

EDOARDO DI GIOVANNI: ITALY'S NEW TENOR

An American Who Is Now the Musical Idol of La Scala

IT is a long step from the American comic-opera stage to La Scala, at Milan, but Edward Johnson, a young American tenor, has successfully performed the feat. As Edward Johnson he sang the leading tenor rôle in "The Waltz Dream" in New York six years ago; as Edoardo di Giovanni he is to-day one of the most popular "Italian" tenors, with a long list of grand-opera successes to his credit and a brilliant future assured him.

He made his first success as an oratorio and concert singer in Canada and in America: from the concert stage he entered the cast of the "Waltz Dream" company and sang the fickle prince's rôle all during that operetta's New York run. Every critic in New York predicted a success for him in grand opera. At its close Edward Johnson disappeared from the stage. He reappeared again, three years later, at Padua, Italy, in Giordano's *Andre Chenier* and was accepted at once by the critical Italian public as a great tenor. Edward Johnson had translated his name literally into Italian and had become Edoardo di Giovanni!

How had he prepared himself in a little over two years for such a career? By force of indefatigable study, unswerving allegiance to one master, an unusually magnetic personality, a perfectly spontaneous enthusiasm for his work, and a beautiful voice! He studied with Vincenzo Lombardi at Florence, made his debut in *Andre Chenier* at Padua, and has since sung at the Comunale Theater at Bologna, at the Costanzi at Rome, the Poli-



EDOARDO DI GIOVANNI (EDWARD JOHNSON)
In "The Girl of the Golden West"

teamo at Florence; at Bergamo, Lucca, and finally, at La Scala in Milan. An enviable record!

The Italian public makes opera-going a sort of national sport—like bull-fighting in Spain, or base-ball in the United States! An Italian goes to the theater to be amused, to be thrilled, to get, in short, his money's worth. Of course he is intolerant, because he is finely critical; he does not like to be cheated. He can be as ardent in his praise as he is bitter in his condemnation. If he is an audience to be feared, he is also an audience worth winning. A singer who can move the Italians to enthusiasm has twice the reward of the singer who hears the perfunctorily polite, always tolerant, often too-kind applause of American theater-goers.

Edoardo di Giovanni has sung *Isabeau* of Mascagni, Puccini's *Fanciulla del West*, *Parsifal*, *L'Ombra di Don Giovanni*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Andre Chenier*, *Lorely*, the *Rheingold* and many other operas and always with the greatest possible success. This, for an American, singing to a public that snatches only too willingly at any defect of diction or of voice, that ridicules any but the best artists, and damns ten times where it lauds once, is sufficient indication of his popularity on the Italian stage.

We should like mightily to see him come and sing at the Metropolitan Opera House (the Directors have tried to get him), where there is certainly one more laurel leaf awaiting him.

Mildred R. Cram.