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Oscar Wilde
Scrapbook

Vol. 4

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 fore-castle. 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,

"The Masqueraders."

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 "erie" 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 exceeding well in the small rôle of Fancourt. 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 Ibsenitish 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."

May 12th
1894.

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

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"The Masqueraders" in "The Porcupine"; May 12th/94

all, the same puzzled, impassive outlook upon mischance and sorrow. Some of this reminiscent flavour may be due to Mrs. CAMPBELL's acting, but it is a pity that for a follow to the part of *Paula Ray* she was given another of such marked similarity.

The first act of the play makes large demands upon one's capacity for ignoring the probabilities. A Hunt Ball takes place at "The Stag Inn," where *Dulcie* is employed—by-the-bye, do such functions habitually take place in inns, with red-coated county lights larking round the bar and uninvited guests strolling in casually?—and a lot of wild young sprigs insist upon putting a kiss of *Dulcie's* up to auction. This is by no means new, but in Mr. JONES's setting it is absurdly improbable, for the ladies of the county—nobility, gentry, and all—troop out into the hall of the inn and watch the auction unconcernedly. True, a sort of *raison d'être* is given to the affair by the fact that *Dulcie* has been soliciting subscriptions for the widow and children of a whipper-in killed in the hunting field, and that the money bid for the intangible prize is to go to this highly-deserving purpose. The scene, however, is not really dramatic, in spite of the picture of *Sir Brice Skene*, "the choicest blackguard in England," and the astronomer, *David Remon*, bidding against each other in thousands for the coveted kiss. We are all the time expecting the ladies to leave in disgust, or *Dulcie* herself to fly into a passion of natural indignation. Nor does *Sir Brice's* offer of his hand and heart along with the cheque for three thousand, which gains him the victory—*David Remon* has only two thousand in the world—convince us in the least. And the absurdity is climaxed when *Dulcie* thereupon dons a ball dress and joins the distinguished company. Yet this is to be forgiven, from the fact that it affords Mrs. CAMPBELL her only opportunity of striking a chord which is not that of *Mrs. Tanqueray*. *David Remon*, the defeated lover, meets her on her way to the ball-room, and the girl who has plighted herself to a scoundrel for the sake of wealth and position is moved, by the reverent love and hopeless misery shining in *Remon's* eyes, to give him the kiss for which *Sir Brice* paid so dearly. It is a beautiful phrase beautifully acted.

Mr. JONES shows the influence of PINERO. He shows also the influence of OSCAR the epigrammatist, and the first part of Act II. is rendered wearisome and uninteresting by padding of the Wildean sort. *Dulcie Larondie*, now *Lady Skene*, entertains a party of guests who are nothing less than tiresome. They are not creations, they are not types; they have not even the merit of being caricatures. Again, too, the note of improbability is struck. Even in this age of disloyalty it is to be doubted if people in society quite so openly and loudly discuss their host and hostess—especially if that discussion turns upon the drunkenness of the former and rumoured unfaithfulness of the latter. But here, again, the act is saved by one of those touches of quaint tenderness of which Mr. JONES is capable. "Say something to me," says poor *Dulcie* to *David Remon*, with whose name, though she does not know it, her guests have been coupling her own—"say something to me, or I shall go mad." *Remon* looks at her with pure eyes of

worshipping love, and sees her tortured, agonised, distracted by the vices and follies of her husband. And he whispers to her a fancy of his—a fancy conjured up in half-bitter mirth by his brother and he on that night, three years ago, when Fate snatched her from him—how that all the world about them is but mist and phantom, how that there is nothing real in the whole universe, nothing save one little star in the nebula of Andromeda. But there everything goes right, everyone is happy; there is no pain, no sadness, no disillusionment, and therefore all is real. And the fretful, tortured woman, soothed by the tones of his voice, and, in her overwrought condition, just in the mood to feed on fantasy, seizes upon the idea and is comforted. The inattentive observer who misses this is at sea for the rest of the piece; it is the key to the whole play. The ending of the scene is poor, there being nothing really dramatic in Mr. JONES's setting of the fact that *David Remon*, intervening in a scene between the ruined *Sir Brice* and *Dulcie*, magnanimously gives her complete control of his banking account—he has fallen heir to a large fortune—and leaves England for ever.

It is in the third act that the dramatic success of the play is scored. Yet this idea, again, is not new; but Mr. JONES's setting is fine, and the acting of Mr. ALEXANDER and Mr. WARING is superb. The scene is in Paris. *Dulcie* has refused to draw further upon *Remon's* banking account, and *Sir Brice's* passion borders upon personal violence, but finally cools into the shrewder form of depriving *Dulcie* of her child unless she will continue her drafts upon *Remon's* fortune. While *Dulcie* is considering this ultimatum, *Remon* himself calls upon her to say farewell. The Transit of Venus is due shortly, and he leaves for Africa in a few days to witness the transit from a spot peculiarly favourable astronomically, but peculiarly deadly to Europeans. He is possessed with a presentiment that he will not return, and its strength has broken through his resolution not to see *Dulcie* again. Human nature is too much for both, and there is a compromising scene between them, in the midst of which *Sir Brice* enters. A strange interview between the two men leads up to the finale of the act, in which *Sir Brice* stakes his wife and child against *Remon's* entire fortune. The play is simple cutting, the game to be two out of three, and the dramatic intensity grows almost unbearable when *Dulcie* comes upon the scene just as her husband wins the first cut, and the last two cuts are played in her presence, the victory of the astronomer terminating a passage of extraordinary power.

The quidnuncs say that Mr. JONES has spoiled his play with the fourth act. It is possessed of little dramatic force, it is quixotic, it is mystical, and, above all, it is religious. And yet without it the play would be a comparatively poor one, and its peculiar significance and beauty would be entirely destroyed. It takes place in *Remon's* observatory in the South of France, whither he brings *Dulcie*. "They are his wife and child now;" passion has broken down his quiet self-control, and he is half insane with exultation

(17)

Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Ayrton. That was right. The travesty was a personal insult; it centred in Mr. Gladstone's hat and collar, and Mr. Lowe's eyebrows. More recently, Mr. Irving protested against being represented in a burlesque by an actor dressed as an old woman. That was right, too; it made it the harder for a serious actor to get the public into the mood for his own serious work. Nevertheless, as a novelist I consider I am more injured in my work by Mr. Gilbert's burlesque of a love scene in his comedy of "Sweethearts" than I should be if Mr. Harry Furniss drew me in a cartoon as a man with the three Manx legs.

The objection to politics on the stage is that people would become partisans, that the pit and gallery would hiss and cheer, that the theatre would be turned into a bear-garden, and the methods of political controversy would be degraded. The objection to religious subjects on the stage is thus stated by an able writer in the *Daily Telegraph*: "Religion as a melodrama behind the footlights, with powder and paint and false wigs and beards, is practically incongruous." May I be forgiven a personal reference? Three or four years ago I wrote a play on the subject of Mohammed. There was an outcry against it, and we did not attempt to produce it on the stage. The objections urged were, first: that Mohammed is the prophet of 180 millions of the people of India, whose religion our sovereign has sworn to respect; second, that Mohammed strutting on the stage, and being called before the curtain to bow his thanks, would be a travesty of the prophet's person, his character and his career; and, third, that though Christians might have a greater right to consider as an insult any theatrical presentation of Jesus Christ, whom they regard not only as human but Divine, they would have less right to object to St. Paul, St. John, and St. Peter in a modern play—and what English audience would tolerate that?

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(1.) The reply to all this is easy. The drama does not want to be a backer of parties, a champion of creeds, but only to touch politics and religion where these touch the moral and social life of man. (2.) The sacredness of a character is no reason why it should be withheld from art. All characters are sacred to the true artist; the whole family of man is sacred, and the artist who wrongs even the least and worst, the hypocrite or the miser, is committing as grievous an outrage on human nature as he who makes a travestie of the greatest and best in history. If a character (short of a divine character) is pure and noble and sacred, that is a reason why it should (rather than should not) appear in art. Are we to have all the impure and ignoble and vulgar characters of the world, or else the weak and indifferent nonentities, and only keep our hands off the great men and the noble women, the saints and the gods? "Nothing," says Michael Angelo, quoted in this connection by Archdeacon Farrar, "makes the soul so pure, so religious, as the endeavour to create something perfect." And if the making of perfect things is good for the artist, the contemplation of them cannot be bad for the spectator.

I plead with you, then, to grant liberty to us who are novelists and dramatists to deal with whatever political or religious subjects come into touch with man's moral life. Don't cripple us; don't ask us to let the intellectual activities of the age pass us by. If the great religious public, which has so long stood aloof from the theatre and given the novel a wide berth, are now coming timidly to the one, and are nervously picking up the other, let them be prepared to find their own world there, themselves there, the thoughts and temptations of their lives there—and not a foolish, irresponsible fable that is something between a pantomime and the tragedy of a Punch-and-Judy show.

This is the condition that is coming. I see it in the near future.

We shall not be deep in the twentieth century before religious subjects will be reverently treated on the stage. The greatest reputations of the time will lie in that direction. Already, though we are raising so loud an outcry against putting sanctified characters into the drama and into the novel, we have conceded the whole principle of the right to do so. A week ago you had "Becket" on the stage in Edinburgh. Was it not done reverently both by author and actor? If so, and no churchman was offended, you have, by your approval of the dramatisation of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, given us everything we ask.

THE WRITER AND HIS SCENES.

But moral responsibility in the choice of subject is perhaps not so great as in the selection of scenes and the delineation of character. The outcry against "Esther Waters" was not so much that its general trend was towards evil (it was obviously towards good) as that individual scenes were not such as it was proper to describe. On the other hand, if there was any moral opposition to "Tess o' the Turberville's" it was mainly that a character which we were asked to accept as pure had in the end acted impurely. Now, what is the precise moral responsibility of an author with respect to his scenes and his characters?

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Coleridge once proposed an anthology to be called "The Filter," a collection to be conducted on the principle of omitting from a book those parts in which the whim or perhaps the bad taste of the author, or perhaps the fashion of his age, prevailed over his genius. The idea has been acted upon in a notable instance by one Bowdler of immortal memory. There are authors who might be the sweeter for passing through such a filter, but it would not occur to many of

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DEATH IN NOVELS.

For instance, since the vigorous revival of romantic fiction with the stirring stories of Mr. Rider Haggard, there has been an outcry against scenes of blood in novels. And Dickens himself has been charged by no less a critic than Mr. Ruskin with drawing aside the sacred curtains of the sick room and pandering to a vulgar love of the suspense, the pathos, the horror, and the other phenomena of death. In his essays "Fiction, Foul and Fair," Ruskin gives a list of the deaths in "Bleak House." There is one by assassination—Mr. Tulkinghorn; one by starvation and consumption—Jo; one by chagrin—Richard; one by spontaneous combustion—Mr. Krook; one by sorrow—Lady Dedlock's lover; one by remorse—Lady Dedlock herself; and so on through insanity and paralysis to the fever of the baby and the hanging of the lively young Frenchwoman. Mr. Ruskin admits that the

number has been exceeded elsewhere, but not their grotesque violence and misery. This violence and misery is manufactured to meet a vile demand. Little Nell in the "Old Curiosity Shop" is simply killed for the market as any butcher might kill a lamb. The great masters of fiction disdain such work. Death with them is either heroic or quiet and natural. It is only the little masters who indulge in such scenes, which, being often witnessed, are easily copied and easily recognised.

The answer to all this is very simple. It is true that death in the modern novel is rarely heroic and often violent and miserable; but such forms of death come of the complex and perhaps unwholesome city life of modern times. Are we to ignore these unheroic manifestations of the life we actually live in favour of the heroic scenes of the life that was lived by our grandfathers? I would rather that men died of a sword wound in a good cause on the highlands of Scotland than of consumption in the gas-heated garrets of the sweating tailors of Petticoat Lane. But death waits for us all wherever our lot is cast; it is the duty and high privilege of art to teach men how to meet that last reality; and, just as the great masters of old fired the courage of the warriors of long ago to encounter death sword in hand, even so, surely, may the masters of the present sustain the hearts of the people of to-day to meet it with a brave face, however unheroic it may be, or violent or miserable.

SCENES OF PASSION IN NOVELS AND DRAMAS.

The moral responsibility of the author is more obvious in scenes of passion. When Walt Whitman was charged with broaching certain topics in one section of his "Leaves of Grass," he answered that there had hitherto been two conditions of the

world's attitude towards such subjects. One was silence. Make no mention of these matters—or at least allude to them at second hand—as the Greeks did to death. The result of this was ignorance, repression, hypocrisy, moral disease, shut up from the world's eye, and the cause of half the world's woe. The other was riot and sensuality, which is, according to Victor Hugo, a trait of all ages and all lands. Whitman proposed a third plan—scientific openness—to be as free as Nature, as healthy, as naked, and if need be, as immodest.

The plain sense of the matter would be that where a scene is mainly scientific, it had better be left to science; but where it is mainly artistic, whatever its delicacy, in proper hands it is proper for art. Thus, if the scenes in the hospital in "Esther Waters" were more proper to a doctor's treatise than to a novel, in a doctor's treatise, and not in a novel, they ought to have appeared. If, on the contrary, they added nothing to surgical science, but a good deal to the knowledge of human nature, then the novel was their proper place. Only, all such scenes carry their own responsibility. They must be done with reticence and with reverence or they are an offence in art. They must not be done for their own sakes, but as a means to an end, or they are an outrage on the sanctities of nature. So to the reader who comes upon what are called "daring" scenes in fiction I would say, "Look to the aim. Is it good or bad? Are these scenes merely finger-posts on the journey? Then they serve a useful purpose, and if they are not too glaring or too coarse you should not resent them. But are they inns meant for your entertainment, taverns intended to detain you, palaces decked out to catch your eye and empty your pockets, with the certainty that when they have sucked you dry they will turn you out on to the road a beggar? Then they ought to be put

down by public opinion, and, if that fail, by the police magistrate, and their author ought to take his proper place as a prostitute and a pander." And to the author I would make bold to say, "When you are tempted to describe a scene of more than usual delicacy, ask yourself first if it comes directly into the line of your story, and next, if it is the end of your story or only the way to the end. If you suspect that in your secret heart it is an aim in itself, cut it out, whatever its merit, whatever its naturalness, however sure you may be that you can do it delicately. But if you can satisfy yourself that it is only a process, if you have well computed the for and against, then, as Carlyle says of a similar scene in biography, "set it down, nothing doubting, having the fear of God before your eyes, and no other fear whatever."

