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Oscar Wilde
Scrapbook

Vol. 9

Financier and Bullionist

THEATRICAL ITEMS.

June 10.

"A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE"— HARRY TATE'S MOTOR.

After all the glamour one is accustomed to expect, it is quite a change to see a modern play at His Majesty's. For this reason Mr. Tree's revival of Oscar Wilde's powerful comedy "A Woman of No Importance" is doubly acceptable, irrespective of the pleasure afforded in reviving recollections of these erstwhile successes. As a compilation of brilliant epigrammatical sayings it would be hard to find its equal. In fact, if we may venture to say so, the action rather suffers thereby. A crudity in construction may also be detected in comparison with latter-day dramatists, but that, after all, is of small consequence. It is the poignancy of the theme with which we are chiefly concerned, and in this respect it will certainly be conceded that the author knew his business. A woman betrayed in her youth is faced with the agonising problem of relinquishing her son to her seducer, by whose means the boy is assured of a brilliant career. This, however, does not so much constitute the main question as whether it is possible for the man to make amends by an offer of marriage. This is the subject upon which the author gives us four acts of brilliant comedy, so delightfully interwoven with "smart" sayings as to entirely remove the piece from the plane of emotional drama. As played by Mr. Tree's company it is par excellence. Chief honours fall to Miss Marion Terry and Mr. Tree, but admirable assistance is rendered by Miss Ellis Jeffreys, Miss Kate Cutler, Miss Viola Tree and Mr. Quartermaine. The opportunity is so rare nowadays of seeing one of the late Oscar Wilde's plays that Mr. Tree is much to be commended for having made a break in his ambitious productions to present the play under notice. That the move has been successful is evidenced by the box-office receipts at His Majesty's.

Leeds Budget. June 8-1907

"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST."

Artificial in design and construction, "The Importance of being Earnest" has still easily survived its enforced exile, and now, on its revival at the Leeds Grand Theatre this week, it is just as fresh and brilliant and entertaining as ever. "The Importance of being Earnest" probably deserves perpetuation more than any other of all Oscar Wilde's comedies, for here the dialogue exhibits less of the influence of the shallow æsthetic cult than many of the productions from the same pen. The dialogue of this famous comedy is always entertaining, and although we do catch occasional glimpses of the inverted truism—a form of brilliance which, happily, is rapidly being killed, despite G.B.S. and G.K.C.—it is all very pleasing, and above all sparkling and witty.

The Hoffe and Campbell Comedy Company, in the performance of their self-imposed task of "presenting our modern masterpieces of comedy," did well to select so brilliant a type as "The Importance of being Earnest." And while one would never suggest that they should run through the whole repertoire of Wilde's comedies, they might do much worse than tackle a few more from that source. Afterwards they might try some more natural comedies—"Sweet Lavender" for example. But the scope for such an organisation is tremendous.

Working Memory 8 June 1907

THE DRAMA.

Mr. Beerbohm Tree is always interesting, and by the revival of *A Woman of No Importance*, by Oscar Wilde, he has given us an opportunity for reflection. Produced originally fourteen years ago at the Haymarket Theatre, Mr. Wilde's play created something of a sensation, as the author's genius for brilliant paradox brought him to the front rank of writers for the stage. Between then and now much has happened in connection with the author. The promise displayed in *A Woman of No Importance* was fulfilled in succeeding works. The author's powers of paradox were perhaps carried a little too far; but *Lady Windermere's Fan* proved the most brilliant play of its day, and was successfully revived at the St. James's Theatre only last year. *The Importance of Being Earnest* was a further specimen of the author's cleverness.

In the present revival of *A Woman of No Importance*, no traces of age can be found, and the smart lines, witty answers, and recurring paradoxes produce the same effect. The author certainly over-worked the paradox habit when writing the first act; but when we get well on with the plot, the epigrams are well balanced. The cast Mr. Tree has at present interpreting Mr. Wilde's comedy is satisfactory in all characters except that of the American girl. Mr. Tree should know better than to give such a difficult part to so poor an actress as his daughter is at present. At times her acting was painful, and her voice seemed ill-trained. Mr. Tree himself was really excellent, and it is to be hoped that he will give us more modern plays in the future, as comedy is essentially his line. Nothing could be finer than the acting of Miss Marion Terry, who is always such a "womanly" actress. Miss Ellis Jeffrey's grand manner was very effective, and Miss Kate Cutler brought an air of refinement to her part. Mr. Charles Quartermaine made an excellent "juvenile"; and the one chance Mr. Edmund Maurice had was cleverly acted.

It will be interesting to notice with what success the revival meets, as the tragic death of the author has left the stage without any successor in his particular style of writing plays. Perhaps Mr. Lewis Waller may be tempted to revive Mr. Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*! At any rate, it is to be hoped so.

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Daily Mirror,

June 8.

SALOME PLAY AT THE ROYALTY.

No Objection Raised to Its Performance Because the
Story Is Not Taken from the Bible.

Much surprise has been aroused by the announcement that "The Daughter of Herodias," a one-act musical play, is to be produced on Monday afternoon at the Royalty Theatre, despite the fact that "Salome," Oscar Wilde's play on the same subject and many other plays dealing with Biblical subjects have been refused licences.

"'The Daughter of Herodias' is not a Biblical piece," said Miss Mabilia Daniell, who is to appear as Salome, to the *Daily Mirror* yesterday. "It does not, therefore, stand in the same category with Oscar Wilde's play, although the story of the two pieces is practically identical.

"The author, Mr. Brinsley Trehane—a lineal descendant of Richard Brinsley Sheridan—has kept strictly to the story as told by Josephus. John the Baptist does not appear, and is never even mentioned by name. The only addition is a song on to the stage."



THE DRAMA. By J. T. GREIN.

"A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE." AT HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.—"CLOTHES AND THE WOMAN" AND "A MAN'S FOES." AT THE IMPERIAL THEATRE.—"MY WIFE," AT THE HAYMARKET THEATRE.

IT is curious to observe the effect of Oscar Wilde's play, "A Woman of No Importance," upon a latter-day audience. Every day we are becoming more insistent in our demand for life such as it really is upon our stage, for human nature, human weaknesses and power, and behind the brilliant fireworks of Wilde's play, which dazzled and delighted in 1893, we detect all too clearly the artificiality, the

theatrical tricks, in a word, the absolute lack of soul. Oscar Wilde handled the English language as few before or after him have handled it. His dialogue is as polished and as neat as a mosaic, illuminated by flashes of caustic wit and traits of keen observation. All these qualities are rare enough in the annals of English drama; indeed, Wilde's pen was rather Gallic than British, yet had he infused a little more of true British feeling and sentiment into his work he would have turned out a better drama. To listen to the witty conversation of a man of culture is a privilege and a pleasure—for a time. Spread over four acts it becomes tedious. For it is Oscar Wilde who speaks for all his puppets—not one of them has a soul to call his own. The author works their actions and their utterances as a ventriloquist his dolls. The story belongs to a falsely sentimental and romantic school whose heyday has long since passed away. It is an oft-told tale, this of the woman deserted by her lover, whom she meets twenty years after, when their son is grown up. Moreover, it has been told with greater effect, because less artificially, by others who had less brilliancy and less brain than Wilde. Had he let epigrams alone for a space, he might have made the conflict between father and son vital and interesting, the situation when the father insults the girl whom his son loves might have become real and arresting, and the mother's intervention and final confession would have moved us to greater sympathy had the woman's character being drawn with a firmer hand. As it is, not one of the characters, even when they profess depth of feeling, convinces us of reality or sincerity. They all pose as one or the other thing; they utter fine sentiments and pointed epigrams couched in most graceful and distinguished language, yet never for one moment do we live their life or feel their emotions. Thus, judged as a whole, the play fails to attain the standards of good drama, while in detail there is much to admire. Society and its foibles are pointedly scourged with the whip of ridicule in a manner most delightful, and some familiar types are admirably parodied. But parody and ridicule are not sufficient for the making of a fine play.

