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Oscar Wilde
Scrapbook

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April 30th
1894.

Daily Chronicle

At the St. James's Theatre on Saturday evening ample proof was afforded of the curiosity concerning Mr. Henry A. Jones's new play, "The Masqueraders," selected by Mr. George Alexander to take the place of the finest play of its year, "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." The house might have been filled twice over, but the most indisputable testimony to the interest in the novelty was the fact that there were very few late-comers, so that to a less extent than usual was the opening scene interrupted by people making their way through the stalls to the annoyance of those who, by seating themselves before the curtain rose, had shown consideration for author, manager and performers, as well as for fellow-members of the audience. Among the occupants of stalls and boxes were certain representatives of Literature, Art, and Science not often seen on a first night. Lord and Lady Randolph Churchill had places just behind the orchestra, and a little in their rear was Mr. Goschen; in two boxes thrown into one on the grand tier were the Duke and Duchess of York and the Duke and Duchess of Teck; and below them sat Lord Londesborough and party. Altogether it was one of the most distinguished assemblages ever drawn to a theatre with the sole object of witnessing the play.

April 30th
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"THE MASQUERADERS" AT THE ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

To the polished art and human feeling with which the principal character was embodied, and to the power exhibited in the treatment of an incident replete with exceptional dramatic intensity, may be attributed the unequivocal success at the St. James's Theatre on Saturday night of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's new play, "The Masqueraders." As a stage production it is not so distinctive in the working out of details as the majority of its author's dramas, and the symptoms of hesitation occasionally observable are the reverse of helpful to sustained attention. Now and again there is a suspicion of Mr. Jones having halted between two opinions, and at these points the play is weak, but where there is unmistakable evidence that he has gone boldly forward and trusted simply to his dramatic instincts the play is strong, original, and full of vitality. In spirit "The Masqueraders" is romantic rather than sternly realistic. The characters are in modern attire, and two or three of the subordinate personages occasionally indulge in conversation that smacks of the music-hall, but notwithstanding this attempt to bring the period of the plot down to our own day, the spectators have to make demands upon their imagination in order to accept some of the situations. In this respect "The Masqueraders" is a contrast to "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." It is well, perhaps, that it should be made impossible to compare the two plays, even if inclination to do so were manifest. Mr. Jones, in the first and second acts, goes out of his way, as it appears to us, to introduce types of fashionable society, in order that they may utter verbal conceits and more or less telling hits at the insincerity prevailing in what have been termed "higher circles," but for this he has not the lightness of touch of Oscar Wilde. Yet with all its air of unreality the play is interesting, and the one character, David Remon, to which we referred at the outset, is drawn with a freedom, consistency, and finish, enlisting notice whenever he comes upon the stage. The other principal characters, in the play, are so contradictory, they may act just as the author for his own purposes wishes them, and not as they would most likely

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MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

IN THE

NOVEL AND THE DRAMA.

MR. HALL CAINE'S ADDRESS, *to be delivered on opening the Session
of the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh,
Wednesday, Nov. 7, 1894.*

ONE of my friends, a gentleman who ought to know, tells me that there is too much writing about literature by those who ought to be writing the thing itself. I agree with him. The republic of letters appears to be too rarely in session and too often in dissolution, and its lawgivers, the authors, seem in all ages to be mounting the hustings, apparently with the unamiable desire of tarring and feathering each other in the eye of the world. This spectacle may not be a very cheerful one, but we are bound to admit that it is sometimes attended by its compensating advantages. Literature, like politics, occasionally stands in need of its manifestoes, its platforms, and its policies. Times change, and with the changing times come changes of literary manners and customs. Without claiming any authority as a literary lawgiver, I should like to say something that would be helpful in the creation of a public opinion favourable to the novel and the drama in their more modern developments.

B

WHAT IS THE NOVEL FOR?

There are writers who tell us that such light forms of literature as the novel and the drama have no moral responsibility whatever. These writers are of two classes. First, there are those who think of a novel as Johnson defined it in his dictionary: "A smooth tale, generally of love." A novel to such persons is merely a piece of recreative reading. The main question about it is—did it amuse? As Sydney Smith says: "Were you, while reading it, surprised at dinner coming so soon? Did you mistake eleven o'clock for ten and twelve for eleven? Were you too late to dress, and did you sit up beyond the usual hour? If a novel produces these effects it is good. It is only meant to please, and it must do that or it does nothing." The second class are those who think too meanly of all forms of imaginative writing to allow either novel or drama a place among the works that have anything to do with serious thought or the real facts of life. Such persons are often historians, and think the man who finds his facts ready made to his hand works on a far higher plane than the man who makes them for himself. But they are sometimes grim theologians, such as Hawthorne imagined in the grey shadow of his stern old Salem forefather looking down on his degenerate son, the author of "The Scarlet Letter." "A writer of story-books! What kind of business in life, what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation, may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!" With regard to the first of these two classes I have only to say that, while I would not despise the art of ministering to the idle hours of busy men, I am so far at one with the second that if the writer of novels is to hold no better place in the economy of life than that of a literary merry-andrew, whose

highest usefulness, perhaps, is to beguile us of the pangs of the toothache, I had rather be a kitten, and cry "Mew!"

THE DIDACTIC NOVEL.

But there are other writers who are so far from wanting the novel and the drama to be a sugar-candy kind of literature, that they are for ever asking the remorseless German question, "To what end?" They are like the senior wrangler of immortal memory, who, upon being required to recognize the merits of "Paradise Lost," said, "Yes, yes, but what does it prove?" These people are for ever asking us to prove something, and to meet that demand there has arisen a kind of imaginative work that is sometimes a parable in the form of a play, sometimes a long lay sermon in the shape of a novel. This kind of didactic literature has had its day. It flourished in the dramas of Joanna Baillie, and it has expressed itself in works of far higher pretensions and more recent date. I would not hold up to ridicule any real literature that makes a serious answer to the question, "What can you teach me?" It has appealed to many robust and even some imaginative minds. "He teaches Fancy," said Johnson of Richardson, "to speak with the voice of Virtue." For my own part I had rather she spoke with the voice of Nature. The other day I came upon a treatise, published early in the century, which was entitled "Morality in Fiction," but ought to have been called "The whole duty of the novelist." It set forth by a series of rules the means by which a novel might be written so that it should have a proper effect on the morality of the world. The hero was to be handsome, for that was a ready way to our sympathies. He was to be thoroughly educated, for that enabled him to move in all societies. He was to be fairly rich, for that left him free to move

about in the cause of charity or philanthropy, or love, or adventure, as the story might require. In short the subject and the plot, the scenes and the characters were to be perfect, so that the lesson they were to teach might be irreproachable. Well, I am not for saying that a novel could not be written on these lines, rigid as they are; but when finished I fear it would have one fault—the fault of the famous racehorse that had every virtue, and only one disadvantage—it was dead.

HAS ART ANY MORALITY?

These writers regard the ethics of a book as the great thing, but there are other writers who so regard the æsthetics. They say the duty of a story-teller is to tell stories, not to preach sermons. A novel should not be an abstract idea put into the form of a human allegory, and, like the figures on the front of a barrel organ, ground out to slow music by the machinery inside. It should not be conspicuous branded with an aphorism. It should not even have a moral. It should be no more moral than a story in the "Arabian Nights." Art and morality have nothing to do with each other. When the novelist or dramatist presents his characters he should stand aside from them; he should disappear, he should annihilate himself. This is the attitude of many of the more notable French authors at the present moment. I think it extraordinary that the doctrine should have taken such hold in France, considering the influence on French fiction of our English Richardson, who was the first of moralists, the enormous vogue of Victor Hugo, who was for ever claiming to have put abstract ideas into concrete form; and the power of the French drama, which is always trying to put down something and to assume the right to teach a higher morality. You will find the pros and cons at full length in the correspondence

of George Sand with Gustave Flaubert. Flaubert had published "Madame Bovary," and the book that he meant for a merciless and striking lesson given to unconscientious and faithless women, had been regarded as immoral and denounced as a scandal. He was angry and down-hearted, but all that he got from George Sand was a sort of Job's comfort which amounted in effect to "serve you right." George Sand urged that Flaubert should have made his lesson plain. He ought not have withheld his own opinion of his heroine, her husband, and her lovers. Six sentences spoken in his own person would have left the reader in no uncertainty as to the opinion he should form. Without these six sentences the reader, seeing only bad people, understands that the bad people are intended for his sympathy, and he is shocked. To all this Flaubert had one answer. He would be infringing the rules of art if for a moment he disclosed his own thought and the object of his literary undertaking. Let the people find it out for themselves. That was their business.