THE NOVEL OF THE FUTURE.

I am tempted to go a little off the track of my thought to say what I think will be the great scenes of the great novels of the future. They will, I confidently believe, be the common and familiar scenes of ordinary life. Victor Hugo, before he began to write novels, said he dreamt of a novelist that should be a compound of Walter Scott and Homer. May I, without irreverence, say that I dream of a greater novel than we have ever yet seen, that shall be compounded of the penny newspaper and the Sermon on the Mount—the plainest realism and the highest idealism. The facts of common life have often been touched in novels, and so have the great passions—but rarely together, and perhaps never by a great master. Balzac might have done this, but he was lost to the high mission by a low view of human nature. Yet the heroic is in all men still, though the surroundings of life are no longer heroic.

"The Masqueraders."

(24)

He will be the Shakespeare of the future who will show us the undying heroism of humanity in the common things of every day—in the struggles of workmen on strike—of poor women with drunken husbands—of enslaved men with besotted wives—of children left to take care of themselves and one another in the wilderness of the world. Then there is the joy and sweetness, as well as the pathos and tragedy, of the common life of the modern world. The passions of men and women are the same now as they were in the heroic days of old, just as strong, just as active, only working in different ways, and, depend upon it, he is to be the great writer who will realise that fact to the full.

THE WRITER AND HIS CHARACTERS.

Then as to the ethics of character. It is extraordinary to an author how narrow the general body of readers can sometimes be about the origin and intention of imaginative characters. Authors have often said brutal things about it. "What duffers they are, these Parisians," said George Sand, "who compose the audience at first representations. They want to make the plays themselves." When poor "Tess" was being so roughly handled for thinking herself a pure woman, it would have been answer enough if Mr. Hardy had said, "My friends, I am not writing a biography of this young girl with the purpose of defending her against scandal. I am writing a novel of which she is the chief character. Personally, I consider her a pure woman, but my only duty is to present and explain her. Don't bully me if she is not pure; bully the world that I have faithfully presented; above all, bully yourselves that, by false conventions, you can push a poor girl down to this condition." But the public seems to us, who are authors, to be rather

at his victory. But *Dulcie* is cold and unresponsive to his caresses, and when he tells her that this is their "wedding-day," the phrase arouses her to her position. It is not possible to describe the scene in which *David Remon* finds his cup of happiness dashed from his lips. *Dulcie* in a previous part of the play has declared her intention of "thinking this"—marriage—"out for herself," and the result of her thinking is revealed when she tells *Remon* brokenly that she cannot do as he wishes. "Life with my husband was vile," she says, "no man, and only few women, can understand how vile; but," she adds, amid a storm of convulsive sobs, "I seem to see that life with you would be even more vile." Her determination, however, breaks down before his misery, and she yields herself to him. "Do anything you like with me, anything you like, but kill me afterwards, or I shall kill myself." Here there is a break. If *Remon* is going to Africa he must go at once, and if he does not go the observations over the whole world will be of no use. The contest must be fought out on the instant. *Nellie Larondie*, *Dulcie's* sister, decides it. She is a good woman, and appeals to the good in *Remon*. If he loves *Dulcie*, she tells him in a fine phrase, his love will make for the best in her and in himself. "There is her child," says *Nellie*, with a touch of healthy prose; "when she is a woman, is her mother to say to her, 'Take this man, and if you are not happy, leave him and take another; it was what I did'? Oh!" she appeals to him with a sob, "I know that the woman who lives with another man while her husband is alive sins against her sex and is a bad woman. Keep her, Mr. Remon—keep her pure for her child's sake."

Nellie has won. *Remon* goes to Africa. "Our love will never grow stale," he tells *Dulcie*, with a little touch of the *exalté*; "it will always be to us a beautiful and a sacred thing, and—if there be anything which is so—an immortal thing." "But shall we not meet again?" wails *Dulcie*. "Who knows?" says *Remon*, with a touch of fantasy; "perhaps in that little world in the nebula of *Andromeda*."

It would spoil all this to reduce it to the language of *Venuei*. Reducing it to narrative has spoiled it sufficiently. But it is a saner chord, this which dies away with *Remon's* last words, than any struck in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. To one who does not simply consider the drama as a species of refined electrical battery the last act is the finest in the piece. Without it *The Masqueraders* would not be worthy of Mr. Jones; with it the play forms a contribution, not only to the modern drama, but to modern thought. It recognises that the soul of love between man and woman is not animalism, that the very top of love is self-sacrifice, and that real love and real duty cannot clash. It touches a note of delicate purity which is tenderer than *Issen*; more real than *Oscar Wilde*, and more religious than *Pinnero*.

It would be cruel to translate the dainty imagery of that star in the nebula of *Andromeda* into anything more solid and matter-of-fact. In the heart of every weary and troubled man and woman there also arises the conviction that "there must be a place where things are real," and that not, as *David Remon* says bitterly, "to complete the world's embroglio," but to make it endurable.

The critics say that the play ends unsatisfactorily; that we do not know whether *Sir Brice* ever claimed *Dulcie*, or whether *Remon* ever came back. Why should we know? Perhaps *Sir Brice* died, and there were wedding bells after all. Our human problems have such homely ways of solving their abstruse complications. G. K.

May 6th
1894.

The Sunday Times

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's new play, "The Masqueraders," is attracting large and enthusiastic audiences at the St. James's, and its success is practically assured. The daring card-playing scene is being much talked about. It is, of course, to be regretted that the nervousness from which Mrs. Patrick Campbell was suffering on the first night—a not unnatural nervousness considering that she was on her trial after the glorious success of her *Paula Tanqueray*—should have prevented her from doing full justice to herself or the play; but if the very severe criticism to which she has been subjected has not the effect of discouraging and depressing her, an actress of her remarkable powers and sensibility may be trusted to rise to the occasion, and give full expression to the conception of *Dulcie Larondie*.

May 5th
1894.

The Daily Telegraph

"THE MASQUERADERS" AT THE ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has written a very brilliant and remarkable play. It will appeal not only to every light-hearted and feather-brained playgoer, but to all thinking men and women. "The Masqueraders," which was produced for the first time on Saturday evening, brims over with cleverness; society will chuckle at it; the mere sightseer will be dazzled by it; and the earnest student of the drama will welcome it with both hands, because it is earnest, because it is manly, because it is English, and because, with all its daring eccentricity, it is wholly free from affectation, absurdity, and cant. This is no problem-play; this is a human play. The men as they stand are of flesh and blood; the women—with one conspicuous and curious exception—are, as interpreted, women who appeal to every fibre of our nature. We congratulate the author in that he has had the courage to print his play and circulate it at the outset, even though it be for private use and guidance. Had he not done so he might have been misunderstood, as so many authors are misunderstood, and unjustly blamed on account of the extraordinary misunderstanding, misreading, or misinterpretation of the one character in the play that is its pivot, its mainstay, and its lever. It speaks volumes for the persuasive force of "The Masqueraders" when we find it carrying the most brilliant audience of the season away with enthusiasm, agitating them and interesting them, when all the time the one character on which the author must have depended for success was so underplayed, was so superciliously scorned, was so ludicrously mismanaged and exposed to the danger of an artist's momentary mood that it was within an ace of wrecking the whole performance.

Here we had Mr. George Alexander playing with more passionate fervour, with more nervous intensity, and more convincing power than we can remember any actor on the English stage to have shown in this line since Charles Fechter bade us farewell. Here we had Mr. Herbert Waring, a modern *Don Salluste* to this modern *Ruy Blas*, bringing back to our stage that vigour and character power which we

all, the same puzzled, impassive outlook upon mischance and sorrow. Some of this reminiscent flavour may be due to Mrs. CAMPBELL's acting, but it is a pity that for a follow to the part of *Paula Ray* she was given another of such marked similarity.

The first act of the play makes large demands upon one's capacity for ignoring the probabilities. A Hunt Ball takes place at "The Stag Inn," where *Dulcie* is employed—by-the-bye, do such functions habitually take place in inns, with red-coated county lights larking round the bar and uninvited guests strolling in casually?—and a lot of wild young sprigs insist upon putting a kiss of *Dulcie's* up to auction. This is by no means new, but in Mr. JONES's setting it is absurdly improbable, for the ladies of the county—nobility, gentry, and all—troop out into the hall of the inn and watch the auction unconcernedly. True, a sort of *raison d'être* is given to the affair by the fact that *Dulcie* has been soliciting subscriptions for the widow and children of a whipper-in killed in the hunting field, and that the money bid for the intangible prize is to go to this highly-deserving purpose. The scene, however, is not really dramatic, in spite of the picture of *Sir Brice Skene*, "the choicest blackguard in England," and the astronomer, *David Remon*, bidding against each other in thousands for the coveted kiss. We are all the time expecting the ladies to leave in disgust, or *Dulcie* herself to fly into a passion of natural indignation. Nor does *Sir Brice's* offer of his hand and heart along with the cheque for three thousand, which gains him the victory—*David Remon* has only two thousand in the world—convince us in the least. And the absurdity is climaxed when *Dulcie* thereupon dons a ball dress and joins the distinguished company. Yet this is to be forgiven, from the fact that it affords Mrs. CAMPBELL her only opportunity of striking a chord which is not that of *Mrs. Tanqueray*. *David Remon*, the defeated lover, meets her on her way to the ball-room, and the girl who has plighted herself to a scoundrel for the sake of wealth and position is moved, by the reverent love and hopeless misery shining in *Remon's* eyes, to give him the kiss for which *Sir Brice* paid so dearly. It is a beautiful phrase beautifully acted.

Mr. JONES shows the influence of PINERO. He shows also the influence of OSCAR the epigrammatist, and the first part of Act II. is rendered wearisome and uninteresting by padding of the Wildean sort. *Dulcie Larondie*, now *Lady Skene*, entertains a party of guests who are nothing less than tiresome. They are not creations, they are not types; they have not even the merit of being caricatures. Again, too, the note of improbability is struck. Even in this age of disloyalty it is to be doubted if people in society quite so openly and loudly discuss their host and hostess—especially if that discussion turns upon the drunkenness of the former and rumoured unfaithfulness of the latter. But here, again, the act is saved by one of those touches of quaint tenderness of which Mr. JONES is capable. "Say something to me," says poor *Dulcie* to *David Remon*, with whose name, though she does not know it, her guests have been coupling her own—"say something to me, or I shall go mad." *Remon* looks at her with pure eyes of

worshipping love, and sees her tortured, agonised, distracted by the vices and follies of her husband. And he whispers to her a fancy of his—a fancy conjured up in half-bitter mirth by his brother and he on that night, three years ago, when Fate snatched her from him—how that all the world about them is but mist and phantom, how that there is nothing real in the whole universe, nothing save one little star in the nebula of Andromeda. But there everything goes right, everyone is happy; there is no pain, no sadness, no disillusionment, and therefore all is real. And the fretful, tortured woman, soothed by the tones of his voice, and, in her overwrought condition, just in the mood to feed on fantasy, seizes upon the idea and is comforted. The inattentive observer who misses this is at sea for the rest of the piece; it is the key to the whole play. The ending of the scene is poor, there being nothing really dramatic in Mr. JONES's setting of the fact that *David Remon*, intervening in a scene between the ruined *Sir Brice* and *Dulcie*, magnanimously gives her complete control of his banking account—he has fallen heir to a large fortune—and leaves England for ever.

It is in the third act that the dramatic success of the play is scored. Yet this idea, again, is not new; but Mr. JONES's setting is fine, and the acting of Mr. ALEXANDER and Mr. WARING is superb. The scene is in Paris. *Dulcie* has refused to draw further upon *Remon's* banking account, and *Sir Brice's* passion borders upon personal violence, but finally cools into the shrewder form of depriving *Dulcie* of her child unless she will continue her drafts upon *Remon's* fortune. While *Dulcie* is considering this ultimatum, *Remon* himself calls upon her to say farewell. The Transit of Venus is due shortly, and he leaves for Africa in a few days to witness the transit from a spot peculiarly favourable astronomically, but peculiarly deadly to Europeans. He is possessed with a presentiment that he will not return, and its strength has broken through his resolution not to see *Dulcie* again. Human nature is too much for both, and there is a compromising scene between them, in the midst of which *Sir Brice* enters. A strange interview between the two men leads up to the *finale* of the act, in which *Sir Brice* stakes his wife and child against *Remon's* entire fortune. The play is simple cutting, the game to be two out of three, and the dramatic intensity grows almost unbearable when *Dulcie* comes upon the scene just as her husband wins the first cut, and the last two cuts are played in her presence, the victory of the astronomer terminating a passage of extraordinary power.

The quidnuncs say that Mr. JONES has spoiled his play with the fourth act. It is possessed of little dramatic force, it is quixotic, it is mystical, and, above all, it is religious. And yet without it the play would be a comparatively poor one, and its peculiar significance and beauty would be entirely destroyed. It takes place in *Remon's* observatory in the South of France, whither he brings *Dulcie*. "They are his wife and child now;" passion has broken down his quiet self-control, and he is half insane with exultation

Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Ayrton. That was right. The travesty was a personal insult; it centred in Mr. Gladstone's hat and collar, and Mr. Lowe's eyebrows. More recently, Mr. Irving protested against being represented in a burlesque by an actor dressed as an old woman. That was right, too; it made it the harder for a serious actor to get the public into the mood for his own serious work. Nevertheless, as a novelist I consider I am more injured in my work by Mr. Gilbert's burlesque of a love scene in his comedy of "Sweethearts" than I should be if Mr. Harry Furniss drew me in a cartoon as a man with the three Manx legs.

