

AN OPERA SINGER'S START.

How Bertha Waltzinger Met Henry Clay Barnabee and the Outcome of the Meeting.

One day while the Bostonians were rehearsing in Boston a pretty and petite little dark-eyed girl knocked at the stage door of the Tremont Theatre and, to the query of the doorkeeper, exclaimed that she wanted to be a singer and politely asked him to introduce her to Mr. Barnabee or Mc Macdonald. Now, it happened that the two singers were on the stage at the time listening to a trial of chorus voices by Mr. Studley. It was at the time of preparation for Victor Herbert's opera, "Prince Annanias."

The stage doorkeeper laughed at the demure little girl, telling her that he could not grant her request, and that she would have to find some other way of securing the introduction. At the man's unintentional cruelty the tears sprang to her eyes, when just at this point Mr. Barnabee, muffled in a great fur overcoat and with his hat pulled down over his eyes, came through the stage door corridor on his way out of the theatre. The woebegone expression of the young and pretty girl arrested his attention, and, turning to the stage doorkeeper, he asked in a kindly voice: "William, who is the child, and what is the matter with her?" The child spoke up for herself, saying: "Sir, I am not a child, but a young lady, and I can sing, and I want to meet Mr. Barnabee. Will you be good enough to introduce me to him?"

"Egad, I will!" said the kindly comedian. "Come right on the stage. Now, my child, what is it: I am Mr. Barnabee?"

"Well, Sir," said the little maid, "I want to join your company." There were perhaps a hundred applicants upon the stage at the time, and when the one in Mr. Studley's hands had finished, Mr. Barnabee himself led the dark-haired little lady to the piano and directed Mr. Studley to play for her. Mr. Barnabee leaned over the piano while Mr. Studley asked the young aspirant what she could sing. "Well," she replied, "I have brought no music with me. I came in a moment of courageous impulse, but I can sing almost anything you will suggest from the operas."

"What operas?" said Mr. Studley, raising his eyebrows, "the grand operas or the comic?"

"Either," modestly said the young girl. Mr. Barnabee and Mr. Studley looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders, and laughed incredulously. By this time the group at the piano engrossed the attention of every one upon the stage.

"Well," said Mr. Studley, jokingly, "suppose we commence with the waltz song from 'Romeo and Juliet.'"

"Very well, Sir," quietly answered the girl, who could not have been more than fifteen years old, "I am ready."

Mr. Studley played the cue note, and the voice struck it perfectly. Mr. Barnabee straightened up like a ramrod, everybody stopped whispering and listened intently to the voice which filled every nook and corner of the dark and deserted theatre.

"Beautiful," they all ejaculated under their breaths. And beautiful, indeed, it was. Clear as a bell, though evidently crude and untrained, this magnetic voice sang the exquisite waltz song of Juliet.

When it was finished, Mr. Barnabee, who could scarcely control his emotions, asked her name. "My name is Bertha Waltzinger," she modestly replied, and this is the true story of this prima donna's start on her professional career. Mr. Barnabee interested himself in her musical education, which lasted for three years, under his supervision, and afterward brought her out as his leading prima donna.