MORAL AIM OF NOVELISTS AND DRAMATISTS.

The general practice of nearly all the great masters is against Flaubert. It is, perhaps, natural that Richardson should keep his intention to the front. He was born to be a censor of morals. His early boyish fables concocted for the amusement of his school-fellows always carried a moral lesson. With less invention Richardson would probably have been a clergyman; with more he might have been a bishop; he was bound to be a preacher. It is startling that Fielding laid claim to moral intention. He says pointedly, in a preface, that by displaying the beauty of virtue he had attempted to convince men that their true interest directed them to a pursuit of her. De Foe, too, was much given to good

sound and simple moralisings of the Benjamin Franklin kind, and Dickens's morality was, as Mr. Leslie Stephen says, as sharply cut as that of Æsop's fables. Charlotte Brontë tells us plainly that her aim was to show us Adam's son earning Adam's wages, and George Eliot held her gifts so earnestly as a minister, that she was never tired of enforcing her lesson. "Great facts," she says, "have struggled to find a voice through me, and have only been able to speak brokenly." As for the drama, the moral conscience seems to be all over it. In France the younger Dumas has been all his life tilting at what he considers abuses—the marriage law, the laws of legitimation, and even the *demi-monde*.

THE GREAT IMPARTIAL ARTISTS—SHAKESPEARE AND SCOTT.

Against this array of genius on the side of conscious moral intention we can mention two names only, but, perhaps, they are the greatest names in literature—Shakspeare and Scott. M. Taine calls them "the great impartial artists," meaning that they are the two great speakers who were unconscious of an aim in speaking. "Beyond drawing audiences to the Globe Theatre," says Carlyle, "Shakspeare contemplated no result in those plays of his. . . . Beyond earning fifteen thousand a year to buy farms with Scott contemplated no result from his novels. . . . No literary man of any generation," he continues, "had less value than Scott for the immaterial part of his mission," for that part of it which could not be looked at, handled, and buttoned up in his breeches pockets. And seeing this, that our highest literary men of the sixteenth century, as well as our highest literary men of the nineteenth century, who both immeasurably beyond all others commanded the world's ear, had either nothing to say, or preferred to be

unencumbered by an ulterior aim, the greater part of writers and readers have concluded that in a novel or a drama it is best to say nothing. Carlyle does not take this view. That Scott has nothing to say is a reproach in Carlyle's eyes. "Not profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for building up." The John Knox in Carlyle sees only the Rob Roy in Scott, and Scott descends, as a consequence, from the rank of a great man. But the ordinary work-a-day world does not carry the moral sentiment so high. "Literature," says Mr. Birrell, "exists to please, to brighten the burden of men's lives, to make them forget for a short while their sorrows and their sins, their silenced hearths, their disappointed hopes." In short, literature is a sort of intellectual soporific.

THE NOVELIST BEHIND THE NOVEL.

The truth appears to be an art question more than an ethical one. I cannot believe that British humanity, at all events, feels an opposition to morality itself, that it has any objection to being preached at. It is preached at on Sunday, and it is preached at on Monday; it is preached at from the Pulpit, and it is preached at from the Press; it is preached at when it is born, it is preached at when it is married, and it is preached over when it is dead—no, I cannot believe that it has any rooted objection to being preached at. And taking its preaching from so many mouths, I think it would take it as resignedly from the mouths of the novelist and the dramatist also, but for one fundamental difficulty. It is in terror lest the play should become as dull as the pulpit sometimes is, lest the three-volume novel should become a three-volume tract. The fact is that our western genius cannot develop a story from an idea. They say the eastern genius has that gift. I know very little Oriental

literature. The story-teller in the market-place of an eastern city seems to hold his circle of hearers by a spell, but their grinning faces have sometimes made me suspect that the centre of interest was not unlike that which brings a crowd around a print-shop in Holywell-street. However it may be with the eastern genius, certainly the western genius, when it tries to combine imagination with moral aim, is like a bear dancing in chains. It lacks freedom, spontaneity, and vitality, and these are the qualities which a novel or a drama must have first, whatever else it falls short of. Give us freedom, says the reader to the novelist ; give us spontaneity, give us vitality, in a word give us nature—and we'll get the preachers to give us the sermons.

But I would say to the novelist and the dramatist, don't think that conscience has therefore no place in the novel. Though you are incapable of putting a moral idea into a work as a motive, don't suppose that your work is unmoral, and that you are free from moral responsibility. Your work is what you are. It cannot help but carry with it the moral atmosphere in which you live. The worth of it will be precisely your own worth. Tell me what manner of man you are, and I'll tell you what the moral effect of your work will be. Strip it of all moralisings, all aphorisms, all texts, all moral platitudes, but don't imagine that you are therefore stripping it of all moral effect. You cannot obliterate all trace of yourself, you cannot disappear behind your work—it is not human, it is not possible. If Shakespeare and Scott are impartial artists (of Shakespeare I don't believe it for a moment), their work is none the less moral or immoral.

It is a frightening thought that the morality of a man's book is exactly his own morality. This is most of all true in imaginative literature. Imagination is a chemical which, let a man pour it on

act beyond the walls of the theatre; but there is nothing uncertain about David Remon.

Let us explain what kind of man this David Remon is. When the audience first see him he seems little more than an idler at a country hotel where there is a lady-like barmaid. He is spoken of as "the mad gentleman who lives at Gerard's-heath," given to astronomy. Another habitué of the hotel is Sir Brice Skene, who has £20,000 a year, and is stated to be "the choicest blackguard in England." David is in love with the barmaid, Dulcie Larondie, and Skene it is clear intends to baulk him in his hopes. The difference in the social positions of Dulcie and Sir Brice is not great. She and her sister, now a nurse, are of a good family, reduced in circumstances. Sir Brice does not claim to be anything but a reprobate, whilst David believes in the purity of women, and has not altogether lost faith in the honour of men. The rivals are brought into collision at a hunt ball. Dulcie, interested in the widow and orphans of a huntsman who sometime before broke his neck, thinks it a good opportunity to appeal on their behalf to the members of the hunt. A roysterer whilst standing at the hotel bar, suggests to his companions that a kiss from the pretty barmaid should be put up to auction, and the proceeds given to the distressed family. Dulcie protests, but the freak is carried out, and the bidding culminates in a contest between the wealthy Sir Brice and the comparatively poor David Remon. Hoping to relieve Dulcie from such an embarrassing position, David at length offers a thousand guineas. Then Sir Brice cries 1,500, then David 2,000, an offer immediately capped by Sir Brice with 3,000. There is no further bid, so the kiss is knocked down to him. After signing his cheque, and giving it to the mock auctioneer, Sir Brice astonishes the company with the statement that an hour ago he asked Miss Larondie to become his wife, and he now renews the offer, which she accepts.

Four years pass, and Lady Skene, formerly Dulcie Larondie, has become a leader of society, entertaining a number of cynical folk, who ridicule each other as well as their hostess. From them we learn that Sir Brice has had heavy losses on the turf, and is altogether going to the bad; whilst David Remon has distinguished himself by making some wonderful discoveries concerning the spots on the sun. Sir Brice's ruin is very much nearer than many people suppose—so near, indeed, that when David appears in Lady Skene's reception-room—and it is patent that she still thinks kindly of him—the disreputable husband proposes that she should borrow money from him to keep the establishment going. The conversation is accidentally overheard by David, who being about to start for the observatory he has set up in the south of France, places his cheque book at Dulcie's disposal.

The downward course of Sir Brice continues, and nine months afterwards he and his wife are at an hotel at Nice virtually living from hand to mouth. David, whose observatory is in the neighbourhood, asks for an interview with Dulcie as he is about to head an expedition to the West Coast of Africa to watch the coming transit of Venus. Sir Brice has pressed his wife to draw further on David's banking account, but having already had £6,000 which her husband has spent in gambling and dissipation, she refuses to accept more. In this farewell interview David learns that she does not want him to undertake the journey from which he is never likely to return. The few words that ensue prove that she loves him. Sir Brice suddenly enters, and a scene of extraordinary dramatic vigour, follows. Sir Brice admits that he owes David £6,000. He has not a penny in the world, but he will ent cards for the £6,000 double or quits. David at first refuses, but, goaded by his opponent's sneers, says he will give him a chance of winning all he has in the world. Sir Brice replies that he is willing to play any game for any stakes. Then David, with the utmost deliberation, says, "The stakes on my side are some £200,000; the stakes on your side are your wife and child." They will play till he (David) is beggared of every farthing, and Sir Brice has lost his wife and child. The arrangement is two cuts out of three. Sir Brice becomes very excited, but David retains his coolness until the result is known. Sir Brice wins the first cut and David the second. Dulcie has entered and awaits the issue. David wins the third cut, and then, seizing the recreant husband by the forces from him a promise that he will never lay claim to either wife or child. He then leads Dulcie from the room.