Mr. Tree has not only revised a play which at the time it was written made a great stir in the world, but, in reinstating the author's name in its proper place on the programme, he has had the courage to honour the artist in a decorous and fitting manner. For this he deserves all praise. Would that the same unqualified praise might be bestowed on the whole revival. Unfortunately, faulty as the play is in itself, the representation failed to do it justice. The finish, the distinction, the easy fluency inseparable from Oscar Wilde's work were,

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MISS ELLIS JEFFREYS.
Playing in "A Woman of No Importance," at His Majesty's Theatre.

Daily Telegraph,

"The Door upon the Latch," was followed by "A Woman of No Importance." Mr. Oscar Wilde's well-known play now runs with an ease and effectiveness which make it one of the most polished and delightful performances to be witnessed in London. Mr. Tree as Lord Illingworth, Miss Marion Terry as Mrs. Arbuthnot, Mrs. Calvert as Lady Hunstanton, Miss Ellis Jeffreys as Mrs. Allenby, Miss Viola Tree as the American girl, Hester Worsley, and Mr. Quartermaine as Gerald Arbuthnot, represent a clever combination of talent and dramatic skill which rouses the house to real enthusiasm. Last night the brilliant dialogue and brilliant acting were received with laughter and sympathy sufficient to prove the lasting popularity of the comedy.

M. Albert Savine publie chez Stock une traduction des Poèmes d'Oscar Wilde; la note jointe au volume assure « que ces vers posèrent immédiatement en Angleterre le poète en chef de l'école de l'art pour l'art », et cette phrase... poétique fait penser à une réflexion que prononçait il y a peu de temps un homme de savoir et de goût : « Dès qu'il s'agit de Wilde, on ne dit que des bêtises. »

"A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE"

When Mr. Beerbohm Tree left the Haymarket Theatre it seemed as though we lost one of our finest character actors; or rather not lost but mislaid on the vast stage of His Majesty's," says the *Saturday Review*. "Neither Shakespeare nor scenery nor Mr. Stephen Phillips was any compensation. But now that the proscenium can be made smaller there seems some chance of our being able to enjoy drama and acting once more. Who knows that we may not even enjoy Shakespeare again? The revival of Oscar Wilde's 'Woman of No Importance' with an unusually brilliant cast has thrown considerable light on the state of the drama and dramatic criticism, and on contemporary taste. It proves that Wilde was the only literary playwright since Sheridan whose dramas command any degree of popular attention, and that in artificial comedy he has never been replaced. Mr. Bernard Shaw and the literary group of Court dramatists have never been tested for long runs, at least in England, and of them Mr. St. John Hankin alone is a derivative of Oscar Wilde's."

However, the soldier friend Mr. C. Gordon Mills has to a double event, as the latest produced such a success. The cast is a fine one, and the production is a masterpiece. The play is a good deal of his gift at the Haymarket, and though there may not be much in common between the two comedies, except the high quality of the acting, the play is a masterpiece. The form of a good many members of the Brighton and Hove Club is well known to me. That of Mr. A. K. Sergeant is not, and judging from the very well known to the handiappers either. Last Saturday he fairly cut his head to ribbons and was to all intents and purposes "walking over." When a man comes in with such a head on his cart as 83—with the inevitable. That Mr. Sergeant will now meet with drastic treatment at the hands of the committee goes without saying, though in re-adjusting his handiaps they are free to face with a considerable amount of difficulty. Mr. H. H. Sans (11), although doing himself every justice, was as many as five strokes behind. Mr. C. W. Dille was third with so good a total as 81. The Chester Street Golfing Society managed to put a good side into the field on Saturday when opposing the London Golfing Society. Their leader, Mr. S. J. Chester, gave a forehand of which was a plummer by a great deal of such a play as to be a good deal of a success. When he scored 11 points to nothing. His total was 81.

DRAMA. May 23, 1907

The Last of Wilde.

WHAT malign fate was it ended Wilde's career with the scandalous imprisonment and the "Ballad of Reading Gaol"? Had his life begun that way, perhaps he might have got at reality. As it was, he achieved only a magnificent bluff, his gifts were used in irony and contempt of his fellow-creatures. Had Wilde's exposure taken place at the University and had he subsequently emigrated to America or to Whitechapel, the world might be the richer for a great poet. As it is, we have only a few plays, one or two beautiful poems, and a star flower or two of perfect language. This "lord of language" and master of dramatic form used his lordship to galvanise utterly unreal and essentially melodramatic plots into a fictitious life. His people are marionettes, his drama is not the essential drama of great events and clashing of personalities, but the stagey drama of mechanically juxtaposed persons. Wilde's marionettes perform certain evolutions because they have been labelled to do so, not because their characters make it necessary. There is no necessity in his drama at all in the sense in which Euripides or Ibsen might use it. This painful fact is largely concealed by a wonderfully woven network of words that dazzle so that one can hardly see the marionette wires. But as soon as any attempt is made to analyse the play, to value the characters, and to conceive them in any other relationship than that in which the play displays them, the whole structure is exposed.

For my part, I bitterly resent this. The man who could write Illingworth's speech on the "Problem of slavery which we seek to solve by amusing the slaves," the man who could write one or two of the poems, that man knew quite well what he was doing in shackling his talents within the mesh of conventional society restrictions. Nothing can be uglier than this conventional society, for while it shuts off the candid world of the outer air, it sets up criteria which are in essence narrowness, meanness, and ugliness. And Wilde knew this as well as any Socialist to-day—Wilde, the apostle of beauty! Yet in a certain sense "A Woman of No Importance," its beauty, the perfection of the mechanism, the absolute precision of the click and sweep of the complicated evolutions of this mechanism; these things are in themselves fascinating to watch. It is like watching the engines on a great line—if only the engines were used to turn a child's paper windmill. It is like watching the stealthy stepping of a panther—a panther spending hours stalking a butterfly. If as Nietzsche thought, "everything beautiful runs upon light feet," then Wilde's play has this light claim to beauty. But as essentially the beauty of a play must be the appeal it makes to our humanity, then Wilde's play is not beautiful.

The meeting of a "betrayed" woman, her former lover, and their twenty year old son is a theme from which a great deal might be extracted. Wilde extracts nothing but a few artificial situations. None of the actual incidents in the play are in themselves incredible, but they are incredible in the relations set forth. The scene at the end of Act 3, where at the moment when Gerald Arbuthnot is going to spring at his father's throat, it is revealed to him that Lord Illingworth is his father, is the purest melodrama. It is first inconceivable that a man of wit and fascination like Illingworth should be so awkward as to kiss a girl in a manner necessitating his instantly facing an accusation of "insult"; and it is, secondly, inconceivable that Gerald Arbuthnot should behave like a homicidal maniac, or if he is one, should allow his mother's "He is your father" to restrain him. The real drama of the situation, the wonder and curiosity of the young man and the breaking open of old wounds of the mother, is left out. Mrs. Arbuthnot does display a varied series of emotions, but they are obviously quite fresh and green, not old emotions reawakened. Mrs.

