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Oscar Wilde
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Vol. 4

MR. PINERO'S NEW PLAY.

[FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.]

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Such a friendship could hardly last, seeing that each believed herself to be engaged to Ernest Worthing. Soon they began to speak of their love-affairs; then arose a misunderstanding, which naturally began a quarrel. Peace was restored by the appearance of John and Algy, for the girls discovered the fraud as to the name that had been practised upon them, and therefore joined forces in an attack upon the impostors. So the men were left alone, and buried their grief in an orgie of crumpets and tea-cakes.

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No doubt, the tale sounds even more than "trivial." Certainly it cannot be pretended that in such matters as construction, invention—or adaptation—of subject, contrivance of comic business, or delineation of character, Mr. Wilde has shown much ability. However, the liveliness of the dialogue saved the piece—even rendered it very successful. I do not believe that the writing is so clever that it would have secured success but for the prestige of the theatre and name of the author, yet cannot deny that it contains many smart speeches. One can have too much of such sayings as "Divorces are made in heaven"—"to have lost one parent is a misfortune, to have lost both looks like carelessness"—or "I am only serious about my amusements." On the other hand, there are many clever jests in the play, and if the average were raised by judicious elimination of the numerous failures, everybody would be heartily amused by "The Importance of being Earnest."

One would rather have Mr. George Alexander doing work of greater value than playing a Charles Hawtreys part, yet must admit that it is pleasant to see how cleverly he did it. In the quickness and alertness of his really comic acting he gave a valuable lesson to the others, who, with the exception of Miss Rose Leclercq—she was an ideal Lady Bracknell—played rather heavily. It would be unfair to suggest that the acting of Miss Evelyn Millard, Miss Irene Vanbrugh, and Mr. Allan Aynesworth is not sound and clever, but at present their style is not sufficiently crisp and light.

"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST."

Mr. John Worthing, of the Manor House, Woolton, Shropshire, in order to explain to his pretty ward, Cecily, with whom he was not in love, his frequent visits to town, imagined the existence of a younger brother, whom he called Ernest, and pretended that he went to see him. When in London he, for no discoverable reason, called himself Ernest. These visits were not culpable in character, for he was courting honestly the Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax. Now, the two girls had what one may call Shandian views about names. By the way, did not Lytton, in "The Caxtons," use Sterne's idea to some extent? Lytton's name naturally comes into mind when one thinks of Mr. Oscar Wilde, for in one aspect the brilliant author of "Pelham" suggests the modern apostle of culture—fortunately, other aspects of Lytton excuse his weaknesses.

Gwendolen fell in love with John because she believed that his name was Ernest. Cecily became enamoured of the mere name of Ernest and the description of him given by John—in which she reminds one of a case cited by Burton in his "Anatomy of Melancholy"—and, being a girl whose studies in French seem to have extended to Marivaux, she actually went so far as to engage herself to this mere fiction. As soon as John, posing as Ernest, proposed to Gwendolen, he was accepted, but he was rather embarrassed to hear her say that his name, Ernest, vibrated in her soul. However, when he spoke to Lady Bracknell—her mother—difficulties arose, for he happened to be a foundling, and Lady Bracknell could not accept as son-in-law a nameless babe, found in a bag at a station. Gwendolen promised to be true despite Mamma's opposition.

Now it chanced that Gwendolen's cousin, Algernon Moncrieffe, was bosom friend of Worthing. Algy for a long time believed that his friend was Ernest, and did not know his country address. By accident

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One would rather have Mr. George Alexander doing work of greater value than playing a Charles Hawtrey part, yet must admit that it is pleasant to see how cleverly he did it. In the quickness and alertness of his really comic acting he gave a valuable lesson to the others, who, with the exception of Miss Rose Leclercq—she was an ideal Lady Bracknell—played rather heavily. It would be unfair to suggest that the acting of Miss Evelyn Millard, Miss Irene Vanbrugh, and Mr. Allan Aynesworth is not sound and clever, but at present their style is not sufficiently crisp and light.

"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST."

Mr. John Worthing, of the Manor House, Woolton, Shropshire, in order to explain to his pretty ward, Cecily, with whom he was not in love, his frequent visits to town, imagined the existence of a younger brother, whom he called Ernest, and pretended that he went to see him. When in London he, for no discoverable reason, called himself Ernest. These visits were not culpable in character, for he was courting honestly the Hon. Gwendolen Fairfax. Now, the two girls had what one may call Shandian views about names. By the way, did not Lytton, in "The Caxtons," use Sterne's idea to some extent? Lytton's name naturally comes into mind when one thinks of Mr. Oscar Wilde, for in one aspect the brilliant author of "Pelham" suggests the modern apostle of culture—fortunately, other aspects of Lytton excuse his weaknesses.

Gwendolen fell in love with John because she believed that his name was Ernest. Cecily became enamoured of the mere name of Ernest and the description of him given by John—in which she reminds one of a case cited by Burton in his "Anatomy of Melancholy"—and, being a girl whose studies in French seem to have extended to Marivaux, she actually went so far as to engage herself to this mere fiction. As soon as John, posing as Ernest, proposed to Gwendolen, he was accepted, but he was rather embarrassed to hear her say that his name, Ernest, vibrated in her soul. However, when he spoke to Lady Bracknell—her mother—difficulties arose, for he happened to be a foundling, and Lady Bracknell could not accept as son-in-law a nameless babe, found in a bag at a station. Gwendolen promised to be true despite Mamma's opposition.

Now it came to the Gwendolen's cousin, Algernon Moncrieff, her bosom friend of Worthing. Algy for a long time believed that his friend was Ernest, and did not know his country address. By accident

Sketch

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Whether Miss Ellen Terry will be a successful rival to Madame Réjane is a matter on which at present it seems unwise to offer an opinion—advice has been freely offered. I do not quite envy Mr. Comyns Carr his task of Englishing Sardou's play. Doubtless, in his "King Arthur," which is to precede it, we shall have a stately play, untainted by any common phrase, and the change from its lofty style to a just rendering of the gutter speeches of "Madame Free-and-Easy" will be very trying. Instead of suggesting that the part may not suit Miss Terry, I cannot help remarking that there seems little gain to the drama in presenting a deodorised version of a work that has little real value, and does not even show such a playwright as Sardou at his best, save in the prologue.

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Rumours which had got abroad concerning Mr. Pinero's new play, to which he has given—lengthy titles being now in fashion—the rather strange designation of "The Notorious Mrs. Ebb-smith," had added a keen zest of curiosity to the interest ordinarily awakened by the announcement of a new production from the author of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." The audience, therefore, hardly needed the earnest request of the management to be in their seats in good time to see the curtain rise on the piece last evening at the Garrick Theatre. It had been alleged that theological controversy was at the bottom of Mr. Pinero's latest invention, but rumour, as often happens, proves to have been at fault. We already have the theological novel, and in course of time Mr. Pinero may conceivably give us the theological play, but for the present he prefers once more to grapple with some of those questions which seem to engage most attention from modern speculators who occupy themselves with the reconstitution of the social fabric. In "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" he chose to show us the result of a chivalrous but mistaken attempt to rehabilitate a woman who has not only had faults, but who has led a life of downright profligacy. In "The Notorious Mrs. Ebb-smith" his aim has been to let us see what would be likely to happen to people who discarded altogether the

conventionality of married life to live together in what is called free union. It is no secret that there are in these days writers and thinkers of both sexes who attack and deride the institution of marriage. Mr. Pinero takes them at their word. He says to them, as it were, "Very well. Have your own way. We shall then see what we shall see." His heroine, if the word may be allowed, is a woman of unconventional training. She has early learned from her father's example, to baroque Socialist gatherings, for her heart is filled with pity for the poor suffering toilers bowed down by labour and care. Later, she has suffered from the tyranny of a harsh and tyrannical husband. This is the woman who, when she becomes a widow, and takes to nursing for a livelihood, falls in love with a patient under her charge, a man belonging to fashionable society, who has also had an unfortunate matrimonial experience and is separated from his wife. The pair agree to enter into a "free union," each being at liberty to leave the other should their companionship no longer seem agreeable, and they are determined to have all the social consequences of the step they have taken, glorying in their freedom from the shackles of conventionality. Such is, in brief, the situation of affairs out of which the story is unfolded. This bare mention is sufficient to show how far wider is the field open to the modern dramatist than that in which his predecessors were compelled to work. Whether, indeed, he should be allowed so ample a scope is a difficult matter to decide, and one that has been, and will continue to be, much controverted. Certainly things are openly referred to on the stage at present that until quite recently were never mentioned before mixed assemblages of men and women. It is obvious that many new and powerful dramatic elements have thus been brought into play, while it is equally obvious that to some extent at least men are debarred from taking the younger members of their family to the theatre. But beyond giving this word of warning to those whom it concerns, there is no necessity to go. Any one who imagined the new play at the Garrick to be an immoral play would be, as Carlyle would say, quite curiously wrong. It is on the contrary as orthodox in its morality as Hogarth's fine pictorial drama "The Rake's Progress."

When the curtain rises we are in Venice looking into a spacious apartment in a palazzo overlooking the Grand Canal. There is a little scene between an Italian man-servant and maid-servant which the author with some amount of daring has written entirely in Italian. One might for the moment imagine oneself in an Italian theatre. This, however, is merely a little artifice, designed to emphasize the fact that the scene is laid in a foreign land. It is in this foreign land, away from the prying English eyes and prating English tongues, that young Imcas Cleeve is staying with "Agnes," otherwise Mrs. Ebb-smith. One gathers that Cleeve has been engaged in politics, and has been on the high road to some great appointment when his domestic troubles have driven him from home. At Rome, where he has been ill, he has been nursed by Mrs. Ebb-smith, who accompanies him to Venice according to the compact of which mention has already been made. The pair are passionately fond of each other, and not a word of disagreement is heard. But already by the subtlest of subtle touches the author conveys the idea that there are dangers ahead for the parties to this irregular alliance. There is a good deal of vanity in young Cleeve. Almost unknown to himself he begins to regret his lost opportunities, and he is apt to refer to them as though they were past and done with in a way that begets uneasy suspicions in the mind of his partner. He notices too that she dresses plainly in a simple snuff-coloured dress, without trimming. It is but recently that he has vowed to devote himself with her to high aims, to literature, in which he is to earn as great a reputation as he would have achieved in politics. Doubts begin to suggest themselves to him. What if he should fail in literature? The thing is not impossible. A further cause of uneasiness lies in the fact that his partner thinks too little of him, and too much of her mission in life—for he is vain, and he craves applause. To a very great extent he has not been weaned away

from old habits and old prejudices. The woman he loves should be smartly dressed that she may be admired, and he has a splendid new gown made for her, with gold ornamentation. Yet, when it comes home, the intended recipient coolly asks him whether he would have her "hang" these things on her bones. Moreover, the presence in Venice of a friend of the young man's family, the Duke of St. Olipherts, bodes no good to the union. Cold, crafty, penetrating, the Duke is determined to leave no stone unturned to get young Cleeve away from his mistress. He sees the woman and she almost captivates even him; but he has no scruples in his dealings with women, and while he admires her for her spirit and resolution he works persistently for her downfall. It is a strange meeting this, between the daughter of the Socialist agitator and the Duke, whose notions of Socialism have been derived from one visit together with some club friends to a meeting in the East-end. When he asks to be informed how a man of his class strikes a person of her class, there is not a trace of resentment in his look as he listens to an eloquent denunciation of the idle rich, and it is altogether without passion, and with a considerable sense of humour, that he informs the lady in return how the absurdity of her platform utterances struck him on the occasion when he went to hear the "notorious Mrs. Ebb-smith" address the discontented toilers.

The scene in which the Duke is, as he says, "Trafalgar-squared," is conducted throughout with masterly ability by the author, but some credit for the remarkable effect created must be given to the performers, Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Mr. John Hare. Mr. Hare's Duke deserves to rank with the finest of his stage portraits. As one watches the calm, suave, incisive manner in which he gives off the gibes, sarcasms, and dexterous insinuations of this man who enjoys life and has no enthusiasm for anything or belief in anything or anybody, one seems to have known him for an age, so perfect is the presentment. Of Mrs. Patrick Campbell's performance too it would be difficult to speak in terms of excessive praise. The intense earnestness of her tones, the calm, placid look of her face, lighted up as with a mysterious light as she launches forth into denunciations of the oppressors of the poor, exalt the character in such a way that all the sneers of the Duke are powerless to make her look ridiculous. A still greater opportunity comes to her in the third of the four acts into which the piece is divided. It is here that the climax is reached. The persistent efforts of young Cleeve's friends have resulted in making him anxious, although he dares not avow the fact, to effect a nominal reconciliation with his wife. The couple, it is suggested, shall live apart under the same roof, and he shall thereby be free to go back and resume his interrupted career in London. The free union, it is clear, cannot bear the strain put upon it, and this is apparent to a friend whom Mrs. Ebb-smith has met abroad and who has become devotedly attached to her. The friend is a young widow travelling with her brother, a Yorkshire clergyman. This worthy couple offer the unhappy woman a home in their house, and, having half persuaded her to accept the invitation, the clergyman writes his address on the flyleaf of a Bible which he hands to her. Beside herself, Mrs. Ebb-smith in a moment of passionate rage and grief seizes the Bible (the word "Bible," by the way, is never mentioned, but the spectator sees what it is) and throws it in the fire, with the exclamation that it has "driven her mad," and that "she hates the sight of it." But better feelings prevail. She burns her hand in rescuing the volume from the flames, and she sinks down in a paroxysm of weeping. Mrs. Campbell's acting throughout this trying scene was full of pathetic expression, finely conveying the conflicting passions to which the woman is a prey, and the scene culminated, on the fall of the curtain, with a loud, hearty, spontaneous, and well-deserved tribute to the actress's genius. The last act unfortunately is the exciting and interesting of all. It simply represents an attempt by Cleeve's wife to get Mrs. Ebb-smith to go back to him (she having run away from him to live with the clergyman's sister), this being judged to be the only way to induce him to go back to work in