The objection to politics on the stage is that people would become partisans, that the pit and gallery would hiss and cheer, that the theatre would be turned into a bear-garden, and the methods of political controversy would be degraded. The objection to religious subjects on the stage is thus stated by an able writer in the *Daily Telegraph*: "Religion as a melodrama behind the footlights, with powder and paint and false wigs and beards, is practically incongruous." May I be forgiven a personal reference? Three or four years ago I wrote a play on the subject of Mohammed. There was an outcry against it, and we did not attempt to produce it on the stage. The objections urged were, first: that Mohammed is the prophet of 180 millions of the people of India, whose religion our sovereign has sworn to respect; second, that Mohammed strutting on the stage, and being called before the curtain to bow his thanks, would be a travesty of the prophet's person, his character and his career; and, third, that though Christians might have a greater right to consider as an insult any theatrical presentation of Jesus Christ, whom they regard not only as human but Divine, they would have less right to object to St. Paul, St. John, and St. Peter in a modern play—and what English audience would tolerate that?

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I plead with you, then, to grant liberty to us who are novelists and dramatists to deal with whatever political or religious subjects come into touch with man's moral life. Don't cripple us; don't ask us to let the intellectual activities of the age pass us by. If the great religious public, which has so long stood aloof from the theatre and given the novel a wide berth, are now coming timidly to the one, and are nervously picking up the other, let them be prepared to find their own world there, themselves there, the thoughts and temptations of their lives there—and not a foolish, irresponsible fable that is something between a pantomime and the tragedy of a Punch-and-Judy show.

This is the condition that is coming. I see it in the near future.

We shall not be deep in the twentieth century before religious subjects will be reverently treated on the stage. The greatest reputations of the time will lie in that direction. Already, though we are raising so loud an outcry against putting sanctified characters into the drama and into the novel, we have conceded the whole principle of the right to do so. A week ago you had "Becket" on the stage in Edinburgh. Was it not done reverently both by author and actor? If so, and no churchman was offended, you have, by your approval of the dramatisation of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, given us everything we ask.

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DEATH IN NOVELS.

For instance, since the vigorous revival of romantic fiction with the stirring stories of Mr. Rider Haggard, there has been an outcry against scenes of blood in novels. And Dickens himself has been charged by no less a critic than Mr. Ruskin with drawing aside the sacred curtains of the sick room and pandering to a vulgar love of the suspense, the pathos, the horror, and the other phenomena of death. In his essays "Fiction, Foul and Fair," Ruskin gives a list of the deaths in "Bleak House." There is one by assassination—Mr. Tulkinghorn; one by starvation and consumption—Jo; one by chagrin—Richard; one by spontaneous combustion—Mr. Krook; one by sorrow—Lady Dedlock's lover; one by remorse—Lady Dedlock herself; and so on through insanity and paralysis to the fever of the baby and the hanging of the lively young Frenchwoman. Mr. Ruskin admits that the

number has been exceeded elsewhere, but not their grotesque violence and misery. This violence and misery is manufactured to meet a vile demand. Little Nell in the "Old Curiosity Shop" is simply killed for the market as any butcher might kill a lamb. The great masters of fiction disdain such work. Death with them is either heroic or quiet and natural. It is only the little masters who indulge in such scenes, which, being often witnessed, are easily copied and easily recognised.

The answer to all this is very simple. It is true that death in the modern novel is rarely heroic and often violent and miserable; but such forms of death come of the complex and perhaps unwholesome city life of modern times. Are we to ignore these unheroic manifestations of the life we actually live in favour of the heroic scenes of the life that was lived by our grandfathers? I would rather that men died of a sword wound in a good cause on the highlands of Scotland than of consumption in the gas-heated garrets of the sweating tailors of Petticoat Lane. But death waits for us all wherever our lot is cast; it is the duty and high privilege of art to teach men how to meet that last reality; and, just as the great masters of old fired the courage of the warriors of long ago to encounter death sword in hand, even so, surely, may the masters of the present sustain the hearts of the people of to-day to meet it with a brave face, however unheroic it may be, or violent or miserable.

SCENES OF PASSION IN NOVELS AND DRAMAS.

The moral responsibility of the author is more obvious in scenes of passion. When Walt Whitman was charged with broaching certain topics in one section of his "Leaves of Grass," he answered that there had hitherto been two conditions of the

world's attitude towards such subjects. One was silence. Make no mention of these matters—or at least allude to them at second hand—as the Greeks did to death. The result of this was ignorance, repression, hypocrisy, moral disease, shut up from the world's eye, and the cause of half the world's woe. The other was riot and sensuality, which is, according to Victor Hugo, a trait of all ages and all lands. Whitman proposed a third plan—scientific openness—to be as free as Nature, as healthy, as naked, and if need be, as immodest.

The plain sense of the matter would be that where a scene is mainly scientific, it had better be left to science; but where it is mainly artistic, whatever its delicacy, in proper hands it is proper for art. Thus, if the scenes in the hospital in "Esther Waters" were more proper to a doctor's treatise than to a novel, in a doctor's treatise, and not in a novel, they ought to have appeared. If, on the contrary, they added nothing to surgical science, but a good deal to the knowledge of human nature, then the novel was their proper place. Only, all such scenes carry their own responsibility. They must be done with reticence and with reverence or they are an offence in art. They must not be done for their own sakes, but as a means to an end, or they are an outrage on the sanctities of nature. So to the reader who comes upon what are called "daring" scenes in fiction I would say, "Look to the aim. Is it good or bad? Are these scenes merely finger-posts on the journey? Then they serve a useful purpose, and if they are not too glaring or too coarse you should not resent them. But are they inns meant for your entertainment, taverns intended to detain you, palaces decked out to catch your eye and empty your pockets, with the certainty that when they have sucked you dry they will turn you out on to the road a beggar? Then they ought to be put

down by public opinion, and, if that fail, by the police magistrate, and their author ought to take his proper place as a prostitute and a pander." And to the author I would make bold to say, "When you are tempted to describe a scene of more than usual delicacy, ask yourself first if it comes directly into the line of your story, and next, if it is the end of your story or only the way to the end. If you suspect that in your secret heart it is an aim in itself, cut it out, whatever its merit, whatever its naturalness, however sure you may be that you can do it delicately. But if you can satisfy yourself that it is only a process, if you have well computed the for and against, then, as Carlyle says of a similar scene in biography, "set it down, nothing doubting, having the fear of God before your eyes, and no other fear whatever."

THE NOVEL OF THE FUTURE.

I am tempted to go a little off the track of my thought to say what I think will be the great scenes of the great novels of the future. They will, I confidently believe, be the common and familiar scenes of ordinary life. Victor Hugo, before he began to write novels, said he dreamt of a novelist that should be a compound of Walter Scott and Homer. May I, without irreverence, say that I dream of a greater novel than we have ever yet seen, that shall be compounded of the penny newspaper and the Sermon on the Mount—the plainest realism and the highest idealism. The facts of common life have often been touched in novels, and so have the great passions—but rarely together, and perhaps never by a great master. Balzac might have done this, but he was lost to the high mission by a low view of human nature. Yet the heroic is in all men still, though the surroundings of life are no longer heroic.

He will be the Shakespeare of the future who will show us the undying heroism of humanity in the common things of every day—in the struggles of workmen on strike—of poor women with drunken husbands—of enslaved men with besotted wives—of children left to take care of themselves and one another in the wilderness of the world. Then there is the joy and sweetness, as well as the pathos and tragedy, of the common life of the modern world. The passions of men and women are the same now as they were in the heroic days of old, just as strong, just as active, only working in different ways, and, depend upon it, he is to be the great writer who will realise that fact to the full.

THE WRITER AND HIS CHARACTERS.

Then as to the ethics of character. It is extraordinary to an author how narrow the general body of readers can sometimes be about the origin and intention of imaginative characters. Authors have often said brutal things about it. "What *duffers* they are, these Parisians," said George Sand, "who compose the audience at first representations. They want to make the plays themselves." When poor "Tess" was being so roughly handled for thinking herself a pure woman, it would have been answer enough if Mr. Hardy had said, "My friends, I am not writing a biography of this young girl with the purpose of defending her against scandal. I am writing a novel of which she is the chief character. Personally, I consider her a pure woman, but my only duty is to present and explain her. Don't bully me if she is not pure; bully the world that I have faithfully presented; above all, bully yourselves that, by false conventions, you can push a poor girl down to this condition." But the public seems to us, who are authors, to be rather

The Masqueraders.

at his victory. But *Dulcie* is cold and unresponsive to his caresses, and when he tells her that this is their "wedding-day," the phrase arouses her to her position. It is not possible to describe the scene in which *David Remon* finds his cup of happiness dashed from his lips. *Dulcie* in a previous part of the play has declared her intention of "thinking this"—marriage—"out for herself," and the result of her thinking is revealed when she tells *Remon* brokenly that she cannot do as he wishes. "Life with my husband was vile," she says, "no man, and only few women, can understand how vile; but," she adds, amid a storm of convulsive sobs, "I seem to see that life with you would be even more vile." Her determination, however, breaks down before his misery, and she yields herself to him. "Do anything you like with me, anything you like, but kill me afterwards, or I shall kill myself." Here there is a break. If *Remon* is going to Africa he must go at once, and if he does not go the observations over the whole world will be of no use. The contest must be fought out on the instant. *Nellie Larondie*, *Dulcie's* sister, decides it. She is a good woman, and appeals to the good in *Remon*. If he loves *Dulcie*, she tells him in a fine phrase, his love will make for the best in her and in himself. "There is her child," says *Nellie*, with a touch of healthy prose; "when she is a woman, is her mother to say to her, 'Take this man, and if you are not happy, leave him and take another; it was what I did'?" Oh!" she appeals to him with a sob, "I know that the woman who lives with another man while her husband is alive sins against her sex and is a bad woman. Keep her, Mr. *Remon*—keep her pure for her child's sake."

Nellie has won. *Remon* goes to Africa. "Our love will never grow stale," he tells *Dulcie*, with a little touch of the *exalté*; "it will always be to us a beautiful and a sacred thing, and—if there be anything which is so—an immortal thing." "But shall we not meet again?" wails *Dulcie*. "Who knows?" says *Remon*, with a touch of fantasy; "perhaps in that little world in the nebula of *Andromeda*."

It would spoil all this to reduce it to the language of *l'envoi*. Reducing it to narrative has spoiled it sufficiently. But it is a saner chord, this which dies away with *Remon's* last words, than any struck in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. To one who does not simply consider the drama as a species of refined electrical battery the last act is the finest in the piece. Without it *The Masqueraders* would not be worthy of Mr. JONES; with it the play forms a contribution, not only to the modern drama, but to modern thought. It recognises that the soul of love between man and woman is not animalism, that the very top of love is self-sacrifice, and that real love and real duty cannot clash. It touches a note of delicate purity which is tenderer than IBSSEN; more real than OSCAR WILDE, and more religious than PINERO.

It would be cruel to translate the dainty imagery of that star in the nebula of *Andromeda* into anything more solid and matter-of-fact. In the heart of every weary and troubled man and woman there also arises the conviction that "there must be a place where things are real," and that not, as *David Remon* says bitterly, "to complete the world's embroglio," but to make it endurable.

The critics say that the play ends unsatisfactorily; that we do not know whether *Sir Brice* ever claimed *Dulcie*, or whether *Remon* ever came back. Why should we know? Perhaps *Sir Brice* died, and there were wedding bells after all. Our human problems have such homely ways of solving their abstruse complications. G. K.

The Sunday Times

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's new play, "The Masqueraders," is attracting large and enthusiastic audiences at the St. James's, and its success is practically assured. The daring card-playing scene is being much talked about. It is, of course, to be regretted that the nervousness from which Mrs. Patrick Campbell was suffering on the first night—a not unnatural nervousness considering that she was on her trial after the glorious success of her Paula Tanqueray—should have prevented her from doing full justice to herself or the play; but if the very severe criticism to which she has been subjected has not the effect of discouraging and depressing her, an actress of her remarkable powers and sensibility may be trusted to rise to the occasion, and give full expression to the conception of *Dulcie Larondie*.

The Daily Telegraph

"THE MASQUERADERS" AT THE ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has written a very brilliant and remarkable play. It will appeal not only to every light-hearted and feather-brained playgoer, but to all thinking men and women. "The Masqueraders," which was produced for the first time on Saturday evening, brims over with cleverness; society will chuckle at it; the mere sightseer will be dazzled by it; and the earnest student of the drama will welcome it with both hands, because it is earnest, because it is manly, because it is English, and because, with all its daring eccentricity, it is wholly free from affectation, absurdity, and cant. This is no problem-play; this is a human play. The men as they stand are of flesh and blood; the women—with one conspicuous and curious exception—are, as interpreted, women who appeal to every fibre of our nature. We congratulate the author in that he has had the courage to print his play and circulate it at the outset, even though it be for private use and guidance. Had he not done so he might have been misunderstood, as so many authors are misunderstood, and unjustly blamed on account of the extraordinary misunderstanding, misreading, or misinterpretation of the one character in the play that is its pivot, its mainstay, and its lever. It speaks volumes for the persuasive force of "The Masqueraders" when we find it carrying the most brilliant audience of the season away with enthusiasm, agitating them and interesting them, when all the time the one character on which the author must have depended for success was so underplayed, was so superciliously scorned, was so ludicrously mismanaged and exposed to the danger of an artist's momentary mood that it was within an ace of wrecking the whole performance.

Here we had Mr. George Alexander playing with more passionate fervour, with more nervous intensity, and more convincing power than we can remember any actor on the English stage to have shown in this line since Charles Fechter bade us farewell. Here we had Mr. Herbert Waring, a modern Don Salluste to this modern Ruy Blás, bringing back to our stage that vigour and character power which we

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seemed to have lost awhile with our Sam Emerys and Leigh Murrays. Here we had young actors and young actresses doing their level best, working for their author to the utmost of their capacity, and one and all loyally assisting their courageous manager in his spirited enterprise. Here we had a play brilliantly mounted, accurately presented, a marvel of production even in these days of astounding realism; and behold the whole thing, actors' work, sumptuous decoration, gorgeous mounting, and author's brilliant brain work, within an ace of being wasted, because the most talked-about actress of the day would not, or could not understand one of the most beautiful, complex, and subtle studies of women that any dramatist has offered us in the whole range of the modern drama.