Arbuthnot, as Wilde conceives her, must have been a narrow, mean-souled woman nursing her luxury of misery because she had nothing but her old sorrows and her shames to put into her life. She could not decree herself the generosity of forgetfulness; on top of which Wilde specifically tells us, to gain sympathy for the character, that Mrs. Arbuthnot was a woman of generous nature and wide interests. In the same way things are hinted about Gerald, but they do not appear. If Gerald Arbuthnot were a real person, he would insist on doing something when his mother says "He is your father"; as Wilde has carefully refrained from creating him, he is passive in the hands of the plot.

But, after all, what stuff and nonsense all this business of Mrs. Arbuthnot's agony of mind is (I notice Miss Marion Terry agreed with me, as she did not try to indicate more agony than that inflicted by a touch of toothache); a woman of that sort meeting her lover after twenty years might quite likely have some difficulty in recognising him at all. Her chief interest at any rate would be to insist on his doing the rational thing, and settling two or three thousand pounds a year on herself and her son. The real drama would be the relation of the son to the father, his wonder and curiosity, the unsettling of his moral standards and the broadening of his outlook. Compare the meeting of Lord Illingworth and Mrs. Arbuthnot with that of Magda and her lover in "Heimat," with that of Mrs. Clandon and her husband in "You Never Can Tell," with that of Vida Levering and her lover in "Votes for Women." Despite the differing values of these plays, the corresponding scene from any of them written into "A Woman of No Importance," with the necessary changes, of course, would cause the whole structure to fall to pieces. "A Woman of No Importance" is an insignificant piece of bluff, the success of which depends on audience, actors, and critics all being hypnotised with a belief of Wilde's genius. When the hypnotic spell is broken all that remains is a wonderful bit of dramatic construction and some beautifully polished sentences, the human appeal is that of the bitterness and savagery of a futile life, an appeal for pity—on which drama cannot be founded.

THE DRA

"A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE AND THE WOMAN" AND "A MY WIFE," AT THE HAYMA

It is curious to observe that of No Importance," upon becoming more insisted upon our stage, for hurried and behind the brilliant and delighted in 1893, theatrical tricks, in a word, the lack of soul. Oscar Wilde had English language as few before him have handled it. His drama as polished and as neat as illuminated by flashes of character and traits of keen observation these qualities are rare enough in the annals of English drama. Wilde's pen was rather German, yet had he infused a touch of true British feeling and into his work he would have a better drama. To listen to the conversation of a man of culture and a pleasure—spread over four acts it is tedious. For it is Oscar Wilde speaks for all his puppets—they have a soul to call his author works their actions utterances as a ventriloquist. The story belongs to a false mental and romantic scheme; heyday has long since passed is an oft-told tale, this of the deserted by her lover, whom twenty years after, when the grown up. Moreover, it has with greater effect, because locally, by others who had less and less brain than Wilde. epigrams alone for a space, have made the conflict between son vital and interesting, when the father insults whom his son loves might have real and arresting, and the intervention and final confession have moved us to greater sympathy the woman's character being a firmer hand. As it is, not characters, even when the depth of feeling, convinces us of sincerity. They all pose the other thing; they utterments and pointed epigrams in most graceful and dislanguage, yet never for one moment we live their life or feel their Thus, judged as a whole, the to attain the standards of good while in detail there is much. Society and its foibles are scourged with the whip of a manner most delightful, familiar types are admirably. But parody and ridicule are efficient for the making of a fine. Mr. Tree has not only written made a great stir in name in its proper place on honour the artist in a deserves all praise. Would that the same unqualified praise might be bestowed on the whole revival. Unfortunately, faulty as the play is in itself, the representation failed to do it justice. The finish, the distinction, the easy fluency inseparable from Oscar Wilde's work were,

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THE ILLUSTRATED SPORTING AND DRAMATIC NEWS.

"A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE" AT HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

JUNE 8, 1907



1. MR. TREE AS LORD ILLINGWORTH. 2. MISS KATE BISHOP AS LADY CAROLINE PONTERACT. 3. MR. EDMUND MAURICE AS THE VEN. JAMES DAUBENY, D.D. 4. MISS KATE CUTLER AS LADY STUTFIELD. 5. MISS ELLIS JEFFREYS AS MRS. ALLENBY. 6. MISS VIOLA TREE AS THE YOUNG AMERICAN GIRL, HESTER WORSLEY, WITH HER LOVER GERALD ARBUTHNOT (MR. CHARLES QUARTERMAINE). 7. MISS MARION TERRY AS MRS. ARBUTHNOT, LORD ILLINGWORTH'S VICTIM.

glasgow Evening Times. 17 June 07

The late Oscar Wilde's clever play "The Importance of Being in Earnest" will be revived at the King's Theatre next Monday.

Wilde; la note jointe au volume assure « que ces vers posèrent immédiatement en Angleterre le poète en chef de l'école de l'art pour l'art », et cette phrase... poétique fait penser à une réflexion que prononçait il y a peu de temps un homme de savoir et de goût : « Dès qu'il s'agit de Wilde, on ne dit que des bêtises. »



MASKS & FACES

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~~Wilde~~ 1871. 2-14 1907

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Public Opinion 18 June

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The Last of Wilde.

WHAT malign fate was it ended Wilde's career with the scandalous imprisonment and the "Ballad of Reading Gaol"? Had his life begun that way, perhaps he might have got at reality. As it was, he achieved only a magnificent bluff, his gifts were used in irony and contempt of his fellow-creatures. Had Wilde's exposure taken place at the University and had he subsequently emigrated to America or to Whitechapel, the world might be the richer for a great poet. As it is, we have only a few plays, one or two beautiful poems, and a star flower or two of perfect language. This "lord of language" and master of dramatic form used his lordship to galvanise utterly unreal and essentially melodramatic plots into a fictitious life. His people are marionettes, his drama is not the essential drama of great events and clashing of personalities, but the stagey drama of mechanically juxtaposed persons. Wilde's marionettes perform certain evolutions because they have been labelled to do so, not because their characters make it necessary. There is no necessity in his drama at all in the sense in which Euripides or Ibsen might use it. This painful fact is largely concealed by a wonderfully woven network of words that dazzle so that one can hardly see the marionette wires. But as soon as any attempt is made to analyse the play, to value the characters, and to conceive them in any other relationship than that in which the play displays them, the whole structure is exposed.

GOLF JOTTINGS.

exciting game was the result. The teams were headed and White (1½) were the only pair to score for the anno-

For my part, I bitterly resent this. The man who could write Illingworth's speech on the "Problem of slavery which we seek to solve by amusing the slaves," the man who could write one or two of the poems, that man knew quite well what he was doing in shackling his talents within the mesh of conventional society restrictions. Nothing can be uglier than this conventional society, for while it shuts off the candid world of the outer air, it sets up criteria which are in essence narrowness, meanness, and ugliness. And Wilde knew this as well as any Socialist to-day—Wilde, the apostle of beauty! Yet in a certain sense "A Woman of No Importance," its beauty, the perfection of the mechanism, the absolute precision of the click and sweep of the complicated evolutions of this mechanism; these things are in themselves fascinating to watch. It is like watching the engines on a great liner—if only the engines were used to turn a child's paper windmill. It is like watching the stealthy stepping of a panther—a panther spending hours stalking a butterfly. If as Nietzsche thought, "everything beautiful runs upon light feet," then Wilde's play has this light claim to beauty. But as essentially the beauty of a play must be the appeal it makes to our humanity, then Wilde's play is not beautiful.

