

Jissen Women's University Rare Books  
Honma Hisao Collection

Digital Archives of Mason Library

Oscar Wilde  
Scrapbook

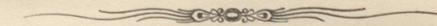
Vol. 4

with human emotion. "Deep in human nature," says a critic, "lies the instinct of compensation—the confidence that everything must end happily."

Sometimes we laugh at the love of the public for a happy ending. Let us laugh at it no more. The unspoken craving of the human heart is not for the clap-trap of marriage bells, but for compensation. It will suffer itself to see the hero die, if only he dies in a good cause, if only his death is the crown of his life, if only it can feel that, though everything passes away from him—youth, fortune, love—one thing remains—recompense. Mr. Hardy, Mr. Jones, Mr. Pinero may say, "I don't see it happen." A lady said to Turner, "I don't see these colours in the sunset." "I dare say not, madam," said Turner, "but don't you wish you could?" Surely this is the very essence of art as distinguished from life. Life is made up of a multitude of fragments, a sea of many currents, often coming into collision, and throwing up breakers. We look around and we see wrong-doing victorious, and right-doing in the dust; the evil man growing rich and dying in his bed, the good man becoming poor and dying in the streets; and our hearts sink, and we say, "What is God doing after all in this world of his children?" But our days are few, our view is limited, we cannot watch the event long enough to see the end which Providence sees. Well, am I irreverent; the place of the great novelist, the great dramatist—Tolstoi, Hugo, Scott, Shakspeare—is that of a temporal Providence—to answer the craving of the human soul for compensation, to shew us that success may be the worst failure, and failure the best success; that poverty may be better than riches, that—

"Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen and his swine,  
Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine."

When he does this, when he gathers together the scattered parts of life and shews "the axis on which the frame of things turns," then he speaks to the world's want. When he does not he might as well leave poor human Nature to turn its eyes on life itself. It is what art is for at its highest, and I count him the greatest artist who does it best; I count him the greatest genius who touches the magnetic and divine chord in humanity which is always waiting to vibrate to the sublime hope of recompense; I count him the greatest man who teaches men that the world is ruled in righteousness.



Sara Bernhardt in "La Tosca"

facts that she was married to a Greek in England and divorced and widowed in France; that she is a clever scriptress, painter, and authoress; that she possesses a voice which has been described as "an exquisite melody, the harmonious modulation of which, once heard, can never be forgotten, whilst her crystal distinctness of elocution is a standard for all ages and all stages;" that she owns a gold medal which she received in recognition of her humane and patriotic services as a nurse during the siege of Paris; that "her figure is tall and singularly thin, yet full of a marvellous grace;" and that her immense intellectuality dominates a frame so physically weak that "it is not an uncommon occurrence for her to faint after each act, and, poor woman, she spits blood."

BY THE WAY—

Sarah Bernhardt is to play Paula in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* in France, and Signora Duse the same character in Italy. What a trio of Paulas!—Bernhardt, Duse, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Surely no play of modern times has been so much discussed or so ably presented as this masterpiece of Pieter's. And was ever author more fortunate with his work?

We are to have *La Tosca* in English as well as in French, so that we shall be able to make some interesting comparisons. In the autumn Miss Olga Brandon will treat us to her version of Bernhardt's great rôle. Miss Brandon is not at all unknown in Liverpool, for I find that she has played Vashti Dathic in *Judah* at the Shakespeare, and a number of strong characters with the Kendals at the Court. When I saw her at the Court the feature which struck me as remarkable about her was her wonderful eyes, and indeed I have heard her described since as "the lady of the midnight eyes."

I have said something above concerning the earning power of the Bernhardt—but what do you think of this? The Parisian music hall singer Yvette Guilbert, who recently distinguished herself by singing spicy ditties before H. R. H. on a Sunday evening, reckons that in four weeks she could earn £2,400 in Europe, and so in order for an American manager to improve upon this he must offer for a month's work in addition to this sum £100 for travelling expenses, £4 a day for hotel bills, and 20 per cent of the net receipts. This I learn from the *Era*, which also informs me that Mr. George Grossmith can do so well "on his own" that he has just refused an offer of £70 a week from the Savoy. Evidently a talent for the stage is nowadays very well worth having.

Sarah Bernhardt is the best of Cleopatras possible, although she is a grandmother and is fifty years old to-day. But then she has a recipe for looking young, and that recipe she has had the temerity to employ. "I always burn my roots behind me," she says. "What is past is passed; I trouble no more about it. And the same as regards the future. I enjoy the moment, and give no thought what may happen to-morrow. So long as I have sufficient money for the needs of the day I am happy. Whenever a notion seizes me that I would like to do a certain thing I carry out the idea at once, be it never so eccentric." The gem of the recipe lies in the last lines, but "so long as I have sufficient for the needs of the day I am happy" is very good. Who could not be happy on (say) £20,000 a year and the worship of a world?

I should imagine this is about the busiest week the Divine Sarah has ever experienced. Between Monday and Saturday she visits Glasgow, Edinburgh, Bradford, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool, staying a day in each place. Such a feat as this is quite unique.

I WELL remember Sarah Bernhardt's first appearance at the Alexandra Theatre fourteen years ago, when she gave several performances, her chief productions being "La Dame aux Camélias" and "Frou Frou." Five years afterwards she paid another visit, but on neither occasion has so much enthusiasm been aroused as this week. The great Sarah is in the bloom of her genius, having discarded those eccentric occupations which rather hampered her histrionic development. In physique she has somewhat broadened, so that a bitter French critic could not now truthfully repeat that "if she chalked her head she might go as a billiard cue."

Liverpool Porcupine

THE Shakespeare Theatre presented a remarkable appearance yesterday afternoon.

From floor to ceiling it was packed as it seldom, if ever, has been packed before, and as a spectacle of fashion the scene would have been a gay one indeed if the performance had taken place in the evening instead of in the morning. It is some years now since Madame BERNHARDT has appeared in Liverpool, which fact alone is sufficient to create a large amount of enthusiasm. But it is probable the excitement would not have run so high if the great actress had announced any other play instead of *La Tosca*. Whatever may be said to the contrary, there is a certain amount of love for the morbid in the human mind, which men and women alike delight to indulge when a suitable occasion arises; and *La Tosca* with SARAH BERNHARDT in the title rôle affords just the most fitting opportunity for a good revel in the horrible as well as a good excuse for so doing. It is horrible in the extreme, and no anticipations that could have been formed on the ground of its sensationalism can fail to have met with the fullest realization. M. VICTORIEN SARDOU has contrived to supply Madame BERNHARDT with the material for one of the most powerful and blood-curdling impersonations that it is possible to imagine. With any capable actress in the part a representation of *La Tosca* could be nothing else but thrilling, with the great French tragedienne it becomes simply devilish in the intensity of its terrors, and yesterday, as heretofore whenever she has played it, the vast audience was held spellbound by the succession of painful dramatic episodes and the marvellous acting of Madame BERNHARDT. As a play, perhaps, it may be said that *La Tosca* does not rank particularly high in literary merit. The author has subserved a great many things to mere sensation, but it is sensation of the highest order, and is far removed in the cruelty and truth of its refinement from the realm of ordinary melodrama. That it is tragedy is unmistakable, but it is tragedy left to take care of itself by the sheer force of its own grip on the audience. You feel as if someone had rendered into modern dialogue a tragedy originally written in blank verse, though at the same time I think blank verse would have spoiled *La Tosca*. A large part of its strength as a play lies in its classical modernness, so to speak, for it has preserved in it all the vital classical elements without the stiltedness that takes the realism out of so many poetry plays, and SARDOU'S cleverness in welding together a succession of such terrible incidents is only equalled by the actress's ability to render them thoroughly naturally. Nor does she spare her audience the slightest pain or the slightest creep of the flesh. Neither author nor actress have any pity for weak nerves, and there is nothing for it but to remain chainbound to one's seat and to be harrowed. I saw the piece first without Madame BERNHARDT, and was horrified by the terrible story; yesterday afternoon the whole thing took a new meaning, as most plays do when

## 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 circlet. 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 overmastering 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 Notes 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 *Izeyl*—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 Camélias*, 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

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 Père 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 Misérables" 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.

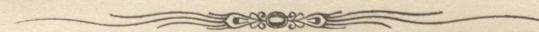
All authors in the end stand or fall by their mastery of motive, for motive is the last test to which genius can be brought. But there is even a last firing of the furnace of that last test, and the value of a novel or a drama depends on the value of its motive. The original story of "Othello," as Shakespeare 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

with human emotion. "Deep in human nature," says a critic, "lies the instinct of compensation—the confidence that everything must end happily."

Sometimes we laugh at the love of the public for a happy ending. Let us laugh at it no more. The unspoken craving of the human heart is not for the clap-trap of marriage bells, but for compensation. It will suffer itself to see the hero die, if only he dies in a good cause, if only his death is the crown of his life, if only it can feel that, though everything passes away from him—youth, fortune, love—one thing remains—recompense. Mr. Hardy, Mr. Jones, Mr. Pinero may say, "I don't see it happen." A lady said to Turner, "I don't see these colours in the sunset." "I dare say not, madam," said Turner, "but don't you wish you could?" Surely this is the very essence of art as distinguished from life. Life is made up of a multitude of fragments, a sea of many currents, often coming into collision, and throwing up breakers. We look around and we see wrong-doing victorious, and right-doing in the dust; the evil man growing rich and dying in his bed, the good man becoming poor and dying in the streets; and our hearts sink, and we say, "What is God doing after all in this world of his children?" But our days are few, our view is limited, we cannot watch the event long enough to see the end which Providence sees. Well, am I irreverent; the place of the great novelist, the great dramatist—Tolstoi, Hugo, Scott, Shakspeare—is that of a temporal Providence—to answer the craving of the human soul for compensation, to shew us that success may be the worst failure, and failure the best success; that poverty may be better than riches, that—

"Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen and his swine,  
Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine."

When he does this, when he gathers together the scattered parts of life and shews "the axis on which the frame of things turns," then he speaks to the world's want. When he does not he might as well leave poor human Nature to turn its eyes on life itself. It is what art is for at its highest, and I count him the greatest artist who does it best; I count him the greatest genius who touches the magnetic and divine chord in humanity which is always waiting to vibrate to the sublime hope of recompense; I count him the greatest man who teaches men that the world is ruled in righteousness.



facts that she was married to a Greek in England and divorced and widowed in France; that she is a clever sculptress, painter, and authoress; that she possesses a voice which has been described as "an exquisite melody, the harmonious modulation of which, once heard, can never be forgotten, whilst her crystal distinctness of elocution is a standard for all ages and all stages;" that she owns a gold medal which she received in recognition of her humane and patriotic services as a nurse during the siege of Paris; that "her figure is tall and singularly thin, yet full of a marvellous grace;" and that her immense intellectuality dominates a frame so physically weak that "it is not an uncommon occurrence for her to faint after each act, and, poor woman, she spits blood."

## BY THE WAY—

Sarah Bernhardt is to play Paula in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* in France, and Signora Duse the same character in Italy. What a trio of Paulas!—Bernhardt, Duse, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Surely no play of modern times has been so much discussed or so ably presented as this masterpiece of Piñero's. And was ever author more fortunate with his work?

We are to have *La Tosca* in English as well as in French, so that we shall be able to make some interesting comparisons. In the autumn Miss Olga Brandon will treat us to her version of Bernhardt's great rôle. Miss Brandon is not at all unknown in Liverpool, for I find that she has played Vashti Dethic in *Judah* at the Shakespeare, and a number of strong characters with the Kendals at the Court. When I saw her at the Court the feature which struck me as remarkable about her was her wonderful eyes, and indeed I have heard her described since as "the lady of the midnight eyes."

I have said something above concerning the earning power of the Bernhardt—but what do you think of this? The Parisian music hall singer Yvette Guilbert, who recently distinguished herself by singing spicy ditties before H. R. H. on a Sunday evening, reckons that in four weeks she could earn £2,400 in Europe, and so in order for an American manager to improve upon this he must offer for a month's work in addition to this sum £100 for travelling expenses, £4 a day for hotel bills, and 20 per-cent of the net receipts. This I learn from the *Era*, which also informs me that Mr. George Grossmith can do so well "on his own" that he has just refused an offer of £70 a week from the Savoy. Evidently a talent for the stage is nowadays very well worth having.

Sarah Bernhardt is the best of Cleopatras possible, although she is a grandmother and is fifty years old to-day. But then she has a recipe for looking young, and that recipe she has had the temerity to employ. "I always burn my boots behind me," she says. "What is past is passed; I trouble no more about it. And the same as regards the future. I enjoy the moment, and give no thought what may happen to-morrow. So long as I have sufficient money for the needs of the day I am happy. Whenever a notion seizes me that I would like to do a certain thing I carry out the idea at once, be it never so eccentric." The gem of the recipe lies in the last lines, but "so long as I have sufficient for the needs of the day I am happy" is very good. Who could not be happy on (say) £20,000 a year and the worship of a world?

I should imagine this is about the busiest week the Divine Sarah has ever experienced. Between Monday and Saturday she visits Glasgow, Edinburgh, Bradford, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool, staying a day in each place. Such a feat as this

I WELL remember Sarah Bernhardt's first appearance at the Alexandra Theatre fourteen years ago, when she gave several performances, her chief productions being "La Dame aux Camelias" and "Frou Frou." Five years afterwards she paid another visit, but on neither occasion has so much enthusiasm been aroused as this week. The great Sarah is in the bloom of her genius, having discarded those eccentric occupations which rather hampered her histrionic development. In physique she has somewhat broadened, so that a bitter French critic could not now truthfully repeat that "if she chalked her head she might go as a billiard cue."

## Liverpool Porcupine

THE Shakespeare Theatre presented a remarkable appearance yesterday afternoon. "La Tosca."

From floor to ceiling it was packed as it seldom, if ever, has been packed before, and as a spectacle of fashion the scene would have been a gay one indeed if the performance had taken place in the evening instead of in the morning. It is some years now since Madame BERNHARDT has appeared in Liverpool, which fact alone is sufficient to create a large amount of enthusiasm. But it is probable the excitement would not have run so high if the great actress had announced any other play instead of *La Tosca*. Whatever may be said to the contrary, there is a certain amount of love for the morbid in the human mind, which men and women alike delight to indulge when a suitable occasion arises; and *La Tosca* with SARAH BERNHARDT in the title rôle affords just the most fitting opportunity for a good revel in the horrible as well as a good excuse for so doing. It is horrible in the extreme, and no anticipations that could have been formed on the ground of its sensationalism can fail to have met with the fullest realization. M. VICTORIEN SARDOU has contrived to supply Madame BERNHARDT with the material for one of the most powerful and blood-curdling impersonations that it is possible to imagine. With any capable actress in the part a representation of *La Tosca* could be nothing else but thrilling, with the great French *tragedienne* it becomes simply devilish in the intensity of its terrors, and yesterday, as heretofore whenever she has played it, the vast audience was held spellbound by the succession of painful dramatic episodes and the marvellous acting of Madame BERNHARDT. As a play, perhaps, it may be said that *La Tosca* does not rank particularly high in literary merit. The author has subserved a great many things to mere sensation, but it is sensation of the highest order, and is far removed in the cruelty and truth of its refinement from the realm of ordinary melodrama. That it is tragedy is unmistakable, but it is tragedy left to take care of itself by the sheer force of its own grip on the audience. You feel as if someone had rendered into modern dialogue a tragedy originally written in blank verse, though at the same time I think blank verse would have spoiled *La Tosca*. A large part of its strength as a play lies in its classical modernness, so to speak, for it has preserved in it all the vital classical elements without the stiltedness that takes the realism out of so many poetry plays, and SARDOU'S cleverness in welding together a succession of such terrible incidents is only equalled by the actress's ability to render them thoroughly naturally. Nor does she spare her audience the slightest pain or the slightest creep of the flesh. Neither author nor actress have any pity for weak nerves, and there is nothing for it but to remain chainbound to one's seat and to be harrowed. I saw the piece first without Madame BERNHARDT, and was horrified by it. Yesterday afternoon the whole thing took a new meaning, as most plays do when

Sara Bernhardt.

excellently acted, and I was more horrified still. The same dreadful tale, the same dialogue, the same scenes, the same ghastly picture of the torture, but in Madame BERNHARDT'S face and voice there was a different thralldom, as much difference as exists between reading an account of some awful tragedy, and being a chief actor in it. You seemed to live as you watched LA BERNHARDT in the inner life and feelings of *La Tosca*. There was no room for criticism. Every man Jack and every woman Jill in the audience existed for the time being, as *La Tosca*. The dead silence of the great mass of people speaks of itself for the intensity of feeling that the actress's powers evoked, for the horrors of the scenes which she rendered still more vivid and horrible by the exercise of her extraordinary talents, and for the skill of SARDOU in contriving a play that, with scarcely any literature about it, should hold the thoughtful and the thoughtless equally enthralled in the evolution of its chain of ghastly incidents. A remarkable thing about *La Tosca* is the extent to which the chief character embodies the entire interest of the piece. There is a fairly-long cast, but besides herself there are only two characters that have any hold on the mind. One is *Cavaradossi*, the painter-lover, and the other *Scarpia*, the Regent of Police, who is in the position of the heavy villain. These are both excellent parts with plenty to do and say to bring them into prominence, and does so, but it is a faint prominence compared to that of *La Tosca*. Everything fades before the fascination that surrounds the heroine, though no doubt the excellent acting of Messieurs LA ROCHE and DARMONT respectively as *Cavaradossi* and *Scarpia* lends much tributary aid to the magnificent effects of Madame BERNHARDT. The quiet, resigned fortitude of M. LA ROCHE before and after his torture was as powerful a piece of acting as you can hope for, and yet the effect produced cannot be said to be derived from what is known as subdued force. It was the audience that was subdued, not the actor, though this end was achieved by sheer power of personality.

dramatic action. M. DARMONT, as the villainous *Scarpia*, presented a most telling picture of the cruel regent, who, while capable of making a diabolical bargain with *La Tosca*, is equally capable of breaking it. Both these gentlemen shared legitimately with Madame BERNHARDT the honours of the afternoon. Of Madame herself it is impossible to speak too highly. Certainly in modern times we have had no actresses who could come within range of her powers, particularly perhaps in the portrayal of the horrors of tragedy, and without witnessing it for themselves none can have any idea to what a pitch of intense nervous excitement she exalts them, all the more, perhaps, because of the quick transitions from gentleness and love to wolfish ferocity which the part of *La Tosca* occasions.

The Queen.