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Rumours which had got abroad concerning Mr. Pinero's new play, to which he has given—lengthy titles being now in fashion—the rather strange designation of "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith," had added a keen zest of curiosity to the interest ordinarily awakened by the announcement of a new production from the author of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." The audience, therefore, hardly needed the earnest request of the management to be in their seats in good time to see the curtain rise on the piece last evening at the Garrick Theatre. It had been alleged that theological controversy was at the bottom of Mr. Pinero's latest invention, but rumour, as often happens, proves to have been at fault. We already have the theological novel, and in course of time Mr. Pinero may conceivably give us the theological play, but for the present he prefers once more to grapple with some of those questions which seem to engage most attention from modern speculators who occupy themselves with the reconstitution of the social fabric. In "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" he chose to show us the result of a chivalrous but mistaken attempt to rehabilitate a woman who has not only had faults, but who has led a life of downright profligacy. In "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" his aim has been to let us see what would be likely to happen to people who discarded altogether the

conventionality of married life to live together in what is called free union. It is no secret that there are in these days writers and thinkers of both sexes who attack and deride the institution of marriage. Mr. Pinero takes them at their word. He says to them, as it were, "Very well. Have your own way. We shall then see what we shall see." His heroine, if the word may be allowed, is a woman of unconventional training. She has early learned from her father's example, to harangue Socialist gatherings, for her heart is filled with pity for the poor suffering toilers bowed down by labour and care. Later, she has suffered from the tyranny of a harsh and tyrannical husband. This is the woman who, when she becomes a widow, and takes to nursing for a livelihood, falls in love with a patient under her charge, a man belonging to fashionable society, who has also had an unfortunate matrimonial experience and is separated from his wife. The pair agree to enter into a "free union," each being at liberty to leave the other should their companionship no longer seem agreeable, and they are determined to brave all the social consequences of the step they have taken, glorying in their freedom from the shackles of conventionality. Such is, in brief, the situation of affairs out of which the story is unfolded. This bare mention is sufficient to show how far wider is the field open to the modern dramatist than that in which his predecessors were compelled to work. Whether, indeed, he should be allowed so ample a scope is a difficult matter to decide, and one that has been, and will continue to be, much controverted. Certainly things are openly referred to on the stage at present that until quite recently were never mentioned before mixed assemblages of men and women. It is obvious that many new and powerful dramatic elements have thus been brought into play, while it is equally obvious that to some extent at least men are debarred from taking the younger members of their family to the theatre. But beyond giving this word of warning to those whom it concerns, there is no necessity to go. Any one who imagined the new play at the Garrick to be an immoral play would be, as Carlyle would say, quite curiously wrong. It is on the contrary as orthodox in its morality as Hogarth's fine pictorial drama "The Rake's Progress."

When the curtain rises we are in Venice looking into a spacious apartment in a palazzo overlooking the Grand Canal. There is a little scene between an Italian man-servant and maid-servant which the author with some amount of daring has written entirely in Italian. One might for the moment imagine oneself in an Italian theatre. This, however, is merely a little artifice, designed to emphasize the fact that the scene is laid in a foreign land. It is in this foreign land, away from the prying English eyes and prating English tongues, that young Lucas Cleeve is staying with "Agnes," otherwise Mrs. Ebbsmith. One gathers that Cleeve has been engaged in politics, and has been on the high road to some great appointment when his domestic troubles have driven him from home. At Rome, where he has been ill, he has been nursed by Mrs. Ebbsmith, who accompanies him to Venice according to the compact of which mention has already been made. The pair are passionately fond of each other, and not a word of disagreement is heard. But already by the subtlest of subtle touches the author conveys the idea that there are dangers ahead for the parties to this irregular alliance. There is a good deal of vanity in young Cleeve. Almost unknown to himself he begins to regret his lost opportunities, and he is apt to refer to them as though they were past and done with in a way that begets uneasy suspicions in the mind of his partner. He notices too that she dresses plainly in a simple snuff-coloured dress, without trimming. It is but recently that he has vowed to devote himself with her to high aims, to literature, in which he is to earn as great a reputation as he would have achieved in politics. Doubts begin to suggest themselves to him. What if he should fail in literature? The thing is not impossible. A further cause of uneasiness lies in the fact that his partner thinks too little of him, and too much of her mission in life—for he is vain, and he craves applause. To a very great extent he has not been weaned away

from old habits and old prejudices. The woman he loves should be smartly dressed that she may be admired, and he has a splendid new gown made for her, with gold ornamentation. Yet, when it comes home, the intended recipient coolly asks him whether he would have her "hang" these things on her bones. Moreover, the presence in Venice of a friend of the young man's family, the Duke of St. Olipherts, bodes no good to the union. Cold, crafty, penetrating, the Duke is determined to leave no stone unturned to get young Cleeve away from his mistress. He sees the woman and she almost captivates even him; but he has no scruples in his dealings with women, and while he admires her for her spirit and resolution he works persistently for her downfall. It is a strange meeting this, between the daughter of the Socialist agitator and the Duke, whose notions of Socialism have been derived from one visit together with some club friends to a meeting in the East-end. When he asks to be informed how a man of his class strikes a person of her class, there is not a trace of resentment in his look as he listens to an eloquent denunciation of the idle rich, and it is altogether without passion, and with a considerable sense of humour, that he informs the lady in return how the absurdity of her platform utterances struck him on the occasion when he went to hear the "notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" address the discontented toilers.

The scene in which the Duke is, as he says, "Trafalgar-squared," is conducted throughout with masterly ability by the author, but some credit for the remarkable effect created must be given to the performers, Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Mr. John Hare. Mr. Hare's Duke deserves to rank with the finest of his stage portraits. As one watches the calm, suave, incisive manner in which he gives off the gibes, sarcasms, and dexterous insinuations of this man who enjoys life and has no enthusiasm for anything or belief in anything or anybody, one seems to have known him for an age, so perfect is the presentment. Of Mrs. Patrick Campbell's performance too it would be difficult to speak in terms of excessive praise. The intense earnestness of her tones, the calm, placid look of her face, lighted up as with a mysterious light as she launches forth into denunciations of the oppressors of the poor, exalt the character in such a way that all the sneers of the Duke are powerless to make her look ridiculous. A still greater opportunity comes to her in the third of the four acts into which the piece is divided. It is here that the climax is reached. The persistent efforts of young Cleeve's friends have resulted in making him anxious, although he dares not avow the fact, to effect a nominal reconciliation with his wife. The couple, it is suggested, shall live apart under the same roof, and he shall thereby be free to go back and resume his interrupted career in London. The free union, it is clear, cannot bear the strain put upon it, and this is apparent to a friend whom Mrs. Ebbsmith has met abroad and who has become devotedly attached to her. The friend is a young widow travelling with her brother, a Yorkshire clergyman. This worthy couple offer the unhappy woman a home in their house, and, having half persuaded her to accept the invitation, the clergyman writes his address on the flyleaf of a Bible which he hands to her. Beside herself, Mrs. Ebbsmith in a moment of passionate rage and grief seizes the Bible (the word "Bible," by the way, is never mentioned, but the spectator sees what it is) and throws it in the fire, with the exclamation that it has "driven her mad," and that "she hates the sight of it." But better feelings prevail. She burns her hand in rescuing the volume from the flames, and she sinks down in a paroxysm of weeping. Mrs. Campbell's acting throughout this trying scene was full of pathetic expression, finely conveying the conflicting passions to which the woman is a prey, and the scene culminated, on the fall of the curtain, with a loud, hearty, spontaneous, and well-deserved tribute to the actress's genius. The last act unfortunately is the exciting and interesting of all. It simply represents an attempt by Cleeve's wife to get Mrs. Ebbsmith to go back to him (she having run away from him to live with the clergyman's sister), this being judged to be the only way to induce him to go back to work in

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She believes in her lover's abilities, and thinks his desire to engage in noble work as sincere as her own. But soon it begins to dawn upon her that, despite his superior attainments, Lucas Cleave is not that sort of man. He finds fault with the simplicity of her dress, and buys her a brilliant evening robe of black, with glittering gold brocade. She will have none of it, and bids the maid take it away. The friends of Lucas, anxious to preserve his reputation, have deputed a relative, the Duke of St. Olpherts, to make an attempt to separate him from Agnes. The Duke is a cynical old roué, and with his experience of women and knowledge of Lucas he speedily sees the false pedestal on which Agnes has placed her idol. He describes to her the real Lucas, and his keen satire pierces her through and through. She begins to realise the truth of his picture. She knows he has come there to separate them, and she feels that her only chance of keeping the man she loves to herself is to put away her plain-out dresses and glowing ideals, and become merely the woman of passion. With a happy unexpectedness that is one of the most charming things in the play, she appears in the low-cut black and gold evening dress. Lucas is enraptured. He goes into ecstasies over her beauty and every flattering word he utters pierces the woman to her very soul. "What has brought about this change?" he asks as he steps back to admire her. The woman says little, but oh, the agony in her face. She realises the actual conditions of their companionship. She notes the joy of the sensualist, and her ideal union vanishes into thin air. In place of the lofty spirit of the worker she sees herself shrinking into the mistress. It is an awful revelation, and as Lucas talks excitedly of their future, of the new life that is open out for them, a life away from Socialistic schemes and faddists, she walks about the room with a far away look of wretchedness in her eyes, and all she says is "my marriage, all over again." Her old life rises up before her, she sees it and she fears it. But she will fight for the man she loves, and on the Duke's return he quickly understands the turn affairs have taken. She is, however, to learn still more of Lucas's failings, and of the little regard he has for her nobler emotions. His wife has arrived in Venice and it is the Duke who is charged to bring husband and wife together. He makes Agnes understand all Lucas is sacrificing by remaining with her, and suggests that she shall simplify matters by using her influence to bring about an outward reconciliation between Lucas and his wife, and consent herself to occupy a suburban villa with a couple of discreet servants. Not for one moment does she think Lucas would ever entertain such a proposal, but to test him she gradually brings the conversation round to the Duke's suggestion, and, instead of the emphatic negative she was prepared to hear, Lucas dallies with the subject, and finally consents. She gets his hat and coat, and he leaves for the hotel to meet his wife to talk over the proposed arrangement. When he has gone, then she gives way to the anguish of her mind. Two good meaning friends try to soothe her with Christian consolation, and implore her to reject a proposition so degrading to her womanhood. But she will have the man she loves at any cost, and their words only excite her to more violent language. One of them, the Rev. Amos Winterfield, puts a Bible in her hands, and the distracted woman throws it into the fire. But her deed appals her, and with quivering fingers she plucks it from the stove, and gives vent to a scream almost marvellous in its shrillness. It is a dramatic moment—the strongest in the play—and brings the third act to a powerful ending. In the fourth and last act we find that Agnes has accompanied the Rev. Amos and his sister to their lodging with the intention of going away with them to their Yorkshire home. She has written her farewell letter to Lucas, and has broken with him for ever. Then comes one of the most daring things in the whole play, the Bible incident not excepted. Lucas is beside himself with despair, and will hear of nothing without Agnes. He refuses to rejoin his wife, or to again take up the thread of his public life. There is only one alternative open to the wife and her advisers, and that is, she must see Agnes herself and beg of her to assist them by resuming her old relations with Lucas. A wife appealing to her husband's mistress to return to him! The idea is repulsive, although it is carried out with much art. Under pressure of the wife's piteous supplications Agnes at length consents. A woman's life is to be wrecked to save a weak man's political reputation. The sacrifice seemed inhuman, but fortunately the wife regrets her action, and will have none of it. Lucas appears once more, and makes a passionate appeal to Agnes, who, however, remains immovable, and the play concludes with a promise of a happier and holier future for her under the rectory roof of the Rev. Amos Winterfield and his sister. "The Notorious Mrs. Ebb Smith" is essentially a woman's play, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell has once again found her

opportunity. We can only briefly put it on record how that she gave a magnificent performance. Next to Mrs. Campbell the most prominent figures were Mr. Forbes Robertson as Lucas and Mr. John Hare as the Duke of St. Olpherts, both inimitable performances. Miss Ellis Jeffries played a part somewhat different to what she has been accustomed to with distinction and success, and, among others, Miss Eleanor Calhoun, Mr. C. Aubrey Smith, and Mr. Fred Thorne rendered valuable assistance. Mr. Pinero appeared before the curtain, and was enthusiastically applauded. In the near future we hope to return to this subject again, for such a play demands too much thought and reflection to be dismissed with one hastily-written notice. Sufficient to say now that it will in all probability exceed in popularity "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," and that it is a piece no intelligent person should miss seeing.

MR. PINERO'S NEW PLAY.

The one thing certain about Mr. Pinero's new play, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebb Smith*—which was produced at the Garrick Theatre last night—is that it will create a vast amount of discussion. Discussion in such cases is synonymous with success; and it may be at once remarked that extraordinarily vivid exposition of character, powerful in conception and delicate in detail, gives this drama exceedingly high rank as a work of art. Whether the play will be accepted as a pleasant one is an altogether different question, and one phase of the subject certain to be hotly discussed is that of its morality. The chief characters, Lucas Cleave and Agnes Ebb Smith, have an unhallowed union; but an immoral play is one which glorifies vice, presenting it in an alluring aspect, and this assuredly cannot be said of the association of Mr. and the *pseudo* Mrs. Cleave. Motive must also be considered in such cases, and the motives of this couple—of the man at first, and of the woman throughout, except for a fleeting moment—are, beyond all doubt, conscientious. Agnes "Cleave" convinces herself with sophistries which are shallow enough to others, but not to her. Her creed is that, in certain cases, individuals have the right to override and disregard the law—a sufficiently comfortable theory for criminals of all descriptions. She finds at last that her theories are impossible, and after having struggled hard to maintain the lofty standard of conduct she has set up for herself, she yields to the force of circumstances, and is led to repentance. A somewhat obscure point is the precise nature of the lesson which Mr. Pinero seeks to enforce. Nothing seems really to be demonstrated, except the strength of the conviction to which Agnes finally becomes subservient, and the general weakness of human nature. This, however, will be made clearer by a brief glance at the story and the personages engaged in it.