The meeting of a "betrayed" woman, her former lover, and their twenty year old son is a theme from which a great deal might be extracted. Wilde extracts nothing but a few artificial situations. None of the actual incidents in the play are in themselves incredible, but they are incredible in the relations set forth. The scene at the end of Act 3, where at the moment when Gerald Arbuthnot is going to spring at his father's throat, it is revealed to him that Lord Illingworth is his father, is the purest melodrama. It is first inconceivable that a man of wit and fascination like Illingworth should be so awkward as to kiss a girl in a manner necessitating his instantly facing an accusation of "insult"; and it is, secondly, inconceivable that Gerald Arbuthnot should behave like a homicidal maniac, or if he is one, should allow his mother's "He is your father" to restrain him. The real drama of the situation, the wonder and curiosity of the young man and the breaking open of old wounds of the mother, is left out. Mrs. Arbuthnot does display a varied series of emotions, but they are obviously quite fresh and green, not old emotions reawakened. Mrs.

Arbuthnot, as Wilde conceives her, must have been a narrow, mean-souled woman nursing her luxury of misery because she had nothing but her old sorrows and her shames to put into her life. She could not decree herself the generosity of forgetfulness; on top of which Wilde specifically tells us, to gain sympathy for the character, that Mrs. Arbuthnot was a woman of generous nature and wide interests. In the same way things are hinted about Gerald, but they do not appear. If Gerald Arbuthnot were a real person, he would insist on doing something when his mother says "He is your father"; as Wilde has carefully refrained from creating him, he is passive in the hands of the plot.

But, after all, what stuff and nonsense all this business of Mrs. Arbuthnot's agony of mind is (I notice Miss Marion Terry agreed with me, as she did not try to indicate more agony than that inflicted by a touch of toothache); a woman of that sort meeting her lover after twenty years might quite likely have some difficulty in recognising him at all. Her chief interest at any rate would be to insist on his doing the rational thing, and settling two or three thousand pounds a year on herself and her son. The real drama would be the relation of the son to the father, his wonder and curiosity, the unsettling of his moral standards and the broadening of his outlook. Compare the meeting of Lord Illingworth and Mrs. Arbuthnot with that of Magda and her lover in "Heimat," with that of Mrs. Clandon and her husband in "You Never Can Tell," with that of Vida Levering and her lover in "Votes for Women." Despite the differing values of these plays, the corresponding scene from any of them written into "A Woman of No Importance," with the necessary changes, of course, would cause the whole structure to fall to pieces. "A Woman of No Importance" is an insignificant piece of bluff, the success of which depends on audience, actors, and critics all being hypnotised with a belief of Wilde's genius. When the hypnotic spell is broken all that remains is a wonderful bit of dramatic construction and some beautifully polished sentences, the human appeal is that of the bitterness and savagery of a little life, an appeal for pity—on which drama cannot be founded.

"A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE" AT HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.



1. MR. TREE AS LORD ILLINGWORTH.

2. MISS KATE BISHOP AS LADY CAROLINE PONTEFRACT.

3. MR. EDMUND MAURICE AS THE VEN. JAMES DAUBENY, D.D.

4. MISS KATE CUTLER AS LADY STUTFIELD.

5. MISS ELLIS JEFFREYS AS MRS. ALLENBY.

6. MISS VIOLA TREE AS THE YOUNG AMERICAN GIRL, HESTER WORSLEY, WITH HER LOVER GERALD ARBUTHNOT (MR. CHARLES QUARTERMAINE).

7. MISS MARION TERRY AS MRS. ARBUTHNOT, LORD ILLINGWORTH'S VICTIM.

glasgow Evening Times. 17 Jan. 07

Jesse Owens's University Library

The late Oscar Wilde's clever play, "The Importance of Being in Earnest" will be revived at the King's Theatre next Monday.

Vanity Fair

"A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE."

To the Editor of "Vanity Fair."

Sir,—Mr. Beerbohm Tree's revival of the famous play, "A Woman of No Importance," has gone far to prove that familiarity with epigrams breeds a liking for them. I think most of us are tired of literary gymnastics, and think more of an author when they can say of him "he paints a picture in a word."

Could "Jamshyd gloried" be put better?
No. Omar hit it to the letter.

When Shakespeare wrote of "violets dim,"
It was distinctly one to him.

And Kipling never was so fine
As in his "far-flung battle line."

Austin—do not let me bore you,
Writing more examples for you.

All I want to say is this:
There is one you should not miss.

Say Smithers gets you out to dine,
And asks your verdict on the wine,

Remember Byron, making merry,
Talked of "an avenging sherry"!

—Yours, &c.,

J. S. J.

Times.

NEW ROYALTY THEATRE.

In aid of the Ladies' Work Association a *matinée* was given yesterday at which two new plays were produced. The *Extra Shilling*, by Mr. Francis Toye, tells of a very ordinary and not too unpleasant coquette, who "doesn't want to get married yet," but likes to have plenty of young men (we see two of them in the play) dangling after her. One of her admirers, Richard Allingham, tries to break away and marry another woman for her money; on being refused, he returns to Olive Trevorton, the coquette, and after, to our considerable joy, telling her some home-truths, forces her to accept him. The author has clearly studied the works of Mr. Bernard Shaw. He has a neat manner in dialogue, and some notions of character; but more strength and originality are needed, even in a one-act play, to make any effect. A "Bohemian Comedy," he calls his piece; we saw nothing Bohemian in these nice, clean, conventional young people, unless it were the silly habit of using profane language, indulged in by both the lady and her two admirers. Mr. Robert Hilton and Mr. Philip Desborough played the admirers, Miss Ina Pelly the coquette, and Miss Esme Hubbard did very well as the coquette's friend. The *Daughter of Herodias*, by "Brinsley Trehane," seems to have been composed by the simple process of taking *Salome*, by Oscar Wilde, and cutting out all that might forfeit a licence. The soothsayer, in verse of which it is sufficient to say that, if it is not "decadent," it is at least devoid of genius, warns Herod against *Salome*. Herod, in verse of the same nature, refuses to accept the warning. *Salome* dances before him and makes her request in a whisper. The executioner goes out. The soothsayer returns. The warning is repeated. The curtain falls. It rises again to show *Salome* being mobbed by the crowd and Herod crying, "Kill this woman!" The dancing of Miss Mabilia Daniell was so good as to suggest that the play would have been much better if performed altogether in dumb show, to the music provided by Mr. Granville Bantock. Between the two plays came an admirable performance of M. Coppée's *Le Passant* by Miss Rita Jolivet as Sylvia and Miss Aimée Lowther as Zanetto. But why did Zanetto refer to his "rough serge" when he was wearing a superb doublet of old red and gold brocade? The orchestra, under Mr. Geoffrey Toye, did their best to cope with an overture to *The Daughter of Herodias*, composed by Mr. Robert Hilton.

Following Monckton play, "The Importance of Being Earnest," which was the last of the series.

It is stated that Mr. Isidore de Lara, the well-known composer, is engaged upon the libretto and the music of a new opera, "Salome," which hopes to submit towards the end of the present year at the Paris Grand Opera. Oscar Wilde's book is to form, as it has now done to the "Salome" of Richard Strauss, the basis of the new work, but the original subject is to have for Mr. de Lara's opera a totally new moulding. The characters of the new "Salome" will be the same as those appearing in Strauss's work, but the plot is to be much more condensed. It is expected that the performance of the new opera will occupy a little over an hour.

London Opinion. 8 June 1907

"A Woman of No Importance," by OSCAR WILDE.

(His Majesty's Theatre.)
He must be quite respectable. One has never heard his name before in the whole course of one's life, which speaks volumes for a man nowadays.

I think to elope is cowardly. It's running away from danger, and danger has become so rare in modern life.