The curtain rises on one of the most remarkable stage sets seen in our time. A hunt ball is taking place in an old country inn, surely we can recognise that courtyard, with its galleries and its old coaching reminiscences, in the good old city of Exeter? Two men are in love with the barmaid of the inn, to the scandal of the county assembled. One is a titled scapegrace, the other a dreamy scientific student and astronomer. The one love is brutal and sensual, the other love is ideal and refined. The rivals intend to have a battle royal for that woman—one for her body, the other for her soul. Woman-like, this extraordinary Dulcie sets these suitors by the ears. She flirts with one and chaffs the other. Dulcie is a modern Frou-Frou, light of heart, restless, pining for pleasure, weeping at her good sister's knees, rollicking with the young bloods of the county, the very embodiment of comedy, a *tête de linotte*, if ever there was one in the world. In a moment of devilry the gay and half-tipsy boys in their hunting-coats propose to swell a charity list by putting up for auction a kiss from the lips of Dulcie Larondie. It is an outrageous proceeding, but we all have our moments of madness. The rivals bid against one another to the astonishment of the brilliant crowd. The kiss is knocked down to the savage and sensual Sir Brice Skene for three thousand guineas. He writes out a cheque, presents it, and *coram populo* asks Dulcie the barmaid to be his wife. The frivolous, light-hearted, vain girl is in the seventh heaven of delight. She rushes up to change her dress in order to dance at the ball, and on her way there meets her pale-faced student lover, David Remon. Intoxicated with pleasure and vanity, this mass of wilfulness bids her knight, who adores her like a saint, to pin up the torn flounces of her dress. He kneels to do it, as at the very altar of love. And then comes another mood with the wilful woman. This man has risked thousands for a kiss from her lips—why should he not have it? So she kisses him with enthusiasm and mock passion, leaves him stupefied, and rushes off laughing like Vivien, as the music crashes out.

This is how it should be acted. But this is not at all how it is played by the principal character concerned. Every eye is riveted on the earnest student face of Mr. George Alexander. He has started the play to admiration. Every pulse beats to know what Mr. Waring, his rival, will do next. The men are finely contrasted, and already are playing better than they ever played before. The scene is alluring, the dresses beyond description, the auction very daring but excusable. But where is Dulcie? Where is the comedy actress? Dulcie is not only dull but inaudible. She wanders about the stage awkwardly and aimlessly. She has no personality, no moods, no changes. She kneels at her sweet, patient sister's feet, the devoted, unselfish nurse, and says: "It would be so lovely to be nursed by you. I could never love a man as I love you, Nell. But I suppose that's a different kind of love. Good-bye, you dear, nice, soft, warm, comforting thing! You're as good as a boa or a muff, or a poultice to me"; but she says it in the same indifferent and heartless manner as she shows when she is drawing a glass of gin for "Jimmy, Jimmy Stokes," the huntsman, or accepting the waist-clasps of the tipsy young revellers. She is the same to everyone, incredible and inert. But even the climax kiss she does not understand. Instead of giving her patient lover a rapid, startling kiss of wilfulness and mutiny, she merely pecks at his forehead like a discontented bird. There is no meaning in the kiss, no sense in the scene as so interpreted. The act was saved by a miracle, for the true Dulcie of the author's imagination did not exist.

Three years and a half have elapsed. Dulcie has married Sir Brice Skene, and she has discovered her mistake. She has eaten of the Dead Sea apples and drunk of the waters of Marah. Her rich husband is bankrupt and a drunkard into the bargain. Society is scandalised at the report that husband and wife are virtually supported by David Remon, who has come into a fortune and acquired fame. He is a wealthy man, and the lion of the season. He is discussed at every party, envied by the men, curiously scanned by the women. And he remains like a sheep dog at the side of Dulcie. His love is of surpassing tenderness and truth. It is not a sensual but an intellectual love. At last a crash comes. The brutalised husband openly suggests that her patient lover should support her, and he overhears the odious bargain. Without a moment's hesitation he places his cheque book and credit at the command of the panderer and goes off in the cause of science to make some astronomical discovery at a dangerous post on the West Coast of Africa, willing to die for science and to forget that strange barmaid now a leader in society.

The second act has ended, and the audience is in the same condition of surprise. Both Mr. George Alexander and Mr. Herbert Waring are better than ever; the ball scene is a revelation in realism; the conversation is the best of its kind the author has ever given us, no straining after epigram, no Joe Miller jokes, no adapted mots from Talleyrand or Dumas, no forced theatrical conversation, but thoroughly sound and brilliant dialogue. But again we ask, Where is Dulcie? She should have been the gaiety and spirit of this act, its life and soul. But she is still the same dull, inert, and inaudible personality, an epitome of boredom. No feverishness, no excitement, simply a calm, crushed woman, who seems to have been beaten, and shows it in her manner. The play is struggling for success even in a dangerous second act, but the heroine is dragging it down.

Now comes the great scene. Matters have gone from bad to worse. Brutal husband and broken-hearted wife are in pawn at an hotel in Nice. Flesh and blood can stand it no longer; and David Remon, the platonic, noble champion of this woman, yields to human weakness. He is on the eve of departing on a scientific expedition. His duty is that of a soldier. But concentrated love breaks down the barrier of reserve. He has loved this woman, he has watched over her, he has paid for the comfort of herself, her husband, and her child. The thought and touch of the child, when he sees it, madden him. His reserve breaks down, and he declares his love with a burst of supreme passion. At this instant the husband enters. "What have you come for?" asks the unnatural brute. "To be paid your debt? No, to take my wife and child away. Well, you must play for them—my wife and child against your fortune." It is a mad proposition, but the play gets mad at this moment, and the actors justify the madness. They play, they stake; the woman comes in to watch the hideous gamble. They pause; they are feverish; they drink and pause again; the possession of a woman on one side, money on the other. David Remon wins, and then Mr. George Alexander turns on his cruel and crafty antagonist with a power and a brilliancy that we have not seen equalled on the English stage since Fechter played *Ruy Blas*. It is all melodrama now, but melodrama of the highest and most intellectual class. Every note in Mr. Alexander's voice rings true; his savage fury makes him grow before the eyes of the audience. And the better Mr. Alexander acts the stronger becomes Mr. Waring. Mr. Waring shakes, shivers, and grows pale under the excitement. Mr. Alexander towers over his antagonist like a moral giant. He has won the woman he loves, and he would shake the life out of the body of any man who should dare to steal her now. She is his, body and soul, at last; he has won her, and he intends to make her his for ever. And so the curtain falls on a scene which would be the making of a play of infinitely less value.

The audience cannot restrain its excitement. It is not a scene of three men, but of two men, and they call them again and again, loading them with the honours they deserve. There is no need to argue the why or the wherefore; it were idle to discuss whether such a gamble could or could not be. It was a risky experiment, and it has succeeded, and that is enough. Brilliant acting has made its mark, and why should it not? This is of the very essence of playing. The playhouse is not a philo-

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unreasonable in all such matters. They want their characters ticketed and labelled, good, bad, and indifferent, and they want to charge us, as their spiritual fathers, with all their shortcomings, their faults, and their sins. When "Tom Jones" was published the admirers of Richardson used to say that the ultimate moral of the character was detrimental to society, because it displayed the triumph and happiness of one who had spent his days in misdoing. To this the admirers of Fielding replied that Tom's vices led to his distresses, and that when he began to follow virtue prosperity returned to him. "There's a good deal of cant," said Johnson, "both in the objection and the answer." When Richardson published "Clarissa" in serial volumes, he began by describing Lovelace as handsome, witty, gay, courageous, sometimes generous, and often capable of quite noble sentiments. But the author found that the character, which he intended to develop into a rake, libertine, and voluptuary, was gaining such favour with the young ladies of his own circle, that he was compelled to throw in some darker shades to make the character repulsive. When "Jane Eyre" was published one theory was that Jane and Becky Sharp were different portraits of the same person, that the original was the author herself, that she was a discarded mistress of Thackeray, and that, by way of revenge for being compelled to sit for the heroine of "Vanity Fair," she had painted him as Rochester. When "The Mill on the Floss" appeared, it was considered an outrage on the character of Maggie that she should have been tempted by the overtures of Stephen Guest. "If the ethics of art," said George Eliot in reply, "do not admit the truthful representation of a character essentially noble but liable to great error, then, it seems to me, the ethics of art are too narrow and must be widened." When the younger Dumas produced "La Dame aux Camélias," it was considered an offence, and even a

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public danger, that pure affection should be put into the heart of a woman of the streets. "Most writers," says Johnson, "for the sake of being natural, so mingle good and bad qualities in their principal personages that . . . as we accompany them through their adventures with delight, we are led by degrees to interest ourselves in their faults, because they do not hinder our pleasure." He goes on to say that there have been men splendidly wicked, whose endowments threw a brightness on their crimes, and whom scarce any villainy made perfectly detestable, "but such have been in all ages the great corrupters of the world, *and their remembrance ought not to be preserved.*" One would think the exact opposite ought to be the natural conclusion. If such dangerous men are always with us let us not be silent about them; let us call on humanity to beware of them as wolves in sheep's clothing.

THE VICE OF PAINTING PORTRAITS.

But indeed the attitude of the public towards imaginary characters is curiously illogical. While they visit on our heads all the shortcomings of our children, they insist (for the most part) on regarding them as more or less portraits of persons who live or have lived. Every week of life brings me letters inquiring if this or that person in my novels is not *true*, if he has not an original somewhere, if I did not know him, and, sometimes, if he was not the letter-writer's grandfather, and if his name was not so-and-so. It is true that authors have sometimes painted from the living model. Eugene Sue's "Mathilde" owed its first success to the fact that its heroine could be pointed at. The introductory chapter to the "Dame aux Camelias" tells us of the writer's first interview with the real Marguerite. Paul Emanuel is said to be the portrait of a man whom

Charlotte Brontë actually knew, and some of the characters in "Adam Bede," including Dinah, and even Adam himself, are said to be simply portraits, the more successful where they are the closest to fact. But the general practice of novelists and dramatists, and perhaps, the invariable practice of all the greatest imaginative writers, is not to take characters from the life. When you meet with a great character in a novel, and he seems to you so real that you are tempted to believe that he must have been a living man, don't cry "Name, name?" Tell yourself at once that, a thousand to one, he is a pure creation. Some touches he may owe to this man, and some to that, but in proportion as he is a living character in literature, be sure that he never lived in the world. Do you want to believe that the characters in Shakespeare were ever living persons? I tell you it would be a shock to me if I were to hear that Hamlet, as he is in the play, was a real man. He has the reality of great art and that is enough. I don't want to bolster and buttress my interest in Hamlet by any thought of a creature of flesh and blood walking on the battlements of Elsinore. In the great writers, portraits are not painted—characters are composed. And this leads me to the conclusion I have come to as to the place of conscience in the making of imaginary characters.

CHARACTERS WE DO NOT WANT IN LITERATURE.

Characters are composed, not painted or photographed, and authors are morally responsible for the materials of which they compose them. The world is made up of good and bad, and an author may choose to describe either part or both. Usually he dwells longest on that part which he knows best, that part which has the strongest fascination for his own mind. Fielding said he had

good authority for all his characters—no less than the doomsday-book of nature. No doubt of that; but it was because he had lived the life of a man about town that he gave us the revolting Lady Bellaston. The imagination of the novelist is much like the domesticated poll-parrot—it tells by its language what company it keeps. But it is not a sufficient indication of a character to say that it is natural. There are characters that we do not want in literature, sometimes because they are too common and too commonplace, and we might just as well turn our eyes on life. You remember the head miller in the “*Mill on the Floss*”—“There’s fools enoo, an’ rogues enoo, wi’out lookin’ i’ books for ‘em.” I’ve always felt sympathy with the Shah of Persia, when he was asked to buy the picture of a donkey for fifty pounds, and he said: “I could buy a living one in my own country for less than five shillings.” But there are types of evil character in the world which the novelist cannot ignore if he pretends to represent life. His responsibility lies in the way he does them. It has been charged against Richardson, the “respectable, domestic old printer,” that he threw himself with such special gusto into the reprobate Lovelace as to convey an idea that, at all events, he thought libertines very amusing company. It is urged against Fielding that if he had been a man of any true delicacy he must have shown more plainly his abhorrence of the conduct of Tom Jones. If the novelist is a man of pure mind he will not be for ever dissecting evil characters. He will not keep his eye constantly fixed on the monstrosities produced by city life. He may share George Eliot’s opinion that “you can’t make men moral by turning them out to grass,” but he will love to turn his gaze on to the healthy and natural lives that men and women may live under the open sky. * Scott,” says Ruskin, “lived in a country and time when, from highest to lowest, but chiefly in that dignified and nobly

severe middle class to which he himself belonged, a habit of serene and stainless thought was as natural to the people as their mountain air. Women like Rose Bradwardine and Ailie Dinmont were the grace and guard of every household—God be praised that the race of them is not yet extinct.”

HOW CHARACTERS IN NOVELS AND DRAMAS ARE MADE.

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The last act is to our mind in an ethical sense the very finest in the play. Here occurs a scene which, if the actress understood it—which she apparently does not—would have been a revelation to the audience. It dropped flat because it did not appeal to the actress. The positions are changed. Suddenly the platonic man becomes passionate; the passionate woman platonic. Duty, honour, respect of friends and of the world are all whistled to the winds now that he has a chance of enjoying what he has coveted so long. He takes his prize up to a lonely observatory in the mountains, where the snow is rose-tinted by the setting sun. He will have no servants. He will be her slave. He will wait upon her, light her fire for her. They cannot be disturbed up here in the sky. He has waited for her so long and so patiently—now he will have his banquet. But—so true to life—it is the woman who hesitates and turns back. She has led the life of a dog. She has been sold to her new master by a brute. She has made her lover sacrifice every sense of honour and duty; and it is the woman who feels instinctively that her supposed happiness will be a positive sin. Here is a wonderful touch of nature, but let us put it in the author's words. Dulcie repulses her lover, who is hungering for her. She says: "No, no! Let me think. Wait till Nell comes. Ah! don't think I don't love you. There's nothing I wouldn't do or suffer for you. There's not a thought in my heart that isn't yours. Say you know it! Say you know it! Oh! it was horrible with him. There was no home, no family, no love. It seemed like a blasphemy of home to live with him. But this—I can't tell you how I feel. I don't think any man can understand it. It's only a woman—and not all women—not many women, perhaps—but I feel it. I can't get rid of it. To live with you seems more horrible than the other. I cannot—I cannot—I cannot!" How many thousand tempted and distressed women have felt like that, only they cannot express themselves so truthfully! This is the finest bit of nature in the play, but it went for nothing, because the actress did not understand it, or, if she understood it, could not express it.