Those who would see Mme. Sarah Bernhardt at her best should hasten to Daly's Theatre during her present season. Never has the great actress played with more splendid abandonment of passion, more complete command of her magnificent resources. Her Marguerite Gautier—to which she has added many subtle and beautiful touches, especially in the death scene—necessarily suggests comparisons with the wonderful performance of her famous Italian rival; but those who have studied both impersonations will probably arrive at the conclusion that comparison in this case is more than usually futile. Each rendering is perfect in its way, but the ways are so entirely different that one can only express a personal preference for one or the other, without attempting to maintain with justice the absolute superiority of either. Mme. Bernhardt has also been seen in her familiar but unfailingly thrilling melodramatic creation in "*La Tosca*," and in the stately and ponderous tragedy of Racine's "*Phédre*," in which, likewise, her performance is well known to her London admirers. This week she has appeared in "*Les Rois*," a drama which is new to English playgoers, and to which further reference will be made in our next issue.

"The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." in "The Sunday Chronicle"

If it were true, as some aver, that we owe Pinero's *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* to the influence of Ibsen—which I don't for a moment believe—then the Norwegian Shakespeare had not lived altogether in vain. The English dramatist attacks a problem of social life with the keenness of the vivisector and the minuteness of the analyst. That the result is saddening is due to the preconceived conditions. I do not venture to argue that Pinero is wrong in his conclusions. Psychological reasoning oft-times leads us in strange directions, and here as in so many dramas dealing with the workings of the inner-consciousness, the author has no better ultimatum to offer than despair and death. All the same, his work is instinct with vigorous virility.

May I recall to your minds somewhat of the story of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*? Aubrey Tanqueray is a widower in the prime of life—the "dangerous forties." His first wife, in the words of Cayley Drumble, man of the world and mutual friend, was a woman "all cold, white arms, and black velvet;" soulless, unimpassioned, repellent. But even under these unsympathetic conditions she managed to bear him a daughter, who is now verging upon womanhood. Eilean—Saint Eilean they call her, for she inherits all her mother's ostentatious purity, though later events prove that the warmer strain of her father's blood is not lacking—Eilean is away at a convent school, and Aubrey Tanqueray, being hump-some and lonely, falls in love with Paula, a woman of many attachments but no settlement. She had "kept house" for men, and the men had kept her. Now she aspires to respectability, as represented by Aubrey, and marriage.

Aubrey is in no sense green. He knows something of the senny past of his beautiful captivator, and he is ready to essay the task of bringing her into the fold of Society. But he knows not what a stubborn windmill he goes a-titling at. On the eve of their wedding Paula brings to him a written catalogue of all her misdoings. He burns the damning record, and tells her to blot out the past. The same night Eilean writes announcing her renunciation of conventual seclusion and speedy return to her father's side. This portends trouble for the young step-mother. St. Eilean has no place in her heart for Paula; she knows instinctively that she's been a wrong 'un, shudders at her approach, and rejects all friendly advances.

Paula gets hipped and loved. Her acquaintance with the neighbouring gentry is confined to a view of their roofs and chimney tops. The Tanquerays are cut, and Paula yearns for London, the Mediterranean, and Algeria. Aubrey's hair begins to whiten under the worry. At last comes Mrs. Cortelyou, an intimate of the first wife's, to carry Eilean off on a trip to Paris. Paula, ever erratic, sensitive, highly-strung, and intensely jealous, conceives that this is because she is not deemed a fit guardian for the girl. In revenge she despatches an invitation to an old friend of the disreputable days, who has since captured the rapid drunkard Sir George Orreyed, in marriage. This brings about the first open rupture with Aubrey, and for some days "they never pass as they speak by," or words to that effect.

Now we are hurrying forward to the climax. St. Eilean returns from Paris in love, followed quickly by the ardent swain, one Captain Ardale, who has been performing prodigies of valour up country in India. Ardale has been wild in the past, but Eilean covers over his misdeeds with the cloak of bravery, and then—Ardale and Paula meet. They have met before. They had even been as other men and women who neglect to purchase a licence to love.

There is no way out. Ardale hurriedly departs from Paris; Eilean is heartbroken; Aubrey's cup of misery overflows; and Paula—well, she commits suicide.

This a terrible lesson, my sisters. A stern, inexorable, pitiless judgment on the fallen. Once lovely woman stoops to folly, and her fate is sealed beyond recall, and in her downfall the innocent suffer.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell, for the three hours of the play, literally *lives* the part of Paula. She is Paula. Ardent, passionate, her whole nature has been warped by early associations. She sees glimmerings of the light; she has aspirations for

Season of 1894.

March 1895.

Vol. I. No. I.

"The Englishwoman"

SOME FAMOUS STAGE LOVERS

No. 1.—MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER AT HOME.

By THE BARONESS VON ZEDLITZ.

"FAR from the busy haunts of men," might be fitly applied to Park Row, so quiet and secluded is the little house occupied therein by George Alexander and his charming wife.

It is a bewildering spot to reach, but when once you have entered the hospitable doors of the popular manager-actor, you are charmed with the beauty yet simplicity of your surroundings. The reception

Angora cat arrayed in a complete suit of long silky fur, calmly took possession of my lap, purring loudly in approval of my general demeanour and attitude towards him. Pussy acted the part of host admirably, until his master and mistress joined me, when I learnt that this really magnificent specimen of a pure-bred Angora is the latest addition to the household.

The windows of the Alexanders' house give straight on to Rotten Row. With its wealth of artistic equipment, its profusion of interesting books, pictures and photographic portraits, and its lavish supply of sweet-scented flowers, it is indeed a pleasant spot wherein to "fritter away the time," for, as my genial host informed me with no little pride, Mrs. Alexander has brought much excellent good taste to her husband's assistance, in the arranging and decorating of their dwelling.

Mr. George Alexander, whose real name is George Alexander Gibb Samson, has risen rapidly to the conspicuously first class position among managers, which he now holds, by dint of his persistent and unflagging energy, which taught him in the early struggling days to take courage by both hands with a firm grip, and to keep his eye steadfastly fixed upon the beacon of success which blinked encouragingly at him from afar through a hazy mist of disappointments.

"I always hankered after the stage," he told me, "and at the time when my father expressed himself keenly desirous that I should go into business in London, I felt more than ever that I was bound to become an actor. In those



From Photo by [A. Ellis, Upper Baker Street.] MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER.

accorded to me on the occasion of my visit to No. 6, Park Row, for the purpose of obtaining this interview, was a very delightful and original one. I had hardly entered the drawing-room, when a huge black

days I was not possessed of any business-like capacity, and the thought of an artistic life in the future, appealed more immediately than anything else to my sympathies.

"A very dear and good friend, Mrs., afterwards Lady, Freake, was really instrumental in bringing about the—to me—momentous decision of adopting the stage as a profession. I had become an enthusiastic member of amateur actor-companies, and had, for two years or more, played in this wise, when, one evening, a performance of *The Critic*, arranged and organized by Mrs. Freake at Cromwell House, settled the matter after my own heart's desire."

"Where did you make your first public appearance, Mr. Alexander?" I asked, while we lingered pleasantly at the luncheon-table, my host, his charming wife, and I; a merry trio, I assure you.

"At Nottingham," said he, while visions of stage fright, nerves, cold, clammy hands, and loss of speech caused him to smile pensively; "but those were anxious, fretful days for me, until at last I felt the ground under my feet."

"We have an old and very interesting photo of you, as 'Caleb Deecie,' taken in a group with Mr. Irving, in '*The Two Roses*,'" I remarked. "I think that was the part in which you made your first appearance at the Lyceum?"

"Yes, in 1881, and to this day it numbers among my favourite rôles."

"I worked under Mr. Irving's able management from 1881 till 1888, during which time I played Laertes, Bassanio, Christian, Ulric (in '*Werner*'), Nemours, Squire Thornhill, Don Pedro, Courriol, Claudio, Orsino, and others, nearly all of which characters I played again, later on, during our two American tours."

"After my return from America to the Lyceum in December, 1885, with Mr. Irving's company, I appeared as Valentine in the first production of *Faust*, afterwards succeeding Mr. H. B. Conway in the more important part of *Faust*, a rôle I was exceedingly fond of at the time."

It will be remembered how favourable was the reception given to Mr. Alexander

in the States, especially on his second visit to America, which shows that his much-improved and matured style was not only appreciated, but even hailed with enthusiasm by our cousins "on the other side."

Mr. Alexander shares the opinion with



From Photo by]

[A. Ellis, Upper Baker Street.

MRS. ALEXANDER.

many of his confrères who have been to the United States, that America is the land of to-day, the country of the future, and that its theatres are magnificent.

"For the study of my art," continued the popular actor, "there could not have been a more excellent school than the Lyceum as far as the advancement of discipline, consciousness, and experience are concerned; in his capacity as manager, artist and friend, all who, like myself, have worked with him, can only speak of Henry Irving with deep affection and gratitude."

"When did you first undertake the management of a theatre?" I asked presently.

"In February, 1890, I opened the Avenue Theatre with *Dr. Bill*, which absurdity, you perhaps remember, had a great success."

When the Avenue Theatre lease expired, Mr. Alexander, somewhat riskily, people thought, entered upon an agreement to take



From Photo by]

[Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street.

VIEW OF BACK DRAWING-ROOM IN MR. G. ALEXANDER'S HOUSE.



From Photo by]

[Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street.

SIDE VIEW OF DRAWING-ROOM IN MR. G. ALEXANDER'S HOUSE.

over the St. James's Theatre, which at that time had achieved the reputation of being an unlucky house.

Here Mr. Alexander's admirable tact and managerial faculties soon turned a consecutive run of bad luck into a succession of successful productions, for "*Lady Windermere's Fan*," followed by that delightful and sublimely-acted domestic idyll, "*Liberty Hall*," then "*The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*," and later, "*The Masqueraders*," have proved for themselves that the actor-

which fails to interest you, is this: In the case of a book, why, you simply put it down if you don't like it, and pick up another one more suited to your taste and mind; but if you go to the theatre and cannot follow the play with interest or pleasure, you feel that you are morally bound to 'see it through,' notwithstanding, and of course you are thoroughly dissatisfied with everything and everybody. I was sorry that '*Guy Domville*' failed to give satisfaction, but there can be no doubt that the public is right, and that I am wrong.



From Photo by

MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER'S STUDY. [Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street.]

manager has always considered the public and its requirements above all things.

When asking him his opinion of his audiences, Mr. Alexander spoke with his usual characteristic good feeling and sound judgment.

"There is nothing half-hearted in their appreciation," he said, "they either like or dislike, and convey their opinion to the stage without hesitation.

"The difference between reading a book which bores you, or going to see a play

"It is a poetic little play, and one which took us a long time to prepare; however, we have another new piece in rehearsal now, by Oscar Wilde, which I hope will meet with undivided approbation."

Hereupon Mr. Alexander read me one or two scenes which, I have every confidence in predicting, will elicit many a hearty smile. Although I may not speak largely on the subject, one scene took my fancy greatly. Of course the whole play is Oscar *Wild-ish* to the core, and contains a con-

glomeration of topsy-turveys *mêlée* with many startling truisms. Illustrative of one of the huge jokes Mr. Oscar Wilde launches forth, the heroine's mamma, a wide-awake match-making dame, enters the room morally responsible for so much; there are so many to think about, and then the *public*, which is all important, is never out of one's mind!"

I smiled at Mr. Alexander's serious mien,



From Photo by

PART OF DRAWING ROOM IN MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER'S HOUSE. [Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street.]

in which her daughter is being proposed to by a young gentleman who is kneeling at her feet in an attitude of adoration. The daughter seeing her mother, says in a lofty tone:

"Mamma, please leave the room, this is no place for you. Besides, Mr. So-and-so hasn't finished yet."

Mr. Alexander is one of the busiest workers I know, ever bearing in mind the fact that he has several hundred people in his employ, all of whom must be considered and managed for.

"People often ask me what I do with my time," said my host, "and although I never seem to have leisure to go about and see my friends, I am always wishing that the days were twice as long, so that I might do more than I do. A manager's life is not a happy one; at least, not a peaceful one! One is

and yet, I felt that he was right. From his point of view it must indeed be a trying ordeal to be in the position of purveyor and organizer to a critical and exacting audience; but Mr. Alexander occupies a large corner in the hearts of the English people, his frank, courteous manner having endeared him to all who have been privileged to meet him on this side of the footlights, and his life and labour are alike conscientious, persevering and replete with energy.

It is unnecessary to describe the young actor-manager's appearance, for there are few houses inhabited by the gentler sex in which you will not find his portrait occupying a conspicuous place of honour.

His voice, one of his greatest charms, is soft and soothing to the ear, convincing one that he speaks from his heart, and

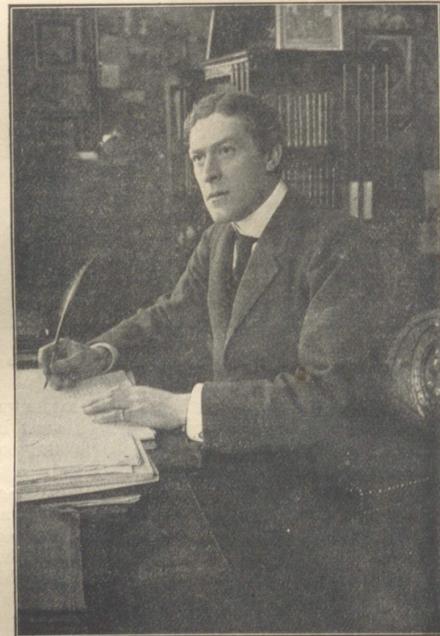
that he is continually impressed by the steadfast resolve of never uttering a hurtful word to anyone.

An over-estimated "I" never escapes his lips; on the contrary, the subject of himself appears to be distasteful to him; but on the matter of a generous word or comment regarding a fellow artist, he is the first to speak eloquently.

But if you really want to know all George Alexander's merits and good qualities, his tender-heartedness and his many little acts of kindness to poor and struggling fellow-actors, you must ask his

wife, for instance, whose face will light up with genuine pleasure at the welcome mention of his name.

From her lips you will gather that although you perchance admire the actor, whose impersonations are so truly and strikingly rendered on the stage, there yet remains a vast amount of sterling excellence hidden in the inner man, of which you only hear from those whose daily contact with him have given them every opportunity of studying and appreciating his many admirable attributes.



From Photo by [A. Ellis, Upper Baker Street].  
MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER.

## "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray"

higher things, but she is pitilessly thrown back upon herself. There is no way out of her prison-house. Like a caged bird she can but beat her wings hopelessly against the bars until she falls—dead.

The stage as a teacher! No Bishop could preach such a sermon, though the doctrine be of Spartan simplicity.

George Alexander, with characteristic self-abnegation, willingly sinks himself in order that the central character may stand out in bold relief. Of all our actor-managers Mr. Alexander is perhaps the least self-assertive, the least ambitious to "star." All the same, after we have once negotiated the fence presented by a man of Aubrey's character and antecedents entering into an alliance with an ex-harlot, we recognise to the full the power and the dignity and the self-sacrifice of his conception of the part.

Maudie Millett as the saintly Elean, Miss Granville as the very proper Mrs. Cortelyon, Edith Chester as the once very improper and always vulgar Lady Orreyed, and H. H. Vincent as the philosopher of Mammon, are the most striking members of a cast which could scarcely be improved upon.

The costumes are a revelation of feminine fashion, and the mounting of the play exquisite. Alwyn Lewis informed me that Manchester is the first city to witness the full completeness of the St. James's *mise-en-scène*.

Herewith I present you with Pat's presentment of Paula. Mrs. Campbell says the critics

have misunderstood her—that is Paula. She is all the time yearning to lead a better life, and she suffers in direct proportion to the good that is in her. Mrs. Campbell is our latest—I was nearly saying our greatest—emotional actress. Clement Scott has been credited with "discovering" her, but she owes the Holy Clement nothing in this connection. It may be the Italian strain in her blood, or it may be—but what is George Alexander himself reported to have

said on one occasion?—"The audience, as a rule, judges the actor by the part he plays, and that is why I say it is frequently wrong for the actor to be praised at the expense of the author. An actor really only speaks that which is set down for him, and the author who supplies the lines he has to speak should often receive more praise than is given to him." Substitute the feminine gender, and then Pinero can share the glory.

After the banquet the dessert. After Mrs. Tanqueray, Liberty Hall. This is the box of bonbons we give to the girls whilst we of sterner stuff linger over the liqueurs and cigars. It is not my fault that I have passed beyond the "bon-bon" stage. All the same I am glad that George Alexander gave us Carton's play. Otherwise we should not have had an opportunity of seeing that delightful comedian, Edward Righton, and that charming actress, Marion Terry. Liberty Hall is a pretty play of the bread-and-butter school, and—dash it all, I can't help it if my palate demands caviare. The chivalrous heir who disguises himself as a shop-assistant in order to act the part of guardian angel over the impoverished daughters of a deceased knight; the haughty lady who treats the courteous heir-at-law with scornery; the benevolent old uncle in 'umble life; and the blustering, bullying creditor who demands the 'and and 'art of the beautiful fair as his pound of flesh are all familiar as household words. And talking of household words reminds me that there is a good deal of the Dickensian flavour in Carton's work, with just an added suspicion of T. W. Robertson. Liberty Hall is a charming retreat, far, far away from the stress and turmoil of the "new drama," but—

## George Alexander in "The Sunday Chronicle"

The Lilley has much to answer for. It all but deprived Manchester of the appearance of George Alexander on Monday night. Dear old dirty Dublin, and—dysentery!

However, the artist triumphed over the man on the stage, and towards the end of the week salubrious Cottonopolis conquered. It was the breakfast hour at the Grand Hotel, and blithe and winsome Mrs. Alexander, rejoicing in the gleamy sunshine, departed for a constitutional, leaving Aubrey Tanqueray to the tender mercies of the early intruder.

For once I was hoist with my own petard. There was no time to introduce the harmless necessary interrogatory, "What excuse have you for inflicting your presence upon an unoffending stage?" for Alexander carried the war forthwith into the enemy's country. "By the way," said he, "have you read Clement Scott's article in the 'North American Review'?" No. Well, he says his rule is "that everything may be discussed in public on the stage that is discussed at any liberal dinner-table in good society." That implies, of course, that nothing else should be discussed on the stage. What do you think about that?"

I confessed that I thought the Holy Clement was making a very sweeping assertion to give weight to a general principle. "But you know," persists Alexander, "that the stage has not confined itself in the past to dinner-table topics. If so any representation of *Measure for Measure* would be impossible; and so would the scene between Lady Teazle and Joseph Surface, to take only two instances. My conviction is that the coming tendency of the drama in England is to show people as they really are; not merely as they ought to be. We shall have a wider scope. The realities of life will be represented in their true colours. Pinero has had the courage to set the example.

"Mind, I am no libsonite; I do not believe in the exhibition of loathsome bodily disease on the stage. And as for Ibsen suggesting *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, that is all nonsense. Mr. Pinero had already taken a departure on the lines of the new drama in *The Profligate*. Yes, I know that was a failure in Manchester. That makes me the more pleased that he is better understood here now."