The one advantage of playing with fire, Lady Caroline, is that one never gets even singed. It is the people who don't know how to play with it who get burnt up.

American women are wonderfully clever in concealing their parents.

The youth of America is their oldest tradition. Lady Stutfield: "What a wonderful man Columbus must have been."

Lord Illingworth: "Why?"

Lady Stutfield: "Because he discovered America."

Lord Illingworth: "Oh, no. It had often been discovered before, but it was always hushed up."

You can't make people respectable by Act of Parliament.

Ah, and one knows so well the popular idea of health—the English country gentleman galloping after a fox, the unspeakable in full pursuit of the uneatable.

They are awfully expensive. I can only afford them when I am in debt.

One should never trust a woman who tells one her real age. A woman who would tell one that would tell one anything.

The soul is born old, but grows young—that is

the comedy of life. And the body is born young and grows old—that is life's tragedy.

The book of life begins with a man and a woman in a garden. It ends with revelations.

Ah! my husband is a sort of promissory note. I am tired of meeting him.

When a man is old enough to do wrong, he should be old enough to do right also.

Duty is what one expects from others; it is not what one does oneself.

Children begin by loving their parents. After a time they judge them. Rarely, if ever, do they forgive them.

Everyone is born a king, and most people die in exile. A man who can dominate a London dinner-table can dominate the world.

It's better to be a dandy than a Puritan, any day. A well-tied tie is the first serious step in life.

There are only two kinds of women in Society—the plain and the coloured.

Men marry because they are tired, women because they are curious. Both are disappointed.

You should study the peerage, Gerald. It is the best thing in fiction the English have ever done.

The world has been made by fools, that wise men should live in it.

The only difference between the saint and the sinner, Lady Hunstanton, is that every saint has a past and every sinner a future.

I delight in men over seventy. They always offer one the devotion of a lifetime.

A title is rather a nuisance in these democratic days. As George Harford I had everything I wanted. Now I have merely everything that other people want.

G. B. S.: Two Estimates.

"Never do unto others what you would that they should do unto you: their tastes may be different." This "ludicrous epigram" of Mr. George Bernard Shaw's, as *Blackwood* calls it, loses none of its force when we read the savage attack made on him by an anonymous contributor in this month's "Maga." *Blackwood*'s tastes are not Mr. Shaw's, and he is certainly done unto himself as he has done unto others pretty frequently. His view that you may just as well not say a thing as say it in an uninteresting way is fully borne out by the withering contempt with which the *Blackwood* man combats some of his most characteristic utterances. To start with he is called "a Mr. George Shaw," a feeble attempt at writing him down an unknown person which can only raise a smile. Under the title "Sham

and Supersham"—the cleverest thing about the article—he is described as a "literary and dramatic Messiah," as an "ideal Polytechnic hero," as "a charlatan," "an ignorant jackanapes," and "a feeble imitator of such diseased eccentrics as Nietzsche." As "Mr. Shaw is being found out, with the rest of the morbid and mediocre crew" who have lived by the reaction from truth and beauty, it was perhaps a little supererogatory to flay him in this way. *Blackwood* has not Mr. Shaw's saving grace of humour—the quality that has made him tolerable again and again in the eyes of his contemporaries. His bland admiration of the writer's obvious sincerity will add fuel to the flames of this Northern critic. Possibly even Mr. Shaw, superior person though he be, will have derived solace from the simultaneous appearance of an article in the *Fortnightly* by Mr. St. John Hankin, in which a very different note is struck. Mr. Hankin is alive to Shavian weaknesses, but chooses to regard Mr. Shaw as a living force in letters and the drama, a propagandist and a reformer. Mr. Shaw's excesses do not neutralise the good that is in his work, and the reception given to the book in which his critical opinions of things dramatic are reprinted is a sufficient answer to the suggestion that the Shaw vogue is at an end.

A correspondent rather takes *Blackwood*'s view on this point. He writes:—"I am wondering if there is going to be a sudden collapse of the Bernard Shaw boom. I have been driven to this reflection by a careful study of the Press notices of the last Shavian production at the Court Theatre. Now the failure of an ordinary dramatist to amuse people with a metaphysical controversy, conducted in the infernal regions, would not be a matter for speculation, but in the case of 'G. B. S.' it is different. A few months ago 'Don Juan in Hell,' or any other exposition of his mental gymnastics, would have been received with rapturous satisfaction. It was not a question of discrimination, nor, do I believe, of genuine enjoyment. Shaw was the vogue, just as in a similar, if more restricted, sense has been Emil Reich or Father Vaughan. Mr. Campbell would have received the same patrician support if he had not been branded with the stigma of Nonconformity. Shaw has been an acquired taste with his countrymen: it took years of assiduous log-rolling to get them to give him a wide hearing. But at last the reward came. The little Sloane Street playhouse became nightly packed with gaping audiences, ready to laugh on the smallest provocation. He must have drawn big cheques on account of his volume rights. Just as the public was shaken out of its constitutional sobriety by the pyrotechnic brilliance of Oscar Wilde, so it has been intoxicated by the wanton massacre of every smug virtue that has stood synonymous for England's greatness. But the reaction is bound to come. The nation which has accepted the platitudes of Marie Corelli for twenty years will not tolerate indefinitely a sacrilegious jester who is stimulated by appreciation to still further excesses. It has been the correct thing to laugh at the gibes, but personally I am inclined to think that the larger portion of the present Shaw public will be relieved when it is no longer a duty to do so."

Hull News, June 14. (Hull Sports Express, June 15.)

STAGE & CONCERT ROOM.

Brilliant Wilde Comedy at the Royal.

Mr. Monckton Hoffe's Comedy Company, announced to appear at the Theatre Royal next week, has been organised, we are informed by the preliminary circular, "to present our modern masterpieces of comedy in the English provinces according to the high standard of acting that holds good on the Continent." The play selected for the tour is "The Importance of Being Earnest," by Oscar Wilde, and it is said of it that it is the most brilliant achievement of the author, and has been as much discussed throughout France and Germany as it has been in London. Until the present tour very few provincial towns have had the opportunity of enjoying it, hence its revival is exceedingly opportune, and will, doubtless, be embraced by Hull playgoers, many of whom had a foretaste of its brilliant wit when the East Yorkshire Dramatic Society produced it some weeks ago.

The author, it is recorded by the "Manchester Courier," achieved a great popular success with this "trivial comedy for serious people," as he called "The Importance of Being Earnest," a piece of dramatic craftsmanship, by the way, which only took him a fortnight to evolve. It was regarded, and indeed still is, as a clever example of topsy-turvy farce—for farce, despite the author's label, it is—whimsical as to plot, smart and neat as to construction, and simply sparkling and spluttering with pert and saucy epigrams.

Wilde said of "The Importance of Being Earnest"—he seemed to believe in the motto "Every playwright his own critic"—that the "first act is ingenious, the second beautiful, the third abominably clever." Be that as it may, and his Hibernian wit apart, he showed the dramatic world that for exuberant, infectious gaiety, lightness of touch, sparkling wit, and cleverness of construction, none of the French farce-writers could take much change out of him. The piece (says our Manchester contemporary) is almost Gilbertian in its extravagance, and in places reminds one of the drama according to the Two Maes. Only, instead of smiting each other on the head with picks and axes, the characters belabour each other with epigrammatic clubs. The duel of wits between Worthing and Monckton, for example, is particularly lively—counter and cross-counter, and no sparing for wind.