Still this fine play ends in a noble manner. The difficulty is solved by the sweetest character in the story, and by urging self-sacrifice, as she, the good, pure nurse of the sick poor, has practised it. The student is in danger of losing his honour; the woman he adores trembles at the brink of danger. It is the good Sister Helen, the pure, unselfish creature, who points the path to man's honour and woman's purity. "I am not a soldier," says David Remon. "Yes, you are," answers Sister Helen, who has had her temptations, as every woman has, but has crushed them. "Yes, you are! We are all soldiers on this earth, bound to be loyal to every one of our comrades, bound to obey the great rules of life, whether they are easy or hard. Yes, and all the more bound when they are hard, when they may cost us our very life. You'll go—you'll go and leave her to me and her child." But still the love-sick passionate man babbles on. "I

love her, I love her." To which the pure Sister Helen replies, "Then save her for her child. Save her to be a good mother to that helpless little creature she has brought into the world, so that when her girl grows up and she has to guide her, she'll not have to say to her child, 'You can give yourself to this man, and if you don't like him you can give yourself to another, and to another, and so on. It doesn't matter. It was what I did.'" And so this really brilliant play ends with a pure and noble moral. The man sacrifices himself and departs for duty. It is a case of "All for her," containing the finest moral of any novel or play ever written. If the self-sacrificing student survives the expedition all will be well; if not, they will both meet "on that little star Andromeda. All's real there!" Thus the curtain falls on a play that every one ought to see and dwell upon and think about.

Mr. George Alexander rose as the subject rose. His acting in the last scene, so natural, so impulsive, so infinitely pathetic, so full of manly resignation, must have been just what the author intended. But he acted alone. His heroism could no more see the pathos of the last act than she could appreciate the comedy of the first. It was from end to end a disappointment. Happily, it will be a temporary one, and the artist who has received such special encouragement on all sides will awaken before it is too late to the responsibility of her position, and give to Dulcie Larondie the place she ought to hold in one of the most interesting of modern plays.

Happily the misunderstood Dulcie is the only hesitating note in a conspicuous success. Would that there were time and space to dwell on the sympathetic and exquisitely womanly Helen Larondie, the nurse, by Miss Granville, a perfect and ideal performance in its way, a picture in a veritable gallery of pictures; on the Montagu Lushington of Mr. Elliot, a little too flurried and indistinct at the outset, but since Mr. Elliot has some of the best things to say, no doubt he will arrange to say them so as to tell home and get the laugh they deserve; on Mr. H. Esmond's Eddie Remon, a very difficult part, played by an artist—a part in which scores of actors would have made a hideous blunder; and on the excellent sketches of character by Mr. Ian Robertson, Mr. Ben Webster, Mr. William H. Day, and Miss Irene Vanbrugh. Mr. A. Vane-Tempest stands out from the rest with a very special bit of character acting, very marked, very full of colour, and very distinct. It is observant and characteristic, and would that all young actors could command and influence an audience as well as Mr. Vane-Tempest does! When he has a good thing to say he says it, and, what is more, he makes it tell. What is the use of smothering up or gabbling with good dialogue?

The play as it stands—so interesting, so peculiar, so unconventional in precisely the right as opposed to the wrong direction, so forcible in character, so brilliant in colouring, so intensely human, and so often pathetic—has succeeded in spite of the defect on which we felt bound, in the interest of the manager, of the author, and of art generally to enlarge. The play has succeeded with a dumb and colourless heroine. When she speaks and glows as Dulcie Larondie ought to glow, the play will rise to the level of the author's pronounced talent, of Mr. Waring's splendid progress and of the bright enthusiasm and passion of Mr. George Alexander, who has brought back to our dull, didactic, and controversial drama the true hero of romance.

The Era.

MR HENRY IRVING did a very graceful and generous thing in connection with Miss Alice Gilbert's benefit at the Lyric Theatre on Monday. When it was being organised, he sent five guineas for a box; and the voucher for one was posted in due course to the Lyceum. Mr Irving returned the ticket, with a note, worded with his wonted tact and courtesy, regretting that he should be unable to use the box, and suggesting that it might be sold over again. Not content with this, he forwarded another five guineas. The box was once more sold, so that fifteen guineas were realised in all by that particular compartment of the house.

August 4
1894.

seemed to have lost awhile with our Sam Emerys and Leigh Murrays. Here we had young actors and young actresses doing their level best, working for their author to the utmost of their capacity, and one and all loyally assisting their courageous manager in his spirited enterprise. Here we had a play brilliantly mounted, accurately presented, a marvel of production even in these days of astounding realism; and behold the whole thing, actors' work, sumptuous decoration, gorgeous mounting, and author's brilliant brain work, within an ace of being wasted, because the most talked-about actress of the day would not, or could not understand one of the most beautiful, complex, and subtle studies of women that any dramatist has offered us in the whole range of the modern drama.

The curtain rises on one of the most remarkable stage sets seen in our time. A hunt ball is taking place in an old country inn, surely we can recognise that courtyard, with its galleries and its old coaching reminiscences, in the good old city of Exeter? Two men are in love with the barmaid of the inn, to the scandal of the county assembled. One is a titled scapegrace, the other a dreamy scientific student and astronomer. The one love is brutal and sensual, the other love is ideal and refined. The rivals intend to have a battle royal for that woman—one for her body, the other for her soul. Woman-like, this extraordinary Dulcie sets these suitors by the ears. She flirts with one and chaffs the other. Dulcie is a modern Frou-Frou, light of heart, restless, pining for pleasure, weeping at her good sister's knees, rollicking with the young bloods of the county, the very embodiment of comedy, a *tête de linotte*, if ever there was one in the world. In a moment of devilry the gay and half-tipsy boys in their hunting-coats propose to swell a charity list by putting up for auction a kiss from the lips of Dulcie Larondie. It is an outrageous proceeding, but we all have our moments of madness. The rivals bid against one another to the astonishment of the brilliant crowd. The kiss is knocked down to the savage and sensual Sir Brice Skene for three thousand guineas. He writes out a cheque, presents it, and *coram populo* asks Dulcie the barmaid to be his wife. The frivolous, light-hearted, vain girl is in the seventh heaven of delight. She rushes up to change her dress in order to dance at the ball, and on her way there meets her pale-faced student lover, David Remon. Intoxicated with pleasure and vanity, this mass of wilfulness bids her knight, who adores her like a saint, to pin up the torn flounces of her dress. He kneels to do it, as at the very altar of love. And then comes another mood with the wilful woman. This man has risked thousands for a kiss from her lips—why should he not have it? So she kisses him with enthusiasm and mock passion, leaves him stupefied, and rushes off laughing like Vivien, as the music crashes out.

This is how it should be acted. But this is not at all how it is played by the principal character concerned. Every eye is riveted on the earnest student face of Mr. George Alexander. He has started the play to admiration. Every pulse beats to know what Mr. Waring, his rival, will do next. The men are finely contrasted, and already are playing better than they ever played before. The scene is alluring, the dresses beyond description, the auction very daring but excusable. But where is Dulcie? Where is the comedy actress? Dulcie is not only dull but inaudible. She wanders about the stage awkwardly and aimlessly. She has no personality, no moods, no changes. She kneels at her sweet, patient sister's feet, the devoted, unselfish nurse, and says: "It would be so lovely to be nursed by you. I could never love a man as I love you, Nell. But I suppose that's a different kind of love. Good-bye, you dear, nice, soft, warm, comforting thing! You're as good as a boar or a muff, or a poultice to me"; but she says it in the same indifferent and heartless manner as she shows when she is drawing a glass of gin for "Jimmy, Jimmy Stokes," the huntsman, or accepting the waist-clasps of the tipsy young revellers. She is the same to everyone, incredible and inert. But even the climax kiss she does not understand. Instead of giving her patient lover a rapid, startling kiss of wilfulness and mutiny, she merely pecks at his forehead like a discontented bird. There is no meaning in the kiss, no sense in the scene as so interpreted. The act was saved by a miracle, for the true Dulcie of the author's imagination did not exist.

Three years and a half have elapsed. Dulcie has married Sir Brice Skene, and she has discovered her mistake. She has eaten of the Dead Sea apples and drunk of the waters of Marah. Her rich husband is bankrupt and a drunkard into the bargain. Society is scandalised at the report that husband and wife are virtually supported by David Remon, who has come into a fortune and acquired fame. He is a wealthy man, and the lion of the season. He is discussed at every party, envied by the men, curiously scanned by the women. And he remains like a sheep dog at the side of Dulcie. His love is of surpassing tenderness and truth. It is not a sensual but an intellectual love. At last a crash comes. The brutalised husband openly suggests that her patient lover should support her, and he overhears the odious bargain. Without a moment's hesitation he places his cheque book and credit at the command of the panderer and goes off in the cause of science to make some astronomical discovery at a dangerous post on the West Coast of Africa, willing to die for science and to forget that strange barmaid now a leader in society.

The second act has ended, and the audience is in the same condition of surprise. Both Mr. George Alexander and Mr. Herbert Waring are better than ever; the ball scene is a revelation in realism; the conversation is the best of its kind the author has ever given us, no straining after epigram, no Joe Miller jokes, no adapted mots from Talleyrand or Dumas, no forced theatrical conversation, but thoroughly sound and brilliant dialogue. But again we ask, Where is Dulcie? She should have been the gaiety and spirit of this act, its life and soul. But she is still the same dull, inert, and inaudible personality, an epitome of boredom. No feverishness, no excitement, simply a calm, crushed woman, who seems to have been beaten, and shows it in her manner. The play is struggling for success even in a dangerous second act, but the heroine is dragging it down.

Now comes the great scene. Matters have gone from bad to worse. Brutal husband and broken-hearted wife are in pawn at an hotel in Nice. Flesh and blood can stand it no longer; and David Remon, the platonic, noble champion of this woman, yields to human weakness. He is on the eve of departing on a scientific expedition. His duty is that of a soldier. But concentrated love breaks down the barrier of reserve. He has loved this woman, he has watched over her, he has paid for the comfort of herself, her husband, and her child. The thought and touch of the child, when he sees it, madden him. His reserve breaks down, and he declares his love with a burst of supreme passion. At this instant the husband enters. "What have you come for?" asks the unnatural brute. "To be paid your debt? No, to take my wife and child away. Well, you must play for them—my wife and child against your fortune." It is a mad proposition, but the play gets mad at this moment, and the actors justify the madness. They play, they stake; the woman comes in to watch the hideous gamble. They pause; they are feverish; they drink and pause again; the possession of a woman on one side, money on the other. David Remon wins, and then Mr. George Alexander turns on his cruel and crafty antagonist with a power and a brilliancy that we have not seen equalled on the English stage since Fechter played Ruy Blas. It is all melodrama now, but melodrama of the highest and most intellectual class. Every note in Mr. Alexander's voice rings true; his savage fury makes him grow before the eyes of the audience. And the better Mr. Alexander acts the stronger becomes Mr. Waring. Mr. Waring shakes, shivers, and grows pale under the excitement. Mr. Alexander towers over his antagonist like a moral giant. He has won the woman he loves, and he would shake the life out of the body of any man who should dare to steal her now. She is his, body and soul, at last; he has won her, and he intends to make her his for ever. And so the curtain falls on a scene which would be the making of a play of infinitely less value.

The audience cannot restrain its excitement. It is not a scene of three men, but of two men, and they call them again and again, loading them with the honours they deserve. There is no need to argue the why or the wherefore; it were idle to discuss whether such a gamble could or could not be. It was a risky experiment, and it has succeeded, and that is enough. Brilliant acting has made its mark, and why should it not? This is of the very essence of playing. The playhouse is not a philo-

unreasonable in all such matters. They want their characters ticketed and labelled, good, bad, and indifferent, and they want to charge us, as their spiritual fathers, with all their shortcomings, their faults, and their sins. When "Tom Jones" was published the admirers of Richardson used to say that the ultimate moral of the character was detrimental to society, because it displayed the triumph and happiness of one who had spent his days in misdoing. To this the admirers of Fielding replied that Tom's vices led to his distresses, and that when he began to follow virtue prosperity returned to him. "There's a good deal of cant," said Johnson, "both in the objection and the answer." When Richardson published "Clarissa" in serial volumes, he began by describing Lovelace as handsome, witty, gay, courageous, sometimes generous, and often capable of quite noble sentiments. But the author found that the character, which he intended to develop into a rake, libertine, and voluptuary, was gaining such favour with the young ladies of his own circle, that he was compelled to throw in some darker shades to make the character repulsive. When "Jane Eyre" was published one theory was that Jane and Becky Sharp were different portraits of the same person, that the original was the author herself, that she was a discarded mistress of Thackeray, and that, by way of revenge for being compelled to sit for the heroine of "Vanity Fair," she had painted him as Rochester. When "The Mill on the Floss" appeared, it was considered an outrage on the character of Maggie that she should have been tempted by the overtures of Stephen Guest. "If the ethics of art," said George Eliot in reply, "do not admit the truthful representation of a character essentially noble but liable to great error, then, it seems to me, the ethics of art are too narrow and must be widened." When the younger Dumas produced "La Dame aux C amelias," it was considered an offence, and even a

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public danger, that pure affection should be put into the heart of a woman of the streets. "Most writers," says Johnson, "for the sake of being natural, so mingle good and bad qualities in their principal personages that . . . as we accompany them through their adventures with delight, we are led by degrees to interest ourselves in their faults, because they do not hinder our pleasure." He goes on to say that there have been men splendidly wicked, whose endowments threw a brightness on their crimes, and whom scarce any villainy made perfectly detestable, "but such have been in all ages the great corrupters of the world, *and their remembrance ought not to be preserved.*" One would think the exact opposite ought to be the natural conclusion. If such dangerous men are always with us let us not be silent about them; let us call on humanity to beware of them as wolves in sheep's clothing.

THE VICE OF PAINTING PORTRAITS.

