STRAUS OPERETTA IS A HIT IN VIENNA.

"Der Tapfere Soldat" Is Founded on Bernard Shaw's "Arms and the Man."

LYRICS MOST EFFECTIVE

Composer Says He Will Devote Himself to Serious Compositions After One More Light Work.

Special Correspondence THE NEW YORK TIMES.

VIENNA, Nov. 19.—Oscar Straus, known to Americans as the composer of "The Waltz Dream," scored another brilliant success with his latest operetta, "Der Tapfere Soldat," in Vienna the other night. The plot is taken by Messrs. Bernauer and Jacobson from Shaw's comedy, "Arms and the Man," through which the English dramatist first became known in Germany. Of course, the librettists have taken some liberties with the drama, though adhering to the fundamental idea.

The highly dramatic events of the first act are really unchanged. Later the musical and theatrical needs give freer scope to all sorts of love and marriage affairs. The best and most artistic parts of the book are undoubtedly the lyrics, more especially the soldiers' chorus at the beginning. The action turns principally on an adventurous young Swiss soldier, who has taken up arms for the Servian cause against the Bulgarians. Pursued by a detachment of the enemy, he flies and gets directly into the sleeping apartment of a young Bulgarian lady, the daughter of Col. Popoff. He easily vanquishes his various enemies. He attacks women on their strongest side, love, and men on their weakest, their valor. This parodistic treatment has a very humorous and often most burlesque effect.

Straus's music is fully attuned to the always effective operatic milieu of the Balkans. But his treatment is altogether different from the slav naturalism of Lehar. He does not aim at national specialties, but at reaching true dramatic musical descriptiveness. As regards instrumentation, no operetta for years past has shown such originality and strength. It is replete with ideas and vivid coloring.

The introduction is characterized by march motives, booming of cannon, a sort of dirge that turns suddenly into gay martial music descriptive of the action. Very impressive is the next number, the "Heldenwaltzer," (hero's waltz,) "Wie schön ist dieses Männerbild," a musical gem handled with a broad rhythm. This is considered the most effective number of the work. The entry of the Bulgarian soldiers, both scenically and musically, is brilliantly carried out. It is where the pursuing soldiers come to look for the fugitive and have to depart without success.

The close of the first act, the "Finale," is quite in the manner of folksongs, and its refrain, "tirallala," a catchy, sweet, waltzlike air, will soon be heard on every side.

In the second act the opening march proved a great hit, and later on the faint sound of cowbells in the orchestra marks the entrance of the Swiss hero.

Needless to say that in the usual course of operetta librettos the hero marries the Bulgarian maiden, who rescued him from his pursuers. But it is necessary to see and hear the opera to enjoy its fun—Colonel Popoff is an ideal comic figure—and its highly artistic musical dress.

The composer, Oscar Straus, considers this his best work. To me he said he intended it to be the last of its kind, save one about to be produced at the Raimund Theater, in Vienna, and that henceforward he would devote himself to serious compositions only.

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