Stage, June 20, 07

HULL-ROYAL (Sole Lessee, Mr. William Morton; Resident Manager, Mr. W. F. Morton).—It must be more than ten years since Hull playgoers had the opportunity of seeing Oscar Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and on this account alone the chance of renewing acquaintance with this cleverly written comedy should prove of interest. Mr. Monckton Hoffe's company are responsible for the representation. Mr. Hoffe is seen in the part of Algernon Monckton, a character in which he appears quite at home. Mr. C. J. Nicholson is not altogether happy as John Worthing, J.P. Mr. Ralph Hutton is suitably played as the Rev. Canon Chasuble. Miss Winnie Grey as the Hon. Gwendoline Fairfax is too stilted in her manner. Miss Hester Newton makes an acceptable Cecily Cardew. Miss Amy Lloyd-Desmond is sufficiently firm as Miss Prism. A *Queen's Messenger* is given as curtain-raiser.

GLASGOW.

(From our own Correspondent.)
KING'S (Proprietors, Howard and Wyndham, Limited; Managing Director, Mr. F. W. Wyndham; Acting-Manager, Mr. H. Macfarlane).—*The Importance of Being Earnest* is staged here by Mr. Monckton Hoffe's company. Algernon Monckton is excellent as played by Mr. Hoffe. Miss Nona Hope makes a fascinating Cecily Cardew. Mr. C. J. Nicholson acts well as John Worthing. Lady Bracknell is good in the hands of Miss Phyllis Manners. Miss Hester Newton is a clever Gwendoline Fairfax. Miss Amy Lloyd-Desmond is the part of Miss Prism. Mr. Ralph Hutton is well cast for the Rev. Canon Chasuble. The play is preceded by *A Queen's Messenger*, in which Miss Hope and Mr. C. J. Nicholson show marked ability.

Tribune, June 11.

A NEW "SALOME."

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE AT THE ROYALTY THEATRE.

The experiments of the young and the courageous in the hazardous fields of dramatic art will always possess a certain fascination for many playgoers, and, judging from the reception accorded to the two new plays produced at the Royalty Theatre yesterday afternoon, the audience which attended the special *matinée* promoted in aid of the The Ladies' Work Association thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment provided for its delectation. On such occasions as this, to be sure, there is always, to quote from the lines of Louis McQuilland, the Irish poet, "The hope of the unexpected, the joy of the noble chance." One's judgment is apt to be warmed by a generous desire to be encouraging. But in the sober light of reflection one grows colder and less appreciative. Things being so, it appears likely that the warm-hearted audience that attended the Royalty Theatre will discover this morning that their enthusiasm was perhaps a little excessive, if not ill-judged.

Of the two new plays produced one only makes very serious demands upon our critical attention and interest. This is "The Daughter of Herodias," a little drama built on the *Salomé* incident in the life of King Herod. Those who have read Lord Alfred Douglas's beautiful translation of the other *Salomé* play which Oscar Wilde wrote in French will perhaps find the Brinsley Trehane's treatment of the subject unimaginative and commonplace. But although one is almost unavoidably driven into making comparisons, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that many of Mr. Trehane's lines possess a fine strength and lilt, and at times reach an undeniably high level of poetic rhetoric. It has colour, movement, incense, and some really deep musical harmonies (composed by Mr. Granville Bantock), but one is forced to admit that atmosphere is lacking. *Salomé* is there, *Salomé* who dances but utters never a syllable until she screams faintly on receiving her death-blow, but she is not the *Salomé* of tragic history, whose grace scorched up the intellect of a wise old king.

Referee.

June 16, 1907

Mr. Tree has put on a new curtain-raiser at His Majesty's. It is entitled "The Door on the Latch," and has been adapted by Mr. Kinsey Paine from Robert Louis Stevenson's short story "La Sire de Malotroit." Although not a specially strong piece of work, it is really an interesting little play, and would doubtless fare better if it had not to be played during the interruptions of the "late arrivals." Many of these when I saw the piece last night added such loquacity to their lateness that I fear the three excellent players concerned—namely, Messrs. Lyn Harding and Basil Gill and Miss Constance Collier—must have been much disturbed.

Such fine business is being done with "The Woman of No Importance," at His Majesty's that Mr. Tree will, he tells me keep the play in the programme until about the middle of July. At the beginning of September Mr. Tree will go on a three months' tour with a repertory including "Colonel Newcome" and several other Tree successes, especially a revival of "King John." As to Mr. Tree's next Shakespearean production at His Majesty's more anon.

Harrogate Times, June 15, 1907.

"The importance of being earnest"

A more brilliant comedy than "The Importance of Being Earnest," staged at the Grand Opera House in the early part of this week by Mr. Monckton Hoffe's company, could not be expected. It is intensely witty throughout. It is a pleasing example of the work of the great dramatist, Oscar Wilde; indeed, many regard the play as a masterpiece. The respective characters had been placed in very capable hands, and the comedy was gratefully received by the numerous visitors to this popular place of amusement, the Opera House. Mr. Monckton Hoffe gave an excellent study of "Algernon Monckton," whilst Miss Minnie Gray respectively parts with distinct success. The piece was preceded by "Father Varien," which proved a capital curtain-raiser.

June 12. 1907

"A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE."

To the Editor of "Vanity Fair."

Sir,—Mr. Beerbohm Tree's revival of the famous play, "A Woman of No Importance," has gone far to prove that familiarity with epigrams breeds a liking for them. I think most of us are tired of literary gymnastics, and think more of an author when they can say of him "he paints a picture in a word."

Could "Jamshyd gloried" be put better?

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It was distinctly one to him.

And Kipling never was so fine

As in his "*far-flung battle line*."

Austin—do not let me bore you,

Writing more examples for you.

All I want to say is this:

There is one you should not miss.

Say Smithers gets you out to dine,

And asks your verdict on the wine,

Remember Byron, making merry,

Talked of "*an avenging sherry*"!

—Yours, &c.,

J. S. J.

French Chronicle June 21, 1903

It is stated that Mr. Isidore de Lara, the well-known composer, is engaged upon the libretto and the music of a new opera, "Salome," which hopes to submit towards the end of the present year at the Paris Grand Opera. Oscar Wilde's book is to form, as it has now done to the "Salome" of Richard Strauss, the basis of the new work, but the original subject is to have for Mr. de Lara's opera a totally new moulding. The characters of the new "Salome" will be the same as those appearing in Strauss's work, but the plot is to be much more condensed. It is expected that the performance of the new opera will occupy a little over an hour.

2019-03-18 Shen Women's University Library 326

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House & Round June 15.

The so

The revival of *A Woman of No Importance* is keeping the box-office busy at His Majesty's. First produced at the House opposite in April, 1893, it enjoyed a run of some four or five months, if I remember right, but it seems only the other day that Mr. Tree came forward and told us that he was "glad to be associated with such a work of art." He still sustains his old part of Lord Illingworth, and the only remaining member of the original cast is Mr. Charles Allan, in the character of Mr. Kelvil, M.P. Mrs. Charles Calvert, Miss Kate Bishop, Miss Ellis Jeffreys, Miss Viola Tree, and Miss Marion Terry now respectively replace Miss Rose Leclercq, Miss Le Thiere, Mrs. Tree, Miss Julia Neilson, and Mrs. Bernard Beere. Mr. Edmund Maurice gives a most amusing representation of the Archdeacon Daubeney—formerly entrusted to Mr. Kemble—and his teeth alone are a marvelous piece of mechanism. Miss Marion Terry is quite at her best as Mrs. Arbuthnot, and Miss Viola Tree is very sweet and sympathetic as Miss Hester Worsley. The play is capitally acted, and the sparkling conversation and witty aphorisms are as fresh and interesting as ever.