But indeed the attitude of the public towards imaginary characters is curiously illogical. While they visit on our heads all the shortcomings of our children, they insist (for the most part) on regarding them as more or less portraits of persons who live or have lived. Every week of life brings me letters inquiring if this or that person in my novels is not *true*, if he has not an original somewhere, if I did not know him, and, sometimes, if he was not the letter-writer's grandfather, and if his name was not so-and-so. It is true that authors have sometimes painted from the living model. Eugene Sue's "Mathilde" owed its first success to the fact that its heroine could be pointed at. The introductory chapter to the "Dame aux Camelias" tells us of the writer's first interview with the real Marguerite. Paul Emanuel is said to be the portrait of a man whom

Charlotte Brontë actually knew, and some of the characters in "Adam Bede," including Dinah, and even Adam himself, are said to be simply portraits, the more successful where they are the closest to fact. But the general practice of novelists and dramatists, and perhaps, the invariable practice of all the greatest imaginative writers, is not to take characters from the life. When you meet with a great character in a novel, and he seems to you so real that you are tempted to believe that he must have been a living man, don't cry "Name, name?" Tell yourself at once that, a thousand to one, he is a pure creation. Some touches he may owe to this man, and some to that, but in proportion as he is a living character in literature, be sure that he never lived in the world. Do you want to believe that the characters in Shakespeare were ever living persons? I tell you it would be a shock to me if I were to hear that Hamlet, as he is in the play, was a real man. He has the reality of great art and that is enough. I don't want to bolster and buttress my interest in Hamlet by any thought of a creature of flesh and blood walking on the battlements of Elsinore. In the great writers, portraits are not painted—characters are composed. And this leads me to the conclusion I have come to as to the place of conscience in the making of imaginary characters.

CHARACTERS WE DO NOT WANT IN LITERATURE.

Characters are composed, not painted or photographed, and authors are morally responsible for the materials of which they compose them. The world is made up of good and bad, and an author may choose to describe either part or both. Usually he dwells longest on that part which he knows best, that part which has the strongest fascination for his own mind. Fielding said he had

good authority for all his characters—no less than the doomsday-book of nature. No doubt of that; but it was because he had lived the life of a man about town that he gave us the revolting Lady Bellaston. The imagination of the novelist is much like the domesticated poll-parrot—it tells by its language what company it keeps. But it is not a sufficient indication of a character to say that it is natural. There are characters that we do not want in literature, sometimes because they are too common and too commonplace, and we might just as well turn our eyes on life. You remember the head miller in the “*Mill on the Floss*”—“There’s fools enoo, an’ rogues enoo, wi’out lookin’ i’ books for ’em.” I’ve always felt sympathy with the Shah of Persia, when he was asked to buy the picture of a donkey for fifty pounds, and he said: “I could buy a living one in my own country for less than five shillings.” But there are types of evil character in the world which the novelist cannot ignore if he pretends to represent life. His responsibility lies in the way he does them. It has been charged against Richardson, the “respectable, domestic old printer,” that he threw himself with such special gusto into the reprobate Lovelace as to convey an idea that, at all events, he thought libertines very amusing company. It is urged against Fielding that if he had been a man of any true delicacy he must have shown more plainly his abhorrence of the conduct of Tom Jones. If the novelist is a man of pure mind he will not be for ever dissecting evil characters. He will not keep his eye constantly fixed on the monstrosities produced by city life. He may share George Eliot’s opinion that “you can’t make men moral by turning them out to grass,” but he will love to turn his gaze on to the healthy and natural lives that men and women may live under the open sky. “Scott,” says Ruskin, “lived in a country and time when, from highest to lowest, but chiefly in that dignified and nobly

severe middle class to which he himself belonged, a habit of serene and stainless thought was as natural to the people as their mountain air. Women like Rose Bradwardine and Ailie Dinmont were the grace and guard of every household—God be praised that the race of them is not yet extinct.”

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But great characters in fiction are not only composed—they are forged. The material of which they are made is found by the novelist in observation of the world, but the spirit that smelts them is the fire of his own nature. The novelists pretend to invent a little world of different characters, but he is really only describing one character, and that is his own. The question the novelist is asking himself is always the same: “If I were this man, if I were this woman, what should I do, what should I say?” Thus the greatest novelist, the greatest dramatist, is he who has got the greatest number of characters within himself, who is at once a king and a beggar, a thief and an honest man, a hero and a villain, a pure woman and an impure one. This has been said before, by Guy de Maupassant, by Mr. Leslie Stephen, and by others, but it cannot be said too often. It justifies the author when he shows that man is a composite creature, having his good angel and his bad angel on either hand. He knows it, for he feels it in himself. He knows how apt virtue is to look two ways. Becky Sharp says: “I think I could be a good woman if I had five thousand a year.” That sort of moral squint is to be found in many characters.

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without and within, and, generally, with the spirit of contradiction which is born with every son of Adam. Murder is a black crime, but do not ask for "Macbeth" with the murder of Duncan left out of it. Do not think to avoid corruption by denying to the novelist the right to represent the darker side of the heart of man. Let him represent it, and if he is a true man himself he will not forget to represent the lighter side also. That is where his moral responsibility in depicting character will loom largest. He will never be able to shuffle it all off on to life. Depicting a little colony of characters, all of them so many facets of his own character, he will be responsible for the creatures he creates and sends out into the world. Are they for the most part a group of rascals? Then depend upon it he is a good deal of a rascal himself. Are they a group of heroes—real heroes, not mouthing and skipping ghosts? Depend upon it he is something of a hero. The thought is a terrifying one, I confess, that no handwriting, no photograph, no phonograph, ever told a man's character so plainly as the characters the novelist represents tells his own character. But it is an inspiring thought, too. To be a noble writer you should first of all be a noble man.

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"The Masqueraders"

sophy shop always, but sometimes an arena for the emotions. The modern Ruy Blas and the modern Don Salluste have won this time. But meanwhile where is the woman? Where is Dulcie? The men have played the scene without her. Was ever a finer dramatic opportunity given to an actress? But Mrs. Patrick Campbell passed it over as insignificant and beneath her notice. A Sarah Bernhardt would have leaped at it. First, there was the love scene, which Mr. Alexander had to play entirely "off his own bat," and then the entrance to the gambling scene and the watching of the contest, of which the actress made literally nothing. There was no terror, no anxiety, no facial expression, no assistance whatever to the scene; but mere passive acquiescence. It was bad enough to hear Mr. Jones's dialogue stifled and smothered long before the card scene came. It might have been inconsistent for Dulcie to rail against men and their treatment of women, when, worldly wise, she had won her husband at an auction and deliberately chosen a brute instead of a Bayard at an open lottery; but conceive an actress who has played the Second Mrs. Tanqueray making no effect, nay, smothering and ruining such a speech as that which the author has written to express a discontented woman's disgust of marriage. For an actress of moment it was a superb chance. But the result was blurred, misty, without expression or power.

The last act is to our mind in an ethical sense the very finest in the play. Here occurs a scene which, if the actress understood it—which she apparently does not—would have been a revelation to the audience. It dropped flat because it did not appeal to the actress. The positions are changed. Suddenly the platonic man becomes passionate; the passionate woman platonic. Duty, honour, respect of friends and of the world are all whistled to the winds now that he has a chance of enjoying what he has coveted so long. He takes his prize up to a lonely observatory in the mountains, where the snow is rose-tinted by the setting sun. He will have no servants. He will be her slave. He will wait upon her, light her fire for her. They cannot be disturbed up here in the sky. He has waited for her so long and so patiently—now he will have his banquet. But—so true to life—it is the woman who hesitates and turns back. She has led the life of a dog. She has been sold to her new master by a brute. She has made her lover sacrifice every sense of honour and duty; and it is the woman who feels instinctively that her supposed happiness will be a positive sin. Here is a wonderful touch of nature, but let us put it in the author's words. Dulcie repulses her lover, who is hungering for her. She says: "No, no! Let me think. Wait till Nell comes. Ah! don't think I don't love you. There's nothing I wouldn't do or suffer for you. There's not a thought in my heart that isn't yours. Say you know it! Say you know it! Oh! it was horrible with him. There was no home, no family, no love. It seemed like a blasphemy of home to live with him. But this—I can't tell you how I feel. I don't think any man can understand it. It's only a woman—and not all women—not many women, perhaps—but I feel it. I can't get rid of it. To live with you seems more horrible than the other. I cannot—I cannot—I cannot!" How many thousand tempted and distressed women have felt like that, only they cannot express themselves so truthfully! This is the finest bit of nature in the play, but it went for nothing, because the actress did not understand it, or, if she understood it, could not express it.

Still this fine play ends in a noble manner. The difficulty is solved by the sweetest character in the story, and by urging self-sacrifice, as she, the good, pure nurse of the sick poor, has practised it. The student is in danger of losing his honour; the woman he adores trembles at the brink of danger. It is the good Sister Helen, the pure, unselfish creature, who points the path to man's honour and woman's purity. "I am not a soldier," says David Remon. "Yes, you are," answers Sister Helen, who has had her temptations, as every woman has, but has crushed them. "Yes, you are! We are all soldiers on this earth, bound to be loyal to every one of our comrades, bound to obey the great rules of life, whether they are easy or hard. Yes, and all the more bound when they are hard, when they are our very life. You'll go—you'll go and leave her to me and her child." But still the love-sick passionate man babbles on, "I

love her, I love her." To which the pure Sister Helen replies, "Then save her for her child. Save her to be a good mother to that helpless little creature she has brought into the world, so that when her girl grows up and she has to guide her, she'll not have to say to her child, 'You can give yourself to this man, and if you don't like him you can give yourself to another, and to another, and so on. It doesn't matter. It was what I did.'" And so this really brilliant play ends with a pure and noble moral. The man sacrifices himself and departs for duty. It is a case of "All for her," containing the finest moral of any novel or play ever written. If the self-sacrificing student survives the expedition all will be well; if not, they will both meet "on that little star Andromeda. All's real there!" Thus the curtain falls on a play that every one ought to see and dwell upon and think about.

Mr. George Alexander rose as the subject rose. His acting in the last scene, so natural, so impulsive, so infinitely pathetic, so full of manly resignation, must have been just what the author intended. But he acted alone. His heroine could no more see the pathos of the last act than she could appreciate the comedy of the first. It was from end to end a disappointment. Happily, it will be a temporary one, and the artist who has received such special encouragement on all sides will awaken before it is too late to the responsibility of her position, and give to Dulcie Larondie the place she ought to hold in one of the most interesting of modern plays.

Happily the misunderstood Dulcie is the only hesitating note in a conspicuous success. Would that there were time and space to dwell on the sympathetic and exquisitely womanly Helen Larondie, the nurse, by Miss Granville, a perfect and ideal performance in its way, a picture in a veritable gallery of pictures; on the Montagu Lushington of Mr. Elliot, a little too flurried and indistinct at the outset, but since Mr. Elliot has some of the best things to say, no doubt he will arrange to say them so as to tell home and get the laugh they deserve; on Mr. H. Esmond's Eddie Remon, a very difficult part, played by an artist—a part in which scores of actors would have made a hideous blunder; and on the excellent sketches of character by Mr. Ian Robertson, Mr. Ben Webster, Mr. William H. Day, and Miss Irene Vanbrugh. Mr. A. Vane-Tempest stands out from the rest with a very special bit of character acting, very marked, very full of colour, and very distinct. It is observant and characteristic, and would that all young actors could command and influence an audience as well as Mr. Vane-Tempest does! When he has a good thing to say he says it, and, what is more, he makes it tell. What is the use of smothering up or gabbling with good dialogue?

The play as it stands—so interesting, so peculiar, so unconventional in precisely the right as opposed to the wrong direction, so forcible in character, so brilliant in colouring, so intensely human, and so often pathetic—has succeeded in spite of the defect on which we felt bound, in the interest of the manager, of the author, and of art generally to enlarge. The play has succeeded with a dumb and colourless heroine. When she speaks and glows as Dulcie Larondie ought to glow, the play will rise to the level of the author's pronounced talent, of Mr. Waring's splendid progress and of the bright enthusiasm and passion of Mr. George Alexander, who has brought back to our dull, didactic, and controversial drama the true hero of romance.

The Era.

August 4 1894.

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2019-03-16

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Mrs Patrick Campbell in "The Masqueraders" "The Era"

AN ADVENTURE IN THE PIT. BY CLEMENT SCOTT.

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So sang Robert Burns in a poem addressed to a very objectionable insect. The "giftie" came to my aid the other night, and gave me the power to hear very much that was infinitely amusing about myself. It was on the evening of Wednesday, May 21 in this week, that I happened to be passing the St. James's Theatre in King-street, and on the principle of Wemmick, "Hullo! here's a church; let's get married!" Some demon whispered in my ear, "Hullo! here's a theatre; let's see a play!" The "house full" placards, so dear to the lucky manager, were displayed at every entrance. The gallery was full, the stalls were full, the circle was full, and so were the upper boxes and the pit. Inside were their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, with a brilliant suite, heartily enjoying the much discussed play *The Masqueraders*, which had occupied my very serious attention all Saturday evening, spoiled my night's rest, and occupied my brain the best part of Sunday.

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young lady. Many of her critics perfectly agree with her. One of them, and one of the cleverest, insists that she would not be called Dulcie if she gave way to passion and emotion. On this point I should like to have the opinion of the gifted author. I don't think he would have written the first act if he had not intended Dulcie to be the vivid embodiment of sparkling comedy; or the second, if he had not required feverish restlessness and agitated nerves; or the third, if he had not asked for passion; or the last, if he had not demanded pathos. It seems to me that the card scene requires just as much facial support and agitation from Dulcie as from the gamblers. But Dulcie is not so much agitated as she would be if the rivals were playing for counters instead of for her beautiful body and that of her child.

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"But how do you account for those first night notices in the *Daily Telegraph* if he did not write them?" asked one.

"My boy! it would be impossible, physically impossible, to do the work in the time. He goes to every rehearsal and writes a little bit every day."

A very animated discussion was going on in another section of the pit, in which my name was freely mentioned, so I thought I would draw a bow at a venture and join in the conversation.

