

The Trumpeter of Säkkingen

[Opera comique, in a prelude and three acts; text by Bunge. First produced at the Stadt Theatre, Leipsic, May 4, 1884.]

PERSONAGES.

Baron of Schoenau. Margaretha, his daughter. Count of Wildenstein. Countess Wildenstein, the Baron's cousin. Damian, the Count's son by a second marriage. Werner Kirchoff, the "trumpeter." Conradin, a trooper.

[Heralds, youths, maidens, peasants, school children, students, troopers, etc.]

The scene is laid in Säkkingen, on the Rhine; time, the year 1650, near the close of the Thirty Years' War.

Few operas have had the advantage of such an excellent book as Nessler's "Trumpeter of Säkkingen," and few light operas have had their stories so legitimately and skilfully illustrated with music. The text is based upon the metrical romance of Victor von Scheffel's "Trumpeter Von Säkkingen," known and admired all over Germany, which tells the story of the young Werner and the fair Margaretha, their romantic wooing and final union. The time is near the close of the Thirty Years' War, and the hero is Werner Kirchoff, a handsome, dashing young student, who, with others of his comrades, is expelled from the University of Heidelberg because of their frequent carousals. They join a body of troopers, Werner in the capacity of a trumpeter, and go with them to Säkkingen. While there he has the good fortune to protect Margaretha, on a saint's fête day, from the rudeness of some Hauenstein peasants who are ready for a revolt against the Baron von Schoenau, her father. Margaretha, who is in company with the Countess Wildenstein, a cousin of the Baron, who has separated from her husband, gratefully gives Werner a forget-me-not. The Countess

inquires his name of his trooper comrade, Conradin, and is struck with his resemblance to her son who had been carried off by gypsies in his childhood. In the next scene the Baron has received a letter from Count Wildenstein, in which he states that his second wife has died, that he wishes to settle the misunderstanding with his first wife, the Countess, and proposes Damian, his son by the second marriage, as a husband for Margaretha,--a proposal which the Baron promptly accepts. When Margaretha enters and tells of her adventures with Werner, the Baron regrets that his old trumpeter, Rassmann, is not alive to summon assistance from the city in case of attack by the peasants. Margaretha tells him of Werner, and notwithstanding the Countess' objections, he gives the position to him.

The second act opens with a love scene between Werner and Margaretha, which is discovered by the Countess, who at once informs the Baron. When Werner asks him for the hand of Margaretha, he not only refuses it, but orders him to leave the castle. Werner takes his farewell of Margaretha, and leaves for his old position with the troopers in the city. Meanwhile the Count of Wildenstein arrives with Damian, but he makes no impression upon Margaretha notwithstanding the Baron's favor.

In the last act the dénouement comes quickly. The peasants attack the castle, and the Baron calls upon Damian to head his retainers and go out to meet the mob. He proves himself, however, an arrant coward, and in the midst of his irresolution Werner rides up at the head of his troopers, performs prodigies of valor, and saves the inmates of the castle. A birthmark upon his arm reveals him as the long-lost son of the Countess, and nothing now stands in the way of Margaretha's and Werner's felicity.

In the prelude and first act the most noticeable numbers are the students' and troopers' choruses, written in the best German style--the prelude indeed is almost entirely choral; the peasants' choruses and lively dances on St. Fridolin's Day; the characteristic growl of the

Baron over his gout and the unreasonable peasants; and the charming lyric sung by Margaretha, "How Proud and Grand his Bearing." The most conspicuous numbers in the second act are a lyric sung by Werner, "On Shore I played me a Merry Tune"; the love scene between Margaretha and Werner, "Sun, has thy Light not grown in Splendor?" the dramatic quintette, "Must so soon the Sunshine vanish?" and Werner's sentimental and beautiful farewell, "Oh, it is sad that in this Life below." The principal numbers of the third act are Margaretha's song, "My Love rode out to the Wide, Wide World"; the May song, "There comes a Youth of Sweet Renown"; the pantomime and dance composing a May idyll; the duet for Margaretha and Werner, "True Love, I give thee Greeting"; and the ringing mass chorus, "Faithful Love and Trumpet blowing," which closes the opera.