Whitby Gazette June 14.

THE SPA.—The dramatic season at the Theatre was opened last week, "My Sweet-heart" being played on each of the last three evenings. "The Importance of Being Earnest," Mr. Oscar Wilde's brilliant comedy was played yesterday (Thursday) night by Mr. Monckton Hoffe's No. 1 Company, which was last week appearing at the Grand Theatre, Leeds. The June prices of admission were maintained, and the opportunity of having such a performance at such prices, when more than double was charged at Leeds, is one which should be appreciated by Whitby playgoers, the piece being repeated to-night (Friday) and to-morrow. The dialogue is the clever production of an extraordinary writer, and the Company caught the spirit of the piece, and played exceedingly well, conveying the impression that, if dramatists would be light and brilliant, actors are quite capable of giving an adequate interpretation of their works. The audience had ample demonstration that the author was a very clever wit. Next Thursday, and the two succeeding nights, another excellent comedy "The Superior Miss Pellender," from the Waldorf Theatre, London, will be produced. The skating-rink has been well patronised this week, and will be continued for the first three days of next week, after which the concert season will commence, and performances will be given every afternoon and evening. The tennis courts and croquet lawn are now open for the season. It is interesting to note that the "Hollenders," who are to appear in the role of entertainment providers, are this week engaged at the fine Kursaal, Harrogate.

"A Woman of no Importance," by OSCAR WILDE.
(His Majesty's Theatre.)

He must be *quite* respectable. One has never heard *his* name before in the whole course of one's life, which speaks volumes for a man nowadays.

I think to elope is cowardly. It's running away from danger, and danger has become so rare in modern life.

The one advantage of playing with fire, Lady Caroline, is that one never gets even singed. It is the people who don't know how to play with it who get burnt up.

American women are wonderfully clever in concealing their parents.

The youth of America is their oldest tradition.

Lady Stutfield: "What a wonderful man Columbus must have been."

Lord Illingworth: "Why?"

Lady Stutfield: "Because he discovered America."

Lord Illingworth: "Oh, no. It had often been discovered before, but it was always hushed up."

You can't make people respectable by Act of Parliament.

Ah, and one knows so well the popular idea of health—the English country gentleman galloping after a fox, the unspeakable in full pursuit of the uneatable.

They are awfully expensive. I can only afford them when I am in debt.

One should never trust a woman who tells one her real age. A woman who would tell one that would tell one anything.

The soul is born old, but grows young—that is

the comedy of life. And the body is born young and grows old—that is life's tragedy.

The book of life begins with a man and a woman in a garden. It ends with revelations.

Ah! my husband is a sort of promissory note. I am tired of meeting him.

When a man is old enough to do wrong, he should be old enough to do right also.

Duty is what one expects from others; it is not what one does oneself.

Children begin by loving their parents. After a time they judge them. Rarely, if ever, do they forgive them.

Everyone is born a king, and most people die in exile.

A man who can dominate a London dinner-table can dominate the world.

It's better to be a dandy than a Puritan, any day.

A well-tied tie is the first serious step in life.

There are only two kinds of women in Society—the plain and the coloured.

Men marry because they are tired, women because they are curious. Both are disappointed.

You should study the peerage, Gerald. It is the best thing in fiction the English have ever done.

The world has been made by fools, that wise men should live in it.

The only difference between the saint and the sinner, Lady Hunstanton, is that every saint has a past and every sinner a future.

I delight in men over seventy. They always offer one the devotion of a lifetime.

A title is rather a nuisance in these democratic days. As George Bernard Shaw said, "I had everything I wanted. Now I have merely everything that other people want."

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Crown June 15 1901
G. B. S.: Two Estimates.

"Never do unto others what you would that they should do unto you: their tastes may be different." This "ludicrous epigram" of Mr. George Bernard Shaw's, as *Blackwood* calls it, loses none of its force when we read the savage attack made on him by an anonymous contributor in this month's "Maga." *Blackwood's* tastes are not Mr. Shaw's, and he is certainly done unto himself as he has done unto others pretty frequently. His view that you may just as well not say a thing as say it in an unirritating way is fully borne out by the withering contempt with which the *Blackwood* man combats some of his most characteristic utterances. To start with he is called "a Mr. George Shaw," a feeble attempt at writing him down an unknown person which can only raise a smile. Under the title "Sham and Supersham"—the cleverest thing about the article—he is described as a "literary and dramatic Messiah," as an "ideal Polytechnic hero," as "a charlatan," "an ignorant jackanapes," and "a feeble imitator of such diseased eccentrics as Nietzsche." As "Mr. Shaw is being found out, with the rest of the morbid and mediocre crew" who have lived by the reaction from truth and beauty, it was perhaps a little supererogatory to flay him in this way. *Blackwood* has not Mr. Shaw's saving grace of humour—the quality that has made him tolerable again and again in the eyes of his contemporaries. His bland admiration of the writer's obvious sincerity will but add fuel to the flames of this Northern critic. Possibly even Mr. Shaw, superior person though he be, will have derived solace from the simultaneous appearance of an article in the *Fortnightly* by Mr. St. John Hankin, in which a very different note is struck. Mr. Hankin is alive to Shavian weaknesses, but chooses to regard Mr. Shaw as a living force in letters and the drama, a propagandist and a reformer. Mr. Shaw's excesses do not neutralise the good that is in his work, and the reception given to the book in which his critical opinions of things dramatic are reprinted is a sufficient answer to the suggestion that the Shaw vogue is at an end.

A correspondent rather takes *Blackwood's* view on this point. He writes:—"I am wondering if there is going to be a sudden collapse of the Bernard Shaw boom. I have been driven to this reflection by a careful study of the Press notices of the last Shavian production at the Court Theatre. Now the failure of an ordinary dramatist to amuse people with a metaphysical controversy, conducted in the infernal regions, would not be a matter for speculation, but in the case of 'G. B. S.' it is different. A few months ago 'Don Juan in Hell,' or any other exposition of his mental gymnastics, would have been received with rapturous satisfaction. It was not a question of discrimination, nor, do I believe, of genuine enjoyment. Shaw was the vogue, just as in a similar, if more restricted, sense has been Emil Reich or Father Vaughan. Mr. Campbell would have received the same patrician support if he had not been branded with the stigma of Nonconformity. Shaw has been an acquired taste with his countrymen: it took years of assiduous log-rolling to get them to give him a wide hearing. But at last the reward came. The little Sloane Street playhouse became nightly packed with gaping audiences, ready to laugh on the smallest provocation. He must have drawn big cheques on account of his volume rights. Just as the public was shaken out of its constitutional sobriety by the pyrotechnic brilliance of Oscar Wilde, so it has been intoxicated by the wanton massacre of every smug virtue that has stood synonymous for England's greatness. But the reaction is bound to come. The nation which has accepted the platitudes of Marie Corelli for twenty years will not tolerate indefinitely a sacrilegious jester who is stimulated by appreciation to still further excesses. It has been the correct thing to laugh at the gibes, but personally I am inclined to think that the larger portion of the present generation will be relieved when it is no longer a duty to do so."

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Hull News, June 14

(Hull Sports Express June 15.)

STAGE & CONCERT ROOM,

Brilliant Wilde Comedy at the Royal.