"Excuse me, sir," I asked, in the most innocent and artless tone I could assume, "but do you happen to know Clement Scott?"

"Know him! perfectly well, and all his people. He is a particular friend of my father."

"What is he like?" "Oh, a very old and decrepit man—nearly as old, I think, as Mr Gladstone, and, poor fellow, almost bed-ridden."

"Indeed," I said to my confident young friend, "how sad! But does he never see a play now?"

"Very seldom. They carry him down to matinees sometimes on an invalid couch just to soothe him, for the ruling passion is strong in death."

"But does he never write?" I insisted.

"Scribbles something like a child on a slate."

"But who does the notices?"

"His ghost!"

I turned away from my young friends to thrust my handkerchief into my mouth to avoid a burst of laughter, when I heard a chuckle by my side.

"We meet in strange places, sir, don't we?" said a young and very intelligent fellow.

He evidently knew me, for he discussed all my criticisms with me, particularly the one on *The Masqueraders*, with which in the main he agreed.

But though I talked to him for half an hour, I really do not know who my friend was. Our discussion grew so warm at one time that I thought we should have been turned out. Fancy a dramatic critic being ignominiously ejected from the pit of a London theatre! My friend would talk, and dragged me into the conversation. But having been "spotted," I was determined to get some fun out of the confident youths who insisted I was over eighty, bed-ridden, and employed a ghost.

Turning to the young fellow who really did know who I was, I said, "I wish you would introduce me to these gentlemen."

He touched one on the arm and said, "May I introduce you to a gentleman who is very much interested in your conversation, who knows something about plays, and who is anxious to make your acquaintance. Delighted!" they all said.

"Mr Clement Scott?"

I never saw such a pitiful expression of horror on any three faces in my life. They did not rush out of the house. They simply melted into space.

But there were other charming incidents that were quite as amusing to me on that memorable evening in the pit last Wednesday.

A handsome and kindly-hearted lady, who appeared to be alone, and who was suffering, as we all were, from the heat, was evidently pining for human sympathy on

the subject of Mr George Alexander.

All through this brilliant actor's love scenes she wept copiously, and beamed lovingly on her idol. All through the card scene she groaned with delight, but when the curtain fell she clutched my arm, and said, "Oh, dear sir! Do you really think there is one more such delightful man on earth? I come to see him every night!"

Immediately I gave her my earnest sympathy, and when I hinted that I had been introduced to Mr George Alexander—I don't think for a moment she believed me—I thought she would have kissed me on the spot.

Her emotion was so deep and sincere that it was suggested that our mutual grief should be drowned in the little refreshment-room at the back of the pit. That good lady's sympathy would have been assisted by a copious libation.

But I was discovered, and I deemed it well, in the interests of the fair amanuensis who writes all my articles to hurry into King-street again, to dodge under the heads of the Royal carriages prancing in the street, and to be lost in the crowd.

I send you the half of my pit ticket to show you that my story is literally true.

SOME DRESSES AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY PRIVATE VIEW.

There was a brilliant show of dresses at the Academy private view. The Countess Spencer looked very stately in a toilette of black accordion-pleated chiffon, with sleeves and yoke of purple velvet, and a jet bonnet; the Viscountess Hood very elegant in black and white satin, with a white and black bonnet, fastened on with large pearl pins. Lady Lepel Griffin was also in black, and Mrs. Fitzgeorge looked well in dark green. Lady Dorothy Nevill wore a curious combination of black and green; the Baroness Burdett-Coutts was grand in black lace; Lady Blomfield looked charmingly pretty in grey spotted camels' hair with revers of silver-grey satin, the toilette completed by a large light grey hat and feather boa and a gold-headed cane. Lady Crichton Browne looked well in a handsome combination of grey silk and velvet, with a bonnet of shaded roses. Mrs. Alfred Morrison wore a pearl-grey silk with a train edged with old lace, and an exquisite short mantle made of grey miroir velvet and lace insertion, the velvet edged with pink sequins. Mrs. Mactear wore a *recherché* toilette in green and brown velvet brocade, with a bonnet of shaded roses with a pale blue moiré bow at one side. The Baroness de Worms wore a wonderful toilette in blue and tan. The Drama was well represented. Mrs. Patrick Campbell looked most distinguished as she passed through the galleries on the arm of her husband; she was gowned in black, with a high-standing collar lined with orange velvet, and orange revers, and a large black hat trimmed with orange-coloured flowers. Mrs. Bernard Beere came in for a little while, in a white serge dress; beautiful Julia Neilson went by in white with a jacket of white Pompadour silk, and a large black hat trimmed with large white feathers. Miss Henrietta Rae (Mrs. Normand) was dressed in purple and yellow shot silk, with a bonnet of velvet roses. Mrs. Fenwick Miller was in black moiré relieved with pale blue.

An interesting feature of the revival of *A Pair of Spectacles* at the Garrick Theatre on Thursday was the first appearance on any stage of Miss Mabel Terry Lewis, the youngest daughter of Mrs Arthur Lewis, once, as Miss Kate Terry, the idol of London playgoers. Miss Mabel Terry Lewis's debut was quite successful; though, of course, the part of Lucy Lorimer was no very severe test of her ability. The grace and smoothness of her performance, and her distinct delivery, did credit, however, to the valuable instruction which the young actress has received from her aunt, Miss Marion Terry.

The Era Jan: 19. 1895.

Once more Mr. George Alexander has secured the success of the season. There is no doubt about that. As a work of art there is no need to compare *The Masqueraders* with *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. As a popular attraction, it will be as remarkable—or more so. It is incomparably the best play that Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has written. It lacks the curious variety and fidelity of portraiture that has characterised some of his plays. Perhaps it is not quite so smartly written. But it is more interesting, more convincing, more possible. One leaves the theatre with the sense of having read a thrilling story with avidity.

Which surely is a high tribute to the dramatist. Much remark has been provoked by the virulent attack on Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the "Daily Telegraph." Probably it must be attributed mainly to the hysterical temperament of the writer and to no worse motive. The opinion of most competent judges is that Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Dulcie Larondie is in its way quite as excellent a performance as her Mrs. Tanqueray. What has Mrs. Campbell then to depict? A girl of a good family who, forced to earn her living, becomes a governess, wearies of that hateful calling, becomes a barmaid, and begins to acquire some of the characteristics of her vocation.

Is that vulgarity, or is it art? She is ambitious, and she sells herself to a high bidder—she offers a wedding ring and a title, as well as a fortune. Have not barmaids made such matches? She becomes a queen of society. Her husband, always governed by the brutal side of his nature, games, drinks, and wenches. She adopts an attitude of sullen indifference towards him. Is that not natural; is it not exquisitely feminine? Then an old lover, meantime become rich, appears upon the scene. That consummate blackguard, Sir Bryce Skene, commands his wife to obtain money from David Remon—that is, the old lover, who has meantime become rich.

Then we have a scene unparalleled in the history of the modern stage. Skene insolently challenges Remon to cut cards for heavy stakes, and David agrees, naming the stakes—"My fortune against your wife." It is the mad offer of a frenzied lover—two hundred thousand pounds, which I do not value, against the woman whom I adore—the faithful, worldly girl, for whom you were able to outbid me in the days of my poverty. Skene, debased, poverty stricken, greedy for more gold to gamble with, agrees; and they set to the cards.

What a thrilling scene; and how consummately well acted—Skene with his hard, red face, and wretched nerves, Remon consumed by desire, and yet horribly cool and determined; and the woman, who has overheard the challenge, and its acceptance, and has mutely agreed, looking on with an awful, haggard face. The audience hung upon the game till the tension became dreadful; and uttered a great sigh of relief when Remon won. But won what? Dare any dramatist give his sanction to a union abhorrent to God and man?

Dulcie herself turns upon her lover. She loves him still; she is his body and soul, if he so desire. But it would be hideous. "Life with him was a blasphemy of home. Life with you, his dreadful figure always rising between us, would be more awful still." This is truth, and it prevails. A splendid play is brought to the only acceptable ending. Imagine another act, as Mr. Scott, say, might have written it. Remon goes to a convenient war, and gets an arm shot off. Dulcie becomes a hospital nurse, and in that capacity assists at the piteous deathbed of her alcoholic husband. Then Remon returns, and swears to an infant prodigy that, please God, he will be its father. Faugh!

Mrs. Patrick Campbell proves to be an admirable actress, and that is the fact. Her Paula Tanqueray was no accident; but the beginning of a brilliant career. Mr. Alexander's David Remon is a fine, romantic performance. The Sir Bryce Skene of Mr. Herbert Waring is the best thing the actor has done. In fact, there is not an ill-played part in the cast of this admirable play. It is the crowning achievement of Mr. Jones; and it adds another to the long list of successes associated with Mr. Alexander's management.

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"Excuse me, sir," I asked, in the most innocent and artless tone I could assume, "but do you happen to know Clement Scott?"

"Know him! perfectly well, and all his people. He is a particular friend of my father."

"What is he like?"

"Oh, a very old and decrepit man—nearly as old, I think, as Mr. Gladstone, and, poor fellow, almost bed-ridden."

"Indeed," I said to my confident young friend; "how sad! But does he never see a play now?"

"Very seldom. They carry him down to matinees sometimes on an invalid couch just to soothe him, for the 'ruling passion is strong in death.'"

"But does he never write?" I insisted.

"Scribbles something like a child on a slate."

"But who does the notices?"

"His ghost!"

I turned away from my young friends to thrust my handkerchief into my mouth to avoid a burst of laughter, when I heard a chuckle by my side.

"We meet in strange places, sir, don't we?" said a young and very intelligent fellow.

He evidently knew me, for he discussed all my criticisms with me, particularly the one on *The Masqueraders*, with which in the main he agreed.

But though I talked to him for half an hour, I really do not know who my friend was. Our discussion grew so warm at one time that I thought we should have been turned out. Fancy a dramatic critic being ignominiously ejected from the pit of a London theatre! My friend would talk, and dragged me into the conversation. But having been "spotted," I was determined to get some fun out of the confident youths who insisted I was over eighty, bed-ridden, and employed a ghost.

Turning to the young fellow who really did know who I was, I said, "I wish you would introduce me to these gentlemen."

He touched one on the arm and said, "May I introduce you to a gentleman who is very much interested in your conversation, who knows something about plays, and who is anxious to make your acquaintance."

"Delighted!" they all said.

"Mr. Clement Scott."

I never saw such a pitiful expression of horror on any three faces in my life. They did not rush out of the house. They simply melted into space.

But there were other charming incidents that were quite as amusing to me on that memorable evening in the pit last Wednesday.

A handsome and kindly-hearted lady, who appeared to be alone, and who was suffering, as we all were, from the heat, was evidently pining for human sympathy on

the subject of Mr George Alexander.

All through this brilliant actor's love scenes she wept copiously, and beamed lovingly on her idol. All through the card scene she groaned with delight, but when the curtain fell she clutched my arm, and said, "Oh, dear sir! Do you really think there is one more such delightful man on earth? I come to see him every night!"

Immediately I gave her my earnest sympathy, and when I hinted that I had been introduced to Mr George Alexander—I don't think for a moment she believed me—I thought she would have kissed me on the spot.

Her emotion was so deep and sincere that it was suggested that our mutual grief should be drowned in the little refreshment-room at the back of the pit. That good lady's sympathy would have been assisted by a copious libation.

But I was discovered, and I deemed it well, in the interests of the fair amanuensis who writes all my articles to hurry into King-street again, to dodge under the heads of the Royal carriages prancing in the street, and to be lost in the crowd.

I send you the half of my pit ticket to show you that my story is

SOME DRESSES AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY
PRIVATE VIEW.

There was a brilliant show of dresses at the Academy private view. The Countess Spencer looked very stately in a toilette of black accordion-pleated chiffon, with sleeves and yoke of purple velvet, and a jet bonnet; the Viscountess Hood very elegant in black and white satin, with a white and black bonnet, fastened on with large pearl pins. Lady Lepel Griffin was also in black, and Mrs. Fitzgeorge looked well in dark green. Lady Dorothy Nevill wore a curious combination of black and green; the Baroness Burdett-Coutts was grand in black lace; Lady Blomfield looked charmingly pretty in grey spotted camels' hair with revers of silver-grey satin, the toilette completed by a large light grey hat and feather boa and a gold-headed cane. Lady Crichton Browne looked well in a handsome combination of grey silk and velvet, with a bonnet of shaded roses. Mrs. Alfred Morrison wore a pearl-grey silk with a train edged with old lace, and an exquisite short mantle made of grey miroir velvet and lace insertion, the velvet edged with pink sequins. Mrs. Mactear wore a *recherché* toilette in green and brown velvet brocade, with a bonnet of shaded roses with a pale blue moiré bow at one side. The Baroness de Worms wore a wonderful toilette in blue and tan. The Drama was well represented. Mrs. Patrick Campbell looked most distinguished as she passed through the galleries on the arm of her husband; she was gowned in black, with a high-standing collar lined with orange velvet, and orange revers, and a large black hat trimmed with orange-coloured flowers. Mrs. Bernard Beere came in for a little while, in a white serge dress; beautiful Julia Neilson went by in white with a jacket of white Pompadour silk, and a large black hat trimmed with large white feathers. Miss Henrietta Rae (Mrs. Normand) was dressed in purple and yellow shot silk, with a bonnet of velvet roses. Mrs. Fenwick Miller was in black with pale blue revers with pale blue.

The Era

Jan: 19.

1895.

AN interesting feature of the revival of *A Pair of Spectacles* at the Garrick Theatre on Thursday was the first appearance on any stage of Miss Mabel Terry Lewis, the youngest daughter of Mrs Arthur Lewis, once, as Miss Kate Terry, the idol of London playgoers. Miss Mabel Terry Lewis's début was quite successful; though, of course, the part of Lucy Lorimer was no very severe test of her ability. The grace and smoothness of her performance, and her distinct delivery, did credit to the valuable instruction which the young actress has received from her aunt, Miss Marion Terry.

MAY 6, 1894

Once more Mr. George Alexander has secured the success of the season. There is no doubt about that. As a work of art there is no need to compare *The Masqueraders* with *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. As a popular attraction, it will be as remarkable—or more so. It is incomparably the best play that Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has written. It lacks the curious variety and fidelity of portraiture that has characterised some of his plays. Perhaps it is not quite so smartly written. But it is more interesting, more convincing, more possible. One leaves the theatre with the sense of having read a thrilling story with avidity.