"Don't you think perhaps that *The Profligate* was a little in advance of provincial education in things dramatic?" "Possibly. But at any rate the people are showing that they can appreciate the author now. I know that in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* I have to sacrifice myself, as far as personal vanity is concerned. Mine is a task of repression all through. I have been accused of over-repression. You yourself suggest that more warmth might be infused into the part. But read it carefully; take it line by line, and see if anywhere you find the slightest justification for a display of passion on the part of Aubrey.

"As to the actor-manager sinking himself. Well, no manager can succeed by producing plays the only merit of which is that he is starred. I do not say that I would not like the opportunity to create something great; but I am a commercial man as well as an actor. And, moreover, I detest a special flood of limelight, and I think the public are beginning to dislike it too."

"But to return to the tendency of modern drama. I am convinced that the English stage is in a very active and vigorous state. We are passing through a period of transition from the old to the new."

"With the result," I venture to interject, "that we shall be flooded with much that is horrible and demoralising by unscrupulous dealers in morbid literary filth presented in the guise of psychological studies."



PAT  
GEORGE ALEXANDER.

# Sara Bernhardt.

excellently acted, and I was more horrified still. The same dreadful tale, the same dialogue, the same scenes, the same ghastly picture of the torture, but in Madame BERNHARDT's face and voice there was a different thralldom, as much difference as exists between reading an account of some awful tragedy, and being a chief actor in it. You seemed to live as you watched LA BERNHARDT in the inner life and feelings of *La Tosca*. There was no room for criticism. Every man Jack and every woman Jill in the audience existed for the time being as *La Tosca*. The dead silence of the great mass of people speaks of itself for the intensity of feeling that the actress's powers evoked, for the horrors of the scenes which she rendered still more vivid and horrible by the exercise of her extraordinary talents, and for the skill of SARDOU in contriving a play that, with scarcely any literature about it, should hold the thoughtful and the thoughtless equally enthralled in the evolvment of its chain of ghastly incidents. A remarkable thing about *La Tosca* is the extent to which the chief character embodies the entire interest of the piece. There is a fairly-long cast, but besides herself there are only two characters that have any hold on the mind. One is *Cavaradossi*, the painter-lover, and the other *Scarpia*, the Regent of Police, who is in the position of the heavy villain. These are both excellent parts with plenty to do and say to bring them into prominence, and does so, but it is a faint prominence compared to that of *La Tosca*. Everything fades before the fascination that surrounds the heroine, though no doubt the excellent acting of Messieurs LA ROCHE and DARMONT respectively as *Cavaradossi* and *Scarpia* lends much tributary aid to the magnificent effects of Madame BERNHARDT. The quiet, resigned fortitude of M. LA ROCHE before and after his torture was as powerful a piece of acting as you can hope for, and yet the effect produced cannot be said to be derived from what is known as subdued force. It was the audience that was subdued, not the actor, though this end was achieved by sheer power of personality rather

dramatic action. M. DARMONT, as the villainous *Scarpia*, presented a most telling picture of the cruel regent, who, while capable of making a diabolical bargain with *La Tosca*, is equally capable of breaking it. Both these gentlemen shared legitimately with Madame BERNHARDT the honours of the afternoon. Of Madame herself it is impossible to speak too highly. Certainly in modern times we have had no actresses who could come within range of her powers, particularly perhaps in the portrayal of the horrors of tragedy, and without witnessing it for themselves none can have any idea to what a pitch of intense nervous excitement she exalts them, all the more, perhaps, because of the quick transitions from gentleness and love to wolfish ferocity which the part of the villainous

# The Queen.

Those who would see Mme. Sarah Bernhardt at her best should hasten to Daly's Theatre during her present season. Never has the great actress played with more splendid abandonment of passion, more complete command of her magnificent resources. Her Marguerite Gautier—to which she has added many subtle and beautiful touches, especially in the death scene—necessarily suggests comparisons with the wonderful performance of her famous Italian rival; but those who have studied both impersonations will probably arrive at the conclusion that comparison in this case is more than usually futile. Each rendering is perfect in its way, but the ways are so entirely different that one can only express a personal preference for one or the other, without attempting to maintain with justice the absolute superiority of either. Mme. Bernhardt has also been seen in her familiar but unfailingly thrilling melodramatic creation in "La Tosca," and in the stately and ponderous tragedy of Racine's "Phédre," in which, likewise, her performance is well known to her London admirers. This week she has appeared in "Les Rois," a drama which is new to English playgoers, and to which further reference will be made in our next issue.

Season 57

1894.

"The Second Mrs. Tanqueray.  
in "The Sunday Chronicle"

\* \* \*  
If it were true, as some aver, that we owe Pinero's *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* to the influence of Ibsen—which I don't for a moment believe—then the Norwegian Shakespeare had not lived altogether in vain. The English dramatist attacks a problem of social life with the keenness of the vivisector and the minuteness of the analyst. That the result is saddening is due to the preconceived conditions. I do not venture to argue that Pinero is wrong in his conclusions. Psychological reasoning oft-times leads us in strange directions, and here as in so many dramas dealing with the workings of the inner consciousness, the author has no better ultimatum to offer than despair and death. All the same, his work is instinct with vigorous virility.

\* \* \*  
May I recall to your minds somewhat of the story of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*? Aubrey Tanqueray is a widower in the prime of life—the "dangerous forties." His first wife, in the words of Cayley Drumdle, man of the world and mutual friend, was a woman "all cold, white arms, and black velvet;" soulless, unimpassioned, repellent. But even under these unsympathetic conditions she managed to bear him a daughter, who is now verging upon womanhood. Eilean—Saint Eilean they call her, for she inherits all her mother's ostentatious purity, though later events prove that the warmer strain of her father's blood is not lacking—Eilean is away at a convent school, and Aubrey Tanqueray, being humpshome and lonely, falls in love with Paula, a woman of many attachments but no settlement. She had "kept house" for men, and the men had kept her. Now she aspires to respectability, as represented by Aubrey, and marriage.

\* \* \*  
Aubrey is in no sense green. He knows something of the seamy past of his beautiful captivator, and he is ready to essay the task of bringing her into the fold of Society. But he knows not what a stubborn windmill he goes a-tilting at. On the eve of their wedding Paula brings to him a written catalogue of all her misdoings. He burns the damning record, and tells her to blot out the past. The same night Eilean writes announcing her renunciation of conventual seclusion and speedy return to her father's side. This portends trouble for the young step-mother. St. Eilean has no place in her heart for Paula; she knows instinctively that she's been a wrong 'un, shudders at her approach, and rejects all friendly advances.

\* \* \*  
Paula gets hipped and bored. Her acquaintance with the neighbouring gentry is confined to a view of their roofs and chimney tops. The Tanquerays are out, and Paula years for London, the Mediterranean, and Algeria. Aubrey's hair begins to whiten under the worry. At last comes Mrs. Cortelyon, an intimate of the first wife's, to carry Eilean off on a trip to Paris. Paula, ever erratic, sensitive, highly-strung, and intensely jealous, conceives that this is because she is not deemed a fit guardian for the girl. In revenge she despatches an invitation to an old friend of the disreputable days, who has since captured the vapid drunkard, Sir George Orreyed, in marriage. This brings about the first open rupture with Aubrey, and for some days "they never pass as they speak by," or words to that effect.

\* \* \*  
Now we are hurrying forward to the climax. St. Eilean returns from Paris in love, followed quickly by the ardent swain, one Captain Ardale, who has been performing prodigies of valour up country in India. Ardale has been wild in the past, but Eilean covers over his misdeeds with the cloak of bravery, and then—Ardale and Paula meet. They have met before. They had even been as other men and women who neglect to purchase a licence to love.

There is no way out. Ardale hurriedly departs from Paris; Eilean is heartbroken; Aubrey's cup of misery overflows; and Paula—well, she commits suicide.

'Tis a terrible lesson, my sisters. A stern, inexorable, pitiless judgment on the fallen. Once lovely woman stoops to folly, and her fate is sealed beyond recall, and in her downfall the innocent suffer.

\* \* \*  
Mrs. Patrick Campbell, for the three hours of the play, literally *lives* the part of Paula. She is Paula. Her nature has been warped by early associations. She sees glimmerings of the light; she has aspirations for

March 1895.

Vol. I. No. I.

"The Englishwoman".

SOME FAMOUS STAGE LOVERS

No. 1.—MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER AT HOME.

By THE BARONESS VON ZEDLITZ.

"FAR from the busy haunts of men," might be fitly applied to Park Row, so quiet and secluded is the little house occupied therein by George Alexander and his charming wife.

It is a bewildering spot to reach, but when once you have entered the hospitable doors of the popular manager-actor, you are charmed with the beauty yet simplicity of your surroundings. The reception

Angora cat arrayed in a complete suit of long silky fur, calmly took possession of my lap, purring loudly in approval of my general demeanour and attitude towards him. Pussy acted the part of host admirably, until his master and mistress joined me, when I learnt that this really magnificent specimen of a pure-bred Angora is the latest addition to the household.

The windows of the Alexanders' house give straight on to Rotten Row. With its wealth of artistic equipment, its profusion of interesting books, pictures and photographic portraits, and its lavish supply of sweet-scented flowers, it is indeed a pleasant spot wherein to "fritter away the time," for, as my genial host informed me with no little pride, Mrs. Alexander has brought much excellent good taste to her husband's assistance, in the arranging and decorating of their dwelling.

Mr. George Alexander, whose real name is George Alexander Gibb Samson, has risen rapidly to the conspicuously first class position among managers, which he now holds, by dint of his persistent and unflagging energy, which taught him in the early struggling days to take courage by both hands with a firm grip, and to keep his eye steadfastly fixed upon the beacon of success which blinked encouragingly at him from afar through a hazy mist of disappointments.

"I always hankered after the stage," he told me, "and at the time when my father expressed himself keenly desirous that I should go into business in London, I felt more than ever that I was bound to become an actor. In those



From Photo by]

[A. Ellis, Upper Baker Street.

MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER.

accorded to me on the occasion of my visit to No. 6, Park Row, for the purpose of obtaining this interview, was a very delightful and original one. I had hardly entered the drawing-room, when a huge black

days I was not possessed of any business-like capacity, and the thought of an artistic life in the future, appealed more immediately than anything else to my sympathies.

"A very dear and good friend, Mrs., afterwards Lady, Freake, was really instrumental in bringing about the—to me—momentous decision of adopting the stage as a profession. I had become an enthusiastic member of amateur actor-companies, and had, for two years or more, played in this wise, when, one evening, a performance of *The Critic*, arranged and organized by Mrs. Freake at Cromwell House, settled the matter after my own heart's desire."

"Where did you make your first public appearance, Mr. Alexander?" I asked, while we lingered pleasantly at the luncheon-table, my host, his charming wife, and I; a merry trio, I assure you.

"At Nottingham," said he, while visions of stage fright, nerves, cold, clammy hands, and loss of speech caused him to smile pensively; "but those were anxious, fretful days for me, until at last I felt the ground under my feet."

"We have an old and very interesting photo of you, as 'Caleb Deecie,' taken in a group with Mr. Irving, in *The Two Roses*," I remarked. "I think that was the part in which you made your first appearance at the Lyceum?"

"Yes, in 1881, and to this day it numbers among my favourite rôles."

"I worked under Mr. Irving's able management from 1881 till 1888, during which time I played Laertes, Bassanio, Christian, Ulric (in *Werner*), Nemours, Squire Thornhill, Don Pedro, Courriol, Claudio, Orsino, and others, nearly all of which characters I played again, later on, during our two American tours."

"After my return from America to the Lyceum in December, 1885, with Mr. Irving's company, I appeared as Valentine in the first production of *Faust*, afterwards succeeding Mr. H. B. Conway in the more important part of *Faust*, a rôle I was exceedingly fond of at the time."

It will be remembered how favourable was the reception given to Mr. Alexander

in the States, especially on his second visit to America, which shows that his much-improved and matured style was not only appreciated, but even hailed with enthusiasm by our cousins "on the other side."

Mr. Alexander shares the opinion with



From Photo by]

[A. Ellis, Upper Baker Street.

MRS. ALEXANDER.

many of his confrères who have been to the United States, that America is the land of to-day, the country of the future, and that its theatres are magnificent.

"For the study of my art," continued the popular actor, "there could not have been a more excellent school than the Lyceum as far as the advancement of discipline, consciousness, and experience are concerned; in his capacity as manager, artist and friend, all who, like myself, have worked with him, can only speak of Henry Irving with deep affection and gratitude."

"When did you first undertake the management of a theatre?" I asked presently.

"In February, 1890, I opened the Avenue Theatre with *Dr. Bill*, which absurdity, you perhaps remember, had a great success."

When the Avenue Theatre lease expired, Mr. Alexander, somewhat riskily, people thought, entered upon an agreement to take



From Photo by]

[Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street. VIEW OF BACK DRAWING-ROOM IN MR. G. ALEXANDER'S HOUSE.



From Photo by]

[Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street. SIDE VIEW OF DRAWING-ROOM IN MR. G. ALEXANDER'S HOUSE.

over the St. James's Theatre, which at that time had achieved the reputation of being an unlucky house.

Here Mr. Alexander's admirable tact and managerial faculties soon turned a consecutive run of bad luck into a succession of successful productions, for "*Lady Windermere's Fan*," followed by that delightful and sublimely-acted domestic idyll, "*Liberty Hall*," then "*The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*," and later, "*The Masqueraders*," have proved for themselves that the actor-

which fails to interest you, is this: In the case of a book, why, you simply put it down if you don't like it, and pick up another one more suited to your taste and mind; but if you go to the theatre and cannot follow the play with interest or pleasure, you feel that you are morally bound to 'see it through,' notwithstanding, and of course you are thoroughly dissatisfied with everything and everybody. I was sorry that '*Guy Domville*' failed to give satisfaction, but there can be no doubt that the public is right, and that I am wrong.



From Photo by]

[Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street.  
MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER'S STUDY.

manager has always considered the public and its requirements above all things.

When asking him his opinion of his audiences, Mr. Alexander spoke with his usual characteristic good feeling and sound judgment.

"There is nothing half-hearted in their appreciation," he said, "they either like or dislike, and convey their opinion to the stage without hesitation.

"The difference between reading a book which bores you, or going to see a play

"It is a poetic little play, and one which took us a long time to prepare; however, we have another new piece in rehearsal now, by Oscar Wilde, which I hope will meet with undivided approbation."

Hereupon Mr. Alexander read me one or two scenes which, I have every confidence in predicting, will elicit many a hearty smile. Although I may not speak largely on the subject, one scene took my fancy greatly. Of course the whole play is Oscar *Wild-ish* to the core, and contains a con-

glomeration of topsy-turveysisms *mêlée* with many startling truisms. Illustrative of one of the huge jokes Mr. Oscar Wilde launches forth, the heroine's mamma, a wide-awake match-making dame, enters the room

morally responsible for so much; there are so many to think about, and then the *public*, which is all important, is never out of one's mind!"

I smiled at Mr. Alexander's serious mien,



From Photo by]

[Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street.  
PART OF DRAWING ROOM IN MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER'S HOUSE.

in which her daughter is being proposed to by a young gentleman who is kneeling at her feet in an attitude of adoration. The daughter seeing her mother, says in a lofty tone:

"Mamma, please leave the room, this is no place for you. Besides, Mr. So-and-so hasn't finished yet."

Mr. Alexander is one of the busiest workers I know, ever bearing in mind the fact that he has several hundred people in his employ, all of whom must be considered and managed for.

"People often ask me what I do with my time," said my host, "and although I never seem to have leisure to go about and see my friends, I am always wishing that the days were twice as long, so that I might do more than I do. A manager's life is not a happy one; at least, not a peaceful one! One is

and yet, I felt that he was right. From his point of view it must indeed be a trying ordeal to be in the position of purveyor and organizer to a critical and exacting audience; but Mr. Alexander occupies a large corner in the hearts of the English people, his frank, courteous manner having endeared him to all who have been privileged to meet him on this side of the footlights, and his life and labour are alike conscientious, persevering and replete with energy.

It is unnecessary to describe the young actor-manager's appearance, for there are few houses inhabited by the gentler sex in which you will not find his portrait occupying a conspicuous place of honour.

His voice, one of his greatest charms, is soft and soothing to the ear, convincing one that he speaks from his heart, and

that he is continually impressed by the steadfast resolve of never uttering a hurtful word to anyone.

An over-estimated "I" never escapes his lips; on the contrary, the subject of himself appears to be distasteful to him; but on the matter of a generous word or comment regarding a fellow artist, he is the first to speak eloquently.

But if you really want to know all George Alexander's merits and good qualities, his tender-heartedness and his many little acts of kindness to poor and struggling fellow-actors, you must ask his

wife, for instance, whose face will light up with genuine pleasure at the welcome mention of his name.

From her lips you will gather that although you perchance admire the *actor*, whose impersonations are so truly and strikingly rendered on the stage, there yet remains a vast amount of sterling excellence hidden in the inner *man*, of which you only hear from those whose daily contact with him have given them every opportunity of studying and appreciating his many admirable attributes.



*From Photo by]*

*[A. Ellis, Upper Baker Street.*

MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER.

# "The Second Mr. Tanqueray"

higher things, but she is pitilessly thrown back upon herself. There is no way out of her prison-house. Like a caged bird she can but beat her wings hopelessly against the bars until she falls—dead.

The stage as a teacher! No Bishop could preach such a sermon, though the doctrine be of Spartan simplicity.

\* \* \*

George Alexander, with characteristic self-abnegation, willingly sinks himself in order that the central character may stand out in bold relief. Of all our actor-managers Mr. Alexander is perhaps the least self-assertive, the least ambitious to "star." All the same, after we have once negotiated the fence presented by a man of Aubrey's character and antecedents entering into an alliance with an ex-harlot, we recognise to the full the power and the dignity and the self-sacrifice of his conception of the part.

Maud Millett as the saintly Ellean, Miss Granville as the very proper Mrs. Cortelyon, Edith Chester as the once very improper and always vulgar Lady Orreyed, and H. H. Vincent as the philosopher of Mammon, are the most striking members of a cast which could scarcely be improved upon.

The costumes are a revelation of feminine fashion, and the mounting of the play exquisite. Alwyn Lewis informed me that Manchester is the first city to witness the full completeness of the St. James's *mise-en-scene*.

\* \* \*

Herewith I present you with Pat's presentment of Paula. Mrs. Campbell says the critics



have misunderstood her—that is Paula. She is all the time yearning to lead a better life; and she suffers in direct proportion to the good that is in her. Mrs. Campbell is our latest—I was nearly saying our greatest—emotional actress. Clement Scott has been credited with "discovering" her, but she owes the Holy Clement nothing in this connection. It may be the Italian strain in her blood, or it may be—but what is George Alexander himself reported to have

MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL.

said on one occasion?—"The audience, as a rule, judges the actor by the part he plays, and that is why I say it is frequently wrong for the actor to be praised at the expense of the author. An actor really only speaks that which is set down for him, and the author who supplies the lines he has to speak should often receive more praise than is given to him." Substitute the feminine gender, and then Pinero can share the glory.