The scene is laid in Venice. In a once magnificent Palazzo on the Grand Canal, now a lodging-house, rooms have been taken by Lucas Cleave, a man of good family and brilliant political prospects, for himself and Agnes, who passes as his wife. He is married, but matrimonial discord has been his lot; he travelled to get away from home, fell ill at Rome, was restored to health mainly by the care of the professional nurse sent out by an English doctor to tend him, and she, Agnes, a woman with what she believes to be a mission in life, is found with him at Venice a few months later bearing his name without legal warrant. They have joined together in a crusade to preach the doctrine that victims of loveless marriages have "a right to refuse to endure a misery they have not earned," that it is not only permissible for them, but highly creditable to them, "to end a wretched marriage from which there is no law on their side to release them." Every man is to be a self-constituted President of a Divorce Court, and every woman is to have the same privilege. The bond between Lucas and Agnes is not that of commonplace lovers. They have united to defend their position and the positions of such as themselves. In truth, this is very like the defence of so-called "free love," just veneered over with a few easy arguments and excuses. "It may be regrettable, scandalous," Lucas once says, speaking of his illicit union just before—to use his own phrase—he comes to his senses, "but the common rules

of right and wrong have ceased to apply here." That is invariably the case, as a matter of course. He must be a singularly unimaginative man who cannot persuade himself, and invent sophistries to try to persuade others, that the common rules which apply to the rest of the world do not apply to him. But Agnes is absolutely sincere. She has been the victim of one of the marriages she denounces, and is, so far, an exemplar of heredity, that she had followed her father's trade of Socialistic agitator with a vehemence which formerly earned for her the name of "Mad Agnes."

The subject-matter of this very remarkable play deals with the attempts of Lucas' uncle, the Duke of St. Olpherts, to detach him from his companion, and restore him to his position in the world. In the person of Lucas Cleave, Mr. Pinero is enabled to draw with a wonderfully cunning hand a notable specimen of a familiar type of character—the man who enters upon a career with an ardour which quickly expends itself. Lucas is far from being the sort of crusader that Agnes supposes, and his real disposition is very accurately summed up by the Duke, who describes him as egotistical, nervous, impulsive, epicurean; but all this being so, the question already mentioned of the precise lesson Mr. Pinero desires to enforce again arises. What is proved by the fact that such a man as Lucas, urged by passion and sentiment to unite his fortunes with such a woman as Agnes, grows tired of the compact, and finally abandons it? Knowing Lucas for what he is, that was inevitable, and, consequently, in the "problem play," as contemporary slang would describe it, the point of the problem to be enforced is by no means clear. The notable strength of the piece lies in the studies which Mr. Pinero has given to his actors and actresses to vivify, and in the scenes in which his keen dramatic instinct has placed them. It is essentially an acting play, for, as will, perhaps, have been gathered, the main plot itself is not of absorbing interest. The first act is necessarily, for the most part, explanatory, and it may be observed that it is doubtful whether the expedient of giving local colour by making Italian servants talk their native language, which few of the audience understand, is commendable; but the manner in which the dramatist unfolds his story is a masterly example of his art. The contrast is, of course, effective between Agnes, the woman with the mission, and Gertrude Thorpe, a young English gentlewoman, a widow, sister of a clergyman, and an adherent of all recognised social traditions, who bears with horror that her friend, the woman she has so greatly admired as a model of all the excellences, is passing under a false name and assuming a position that is not rightfully hers. But the second act is extraordinarily fine in its exposition of character and subtlety of intrigue. The Duke, a delightfully well-bred man of the world, perfect in all externals of manner and bearing, but cynical and entirely heartless, has come to rescue his nephew. He thinks he will call and see the siren, his curiosity being enhanced by the fact that he had attended one of her lectures in some wretched hole in the East-end, and there heard her scornfully denounced as "Mad Agnes." He pays his visit for the purpose that she will understand, and the scene between them is altogether admirable, as is that which follows between the Duke and Lucas, the former quietly putting aside the rebuff he at first receives and gradually moulding his nephew's weaker will. The tone—half amused, half sarcastic—in which the Duke talks of Agnes and his previous knowledge of her is, as he is aware it will be, exactly the way to influence Lucas. He describes her lecture denouncing the gilded aristocracy. "I assure you, my dear fellow, I was within three feet of her when she deliberately Trafalgar-squared me." The expressive new verb, "to Trafalgar-square," delighted the house.

One feature of interest in the performance was Mrs. Patrick Campbell's attempt to realise the strange character of Agnes, and in this she succeeded to an extent which must be held to justify to the full her early promise. The actress's manner and tone have a singular attraction, and of the exceedingly powerful opportunities provided she takes admirable advantage. By slow degrees Agnes perceives that Lucas is weakening—weakening fast—and that to retain him she must sacrifice her ideal and treat him, not as the glorious leader of a new creed, but as a lover. He has sent her a handsome evening dress, which she at first despises; but he has commented on her shabbiness, and, to please him, she arrays herself. The womanly gratification of being admired by the man she loves clashes cruelly with her recognition of the fact that she is surely being driven to abandon her mission, and this is indicated with rare skill. The great scene of the play comes at the end of the third act, and last night merited much of the enthusiasm it created. Gertrude and her brother make a final attempt to induce Agnes to go with them

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She believes in her lover's abilities, and thinks his desire to engage in noble work as sincere as her own. But soon it begins to dawn upon her that, despite his superior attainments, Lucas Cleeve is not that sort of man. He finds fault with the simplicity of her dress, and buys her a brilliant evening robe of black, with glittering gold brocade. She will have none of it, and bids the maid take it away. The friends of Lucas, anxious to preserve his reputation, have deputed a relative, the Duke of St. Olphert's, to make an attempt to separate him from Agnes. The Duke is a cynical old roué, and with his experience of women and knowledge of Lucas he speedily sees the false pedestal on which Agnes has placed her idol. He describes to her the real Lucas, and his keen satire pierces her through and through. She begins to realise the truth of his picture. She knows he has come there to separate them, and she feels that her only chance of keeping the man she loves to herself is to put away her plain-cut dresses and glowing ideals, and become merely the woman of passion. With a happy unexpectedness that is one of the most charming things in the play, she appears in the low-cut black and gold evening dress. Lucas is enraptured. He goes into ecstasies over her beauty and every flattering word he utters pierces the woman to her very soul. "What has brought about this change?" he asks as he steps back to admire her. The woman says little, but oh, the agony in her face. She realises the actual conditions of their companionship. She notes the joy of the sensualist, and her ideal union vanishes into thin air. In place of the lofty spirit of the worker she sees herself shrinking into the mistress. It is an awful revelation, and as Lucas talks excitedly of their future, of the new life that is open out for them, a life away from Socialistic schemes and faddists, she walks about the room with a far away look of wretchedness in her eyes, and all she says is "my marriage, all over again." Her old life rises up before her, she sees it and she fears it. But she will fight for the man she loves, and on the Duke's return he quickly understands the turn affairs have taken. She is, however, to learn still more of Lucas's failings and of the little regard he has for her nobler emotions. His wife has arrived in Venice and it is the Duke who is charged to bring husband and wife together. He makes Agnes understand all Lucas is sacrificing by remaining with her, and suggests that she shall simplify matters by using her influence to bring about an outward reconciliation between Lucas and his wife, and consent herself to occupy a suburban villa with a couple of discreet servants. Not for one moment does she think Lucas would ever entertain such a proposal, but to test him she gradually brings the conversation round to the Duke's suggestion, and, instead of the emphatic negative she was prepared to hear, Lucas dallies with the subject, and finally consents. She gets his hat and coat, and he leaves for the hotel to meet his wife to talk over the proposed arrangement. When he has gone, then she gives way to the anguish of her mind. Two good meaning friends try to soothe her with Christian consolation, and implore her to reject a proposition so degrading to her womanhood. But she will have the man she loves at any cost, and their words only excite her to more violent language. One of them, the Rev. Amos Winterfield, puts a Bible in her hands, and the distracted woman throws it into the fire. But her deed appals her, and with quivering fingers she plucks it from the stove, and gives vent to a scream almost marvellous in its shrillness. It is a dramatic moment—the strongest in the play—and brings the third act to a powerful ending. In the fourth and last act we find that Agnes has accompanied the Rev. Amos and his sister to their lodging with the intention of going away with them to their Yorkshire home. She has written her farewell letter to Lucas, and has broken with him for ever. Then comes one of the most daring things in the whole play, the Bible incident not excepted. Lucas is beside himself with despair, and will hear of nothing without Agnes. He refuses to rejoin his wife, or to again take up the thread of his public life. There is only one alternative open to the wife and her advisers, and that is, she must see Agnes herself and beg of her to assist them by resuming her old relations with Lucas. A wife appealing to her husband's mistress to return to him! The idea is repulsive, although it is carried out with much art. Under pressure of the wife's piteous supplications Agnes at length consents. A woman's life is to be wrecked to save a weak man's political reputation. The sacrifice seemed inhuman, but fortunately the wife regrets her action, and will have none of it. Lucas appears once more, and makes a passionate appeal to Agnes, who, however, remains immovable, and the play concludes with a promise of a happier and a holier future for her under the rectory roof of the Rev. Amos Winterfield and his sister. "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" is a sensational play, and Mrs. Pinero, who has once again found her

opportunity. We can only briefly put it on record how that she gave a magnificent performance. Next to Mrs. Campbell the most prominent figures were Mr. Forbes Robertson as Lucas and Mr. John Hare as the Duke of St. Olpherts, both inimitable performances. Miss Ellis Jeffries played a part somewhat different to what she has been accustomed to with distinction and success, and, among others, Miss Eleanor Calhoun, Mr. C. Aubrey Smith, and Mr. Fred Thorne rendered valuable assistance. Mr. Pinero appeared before the curtain, and was enthusiastically applauded. In the near future we hope to return to this subject again, for such a play demands too much thought and reflection to be dismissed with one hastily-written notice. Sufficient to say now that it will in all probability exceed in popularity "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," and that it is a piece no intelligent person should miss seeing.

MR. PINERO'S NEW PLAY.

The one thing certain about Mr. Pinero's new play, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*—which was produced at the Garrick Theatre last night—is that it will create a vast amount of discussion. Discussion in such cases is synonymous with success; and it may be at once remarked that extraordinarily-vivid exposition of character, powerful in conception and delicate in detail, gives this drama exceedingly high rank as a work of art. Whether the play will be accepted as a pleasant one is an altogether different question, and one phase of the subject certain to be hotly discussed is that of its morality. The chief characters, Lucas Cleeve and Agnes Ebbsmith, have an unhallowed union; but an immoral play is one which glorifies vice, presenting it in an alluring aspect, and this assuredly cannot be said of the association of Mr. and the *pseudo* Mrs. Cleeve. Motive must also be considered in such cases, and the motives of this couple—of the man at first, and of the woman throughout, except for a fleeting moment—are, beyond all doubt, conscientious. Agnes "Cleeve" convinces herself with sophistries which are shallow enough to others, but not to her. Her creed is that, in certain cases, individuals have the right to override and disregard the law—a sufficiently comfortable theory for criminals of all descriptions. She finds at last that her theories are impossible, and after having struggled hard to maintain the lofty standard of conduct she has set up for herself, she yields to the force of circumstances, and is led to repentance. A somewhat obscure point is the precise nature of the lesson which Mr. Pinero seeks to enforce. Nothing seems really to be demonstrated, except the strength of the conviction to which Agnes finally becomes subservient, and the general weakness of human nature. This, however, will be made clearer by a brief glance at the story and the personages engaged in it.

The scene is laid in Venice. In a once magnificent Palazzo on the Grand Canal, now a lodging-house, rooms have been taken by Lucas Cleeve, a man of good family and brilliant political prospects, for himself and Agnes, who passes as his wife. He is married, but matrimonial discord has been his lot; he travelled to get away from home, fell ill at Rome, was restored to health mainly by the care of the professional nurse sent out by an English doctor to tend him, and she, Agnes, a woman with what she believes to be a mission in life, is found with him at Venice a few months later bearing his name without legal warrant. They have joined together in a crusade to preach the doctrine that victims of loveless marriages have "a right to refuse to endure a misery they have not earned," that it is not only permissible for them, but highly creditable to them, "to end a wretched marriage from which there is no law on their side to release them." Every man is to be a self-constituted President of a Divorce Court, and every woman is to have the same privilege. The bond between Lucas and Agnes is not that of commonplace lovers. They have united to defend their position and the positions of such as themselves. In truth, this is very like the defence of so-called "free love," just veneered over with a few easy arguments and excuses. "It may be regrettable, scandalous," Lucas once says, speaking of his illicit union just before he uses his own phrase—he comes to his senses, "but the common rules

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of right and wrong have ceased to apply here." That is invariably the case, as a matter of course. He must be a singularly unimaginative man who cannot persuade himself, and invent sophistries to try to persuade others, that the common rules which apply to the rest of the world do not apply to him. But Agnes is absolutely sincere. She has been the victim of one of the marriages she denounces, and is, so far, an exemplar of heredity, that she had followed her father's trade of Socialistic agitator with a vehemence which formerly earned for her the name of "Mad Agnes."

The subject-matter of this very remarkable play deals with the attempts of Lucas' uncle, the Duke of St. Olpherts, to detach him from his companion, and restore him to his position in the world. In the person of Lucas Cleeve, Mr. Pinero is enabled to draw with a wonderfully cunning hand a notable specimen of a familiar type of character—the man who enters upon a career with an ardour which quickly expends itself. Lucas is far from being the sort of crusader that Agnes supposes, and his real disposition is very accurately summed up by the Duke, who describes him as egotistical, nervous, impulsive, epicurean; but all this being so, the question already mentioned of the precise lesson Mr. Pinero desires to enforce again arises. What is proved by the fact that such a man as Lucas, urged by passion and sentiment to unite his fortunes with such a woman as Agnes, grows tired of the compact, and finally abandons it? Knowing Lucas for what he is, that was inevitable, and, consequently, in the "problem play," as contemporary slang would describe it, the point of the problem to be enforced is by no means clear. The notable strength of the piece lies in the studies which Mr. Pinero has given to his actors and actresses to vivify, and in the scenes in which his keen dramatic instinct has placed them. It is essentially an acting play, for, as will, perhaps, have been gathered, the main plot itself is not of absorbing interest. The first act is necessarily, for the most part, explanatory, and it may be observed that it is doubtful whether the expedient of giving local colour by making Italian servants talk their native language, which few of the audience understand, is commendable; but the manner in which the dramatist unfolds his story is a masterly example of his art. The contrast is, of course, effective between Agnes, the woman with the mission, and Gertrude Thorpe, a young English gentlewoman, a widow, sister of a clergyman, and an adherent of all recognised social traditions, who hears with horror that her friend, the woman she has so greatly admired as a model of all the excellences, is passing under a false name and assuming a position that is not rightfully hers. But the second act is extraordinarily fine in its exposition of character and subtlety of intrigue. The Duke, a delightfully well-bred man of the world, perfect in all externals of manner and bearing, but cynical and entirely heartless, has come to rescue his nephew. He thinks he will call and see the siren, his curiosity being enhanced by the fact that he had attended one of her lectures in some wretched hole in the East-end, and there heard her scornfully denounced as "Mad Agnes." He pays his visit for the purpose that she well understands, and the scene between them is altogether admirable, as is that which follows between the Duke and Lucas, the former quietly putting aside the rebuff he at first receives and gradually moulding his nephew's weaker will. The tone—half amused, half sarcastic—in which the Duke talks of Agnes and his previous knowledge of her is, as he is aware it will be, exactly the way to influence Lucas. He describes her lecture denouncing the gilded aristocracy. "I assure you, my dear fellow, I was within three feet of her when she deliberately Trafalgar-squared me." The expressive new verb, "to Trafalgar-square," delighted the house.