The furious energy of this scene is beyond description, and nothing that could accentuate its effectiveness is wanting either from Mr. George Alexander as David, or Mr. Herbert Waring as Sir Brice.

The final act is laid in David's observatory at night. David brings Dulcie into the room and dwells upon the happiness that is at length in store for them. But Dulcie does not regard the situation in quite the same light. She admits that she loves him, but to live with him under present circumstances would be more horrible to her than to go back to the brute whose roof she has just quitted. To her remonstrances are shortly added those of the faithful sister, who explains that it is impossible for David, in any sense, to become Dulcie's husband until Sir Brice has divorced her. Helen says, "You have made so many sacrifices for her, make this one last sacrifice. Keep her pure for her child." His brother enters to remind him that his fellow-travellers are awaiting him to lead them to Africa, and the curtain falls as David leaves the beloved Dulcie and goes on his self-imposed mission.

The unsatisfactory nature of this ending scarcely requires to be pointed out. David has no other guarantee than Sir Brice's word that the despicable and desperate husband will not again seek his wife when he knows his rival has left for Africa. But the parting of David and Dulcie is set forth with such tender expression by Mr. Alexander and Mrs. Patrick Campbell that the abruptness of the finale is not realised. The part of David most advantageously develops the talent of Mrs. Alexander for indicating suppressed as well as pronounced emotion. To some of the characters David is rather a fantastic being until the opportunity arrives for avenging the cruelty of Sir Brice to Dulcie. Then there is no longer need to conceal with such care the passionate love for Dulcie that did not flicker and expire when she elected to become Lady Skene. The actor cleverly contrives to let the audience into the secret, but they are nevertheless surprised at the determination shown in the card-cutting incident with Sir Brice. As already stated Messrs. Alexander and Waring get all the effect possible out of a scene that in a few days will be the talk of London, and which everybody favourably inclined to the modern drama will make a point of seeing. But it is the harmony of his impersonation throughout, and the ability with which he deals with the manifold lights and shades of the character, that entitle Mr. Alexander to the heartiest compliments. His David Remon is an embodiment destined to live in the memory of playgoers.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell, as Dulcie, finds the best scope for her command of passion in a scene in the third act, in which the wretched wife hysterically dwells upon the mistake she has committed in wedding Sir Brice. Here the actress is quite equal to the claims made upon her, whilst in the final act her manner and delivery of Dulcie's expostulations are charged with the deepest pathos. Mr. Herbert Waring shares the honours with Mr. Alexander in the great scene of the play, and elsewhere also presents a vivid picture of the vindictive and besotted gamester Sir Brice. Mr. Elliot, as an avowedly selfish retailer of scandal, rattles off his cynical utterances with considerable point, and in other parts creditable work is done by Miss Granville (the nurse, Helen Larondie), Mr. H. V. Esmond (David's eccentric brother), Mr. Ben Webster, and Miss Irene Vanbrugh. The mounting of the play is on the most liberal scale. The courtyard of the hotel, with its old-fashioned galleries solidly built, and with the crowd of fox-hunters in their scarlet coats, and elegantly-dressed ladies assembled for the ball, constitutes a particularly animated spectacle.

The reception of the play on Saturday was thoroughly satisfactory. The applause at the end of the third act—the card-cutting scene—was of the most enthusiastic description, and at the close there were hearty calls for both the author and the manager, the latter of whom in modest terms briefly thanked the audience for the kindness shown to "The Masqueraders."

"The Masqueraders" in "The Queen" May 5th 1894.

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

TO DEFINE with any exactness the character of the new play which Mr Henry Arthur Jones has contributed to the St. James's Theatre would be a task of no small difficulty. It is neither wholly comedy, nor romance, nor melodrama, but a strange and infinitely clever amalgam of all three. In outline, the plot of "The Masqueraders" is frankly melodramatic, a description that applies equally well to its most stirring and impressive situation. But the genius of the playwright has illumined the character of his astronomer-lover with so bright a glow of romantic heroism, and has enlivened the two earlier acts with such admirable scenes of pure comedy, that one is puzzled to assign the play to any one of the ordinary categories. And yet there is nothing strikingly new in the story that Mr Jones sets himself to tell us in this his latest and in some respects his most notable work. Put into a sentence, it is merely the old conflict between the titled scoundrel who possesses and the faithful lover who befriends an unhappy girl, whose ambition has led her to a disastrous and bitterly regretted marriage. The idea is, of course, the merest commonplace of novelists and dramatists; but Mr Jones has so treated it as to rob it of all its conventionality and invest it with new and irresistible interest. There may be incidents in "The Masqueraders" at which the reason of the spectator will rebel; there may be cause for disappointment in the feebleness of the heroine's character and in the vague and nebulous position in which the author elects to leave her and her lover at the final fall of the curtain. But the power and beauty of the dialogue, the impressive picture of self-denying love presented by this most chivalrous of heroes, and the brilliancy and sparkle of the comedy-scenes, combine to obscure all that is doubtful and unconvincing in the play, and entitle it to rank with its immediate predecessor at this theatre among the remarkable English dramas of the present generation. The story unfolded in the four acts of "The Masqueraders" may be here very briefly indicated. Dulcie Larondie is a young girl of gentle birth who has been left by family adversity upon her own resources. Her elder sister Helen has adopted the career of a hospital nurse; but Dulcie, longing for "life" and excitement, has thrown up the uncongenial work of a governess to accept a barmaid's post at the Stag Hotel and Assembly Rooms, Crandover, where, at the opening of the play, a large and fashionable company is assembled for the Hunt Ball. The young sportsmen vie with each other in familiar attentions to the pretty and ladylike girl in the bar; but there are two men who regard her with more serious feelings. One is Sir Brice Skene, a sinister baronet with a bad reputation; the other is David Remon, an astronomer, an enthusiast, and a dreamer, whose love for Dulcie is as romantic and ideal as that of his rival is coarse and selfish. A subscription being on foot for a charitable object, one of the young men so far forgets himself as to propose that a kiss from Miss Larondie shall be made the subject of an auction, and, though the girl herself offers a faint objection, the other "gentlemen" fall in with and proceed to carry out the idea. The bidding begins with moderate sums; but suddenly the two rivals come to the front, Remon evidently with the motive of saving the woman he loves from the threatened indignity. But the baronet, dogged and angrily defiant, caps his every bid by one still higher, and at last, when the astronomer's offer has risen by rapid stages to 2000 guineas—his whole available capital—his rival promptly bids 3000, and the prize is assigned to him. But Sir Brice Skene has not given his 3000 guineas merely for a kiss. Having written the cheque, he begs Miss Larondie to devote it to the charity that gave the occasion for this strange auction, and then, in the presence of the entire assemblage, asks her to become his wife. Dazzled by the prospect, she accepts his proposal; but there is a soft place in her heart for the rejected lover who has offered all he has for a single kiss from her lips; and presently, when she encounters him alone, she kisses him compassionately on the forehead as she runs off to join her future husband. Four years have passed, and Dulcie, now Lady Skene, finds little enough of happiness in her life except that which comes of her love for her baby girl, and of the loyal friendship of David Remon, who has not only inherited wealth, but has achieved scientific fame in the interval. Sir Brice, who has proved a gambler, a drunkard, and a bully, is on the verge of ruin, and the scandal-loving jests who flock to his wife's smart receptions hint, not

