing Wagner or Donizetti. To sing in opera as opera ought to be sung needs an absolute command of the old art of *bel canto*. Let the singer begin in the lighter parts of the Italian composers, such as Rossini or the early Verdi, and above all let her study and sing constantly Mozart. Mozart's is far and away the most difficult music to sing; but it is music more than any other that trains the voice as it should be trained. I make it a rule after singing a Wagnerian work to sit down at the piano and go through some Mozart aria, and I have always found it a splendid correction in bringing my voice down from the high tension imposed upon it by the heavier music. A singer ought to be able to sing Wagner one day and Mozart the next; yet such a condition is possible only with an artist who has been thoroughly trained in *bel canto*. To my mind the greatest operatic artist of today is Lilli Lehmann, who is equally great in Wagner and Mozart.

Yet I realize that the desire for quick success is not the only reason for the decay in the vocal art. Too many of the modern composers write apparently solely for the orchestra, regarding the human voice but as another instrument in the great ensemble. Particularly true is this of Richard Strauss, who indeed has no hesitation in saying that he does not care whether or not his operas are suited to display the art of song. I remember one day complaining of this, and asking him why he did not have more regard for the singer. His answer was a smile, and, "Mme. Gadski, my operas are not meant to be sung by such singers as yourself." Despite Strauss's genius, I cannot think this is the correct attitude. The human voice is the most delicate and most beautiful of instruments; the more beautiful since it is the gift not of man but of nature. The great classic composers all recognized this fact and wrote their operas accordingly. They recognized that beautiful singing was the chief support of their art. At present this idea seems to suffer a partial eclipse; but I cannot believe that it is an eclipse that is to last. I feel there will come a return to sounder standards. One of the most talented of the young composers, Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari, has shown in his "Le Donne Curiosa" that he recognizes this necessity. Let us hope that others will follow in the path that he has pointed out, and that the art of pure song, of *bel canto*, will once again be recognized as a *sine qua non* of opera.

Toward this end, I should advise every young singer to begin to study singing as early as possible, and on no account to make an operatic début before she has thoroughly grounded herself in the technic of her art. Five or six years of apparently unremunerative study may seem at first intolerable; but they are years absolutely necessary for a singer who would make a lasting success.