One feature of interest in the performance was Mrs. Patrick Campbell's attempt to realise the strange character of Agnes, and in this she succeeded to an extent which must be held to justify to the full her early promise. The actress's manner and tone have a singular attraction, and of the exceedingly powerful opportunities provided she takes admirable advantage. By slow degrees Agnes perceives that Lucas is weakening—weakening fast—and that to retain him she must sacrifice her ideal and treat him, not as the glorious leader of a new creed, but as a lover. He has sent her a handsome evening dress, which she at first despises; but he has commented on her shabbiness, and, to please him, she arrays herself. The womanly gratification of being admired by the man she loves clashes cruelly with her recognition of the fact that she is surely being driven to abandon her mission, and this is indicated with rare skill. The great scene of the play comes at the end of the third act, and last night merited much of the enthusiasm it created. Gertrude and her brother make a final attempt to induce Agnes to go with them

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to their quiet North Country vicarage. She refuses, for it is "her hour," she declares; Lucas loves her; she has triumphed over the Duke and defeated his plot; the crusade may have to be given up, but Lucas will at least be with her. The clergyman writes his address on a testament and places it by her side, bidding her there seek comfort and consolation. But she furiously declares that these are not to be found, and, at length, opening the door of the stove, she flings the book into the fire. A moment afterwards, horror at what she has done overwhelms her; opening the door again, she plunges her hand into the flames, snatches out the sacred volume, and clasps it to her heart. The intensity with which all this is done is deeply moving, may even, indeed, be called thrilling. The emotions of the last act are in a way quieter, though scarcely less fervent. She has to choose between the man she loves and the path of duty that may lead to peace, and the struggle is shown to be a bitterly-severe one. Beyond doubt, Mrs. Patrick Campbell greatly strengthened and advanced her position by her work last night. The Lucas Cleeve of Mr. Forbes Robertson is altogether excellent. He is the veritable man that his uncle so tersely describes. Sincere as his love for Agnes is, the world has attractions for him; and, by numberless adroit little touches, he indicates his growing distaste for the mission upon which he has entered. His joy is unfeigned when Agnes shows her readiness to descend from her pedestal and be merely a woman. His weakness, played upon by the Duke's cunning skill, is most forcibly emphasised. The whole study is extraordinarily true, and the earnestness of his final appeal to Agnes not to leave him makes plain how hard it must have been for her to maintain her resolve. The performance of the excellent actor deserves more attention than it is possible here to bestow upon it. Mr. Hare's Duke is again a perfect picture of the polished reprobate—wary, diplomatic, and unscrupulous. These three characters stand out to make the play notable, and the principal personages are ably supported. Miss Ellis Jeffreys, as Mrs. Thorpe, might possibly be somewhat more sympathetic, but she plays well; and Mr. Aubrey Smith, as her brother, is very good indeed. Miss Calhoun appears to advantage as Lucas's wife and the proposer of a base plot, from which she afterwards shrinks, to induce Agnes to tempt him back to London. A word of praise must be said for the sprightly Nella—Agnes's maid—of Miss Mary Halsey. The actress furnishes a particularly clever little sketch. Indeed, Nella might have come direct from Venice. The dictatorial Sir Sandford Cleeve of Mr. Ian Robertson makes his mark, short as the part is; Mr. Joseph Carne and Mr. Fred Thorne represent with much tact doctors of different types, the consulting physician, Sir George Brodrick, and the humble Scotch practitioner, Dr. Kirke. Mr. Gerald du Maurier makes a model servant as Fortuné, and useful aid is given by M. Caravoglia and Mrs. Charles Groves. The reception of Mr. Pinero when the curtain had fallen was cordial in the extreme.

"THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH."

NEW PLAY BY MR. PINERO.

What did we see last night at the Garrick Theatre, sitting absorbed, interested, astounded by the daring of the scheme, enchanted by the art of the acting, fascinated by the brilliant power of Mrs. Patrick Campbell? Unquestionably the masterpiece, as yet, of Arthur Wing Pinero. The play that resulted in so splendid a success for Mr. John Hare is, to our thinking, head and shoulders above "Mrs. Tanqueray" in analysis, in excellence of dialogue, in profundity of thought, and in rare chances for always clever, sometimes extraordinary, acting. Let not playgoers be frightened at the new play because it will be called a tragedy; and so it is—a tragedy of human life, a tragedy in which two wrecked souls are concerned. Not a tragedy of daggers and bows and red fire and feathers and flummery, but a tragedy that lays bare with pitiless severity the heart of a woman, mistaken perhaps, inconsistent perchance, misguided, sometimes unnatural, often inconsequent; the tragedy of a man, weak, egotistical, vain, passionate, loving, tender, and shipwrecked, but on the whole a man far

more natural, as it seems to us, than his companion in misery, dejection, and despair. We do not pretend, nor would it be right in connection with so fine a play, to give more than the barest outline at the moment of Mr. Pinero's daring scheme. There will be many opportunities to return to it again and again, to describe it in detail, to record our impression of acting as fine as has been seen in modern times on the English stage, and to congratulate Mr. Hare on the possession of a work that will command the undivided attention and criticism of all earnest playgoers. "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" is not the kind of play to be taken in a hurried gulp on a chance day after dinner. It has to be seen repeatedly, and to be commended to the critical attention of all who value a novel and striking modern tragedy.

Who, then, is Mrs. Ebbsmith? She is the daughter of a notorious London Socialist and reformer, the fruit of an unhappy marriage, who has absorbed into her young life her father's daring and impulsive ideas. Her father has preached in the Park, and become a hero lecturer in Old-street, St. Luke's. We all know your prototype, Mr. Pinero! The daughter, on her father's death, has carried on his wild but earnest campaign, has shouted herself hoarse on a platform with a flaming red banner for a background, and enthusiast, "dowdy demagogue" as she is, has hoped to be a daughter of the people. They call her down East "Mad Agnes." In Paris she would be wearing a red bonnet and preaching the Commune. A dangerous young woman surely. But passionate, wild, undisciplined, and enthusiastic as she is, she is still a woman with a heart, a woman who can love, for she finds herself atheist, socialist, demagogue, a hater of convention, standing up beside a young barrister at the altar rails of St. Andrew's Church, Holborn. The marriage turns out a miserable failure; she loathes the institution, she considers it no better than a harem, and when her husband dies, this Mad Agnes of the St. Luke's Debating Hall turns hospital nurse, and takes up her parable against marriage. She unsexes herself. She considers that "to be a woman is to be mad." The misery of her life has soured her completely. In this hapless condition she nurses a young fellow in Rome who is dying of Roman fever. His experience of married life is as bad and bitter as that of Mad Agnes, the Socialist now turned nurse and ministering angel. Listen what he says about want of sympathy in women:

Love one of these women—I know!—worship her, yield yourself to the intoxicating day dreams that make the grimy world sweeter than any heaven ever imagined. How your heart leaps with gratitude for your good fortune; how compassionately you regard your unblest fellow-men! What may you not accomplish with such a mate beside you; how high will be your aims, how paltry every obstacle that bars your way to them; how sweet is to be the labour, how divine the rest! Then—you marry her. Marry her, and in six months, if you've pluck enough to do it, lag behind your shooting party and blow your brains out by accident at the edge of a turnip-field. You have found out by that time all there is to look for—the daily diminishing interest in your doings, the poorly-assumed attention as you attempt to talk over some plan of the future; then the yawn, and by degrees the covert sneer, the little sarcasm, and, finally, the frank, open stare of boredom. Ah, Duke, when you all carry out your repressive legislation against women of evil lives don't fail to include in your schedule the unsympathetic wives. They are the women whose victims show the sorriest scars; they are the really "bad women" of the world—all the others are snow-white in comparison. This want of sympathy with women has ruined the life and career of Lucas Cleeve. He has run away from his lawful wife in despair, and we find him living with Mad Agnes in Venice ostensibly as man and wife. What a wretched, deplorable union! The man hungers for love and tenderness; the woman screams for an impassionate existence, a life with no nature in it. In her arrogance she would defy nature and laugh it to scorn. She wants to live with the man she has nursed to life as platonic companion alone. She hates and detests passion, and argues out her hatred of it much to her own satisfaction, not at all to the delight of her companion.

AGNES (leaning upon the back of the chair, staring before her, in a low, steady voice). What has been was inevitable, I suppose. Still, we have hardly yet set

foot upon the path we've agreed to follow. It is not too late for us, in our own lives, to put the highest interpretation upon that word—Love. Think of the inner sustaining power it would give us! (Turning to him forcibly) We agree to go through the world together, preaching the lessons taught us by our experiences. You will show yourself fearlessly to the world as one who refuses to endure a misery you have not earned; one who makes a right to end a wretched marriage, from which there is no law on your side to release you. And I take my place openly by you—a woman ready to give you, for as long as you ask it, that food of sympathy your talents hunger for to save them from starvation. We cry out to the people, "Look at us! Man and woman who are in the bondage of neither law nor ritual! Linked simply by mutual trust! Man and wife, but something better than man and wife! Friends, but even something better than friends!" I say there is that which is noble, finely defiant, in the future we have mapped out for ourselves, if only—if only—

LUCAS. Yes?

AGNES (turning from him). If only it could be free from passion!

LUCAS (after a pause, in a low voice). Yes; but is that possible?

AGNES (in the same tone, watching him askance, a frightened look in her eyes). Why not?

LUCAS. Young man and woman . . . youth; and love. . . .? Scarcely upon this earth, my dear Agnes, such a life as you have pictured.

AGNES. I say it can be, it can be.

But in truth, as the Duke of St. Olpherts, a charming and delightful cynic, soon discovers, the "Fair Agnes, beauteous flower," is two distinct women rolled into one. She thinks she has conquered nature, but she hasn't. With woman's instinct she sees that her lover companion is wearying of Platonism and cold comfort. She becomes listless and bored. His accursed aristocratic friends and relations come to Venice to break up and smash down the "fair companionship." She scents the danger afar. They call her a dowdy, a draggetail, and a white witch, as she is. Instinctively she puts off gay and regal attire to tempt the lover whose kisses she brushes from her disgusted mouth. She leans for comfort on the cheek of the man whose embraces she loathes, for she fears to lose him. And here comes the one wonder of the play. Why did such a woman as Agnes ever love such a man as Lucas Cleeve? Mr. Pinero has not properly explained it. Is it mere mystery or fate that attaches so determined, obstinate, unnatural, scornful, and occasionally detestable a woman to a man so weak, so irresolute, so fitful, so egotistic, and vain as Lucas? Extremes meet here, indeed. But in the remnant left of her heart she loves him, and would die rather than be separated from her half-and-half lover. At last the crash comes. The diplomatic Duke, with exquisite suavity and severity, tries in the interests of his nephew to separate the ill-assorted pair. His mission is in vain. A good, sweet, tender, and pure woman—charmingly played by Miss Ellis Jeffreys—a travelling acquaintance, who is a widow and has had her marriage sorrow, also offers her a home in the country, if the Socialistic Magdalen will only return to English peace. Her brother, a broad-minded, stalwart, honest-hearted, muscular Christian of a parson, does his best to urge a separation; and then comes the finest scene in all the play, which called down thunders of applause last night—a risky scene, a scene that if merely described would be considered outrageous, but one that, thanks to the really superb acting of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, became a dramatic moment to live long in the memory. Baffled and disheartened, the parson and his sister are leaving the reckless, unrepentant, apparently hard-hearted woman, and quitting her for ever. Before departing, the clergyman, without cant or humbug, without affectation or religious prigishness, leaves behind him a small pocket Bible, with the names of the two faithful friends inscribed in it. The sight of the Bible, in which she once believed, maddens the infuriated Agnes. The horror of the woman's unrepentance galls the faithful Gertrude. It is the one touch of nature in the whole of this dark and gloomy human tragedy. The scene is well worth reading, and it was superbly played by all those concerned in it—Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Miss Jeffreys, and a most promising and natural young actor, Mr. C. Aubrey Smith. (Here is the passage:

GERTRUDE (to Agnes, pointing to book). This frightens you—(Agnes turns her head towards Gertrude)—simple print and paper, so you pretend to regard it—but it frightens you. (With a quick movement Agnes twists her chair round and faces Gertrude fiercely.) I called you a mad thing just now. A week ago I did think you half-mad—a poor, ill-used creature, a visionary, a moral woman living immorally; yet, in spite of all, a woman to be loved and pitied. But now I'm beginning to think that you're only frail—wanton. Oh, you're not so mad as not to know you're wicked—(tapping the book forcibly)—and so this frightens you!

AGNES. You're right! Wanton! That's what I've become! And I'm in my right senses, as you say. I suppose I was mad once for a little time, years ago. And do you know what drove me so? (Striking the book with her fist.) It was that—that!

GERTRUDE. That!

AGNES. I'd trusted in it, clung to it, and it failed me. Never once did it stop my ears to the sound of a

curse; when I was beaten it didn't make blows a whit the lighter; it never healed my bruised flesh, my bruised spirit! Yes, that drove me distracted for a while; but I'm sane now—now it is you, that are mad, mad to believe! You foolish people not to know—(beating her breast and forehead)—the hell or heaven is here and here. (Pointing to the book.) Take it! (Gertrude turns away and joins Amos, and they walk quickly to the door.)

AGNES (frantically). I'll not endure the sight of it! (As they reach the door Gertrude looks back and sees Agnes hurl the book into the fire. They go out. Agnes starts to her feet and stands motionless for a moment, her head bent, her fingers twisted in her hair. Then she raises her head; the expression on her face has changed to a look of fright and horror. Uttering a loud cry, she hastens to the stove, and, thrusting her arm into the fire, drags out the book. Gertrude and Amos re-enter quickly, in alarm.)