obscurely, that the rich astronomer is himself keeping the baronet's establishment afloat for dishonourable reasons. On this coming to Remon's ears, he decides to leave England forthwith; but, having learnt of the impending ruin that threatens Dulcie's husband, he places his banking account at her disposal. A few months later Sir Brice Skene and his wife are found at a hotel at Nice. The gambler, having wasted £6000 of Remon's money, is once more on the verge of disaster, and insolently commands his wife to give him more, taunting her meanwhile with her love for the man who has helped them. Stung to revolt by his brutality, Dulcie does not attempt to conceal her love for his rival, whose money she steadily refuses to let him any longer handle. Remon, however, is about to start on a perilous astronomical expedition to the West Coast of Africa, and comes to bid her good-bye. The thought of losing him breaks down her self-restraint, and a mutual declaration of love follows, during which the baronet enters and discovers them in each other's arms. Here is the chance he has been awaiting; he cares nothing for revenge—all he seeks is money, and he accepts Remon's desperate proposal that they shall play for the possession of Dulcie and her child, the stakes on the other side being Remon's entire fortune. The two men bend over the card-table, while the woman whose future is at stake stands by and awaits the result. Then, when the cards have declared Remon the victor, he springs triumphantly upon his rival, and makes him swear never to claim Dulcie or her child again. But the wife and mother cannot sacrifice her honour even for the man she loves so well. She goes with him to his observatory on an Alpine height, and there, with the help of her sister, who has watched over her tenderly all through the story, she awakens Remon to his true duty. Placing a ring on her finger, in token of a pledge that may one day be possible of fulfilment, the loyal-hearted lover bids her farewell, and, leaving her to her sister's care, goes forth to his distant expedition, taking his life in his hand. Powerful as are these closing scenes, it cannot be denied that they are marred by a certain fantastic unreality. The gambling incident, for instance, though splendidly effective as a stage situation, lacks even the faintest show of probability, for it is obvious that Remon has no adequate motive for placing his fortune and his power to rescue Dulcie from her husband at the hazard of the card-table. All that he does as a consequence of his victory, he could do equally well if the gambling scene had no place in the play; nor is it credible that any woman with a grain of self-respect would suffer herself to be made the sport of a pack of cards—or, for the matter of that, would allow her kisses to be put up to auction. The weakness of the character of Dulcie is, in our judgment, by far the most serious defect of the play; and it would seem that Mrs Patrick Campbell, accomplished actress as she is, can do nothing towards redeeming its vagueness and lack of colour. Her performance last Saturday evening seemed, indeed, curiously lacking in variety and spirit, and almost suggested that she either did not understand or did not like the part. Mr George Alexander, on the other hand, has never acted better—probably never so well. The romantic tenderness, the deep feeling, the patient endurance of this loyal and truly devout lover are splendidly varied by the wild abandonment of triumphant passion with which the victor springs upon his foe in the magnificently played scene that closes the third act. Here, as elsewhere, the author owes much to the consistently fine acting of Mr Herbert Waring, whose study of sullen, brutal desperation is wonderfully faithful and consistent. Excellent in its quiet, unobtrusive way is Miss Granville's portrait of the strong, true-hearted Nursing Sister, with her simple views of duty and self-sacrifice; and from the fringe of drawing-room cynics surrounding the chief characters of the story, the parts played by Mr Elliot, Mr Vane-Tempest, and Miss Irene Vanbrugh stand out with most distinctness. Mr H. V. Esmond, in a character quite apart from these—that of Remon's devoted younger brother—plays with pleasing humour and occasional happy touches of more serious feeling. When all such deductions as we have indicated, and others still, have been made, it will yet remain to be recorded that Mr Jones has added another unchallenged success to his brilliant record, and that the St. James's is once more the home of a play which does honour to the English stage.

The Queen.

FIRST NIGHT AT THE ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

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Mrs Campbell at last emerges from the bar, of all unlikely places, and then, after noticing that she is in a modest little black silk dress, trimmed in a quiet fashion with creamy lace, it begins to dawn upon us that she is just the hotel young lady and not a guest at all. But many things may happen during one night of a pretty girl's life, and Dulcie Larondie (Mrs Campbell) is asked to join the dancers before this ball is over. She runs off on the plea that she will slip on an old ball frock. In real life the old ball-frock of a penniless orphan would assuredly be a dilapidated black lace affair upon a sateen foundation. But on the stage these painful truths are fortunately mitigated, wherefore Dulcie re-appears in a pale blue satin, with white lace berthe and short sleeves, and some pink roses on the skirt. It is unimposing, but becoming, and certainly not of the year before last.

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Mrs Campbell's last dress is not quite so rich as the one already described, but it is even more charming. The skirt is an extremely beautiful Pompadour satin of turquoise blue, on which is scattered a design of large flowers with pink centres. The bodice is satin; to correspond, is cut in the blouse style and entirely draped with heliotrope chiffon, and the effect of the pale blue satin gleaming through the mauve gauze is a loveliness only to be imagined or seen. The sleeves have puffs from shoulder to elbow of the chiffon draped satin; but the lower portion of the sleeve is of ivory lace, which also continues up the inner side of the arm to the juncture with the bodice—a method of treatment that preserves the outline of the arm, despite the appearance of fullness. A deep collar of the same lace is fastened with a bow of heliotrope chiffon and a diamond brooch. A belt of silver galon, with small ends of the same hanging chateleine wire at each side, gives artistic completeness to this most desirable costume. Mrs Campbell wears, for a few moments in the fourth act, a superb cloak of crimson velvet.

THE ATHENÆUM

DRAMA

THE WEEK.

ST. JAMES'S.—"The Masqueraders," a Play in Four Acts. By Henry Arthur Jones.

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Kindling holy fires,
Circled round about with spies,
Never dreaming loose desires,
Doting at the altar dies.

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

TO DEFINE with any exactness the character of the new play which Mr Henry Arthur Jones has contributed to the St. James's Theatre would be a task of no small difficulty. It is neither wholly comedy, nor romance, nor melodrama, but a strange and infinitely clever amalgam of all three. In outline, the plot of "The Masqueraders" is frankly melodramatic, a description that applies equally well to its most stirring and impressive situation. But the genius of the playwright has illumined the character of his astronomer-lover with so bright a glow of romantic heroism, and has enlivened the two earlier acts with such admirable scenes of pure comedy, that one is puzzled to assign the play to any one of the ordinary categories. And yet there is nothing strikingly new in the story that Mr Jones sets himself to tell us in this his latest and in some respects his most notable work. Put into a sentence, it is merely the old conflict between the titled scoundrel who possesses and the faithful lover who befriends an unhappy girl, whose ambition has led her to a disastrous and bitterly regretted marriage. The idea is, of course, the merest commonplace of novelists and dramatists; but Mr Jones has so treated it as to rob it of all its conventionality and invest it with new and irresistible interest. There may be incidents in "The Masqueraders" at which the reason of the spectator will rebel; there may be cause for disappointment in the feebleness of the heroine's character and in the vague and nebulous position in which the author elects to leave her and her lover at the final fall of the curtain. But the power and beauty of the dialogue, the impressive picture of self-denying love presented by this most chivalrous of heroes, and the brilliancy and sparkle of the comedy-scenes, combine to obscure all that is doubtful and unconvincing in the play, and entitle it to rank with its immediate predecessor at this theatre among the remarkable English dramas of the present generation. The story unfolded in the four acts of "The Masqueraders" may be here very briefly indicated. Dulcie Larondie is a young girl of gentle birth who has been left by family adversity upon her own resources. Her elder sister Helen has adopted the career of a hospital nurse; but Dulcie, longing for "life" and excitement, has thrown up the uncongenial work of a governess to accept a barmaid's post at the Stag Hotel and Assembly Rooms, Crandover, where, at the opening of the play, a large and fashionable company is assembled for the Hunt Ball. The young sportsmen vie with each other in familiar attentions to the pretty and ladylike girl in the bar; but there are two men who regard her with more serious feelings. One is Sir Brice Skene, a sinister baronet with a bad reputation; the other is David Remon, an astronomer, an enthusiast, and a dreamer, whose love for Dulcie is as romantic and ideal as that of his rival is coarse and selfish. A subscription being on foot for a charitable object, one of the young men so far forgets himself as to propose that a kiss from Miss Larondie shall be made the subject of an auction, and, though the girl herself offers a faint objection, the other "gentlemen" fall in with and proceed to carry out the idea. The bidding begins with moderate sums; but suddenly the two rivals come to the front, Remon evidently with the motive of saving the woman he loves from the threatened indignity. But the baronet, dogged and angrily defiant, caps his every bid by one still higher, and at last, when the astronomer's offer has risen by rapid stages to 2000 guineas—his whole available capital—his rival promptly bids 3000, and the prize is assigned to him. But Sir Brice Skene has not given his 3000 guineas merely for a kiss. Having written the cheque, he begs Miss Larondie to devote it to the charity that gave the occasion for this strange auction, and then, in the presence of the entire assemblage, asks her to become his wife. Dazzled by the prospect, she accepts his proposal; but there is a soft place in her heart for the rejected lover who has offered all he has for a single kiss from her lips; and presently, when she encounters him alone, she kisses him compassionately on the forehead as she runs off to join her future husband. Four years have passed, and Dulcie, now Lady Skene, finds little enough of happiness in her life except that which comes of her love for her baby girl, and of the loyal friendship of David Remon, who has not only inherited wealth, but has achieved scientific fame in the interval. Sir Brice, who has proved a gambler, a drunkard, and a bully, is 2019-03-16

