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**VARIATIONS ON A PERSONAL THEME.**

By SIR LANDON RONALD.

Jewry is noted for the great interest it takes in matters musical and it will read with no small amount of delight Sir Landon Ronald's "Variations on a Personal Theme", which is published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton at the modest price of half-a-guinea. The author, who is a distinguished co-religionist, is in the forefront of modern musicians, and, for more years than he himself would care to remember, has been regarded as one of the leading composers, conductors and accompanists. At the present time he is among other things head of such an important institution as the Guildhall School of Music, London. No little of the success of this institution is due to his methods of organising the various courses of training. Coming to the book itself, it is one of the most entertaining published for quite a long while. Written perhaps in the lighter vein it is full of anecdotes of such famous persons in the musical world as Patti, Melba, Tosti, Puccini, Caruso, Sir Herbert Tree, Elgar and many others. Some of them are well worth repeating especially the one concerning Sir Herbert Tree and Signor Grassi who, at the head of a number of Sicilian players visited London to give a number of plays. "Tree, as the acknowledged head of the profession, thought it would be a nice compliment to Grassi to give a supper in the dome of His Majesty's Theatre. The date was arranged, and about fifteen or twenty of the best-known "lights" in the fine art and science were duly invited to meet the great

Sicilian. The party was in every way a success, and in a happy and graceful extempore speech Tree bade Signor Grassi (who had had considerably more champagne than was good for him) good-night and made a move to go. Everybody at once rose to their feet, and Grassi (in true Sicilian fashion) began making his adieus by kissing everyone on both cheeks with great warmth. A look of horror came over Tree's face as he edged away from his guest murmuring to Cecil King, his stage-manager, "Take him down in the lift, I'll walk down. I will not be kissed by Grassi." After some difficulty a hansom cab was obtained for the purpose of taking Grassi home, and Tree was waiting to help him in, when, without the slightest warning, he flung both arms round Tree and kissed him fervently on both cheeks! Tree's expression was a study! He succeeded in controlling his feelings, however, and asked his guest politely and frigidly where he lived so that he might direct the cabman. This seemed to puzzle Grassi. As a matter of fact, it leaked out afterwards that he was staying in some very shabby apartments in a very shabby street in Soho with a Sicilian ice-cream merchant—a friend of his youth. After some hesitation Grassi replied, "If you please, ask him to take me Garrick Theatre." Tree, addressing the cabman, said, "Take this gentleman to the Garrick Theatre." The cabman looked down scornfully, asked, "What the blankety blank does 'e want to go to the Garrick Feater for at this time o' night?" "I don't know," was Tree's quick rejoinder, "but I should think he has forgotten to kiss the fireman."

To those who would take up a musical career, no matter in whatever direction, Sir Landon gives much valuable advice. In fact it is well worth more than the cost of the book and his suggestions for the placing of music on a more substantial financial basis are well worth following. Personally, I well remember how the author worked hard for a considerable period to make his promenade concerts a

success and it was his persistency and genius, which resulted in his making one of the largest cities in the British Empire a strong supporter of good music.

"Variations" will be read with interest by all and more especially by South African Jewry which has already been stated is a generous patron of this art.

S.M.G.

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