GERTRUDE. Agnes! (They stand looking at Agnes, who is kneeling upon the ground, clutching the charred book. The curtain falls.)

Mrs. Patrick Campbell has done nothing finer than the scene of the burning Bible in the whole of her brilliant and fitful career. Here she becomes inspired. She had reserved all her strength for this moment. At the outset a little nervous and hurried, as was natural on such an occasion, but always a picture, always interesting, always with a face that riveted the attention of every spectator, here she rose into the domain of genuine tragedy. Her agonised cry when she felt what she had done, the impulsive thrusting of the bare arm into the red-hot furnace of a stove, the rescue of "the book," and then the rapt face of exquisite delight as she clasped the burning volume to her breast, will be discussed again and again, and praised as often as it is discussed. It is acting that does credit alike to the artist and her country, and so we find Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who was so brilliant as the Second Mrs. Tanqueray, who then went under a cloud, and exhibited too obviously a distaste for her work, has once again more than justified the prophecies of her earliest and warmest admirers. We shall return to her acting again, but meanwhile the brilliancy of the success must be promptly recorded.

But the sorrows of Agnes are not nearly over. The clergyman and his sister would lead the prodigal home. The wife of her lover comes to propose to her an abominable bargain, by which she shall live with her husband, whilst the wife ostensibly takes Lucas home. Lucas himself, in despair at losing her, clings to her skirts, and would degrade himself to any depth for her sake. But Agnes is triumphant. She dismisses her weak lover with scorn, and she is going really home at last with the good man and pure woman of this painful but absorbing story.

There is not one part in this tragedy that is not well played. Mr. John Hare, as the cynical Duke, gives us one more, and perhaps the best, of his masterly character sketches, the very relief of lightness, and comedy, and satire that was wanted to lift the clouds of gloom and exquisite mental torture. It was a treat to hear Mr. Hare say of Agnes the Socialist, "I got within three feet of her, when she deliberately Trafalgar-squared me!" Mr. Forbes-Robertson had the most difficult task of all to perform. He had to make interesting, and he succeeded in doing so, a hopelessly weak and invertebrate hero. At the outset we do not

to their quiet North Country vicarage. She refuses, for it is "her hour" she declares; Lucas loves her; she has triumphed over the Duke and defeated his plot; the crusade may have to be given up, but Lucas will at least be with her. The clergyman writes his address on a testament and places it by her side, bidding her there seek comfort and consolation. But she furiously declares that these are not to be found, and, at length, opening the door of the stove, she flings the book into the fire. A moment afterwards, horror at what she has done overwhelms her; opening the door again, she plunges her hand into the flames, snatches out the sacred volume, and clasps it to her heart. The intensity with which all this is done is deeply moving, may even, indeed, be called thrilling. The emotions of the last act are in a way quieter, though scarcely less fervent. She has to choose between the man she loves and the path of duty that may lead to peace, and the struggle is shown to be a bitterly-severe one. Beyond doubt, Mrs. Patrick Campbell greatly strengthened and advanced her position by her work last night. The Lucas Cleeve of Mr. Forbes Robertson is altogether excellent. He is the veritable man that his uncle so tersely describes. Sincere as his love for Agnes is, the world has attractions for him; and, by numberless adroit little touches, he indicates his growing distaste for the mission upon which he has entered. His joy is unfeigned when Agnes shows her readiness to descend from her pedestal and be merely a woman. His weakness, played upon by the Duke's cunning skill, is most forcibly emphasised. The whole study is extraordinarily true, and the earnestness of his final appeal to Agnes not to leave him makes plain how hard it must have been for her to maintain her resolve. The performance of the excellent actor deserves more attention than it is possible here to bestow upon it. Mr. Hare's Duke is again a perfect picture of the polished reprobate—wary, diplomatic, and unscrupulous. These three characters stand out to make the play notable, and the principal personages are ably supported. Miss Ellis Jeffreys, as Mrs. Thorpe, might possibly be somewhat more sympathetic, but she plays well; and Mr. Aubrey Smith, as her brother, is very good indeed. Miss Calhoun appears to advantage as Lucas's wife and the proposer of a base plot, from which she afterwards shrinks, to induce Agnes to tempt him back to London. A word of praise must be said for the sprightly Nella—Agnes's maid—of Miss Mary Halsey. The actress furnishes a particularly clever little sketch. Indeed, Nella might have come direct from Venice. The dictatorial Sir Sandford Cleeve of Mr. Ian Robertson makes his mark, short as the part is; Mr. Joseph Carne and Mr. Fred Thorne represent with much tact doctors of different types, the consulting physician, Sir George Brodrick, and the humble Scotch practitioner, Dr. Kirke. Mr. Gerald du Maurier makes a model servant as Fortuné, and useful aid is given by M. Caravoglia and Mrs. Charles Groves. The exit of Mr. Pincro when the curtain had fallen was cordial in the extreme.

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"THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH."
NEW PLAY BY MR. PINERO.

What did we see last night at the Garrick Theatre, sitting absorbed, interested, astounded by the daring of the scheme, enchanted by the art of the acting, fascinated by the brilliant power of Mrs. Patrick Campbell? Unquestionably the masterpiece, as yet, of Arthur Wing Pinero. The play that resulted in so splendid a success for Mr. John Hare is, to our thinking, head and shoulders above "Mrs. Tanqueray" in analysis, in excellence of dialogue, in profundity of thought, and in rare chances for always clever, sometimes extraordinary, acting. Let not playgoers be frightened at the new play because it will be called a tragedy; and so it is—a tragedy of human life, a tragedy in which two wrecked souls are concerned. Not a tragedy of daggers and bows and red fire and feathers and flummery, but a tragedy that lays bare with pitiless severity the heart of a woman, mistaken perhaps, but not ent perchance, misguided, sometimes unnatural, often inconsequent; the tragedy of a man, weak, egotistical, vain, passionate, loving, tender, and shipwrecked, but on the whole a man far

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more natural, as it seems to us, than his companion in misery, dejection, and despair. We do not pretend, nor would it be right in connection with so fine a play, to give more than the barest outline at the moment of Mr. Pinero's daring scheme. There will be many opportunities to return to it again and again, to describe it in detail, to record our impression of acting as fine as has been seen in modern times on the English stage, and to congratulate Mr. Hare on the possession of a work that will command the undivided attention and criticism of all earnest playgoers. "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" is not the kind of play to be taken in a hurried gulp on a chance day after dinner. It has to be seen repeatedly, and to be commended to the critical attention of all who value a novel and striking modern tragedy.

Who, then, is Mrs. Ebbsmith? She is the daughter of a notorious London Socialist and reformer, the fruit of an unhappy marriage, who has absorbed into her young life her father's daring and impulsive ideas. Her father has preached in the Park, and become a hero lecturer in Old-street, St. Luke's. We all know your prototype, Mr. Pinero! The daughter, on her father's death, has carried on his wild but earnest campaign, has shouted herself hoarse on a platform with a flaming red banner for a background, and enthusiast, "dowdy demagogue" as she is, has hoped to be a daughter of the people. They call her down East "Mad Agnes." In Paris she would be wearing a red bonnet and preaching the Commune. A dangerous young woman surely. But passionate, wild, undisciplined, and enthusiastic as she is, she is still a woman with a heart, a woman who can love, for she finds herself atheist, socialist, demagogue, a hater of convention, standing up beside a young barrister at the altar rails of St. Andrew's Church, Holborn. The marriage turns out a miserable failure; she loathes the institution, she considers it no better than a harem, and when her husband dies, this Mad Agnes of the St. Luke's Debating Hall turns hospital nurse, and takes up her parable against marriage. She unsexes herself. She considers that "to be a woman is to be mad." The misery of her life has soured her completely. In this hapless condition she nurses a young fellow in Rome who is dying of Roman fever. His experience of married life is as bad and bitter as that of Mad Agnes, the Socialist now turned nurse and ministering angel. Listen what he says about want of sympathy in women:

Love one of these women—I know!—worship her, yield yourself to the intoxicating day dreams that make the grimy world sweeter than any heaven ever imagined. How your heart leaps with gratitude for your good fortune; how compassionately you regard your unblest fellow-men! What may you not accomplish with such a mate beside you; how high will be your aims, how paltry every obstacle that bars your way to them; how sweet is to be the labour, how divine the rest! Then—you marry her. Marry her, and in six months, if you've pluck enough to do it, lag behind your shooting party and blow your brains out by accident at the edge of a turnip-field. You have found out by that time all there is to look for—the daily diminishing interest in your doings, the poorly-assumed attention as you attempt to talk over some plan of the future; then the yawn, and by degrees the covert sneer, the little sarcasm, and, finally, the frank, open stare of boredom. Ah, Duke, when you all carry out your repressive legislation against women of evil lives don't fail to include in your schedule the unsympathetic wives. They are the women whose victims show the sorriest scars; they are the really "bad women" of the world—all the others are snow-white in comparison.

This want of sympathy with women has ruined the life and career of Lucas Cleeve. He has run away from his lawful wife in despair, and we find him living with Mad Agnes in Venice ostensibly as man and wife. What a wretched, deplorable union! The man hungers for love and tenderness; the woman screams for an impassionate existence, a life with no nature in it. In her arrogance she would defy nature and laugh it to scorn. She wants to live with the man she has nursed to life as platonic companion alone. She hates and detests passion, and argues out her hatred of it much to her own satisfaction, not at all to the delight of her companion.

AGNES (leaning upon the back of the chair, staring before her, in a low, steady voice). What has been was inevitable, I suppose. Still, we have hardly yet set

foot upon the path we've agreed to follow. It is not too late for us, in our own lives, to put the highest interpretation upon that word—Love. Think of the inner sustaining power it would give us! (Turning to him forcibly) We agree to go through the world together, preaching the lessons taught us by our experiences. You will show yourself fearlessly to the world as one who refuses to endure a misery you have not earned; one who makes a right to end a wretched marriage, from which there is no law on your side to release you. And I take my place openly by you—a woman ready to give you, for as long as you ask it, that food of sympathy your talents hunger for to save them from starvation. We cry out to the people, "Look at us! Man and woman who are in the bondage of neither law nor ritual! Linked simply by mutual trust! Man and wife, but something better than man and wife! Friends, but even something better than friends!" I say there is that which is noble, finely defiant, in the future we have mapped out for ourselves, if only—if only—

LUCAS. Yes?

AGNES (turning from him). If only it could be free from passion!

LUCAS (after a pause, in a low voice). Yes; but is that possible?

AGNES (in the same tone, watching him askance, a frightened look in her eyes). Why not?

LUCAS. Young man and woman . . . youth; and love. . . .? Scarcely upon this earth, my dear Agnes, such a life as you have pictured.

AGNES. I say it can be, it can be.

But in truth, as the Duke of St. Olpherts, a charming and delightful cynic, soon discovers, the "Fair Agnes, beauteous flower," is two distinct women rolled into one. She thinks she has conquered nature, but she hasn't. With woman's instinct she sees that her lover companion is wearying of Platonism and cold comfort. She becomes listless and bored. His accursed aristocratic friends and relations come to Venice to break up and smash down the "fair companionship." She scents the danger afar. They call her a dowdy, a draggletail, and a white witch, as she is. Instinctively she puts on gay and regal attire to tempt the lover whose kisses she brushes from her disgusted mouth. She leans for comfort on the cheek of the man whose embraces she loathes, for she fears to lose him. And here comes the one wonder of the play. Why did such a woman as Agnes ever love such a man as Lucas Cleeve? Mr. Pinero has not properly explained it. Is it mere mystery or fate that attaches so determined, obstinate, unnatural, scornful, and occasionally detestable a woman to a man so weak, so irresolute, so fitful, so egotistic, and vain as Lucas? Extremes meet here, indeed. But in the remnant left of her heart she loves him, and would die rather than be separated from her half-and-half lover. At last the crash comes. The diplomatic Duke, with exquisite suavity and severity, tries in the interests of his nephew to separate the ill-assorted pair. His mission is in vain. A good, sweet, tender, and pure woman—charmingly played by Miss Ellis Jeffreys—a travelling acquaintance, who is a widow and has had her marriage sorrow, also offers her a home in the country, if the Socialistic Magdalen will only return to English peace. Her brother, a broad-minded, stalwart, honest-hearted, muscular Christian of a parson, does his best to urge a separation; and then comes the finest scene in all the play, which called down thunders of applause last night—a risky scene, a scene that if merely described would be considered outrageous, but one that, thanks to the really superb acting of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, became a dramatic moment to live long in the memory. Baffled and disheartened, the parson and his sister are leaving the reckless, unrepentant, apparently hard-hearted woman, and quitting her for ever. Before departing, the clergyman, without cant or humbug, without affectation or religious prigishness, leaves behind him a small pocket Bible, with the names of the two faithful friends inscribed in it. The sight of the Bible, in which she once believed, maddens the infuriated Agnes. The horror of the woman's unrepentance galls the faithful Gertrude. It is the one touch of nature in the whole of this dark and gloomy human tragedy. The scene is well worth reading, and it was superbly played by all those concerned in it—Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Miss Jeffreys, and a most promising and natural young actor, Mr. C. Aubrey Smith. Here is the passage:

GERTRUDE (to Agnes, pointing to book). This frightens you—(Agnes turns her head towards Gertrude)—simple print and paper, so you pretend to regard it—but it frightens you. (With a quick movement Agnes twists her chair round and faces Gertrude fiercely.) I called you a mad thing just now. A week ago I did think you half-mad—a poor, ill-used creature, a visionary, a moral woman living immorally; yet, in spite of all, a woman to be loved and pitied. But now I'm beginning to think that you're only frail—wanton. Oh, you're not so mad as not to know you're wicked—(tapping the book forcibly)—and so this frightens you!

AGNES. You're right! Wanton! That's what I've become! And I'm in my right senses, as you say. I suppose I was mad once for a little time, years ago. And do you know what drove me so? (Striking the book with her fist.) It was that—that!

GERTRUDE. That!

AGNES. I'd trusted in it, elung to it, and it failed me. Never once did it stop my ears to the sound of a curse; when I was beaten it didn't make blows a whit the lighter; it never healed my bruised flesh, my bruised spirit! Yes, that drove me distracted for a while; but I'm sane now—now it is you, that are mad, mad to believe! You foolish people not to know—(beating her breast and forehead)—the hell or heaven is here and here. (Pointing to the book.) Take it! (Gertrude turns away and joins Amos, and they walk quickly to the door.)