obscurly, that the rich astronomer is himself keeping the baronet's establishment afloat for dishonourable reasons. On this coming to Remon's ears, he decides to leave England forthwith; but, having learnt of the impending ruin that threatens Dulcie's husband, he places his banking account at her disposal. A few months later Sir Brice Skene and his wife are found at a hotel at Nice. The gambler, having wasted £6000 of Remon's money, is once more on the verge of disaster. and insolently commands his wife to give him more, taunting her meanwhile with her love for the man who has helped them. Stung to revolt by his brutality, Dulcie does not attempt to conceal her love for his rival, whose money she steadily refuses to let him any longer handle. Remon, however, is about to start on a perilous astronomical expedition to the West Coast of Africa, and comes to bid her good-bye. The thought of losing him breaks down her self-restraint, and a mutual declaration of love follows, during which the baronet enters and discovers them in each other's arms. Here is the chance he has been awaiting; he cares nothing for revenge—all he seeks is money, and he accepts Remon's desperate proposal that they shall play for the possession of Dulcie and her child, the stakes on the other side being Remon's entire fortune. The two men bend over the card-table, while the woman whose future is at stake stands by and awaits the result. Then, when the cards have declared Remon the victor, he springs triumphantly upon his rival, and makes him swear never to claim Dulcie or her child again. But the wife and mother cannot sacrifice her honour even for the man she loves so well. She goes with him to his observatory on an Alpine height, and there, with the help of her sister, who has watched over her tenderly all through the story, she awakens Remon to his true duty. Placing a ring on her finger, in token of a pledge that may one day be possible of fulfilment, the loyal-hearted lover bids her farewell, and, leaving her to her sister's care, goes forth to his distant expedition, taking his life in his hand. Powerful as are these closing scenes, it cannot be denied that they are marred by a certain fantastic unreality. The gambling incident, for instance, though splendidly effective as a stage situation, lacks even the faintest show of probability, for it is obvious that Remon has no adequate motive for placing his fortune and his power to rescue Dulcie from her husband at the hazard of the card-table. All that he does as a consequence of his victory, he could do equally well if the gambling scene had no place in the play; nor is it credible that any woman with a grain of self-respect would suffer herself to be made the sport of a pack of cards—or, for the matter of that, would allow her kisses to be put up to auction. The weakness of the character of Dulcie is, in our judgment, by far the most serious defect of the play; and it would seem that Mrs Patrick Campbell, accomplished actress as she is, can do nothing towards redeeming its vagueness and lack of colour. Her performance last Saturday evening seemed, indeed, curiously lacking in variety and spirit, and almost suggested that she either did not understand or did not like the part. Mr George Alexander, on the other hand, has never acted better—probably never so well. The romantic tenderness, the deep feeling, the patient endurance of this loyal and truly devout lover are splendidly varied by the wild abandonment of triumphant passion with which the victor springs upon his foe in the magnificently played scene that closes the third act. Here, as elsewhere, the author owes much to the consistently fine acting of Mr Herbert Waring, whose study of sullen, brutal desperation is wonderfully faithful and consistent. Excellent in its quiet, unobtrusive way is Miss Granville's portrait of the strong, true-hearted Nursing Sister, with her simple views of duty and self-sacrifice; and from the fringe of drawing-room cynics surrounding the chief characters of the story, the parts played by Mr Elliot, Mr Vane-Tempest, and Miss Irene Vanbrugh stand out with most distinctness. Mr H. V. Esmond, in a character quite apart from these—that of Remon's devoted younger brother—plays with pleasing humour and occasional happy touches of more serious feeling. When all such deductions as we have indicated, and others still, have been made, it will yet remain to be recorded that Mr Jones has added another unchallenged success to his brilliant record, and that the St. James's is once more the home of a play which does honour to the English stage.

May 5th
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"The Masqueraders."

Mr. Jones has devised a triumph new in a sense for love, but anticipated—as what form of praise or consecration is not?—in some respects by previous writers. His hero wins by noble service the woman he loves. His all when he is poor he bids for a kiss which, in an exquisitely pretty scene, he gets; but he loses the prize on which his heart is set. His all when he is rich he stakes for her, and he wins. Palpitating with love, she makes surrender, and she quits on his arm the presence of her husband, who has gambled away her honour on a card, and subjected her to every form of indignity and outrage. He takes her to his own house and clasps her once more where none may intrude. Is there more he can do? Yes. He can settle on her his fortune, and go away to die, preserving thus her honour, and leaving her after his death a prey to a husband who so soon as he hears of her wealth will resume the rights which no human power can deny him. Here is the latest and most "fantastic triumph" of love enforced in a brilliant, paradoxical, delightful, and wholly unconvincing play. "People do not do such things," says Judge Brack in 'Hedda Gabler.' They do not indeed, nor should they. If there are beings of such high-souled purity, let them be canonized, not put on the stage.

Esser baciato da cotanto amante,

and then withdraw to resume normal and honourable avocations, may be pious and commendable. For those capable of such heroism there is no place in the inferno of lovers. It happens that a poet not regarded as among the sensuous and libertine has dealt with this very state of affairs. Mr. Philip James Bailey, the author of 'Festus,' asks—the utterance is dramatic:—

Who ever paused on passion's fiery wheel?
Or, trembling by the side of her he loved,
Whose lightest touch brings all but madness, ever
Stopped coldly short to reckon up his pulse?

This is practically what David Remon, the hero of 'The Masqueraders,' does. He is, it is true, a dreamer, a visionary, an astronomer. Looking at the stars, he falls into the ditch, and the only moral he supplies is one familiar in literature—that he who will win must not be denied. Something, too, of the old notions of physical chastity seems to underlie the whole. When a woman rhapsodizes, "He loves me! He loves me! He loves me and I'm not ashamed of it, and I don't care who knows it"; when she tells her husband that she loves another; when she accepts that lover's embrace, and, quitting her husband's roof and presence, goes out into the midnight, leaning upon the arm which has just clasped her in delirium, what rag of moral raiment is retained?

Putting aside this crowning defect, there is very much to be said for a powerful and brilliant play. Two scenes are there, each dangerous and difficult, and each faced and conquered. Mr. Jones's instinct is safe. When a kiss of the heroine is put up for auction some shock is experienced. Mr. Jones would, indeed, do well to make

the ladies—the dowagers at least—leave the room. An insult is in the end converted into a compliment, the delicacy of the heroine is saved, and a man thenceforward to be regarded as a scoundrel behaves with chivalric courtesy. When a woman stands aside and watches two men playing for her possession and that of her child, the passions aroused are so deadly that we have not time to be scandalized and do not dare to scoff. The play, indeed, though it has dull passages and is not without blemishes, some of them sufficiently obvious, is absorbing. It is well written, moreover, and presents a picture—faithful in the main, and highly diverting—of contemporary manners. It is acted with admirable *ensemble*, and supplies many thoroughly lifelike pictures. The three principal characters are finely played, though Mrs. Patrick Campbell as the heroine should take more pains to be audible. Hers is a very trying part, since during two acts she is always on the stage and has scarcely anything to say. Mr. Herbert Waring's husband is an excellent impersonation, and Mr. Alexander as the hero produces an electrical effect upon the audience.

The Era

THE LONDON THEATRES

THE ST. JAMES'S.

On Saturday, April 28th, for the First Time,
a New and Original Modern Play, in Four Acts,
by Henry Arthur Jones, entitled
"THE MASQUERADERS."

David Remon	Mr GEORGE ALEXANDER
Sir Brice Skene	Mr HERBERT WARING
Montagu Lushington	Mr ELLIOT
Eddie Remon	Mr H. V. ESMOND
Lord Crandover	Mr IAN ROBERTSON
Hon. Percy Blanchflower	Mr A. VANE-TEMPEST
Sir Winchmore Wills, M.D.	Mr GRAEME GORING
George Copeiland	Mr BEN WEAVER
Fancourt	Mr ARTHUR ROYSTON
Carter	Mr GUY LANE-COULSON
Randall	Mr J. A. BENTHAM
Rodney	Mr F. KINSEY-PEILE
Sharland	Mr A. BROMLEY-DAYENPORT
Jimmy Stokes	Mr WILLIAM H. DAY
Brinkley	Mr ALFRED HOLLES
Thomson	Mr F. LOFTUS
A Servant	Mr THEO STEWART
Dulcie Larondie	Mrs PATRICK CAMPBELL
Helen Larondie	Miss GRANTVILLER
Charley Wishanger	Miss IRENE VANBRUGH
Lady Clarice Raine	Miss BERYL FABER
Lady Crandover	Mrs EDWARD SAKER

Prince Bismarck once described an English statesman as a lath painted to look like iron; Mr Jones's last play is a melodrama written to seem like an intellectual entertainment. The *scène-à-faire* of the piece—that in which the lover cuts cards with the husband for his wife and child—is purely "transpontine;" and when Mr Alexander wrestles with Mr Waring, takes him by the throat, shakes him, and throws him violently into a chair, we can almost fancy ourselves at the Adelphi. So much for the mass. For the connoisseur there are bits of first-hand observation, dialogue of the smartly cynical order, and in the last act a scene which is really deep and human. The piece, as a whole, deserves rather to be described than analysed.

