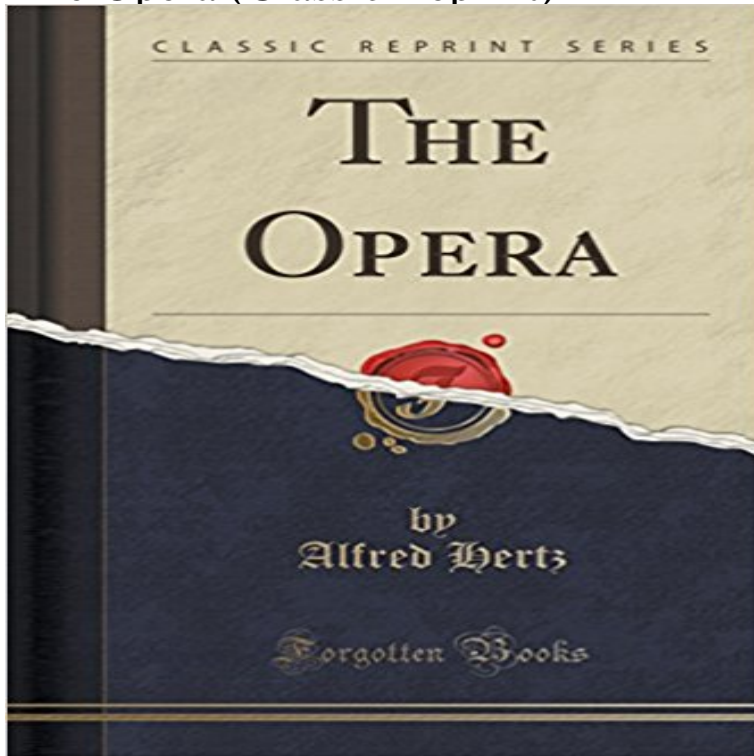


The Opera (Classic Reprint)



Excerpt from The Opera
The opera is a problem - a problem to the composer and to the audience. The composer's problem has been in the course of solution for over three centuries and the problem of the audience is fresh with every performance. In a measure the audience's difficulty creates that of the composer, for it is the audience to which his appeal is directed. On the other hand, it is the composer who sets the problem to his audience, and the easier he makes it the better the audience will like it. The audience comes to be amused, and the composer - the serious composer - would educate it, impress it, inspire it. Between them lies a gulf to be bridged. Now the composer's problem is a matter of history. Through the whole of this volume it is an ever-present quantity. It is a legacy from generation to generation. It is inherent in the very nature of the art-form. It is this: the opera is a drama and the opera is music. The drama appeals to our emotion by way of the intellect and music by way of the senses; the one applies the test of logic, the other, that of aesthetics, proportions; the ideal of one is truth, the other beauty. How shall a perfect balance between them be maintained? Now in nature truth and beauty are one. A naturally evolved art-form - the statue, the song, or the symphony - therefore is true if it is beautiful. But the opera is not so evolved. About the Publisher
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