

HERBERT MUSIC AGAIN CHARMS

Provides the Distinguishing
Feature of "Sweethearts" at
the New Amsterdam.

MISS MACDONALD PLEASES

Notably Fine Ensembles Well Sung
by a Chorus Which Provides
Pleasure for Both Eye and Ear.

With the present inclination on the part of theatrical producers for washing linen in public, it is not surprising, perhaps, to find a fully equipped French laundry providing the first scene of the latest operetta. But in justice to the snow-white quality of Mr. Victor Herbert's "Sweethearts" let it be added quickly that there isn't the suggestion of a smudge on either its lines or its linen.

What one regrets most in these days of small flats and contracted laundry space is the fact that the week's wash must be sent to the steam laundry around the corner, instead of being intrusted to the tender mercies of such charming ladies of the soap suds as officiate on the various items—no need to mention them—intrusted to Mother Goose's establishment.

Which brings us to the fact that the programme of "Sweethearts," in its clarity and conciseness, will serve not only to avert the brain fag of "the tired business man," but provide as well a convenient excuse for not saying that the plot isn't worth the telling and then using several hundred words in the attempt to tell it. For, says this admirably illuminative document:

The story of the opera is founded on the adventures of Princess Jeanne, daughter of King Rene of Naples, who reigned in Fifteenth Century. Time has been changed to the present, and the locale to the ancient city of Bruges, to which the little Princess is carried for safety in time of war, and is given the name of

SYLVIAMiss CHRISTIE MACDONALD
As an infant she is found in a Tullip Garden one morning by

DAME PAULA.....
Miss ETHEL DU FRE HOUSTON
who conducts the Laundry of The White Geese, and who is known as "Mother Goose."

Sylvia is brought up as the daughter of

Paula, although the latter has six daughters of her own.
LIZETTE.....Miss NELLIE McCOY
CLAIRETTE.....Miss CECILIA HOFFMAN
BABETTE.....Miss EDITH ALLEN
JEANETTE.....Miss GERTRUDE RUDD
TOINETTE.....Miss GENE PELTIER
NANETTE....Miss GRETCHEN HARTMAN
(Known as the White Geese.)

To the Laundry comes
MIKEL MIKELOVIZ.....
Mr. TOM McNAUGHTON
who, disguised as a Monk, left Sylvia when an infant in Dame Paula's care. Knowing that Sylvia is the Crown Princess of the little Kingdom of Zilania, Mikel is conspiring to restore her to the throne, which is about to be offered to

FRANZ, the Heir Presumptive.....
Mr. THOMAS CONKEY
who, traveling incognito, has fallen in love with Sylvia, and who finds a rival in

LIEUTENANT KARL. Mr. EDWIN WILSON
a military Lothario, betrothed to Sylvia. Mikel's plans are endangered by the schemes of

HON. PERCY ALGERNON SLINGSBY..
Mr. LIONEL WALSH
PETRUS VAN TROMP.....

Mr. FRANK BELCHER
ARISTIDE CANICHE.....
Mr. ROBERT O'CONNOR
who wish to purchase for their own purposes Prince Franz's estates in Zilania.
LIANE, a milliner....Miss HAZEL KIRKE
has sought temporary employment in the Laundry of The White Geese, and is mistaken by Mikel and Slingsby for the lost Princess.

From which it be determined easily enough that the authors have not departed far enough from the traditions to be guilty of lèse majesté or any other treasonable offense against the society of stereotypers, limited, of whose product the present is a reasonably fair sample. Having determined which it is time to emphasize the fact that Mr. Victor Herbert, as is often his habit, has provided a very well written score in which there are many numbers of excellent quality, several of them graced with those delightful touches of unexpectedness which (if the bull be excused) one has come to expect of him, and at least one song, "Sweethearts," which is destined to become a best seller at the music counters. By no means the best number in the piece, this one, by reason of its rhythmic quality and flowing melody, promises to impress itself on many ears for which such notable numbers as "Angelus" and "Cricket on the Heath" will prove elusive. It was Miss Christie Macdonald, quite as dainty and alluring as usual, who sang the first, and it was she again who carried one part of each of the two duos in which the well-trained voice of Thomas Conkey took the other.

Mr. Herbert has provided hardly a number in the piece, however, in which the chorus does not participate, and the resultant ensembles, with the association of fresh, well-trained voices, make for spirited climaxes all through. In "Smiles," for instance, sung very nicely by Miss Hazel Kirke, (no, not the original Madison Square heroine, as her youth will testify;) in "Mother Goose," a new reading of the old rhymes, and in a splendid finale to the first act these choristers do helpful work with the backing of the men down below engaged in handling Mr. Herbert's very agreeable orchestrations. And when voices are stilled there is the click-clack of wooden shoes to keep the rhythm going.

By way of change the second act opens with a male chorus, and the men do good service in "Pretty as a Picture," of which the solo part is effectively handled by Frank Belcher. Then there is a "by-intentions comic" song, "I Don't Know How to Do It," which is not extravagantly funny, somehow—maybe, because Lionel Walsh is so amazingly clever in his fatuous ass speciality that it seems unkind to laugh at him. His is a really fine bit of humorous impersonation, however, providing some share of laughs where they are rather badly needed, since the authors themselves have done little to evoke them. Tom McNaughton, too, is funny after his fashion, which is not exactly subtle, and which concerns itself with such playful antics as a masquerade in cap and apron the while he attempts to do a bit of ironing after the manner in which the mere male is supposed to do things generally pre-empted as women's occupations. A good number, "Game of Love," is well sung by Edwin Wilson, assisted by half a dozen attractive girls.

On the whole, "Sweethearts," though not the liveliest entertainment imaginable, has its good points and will provide an evening's diversion with pleasant music, pretty girls, charming costumes, and nice color.