Dulcie Larondie, a young lady in reduced circumstances, has become barmaid at the Stag Hotel, Crandover. She loathes the life, and is, as Goldsmith said, "ambitious of the town." She wants to marry a man with money, go to London, and "have Society at her feet." She is beloved by a brutal blackguard of a baronet named Sir Brice Skene; and is worshipped from afar by an astronomer named David Remon. David has no money, but a friend who is about to start on a mountaineering expedition leaves £2,000 at his banker's to Remon's credit, and the latter is thus able to take part in an auction at which, in a wild freak, one of Dulcie's

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any plate whatsoever, it is sure to develop the features of his own face. George Sand puts it well: "Art," she says, "does not wholly consist in depicting." Guy de Maupassant puts it better: "Art consists," he says, "in following the logic of facts," whence he concludes that the higher order of realists should rather call themselves illusionists. "Every fact," says Emerson, "is related on one side to sensation, on the other to morals." Therefore, you cannot escape morality in your novels and your plays. Don't attempt to escape it. Don't deceive yourself that you are trying to be an impartial artist like Shakespeare or Scott, if you are merely suffering from a want of conviction, a want of moral earnestness. Don't try to shelter yourself in the evasive cowardice of "Am I my brother's keeper?" That you dare to write books at all shows that you consider yourself something stronger than your brother. Then look first to yourself; search yourself; know yourself; that's the only way of safety for you or for the world.

THE WRITER AND HIS SUBJECT.

If the novelist and dramatist cannot escape from moral responsibility, in what does his responsibility consist? It consists first in his choice of subject. In old times, when almost all books were written in Latin, and read only by scholars, this responsibility of subject must have been small. But now, when literature is addressed equally to both sexes and to all ages, it is very serious. The ethics of the time claim the right to exercise a sort of moral censorship over the subject. In Russia, when foreign books and newspapers contain certain allusions, the legal censorship blacks them out. Within the past few weeks the committee of an English library, the Aston Free Library, have decided to paste slips of white

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paper over the racing and betting intelligence in the daily papers. Thus they have taken a leaf—a white leaf instead of a black one—out of the Russian book, and one wonders what they will do when the next scandal in high life comes along. The newspapers of the Aston Free Library will surely be the broadsheets of miraculous whiteness. But the committee, bless its mealy mouth, has gone a step farther. It has ordered that the works of Fielding and Smollett shall be relegated to the reference department. What censorship they exercise on modern novels we have not heard, but their attitude of moral guardianship is not unique. The other day the city fathers of Melbourne held a literary inquisition on a list of works by certain lady novelists, headed by the “Heavenly Twins.” One seems to see them in grim array in the front row of the stalls sitting in judgment on “The Second Mrs. Tanqueray.”

FORBIDDEN SUBJECTS.

Far be it from me to deride any activity of the moral conscience. Only let it be informed by knowledge, and we cannot easily have too much of it. The novelist and the dramatist usually gives the public what it wants. As Macaulay says, it is not so much by his own taste as by the taste of the fish that the angler is determined in his choice of bait. Smollett's masterpiece owed its first success to an episode, “Memoirs of a Lady of Fashion,” supposed to contain the history of a notorious woman who had paid the author, they say, to publish the facts of her infamous life. That was a case of an author giving the public the bait that suited its taste. There are other cases of authors wishing to give the bait that only suited their own. Some time ago Mr. Grant Allen published in the *Athenæum* an affecting account of how he had written a book into which he had

put all his heart, and then destroyed it at the advice of his publisher. The public is supposed by authors to be a very stubborn patron. To use the language of the advertisement, when it asks for a thing it sees that it gets it. I am not in the least of this opinion. There is only one thing the public demands, and that is human nature. It says to the novelist, “Amuse me! Sustain me! Comfort me!” But it leaves him to please himself how he does it. He can sing what song he pleases. All it asks is that the song shall be good, and that he shall sing it well enough. Otherwise it may be either a song of love or a ditty of the forecastle. Undoubtedly there are subjects which it forbids. It forbids all unwholesome, and unnatural passions; it forbids the imaginative treatment of sacred personages. Short of these, it welcomes anything—religious questions, political questions, or even dangerous moral questions.

To the dramatist the licence is less liberal. In my earliest days in London they produced on the stage Tennyson's “Promise of May.” I was present at that frightful fiasco. The play was not a good one, but its failure that night was not so much due to its artistic defects as to its daring treatment of morals. It presented the conventional seducer of innocence, not as a ruffian who ought to be kicked, but as a thinker who had even something to say for himself. This was grotesque to the English public, and they howled and howled. I alone, or almost alone, with my friend Theodore Watts, cheered and cheered. It wasn't that we cared a ha'p'orth for the scoundrel on the stage, but that we claimed the right of the drama to deal with moral questions. That night in my lodgings I wrote to Tennyson. I meant him to get my letter with the newspapers next morning. “The stage,” he answered, “must be in a very low state indeed, if, as some dramatic critics are telling us, none of the great moral and social questions of the time can be touched

upon in a modern play." That was only twelve years ago, and what have those twelve years witnessed? They have witnessed the rise of Ibsen. Think what you like of Ibsen, consider him a morbid, unhealthy, middle-class sceptic, if you will (and I have no great idolatry to spend on him myself, either as an artist or a man), you must admit that once for all he has brought back the living moral questions to the stage.

LOVE IN THE NOVEL AND THE DRAMA.

Napoleon complained that poets and novelists showed no enterprise in dealing with the rich materials of the modern world. What could be more tragic than the struggles in the mind of a wise and powerful ruler? And Mr. Ruskin complains that the fiction of our age has swept its heart clear of all the passions known as loyalty, patriotism, and piety. It has only one sentiment, the sentiment of love. This it magnifies out of all proportion. In Scott the most important business of man and woman was not marriage. Love with the great romancer was only a light by which the sterner features of character were to be irradiated.

For my own part I have no complaint against the novel and the drama that love is its central theme. I don't believe the novel could exist save in the hands of a great master (and with the addition of great wealth of local colour, or foreign, or old-world pageantry) without love as its axis; and I don't believe that without love as the dominant theme the modern drama could exist at all. But I do complain that love in the novel and the drama is painted too much from one point of view. It is the idyllic point of view, the sweet, sugar-and-candy, rosy, Aurora Borealis point of view. But love has its tragedies, its great clashings of passion, its wrecks and ruins. Surely these

should have their place in art. For the most part the world sets its face against them. The farthest it will go is to recognise what one might call the spider and fly dramas of love. Man is the spider, woman is the fly, and the business of the novelist is to brush down the cobwebs. It has been known that in actual life the *dramatis personæ* has been reversed, and the woman has been the spider and the man the fly, but that would never do for modern art. "Please paint my white cat," said the child to the Professor. "Child," said the Professor, "in the grand school all cats are grey."

LOVE IN LIFE.

There are other aspects of the love problem which it might be well to contemplate. Cleopatra and Antony, a scheming woman enchanting with her bodily charms a strong man so that she might use him as a means to her own ends; a conqueror conquered, and imagining, poor simple soul, that he is loved for himself alone. Or a good woman bound down by the cruel limitations of her sex, trying to hold on to the man who is slipping away from her. These are some of the tragedies of love and perhaps they are not so idyllic, not so sweet, not so innocent. Shall we therefore ignore them? Let us face the fact that they might be dangerous. The world might get too fond of contemplating them. They might be temptations. "Some men," says Jeremy Taylor, "are more in love with the temptation than with the sin," but the best way with most men to escape sin is to avoid the temptation. Alexander told the Queen of Caria that he had two cooks who kept him out of temptation—hard marches all night and a small dinner next day. We keep these two cooks hard at work in making the book of fiction, and there would be no cause to complain if we did not keep two very different

cooks still harder at work making the book of life. "People speak," says Balzac, according to Mr. Stephen, "of the immorality of certain books; here is a horrible, foul, and corrupt book, always open and never to be shut—the great book of the world." We can read it in the newspapers—we can see it in the streets—we can hear it in the police courts. What is the use of sweeping your books clean of sin while the world is full of it? Do you think that merely by painting up a fancy picture of an existence without fault that life is going to copy it? In the English lake country somebody has set up a foolish tower which overlooks Windermere by four stained glass windows, one in each of the four walls. Look out at the first and everything is green and all the scene below is like spring; look out at the second and it is like summer; the third and it is like autumn; the fourth and it is like winter. It is an innocent folly enough, and if you are content with that sort of stained-glass fiction, if it amuses you, and you are happy in your amusement, so be it; live and be cheerful in your little peep-show, and you may go on next to the House that Jack built. Only if you expect literature to have anything to do with life, if you want it to speak to you in your dark hours, just break to pieces the foolish and deceptive medium that is giving false colours to the world.