AGNES (frantically). I'll not endure the sight of it! (As they reach the door Gertrude looks back and sees Agnes hurl the book into the fire. They go out. Agnes starts to her feet and stands motionless for a moment, her head bent, her fingers twisted in her hair. Then she raises her head; the expression on her face has changed to a look of fright and horror. Uttering a loud cry, she hastens to the stove, and, thrusting her arm into the fire, drags out the book. Gertrude and Amos re-enter quickly, in alarm.)

GERTRUDE. Agnes! (They stand looking at Agnes, who is kneeling upon the ground, clutching the charred book. The curtain falls.)

Mrs. Patrick Campbell has done nothing finer than the scene of the burning Bible in the whole of her brilliant and fitful career. Here she becomes inspired. She had reserved all her strength for this moment. At the outset a little nervous and hurried, as was natural on such an occasion, but always a picture, always interesting, always with a face that riveted the attention of every spectator, here she rose into the domain of genuine tragedy. Her agonised cry when she felt what she had done, the impulsive thrusting of the bare arm into the red-hot furnace of a stove, the rescue of "the book," and then the rapt face of exquisite delight as she clasped the burning volume to her breast, will be discussed again and again, and praised as often as it is discussed. It is acting that does credit alike to the artist and her country, and so we find Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who was so brilliant as the Second Mrs. Tanqueray, who then went under a cloud, and exhibited too obviously a distaste for her work, has once again more than justified the prophecies of her earliest and warmest admirers. We shall return to her acting again, but meanwhile the brilliancy of the success must be promptly recorded.

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quite see the dramatic value of such mental vacillation in the passionate lover. But we hope to return to him again, and possibly correct our first impression. It was marvellous, however, to note the changes on Mr. Forbes-Robertson's face. When happy, and with a prospect of love before him, he was gay and bright as a boy. When baffled and disappointed he became prematurely old and haggard. Mr. Ian Robertson, Mr. Joseph Carne, Mr. Fred Thorne, Mr. Gerald du Maurier, all contributed to the success of the play, and the third act derived an added interest from the appearance of Miss Eleanor Calhoun, who, being an artist, did not disdain to appear only in the last act as the contemptuous wife—a little bit, it is true, but played to perfection for all that.

Thus we must leave for the moment Mrs. Ebbsmith, who will be far more "notorious" by the end of the week than she was last night, for all play-going London, will be off to visit her, and rave once more, most justly, about Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who has at last established herself in the highest position, and has the ball at her feet. She has now not only England, but America and other countries to conquer. Need we chronicle in the conventional manner the excited shouts for Mr. Pinero, the congratulations that were showered upon him, the cheers again and again for Mr. Hare—who has got his genuine success at last—the desire to see more and more again of pale-faced, large-eyed, earnest Mrs. Campbell, and the general triumph of a play that, whether we like it or not, everyone must see, study, and weigh in the balance? We repeat again it is a tragedy, and a very fine one—a tragedy that brings out in authorship and acting the very best that we have got in English art.

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MR. PINERO'S NEW PLAY.

Mr. Pinero's new play, "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith," is a powerful, daring, original work, enthralling at times, and never uninteresting, but it lacks certain qualities conspicuous in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." In the history of poor Paula Wray there was a beauty of workmanship that is not to be found in the tale of Agnes Ebbsmith. The elder play was full of life and incident, handled like decoration in pure Gothic work, so as to be an integral portion of the structure. Throughout the new piece there is a want of actual event, which in some scenes actually made it appear almost dull, despite the high quality of the dialogue; so low-pitched, indeed, it is in movement that the one noteworthy incident—the casting by Agnes of a Bible into the fire—appeared rather melodramatic and out of keeping. Hardly a word of the dialogue in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" could be spared, but there was a feeling to-night that some cutting should be done in the play of the evening—that in the first act there was redundancy in the explanatory conversations. Moreover, there is an important question of obscurity. The work produced at the St. James's Theatre certainly is a full play—so full that one could see it several times, and read it as well without exhausting it; yet in its psychology it seemed as clear as it was complex. No one of average human experience could fail to understand Paula and her motives. Unfortunately, one cannot say this of "Mad Agnes" whose conduct seems inconsistent, whose motives for some of her acts, as we shall show in telling the story, are puzzling. Nevertheless, judged by a lower standard than his own, "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" would appear to be a great play. It has a dialogue which, whilst avoiding the fault of phrase-making, is vivid, picturesque, and full of character; the theme is handled boldly and simply, and though one may find some fault in the depiction of the heroine, nothing but admiration can be expressed of almost all the minor characters. The hero is a really brilliant study of an unsteadfast man, and, indeed, has a subtlety and force that one hardly found in Aubrey Tanqueray.

The Subject.

Mr. Pinero has taken a topic of the day as his subject, and we are presented with a powerful play on the question of extra-conjugal unions. In handling it the author appears to be on the woman's side, though

perhaps his method of dealing with Agnes Ebbsmith will not altogether please some of the supporters of the so-called "New Woman" movement. Agnes was daughter of John Thorold, an Agnostic Socialist agitator. The marriage of her parents was unhappy, and so, as a child, she determined to remain unmarried; yet at eighteen she was wedded in a church to Mr. Ebbsmith, barrister. For one year he treated her "like a woman in a harem," for the next like a "beast of burden," and then he died, freeing her from what she called "the seething pit of marriage." Her father's blood was strong in her, and she turned agitator, grew popular in Hyde Park, and was famous as "Mad Agnes." However, by a turn of the wheel she became hospital nurse, and was sent to Rome to nurse a young man named Lucas Cleeve, stricken with Roman fever. He was a brilliant young politician—one of the "coming men"—a happy phrase, "I wonder where all the 'coming' men go to," may be noticed—whose married life had been as unfortunate as hers. He had wedded an "unsympathetic woman"—"the unsympathetic women are the really bad women of the world" was his phrase—was separated from her. There were faults on his side as well as that of his wife, but he was not eloquent concerning them. Agnes nursed him through his dangerous illness and by her skill and devotion saved his life. She grew to love the man whom she had rescued from death, and his gratitude took the form of love. Neither of them had what they would have called "conventional scruples," and the expected took place. They moved to Venice—the city famous for the love episode of the French novelist and her compatriot poet of which the novels, "Lui et Elle" and "Elle et Lui" give an interesting idea. The strong, eager personality of the woman soon carried the man off his feet. They were to become bold protestants against marriage; their union was not to be a hole-and-corner affair, but a public compact founded and dependent upon no law save of love. He was to give up his political career and make himself famous as a social reformer by brilliant use of his pen. To all this the man consented, but the woman wanted to go further. "Such a union," she said, "would be nobler and more courageous if it were—if it were devoid of passion." Lucas objected; he hardly appreciated the idea of losing his career and position in society through disrepute of a sin that he did not commit. Now, the friends, relatives, and wife of Cleeve were determined not to let Mrs. Ebbsmith engross him without a struggle, so they sent over to Venice the cynical, elderly, libertine Duke of St. Olpherts, a man who had "an ornamental appointment for which an over-taxed country paid a handsome stipend." He was not the only disruptive force, since a Mrs. Thorpe, a widow, who had lately lost her little boy, and the Rev. Amos Winterfield, her brother, were also there trying to "rescue" Agnes. Gertrude Thorpe, believing Agnes to be the wife of Lucas, had grown fond of her, and even discovery of the truth could not drive her away. Now, without going into detail at great length, one could hardly give a fair idea of the actual course of events, and we can but offer a bare sketch. The first effect of the meeting of the duke and Mrs. Ebbsmith was that she became really aware of the inconstant egotistical character of Lucas—an ego-maniac, to use the new cant phrase—and got a hint from the indiscreet diplomatist that she must appeal rather to the young man's senses than to his sense. She promptly acted upon the hint, and dressed herself in a daintily décolleté gown, which she had before refused to wear. Moreover, she had a fainting fit and announced to Lucas that she and he were going to be man and woman together, and consented to abandon the Socialist propaganda enterprise. He was delighted, as he had become wearied of "the hideous unsoundness of her views." Now, though possibly on a second or third visit to the play, or upon reading it, one may come to understand and believe in the sudden strange "right-about-face" of the strong-minded woman, our present feeling is one of surprise not untinted with doubt. Displeased with this result, the Duke sends for the real Mrs. Cleeve and then proposes that there shall be a nominal reconciliation, that Lucas shall return to London and live in the same house as Mrs. Cleeve, but on a basis of actual separation; whilst Agnes is to dwell in a suburban villa and be what may be called the actual wife. This idea the Duke suggests to Mrs. Ebbsmith, and dares her to propose it to Lucas; she, confident that he will refuse so base an arrangement, accepts the challenge, and finds that the Duke was right. After this Mrs. Thorpe and her brother make an effort—actually their second—to induce her to come to England and live with them. She refuses, and then comes the Bible episode. The parson writes their address in a Bible, and offers it to her. She says she knows the address, and does not want the book. Mrs. Thorpe breaks in, tells her that she is afraid to touch the book, that though she is an agnostic she fears it.

Thereupon Agnes clutches it and throws it into the burning stove: they flee in horror. A moment later the hapless woman thrusts her hands into the flames and draws out the book, and then hastens off to the lodgings of the worthy pair. The incident is startling, painful, and most effective; but the strain of psychological impression that causes her to pull the book out and change her mind and follow Mrs. Thorpe is puzzling. Perhaps for this and some other difficulties of the play the author means to offer a solution in a suggestion that Mrs. Ebbsmith is affected in character by approaching though distant maternity; but there is very little to support this theory. The last act shows Mrs. Ebbsmith firm in her determination to cling to Mrs. Thorpe and her brother: it is worked out, not very effectively, nor with remarkable skill, by an interview between poor Agnes and Mrs. Cleeve, and a meeting between Lucas and his mistress, to whom in his fear of losing her he vainly offers any sacrifice.

The Performance.

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But the social question with which Mr. Pinero in his latest play more particularly deals is that of the hypocrisy of outward show as regards loveless marriages. Why should a companionship, cemented by mutual trust and confidence—a companionship that brings hope and support to each of the parties—be regarded as less honourable than a union confirmed by the Church, and the obligations of which have become irksome? This is virtually the inquiry made by Agnes Ebbsmith, the character already referred to. "We've done with marriage," she says. She knows that the formalities of law and the blessing of the priest cannot alone bring happiness, peace, or security. More, are they not frequently the pretext for deceit, fraud, and every species of double-dealing? It is on this point that discussion may arise concerning the play at the Garrick. The literary ability displayed, the straightforwardness of the author, and the admirable manner in which his ideas are carried out by the players he has selected for the purpose are indisputable.

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MR. PINERO'S NEW PLAY.

Mr. Pinero's new play, "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith," is a powerful, daring, original work, enthralling at times, and never uninteresting, but it lacks certain qualities conspicuous in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." In the history of poor Paula Wray there was a beauty of workmanship that is not to be found in the tale of Agnes Ebbsmith. The elder play was full of life and incident, handled like decoration in pure Gothic work, so as to be an integral portion of the structure. Throughout the new piece there is a want of actual event, which in some scenes actually made it appear almost dull, despite the high quality of the dialogue; so low-pitched, indeed, it is in movement that the one noteworthy incident—the casting by Agnes of a Bible into the fire—appeared rather melodramatic and out of keeping. Hardly a word of the dialogue in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" could be spared, but there was a feeling to-night that some cutting should be done in the play of the evening—that in the first act there was redundancy in the explanatory conversations. Moreover, there is an important question of obscurity. The work produced at the St. James's Theatre certainly is a full play—so full that one could see it several times, and read it as well without exhausting it; yet in its psychology it seemed as clear as it was complex. No one of average human experience could fail to understand Paula and her motives. Unfortunately, one cannot say this of "Mad Agnes" whose conduct seems inconsistent, whose motives for some of her acts, as we shall show in telling the story, are puzzling. Nevertheless, judged by a lower standard than his own, "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" would appear to be a great play. It has a dialogue which, whilst avoiding the fault of phrase-making, is vivid, picturesque, and full of character; the theme is handled boldly and simply, and though one may find some fault in the depiction of the heroine, nothing but admiration can be expressed of almost all the minor characters. The hero is a really brilliant study of an unsteadfast man, and, indeed, has a subtlety and force that one hardly found in Aubrey Tanqueray.

The Subject.

