

companion: their book has proved them an ideal combination.

This volume will be the standard authority on the greatest singer of his time and perhaps the greatest voice of all times. Its emphasis is on the facts of Caruso's life, facts which are exhaustive yet splendidly selected and marshaled. From these facts, supplemented by passages of shrewd psychological comment, the reader will be able to deduce his own estimate of the man, the man whom all his fellow artists loved.

Mr. Key has presented his material with admirable clarity, and has gone for it to the persons most capable of reporting events truthfully. A special word of praise should be given for the way the biographer has treated the more delicate passages in the great tenor's life. The very simplicity of their treatment has placed Caruso in a light which robs them of all offense. Here is a biographer who has realized that whitewash destroys the very effect it aims at. By telling the plain facts, he has given us a veritable picture of the world's greatest tenor, who was at once a superb artist and a lovable man.

Of special interest is Mr. Key's analysis of Caruso as a singer, an analysis which shows unusual insight into the voice and its meaning. This particular chapter I should advise all young singers to read. It is worth many lessons in itself. In short, Mr. Key and Signor Zirato have given to operatic literature a volume of sterling worth and one which will long be read both for its content and its style.

Mme. Emma Calvé's "My Life" is a very different sort of book. It makes no pretense of being a definitive life, but is evidently compiled from a series of magazine articles. Its writing lacks the restraint of the Caruso book, and

ECHOES OF OPERA

By Orville Harrold

TO me as to all other operatic tenors of his time, Enrico Caruso was a god, but to me he was also something more—he was a friend. Often when I think of him I cannot believe that he is dead, his personality was so vibrant and so vital; and it was with a feeling of extraordinary poignancy that I took up the great tenor's life and realized that an irrevocable finis was written at the end. Enrico Caruso was as an artist fortunate in his life; his death has left him fortunate in his biographers. Pierre Key knew him well and Bruno Zirato was his devoted friend and

it is frankly a little too much in the Pollyanna vein. From reading it one would believe that Mme. Calvé had always lived in the best of all possible worlds and that sorrow or suffering never left their marks upon her. I feel that by giving this impression she has been unjust to herself. Mme. Calvé was a great, a moving, and a sincere artist, and her art was not expressed by the sentimental exclamations of a schoolgirl; yet unfortunately, this is the impression given by her book. It simply proves again that those who choose one medium of expression as their life work are too often lost when they attempt another medium.

But this does not mean that there is not much interesting matter in the volume. Many of the anecdotes are most engaging. For instance, Mme. Calvé's story of meeting Oscar Wilde in London at the height of his glory and having him bring in Paul Verlaine attired like a vagabond, with its se-

quel a few years later in Paris when she saw Wilde again, this time almost in the same condition as had been Verlaine, is related in a poignant manner. Her tributes, too, to her fellow artists are generous and enthusiastic. Particularly eloquent is her apostrophe to Victor Maurel, whom she calls her teacher and master in the art of lyric declaration. In speaking of the artists with whom she sang during her first season at the Metropolitan Opera House, she writes: "Foremost among them was Victor Maurel, the great tragedian, a man of genius." She speaks of his Falstaff, his Iago, and his Don Giovanni as standing alone. This in a company which included Jean de Reszke, Edouard de Reszke, Paul Plançon, Sembrich, Eames, and Nordica. There were giants in those days!

Enrico Caruso, A Biography. By Pierre V. R. Key in collaboration with Bruno Zirato. Little, Brown and Co.
My Life. By Emma Calvé, translated by Rosamond Gilder. D. Appleton and Co.