\* \* \*

After the banquet the dessert. After Mrs. Tanqueray, Liberty Hall. This is the box of *bonbons* we give to the girls whilst we of sterner stuff linger over the liqueurs and cigars. It is not my fault that I have passed beyond the *bon-bon* stage. All the same I am glad that George Alexander gave us Carton's play. Otherwise we should not have had an opportunity of seeing that delightful comedian, Edward Righton, and that charming actress, Marion Terry. Liberty Hall is a pretty play of the bread-and-butter school, and—dash it all, I can't help it if my palate demands caviare. The chivalrous heir who disguises himself as a shop-assistant in order to act the part of guardian angel over the impoverished daughters of a deceased knight; the haughty lady who treats the courteous heir-at-law with scornery; the benevolent old uncle in 'umble life; and the blustering, bullying creditor who demands the 'and and 'art of the beautiful fair as his pound of flesh are all familiar as household words. And talking of household words reminds me that there is a good deal of the Dickensian flavour in Carton's work, with just an admixture of the *bon-bon* of Robertson. Liberty Hall is a charming retreat, far, far away from the stress and turmoil of the "new drama," but—

# George Alexander in "The Sunday Chronicle"

The Jiffey has much to answer for. It all but deprived Manchester of the appearance of George



GEORGE ALEXANDER.

Alexander on Monday night. Dear old dirty Dublin, and—dysentery! However, the artist triumphed over the man on the stage, and towards the end of the week salubrious Cottonopolis conquered.

It was the breakfast hour at the Grand Hotel, and blithe and winsome Mrs. Alexander, rejoicing in the gleamy sunshine, departed for a constitutional, leaving Aubrey Tanqueray to the tender mercies of the early intruder.

For once I was hoist with my own petard. There was no time to introduce the harmless neces-

sary interrogatory, "What excuse have you for inflicting your presence upon an unoffending stage?" for Alexander carried the war forthwith into the enemy's country. "By the way," said he, "have you read Clement Scott's article in the 'North American Review?' No. Well, he says his rule is 'that everything may be discussed in public on the stage that is discussed at any liberal dinner-table in good society.' That implies, of course, that nothing else should be discussed on the stage. What do you think about that?"

I confessed that I thought the Holy Clement was making a very sweeping assertion to give weight to a general principle.

"But you know," persists Alexander, "that the stage has not confined itself in the past to dinner-table topics. If so any representation of *Measure for Measure* would be impossible; and so would the scene between Lady Teazle and Joseph Surface, to take only two instances. My conviction is that the coming tendency of the drama in England is to show people as they really are: not merely as they ought to be. We shall have a wider scope. The realities of life will be represented in their true colours. Pinero has had the courage to set the example.

"Mind, I am no Ibsenite. I do not believe in the exhibition of loathsome bodily disease on the stage. And as for Ibsen suggesting *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, that is all nonsense. Mr. Pinero had already taken a departure on the lines of the new drama in *The Profligate*. Yes, I know that was a failure in Manchester. That makes me the more pleased that he is better understood here now."

"Don't you think perhaps that *The Profligate* was a little in advance of provincial education in things dramatic?"

"Possibly. But at any rate the people are showing that they can appreciate the author now. I know that in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* I have to sacrifice myself, as far as personal vanity is concerned. Mine is a task of repression all through. I have been accused of over-repression. You yourself suggest that more warmth might be infused into the part. But read it carefully; take it line by line, and see if anywhere you find the slightest justification for a display of passion on the part of Aubrey.

"As to the actor-manager sinking himself. Well, no manager can succeed by producing plays the only merit of which is that he is starred. I do not say that I would not like the opportunity to create something great; but I am a commercial man as well as an actor. And, moreover, I detest a special flood of limelight, and I think the public are beginning to dislike it too.

\* \* \*

"But to return to the tendency of modern drama. I am convinced that the English stage is in a very active and vigorous state. We are passing through a period of transition from the old to the new."

"With the result," I venture to interject, "that we shall be flooded with much that is horrible and demoralising by unscrupulous dealers in morbid literary studies."

George Alexander.

"Very likely. We are sure to have some bad plays, but they will soon be doomed. The man who writes a piece simply with the object of shocking public sentiment will not be tolerated. But I do believe we are advancing in our ideas of the mission of the theatre. As I said before, the realities of life are forcing themselves upon the dramatist, and the clever writer has an entirely new field opened out to him."

"And you think there is a paying public for pieces of this type, apart from the special attraction of a work of extraordinary genius, such as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*?"

"Yes, I do thoroughly. I do not believe in the doctrine of audiences for pieces. I am firmly of opinion that the people who go and laugh at *Charley's Aunt* to-night can be equally interested in Pinero's latest to-morrow."

"I suppose you have been inundated with correspondence on the subject?"

"Well, I have letters every day. Here's one from a Birmingham lady, whose young daughter wrote asking for my autograph. The mother says: 'May I say how thankful I feel that in that terrible new play you should have thrown the weight of your genius and the perfection of your artistic skill on the side of a truth which is struggling for recognition: that the attempt to have one law for man and one for woman must end as it does in the tragic ruin of the lives of men and women alike, and is responsible for half the misery of the world.'"

"Then take the young lady of the day. Here's another typical note: 'My feelings when I came away from *Mrs. Tanqueray*, far from being corrupted or in any way inclined to evil, were, I might say, more elevated, and it made me reflect what a great lesson there was to be learned from poor Paula's sad end. I am sure those people who speak against Mr. Pinero's great play, and who infer all sorts of disgusting things, must have very corrupt minds, and I might also add it is they themselves who put impure thoughts into people's minds by their bigoted suggestions, and not the play itself. These are my feelings. I am 19, and it is on behalf of young girls like myself that people make themselves so officious over *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*.'"

"One significant fact, I notice, Mr. Alexander: that no one has raised a growl about the advanced prices this visit."

"No; you have been very good. But, after all, I don't see how it is to be avoided, or what there is to grumble about. The very people who raise objections in the country would readily pay half a guinea for a stall in London; and where is the difference when we produce the play here exactly as it is there? Don't forget we have our travelling expenses, and the rent in London going on all the time."

"Precisely. That is exactly Mr. John Hare's argument, and I think a very just one—when, as you say, a genuine London production is given us."

"I remember a rather funny incident in Birmingham," continued Alexander, with a twinkle. "I went into a barber's for a shave, and he opened fire on the subject. 'Are you going to the theatre to-night?' said he. I replied that I thought I should look in. 'Who are these London people that they should come here and raise the prices?' demanded the barber. 'Who is this George Alexander; I never heard of him.' That proves to you the value of an actor coming into the country, and giving people an opportunity to make his acquaintance. I was rather tickled by my frank shaver, and on the Saturday I took him in an order. He was at the theatre at night when I told the little story from the stage, and I think he was as much amused as anybody."

"And now," I mildly suggested, "suppose you efface your natural modesty for a few minutes, and talk about yourself." "You were born, I believe, in 1858?"

"Yes, at Reading. My family is Scotch, but my father carried on business in England. He lived close by Manchester here, at Bowden, many years. But I went straight to Scotland as a youngster, and was educated there."

"Though possessed of some commercial instinct, my tastes went in the direction of the stage, and I made many appearances as an amateur. The first piece I ever played in was written by W. Davenport Adams, the critic, now of the 'Globe,' and we appeared in it as boys together. In London I performed frequently at the house of that well-known lady, Mrs. Freaque, in Cromwell-road. Mrs. Langtry also appeared there. As an amateur, too,

I played in *The Critic*, and it is not generally known that Burmand played in it with me as Paul."

"I was staying at Mrs. Freaque's when I got my first professional engagement with Ada Swanborough and W. N. Vernon at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, the pieces being *The Snobball*, *A Lesson in Love*, and *Cool as a Cucumber*. I had to go home, and steal away with my things in secret, for my parents were much opposed to my going on the stage. For a time my father refused to recognise me, but we became reconciled when he saw that I was determined upon the career."

"And that reminds me of how I came by my stage name. We rehearsed at the Strand Theatre, and old Mrs. Swanborough, who was sitting in the wings, came up to me and said, 'Young man, I think you will do very well. What is your name?' I told her 'George Alexander Samson.' 'Ah,' she said, 'that will never do. We cannot have any Bible names on the stage.' And so I dropped the Samson, and have remained plain George Alexander ever since."

"Yes, I had my early struggles and troubles. After the season with Ada Swanborough, I was at Portsmouth, and in pretty low water. I would not appeal to my father, but the good old landlady was very kind to me. Then came the engagement with T. W. Robertson's *Caste* Company, and I found on going to town that I should be involved in considerable expenditure for spurs and other properties necessary in the military plays they were producing at that time. There was nothing else for it. My father had presented me with this watch on my twenty-first birthday, and I was compelled to pawn it more than once. When better days came I redeemed it, and then thinking I should like to have it converted into a keyless watch, I took it to the shop where it was originally purchased."

"'H'mph,' observed the proprietor, 'I see this has been a useful watch to you.' 'Yes,' I replied, not knowing what he was driving at: 'it keeps very good time.' 'Just so. And I see it has been in pawn twice.' He had detected the numbers scratched on the inside of the case. See?"

"Well, after three years with Robertson, I made my first appearance in London as Caleb Decie in the revival of *The Two Roses* at the Lyceum. Then when Mr. Terris left the company I was engaged."

"And became at once a leading juvenile tragedian?"

"People were kind enough to accept my efforts. From the Lyceum I went to join Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, and first appeared with them in Manchester as the Frenchman, Victor, in *Jaspaloo*. After the tour we returned to the St. James's with *The Ironmaster*, &c.; thence to the Court, where I played in *The Pavane*, and afterwards came into the country with Miss Wallis, to play *Oriental*, *Benedick*, and other of the leads to her. A second time I went to the St. James's, and whilst there playing in farce appeared also with Mary Anderson at the Lyceum in *Comedy and Tragedy*. I also played in that one celebrated performance of *Werner* for Westland Marston's benefit. Returning to Mr. Irving about 1884, I joined his second American tour, and a very happy experience it was. His is a wonderful personality, and he possesses a greater power of attracting people than any public man I know. Coming back to England, I appeared at the Lyceum again as *Valentine* and *Faust*, and as *Macduff* in the revival of *Macbeth*. Then when *The Dead Heart* was put up there was no part suitable for me. Although my contract with Mr. Irving had not terminated he permitted me to go to the Adelphi in *London Day by Day*.

"Whilst there I made my first little plunge into management, giving a morning performance at Terry's of *The Grandisire*, an adaptation of a French play, *Pilobastier*, I had seen at the Francaise. Encouraged by success, and Dame Fortune smiling upon Mrs. Alexander about that period, I took the Avenue. *London Day by Day*, however, had not completed its run, and so I produced the farcical comedy *Dr. Bill* as a stop gap. The result was something of a surprise, for *Dr. Bill* turned out a great success. I went to play the part at the conclusion of the Adelphi engagement. And so tried my hand in a low comedy character. Then I put up the play I intended to flatter off with—*The Struggle for Life*. That was a hard struggle, and it wasn't prolonged, for the piece was a failure."

March 1895.

"The Englishwoman"

Vol. 5. No. 1.

## PLAYS OF THE HOUR

I MUST begin this article by performing certain obsequies. It is one of the drawbacks of a monthly chronicle of the drama that you can never tell whether a new play will be alive by the time your sagacious observations upon it appear in print. For this reason the first performance of Mr. Henry James's play, *Guy Domville*, had a peculiarly mournful interest for me. I knew the piece would be gone like the daffodils before the first number of THE ENGLISHWOMAN was in the hands of a grateful world. I thought of those lovely lines:

"Sweet daffodils, we grieve to see  
You fade away so soon,  
As yet the early rising sun  
Has not attained his noon."

And I saw the belated orb of Mr. Henry James's dramatic genius crushed by the boisterous derision of the upper boxes!

A few words of mortuary notice are due to Mr. Guy Domville. So much is inexplicable in his brief career that Mr. James alone is capable of unravelling it. I read the other day a delightful article by M. Jules Lemaitre on his own play *L'Age Difficile*. With charming simplicity, and without the smallest personal bias, he expounded the genesis of that drama, its root idea, and the various developments of character. It was an interesting and illuminating analysis. Now in analysis, who is so competent as Mr. Henry James? And if ever a gentleman needed illumination it was Guy Domville, the last of his line, and I am sure, the least intelligible. I do not know to this day why he left the widow who was dying to marry him, and went off to a lady he had never seen, who was fond of somebody else; nor why, when he returned to the widow, he did not wed her, instead of falling into a violent rage at the sight of a pair of white gloves, with silver seams, belonging to a nobleman who was playing a deep game, so deep as to be quite unfathomable. I say that if Mr. Henry James would take this mystery in hand, and give us an exposition in his own subtle and incomparable way, Guy Domville might be encircled by quite a luminous halo of regrets. Mr. James has always had much more to say about his characters than

they have had to say for themselves; and when I saw them left to their own devices on the stage, and so shy of one another that in the last act everybody seemed eager to go off as often as possible and bang the door, I yearned for Mr. James to come on, take a chair, and keep them in countenance with a few analytical remarks. As it was the "damnable iteration" of the door was the only touch of realism.

But why dwell on such things when performing the fitting obsequies? Perhaps, to be quite just, I ought to write a simple epitaph in this vein:

Hic JACET  
Guy Domville.  
Last of his line,  
He was TOO DELICATE  
For the Upper Boxes.

There is a cheerful story of Maupassant's, in which a gentleman, who is mourning for his dead lady-love in a graveyard, observes the neighbouring tombs uprise, and their inmates busily engaged in re-writing the inscriptions with a painful regard for strict accuracy. The lady-love rises too, and writes something which throws her bereaved adorer into a swoon. Now I wonder whether the lamented Mr. Domville, if he had a mind to revise or enlarge the above epitaph, would conscientiously add these lines:

And with Him Perished  
The First Fond Hope  
Of the Literary Drama.

For I remember the wail that went up from some of my colleagues who are waiting to be foster-fathers of the Literary Drama whenever that interesting foundling shall allow itself to be discovered. There was "A. B. W." in *The Speaker*, who beat his bosom, and cried over Mr. Henry James's first act, "If all the rest had been as good, this were, indeed, Absalom, my son, my son!" But there are no foster-fatherly endearments for *King Arthur* at the Lyceum, though Mr. Comyns Carr has evolved a very praiseworthy semblance of a dramatic story out of the Malony legends, and has written it, if not in immortal poesy, with a skill which is enhanced by the almost insuperable difficulties of the theme.

There is the primitiveness of the protoplasm in the original myths of Arthur, and it needed no small dexterity to give them coherent evolution in a play. Such people as Mordred and Morgan le Fay come from the very mussel-bed of melodrama. Mr. Carr has a poor opinion of Arthur's knights, for the most part, and indeed their behaviour when their lawful king, supposed to be dead, reappears safe and sound and confronts the usurper whom nobody has any reason to love, is lamentably shabby. When I saw them turn their backs on Arthur, I felt that Mr. Carr had pierced through the legendary veneer of religion and chivalry to the aboriginal Briton.

But Arthur himself and Lancelot, Guinevere and Elaine, are preserved in something like the traditional poetry which Mr. Carr, not Tennyson nor another, rightly employs to give us a kinship with remote savagery. The humanity of the picture is increased by a certain element of boredom in the Arthurian virtues. Even the blameless king cannot stand the eternal prophecies of Merlin; and when you contrast the castle hall of the open pillars, where Arthur takes his meditations, with the exuberance of the hawthorn in the "Queen's Maying," you do not marvel at Guinevere's flirtations in the wood. Arthur is a shadowy being, but the moment of his great sorrow is the moment of the play, and it is Mr. Irving's opportunity to make Arthur real to us in one flash of pathetic dignity. Never did the actor's imagination serve him in better stead. He has what I may call a creative sense of personal dignity, the varied aspects of which we recall when we think of Shylock, Hamlet, Wolsey, Becket, Dr. Primrose, Charles I. and many other characters, each with a perfectly distinct illustration of this faculty. You cannot make Arthur glow with a passionate emotion which fires a whole theatre, but Mr. Irving's picture of the ruin in this candid soul, caused by the falsehood of woman and the treachery of friendship, is a piece of rare art. It is subdued like Miss Terry's Guinevere and Mr. Forbes Robertson's Lancelot to the dim and decorative sweetness of the whole composition. Sir Edward Burne-Jones has waved his wand and spread a mystical vagueness around, as of a mellow infinity of stained glass window. But that is in

harmony with the fable; if it were not represented in this way, it would lose, for me at least, its most fitting and conspicuous charm, though this is apparently no balm to the lacerated heart-strings of my friends who weep for the Literary Drama.

Where is that world's desire? Is it at the Haymarket? I believe Mr. Oscar Wilde has complained that the critics occupied themselves exclusively with trivial incidents in *An Ideal Husband*, and ignored the psychology. There is a rather foolish business about a bracelet. Mr. Wilde is impatient with people who say this is an unsatisfactory pivot of the story. He seems to retort in effect, "Oh, bother the story—who cares about the story? Why don't you consider the subtleties of my character drawing?" Well, the psychology at the Haymarket consists of just one idea—that of an adoring wife who learns that it is better to know her husband's errors and forgive them than to credit him with illusory virtues. This is very well; it would make a piquant maxim, with a smack of Rochefoucauld and a pinch of Oscar Wilde; but to turn it into a four act play, that is a very different job.

Probably Mr. Wilde wrote the very clever speech at the end of Act II. before he wrote anything else. It is the speech in which Sir Robert Chiltern explains to his wife the psychological aspect of their relations now she finds that her idol is badly cracked. But having administered the prescription to Lady Chiltern he has nothing left. We get the philosophy at one dose, so to speak, and then there is nothing for us but a commonplace adventuress, the bracelet, a stolen letter and so forth. There is not enough psychology to go round. Briefly, that is the trouble with Mr. Wilde's amusing play, and it is not disguised by the pleasantries poured out by Mr. Hawtrey with a happy-go-lucky, hit-or-miss profusion. Chiltern wanders through Act III. bemoaning his fate, as who should say, "My dear boy, I have left all my psychology in the second act; you must help me out by listening to my tale of woe till I give the cue for the lady with the bracelet." Perhaps that unfortunate ornament has no more to do with the intellectual interest than Mr. Wilde's curious notion that an Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs is master of the Cabinet; but these frivolities are forced on me by a primitive

method of dramatic construction. After all, the Literary Drama will not demean itself by setting out with a sufficient supply of character, so as not to leave both hero and heroine perfectly threadbare before they are half-way.

Mr. Wilde is indisputably a born writer; that he is also a born dramatist it is not so easy to determine. But as a public entertainer his success is manifest. I laugh by anticipation at his new farce, which will be produced at the St. James's after this article has passed out of my hands into those of the Binder who has the grim decision of the Button Moulder in *Peer Gynt*. In the next number of this magazine I hope to find Mr. Wilde still blooming at the St. James's, and Mr. Comyns Carr's new production at the Comedy, *A Leader of Men*, also in abundant feather. The dramatic critic may be stony-hearted, but he has no real taste for the mortuary notice.