Mr. Pinero has taken a topic of the day as his subject, and we are presented with a full play on the question of extra-conjugal unions. In handling it the author appears to be on the woman's side, though

perhaps his method of dealing with Agnes Ebbsmith will not altogether please some of the supporters of the so-called "New Woman" movement. Agnes was daughter of John Thorold, an Agnostic Socialist agitator. The marriage of her parents was unhappy, and so, as a child, she determined to remain unmarried; yet at eighteen she was wedded in a church to Mr. Ebbsmith, barrister. For one year he treated her "like a woman in a harem," for the next like a "beast of burden," and then he died, freeing her from what she called "the seething pit of marriage." Her father's blood was strong in her, and she turned agitator, grew popular in Hyde Park, and was famous as "Mad Agnes." However, by a turn of the wheel she became hospital nurse, and was sent to Rome to nurse a young man named Lucas Cleeve, stricken with Roman fever. He was a brilliant young politician—one of the "coming men"—a happy phrase, "I wonder where all the 'coming' men go to," may be noticed—whose married life had been as unfortunate as hers. He had wedded an "unsympathetic woman"—"the unsympathetic women are the really bad women of the world" was his phrase—was separated from her. There were faults on his side as well as that of his wife, but he was not eloquent concerning them. Agnes nursed him through his dangerous illness and by her skill and devotion saved his life. She grew to love the man whom she had rescued from death, and his gratitude took the form of love. Neither of them had what they would have called "conventional scruples," and the expected took place. They moved to Venice—the city famous for the love episode of the French novelist and her compatriot poet of which the novels, "Lui et Elle" and "Elle et Lui" give an interesting idea. The strong, eager personality of the woman soon carried the man off his feet. They were to become hold protestants against marriage; their union was not to be a hole-and-corner affair, but a public compact founded and dependent upon no law save of love. He was to give up his political career and make himself famous as a social reformer by brilliant use of his pen. To all this the man consented, but the woman wanted to go further. "Such a union," she said, "would be nobler and more courageous if it were—if it were devoid of passion." Lucas objected; he hardly appreciated the idea of losing his career and position in society through disrepute of a sin that he did not commit. Now, the friends, relatives, and wife of Cleeve were determined not to let Mrs. Ebbsmith engross him without a struggle, so they sent her to Venice the cynical, elderly, libertine Duke of St. Olpherts, a man who had "an ornamental appointment for which an over-taxed country paid a handsome stipend." He was not the only disruptive force, since a Mrs. Thorpe, a widow, who had lately lost her little boy, and the Rev. Amos Winterfield, her brother, were also there trying to "rescue" Agnes. Gertrude Thorpe, believing Agnes to be the wife of Lucas, had grown fond of her, and even discovery of the truth could not drive her away. Now, without going into detail at great length, one could hardly give a fair idea of the actual course of events, and we can but offer a bare sketch. The first effect of the meeting of the duke and Mrs. Ebbsmith was that she became really aware of the inconstant egotistical character of Lucas—an ego-maniac, to use the new cant phrase—and got a hint from the indiscreet diplomatist that she must appeal rather to the young man's senses than to his sense. She promptly acted upon the hint, and dressed herself in a daringly décolleté gown, which she had before refused to wear. Moreover, she had a fainting fit and announced to Lucas that she and he were going to be man and woman together, and consented to abandon the Socialist propaganda enterprise. He was delighted, as he had become wearied of "the hideous unsoundness of her views." Now, though possibly on a second or third visit to the play, or upon reading it, one may come to understand and believe in the sudden strange "right-about-face" of the strong-minded woman, our present feeling is one of surprise not untinged with doubt. Displeased with this result, the Duke sends for the real Mrs. Cleeve and then proposes that there shall be a nominal reconciliation, that Lucas shall return to London and live in the same house as Mrs. Cleeve, but on a basis of actual separation; whilst Agnes is to dwell in a suburban villa and be what may be called the actual wife. This idea the Duke suggests to Mrs. Ebbsmith, and dares her to propose it to Lucas; she, confident that he will refuse so base an arrangement, accepts the challenge, and finds that the Duke was right. After this Mrs. Thorpe and her brother make an effort—actually their second—to induce her to come to England and live with them. She refuses, and then comes the Bible episode. The parson writes their address in a Bible, and offers it to her. She says she knows the address, and does not want the book. Mrs. Thorpe breaks in, tells her that she is afraid to touch the book, and Agnes, who is a hypocrite, she fears it.

Thereupon Agnes clutches it and throws it into the burning stove: they flee in horror. A moment later the hapless woman thrusts her hands into the flames and draws out the book, and then hastens off to the lodgings of the worthy pair. The incident is startling, painful, and most effective; but the strain of psychical impression that causes her to pull the book out and change her mind and follow Mrs. Thorpe is puzzling. Perhaps for this and some other difficulties of the play the author means to offer a solution in a suggestion that Mrs. Ebbsmith is affected in character by approaching though distant maternity; but there is very little to support this theory. The last act shows Mrs. Ebbsmith firm in her determination to cling to Mrs. Thorpe and her brother: it is worked out, not very effectively, nor with remarkable skill, by an interview between poor Agnes and Mrs. Cleeve, and a meeting between Lucas and his mistress, to whom in his fear of losing her he vainly offers any sacrifice.

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is to bring about a reconciliation between Cleeve and his family. Then it is that Agnes perceives she will have to fight for the possession of the somewhat vain and egotistical man with whom she is residing. Having previously despised handsome dresses, and, asking Cleeve after he has presented her with a magnificent costume, "When would you have me hang these on my bones?" she astonishes him and the Duke by not only wearing this particular gown, but by consenting to go with him to a supper party. It soon becomes evident that Lucas regrets the public career in his own country he has given up for her sake, and the Mephistophelian Duke is ever at his elbow to remind him how much he has lost by associating with Mrs. Ebbsmith.

Gradually Agnes finds her hold on Cleeve weakening. The wife from whom he has been separated comes to Venice, and for the sake of appearances is anxious to patch up a peace at any price. At last the suggestion is made that Mr. and Mrs. Cleeve shall return to London and reside beneath one roof, but not as man and wife, whilst a separate establishment, also in London, shall be maintained for poor Agnes. Her ambition to prove with Cleeve an example of how two people can live together in faith has long been relinquished, for she has grown to love him "in the helpless, common way of women." Happily she has two friends by her side—an English clergyman and his sister—who both pity and respect her. After a highly-dramatic scene, in which, after throwing a Testament they have left with her in the fire she rescues it from the flames, Agnes consents to accompany them to their home in Yorkshire and strive to forget the past. But her temptations are not yet at an end. Mrs. Cleeve—the lawful wife of the man Agnes loves—asks her to return to London in order that Lucas may be brought back. Agnes is about to yield, when Mrs. Cleeve, ashamed of her proposal, withdraws it. The appeals of the wretched Lucas are in vain. Agnes has been strengthened by her recent severe trials; she perceives how hopeless, how sinful it would be to strive to keep Lucas, and the curtain falls upon the triumph of the clergyman and his sister.

Throughout Mrs. Patrick Campbell justified Mr. Pinero's choice for the embodiment of such a difficult character as Mrs. Ebbsmith—a character full of quick contrasts. The motives of the woman are always clear, but not invariably so are her methods of realising them. For instance, it is at first not easy to see why Agnes should suddenly discard the sober dress she has hitherto favoured, and appear in the extremely fashionable gown she had previously ridiculed. But from beginning to end Mrs. Campbell kept the interest of the audience in the character undiminished, and at the close of the third act, when torn by conflicting emotions she hurled the Testament in the fire, attained a height of tragic intensity worthy the best moments of her Mrs. Tanqueray. The enthusiasm with which her exertions were received was well earned. Mr. Forbes Robertson played the vacillating Lucas with consistency and fervour, and Mr. John Hare brought out the chief characteristics of the wicked, yet ever-polite, Duke of St. Olpherts with rare skill. Miss Eleanor Calhoun played the wife, and Miss Ellis Jeffreys was

earnest and bright as the clergyman's sister.

The three earlier acts were received with the heartiest approval, and the slackening of favour towards the close was not sufficient to leave the fate of the play in doubt. Mr. Pinero was well received, and so too was Mr. Hare. The latter was about to comply with the demand for a speech, whereupon some protests were made, and Mr. Hare disappeared.

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GARRICK THEATRE.

"THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH."

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A CHARMING MISTRESS.

With a sigh Agnes consents, supposing that a woman must pay the price of a friendship with all her body. The idea is dreadful to her. There is a reminiscence of her old, hideous married life in

is to bring about a reconciliation between Cleeve and his family. Then it is that Agnes perceives she will have to fight for the possession of the somewhat vain and egotistical man with whom she is residing. Having previously despised handsome dresses, and, asking Cleeve after he has presented her with a magnificent costume, "When would you have me hang these on my bones?" she astonishes him and the Duke by not only wearing this particular gown, but by consenting to go with him to a supper party. It soon becomes evident that Lucas regrets the public career in his own country he has given up for her sake, and the Mephistophelian Duke is ever at his elbow to remind him how much he has lost by associating with Mrs. Ebbsmith.

Gradually Agnes finds her hold on Cleeve weakening. The wife from whom he has been separated comes to Venice, and for the sake of appearances is anxious to patch up a peace at any price. At last the suggestion is made that Mr. and Mrs. Cleeve shall return to London and reside beneath one roof, but not as man and wife, whilst a separate establishment, also in London, shall be maintained for poor Agnes. Her ambition to prove with Cleeve an example of how two people can live together in faith has long been relinquished, for she has grown to love him "in the helpless, common way of women." Happily she has two friends by her side—an English clergyman and his sister—who both pity and respect her. After a highly-dramatic scene, in which, after throwing a Testament they have left with her in the fire she rescues it from the flames, Agnes consents to accompany them to their home in Yorkshire and strive to forget the past. But her temptations are not yet at an end. Mrs. Cleeve—the lawful wife of the man Agnes loves—asks her to return to London in order that Lucas may be brought back. Agnes is about to yield, when Mrs. Cleeve, ashamed of her proposal, withdraws it. The appeals of the wretched Lucas are in vain. Agnes has been strengthened by her recent severe trials; she perceives how hopeless, how sinful it would be to strive to keep Lucas, and the curtain falls upon the triumph of the clergyman and his sister.

Throughout Mrs. Patrick Campbell justified Mr. Pinero's choice for the embodiment of such a difficult character as Mrs. Ebbsmith—a character full of quick contrasts. The motives of the woman are always clear, but not invariably so are her methods of realising them. For instance, it is at first not easy to see why Agnes should suddenly discard the sober dress she has hitherto favoured, and appear in the extremely fashionable gown she had previously ridiculed. But from beginning to end Mrs. Campbell kept the interest of the audience in the character undiminished, and at the close of the third act, when torn by conflicting emotions she hurled the Testament in the fire, attained a height of tragic intensity worthy the best moments of her Mrs. Tanqueray. The enthusiasm with which her exertions were received was well earned. Mr. Forbes Robertson played the vacillating Lucas with consistency and fervour, and Mr. John Hare brought out the chief characteristics of the wicked, yet ever-polite, Duke of St. Olpherts with rare skill. Miss Eleanor Calhoun played the wife of Ellis Jeffreys was

earnest and bright as the clergyman's sister.

The three earlier acts were received with the heartiest approval, and the slackening of favour towards the close was not sufficient to leave the fate of the play in doubt. Mr. Pinero was well received, and so too was Mr. Hare. The latter was about to comply with the demand for a speech, whereupon some protests were made, and Mr. Hare disappeared.

Daily Graphic

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A CHARMING MISTRESS.

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every caress of her new lover. And yet there is a germ of sweetness that grows and grows, until at length Cleve conquers—Agnes is utterly and eagerly abandoned to him. It is a difficult part to play, is it not? but Mrs. Patrick Campbell succeeded to admiration. Now Cleve's friends break in. Their forerunner is the Duke of St. Olaves, an elderly dandy, with the gout, no morals, and a bitter tongue—this is, of course, Mr. Hare's part. Agnes fights desperately for her lover. He, the weak fellow, is soon captured. He is willing for the sake of position to live under the same roof with his wife; but what of Agnes, with whom he was going to brave the world, if not to regenerate it? He swears he cannot live altogether without her—and insolently suggests that he might occasionally find his way to Brompton. Now the most

POWERFUL AND PATHETIC

scene occurs, the struggle between the good and the bad angels that rend poor Agnes's bosom. She declares she will be the creature of a worthless man—the voice of reason, the persuasion of loyal friends first avail nothing with the frenzied woman, and then prevail. The last act, that indicates the departure of the notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith for a peaceful Yorkshire Riding, there to begin life a third time, is rather uninteresting, with its irritating introduction of half-a-dozen characters of whom we have previously known nothing, and this tended to moderate the ardour of an audience that had just previously been perfectly enthusiastic. But there is no reason to doubt that "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" will create a profound sensation, and for some time to come attract large audiences to the Garrick.

H. G. H.

THE DRESSES.

The smartest gowns in the new Garrick piece are those worn by Miss Ellis Jeffreys as the widowed Gertrude Thorpe. One is of black and white checked gloss, the pouch bodice simply trimmed with a graceful fichu of white chiffon bordered with yellow valenciennes, the long ends caught into a waistband of black satin. With this gown she wears a short full cape of black cloth lined with white spin, and with a neck ruffle of black chiffon and a white straw bonnet with wide bows of black plissé chiffon, divided by jet ears and a black paradise osprey. Her other dress of black Sicilian alpaca has a plain full skirt, and a delightfully smart coat bodice with revers of white satin covered with black jet, with an appliqué and frill of cream lace, the full vest being of white accordion-pleated chiffon.

Miss Calhoun, who only appears in one act, has an exquisite evening gown of black accordion-pleated chiffon, the overhanging fulness of the bodice caught into a deep jet waistband, while the square-cut corsage is bordered with a broad band of jet. She also has a superb cloak of black glace, patterned with sprays of faint-hued flowers in which a lovely shade of pink predominates, appearing again in the huge silk revers which, with a collar of chinchilla, constitutes the trimming of this lovely garment.

In striking contrast to this up-to-date smartness is the simple attire of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, whose first dress of dark brown serge is almost nun-like in its severity, while the second of grey cashmere is like it in fashion. Then comes the change, and at the end of the second act she appears a gorgeous vision in a trailing robe of shimmering black tulle almost entirely covered with a raised floral design in gold, the corsage cut very low and the sleeves simply composed of strings of gold beads. But the last glimpse of her in Act IV. is in a funereal black gown, in which, however, she looks just as lovely as in the bitterly gorgeousness of the second act.

The Globe
March 14/95

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Among new women, Mr. Pinero's latest heroine, "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith," holds a prominent if not very easily definable place. It is hard to place her in any recognised category. She is not precisely a "femme incomprise," nor is she one who in her heart is impatient of masculine supremacy and control. So far as her singularly composite nature may be depicted in a phrase, she is a creature roused to fierce revolt by wrongs, individual and collective, in whom sexual temperament triumphs over aspiration. The daughter of a social democrat of the most pronounced type, she has, though loving her father, escaped the contagion of his teaching, and it is as a pure-minded Christian woman that she has gone to the altar with her barrister husband. What have been his exact misdeeds is not declared. He has treated her for a year as a toy, as a Sultana in his harem, and for eight following years as a beast of burden. Other women shall, she has determined, escape the snare into which she has fallen, and before and since her husband's death she has preached to women and to men the accursedness of marriage. Before she has been driven by the pangs of hunger to earn her living as a hospital nurse, she has, though one of the gentlest and womanliest of her sex, been christened Mad Agnes. In a hospital in Rome she has nursed into convalescence Lucas Cleeve, a rising young statesman, whose domestic experiences have been no less painful than her own. With him she has fallen in love, hailing in him a being kindred to herself, who will aid her in holding aloft the banner of emancipation from conjugal control.