ART SHOULD BE AS MORAL AS THE WORLD.

But perhaps literature sometimes goes too far—farther than life itself. When Mr. Pinero produced his most successful play, Mr. Clement Scott, an earnest dramatic critic, whose opinion is worthy of respect, urged that art should not be less moral than life, and that a play should not deal with subjects that cannot be discussed at the dinner-table. "Art should be as moral as life," says Mr.

Zangwill, implying that it is sometimes apt to be less moral. "A modern school," says Mr. Stephen, "has turned to account all the most refined methods of breaking the Ten Commandments." Ruskin calls their books the literature of the Prison House, and says "the speciality of the plague is a delight in the exposition of the relations between guilt and decrepitude."

God forbid that I should stand here as an apologist for what George Eliot calls "the Cremorne walks and shows of fiction." But I want to stand here for the twin angels of freedom and truth. If the novel and the drama is to act upon life, it must be at liberty to represent it, not in one aspect only, but in all aspects; not in its Sunday clothes merely, but in its week-day garments; not in part, but altogether. You tell me that that is fraught with dangers. So it is, with great dangers. You say the world is not all fit for all eyes to look upon. True. But the dangers of life are worse than the dangers of books. Don't run away from the one, while you are compelled to expose yourself to the other. Don't shut your eyes in the street and open them only in the library. Don't be vexed with the author who tells you that for you, for your children, perils lie in wait—that man in the story was too fond of his sleep, who was angry with the lizard that waked him when the viper was creeping into his mouth. *Only*, when a writer tells you of danger, look first to his intention in telling you, and look next to see what manner of man he is himself. "All is proper to be expressed," says J. F. Millet, "provided our aim is high enough." This is what I would say to the reader, and to the writer I would venture, if I dare, to give similar counsel. I would say to him: To the reader I have pleaded for freedom with truth; to you I plead for truth with freedom. If you are to be free to find your subjects in any scene of human life, remember that your responsibility as a man is the

greater for your liberty as an artist. If you are allowed to get very close to human experience, beware lest you wrong it by want of reticence and sincerity. You are coming nearer than a brother, nearer than a sister. If you are to walk in the inner sanctuaries of the hearts of men and women, for God's sake have a care to walk as with God's eye on you.

RELIGION AND POLITICS ON THE STAGE.

A few words here on the question of whether the drama is a responsible vehicle for the discussion of religious and political subjects. When Moliere wrote "Tartuffe" he plunged into the utmost depths of this ancient controversy. His chief character, a hypocrite, was supposed to be intended for a certain famous Abbe, afterwards made Bishop. A great outcry went up from the church and the play was prohibited. Churchmen denounced it as a mockery of the sacred character and divine functions of religion. One vicar protested that the author was a demon incarnate dressed up as a man, and that he ought to be burnt at the stake as a foretaste of the fires of hell. Moliere replied, temperately and humorously, in a preface and in some letters to the king. He claimed that the stage had a right to discuss religion, not as dogma, but as a moral force. It was no argument against the stage as a proper place for such discussion, that in bad hands it might be turned to bad account. Medicine was a profitable art which had done the world much good—were they to put it down because evil practitioners had used it to poison people? But Moliere was beaten, and every dramatist since Moliere has been scourged who has tried to touch religious or political themes in a play.

A few years ago the Lord Chamberlain stopped a burlesque in which the actors were made up to represent Mr. Gladstone,

kisses is put up for sale by a number of reckless youths, for the benefit of the widow of a local "whip." Remon and Skene bid against each other; and Sir Brice clinches his success by announcing to those present his intention to make Dulcie his wife. In a daintily written scene Remon takes leave of her, and, dimly appreciating his chivalrous devotion, Dulcie presses a kiss on his forehead before she goes.

Four years pass, and she finds she has made a bad bargain. Sir Brice has gambled away all his property, while Remon, by the death of his bosom friend, has inherited a large fortune. Fearing that his passion for Lady Skene may carry him too far, Remon departs on an astronomical expedition to South Africa, leaving a large balance at his banker's for Dulcie to draw upon in case she is in need, Sir Brice tacitly consenting to this arrangement. In the third act we find the Skenes at an hotel at Nice. Dulcie has drawn upon Remon's account, and Sir Brice, who is in deeper difficulty than ever, wants her to continue to do so. But she refuses, and looks herself into her bedroom when he tries to bully her. Remon comes to say a last farewell to her before starting for East Africa; his resolutions break down, and he clasps her to his breast. Sir Brice returns, and Remon offers to play him for his wife and child against his (Remon's) whole fortune. The astronomer wins.

The scene of the last act is laid in an observatory in the Maritime Alps. Here Remon comes with Dulcie, who is seized with qualms of conscience, and cannot bring herself to cohabit with the astronomer while her husband still lives. David, moved by her pleadings, and by the noble representations of her sister, a nurse, goes out to Africa to complete his study of sun-spots; and Lady Skene, presumably, returns to her martyrdom, the play thus ending on a high note. The title of the piece, by-the-by, is accounted for by Remon's whimsical theory of the unreality of all things except the stars. Other characters in the cast are the astronomer's crazy brother and a cynical man of Society, Montagu Lushington; and the stage is furnished with an abundance of ladies and gentlemen of fashion, who bear themselves as such and say some very clever and amusing things.

The Masqueraders met with a very warm reception from the first-night audience. At the end of the third act, after the card-playing scene, the house "rose" at the author and actors, and cheered as if they were at a political meeting. The artists were called again and again. Mr. Alexander had to make a judiciously brief speech; and Mr. Jones was summoned, and was received with thundering cheers. For this result Mr. Alexander and his company can claim a large share of credit. Truly, Mr. Jones had fitted the actor-manager of the St. James's Theatre with a part which exploited his best powers. As the thoughtful "eerie" astronomer, with something unearthly in his dreamy, speculative eye, something more than ordinary in the elevation of his sentiments, yet very human after all, Mr. Alexander was supremely excellent. In the earlier acts all was restrained and subdued. It was not until the end of the third that the pent-up power was let loose, and David Remon, after half strangling the astonished husband, hurled him, astounded and breathless, on a chair, and made his exit amidst a whirlwind of excited applause. Nothing could resist the strenuous energy of this. Mr. Herbert Waring's Sir Brice Skene was forcibly characteristic. The brutal vigour of the baronet in the first act developed in the second and third into the quivering anxiety of the habitual gambler and drunkard. Such a picture of aristocratic degradation is seldom seen on our boards. As a contrast to Mr. Alexander's Remon, nothing could have been better. Mr. Elliot delivered the epigrams of Montagu Lushington with telling point and polish. Each sharply-pointed line went arrow-like to its mark, each well-turned phrase had its exact value. Mr. H. V. Esmond hit off the "flightiness" of Eddie Remon capitally; and Mr. Ian Robertson as Lord Crandover looked every inch a master of the hounds. Mr. A. Vane Tempest was quaintly humorous as the Hon. Percy Blanchflower; and Mr. Graeme Goring was duly professional as a fashionable physician. Mr. Ben Webster did exceedingly well in the small rôle of Pancourt. Special praise is due to the little army of "small-part people" whom Mr. Alexander has enlisted. The ladies and gentlemen at the St. James's are commendably real and modern. What a gulf there is between them and the old-fashioned "Adelphi guests!" Mr. William H. Day was excellent as an old whip; and Mr. Alfred Holles was very natural and easy as the old hotel-keeper. Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who played Dulcie Larondie, was frequently indistinct, and was not seen at her best. But the character of Dulcie Larondie is a very difficult one to deal with. Dulcie is a puzzle. In the first act, she is a mercenary little snob, with the ambitions of a real barmaid, and incapable of appreciating Remon's infatuated adoration. In the second act she is a neurotic patient, in the third a wife bullied into sad sullenness, and in the

last an introspective Ibsenish heroine. Mrs. Campbell will doubtless see her way to improving her reading with repetition. Miss Irene Vanbrugh hit off very neatly the "smart" peculiarities of Charley Wishanger; Miss Beryl Faber was ladylike and graceful as Lady Clarice; and Mrs. Edward Saker made a duly dignified and overbearing Lady Crandover.