#### POSTSCRIPTUM.

I have escaped from the clutches, or stitches, of the Binder to say that the laugh by anticipation at Mr. Oscar Wilde's new piece was happily prophetic. There is no psychology in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, but a great deal of agreeable fooling. When Mr. Wilde throws aside all affectation of being serious, his genius finds full scope. You are invited not to a dissection of character, but to a merry imbroglia of pure farce, interspersed with muffins. Indeed, the only criticism I have to offer is, that the elasticity of the muffins in the second act does not stretch across the gap in the fantasy when Mr. Alexander, who appears in mourning for a dead and imaginary brother, has finished reproaching Mr. Aynesworth—a great eater of muffins—for impersonating that mythical relative. The young women in the piece have a strong family likeness to certain heroines of Mr. W. S. Gilbert; but Mr. Alexander, as a foundling who was put, when an infant, by mistake for the M.S. of a three volume novel, into a black bag, and left in

the cloak-room of a railway station, is a delightful creation. Moreover, the fun depends much less than usual on the paradoxes which have become as commonplace as the mottoes in Christmas crackers. When Miss Rose Leclercq—whose appearance in any part is always a joy to me—cross-examines Mr. Alexander as to his qualifications for marriage with her daughter, and decides that the young lady cannot marry into a family with no visible origin but a cloak-room, I question whether in the whole range of farce there is a more mirthful scene.

As for *A Leader of Men*, it proves to be a work of considerable promise. The author has essayed to contrast the private and public life of the politician. We see a Prime Minister and a Labour leader; the one takes three lumps of sugar in his tea, and the other has a habit of spouting what Dizzy called "Sadler's Wells sarcasm" in the middle of a drawing-room. This is not quite impressive, perhaps, but it is as good as most representations of the politician's dual existence, from Bulwer Lytton's *Money* to Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's *Bauble Shop*. The best thing in Mr. Charles Ward's play is the character of Mrs. Dundas, who falls in love, rather unaccountably, with the Labour leader. By a stroke of good fortune for the author, this part is played by Miss Marion Terry, whose peculiar quality of womanly sympathy always lays a magic spell upon me. How exquisite she was in *Guy Domville*! How the almost imperceptible delicacies of Mr. Henry James radiated from her presence! Had Mr. James handled the whole of his play as skilfully as he drew the widow to whom Mr. Domville behaved so oddly, and whom Miss Marion Terry played so beautifully, I might have written no epitaph. In Mr. Ward's drama Miss Terry is simply a sun of grace and tenderness, shedding light and warmth through a story, which, without her, might be cold and lifeless.

L. F. AUSTIN.

THE CENSORSHIP OF THE STAGE.

THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY CHRONICLE.

SIR,—I am so thoroughly in sympathy with any and every protest against the Censorship of the Stage that I should be quite content to accept Mr. William Archer's deliverances on the subject as they stand without caring to criticise the puzzle-headedness which invariably characterises that gentleman's thought and style, even when he is on the right side. Unfortunately, however, I have read in connection with his fairly coherent letter to The Daily Chronicle, the extraordinary article which he has just published, to please the prigs and the Puritans, in the Contemporary Review. In other words, if he were contending that the drama, like all art, should flourish independently of any kind of obstruction, should be absolutely and unreservedly free from any sort of State or civic or critical interference, I should cordially agree with him and wish him "God speed." But he is doing nothing of the kind. He is merely suggesting that we should exchange one kind of tyranny for another, for one infinitely more dangerous. His contention is that we should turn from the light-handed ministry of the Lord Chamberlain to the heavy-handed ministrations of the County Council, that instead of the late Mr. Pigott we should have a re-cuscitated Kirk Session!

Now, as I have already suggested, I have not one word to say in defence of the Lord Chamberlain. The blunders of the late Licensor of Plays were deplorable, from the moment when he first began to forbid the didactic dramas of the Second Empire (now freely re-emerging on our own stage) to the moment when he refused to license the quasi-pious muse of Mr. Oscar Wilde. He stood for Church and State, and he refused to have God's documents even pamed in the devil's temple; at the same time, he gave the devil himself carte blanche in the way of smutty suggestion and indecent exposure. All this was very sad. But how did it end? Before very long the Licensor began to feel that public opinion was too strong for him. One by one the "masterpieces" discovered by Mr. Archer and his friends did have a hearing. The era of the pathological play and the sepulchral matinee dawned at last, and full noontide was reached when Mr. Pigott, who had refused "Les Lionnes Pauvres," gave his approval to "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." Sex-mania, in a hundred forms, invaded the stage, and Mr. William Archer was happy. He himself avows, in both letter and article, that the drama, the real drama, has lately been flourishing; by which he means, I presume, that it has at last reached the same apex of dismal impropriety as the literature of the "Yellow Book" and the art of Mr. Aubrey Beardsley. But even this, even the theatrical apotheosis of the great god Pan, does not content him. He fumes and frets because high jinks are still possible in theatres and music-halls, despite his favourite prescription of Ibsen and low spirits. He wants the drama to be free, but he is alarmed when it becomes free and easy.

Here, in a nutshell, is Mr. William Archer's argument that the censorship of plays should be taken away from the Lord Chamberlain and given to the County Council. "No one denies," he says, "that the County Council is a reasonably democratic assembly—that it fairly represents a widely popular electorate. Why then should we fear that a body which expresses the will of the people should tyrannously thwart the will of the people in the matter of amusement? This is the sheer inconsequence of panic." I won't stay to inquire what Mr. Archer means by the terms "reasonably democratic" and "fairly represents," though I protest en passant against the disingenuous use of the qualifying adverbs. What Mr. Archer means generally is that a majority of administrators chosen by the electorate is far more likely to license plays judiciously than a Court official who is guided entirely by his own free judgment. I deny this proposition altogether. Personally, I far prefer one tyrant to many, and when the power of many tyrants is based merely upon a greater or smaller majority it is the most dangerous tyranny of all. We have very recently had an illustration of the extent to which the ignorance and prejudice of a few "individual citizens," as Mr. Archer calls them, can infringe on public liberty. Your "crank" your Puritan, your choice of the electorate, is swayed by no consideration for individual opinion; he holds himself responsible, and rightly, only to the other "cranks" and Puritans, who have elected him and are of his way of thinking. A Court official, on the other hand, having few prejudices one way or the other, is guided to no little extent by the public sentiment in general, including that of minorities. Mr. Pigott again and again gave his cachet to productions which he personally detested; a Star Chamber of Puritans would license nothing of which it conscientiously disapproved.

"The will of the people" indeed! Wherever that has conquered, there has been no art whatever. It is not the will of the people that concerns us, but the will of the artist, which should be absolute.

Mr. Archer is a Scotchman, but he has studied Scottish history to little purpose if he is unaware of the performances of that highly moral and enlightened body, the "Kirk Session"—a body which derived its strength from the will of the people, and which, in the name of Morality and Religion, darkened the national life for many centuries. The members of the Kirk Session were many of them men of noble character, men who began by preaching the gospel of free thought and free speech to a priest-bound generation, but who ended by driving Liberty out of the land altogether; for they loved Liberty as Mr. Archer loves it—that is, as a means to the advancement of their own superstitious ideas. If the Kirk Session had possessed the power of "licensing" literature, the world would never have heard of Robert Burns, and Scotchmen would never have become the free men of the world. The power by which Mr. Archer proposes to guide the Drama would be simply another Kirk Session. Individual citizens representing the "will of the people," would deal gently enough, no doubt, with the drama of edification, but the higher drama of life and character would be driven for ever from the

The last round of the Professor's "There is with its long The young "Oh, Prof "But," co did not like "There tinned the g Evelyn G



"THERE tossed the impatient "You she said. qualificat perhaps I smile elev picked u his coat his hand, alarmed by the mystery of his manner.

stage. There is, in fact, only one way for either Art or Literature—free and unrestricted expression all along the line. Suppression of individual feeling or opinion, under any pretext whatever, is fatal to intellectual progress.

Even as matters stand at present, England is not a pleasant country for an artist to live in. Mr. Archer would render the artist's life in it impossible. In addition to the newly-invented tyranny of the Press, which is rapidly silencing by clamour nearly every independent thinker who still survives, we should have the organised tyranny of faddists chosen by an ignorant electorate. We may guess what would be in store for us from Mr. Archer's tone of rejoicing over recent developments of the drama. He informs us, with unmistakable jubilation, that the higher drama is developing and emerging. A glance at the advertising columns of the daily newspapers should make him wiser. There never was a period in theatrical history when plays were so few, and variety entertainments, under the disguise of plays, were so many. Does Mr. Archer know why? The reason is, that a Kirk Session of small critics, representing a Cockney electorate, has been insisting that audiences should accept, willy-nilly, the drama of sex-mania, the purposeless play with a purpose. It has been dinned into our ears, from a hundred journalistic pulpits, that Dulness and Dirt are to be the sole study of the dramatist, and that any piece which is pathological is in the nature of a "masterpiece." Well, the playgoing public, having tried the "masterpieces" and found them wanting, has rushed in sheer despair to the variety entertainment, which is at least lively, which is at least amusing. What the "Holy Willie" of the World demands now is, practically, that a licensing committee chosen by the electorate should render mere amusement impossible—that, in other words, an intelligent "majority," elected by members of the community who do not like the theatre, should impose its will upon that "minority" by which the theatre and the music-hall are supported. Small wonder that theatrical managers, having their choice between a lesser evil and a greater, prefer the domination of the Lord Chamberlain.

As I write a case in point occurs, with the production of Mr. Pinero's new play at the Garrick Theatre, pronounced by some of your contemporaries a "masterpiece." I have not seen this play, but I yield to no one in my admiration for the cleverness of its author. What occurs to me, however, if I may be guided by the public reports, is that this piece is just such a production as would be freely licensed and rapturously approved by the new Kirk Session. "Surely," Mr. Archer may say, "an argument in my favour." By no means. The new Kirk Session, like its prototype, would countenance any treatment of social and religious subjects so long as the argument was on the side of conventional morality and religion; it would laud to the heavens as bold, original, and unconventional, productions which were secretly respectful to the existing formulas; but it would suppress, at the same time, any argument on the other side. The great scene of "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" is I

"You are not angry with me?" said Evelyn, somewhat alarmed by the mystery of his manner.

understand, one in which the heroine, after throwing the Bible into the fire, plucks it from the burning, and sobs over it hysterically, preparatory to retiring into the odour of sanctity with "a clergyman and his sister." Is it necessary to say, to anyone acquainted with life, that such a scene is as gross a caricature of Socialism and Freethought as Lord Tennyson's picture of "an atheist" in the "Promise of May"? No woman brought up as Agnes had been, no woman who knows what Freethought and Socialism are, could have been guilty of so gross an absurdity. But that is neither here nor there. My contention is that the superficially unconventional play would be approved by Mr. Archer and the Kirk Session, while the really unconventional play would be rejected with horror. Can my reader conceive a scene in which a hero or heroine threw the Bible into the fire, while proclaiming the evils which, to his or her thinking, it had caused to humanity? Yet such a scene would be as defensible as, and possibly less absurd than, the other. If we are to have freedom of utterance (which I, for one, claim) let us have it, I repeat, all along the line. Do not let us be deluded into the belief that the pathological drama, written half-heartedly, in defence of formulas approved by the "will of the people," is any real advance on the old-fashioned drama written for public amusement. If Mr. Pinero is to have the right to burlesque Freethought and free thinkers (and I, for one, would certainly give him that right), and to beg the whole social question with a religious platitude, let other men also have the right to treat morality and religion as subjects. This, under the supervision of a council founded on "the will of the people," they would never be suffered to do. In a word, Art need not be free at all, unless it is free altogether.

One word, finally, on your leading article concerning the new selection for the Licensing of Plays. I think it is a subject for rejoicing, not for wailing, that an unknown man, a man presumably without any kind of intellectual prejudice or vested interest, has been chosen. If we must have a Licensor, it is as well to have one with as small a sense of moral responsibility as possible. God forbid that we should have an intelligent busybody, who imagined it his business either to restrict or to "advance" the drama, in the interest of any formulas whatever.—I am, &c.,

ROBERT BUCHANAN. March 14.

which had sent him to sleep. Alas, he found it impossible to fix his mind upon a dry article upon "Mountain Guns" while his ears were being assaulted by a sustained bombardment of vocal exercises.

The Colonel, a widower, was devoted to his only child, Evelyn, and had already suffered many a minor martyrdom rather than disturb her pursuits. But experience had made him wise, and he recognised that relief could only certainly be secured by flight. Going softly into the hall, he obtained his hat and umbrella, and glided like a frock-coated ghost into the street. He found the lamps being lit, the damp pavement reflecting the yellow light. In the distance a pianoforte organ was slowly hammering out Mascagni's "Intermezzo."

gaged hand angry, my You say I ordinary t complain, rent. Small ot morning, lower if he Professor tingled with and looked arking with to herself, his 'braise,' no longer a in the grub oor kind of if I don't. room. Just ith the ends suspiciously times round e impressed no and went house the is afternoon to stir unke onged shake d he sat up to himself. al bagpipes." the review

Strand Musical Magazine. "CHARLEY'S AUNT" AS A COMPOSER. January, 1895.

As a comedian of the most humorous type, Mr. W. S. Penley is famed the world over, but it is not generally known that "Charley's Aunt," is a composer of music.



"I AM NO ORDINARY COMPOSER." From a photograph by T. C. Turner & Co., 10, Barnsbury Park, N.

"I compose for my own amusement," said Mr. Penley to me, as I called on him at the scene of his most brilliant successes—the Globe Theatre. "The only pieces of my composition, however, that are before the public are three plantation songs, one of which you are going to publish. I appreciate the honour, but, I can assure you, I have no ambition to shine as a musician."

"Then you can say, 'I am no ordinary composer,' as well as 'I am no ordinary woman?'"

Mr. Penley laughed. "I may tell you I love good music," he remarked, "especially church music. I have been singing all my life. I am an old Abbey boy; I was in the Chapel Royal choir, and also in the Duchess of Edinburgh's private choir. For two years and a half I was at the Russian Embassy, and I have sung at Farm Street, and at St. Joseph's Retreat, at Highgate. At one time I was the principal bass singer at Bellew's Chapel, in Bloomsbury. You are surprised to hear that I sing bass," continued Mr. Penley, raising his voice to an upper C. "But I do, and although the work I am doing now isn't conducive to the production of bass notes, my old vocal powers would soon come back again if I were to take a brief rest. I have written music of various kinds, from gavottes to hymns and chants. But, as I told you just now, I do not aspire to fame as a composer: I write music simply as a pastime."

Vol. I.—2.

Mr. Penley has several good stories of his career as a vocalist.

"I obtained my first engagement as a chorister," he said, "with Miss Sheridan, at the Opera Comique, next door. My neighbour in the chorus was a tenor who stood about six feet two, but had a very weak voice. The management came to the conclusion that it was the big fellow who made all the noise, and I got the sack. This hurt my feelings, and I protested, with the result that my notice to leave was suspended. Then they discovered that it was I who had the big voice; and after that the other man got the sack."

When Mr. Penley was playing in "Trial by Jury," he was also a member of a church choir. Here he had a somewhat extraordinary experience, which I will relate in his own words:—"You know," said the famous comedian, "I open my mouth very wide when I sing, and the spectacle I presented on this occasion had such an effect on the nerves of another member of the choir, who was singing a duet with me, that he became hysterical and shrieked out. To save the situation, the clergyman shouted promptly, 'We will sing the 350th hymn.' After that," added Mr. Penley, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, "I sang behind a screen."



"I AM NO ORDINARY WOMAN." From a photograph by T. C. Turner & Co., 10, Barnsbury Park, N.

It was now time for Mr. Penley to "go on." As we parted, he shook me heartily by the hand, and said: "I think THE STRAND MUSICAL MAGAZINE is an excellent idea, and I wish it every success."

17

Sara Bernhardt in "La Tosca" Liverpool Daily Post.

"Lucky for you that Dr. Bill had been such a good physician." "Yes; but I wasn't long doomed to failure, for after *The Struggle for Life* came *Sunlight and Shadow*, which compensated for the previous disappointment."

"When Mrs. Langtry left the St. James's I succeeded her, and produced *The Idler* in February, 1891. Since then, as you know, we have had *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Liberty Hall*, and now *Mrs. Tanqueray*."

"And the best play you have produced is?" "The *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* undoubtedly."

"With which you resume on returning to town at the end of the month?" "Yes; and I don't anticipate having to change the bill for some time. But one never knows, and I am prepared with a successor. It will either be a play which H. A. Jones is just finishing or a costume piece by Henry James. No; they are neither of them altogether on the lines of the 'new drama.'"

And now it is time to leave. I don't know with which of his favourite amusements Mr. Alexander contemplates employing the time until luncheon—riding, driving or fencing; but he is certainly entitled to some recreation after the worries of the morning.

"Good-bye; come and see us again to-night; I was off colour on Monday; you may find a little more devil in Aubrey now."

And with a final plunge into the whisky and seltzer bath I departed.

The Era.

MR. JAS. B. CURRY, the Midland Railway Company's theatrical agent, has been presented by Mr. C. J. Abud, acting-manager for Madame Sarah Bernhardt's provincial matinee tour, with a handsome gold ring, in recognition of his attentions in connection with the excellent railway arrangements that were made for the French tragédienne and her company.

The Academy.

M. DELAFOSSE, who gave his second recital at the new Salle Erard on Thursday afternoon last week, is a powerful pianist, but so far as present experience enables us to form judgment he has more of the qualities of a virtuoso than an artist. Tausig's abominable distortion of Weber's 'L'Invitation à la Valse,' and various more or less showy pieces by Dubois, Chaminade, Chopin, and Liszt enabled him to display executive abilities of no ordinary kind, and that is the most that can be said at present. Madame der Veer-Green, a mezzo-soprano with a well-trained voice of pleasant quality, sang airs by Lalo, Tosti, and Bemberg with much effect; and M. Léon Gozolan's amusing sketch 'La Pluie et le Beau Temps' was excellently rendered by Madame Sarah Bernhardt and M. Guity.

Liverpool Daily Post.

Madame Sarah Bernhardt has announced twenty subscription Saturdays, in Paris, beginning on December 1st, and ending April 13th, the subscription being divided into two series of ten nights each. M. Coquelin's name is mentioned beside that of the manageress, and in the list of probable productions appear Mr. Pinero's "Second Mrs. Tanqueray," Mr. Oscar Wilde's "Salome," and "Falstaff," by the late Paul Delair, the piece in which Parisians are to see the tragédienne as Prince Hal.

Season 1894.

Season 1894.

October 15, 1894.

MADAME SARAH BERNHARDT AS LA TOSCA.