When the play opens the pair are leading in Venice an all but ideal life, such as was heretofore led by Fron-Frou and her lover. In the present case prolongation of this pleasant life is menaced both from within and without. The wife and the brother of Lucas are on the point of arrival, to lead or drive the wandering sheep back into the fold. Their coming has been preceded by that of a far more dangerous adversary, the Duke of St. Olpherts, a debauched and Mephistophelian old nobleman, who knows exactly the temptations to which a nature, weak, vain, self-indulgent, and hysterical, such as that of Lucas, is most easily amenable. Before these assailants, the edifice of Agnes's happiness is to crumble into dust. She herself contributes, however, largely to her own defeat. Immeasurably beyond her strength is the task she has essayed. No champion is she of an oppressed and injured race. She is a loving woman, only anxious to maintain the dominion which she feels slipping from her grasp. She has sought to render pure and undisturbed by influences of sex the love that she feels, she has dressed herself plainly and unattractively, and has sought to keep her associate up to the high standard of her own ambition. It is vain. The feet of her idol are of clay. What is worse, her own feet are of clay also. From her arch-adversary she learns the dangers by which she is menaced. She dresses herself in rich and fashionable attire that he may be proud of her; she accepts and returns caresses that imply a virtual abandonment of her position. Worst of all, she finds herself slipping back into the slough from which she has escaped. The yoke of masculine supremacy is reimposed upon her neck, and she consents with a supreme surrender of her convictions to marry her lover so soon as he shall be freed. Even here her self-abasement and degradation do not stop. A proposal that she shall, while accepting a separate establishment, allow her lover to rejoin his wife and live nominally under her roof, comes near being accepted. It is not accepted. In the end the wretched woman finds strength enough to fly from temptation, accept the shelter offered her by pious friends, and spend expiatory years on the bleakest of Northern moors.

As in other of Mr. Pinero's plots, the lesson inculcated by the story is that woman, however self-contained and resolute, is not able to combat

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every caress of her new lover. And yet there is a germ of sweetness that grows and grows, until at length Cleve conquers—Agnes is utterly and eagerly abandoned to him. It is a difficult part to play, is it not? but Mrs. Patrick Campbell succeeded to admiration. Now Cleve's friends break in. Their forerunner is the Duke of St. Olaves, an elderly dandy, with the gout, no morals, and a bitter tongue—this is, of course, Mr. Hare's part. Agnes fights desperately for her lover. He, the weak fellow, is soon captured. He is willing for the sake of position to live under the same roof with his wife; but what of Agnes, with whom he was going to brave the world, if not to regenerate, it? He swears he cannot live altogether without her—and insolently suggests that he might occasionally find his way to Brompton. Now the most

POWERFUL AND PATHETIC

scene occurs, the struggle between the good and the bad angels that rend poor Agnes's bosom. She declares she will be the creature of a worthless man—the voice of reason, the persuasion of loyal friends first avail nothing with the frenzied woman, and then prevail. The last act, that indicates the departure of the notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith for a peaceful Yorkshire Riding, there to begin life a third time, is rather uninteresting, with its irritating introduction of half-a-dozen characters of whom we have previously known nothing, and this tended to moderate the ardour of an audience that had just previously been perfectly enthusiastic. But there is no reason to doubt that "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" will create a profound sensation, and for some time to come attract large audiences to the Garrick.

H. G. H.

THE DRESSES.

The smartest gowns in the new Garrick piece are those worn by Miss Ellis Jeffreys as the widowed Gertrude Thorpe. One is of black and white checked glacé, the pouch bodice simply trimmed with a graceful fichu of white chiffons bordered with yellow valenciennes, the long ends caught into a waistband of black satin. With this gown she wears a short full cape of black cloth lined with white satin, and with a neck ruffle of black chiffon and a white straw bonnet with wide bows of black plissé chiffon, divided by jet ears and a black Paradise osprey. Her other dress of black Sicilian alpaca has a plain full skirt, and a delightfully smart coat bodice with revers of white satin covered with black net, with an appliqué and frill of cream lace, the full vest being of white accordion-pleated chiffon.

Miss Calhoun, who only appears in one act, has an exquisite evening gown of black accordion-pleated chiffon, the overhanging fulness of the bodice caught into a deep jet waistband, while the square-cut corsage is bordered with a broad band of jet. She also has a superb cloak of black glacé, patterned with sprays of faint-hued flowers in which a lovely shade of pink predominates, appearing again in the huge silk revers which, with a collar of chinchilla, constitutes the trimming of this lovely garment.

In striking contrast to this up-to-date smartness is the simple attire of Mrs. Patrick-Campbell, whose first dress of dark brown serge is almost nun-like in its severity, while the second of grey cashmere is like it in fashion. Then comes the change, and at the end of the second act she appears a gorgeous vision in a trailing robe of shimmering black gauze, almost entirely covered with a raised floral design in gold, the corsage cut very low and the sleeves simply composed of strings of gold beads. But the last glimpse of her in Act IV. is in a funereal black gown, in which the butterfly gorgeousness of the second act.

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with marriage. Each has seen its curse. Mrs. Thorpe's womanly kiss to the sinner when she has learnt a part of this story cements a bond of friendship, which has hitherto been on uncertain ground. Lucas returns from his stroll with a bundle of letters. All are from English friends and all speak of his blasted career, imploring him to return to England. To Agnes he pours out his soul, and reveals the first hint of his real character. Her love must grant him oblivion. The passionate kiss which he imprints upon her lips she scornfully wipes away. Such a union as theirs should be free from passion. Their compact was to be fellow-workers, not lovers. "Is it not rather late for this, Agnes?" asks the man.

She has soon, however, to learn that all her resources will be called upon if she is to retain her hold upon him. It is conventional love he wants at the moment, not idealism. A letter is brought in. It is from Lucas's uncle, the Duke of St. Olpherts (Mr. John Hare), an elderly, cynical "Rip," who sends at the same time a bouquet for the lady with whom his delightful nephew is amusing himself. Agnes walks to the piazza, and seeing that the duke is watching the window from his gondola,

THROWS HIS BOUQUET
into the canal. Lucas knows his uncle's tactics by experience. He hopes to laugh him out of his folly. As Agnes says, "He must be a man of small resources." But she does not know him yet.

A week has passed when the curtain next opens. Lucas has ordered Agnes a wonderful dress of black and gold. "When would you have me hang this on my bones?" she asks. She is struggling hard against the moment, which she feels is inevitable, when she will find herself loving Lucas in the common way. The scene in which the Duke of St. Olpherts introduces himself to the Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith, whom he has seen at her Iron Hall, is delightful. She gives him the popular view of his career—at Eton, at Oxford, as an open debauchee, then living with his Duchess at a distance, and then in office, an irritation to his own order and a red rag to the people. In his own word Agnes "Trafalgar Squares" him, and he retaliates with a portrait of the real Lucas—the egoist, mining for adulation, in intellect still a callow boy, an epicure in morals. Lucas returning resents his uncle's intrusion, denouncing it as persecution. He has to stand the full battery of ridicule, and then turns to find his wife in the gorgeous dress she had disdained an hour before. "I think you're very clever" is the duke's comment. Lucas's compliment is to her beauty. "Am I beautiful? I'm glad."

The third act finds Agnes fainting on the sofa. Mrs. Thorpe has returned to her, and finds that she is playing a part. The egoist comes to her and pictures a lovers' future, and in his picture she sees her

MARRIAGE ALL OVER AGAIN.
She assents to all he suggests, for she cannot lose him now. The arrival of Lucas's lawful wife complicates matters, and when Lucas leaves Agnes to discuss compromise with his relatives, the fiend in the woman bursts forth. "Come home with us to Kettering," pleads Mrs. Thorpe and her brother. But Agnes's sex has found her out. There is one supreme hour in a woman's life, and hers has come when she can keep Lucas from his wife.

Finding argument useless, the parson places his Bible on the sofa before her. In a moment she has snatched it up and hurled it upon the fire. But repentance comes as quickly. When the curtain falls she is on her knees, with the rescued Bible clasped to her bosom. The final act is undecided in its tendency. Mrs. Thorpe succeeds in inducing the Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith to devote herself to the sufferings of others in the quiet Yorkshire village. Lucas and his wife enter upon a compromise that can bring no happiness to either. The reception of this play was enthusiastic to a degree. I have seldom heard such terrific cheers as greeted Mrs. Campbell at the close of her big scene with the Bible. This great actress has fully sustained the reputation she won as Paula Tanqueray. Miss Ellis Jeffreys makes a distinct advance,

and Mr. Hare and Mr. Robertson are perfect in their very opposite rôles. Why did not Mr. Pinero fix his premiere for a Saturday. One might have thought over his play then, and got at its moral—perhaps.

J. R. G.

GARRICK THEATRE.

"The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith."

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Act Three. Same scene. "So it has already arrived," says someone, "at a struggle to hold Mr. Cleeve." The struggle is not over yet. The wily Duke has summoned Lucas's wife to Venice, and a compromise has been proposed. If Lucas will consent to live, in outward decency, under the same roof as his wife, why, arrangements can be made for the retention of Agnes—a quiet little suburban villa, and no questions asked. The man protests, is hysterically ebullient—but obviously has a sneaking fancy for the plan. Agnes, perceiving this, resolves to complete her sacrifice of self. For the sake of her love she will roll in the mud—I mean, remove to the suburban villa. Lucas, still quivering with nervous excitement, still protesting this and that—a miserable weakling (a little of Helmer, more of Ekdal in "The Wild Duck"—are we men really like that? . . . Ugh! I shiver . . .), accepts the woman's sacrifice. When he has departed, to patch up matters with his wife, two of Agnes's friends, a parson (Mr. Aubrey Smith) and his sister (Miss Ellis Jeffreys), come to the rescue. They implore her to leave Lucas and to seek with them the virtuous retirement and fresh air of a Yorkshire moor. She refuses. As a last hope, they leave her a Bible. She straightway chucks it into the fire—and straightway pulls it out again, to clasp it

to her breast. Thus is religion vindicated, while the pit cheers itself hoarse. But what, in the name of common-sense, has the Bible to do with it just at this moment? And would the Bible ever have been thrown into the fire if Hedda Gabler had never thrown Löwborg's manuscript into the stove? I wonder.

Act Four. The lodgings of the parson and his sister, to whose care Agnes has fled. Interview—we have been waiting a long time for it—between the wife (Miss Calhoun) and Agnes. The shameful arrangement, already mentioned is again proposed. Again Agnes is induced to agree to it. Then comes a rightabout-face in the wife's conscience—and she declares that the plan is "off." Lucas makes a pitiable exhibition of weakness, whines to be taken back by Agnes; but this time she is firm, and bids him farewell for ever. When she has learned to pray once more, she will remember him—cold comfort! Exit Lucas—probably to rejoin his wife; and the curtain descends upon Agnes safe in the custody of the parson and his sister.

General impression of the play (I speak for myself, of course): vague irritation. It promises to be a study of inner mental and moral forces—the struggle of a woman's spiritual ideals with woman's love after the

with marriage. Each has seen its curse. Mrs. Thorpe's womanly kiss to the sinner when she has learnt a part of this story cements a bond of friendship, which has hitherto been on uncertain ground. Lucas returns from his stroll with a bundle of letters. All are from English friends and all speak of his blasted career, imploring him to return to England. To Agnes he pours out his soul, and reveals the first hint of his real character. Her love must grant him oblivion. The passionate kiss which he imprints upon her lips she scornfully wipes away. Such a union as theirs should be free from passion. Their compact was to be fellow-workers, not lovers. "Is it not rather late for this, Agnes?" asks the man.

She has soon, however, to learn that all her resources will be called upon if she is to retain her hold upon him. It is conventional love he wants at the moment, not idealism. A letter is brought in. It is from Lucas's uncle, the Duke of St. Olpherts (Mr. John Hare), an elderly, cynical "Rip," who sends at the same time a bouquet for the lady with whom his delightful nephew is amusing himself. Agnes walks to the piazza, and seeing that the duke is watching the window from his gondola,

THROWS HIS BOUQUET

into the canal. Lucas knows his uncle's tactics by experience. He hopes to laugh him out of his folly. As Agnes says, "He must be a man of small resources." But she does not know as yet.

A week has passed when the curtain next opens. Lucas has ordered Agnes a wonderful dress, of black and gold. "When would you have me hang this on my bones?" she asks. She is struggling hard against the moment, which she feels is inevitable, when she will find herself loving Lucas in the common way. The scene in which the Duke of St. Olpherts introduces himself to the Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith, whom he has seen at her Iron Hall, is delightful. She gives him the popular view of his career—at Eton, at Oxford, as an open debauchee, then living with his Duchess at a distance, and then in office, an irritation to his own order and a red rag to the people. In his own word Agnes "Trafalgar Squares" him, and he retaliates with a portrait of the real Lucas—the egoist, mining for adulation, in intellect still a callow boy, an epicure in morals. Lucas returning resents his uncle's intrusion, denouncing it as persecution. He has to stand the full battery of ridicule, and then turns to find his wife in the gorgeous dress she had disdained an hour before. "I think you're very clever" is the duke's comment. Lucas's compliment is to her beauty. "Am I beautiful? I'm glad."

The third act finds Agnes fainting on the sofa. Mrs. Thorpe has returned to her, and finds that she is playing a part. The egoist comes to her and pictures a lovers' future, and in his picture she sees her

MARRIAGE ALL OVER AGAIN.

She assents to all he suggests, for she cannot lose him now. The arrival of Lucas's lawful wife complicates matters, and when Lucas leaves Agnes to discuss compromise with his relatives, the fiend in the woman bursts forth. "Come home with us to Kettering," plead Mrs. Thorpe and her brother. But Agnes's sex has found her out. There is one supreme hour in a woman's life, and hers has come when she can keep Lucas from his wife.

Finding argument useless, the parson places his Bible on the sofa before her. In a moment she has snatched it up and hurled it upon the fire. But repentance comes as quickly. When the curtain falls she is on her knees with the rescued Bible clasped to her bosom. The final act is undecided in its tendency. Mrs. Thorpe succeeds in inducing the Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith to devote herself to the sufferings of others in the quiet Yorkshire village. Lucas and his wife enter upon a compromise that can bring no happiness to either. The reception of the play was enthusiastic to a degree. I have seldom heard such terrific cheers as greeted Mrs. Campbell at the close of her big scene with the Bible. This great actress has fully sustained the reputation she has as Paula Tanqueray. Miss Ellis Jeffreys makes a distinct advance,

and Mr. Hare and Mr. Robertson are perfect in their very opposite rôles. Why did not Mr. Pinero fix his première for a Saturday. One might have thought over his play then, and got at its moral—perhaps.

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