

# It Seems to Me

by  
HEYWOOD BROUN

MY right to discuss American opera may be challenged for cause since I admit that my favorite music drama is "Madame Butterfly" and even so I must protest at the curious nature of the themes selected by our native composers. It would be unfair, perhaps, to insist that no American opera should be accepted at the Metropolitan unless it dealt with Union Square or a Kansas cornfield. And yet both places might furnish an excellent locale. Indeed, offhand, I think of Willa Cather's "My Antonia" as superb material for a librettist. Nor need we deal wholly in theory. The musical comedy founded on Edna Ferber's "Show Boat" is much closer to my idea of what American opera ought to be than anything which Mr. Gatti-Casazza has done.

The point comes up because of the news accounts of the latest native work to be produced. John Laurence Seymour's short opera is called "In the Pasha's Garden." For all I know it may be swell, but I am alienated by the synopsis of the story.

Surely there must be, somewhere, better plots than this old fable about the husband, the wife and the lover and "hide in yonder trunk." In this case the trunk I buried in the garden which is most unfortunate for the man inside. And that goes to prove, I suppose, that it is better to stand on your ground and say, "I was waiting for a street car."

## Picks Millstone to Millionaire

IT is not wholly accidental, I believe, that American composers and librettists have sought their themes in ancient Briton, in Du Maurier's Paris and in a pasha's garden. The pallid quality of these productions can be traced, perhaps, to the hot-house atmosphere under which and for which they are nurtured.

Many have argued that without great individual holdings of wealth many art forms would languish. Certain rich men have sought to justify their estate in the community by buying paintings, endowing plays, collecting vases and supporting the opera. But I think that in the world today the touch of Mae-cenas is quite as deadly as that of Midas.

The new theater which inhabited the now defunct Century was doomed from the start because it was handed down from the top. When the great ones of the land start handing out culture the general public has an uneasy feeling that somewhere in the basket there is concealed a cold turkey leg, a jar of cranberry sauce and a bag of flour. They fear, and have a right to fear, that they are being patronized. And in all truth most of the artistic handouts have been decidedly cold turkey.

Indeed I have known not a single painter or author whose work did not suffer when some wealthy friend, with the best intentions in the world, began to take an interest in him. It is better to hang a millstone than a millionaire around the neck of a creative artist.

## Why Not Save the Opera?

THE objection is raised that there must be some source of support for the artist who has ample talent and slight recognition the answer is easy. It should very properly be the function of the government, both municipal, state and federal, to foster the fledglings. Such aid as has been extended in recent years has certainly not been unprofitable. On various projects throughout the country the government has received absolutely first class work for rather meagre stipends.

As far as I know, practically no help at all has been extended to unemployed writers but the painters of the land have had a little aid and have been stimulated by it. And this I do not regard at all in the light of patronage. Taking money from Uncle Sam is quite a different thing than going around hat in hand to the salons of Mrs. Augustus J. Schneidkern-Schnickelkerns. On government projects the artist is working for the public and being paid by the public and what could be fairer than that?

I do not think it fair to wave away all such suggestions on the ground that they are born out of a wholly visionary radicalism. State theaters and opera houses are not unknown in countries which are far from socialistic. Surely, the golden horseshoe has never brought the Metropolitan any great amount of luck and I read with a certain disaffection the news that some vast sum had been spent to get more red plush for the music temple.

I am aware that these sums did not come out of the save-the-opera-fund to which we were all allowed to contribute. Certain rich men made these gifts on their own. But in that case why didn't they save the opera themselves? After all it is their toy.

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## Today's Science

BY DAVID DIETZ

HOW the force of gravity has played the major role in determining man's shape and size is pointed out by Dr. R. P. Wodehouse, well known scientist, Yonkers, N. Y.

Because of the force of gravity, Dr. Wodehouse points out, three worlds exist side by side upon this earth of ours, the shapes and forms and characteristics of the inhabitants of each determined by the relationship between their size and the force of gravity.

The three worlds are the world of gravity walkers, the world of easy flight, and the world of floating and sticking.

This new classification is picturesque and striking. It awakens new avenues of thought and clarifies many phenomena.

Man, as Dr. Wodehouse points out, belongs to the world of gravity walkers.

Because volume increases as the cube whereas cross-section increases only as the square, volume and therefore weight increase much more rapidly than surface.

This means that nature has put a handicap on bigness.

NATURE'S tendency, Dr. Wodehouse continues, is to make all things as symmetrical as possible. But this tendency is thwarted in the land of gravity walkers by the force of gravity which is a one directional pull.

In consequence, gravity walkers developed a top and bottom, and since they had to move forward at right angles to the force of gravity, a front and back.

The only symmetry possible to them was bilateral symmetry or a "right and left" symmetry. They show this symmetry.

The world of easy flight is, of course, the world of insects. Here we find feet provided with hooks or suction disks.