A shrewd remark was made in a London journal this week on an imitation of the great Sarah Bernhardt. The ability of the imitator was admitted. The mimicry was confessed to be exact and admirable. But the gift was not there of finding that within which when it shines forth in action produces what we know as Sarah Bernhardt's acting. One artist had been successfully imitated because she was "all outside." Another had been successfully caricatured because her style provoked in the imitator humorous exaggeration. Madame Bernhardt had been only copied. The copy had not gone beneath the surface, where all this wonderful actress's great effects really originate.

Those who saw "La Tosca" performed yesterday afternoon at the Shakespeare Theatre—which the attraction had served to densely pack—must have felt that the criticism passed on the clever copyist was likely to be exactly just. Madame Bernhardt seizes on her audience by surprise as sudden and powerful as those of the most sensational melodrama, but in looking back on the effects she has produced one is struck with the comparative quiet—with which she has accomplished her greatest achievements, and the explanation of such success, so won, is to be found, so to speak, in the inwardness of the motive of each action; in the fact that each grows or springs out of some innermost feeling of which it is the vivid expression. In a rough sort of way you know from point to point what Madame Bernhardt will essay to do; but it is futile and utterly unintelligent to anticipate in a rough sort of way what is sure to be marked by the most refined contrasts and the most sincere gradations. She is not the same when she is toying with her lover as when she is making love to him, nor the same when she is making love to him as when she is adoring him. She is not the same when ordinary jealousy is making her pettish as she is when deadly jealousy is making her desperate. She is not the same when she is execrating her enemy as when she is killing him, nor the same when she is killing him as when she is screaming taunts into his dying ear. This is what underlies the remark often made that she is "so perfectly natural." None of us have seen enough real tragedy to be sure as experts that any performance of tragedy is "perfectly natural;" but we all perceive by human instinct what it is that Sarah Bernhardt is really feeling when the character she is performing does tragic things.

Scarcely another part in her great repertoire affords so many great opportunities—such continuous grand opportunity—for histrionic power of this supreme and superb character as that which Madame Bernhardt yesterday performed. The play is an admirable one, well designed and carried out; having but little in it of the lengthy talk which in most French plays conflicts with English taste; and blemished, if it is blemished, by only one fault—namely, that the horrors are somewhat too dreadful to be borne. For our own part, we dispute that there is either fault or blemish. The situation of the dreadful torturing scene is probable, and legitimately brought about. It is only mental torture, and that in the most pathetic form, that the audience actually behold. To have lost so thrilling and touching a scene for any scruple would have robbed the stage unnecessarily of one of the greatest triumphs that ever illustrated its capability of piercing the heart.

"La Tosca" has five acts. The general story of it is well known from English representations. Our business is to record the rendering of it by

# George Alexander.

"Very likely. We are sure to have some bad plays, but they will soon be doomed. The man who writes a piece simply with the object of shocking public sentiment will not be tolerated. But I do believe we are advancing in our ideas of the mission of the theatre. As I said before, the realities of life are forcing themselves upon the dramatist, and the clever writer has an entirely new field opened out to him."

"And you think there is a paying public for pieces of this type, apart from the special attraction of a work of extraordinary genius, such as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*?"

"Yes, I do thoroughly. I do not believe in the doctrine of audiences for pieces. I am firmly of opinion that the people who go and laugh at *Charley's Aunt* to-night can be equally interested in Pinero's latest to-morrow."

\* \* \*

"I suppose you have been inundated with correspondence on the subject?"

"Well, I have letters every day. Here's one from a Birmingham lady, whose young daughter wrote asking for my autograph. The mother says: 'May I say how thankful I feel that in that terrible new play you should have thrown the weight of your genius and the perfection of your artistic skill on the side of a truth which is struggling for recognition: that the attempt to have one law for man and one for woman *must* end as it does in the tragic ruin of the lives of men and women alike, and is responsible for half the misery of the world.'

"Then take the young lady of the day. Here's another typical note: 'My feelings when I came away from *Mrs. Tanqueray*, far from being corrupted or in any way inclined to evil, were, I might say, more elevated, and it made me reflect what a great lesson there was to be learned from poor Paula's sad end. I am sure those people who speak against Mr. Pinero's great play, and who infer all sorts of disgusting things, must have very corrupt minds, and I might also add it is they themselves who put impure thoughts into people's minds by their bigoted suggestions, and not the play itself. These are my feelings. I am 19, and it is on behalf of young girls like myself that people make themselves so officious over *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*.'"

\* \* \*

"One significant fact, I notice, Mr. Alexander: that no one has raised a growl about the advanced prices this visit."

"No; you have been very good. But, after all, I don't see how it is to be avoided, or what there is to grumble about. The very people who raise objections in the country would readily pay half a guinea for a stall in London; and where is the difference when we produce the play here exactly as it is there? Don't forget we have our travelling expenses, and the rent in London going on all the time."

"Precisely. That is exactly Mr. John Hare's argument, and I think a very just one—when, as you say, a genuine London production is given us."

"I remember a rather funny incident in Birmingham," continued Alexander, with a twinkle. "I went into a barber's for a shave, and he opened fire on the subject. 'Are you going to the theatre to-night?' said he. I replied that I thought I should look in. 'Who are these London people that they should come here and raise the prices?' demanded the barber. 'Who is this George Alexander; I never heard of him.' That proves to you the value of an actor coming into the country, and giving people an opportunity to make his acquaintance. I was rather tickled by my frank shaver, and on the Saturday I took him in an order. He was at the theatre at night when I told the little story from the stage, and I think he was as much amused as anybody."

\* \* \*

"And now," I mildly suggested, "suppose you efface your natural modesty for a few minutes, and talk about yourself." "You were born, I believe, in 1858?"

"Yes, at Reading. My family is Scotch, but my father carried on business in England. He lived close by Manchester here, at Bowden, many years. But I went straight to Scotland as a youngster, and was educated there."

"Though possessed of some commercial instinct, my tastes went in the direction of the stage, and I made many appearances as an amateur. The first piece I ever played in was written by W. Davenport Adams, the critic, now of the "Globe," and we appeared in it as boys together. In London I performed [2019-03-16](#) at the house of that well-known lady, Mrs. Freaque, in Cromwell-road. Mrs. Langtry also appeared there. As an amateur, too,

I played in *The Critic*, and it is not generally known that Burnand played in it with me as Puff."

"I was staying at Mrs. Freaque's when I got my first professional engagement with Ada Swanborough and W. N. Vernon at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, the pieces being *The Snowball*, *A Lesson in Love*, and *Cool as a Cucumber*. I had to go home, and steal away with my things in secret, for my parents were much opposed to my going on the stage. For a time my father refused to recognise me, but we became reconciled when he saw that I was determined upon the career."

"And that reminds me of how I came by my stage name. We rehearsed at the Strand Theatre, and old Mrs. Swanborough, who was sitting in the wings, came up to me and said, 'Young man, I think you will do very well. What is your name?' I told her 'George Alexander Samson.' 'Ah,' she said, 'that will never do. We cannot have any Bible names on the stage.' And so I dropped the Samson, and have remained plain George Alexander ever since."

\* \* \*

"Yes, I had my early struggles and troubles. After the season with Ada Swanborough, I was at Portsmouth, and in pretty low water. I would not appeal to my father, but the good old landlady was very kind to me. Then came the engagement with T. W. Robertson's *Caste* Company, and I found on going to town that I should be involved in considerable expenditure for spurs and other properties necessary in the military plays they were producing at that time. There was nothing else for it. My father had presented me with this watch on my twenty-first birthday, and I was compelled to pawn it more than once. When better days came I redeemed it, and then thinking I should like to have it converted into a keyless watch, I took it to the shop where it was originally purchased."

"'H'mph,' observed the proprietor, 'I see this has been a useful watch to you.'

"'Yes,' I replied, not knowing what he was driving at: 'it keeps very good time.'

"'Just so. And I see it has been pawn twice.' He had detected the numbers scratched on the inside of the case. See?"

\* \* \*

"Well, after three years with Robertson, I made my first appearance in London as Caleb Decie in the revival of *The Two Roses* at the Lyceum. Then when Mr. Terris left the company I was engaged."

"And became at once a leading juvenile tragedian?"

"People were kind enough to accept my efforts. From the Lyceum I went to join Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, and first appeared with them in Manchester as the Frenchman, Victor, in *Impulse*. After the tour we returned to the St. James's with *The Ironmaster*, &c.; thence to the Court, where I played in *The Parvenu*, and afterwards came into the country with Miss Wallis, to play Orlando, Benedick, and other of the leads to her. A second time I went to the St. James's, and whilst there playing in farce appeared also with Mary Anderson at the Lyceum in *Comedy and Tragedy*. I also played in that one celebrated performance of *Werner* for Westland Marston's benefit. Returning to Mr. Irving about 1884, I joined his second American tour, and a very happy experience it was. His is a wonderful personality, and he possesses a greater power of attracting people than any public man I know. Coming back to England, I appeared at the Lyceum again as Valentine and Faust, and as Macduff in the revival of *Macbeth*. Then when *The Dead Heart* was put up there was no part suitable for me. Although my contract with Mr. Irving had not terminated he permitted me to go to the Adelphi in *London Day by Day*.

"Whilst there I made my first little plunge into management, giving a morning performance at Terry's of *The Grand sire*, an adaptation of a French play, *Flibustier*, I had seen at the Francaise. Encouraged by success, and Dame Fortune smiling upon Mrs. Alexander about that period, I took the Avenue. *London Day by Day*, however, had not completed its run, and so I produced the farcical comedy *Dr. Bill* as a stop gap. The result was something of a surprise, for *Dr. Bill* turned out a great success. I went to play the part at the conclusion of the Adelphi engagement, and so tried my hand in a low comedy character. Then I put up the play I intended to flitter off with—*The Struggle for*—. That was a hard struggle, and it wasn't prolonged, for the piece was a failure."

March 1895.

Vol. I. No. I.

"The Englishwoman"

PLAYS OF THE HOUR

I MUST begin this article by performing certain obsequies. It is one of the drawbacks of a monthly chronicle of the drama that you can never tell whether a new play will be alive by the time your sagacious observations upon it appear in print. For this reason the first performance of Mr. Henry James's play, *Guy Domville*, had a peculiarly mournful interest for me. I knew the piece would be gone like the daffodils before the first number of THE ENGLISHWOMAN was in the hands of a grateful world. I thought of those lovely lines :

"Sweet daffodils, we grieve to see  
You fade away so soon,  
As yet the early rising sun  
Has not attained his noon."

And I saw the belated orb of Mr. Henry James's dramatic genius crushed by the boisterous derision of the upper boxes !

A few words of mortuary notice are due to Mr. Guy Domville. So much is inexplicable in his brief career that Mr. James alone is capable of unravelling it. I read the other day a delightful article by M. Jules Lemaître on his own play *L'Age Difficile*. With charming simplicity, and without the smallest personal bias, he expounded the genesis of that drama, its root idea, and the various developments of character. It was an interesting and illuminating analysis. Now in analysis, who is so competent as Mr. Henry James? And if ever a gentleman needed illumination it was Guy Domville, the last of his line, and I am sure, the least intelligible. I do not know to this day why he left the widow who was dying to marry him, and went off to a lady he had never seen, who was fond of somebody else ; nor why, when he returned to the widow, he did not wed her, instead of falling into a violent rage at the sight of a pair of white gloves, with silver seams, belonging to a nobleman who was playing a deep game, so deep as to be quite unfathomable. I say that if Mr. Henry James would take this mystery in hand, and give us an exposition in his own subtle and incomparable way, Guy Domville might be encircled by quite a luminous halo of regrets. Mr. James has always had much more to say about his characters than

they have had to say for themselves ; and when I saw them left to their own devices on the stage, and so shy of one another that in the last act everybody seemed eager to go off as often as possible and bang the door, I yearned for Mr. James to come on, take a chair, and keep them in countenance with a few analytical remarks. As it was the "damnable iteration" of the door was the only touch of realism.

But why dwell on such things when performing the fitting obsequies? Perhaps, to be quite just, I ought to write a simple epitaph in this vein :

Hic JACET  
Guy Domville,  
Last of his line,  
He was TOO DELICATE  
For the Upper Boxes.

There is a cheerful story of Maupassant's, in which a gentleman, who is mourning for his dead lady-love in a graveyard, observes the neighbouring tombs uprise, and their inmates busily engaged in re-writing the inscriptions with a painful regard for strict accuracy. The lady-love rises too, and writes something which throws her bereaved adorer into a swoon. Now I wonder whether the lamented Mr. Domville, if he had a mind to revise or enlarge the above epitaph, would conscientiously add these lines :

And with Him Perished  
The First Fond Hope  
Of the Literary Drama.

For I remember the wail that went up from some of my colleagues who are waiting to be foster-fathers of the Literary Drama whenever that interesting foundling shall allow itself to be discovered. There was "A. B. W." in *The Speaker*, who beat his bosom, and cried over Mr. Henry James's first act, "If all the rest had been as good, this were, indeed, Absalom, my son, my son !" But there are no foster-fatherly endearments for *King Arthur* at the Lyceum, though Mr. Comyns Carr has evolved a very praiseworthy semblance of a dramatic story out of the Malony legends, and has written it, if not in immortal poesy, with a skill which is enhanced by the almost insuperable difficulties of the theme.

There is the primitiveness of the protoplasm in the original myths of Arthur, and it needed no small dexterity to give them coherent evolution in a play. Such people as Mordred and Morgan le Fay come from the very mussel-bed of melodrama. Mr. Carr has a poor opinion of Arthur's knights, for the most part, and indeed their behaviour when their lawful king, supposed to be dead, reappears safe and sound and confronts the usurper whom nobody has any reason to love, is lamentably shabby. When I saw them turn their backs on Arthur, I felt that Mr. Carr had pierced through the legendary veneer of religion and chivalry to the aboriginal Briton.

But Arthur himself and Lancelot, Guinevere and Elaine, are preserved in something like the traditional poetry which Mr. Carr, not Tennyson nor another, rightly employs to give us a kinship with remote savagery. The humanity of the picture is increased by a certain element of boredom in the Arthurian virtues. Even the blameless king cannot stand the eternal prophecies of Merlin; and when you contrast the castle hall of the open pillars, where Arthur takes his meditations, with the exuberance of the hawthorn in the "Queen's Maying," you do not marvel at Guinevere's flirtations in the wood. Arthur is a shadowy being, but the moment of his great sorrow is the moment of the play, and it is Mr. Irving's opportunity to make Arthur real to us in one flash of pathetic dignity. Never did the actor's imagination serve him in better stead. He has what I may call a creative sense of personal dignity, the varied aspects of which we recall when we think of Shylock, Hamlet, Wolsey, Becket, Dr. Primrose, Charles I. and many other characters, each with a perfectly distinct illustration of this faculty. You cannot make Arthur glow with a passionate emotion which fires a whole theatre, but Mr. Irving's picture of the ruin in this candid soul, caused by the falsehood of woman and the treachery of friendship, is a piece of rare art. It is subdued like Miss Terry's Guinevere and Mr. Forbes Robertson's Lancelot to the dim and decorative sweetness of the whole composition. Sir Edward Burne-Jones has waved his wand and spread a mystical vagueness around, as of a mellow infinity of stained glass window. But that is in

harmony with the fable; if it were not represented in this way, it would lose, for me at least, its most fitting and conspicuous charm, though this is apparently no balm to the lacerated heart-strings of my friends who weep for the Literary Drama.

Where is that world's desire? Is it at the Haymarket? I believe Mr. Oscar Wilde has complained that the critics occupied themselves exclusively with trivial incidents in *An Ideal Husband*, and ignored the psychology. There is a rather foolish business about a bracelet. Mr. Wilde is impatient with people who say this is an unsatisfactory pivot of the story. He seems to retort in effect, "Oh, bother the story—who cares about the story? Why don't you consider the subtleties of my character drawing?" Well, the psychology at the Haymarket consists of just one idea—that of an adoring wife who learns that it is better to know her husband's errors and forgive them than to credit him with illusory virtues. This is very well; it would make a piquant maxim, with a smack of Rochefoucauld and a pinch of Oscar Wilde; but to turn it into a four act play, that is a very different job.

Probably Mr. Wilde wrote the very clever speech at the end of Act II. before he wrote anything else. It is the speech in which Sir Robert Chiltern explains to his wife the psychological aspect of their relations now she finds that her idol is badly cracked. But having administered the prescription to Lady Chiltern he has nothing left. We get the philosophy at one dose, so to speak, and then there is nothing for us but a commonplace adventuress, the bracelet, a stolen letter and so forth. There is not enough psychology to go round. Briefly, that is the trouble with Mr. Wilde's amusing play, and it is not disguised by the pleasantries poured out by Mr. Hawtrey with a happy-go-lucky, hit-or-miss profusion. Chiltern wanders through Act III. bemoaning his fate, as who should say, "My dear boy, I have left all my psychology in the second act; you must help me out by listening to my tale of woe till I give the cue for the lady with the bracelet." Perhaps that unfortunate ornament has no more to do with the intellectual interest than Mr. Wilde's curious notion that an Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs is master of the Cabinet; but these frivolities are forced on me by a primitive

method of dramatic construction. After all, the Literary Drama will not demean itself by setting out with a sufficient supply of character, so as not to leave both hero and heroine perfectly threadbare before they are half-way.

Mr. Wilde is indisputably a born writer; that he is also a born dramatist it is not so easy to determine. But as a public entertainer his success is manifest. I laugh by anticipation at his new farce, which will be produced at the St. James's after this article has passed out of my hands into those of the Binder who has the grim decision of the Button Moulder in *Peer Gynt*. In the next number of this magazine I hope to find Mr. Wilde still blooming at the St. James's, and Mr. Comyns Carr's new production at the Comedy, *A Leader of Men*, also in abundant feather. The dramatic critic may be stony-hearted, but he has no real taste for the mortuary notice.

#### POSTSCRIPTUM.

I have escaped from the clutches, or stitches, of the Binder to say that the laugh by anticipation at Mr. Oscar Wilde's new piece was happily prophetic. There is no psychology in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, but a great deal of agreeable fooling. When Mr. Wilde throws aside all affectation of being serious, his genius finds full scope. You are invited not to a dissection of character, but to a merry imbroglio of pure farce, interspersed with muffins. Indeed, the only criticism I have to offer is, that the elasticity of the muffins in the second act does not stretch across the gap in the fantasy when Mr. Alexander, who appears in mourning for a dead and imaginary brother, has finished reproaching Mr. Aynesworth—a great eater of muffins—for impersonating that mythical relative. The young women in the piece have a strong family likeness to certain heroines of Mr. W. S. Gilbert; but Mr. Alexander, as a foundling who was put, when an infant, by mistake for the M.S. of a three volume novel, into a black bag, and left in

the cloak-room of a railway station, is a delightful creation. Moreover, the fun depends much less than usual on the paradoxes which have become as commonplace as the mottoes in Christmas crackers. When Miss Rose Leclercq—whose appearance in any part is always a joy to me—cross-examines Mr. Alexander as to his qualifications for marriage with her daughter, and decides that the young lady cannot marry into a family with no visible origin but a cloak-room, I question whether in the whole range of farce there is a more mirthful scene.