* * *

Which surely is a high tribute to the dramatist. Much remark has been provoked by the virulent attack on Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the "Daily Telegraph." Probably it must be attributed mainly to the hysterical temperament of the writer and to no worse motive. The opinion of most competent judges is that Mrs. Patrick Campbell's *Dulcie Larondie* is in its way quite as excellent a performance as her *Mrs. Tanqueray*. What has Mrs. Campbell then to depict? A girl of a good family who, forced to earn her living, becomes a governess, wearies of that hateful calling, becomes a barmaid, and begins to acquire some of the characteristics of her vocation.

* * *

Is that vulgarity, or is it art? She is ambitious, and she sells herself to a high bidder—he offers a wedding ring and a title, as well as a fortune. Have not barmaids made such matches? She becomes a queen of society. Her husband, always governed by the brutal side of his nature, games, drinks, and wenches. She adopts an attitude of sullen indifference towards him. Is that not natural; is it not exquisitely feminine? Then an old lover, meantime become rich, appears upon the scene. That consummate blackguard, Sir Bryce Skene, commands his wife to obtain money from David Remon—that is, the old lover, who has meantime become rich.

* * *

Then we have a scene unparalleled in the history of the modern stage. Skene insolently challenges Remon to cut cards for heavy stakes, and David agrees, naming the stakes—"My fortune against your wife." It is the mad offer of a frenzied lover—two hundred thousand pounds, which I do not value, against the woman whom I adore—the fanciful, worldly girl, for whom you were able to outbid me in the days of my poverty. Skene, debased, poverty stricken, greedy for more gold to gamble with, agrees; and they set to the cards.

* * *

What a thrilling scene; and how consummately well acted—Skene with his hard, red face, and wretched nerves, Remon consumed by desire, and yet horribly cool and determined: and the woman, who has overheard the challenge, and its acceptance, and has mutely agreed, looking on with an awful, haggard face. The audience hung upon the game till the tension became dreadful; and uttered a great sigh of relief when Remon won. But won what? Dare any dramatist give his sanction to a union abhorrent to God and man?

* * *

Dulcie herself turns upon her lover. She loves him still; she is his, body and soul, if he so desire. But it would be hideous. "Life with him was a blasphemy of home. Life with you, his dreadful figure always rising between us, would be more awful still." This is truth, and it prevails. A splendid play is brought to the only acceptable ending. Imagine another act, as Mr. Scott, say, might have written it. Remon goes to a convenient war, and gets an arm shot off. *Dulcie* becomes a hospital nurse, and in that capacity assists at the penitent deathbed of her alcoholic husband. Then Remon returns, and swears to an infant prodigy that, please God, he will be its father. Faugh!

* * *

Mrs. Patrick Campbell proves to be an admirable actress, and that is the fact. Her *Paula Tanqueray* was no accident; but the beginning of a brilliant career. Mr. Alexander's *David Remon* is a fine, romantic performance. The *Sir Bryce Skene* of Mr. Herbert Waring is the best thing the actor has done. In fact, there is not an ill-played part in the cast of this admirable play. It is the crowning achievement of the management. Another to the long list of successes associated with Mr. Alexander's management.

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Sara Bernhardt

About Sarah Bernhardt.

MADAME ROSINE SARAH BERNHARDT appears before the Liverpool public, after an absence of nine years, at the Shakespeare Theatre this, Friday, afternoon. Of such importance is this event that all the local art-world is now chiefly concerned about it. The great actress has cast the spell of her magnetic personality upon us, and we await with the pleasantest anticipations and with the keenest curiosity her appearance this afternoon. The Shakespeare Theatre, large as it is, and exacting as are the prices of admission, will probably prove all too inadequate to accommodate the crowds which will come clamouring to see the modern Melpomene in the *Tosca* of Sardou.

The great feature about *La Tosca* is the curdingly realistic way in which it portrays physical agony. *La Tosca* is a beautiful prima donna, whose lover, a young artist named Cavaradossi, is condemned to death and torture by the Government of Rome for a political misdemeanour. The big scene represents Cavaradossi being tortured in an ante-room, whilst the Roman police official Scarpia endeavours to wring from *La Tosca*, by means of her lover's sufferings, certain confessions which will incriminate a mutual friend of the couple. *La Tosca* is offered the alternative of continuous torture for her lover if she continues to keep her lips sealed, or of cessation and release if she confesses. The mental agony of the tempted woman and the physical sufferings of the tortured man are thus represented with a realism which is almost appalling, and which will probably never be forgotten by those who are privileged to witness the Bernhardt's playing of the scene.

"For my part," says that erudite critic Mr. A. B. Walkley, "I found the realism of the torture-scene so perfect that it was with the greatest difficulty (believe it or not who may), I persuaded myself that Mario was *not* being tortured behind the scenes. I had to reason with myself something in this way: 'You idiot! Why are you so distressed? You know very well that there is no Mario Cavaradossi lying outside there, strapped to a couch, with his head in an iron circle. It is really Mr. So-and-So, a young actor at so many pounds a week, who is probably, at this moment, taking a steady pull at a tankard of stout, or perhaps glancing over the evening paper.' And yet I could not shake off the overwhelming horror of the scene."

Mr. Walkley further speaks of *La Tosca* as "a clever, a diabolically clever, bit of stage craft." But at the same time he contends that this kind of realism is not art. Not that the representations of physical torture may not be made artistic, for "the pre-Raphaelite pictures of grilled, disembowelled, and arrow-riddled saints in the National Gallery portray physical torture, and these are art." But "the representation of Cavaradossi's torture by the minions of Baron Scarpia in the third act of *La Tosca* oversteps the limit of art, and becomes mere bestiality, a mere appeal to the lust of blood which lurks low down in all of us as the last proof of our kindred with a Nero and a Caligula. The yells and screams of Cavaradossi, with his head encased in the 'Luke's crown' of Baron Scarpia's inquisitors, revolt me just as the groans of a man run over by an omnibus in Cheapside revolt me, just as the sight of the blood gushing from a disembowelled horse in the Plaza de Toros at Valencia once revolted me."

Thus Mr. Walkley, in his fascinating "Playhouse Impressions." You see I am unable to give, this week, a personal notice of the Bernhardt's performance, so I am falling back upon authorities. And following this vein, it is interesting to read the latest opinion of that other new critic, Mr. William Archer, upon the Divine Sarah. In his "Theatrical World for 1893" he compares her with Eleanora Duse thus:—"Since the comparison with Sarah

Bernhardt is thrust upon us, I must admit that Duse gives me far more pleasure than Sarah has given me for years past, simply because her art is delicate, noble, and unobtrusive, while Sarah's art has overlaid her native talent until we are too often conscious of nothing but her tricks and processes. It sometimes seems as though Sarah Bernhardt were no longer a real woman, but an exquisitely-contrived automaton, the most wonderful *article de Paris* ever invented; perfect in all its mechanical airs and graces, but devoid alike of genuine feeling and artistic conscience. Of course this is a gross, an ungrateful exaggeration. Sarah Bernhardt has been, and still is, a great actress, to whom we owe countless artistic pleasures."

And Madame Bernhardt is as extraordinary as a woman as she is great—incomparable—as an artist. The combination of her two reputations—her renown as an artist and her notoriety as a creature of phenomenal eccentricity—places her upon a pinnacle of greatness which is high above any other woman of our time. Her character and genius will probably be remembered long after the purely personal element of Queen Victoria's existence has faded into oblivion, and even as it is her name is now better known, and honoured with greater concern and interest, than that of any other individuality of our time. Indeed, I find it difficult to crowd into a paragraphic monograph the records of her strangely peculiar career. But let me try.

She is as cosmopolitan in her birth as she is in her art. Her father was a French lawyer, and her mother a Dutch lady of Jewish extraction. She was born in 1844, and, although no one would dream it to see her on the stage, is now a grandmother. The first steps in her artistic career were dogged by poverty and rebuffs. But before that, even as a child, her eccentricity had taken tangible form, for four times was she expelled on account of it from the convent where she was educated. In '72 she gained her first triumph; in '79 she was a great actress, and had made a hit in London at the Gaiety; and following this she made her first sensational tour, playing in Italy, Spain, Algeria and America. Now, as I have inferred, her art and her personality are as cosmopolitan as the sun.

After two short engagements in the States the Bernhardt netted £37,000 each. So lucrative, indeed, were her foreign engagements that she cheerfully paid a fine of £4,000 to the Comedie Française in order to fulfil them. In London she has appeared at the Gaiety, the Lyceum, Her Majesty's and quite recently at the Royal English Opera House and Daly's. Her first London triumph was with *La Tosca*; her latest with *Iseult*—both tragedies, the one realistic, the other romantic. But her versatility as a tragedienne knows no limit, for she realises diversity of character with equal genius, from the stately women of Greece and Rome and the dainty heroines of Shakespeare down to the ultra-modern creations of *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, *Marguerite Gautier*, *La Dame aux Camelias*, and (probably) *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. It is computed that during the period of her greatness she has commanded an income of £20,000 a year, and on one occasion £1,800 was attracted to a theatre's box-office by the magic of her name.

To summarise a few of the facts recorded against her reputation for eccentricity—some of them mere romances I have no doubt—I learn that she thinks little of carrying personal effects when on tour to the extent of dozens of wooden boxes each four feet high; that her extreme fondness for animals induces her to make pets of tigers; that she is credited with the queer idea of carrying her own coffin about with her; that she once drove to her hotel in London after the performance on a fire-engine; that she takes trips in balloons and performs feats of breathless daring on horse-back; and that she occasionally sleeps in a coffin and always keeps a skeleton in a cupboard. These, however, are mere rumours. In addition to such gossip there are the

(31)

work, giving it intention and direction. Without this a novel is only a story book, and a play is only a puppet show. With it they are living things, taking their part in the affairs of life, helping to make good laws and to unmake bad ones, and not even shrinking from the high privilege of entering into man's spiritual life. "In the heart of the speaker," says Carlyle, "there ought to be some kind of tidings burning till it be uttered; otherwise it were better for him that he altogether held his peace." It must be confessed that few novelists seem to work from the focal centre of an idea. As Carlyle says, Scott did not. Occasionally Dickens did, if his idea was only on the humble level of a social reformer. Sometimes Charles Reade did, but his best books seem to have no central idea at all. Balzac's idea, if we may gather it from a series of stories, is only that in this world virtue usually brings a man to the squalid failure of Pere Goriot, and vice to the success of his daughters. Fielding thought his motive was the triumph of virtue. In his famous dedication he says he hopes he has shown "nothing inconsistent with the strictest rules of decency, nothing prejudicial to the cause of religion and virtue, nothing to offend the chastest eye in the perusal." Reading this one cannot help thinking of the famous author (mentioned by Fielding himself) who told a learned Bishop that the reason his lordship could not feel the excellence of his book was that he did not read it with a fiddle in his hand—for he always had one in his own when he composed it. We want the fiddle to realize Fielding's moral motive in "Tom Jones." Charlotte Brontë thought that her aim in "Jane Eyre" was to protest against conventional morality, and her first reviewers took her at her word, and said the novel taught that strong passion was the only really good thing in the world, and that all that opposed it—good taste, morality, religion—were to be disregarded.

Now we see that Charlotte Brontë had the most profound respect for all the conventions, and above all, the sincerest, even the most superstitious reverence for the marriage law.

The truth is, if I dare say so, the novelists sometimes think they have a central idea when they have only a central situation. The central situation of "Jane Eyre" is that of a man married to a mad woman, and trying to join his enslaved life to that of an innocent girl. A central idea might have come out of this situation, and been made to inform the whole scheme of the story. Is a man doing right who does this? If so, the law must be altered which ties him to a living dead-body. When the book appeared, George Eliot, then Marian Evans, told a friend that she considered Rochester was perfectly justified in trying to contract a fresh marriage. George Eliot would have given "Jane Eyre" a motive, though she could not have given it as much dramatic passion.

THE THREE GREAT WRITERS OF THE CENTURY.

It can hardly be denied that the fiction of the western world, and even its drama also since Moliere, have been deficient in motive, and in that high regard both are behind the great art of poetry, where Milton in "Paradise Lost," and Shelley in "Prometheus," show how a central idea can be carried through a work of imagination. Modern novelists and dramatists seem to find it hard to combine unity of purpose with freedom of invention. The author of "Les Miserables" shows mastery over motive, and so does the author of "Anna Karanina." These two, and these alone, seem to me to realise George Eliot's ideal of the "intensest realism of presentation with the highest idealism of conception," and by virtue of this mastery, and not because of any special superiority in

delineating character or depicting scene, I claim for Victor Hugo and Count Tolstoi that, with Walter Scott, they will in the time to come be recognised as the three greatest novelists of the nineteenth century.

THE MISSION OF THE NOVEL AND THE DRAMA.

All authors in the end stand or fall by their mastery of motive, for motive is the last test to which genius can be brought. But there is even a last firing of the furnace of that last test, and the value of a novel or a drama depends on the value of its motive. The original story of "Othello," as Shakespeare found it, had jealousy for its motive; but the tragedy of "Othello," as Shakspeare left it, has a motive infinitely higher than could come of any story of a jealous husband—it is the wreck of the soul of a great man when the idol it has built up is broken to pieces. Three authors of to-day, in three works, have shewn mastery over motive, but, if I may be forgiven for the criticism, the motive is not quite of the highest. He who tells me that life is an unsolved riddle tells me nothing. "The Tempter" of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones was one of the few modern plays built on an idea, but the idea was that the spirit of evil, so far as this world goes, is more powerful than the spirit of good. Mr. Pinero's "Mrs. Tanqueray" seemed to say that when a woman has fallen there is no salvation for her in this life, and she might as well take herself out of it and leave the reckoning between the world and her faults to be made elsewhere. Mr. Hardy's "Tess" revolved about the idea that poor human nature is only the sport of chance. Thus all three works have the same general motive, and perhaps it is the dominant thought of the age. It may be right as a principle of ethics, but I make bold to say that as a principle of art it is wrong. I say it is wrong as art because it is in conflict