THE third world, the world of floating and sticking includes spores and pollen grains. In this world, no wings are needed. Dr. Wodehouse points out, because objects are so small that when they are free they float.

The force of gravity is not sufficient to pull them down against the slightest current of air. Whenever they touch an object, they stick to it, because the force of gravity is not sufficient to pull them loose.

Since the force of gravity is here unimportant, Nature has full play to obtain symmetry. Top and bottom, front and back, are no longer important terms. Hence we find most objects in this world modeled upon the sphere.

Q—By what other names are cougars known? A—Puma, panther, catamount, mountain lion and American lion.

Q—Name the United States Secretaries of the Interior since 1920.

A—John B. Payne, 1920; Albert B. Fall, 1921; Hubert Work, 1923; Roy O. West, 1928; Ray Lyman Wilbur, 1929; Harold L. Ickes, 1933.



Gold! Seeking the metal, Forty-Niners set out in wagons and in ships, racing westward. The Josephine advertised (right) that, having crossed from Liverpool in 14 days, she could make California via the Horn faster than any other ship.

BY EARL SPARLING  
Times Special Writer

THE gold clause is inextricably linked with the so-called gold standard. From 1816 to 1914 the latter placed an apparently immutable value upon gold in terms of all currencies.

When American money lenders after the greenback inflation of 1860-1864 began demanding that debts be paid in gold of a specified weight and fineness, they thought they were obtaining a value beyond human hands to change.

Any government might change the value of its currency. No nation could change the world value of mined or minted gold. That clearly was the theory that persisted among debtor nations, including the United States, throughout the nineteenth century and right up to the World War.

The truth of the matter is that there never was a gold standard as popularly conceived, or any natural value of gold. There was only a value for gold as set and maintained by Great Britain in terms of the pound sterling.

The patriotic American lender in demanding gold was merely saying, although few of them ever realized the fact, that they had more faith in British money than American money. Great Britain could have raised or lowered the value of gold in terms of all currencies at any time during most of the nineteenth century.

Five persons realized that then, and few compared the issues involved even now. Lenders and borrowers alike seem to have believed until quite recently that the value of gold in terms of all currencies was a natural thing, not a man-made thing.

It was partly recognized that the purchasing value of gold in terms of commodities might vary from year to year because of the varying supply of the commodities. It was not recognized that, if the British government so decided, the value of gold could be changed in terms of all currencies—that is, with no internal increase or decrease in the amount of the currencies and with no increase or decrease in the amount of the world's gold or that of any nation.

HE says that quite plainly later on in his recent book, "The Rise and Fall of the Gold Standard," which can be transliterated as "The Rise and Fall of the British Sterling Gold Standard."

"Britain's withdrawal from the gold standard (in 1931) after borrowing millions from America and France in an attempt to stay on it) was regarded by the orthodox as an act of financial blasphemy. The golden fetish had been flouted.

"The world at large was filled with apprehension of the fate that would overtake Britain now that she had defied golden superstition. But Britain was undismayed. Her exuberant expression of relief and delight at being rescued from her degrading position 'under the harrow' was regarded by her believers as verging on the indecent."

In other words, during the nineteenth century when America and other nations were "under the harrow" to Great Britain, the pound sterling gold standard was a miraculous instrument of international finance.

When the World War changed the United States from a debtor to a creditor nation and enabled Americans to institute a dollar gold standard, to which England

was forced to tie, the gold standard became a "degrading" thing.

NOW let's see how the original gold standard, the English pound sterling gold standard, came into existence. England's money for centuries was silver, and the unit of value was a pound of pure silver, originally divided into 20 shillings. It was an unstable money because the value of the shillings depended on the varying market value of a pound of sterling silver.

Conduit, who succeeded Sir

Isaac Newton as warden of the mint, estimated that the value of the weight of silver had varied

seven times with reference to its currency value during the five years, 1713-18. It was also un-

stable because the various English rulers constantly debased the coin.

King Henry VIII so debased the silver coinage during his reign, for example, that when Queen Eliza-

beth took the throne the national

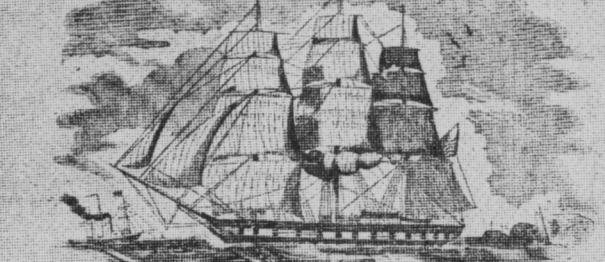
money was 60 per cent below par.

On remelting it to establish it, Queen Elizabeth used the slag, we are told, to mend her roads.

Piracy and the violent acquisition of mines in various parts of the world gradually increased England's stock of gold. From an early time gold was struck into coins, but the gold coins for centuries were a sort of luxury money.

And for most of that time the English had enormous difficulty keeping gold coin in circulation at

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