The mounting was sumptuously artistic. So elaborate was the scene of the courtyard of the Stag Hotel in the first act that nearly twenty minutes were consumed in "striking" it. The amount of building-up must have been tremendous. The bar, with its beer-engines, bottles, cups, and mugs, was wonderfully realistic, and the quaint staircases and galleries, the overhead skylight, and the mani-coloured flags made, altogether, one of the most realistic reproductions that have been seen on the stage for some time. The *venue* of the second act,

Lady Skene's Drawing-room, was delightful in its exquisite taste. The noble lamps, with their glasses of delicate sea-green, the baskets of drooping roses hanging from the ceiling, and the profusion of artistic costumes worn by the ladies made a fascinating whole. *The Masqueraders* is essentially a "tricky" piece; and it seems on the evidence of the box-office, where they are now booking seats for two months ahead, that Mr. Jones has "done the trick."

The Porcupine

"THE MASQUERADERS."

MR. JONES'S NEW PLAY.

I WILL not pretend to prophesy as to whether or not Mr. JONES has written a play which will prove to be financially "in the running" with *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. It is beyond all doubt that he has not only done himself full justice in *The Masqueraders*, but has added to his laurel-crown a very green and enduring leaf. But he has done more—he has written a play which, while inferior in grasp and focus to PINERO's masterpiece, is yet possessed of some elements of power which, magnificently great as was *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, were lacking in that play. In the first place, it leads somewhere; *Mrs. Tanqueray* was a moral *cul de sac*. In the second place, it is much healthier, and, in spite of its half-fantastic imagery, far saner. These are things by no means unimportant. If dramatic intensity and power were the be-all and end-all of a play, then *The Cenci* would be the greatest of all tragedies.

The Second Mrs. Tanqueray was a woman's piece, and Mrs. PATRICK CAMPBELL, as all the world knows, scored heavily in the character of Paula Ray. *The Masqueraders* is a man's play, and Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER as David Remon, the astronomer lover, carries off the honours almost unshared. Mrs. CAMPBELL as Dulcie Larondie—the discontented girl who, compelled to earn her living, has chosen to become a barmaid—has to play a part which has evidently been written with her in mind, and which is pretty plainly coloured, and coloured strongly, by her portrayal of *Mrs. Tanqueray*. In fact, the character of Dulcie Larondie, as drawn by Mr. JONES in the first and second acts, is continually reminiscent of that of the discontented, fretful woman created by Mr. PINERO. There is the same panting eagerness to see "life," the same passionate, unhealthy, overstrung temperament, the same half-insane apprehension of the future, and, above

May 12th
1894.

"The Masqueraders."

Mr. Jones has devised a triumph new in a sense for love, but anticipated—as what form of praise or consecration is not?—in some respects by previous writers. His hero wins by noble service the woman he loves. His all when he is poor he bids for a kiss which, in an exquisitely pretty scene, he gets; but he loses the prize on which his heart is set. His all when he is rich he stakes for her, and he wins. Palpitating with love, she makes surrender, and she quits on his arm the presence of her husband, who has gambled away her honour on a card, and subjected her to every form of indignity and outrage. He takes her to his own house and clasps her once more where none may intrude. Is there more he can do? Yes. He can settle on her his fortune, and go away to die, preserving thus her honour, and leaving her after his death a prey to a husband who so soon as he hears of her wealth will resume the rights which no human power can deny him. Here is the latest and most "fantastic triumph" of love enforced in a brilliant, paradoxical, delightful, and wholly unconvincing play. "People do not do such things," says Judge Brack in 'Hedda Gabler.' They do not indeed, nor should they. If there are beings of such high-souled purity, let them be canonized, not put on the stage.

Esser baciato da cotanto amante, and then withdraw to resume normal and honourable avocations, may be pious and commendable. For those capable of such heroism there is no place in the inferno of lovers. It happens that a poet not regarded as among the sensuous and libertine has dealt with this very state of affairs. Mr. Philip James Bailey, the author of 'Festus,' asks—the utterance is dramatic:—

Who ever paused on passion's fiery wheel?
Or, trembling by the side of her he loved,
Whose lightest touch brings all but madness, ever
Stopped coldly short to reckon up his pulse?

This is practically what David Remon, the hero of 'The Masqueraders,' does. He is, it is true, a dreamer, a visionary, an astronomer. Looking at the stars, he falls into the ditch, and the only moral he supplies is one familiar in literature—that he who will win must not be denied. Something, too, of the old notions of physical chastity seems to underlie the whole. When a woman rhapsodizes, "He loves me! He loves me! He loves me and I'm not ashamed of it, and I don't care who knows it"; when she tells her husband that she loves another; when she accepts that lover's embrace, and, quitting her husband's roof and presence, goes out into the midnight, leaning upon the arm which has just clasped her in delirium, what rag of moral raiment is retained?

Putting aside this crowning defect, there is very much to be said for a powerful and brilliant play. Two scenes are there, each dangerous and difficult, and each faced and conquered. Mr. Jones's instinct is safe. When a kiss of the heroine is put up for auction some shock is experienced. Mr. Jones would, indeed, do well to make

the ladies—the dowagers at least—leave the room. An insult is in the end converted into a compliment, the delicacy of the heroine is saved, and a man thenceforward to be regarded as a scoundrel behaves with chivalric courtesy. When a woman stands aside and watches two men playing for her possession and that of her child, the passions aroused are so deadly that we have not time to be scandalized and do not dare to scoff. The play, indeed, though it has dull passages and is not without blemishes, some of them sufficiently obvious, is absorbing. It is well written, moreover, and presents a picture—faithful in the main, and highly diverting—of contemporary manners. It is acted with admirable *ensemble*, and supplies many thoroughly lifelike pictures. The three principal characters are finely played, though Mrs. Patrick Campbell as the heroine should take more pains to be audible. Hers is a very trying part, since during two acts she is always on the stage and has scarcely anything to say. Mr. Herbert Waring's husband is an excellent impersonation, and Mr. Alexander as the hero produces an electrical effect upon the audience.

May 5th
1894.

The Era

THE LONDON THEATRES

THE ST. JAMES'S.

On Saturday, April 28th, for the First Time,
a New and Original Modern Play, in Four Acts,
by Henry Arthur Jones, entitled
"THE MASQUERADERS."

David Remon	Mr GEORGE ALEXANDER
Sir Brice Skene	Mr HERBERT WARING
Montagu Lushington	Mr ELLIOT
Eddie Remon	Mr H. V. ESMOND
Lord Crandover	Mr IAN ROBERTSON
Hon. Percy Blanchflower	Mr A. VANE-TEMPEST
Sir Winchmore Willis, M.D.	Mr GRAEME GORING
George Copeland	Mr BEN WEBSTER
Fancourt	Mr ARTHUR ROYSTON
Carter	Mr GUY LANE-COULSON
Randall	Mr J. A. BENTHAM
Rodney	Mr F. KINSEY-PEILE
Sharland	Mr A. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT
Jimmy Stokes	Mr WILLIAM H. DAY
Brinkler	Mr ALFRED HOLLES
Thomson	Mr F. LOFTUS
A Servant	Mr THEO STEWART
Dulcie Larondie	Mrs PATRICK CAMPBELL
Helen Larondie	Miss GRANVILLE
Charley Wishanger	Miss IRENE VANDRUGH
Lady Clarice Kaindean	Miss BEVEL FABER
Lady Crandover	Mrs EDWARD SAKER

Prince Bismarck once described an English statesman as a lath painted to look like iron; Mr Jones's last play is a melodrama written to seem like an intellectual entertainment. The *scene-à-faire* of the piece—that in which the lover cuts cards with the husband for his wife and child—is purely "transpontine;" and when Mr Alexander wrestles with Mr Waring, takes him by the throat, shakes him, and throws him violently into a chair, we can almost fancy ourselves at the Adelphi. So much for the mass. For the connoisseur there are bits of first-hand observation, dialogue of the smartly cynical order, and in the last act a scene which is really deep and human. The piece, as a whole, deserves rather to be described than analysed.

Dulcie Larondie, a young lady in reduced circumstances, has become barmaid at the Stag Hotel, Crandover. She loathes the life, and is, as Goldsmith said, "ambitious of the town." She wants to marry a man with money, go to London, and "have Society at her feet." She is beloved by a brutal blackguard of a baronet named Sir Brice Skene; and is worshipped from afar by an astronomer named David Remon. David has no money, but a friend who is about to start on a mountaineering expedition leaves £2,000 at his banker's to Remon's credit, and the latter is the able to take part in an auction at which, in a wild freak, one of Dulcie's

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