As for *A Leader of Men*, it proves to be a work of considerable promise. The author has essayed to contrast the private and public life of the politician. We see a Prime Minister and a Labour leader; the one takes three lumps of sugar in his tea, and the other has a habit of spouting what Dizzy called "Sadler's Wells sarcasm" in the middle of a drawing-room. This is not quite impressive, perhaps, but it is as good as most representations of the politician's dual existence, from Bulwer Lytton's *Money* to Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's *Bauble Shop*. The best thing in Mr. Charles Ward's play is the character of Mrs. Dundas, who falls in love, rather unaccountably, with the Labour leader. By a stroke of good fortune for the author, this part is played by Miss Marion Terry, whose peculiar quality of womanly sympathy always lays a magic spell upon me. How exquisite she was in *Guy Domville*! How the almost imperceptible delicacies of Mr. Henry James radiated from her presence! Had Mr. James handled the whole of his play as skilfully as he drew the widow to whom Mr. Domville behaved so oddly, and whom Miss Marion Terry played so beautifully, I might have written no epitaph. In Mr. Ward's drama Miss Terry is simply a sun of grace and tenderness, shedding light and warmth through a story, which, without her, might be cold and lifeless.

L. F. AUSTIN.

## THE CENSORSHIP OF THE STAGE.

THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY CHRONICLE.

SIR,—I am so thoroughly in sympathy with any and every protest against the Censorship of the Stage that I should be quite content to accept Mr. William Archer's deliverances on the subject as they stand without caring to criticise the puzzle-headedness which invariably characterises that gentleman's thought and style, even when he is on the right side. Unfortunately, however, I have read in connection with his fairly coherent letter to *The Daily Chronicle*, the extraordinary article which he has just published, to please the prigs and the Puritans, in the *Contemporary Review*. In other words, if he were contending that the drama, like all art, should flourish independently of any kind of obstruction, should be absolutely and unreservedly free from any sort of State or civic or critical interference, I should cordially agree with him and wish him "God speed." But he is doing nothing of the kind. He is merely suggesting that we should exchange one kind of tyranny for another, for one infinitely more dangerous. His contention is that we should turn from the light-handed ministry of the Lord Chamberlain to the heavy-handed ministrations of the County Council, that instead of the late Mr. Pigott we should have a re-cuscitated Kirk Session!

Now, as I have already suggested, I have not one word to say in defence of the Lord Chamberlain. The blunders of the late Licensor of Plays were deplorable, from the moment when he first began to forbid the didactic dramas of the Second Empire (now freely re-emerging on our own stage) to the moment when he refused to license the quasi-pious muse of Mr. Oscar Wilde. He stood for Church and State, and he refused to have God's documents even pamed in the devil's temple; at the same time, he gave the devil himself *carte blanche* in the way of smutty suggestion and indecent exposure. All this was very sad. But how did it end? Before very long the Licensor began to feel that public opinion was too strong for him. One by one the "masterpieces" discovered by Mr. Archer and his friends *did* have a hearing. The era of the pathological play and the sepulchral *matinée* dawned at last, and full noontide was reached when Mr. Pigott, who had refused "Les Lionnes Pauvres," gave his approval to "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." Sex-mania, in a hundred forms, invaded the stage, and Mr. William Archer was happy. He himself avows, in both letter and article, that the drama, the real drama, has lately been flourishing; by which he means, I presume, that it has at last reached the same apex of dismal impropriety as the literature of the "Yellow Book" and the art of Mr. Aubrey Beardsley. But even this, even the theatrical apotheosis of the great god Pan, does not content him. He fumes and frets because high jinks are still possible in theatres and music-halls, despite his favourite prescription of Ibsen and low spirits. He wants the drama to be free, but he is alarmed when it becomes free and easy.

Here, in a nutshell, is Mr. William Archer's argument that the censorship of plays should be taken away from the Lord Chamberlain and given to the County Council. "No one denies," he says, "that the County Council is a reasonably democratic assembly—that it fairly represents a widely popular electorate. Why then should we fear that a body which expresses the will of the people should tyrannously thwart the will of the people in the matter of amusement? This is the sheer inconsequence of panic." I won't stay to inquire what Mr. Archer means by the terms "reasonably democratic" and "fairly represents," though I protest *en passant* against the disingenuous use of the qualifying adverbs. What Mr. Archer means generally is that a majority of administrators chosen by the electorate is far more likely to license plays judiciously than a Court official who is guided entirely by his own free judgment. I deny this proposition altogether. Personally, I far prefer one tyrant to many, and when the power of many tyrants is based merely upon a greater or smaller majority it is the most dangerous tyranny of all. We have very recently had an illustration of the extent to which the ignorance and prejudice of a few "individual citizens," as Mr. Archer calls them, can infringe on public liberty. Your "crank," your Puritan, your choice of the electorate, is swayed by no consideration for individual opinion; he holds himself responsible, and rightly, only to the other "cranks" and Puritans, who have elected him and are of his way of thinking. A Court official, on the other hand, having few prejudices one way or the other, is guided to no little extent by the public sentiment in general, including that of minorities. Mr. Pigott again and again gave his *cachet* to productions which he personally detested; a Star Chamber of Puritans would license nothing of which it conscientiously disapproved.

"The will of the people" indeed! Wherever that has conquered, there has been no art whatever. It is not the will of the people that concerns us, but the will of the artist, which should be absolute.

Mr. Archer is a Scotchman, but he has studied Scottish history to little purpose if he is unaware of the performances of that highly moral and enlightened body, the "Kirk Session"—a body which derived its strength from the will of the people, and which, in the name of Morality and Religion, darkened the national life for many centuries. The members of the Kirk Session were many of them men of noble character, men who began by preaching the gospel of free thought and free speech to a priest-bound generation, but who ended by driving Liberty out of the land altogether; for they loved Liberty as Mr. Archer loves it—that is, as a means to the advancement of their own superstitious ideas. If the Kirk Session had possessed the power of "licensing" Literature, the world would never have heard of Robert Burns, and Scotchmen would never have become the free men of the world. The power by which Mr. Archer proposes to guide the Drama would be simply another Kirk Session. Individual citizens representing the "will of the people" would deal gently enough, no doubt, with the drama of education, but the higher drama of life and character would be driven for ever from the

stage. There is, in fact, only one way for either Art or Literature—free and unrestricted expression all along the line. Suppression of individual feeling or opinion, under any pretext whatever, is fatal to intellectual progress.

Even as matters stand at present, England is not a pleasant country for an artist to live in. Mr. Archer would render the artist's life in it impossible. In addition to the newly-invented tyranny of the Press, which is rapidly silencing by clamour nearly every independent thinker who still survives, we should have the organised tyranny of faddists chosen by an ignorant electorate. We may guess what would be in store for us from Mr. Archer's tone of rejoicing over recent developments of the drama. He informs us, with unmistakeable jubilation, that the higher drama is developing and emerging. A glance at the advertising columns of the daily newspapers should make him wiser. There never was a period in theatrical history when plays were so few, and variety entertainments, under the disguise of plays, were so many. Does Mr. Archer know *why*? The reason is, that a Kirk Session of small critics, representing a Cockney electorate, has been insisting that audiences should accept, willy-nilly, the drama of sex-mania, the purposeless play with a purpose. It has been dinned into our ears, from a hundred journalistic pulpits, that Dulness and Dirt are to be the sole study of the dramatist, and that any piece which is pathological is in the nature of a "masterpiece." Well, the playgoing public, having tried the "masterpieces" and found them wanting, has rushed in sheer despair to the variety entertainment, which is at least lively, which is at least amusing. What the "Holy Willie" of the *World* demands now is, practically, that a licensing committee chosen by the electorate should render mere amusement impossible—that, in other words, an intelligent "majority," elected by members of the community who do not like the theatre, should impose its will upon that "minority" by which the theatre and the music-hall are supported. Small wonder that theatrical managers, having their choice between a lesser evil and a greater, prefer the domination of the Lord Chamberlain.

As I write a case in point occurs, with the production of Mr. Pinero's new play at the Garrick Theatre, pronounced by some of your contemporaries a "masterpiece." I have not seen this play, but I yield to no one in my admiration for the cleverness of its author. What occurs to me, however, if I may be guided by the public reports, is that this piece is just such a production as would be freely licensed and rapturously approved by the new Kirk Session. "Surely," Mr. Archer may say, "an argument in my favour." By no means. The new Kirk Session, like its prototype, would countenance any treatment of social and religious subjects so long as the argument was on the side of conventional morality and religion; it would laud to the heavens as bold, original, and unconventional, productions which were secretly respectful to the existing formulas; but it would suppress, at the same time, any argument on the other side. The production of "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" is, I

ATE

L. PA

understand, one in which the heroine, after throwing the Bible into the fire, plucks it from the burning, and sobs over it hysterically, preparatory to retiring into the odour of sanctity with "a clergyman and his sister." Is it necessary to say, to anyone acquainted with life, that such a scene is as gross a caricature of Socialism and Freethought as Lord Tennyson's picture of "an atheist" in the "Promise of May"? No woman brought up as Agnes had been, no woman who knows what Freethought and Socialism are, could have been guilty of so gross an absurdity. But that is neither here nor there. My contention is that the superficially unconventional play would be approved by Mr. Archer and the Kirk Session, while the really unconventional play would be rejected with horror. Can my reader conceive a scene in which a hero or heroine threw the Bible into the fire, while proclaiming the evils which, to his or her thinking, it had caused to humanity? Yet such a scene would be as defensible as, and possibly less absurd than, the other. If we are to have freedom of utterance (which I, for one, claim) let us have it, I repeat, all along the line. Do not let us be deluded into the belief that the pathological drama, written half-heartedly, in defence of formulas approved by the "will of the people," is any real advance on the old-fashioned drama written for public amusement. If Mr. Pinero is to have the right to burlesque Freethought and free thinkers (and I, for one, would certainly give him that right), and to beg the whole social question with a religious platitude, let other men also have the right to treat morality and religion as *subjects*. This, under the supervision of a council founded on "the will of the people," they would never be suffered to do. In a word, Art need not be free at all, unless it is free altogether.

One word, finally, on your leading article concerning the new selection for the Licensership of Plays. I think it is a subject for rejoicing, not for wailing, that an unknown man, a man presumably without any kind of intellectual prejudice or vested interest, has been chosen. If we must have a Licensor, it is as well to have one with as small a sense of moral responsibility as possible. God forbid that we should have an intelligent busybody, who imagined it his business either to restrict or to "advance" the drama, in the interest of any formulas whatever.—I am, &c.,

ROBERT BUCHANAN.

March 14.

which had sent him to sleep. Alas, he found it impossible to fix his mind upon a dry article upon "Guns" while his ears were being assaulted by a bombardment of vocal exercises.

The Colonel, a widower, was devoted to his Evelyn, and had already suffered many a mild rebuff rather than disturb her pursuits. But he had made him wiser, and he recognised that rebuff could only certainly be secured by flight. Going softly to his room, he obtained his hat and umbrella, and glided like a frock-coated ghost into the street. He found the pavement damp, reflecting the yellow light of the lamps, the damp pavement reflecting the yellow light of the lamps. In the distance a pianoforte organ was slowly playing out Mascagni's "Intermezzo."

As a comedian of the most humorous type, Mr. W. S. Penley is famed the world over, but it is not generally known that "Charley's Aunt," is a composer of music.



"I AM NO ORDINARY COMPOSER."

From a photograph by T. C. Turner & Co., 10, Barnsbury Park, N.

"I compose for my own amusement," said Mr. Penley to me, as I called on him at the scene of his most brilliant successes — the Globe Theatre. "The only pieces of my composition, however, that are before the public are three plantation songs, one of which you are going to publish. I appreciate the honour, but, I can assure you, I have no ambition to shine as a musician."

"Then you can say, 'I am no ordinary composer,' as well as 'I am no ordinary woman?'"

Mr. Penley laughed. "I may tell you I love good music," he remarked, "especially church music. I have been singing all my life. I am an old Abbey boy; I was in the Chapel Royal choir, and also in the Duchess of Edinburgh's private choir. For two years and a half I was at the Russian Embassy, and I have sung at Farm Street, and at St. Joseph's Retreat, at Highgate. At one time I was the principal bass singer at Bellew's Chapel, in Bloomsbury. You are surprised to hear that I sing bass," continued Mr. Penley, raising his voice to an upper C. "But I do, and although the work I am doing now isn't conducive to the production of bass notes, my old vocal powers would soon come back again if I were to take a brief rest. I have written music of various kinds, from gavottes to hymns and chants. But, as I told you just now, I do not aspire to fame as a composer: I write music simply as a pastime."

Vol. I.—2.

2019-03-16

Mr. Penley has several good stories of his career as a vocalist.

"I obtained my first engagement as a chorister," he said, "with Miss Sheridan, at the Opera Comique, next door. My neighbour in the chorus was a tenor who stood about six feet two, but had a very weak voice. The management came to the conclusion that it was the big fellow who made all the noise, and I got the sack. This hurt my feelings, and I protested, with the result that my notice to leave was suspended. Then they discovered that it was I who had the big voice; and after that the other man got the sack."

When Mr. Penley was playing in "Trial by Jury," he was also a member of a church choir. Here he had a somewhat extraordinary experience, which I will relate in his own words:—"You know," said the famous comedian, "I open my mouth very wide when I sing, and the spectacle I presented on this occasion had such an effect on the nerves of another member of the choir, who was singing a duet with me, that he became hysterical and shrieked out. To save the situation, the clergyman shouted promptly, 'We will sing the 350th hymn.' After that," added Mr. Penley, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, "I sang behind a screen."



"I AM NO ORDINARY WOMAN."

From a photograph by T. C. Turner & Co., 10, Barnsbury Park, N.

It was now time for Mr. Penley to "go on." As we parted, he shook me heartily by the hand, and said: "I think THE STRAND MUSICAL MAGAZINE is an excellent idea, and I wish it every success."

"Lucky for you that *Dr. Bill* had been such a good physician."

"Yes; but I wasn't long doomed to failure, for after *The Struggle for Life* came *Sunlight and Shadow*, which compensated for the previous disappointment.

\* \* \*

"When *Mrs. Langtry* left the *St. James's* I succeeded her, and produced *The Idler* in February, 1891. Since then, as you know, we have had *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Liberty Hall*, and now *Mrs. Tanqueray*."

"And the best play you have produced is?—"

"*The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* undoubtedly."

"With which you resume on returning to town at the end of the month?"

"Yes; and I don't anticipate having to change the bill for some time. But one never knows, and I am prepared with a successor. It will either be a play which *H. A. Jones* is just finishing or a costume piece by *Henry James*. No; they are neither of them altogether on the lines of the 'new drama.'"

And now it is time to leave. I don't know with which of his favourite amusements *Mr. Alexander* contemplates employing the time until luncheon—riding, driving or fencing; but he is certainly entitled to some recreation after the worries of the morning.

"Good-bye; come and see us again to-night; I was off colour on Monday; you may find a little more devil in *Aubrey* now."

And with a final plunge into the whisky and seltzer bath I departed.

\*

# The Era.

MR JAS. B. CURRY, the Midland Railway Company's theatrical agent, has been presented by Mr C. J. Abud, acting-manager for Madame Sarah Bernhardt's provincial matinée tour, with a handsome gold ring, in recognition of his attentions in connection with the excellent railway arrangements that were made for the French tragédienne and her company.

Season  
1894.

2019-03 Jissen Women's University Library

114



# Liverpool Daily Post.

Madame Sarah Bernhardt has announced twenty subscription Saturdays, in Paris, beginning on December 1st, and ending April 13th, the subscription being divided into two series of ten nights each. M. Coquelin's name is mentioned beside that of the manageress, and in the list of probable productions appear Mr. Pinero's "Second Mrs. Tanqueray," Mr. Oscar Wilde's "Salome," and "Falstaff," by the late Paul Dolair, the piece in which Parisians are to see the tragedy of Prince Hal.

October 15.

1894.

MADAME SARAH BERNHARDT AS  
LA TOSCA.

A shrewd remark was made in a London journal this week on an imitation of the great Sarah Bernhardt. The ability of the imitator was admitted. The mimicry was confessed to be exact and admirable. But the gift was not there of finding that within which when it shines forth in action produces what we know as Sarah Bernhardt's acting. One *artiste* had been successfully imitated because she was "all outside." Another had been successfully caricatured because her style provoked in the imitator humorous exaggeration. Madame Bernhardt had been only copied. The copy had not gone beneath the surface, where all this wonderful actress's great effects really originate.

Those who saw "La Tosca" performed yesterday afternoon at the Shakespeare Theatre—which the attraction had served to densely pack—must have felt that the criticisms passed on the clever copyist was likely to be exact'ly just. Madame Bernhardt seizes on her audience by grasps as sudden and powerful as those of the most sensational melodrama, but in looking back on the effects she has produced one is struck with the comparative quiet—we carefully say the *comparative* quiet—with which she has accomplished her greatest achievements, and the explanation of such success, so won, is to be found, so to speak, in the inwardness of the motive of each action; in the fact that each grows or springs out of some innermost feeling of which it is the vivid expression. In a rough sort of way you know from point to point what Madame Bernhardt will essay to do; but it is futile and utterly unintelligent to anticipate in a rough sort of way what is sure to be marked by the most refined contrasts and the most sincere gradations. She is not the same when she is toying with her lover as when she is making love to him, nor the same when she is making love to him as when she is adoring him. She is not the same when ordinary jealousy is making her pettish as she is when deadly jealousy is making her desperate. She is not the same when she is execrating her enemy as when she is killing him, nor the same when she is killing him as when she is screaming taunts into his dying ear. This is what underlies the remark often made that she is "so perfectly natural." None of us have seen enough real tragedy to be sure as experts that any performance of tragedy is "perfectly natural;" but we all perceive by human instinct what it is that Sarah Bernhardt is really feeling when the character she is performing does tragic things.

Scarcely another part in her great repertoire affords so many great opportunities—such continuous grand opportunity—for histrionic power of this supreme and superb character as that which Madame Bernhardt yesterday performed. The play is an admirable one, well designed and carried out; having but little in it of the lengthy talk which in most French plays conflicts with English taste; and blemished, if it is blemished, by only one fault—namely, that the horrors are somewhat too dreadful to be borne. For our own part, we dispute that there is either fault or blemish. The situation of the dreadful torturing scene is probable, and legitimately brought about. It is only mental torture, and that in the most pathetic form, that the audience actually behold. To have lost so thrilling and touching a scene for any scruple would have robbed the stage unnecessarily of one of the greatest triumphs that ever illustrated its capability of piercing the heart.

"La Tosca" has five acts. The general story of it is well known from English representations. Our business is to record the rendering of it by

La Tosca

Madame Bernhardt and her colleagues. Reader will remember the effective opening in which the painter Cavaradosi is seen at work on his picture, rendered dangerous to his peace by the reminiscence it contains of the features of the Marchioness Attavanti—not that he is "smitten" except with admiration of the face, but it ignites the first spark of jealousy in the mind—as yet scarcely in the heart—of La Tosca, the great Roman singer, he and she being equally and rapturously in love with each other. The spice of half-playful suspicion which gives excitement to this scene is rendered with matchless sparkle by Madame Bernhardt, and then she passes into one of her most winsome moods as La Tosca jokingly tries to persuade her painter-lover that he is to sacrifice his moustache, of which she is evidently passionately fond, as a concession to his aristocratic and Church enemies. There is a light, crisp touch in this act which exquisitely postpones the grave interest that is presently to arise.

In act the second, Madame Bernhardt continues to exhibit the mercurial nature of the artist, and the details of her behaviour at the Queen's party, where she is expected to sing in honour of the victory over Napoleon which never takes place, are very happily piquant. But when the unequal struggle between her and Scarpia, the head of the Papal police, begins, a new phase of her character appears. Her jealousy becomes active and impulsive. She would willingly avoid singing altogether. In the end she is saved the necessity, for Queen Marie Caroline receives the overwhelming news that Marengo is a Bonaparte victory, not a defeat. Maddened by the sight and possession of a fan which points to a liaison between her lover and the fair Marchioness, she rushes off to find him at his country villa, and is closely followed thither by Scarpia and his agents.

The object of these persons is not so much to find cause of offence against the Liberal painter as to recover a fugitive from prison, a brother of the Marchioness. One of the most striking points of the piece is when, at the beginning of the third act, La Tosca is suddenly plunged from a state of satisfaction into which she has passed from her jealous tantrums, upon her lover's explanations, into a paralysing depth of despair, as she realises that she has brought the police down upon Cavaradosi by falling into the silly lure which Scarpia tried upon her. It is a sight to see the blanched face—the horror-stricken collapse of the motionless figure. Hastily, the poor prisoner is hurried off to the hiding-place in the well which has been selected for him, while La Tosca and her lover are face to face with the necessity of meeting the subtle and stern police questioners with the secret fresh in their keeping.

Now begins the indescribable greatest scene of the play. At first La Tosca has no idea of the lengths to which the inquisition will be pushed. Even when the painter is taken into the next room, though she is troubled enough, and sits feverishly drumming the table with her fingers, it is plain that the tension of her anxiety is within bounds. The infamous and cold-blooded Scarpia begins to question her, foreseeing that by torturing her mind he will get more from her than he will obtain by torturing her lover's body. Her excitement rises as dark, vague apprehensions begin to form in her. "Jo cherche, je cherche," she exclaims distractedly, as she taps her forehead with her forefinger. But at last the inquisitor makes her understand by plain language that her lover will be physically tortured in the adjoining chamber, and then a great and protracted burst of agony ensues. In the stress of her anguish, appalling to behold, poor Cavaradosi's voice is heard conjuring her to be firm, and to reveal nothing; but the wrothly-plied questions of Scarpia produce the most frightful strain of suffering in a mind almost maddened by the thought of

what her lover is enduring. Words cannot describe the range and variety—what is more important, no idea can be given at second hand of the reality—of Madame Bernhardt's paroxysms. Still she remains reticent, though hard-pressed, as only a woman under cruel inquisition can be, until, at a truly wonderful climax of misery, Scarpia encourages her to advance towards the open door of the torture chamber. Here her wailing petitions to her lover to give way or to let her give way are agonising. Her cry, "Mon Mario adoré," will never be forgotten by those who hear it. What a concentration, what a quintessence, of love and suffering for the loved one! Then the secret is got. The tortured man comes reeling forth. The fugitive prisoner is brought in dead from the well, where he has killed himself rather than be taken. The curtain falls as Cavaradosi, tortured in vain, reproaches La Tosca for having sacrificed his friend. Well might Madame Bernhardt receive at this point as the curtain fell on Act Three the honour of several tumultuous recalls.

The fourth act is scarcely less great. The painter is in prison, about to be shot. Scarpia is voluptuously enjoying his supper. He has now complicated the situation by conceiving a passion of the coarsest kind for La Tosca. In a long and splendidly sustained scene he resists his attempts to bargain thus with her for her lover's life, which all the same he does not mean effectively to grant. At last she pretends to yield. While he writes out a safe conduct her hand stealthily creeps towards and clutches a large knife on the table. This is a most blood-curdling action. When Scarpia approaches to claim his due, with a sudden flash of steel brought down fiercely into his bosom dagger-wise, he is struck fatally, and reels away to a settee. Here, as he lies almost insensible, the frenzied woman shrieks in his ear her angry exhortations to die. She retires, still grasping her knife. He rises unsteadily, moves slowly towards her. It is a terrible crisis, for her hand is again uplifted, and she may have to strike a second blow. She stands there calm, strong, and with the vengeance of an implacable deity in her countenance. But enough has been done. The wretched man falls backwards just as he sees the avenging figure. Then, with tragic solemnity, La Tosca extricates the safe conduct from his stiffening fingers, places two candles on the ground, one on each side of the figure as it lies there, lays a large crucifix on the breast of her slaughtered enemy, and calmly retires. The merciful tell one of the enormous exertions of the wonderful passara. Madame Bernhardt not only meets them, but raises the scene to the highest power of tragic imagination.

Only the last act remains, in which La Tosca has to satisfy her lover in prison that his escape, now expected, has not been obtained at an unworthy price—which, of course, is done in her own most touching tones—and then has to cope with the awful reality when she finds that Mario Cavaradosi has really been shot. The surprise, the actual despair, as first she fears he has failed, and then finds he is dead of bullet-wounds, are rapidly followed by the poor woman's leap into the Tiber, which ends one of the saddest and most natural stories of tragically frustrated love that ever was imagined and executed by genius.

Madame Bernhardt was very ably and gracefully supported by M. Laroche as the painter-lover, and the part of Scarpia was excellently played by M. Darmon. All the characters, indeed, were efficiently played; and a special line of praise should be given to Esbè, the sacristan—a rich old portraiture; and to Gennarino, the sacristan's boy—a bright young portraiture; the former by M. Lacroix, and the latter by Madile, senior.

Saturday  
September  
22.  
1894.

The Daily Graphic. "A Story of Waterloo"  
Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup> 1894

MR. IRVING AT BRISTOL.

"A STORY OF WATERLOO."

"A Story of Waterloo," by Dr. A. Conan Doyle, produced by Mr. Irving in Bristol, is not, as in the short speech wrung from him at the close of the representation Mr. Irving stated, its author's first dramatic essay. "Foreign Policy," a one-act play by Dr. Doyle, was given on June 3rd, 1893, at Terry's Theatre; and one other piece, at least, bears traces of the subtle humour of the same delightful author. With "A Story of Waterloo," however, Dr. Doyle puts in his first claim to be considered a serious aspirant for dramatic honours, and the announcement of his appearance in that character was sufficient to give the Prince's Theatre, Bristol, the look of a London house on a first night. Considered, as it should be, as a sketch of character rather than a play, "A Story of Waterloo" is entitled to consideration. It is not particularly happy in construction, the exits and entrances of one character at least being positively clumsy. It is brightly and humorously written, however, and at the close has a touch of genuine pathos.

Of the 3rd Grenadiers, 1,000 strong, who, under Maitland, held the farmhouse of Hougoumont during the battle of Waterloo, and in so doing secured the ultimate triumph of British arms, one only, in the year 1876, survives, and his last day has been reached.

He is a certain Corporal Brewster, who, during the fight, has exhibited a singular trait of heroism, driving through a wall of flame, at the imminent risk of his life, the waggon containing the ammunition, without which the continued defence of the position was impossible. For this deed the Regent, the "first gentleman of Europe," has fastened on his breast a medal. "The regiment is proud of you," says the Prince. "And I'm proud of the regiment," replies the undaunted Corporal, winning from the laughing Regent the response to Lord Hill, "And a damned good answer too." Proud of Brewster have been not only the 3rd Battalion of Guards now in the new-fangled spirit, and though promotion has somehow passed him over, and he remains but "good master corporal," men in the line and in the artillery sixty years later find their way into the little Woolwich cottage to gaze on or chat with the hero of Hougoumont. The last day of his earthly career brings with it a species of "lightning before death." Knowing him alone, his pretty grandniece Norah has come from Essex to attend upon him. Sergeant McDonald has paid more than one visit, allured partly thereto by the bright eyes of Norah, has given him a handsome pipe with an amber mouthpiece, and a pound of tobacco, and an invitation to the mess of the Royal Artillery. Greatest honour of all, the new colonel of what was his own regiment has come to slip a "fiver" into his purse and ask for his reminiscences of Waterloo. These consecutive and "violent delights" are too much for the enfeebled old man. He falls into a state of lethargy, partly sleep, partly syncope, from which he rouses himself a moment. Rising erect from his seat he cries in a voice loud, audible, and almost rotund, "The Guards want powder and by God they shall have it," and slips back into his chair, and the muster-roll of the Guards who fought at Waterloo is complete. This is the outline of what can scarcely be called a story. In the filling up is what is really valuable. The details of the character have remarkable significance and truth. Brewster is, of course, a praiser of past times. The erudition of his niece, who is able to read, impresses him, and her journey of forty miles by rail is a feat all but demanding a medal like his own; the musket which breaks apparently in half to admit of being loaded at the wrong end is an ingenious toy, but he guesses they will have to go back to "brown Bess" when there is work to be done. All modern changes and appliances are measured by what they would have appeared to "the Dook," and when consolation for modern non-combativeness is found in the prospect of the promised and first battle of Armageddon, he guesses that the 3rd Guards will be there, and "the Dook" will have something to say. In the description of the fight the

senility and garrulity of the old man are most vividly portrayed. By the aid of a thimble, a will-box, and a bottle of paregoric, which last is very good for the "toobes," the position of the allied forces and their assailants is exhibited. Brewster's own recollections of the fight are nebulous. There was a deal of smoke, that, at least, he knows. What most dwells in a mind tenacious of trifles is that at Brussels he lent Jabez Smith, his rear-rank man, three half-crowns, the repayment of which had been faithfully promised. A French spear at Quatre Bras had, however, exempted poor Jabez from pecuniary responsibility, and now, after sixty years, Brewster has good reason to regard "them three half-crowns as good as lost." For the rest, Brewster is exigent as regards his rations, has strong views on the virtues of tea, and bursts into fits of unmanly and almost idiotic weeping when he breaks his pipe.

With much care Mr. Irving indicates the characteristics of this sympathetic, though not very dramatic, old man. From the outset death has set his seal upon him. The cord is loosened, the familiar and scarcely-regarded discomfort in the "toobes" is arresting the breath, the tottering limbs are losing their last remnant of power, and the querulous spirit is passing slowly, but surely away. To show successive phases of demolition and decay, to begin in a pianissimo, to end in silence, is a difficult feat, in the accomplishment of which Mr. Irving carried away the public. In one or two scenes a delivery more conventional and less realistic would have augmented the poetry, supposing poetry to be desirable. Action less feverish and constant would, moreover, have produced a stronger impression. Granting, as one is bound, the actor's conception, the whole exercises a marvellous influence upon a public which is indeed stirred to ecstasy. Mr. Irving was summoned before the curtain four times. Miss Annie Hughes was delightful as a rustic maiden. Mr. Fuller Mellish and Mr. Haviland were seen in other parts. "The Bells" followed.

Liverpool Daily Post.

Monday  
October 15  
1894

It is said that Mr. Willard means to take almost a clear year off duty when he has finished his season at the Garrick and played for the week or two at Liverpool, Birmingham, and Brighton. His American tours have meant several years of exceedingly hard, if exceedingly profitable, work for Mr. Willard, and he now intends to rest until, in the autumn of 1895, he starts again in the United States.

Punch.

Season  
1894.

"IZEYL."

WHAT extremely funny names these are!  
*Izeyl,*  
*Harastri, Yoghi, Siddarathra,* They reveal  
Oriental birth like *Scyndia*;  
But we feel  
*Tukkututti* takes the cake, ha, ha,  
*Izeyl!*  
What's a "*Tukkututti*," *qu'est-ce donc ça*  
*Izeyl!*  
*Tiens, c'est un drol' de nom, n'est-ce pas?*  
Sounds a deal  
More like some wild comic opera,  
*Vauderille,*  
Than a drama mixed up with *Boudhah,*  
*Izeyl.*  
You are far from comic—very far!—  
*Izeyl!*  
In the clutches of the King's mamma,  
How you squeal!  
*Mais "le Tukkututti," oh, la la!*  
*C'est vrai qu'il*  
*Est un nom charmant. Farewell! Ta-ta!*  
*Izeyl.*

Madame Bernhardt and her colleagues. Reader will remember the effective opening in which the painter Cavaradossi is seen at work on his picture, rendered dangerous to his peace by the reminiscence it contains of the features of the Marchioness Attavanti—not that he is "smitten" except with admiration of the face, but it ignites the first spark of jealousy in the mind—as yet scarcely in the heart—of La Tosca, the great Roman singer, he and she being equally and rapturously in love with each other. The spice of half-playful suspicion which gives excitement to this scene is rendered with matchless sparkle by Madame Bernhardt, and then she passes into one of her most winsome moods as La Tosca jokingly tries to persuade her painter-lover that he is to sacrifice his moustache, of which she is evidently passionately fond, as a concession to his aristocratic and Church enemies. There is a light, crisp touch in this act which exquisitely postpones the grave interest that is presently to arise.

In act the second, Madame Bernhardt continues to exhibit the mercurial nature of the *artiste*, and the details of her behaviour at the Queen's party, where she is expected to sing in honour of the victory over Napoleon which never takes place, are very happily piquant. But when the unequal struggle between her and Scarpia, the head of the Papal police, begins, a new phase of her character appears. Her jealousy becomes active and impulsive. She would willingly avoid singing altogether. In the end she is saved the necessity, for Queen Marie Caroline receives the overwhelming news that Marengo is a Buonaparte victory, not a defeat. Maddened by the sight and possession of a fan which points to a *liaison* between her lover and the fair Marchioness, she rushes off to find him at his country villa, and is closely followed thither by Scarpia and his agents.

The object of these persons is not so much to find cause of offence against the Liberal painter as to recover a fugitive from prison, a brother of the Marchioness. One of the most striking points of the piece is when, at the beginning of the third act, La Tosca is suddenly plunged from the state of satisfaction into which she has passed from her jealous tantrums, upon her lover's explanations, into a paralysing depth of despair, as she realises that she has brought the police down upon Cavaradossi by falling into the silly *lure* which Scarpia tried upon her. It is a sight to see the blanched face—the horror-stricken collapse of the motionless figure. Hastily, the poor prisoner is hurried off to the hiding-place in the well which has been selected for him, while La Tosca and her lover are face to face with the necessity of meeting the subtle and stern police questioners with the secret fresh in their keeping.

Now begins the indescribable greatest scene of the play. At first La Tosca has no idea of the lengths to which the inquisition will be pushed. Even when the painter is taken into the next room, though she is troubled enough, and sits feverishly drumming the table with her fingers, it is plain that the tension of her anxiety is within bounds. The infamous and cold-blooded Scarpia begins to question her, foreseeing that by torturing her mind he will get more from her than he will obtain by torturing her lover's body. Her excitement rises as dark, vague apprehensions begin to form in her. "Je cherche, je cherche," she exclaims distractedly, as she taps her forehead with her forefinger. But at last the inquisitor makes her understand by plain language that her lover will be physically tortured in the adjoining chamber, and then a great and protracted burst of agony ensues. In the stress of her anguish, appalling to behold, poor Cavaradossi's voice is heard conjuring her to be firm, and to reveal nothing; but his pitifully-plied questions of Scarpia produce the most frightful strain of suffering in a mind almost maddened by the thought of

what her lover is enduring. Words cannot describe the range and variety—what is more important, no idea can be given at second hand of the reality—of Madame Bernhardt's paroxysms. Still she remains reticent, though hard-pressed, as only a woman under cruel inquisition can be, until, at a truly wonderful climax of misery, Scarpia encourages her to advance towards the open door of the torture chamber. Here her wailing petitions to her lover to give way or to let her give way are agonising. Her cry, "Mon Mario adoré," will never be forgotten by those who hear it. What a concentration, what a quintessence, of love and suffering for the loved one! Then the secret is got. The tortured man comes reeling forth. The fugitive prisoner is brought in dead from the well, where he has killed himself rather than be taken. The curtain falls as Cavaradossi, tortured in vain, reproaches La Tosca for having sacrificed his friend. Well might Madame Bernhardt receive at this point as the curtain fell on Act Three the honour of several tumultuous recalls.

The fourth act is scarcely less great. The painter is in prison, about to be shot. Scarpia is voluptuously enjoying his supper. He has now complicated the situation by conceiving a passion of the coarsest kind for La Tosca. In a long and splendidly sustained scene he resists his attempts to bargain thus with her for her lover's life, which all the same he does not mean effectively to grant. At last she pretends to yield. While he writes out a safe conduct her hand stealthily creeps towards and clutches a large knife on the table. This is a most blood-curdling action. When Scarpia approaches to claim his due, with a sudden flash of steel brought down fiercely into his bosom dagger-whys, he is struck fatally, and reels away to a settee. Here, as he lies almost insensible, the frenzied woman shrieks in his ear her angry exhortations to die. She retires, still grasping her knife. He rises unsteadily, moves slowly towards her. It is a terrible crisis, for her hand is again uplifted, and she may have to strike a second blow. She stands there calm, strong, and with the vengeance of an implacable deity in her countenance. But enough has been done. The wretched man falls backwards just as he nears the avenging figure. Then, with tragic solemnity, La Tosca extricates the safe conduct from his stiffening fingers, places two candles on the ground, one on each side of the figure as it lies there, lays a large crucifix on the breast of her slaughtered enemy, and calmly retires. The merciful tells one of the enormous exactions of the wonderful passage. Madame Bernhardt not only meets them, but raises the scene to the highest power of tragic imagination.

Only the last act remains, in which La Tosca has to satisfy her lover in prison that his escape, now expected, has not been obtained at an unworthy price—which, of course, is done in her own most touching tones—and then has to cope with the fearful reality when she finds that Mario Cavaradossi has really been shot. The surprise, the sudden despair, as first she fears he has fallen, and then finds he is dead of bullet-wounds, are rapidly followed by the poor woman's leap into the Tiber, which ends one of the saddest and most natural stories of tragically frustrated love that ever was imagined and executed by genius.

Madame Bernhardt was very ably and gracefully supported by M. Laroche as the painter-lover, and the part of Scarpia was excellently played by M. Darmont. All the characters, indeed, were efficiently played; and a special line of praise should be given to Eusèbe, the sacristan—a rich old portraiture; and to Gennarino, the sacristan's boy—a bright young portraiture: the former by M. Lacroix, and the latter by Madlle. Genoir.