Mr Morekton Hoffe's Comedy Company, announced to appear at the Theatre Royal next week, has been organised, we are informed by the preliminary circular, "to present our modern masterpieces of comedy in the English provinces according to the high standard of acting that holds good on the Continent." The play selected for the tour is "The Importance of Being Earnest," by Oscar Wilde, and it is said of it that it is the most brilliant achievement of the author, and has been as much discussed throughout France and Germany as it has been in London. Until the present tour very few provincial towns have had the opportunity of enjoying it, hence its revival is exceedingly opportune, and will, doubtless, be embraced by Hull playgoers, many of whom had a foretaste of its brilliant wit when the East Yorkshire Dramatic Society produced it some weeks ago.

* * *

The author, it is recorded by the "Manchester Courier," achieved a great popular success with this "trivial comedy for serious people," as he called "The Importance of Being Earnest," a piece of dramatic craftsmanship, by the way, which only took him a fortnight to evolve. It was regarded, and indeed still is, as a clever example of topsy-turvy farce—for farce, despite the author's label, it is—whimsical as to plot, smart and neat as to construction, and simply spurring and spluttering with pert and saucy epigrams.

* * *

Wilde said of "The Importance of Being Earnest"—he seemed to believe in the motto "Every playwright his own critic"—that the "first act is ingenious, the second beautiful, the third abominably clever." Be that as it may and his Hibernian gotism apart, he showed the dramatic world that for exuberant, infectious gaiety, lightness of touch, sparkling wit, and cleverness of construction, none of the French farce-writers could take much change out of him. The piece (says our Manchester contemporary) is almost Gilbertian in its extravagance, and in places reminds one of the drama according to the Two Macs. Only, instead of smiting each other on the head with picks and axes, the characters belabour each other with epigrammatic clubs. The duel of wits between Worthing and Monchieff, for example, is particularly lively—

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Tribune, June 11.

A NEW "SALOME."

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE AT THE ROYALTY THEATRE.

The experiments of the young and the courageous in the hazardous fields of dramatic art will always possess a certain fascination for many playgoers, and, judging from the reception accorded to the two new plays produced at the Royalty Theatre yesterday afternoon, the audience which attended the special matinee promoted in aid of the The Ladies' Work Association thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment provided for its delectation. On such occasions as this, to be sure, there is always, to quote from the lines of Louis McQuilland, the Irish poet, "The hope of the unexpected, the joy of the noble chance." One's judgment is apt to be warmed by a generous desire to be encouraging. But in the sober light of reflection one grows colder and less appreciative. Things being so, it appears likely that the warm-hearted audience that attended the Royalty Theatre will discover this morning that their enthusiasm was perhaps a little excessive, if not ill-judged.

Of the two new plays produced one only makes very serious demands upon our critical attention and interest. This is "The Daughter of Herodias," a little drama built on the Salomé incident in the life of King Herod. Those who have read Lord Alfred Douglas's beautiful translation of the other Salomé play which Oscar Wilde wrote in French will perhaps find the Brinsley Trehane's treatment of the subject unimaginative and commonplace. But although one is almost unavoidably driven into making comparisons, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that many of Mr. Trehane's lines possess a fine strength and lilt, and at times reach an undeniably high level of poetic rhetoric. It has colour, movement, incense, and some really deep musical harmonies (composed by Mr. Granville Bantock), but one is forced to admit that atmosphere is lacking. Salomé is there, Salomé who dances but utters never a syllable until she screams faintly on receiving her death-blow, but she is not the Salomé of magic history, whose grace scorched up the intellect of a wise old king.

Stage,

June 20. '07

HULL—ROYAL (Sole Lessee, Mr. William Morton; Resident Manager, Mr. W. F. Morton).—It must be more than ten years since Hull playgoers had the opportunity of seeing Oscar Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and on this account alone the chance of renewing acquaintance with this cleverly written comedy should prove of interest. Mr. Moncton Hoffe's company are responsible for the representation. Mr. Hoffe is seen in the part of Algernon Moncrieff, a character in which he appears quite at home. Mr. C. Nicholson is not altogether happy as John Worthing, J.P. Mr. Ralph Hutton is suitably placed as the Rev. Canon Chasuble. Miss Winnie Grey as the Hon. Gwendoline Fairfax is too stilted in her manner. Miss Heston Newell as Cecily is a little better. Mr. Wardew. Miss Amy Lloyd-Desmond is sufficiently firm as Miss Prism. *A Queen's Messenger* is given as curtain-raiser.

Referee.

June 16. 1909

Mr. Tree has put on a new curtain-raiser at His Majesty's. It is entitled "The Door on the Latch," and has been adapted by Mr. Kinsey Peile from Robert Louis Stevenson's short story "Le Sire de Maletroit." Although not a specially strong piece of work, it is really an interesting little play, and would doubtless fare better if it had not to be played during the interruptions of the "late arrivals." Many of these when I saw the piece last night added such loquacity to their lateness that I fear the three excellent players concerned—namely, Messrs. Lyn Harding and Basil Gill and Miss Constance Collier—must have been much disturbed.

Such fine business is being done with "The Woman of No Importance," at His Majesty's that Mr. Tree will, he tells me keep the play in the programme until about the middle of July. At the beginning of September Mr. Tree will go on a three months' tour with a repertory including "Colonel Newcome" and several other Tree successes, especially a revival of "King John." As to Mr. Tree's next Shakespearean production at His Majesty's more anon.

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June 27.

GLASGOW.

(From our own Correspondent.)

KING'S (Proprietors, Howard and Wyndham, Limited; Managing Director, Mr. F. W. Wyndham; Acting-Manager, Mr. H. Macfarlane).—*The Importance of Being Earnest* is staged here by Mr. Menckton Hoffe's company. Algernon Moncrieff is excellent as played by Mr. Hoffe. Miss Nona Hope makes a fascinating Cicely Cardew. Mr. C. J. Nicholson acts well as John Worthing. Lady Bracknell is good in the hands of Miss Phyllis Manners. Miss Hester Newton is a clever Gwendoline Fairfax. Miss Amy Lloyd-Desmond scores in the part of Miss Prism. Mr. Ralph Hutton is well cast for Mr. Bunce. The play is preceded by *A Queen's Messenger*, in which Miss Hope and Mr. C. J. Nicholson show marked ability.

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Harrogate Times, June 15, 1907.

"The importance of being earnest."

A more brilliant comedy than "The Importance of Being Earnest," staged at the Grand Opera House in the early part of this week by Mr. Monckton Hoffe's company, could not be expected. It is intensely witty throughout. It is a pleasing example of the work of the great dramatist, Oscar Wilde; indeed, many regard the play as a masterpiece. The respective characters had been placed in very capable hands, and the comedy was gratefully received by the numerous visitors to this popular place of amusement, the Opera House. Mr. Monckton Hoffe gave an excellent study of "Algernon Moncreif," whilst Miss Minnie Gray and Miss Maud Hope appeared in their respective parts with distinct success. The piece was preceded by "Father Varien," which proved a capital curtain-raiser.

On the Continent

MUSIC IN PARIS

'SALOME'

SALOME.
THEATRE DU CHATELET.

MUSIC-DRAMA IN ONE ACT.
BOOK BY OSCAR WILDE. MUSIC BY RICHARD STRAUSS.

Such was the announcement which had covered the pillars devoted to advertising the concerts and theatrical performances in the streets of Paris for many days. At the first performance the huge Châtelet theatre was crowded from floor to ceiling by a vast audience, whose curiosity had been keyed to the highest pitch by the notoriety 'Salome' had attained in other capitals and towns.

The theatre is in complete darkness; the curtain rising discloses a terrace before the palace of Herod the Tetrarch. In the centre is a species of cistern or well. Soldiers are grouped about this well, in which is confined Jochanaan (John the Baptist). At one side is the palace of King Herod, whence are heard sounds of revelry. Salome enters; she has quitted the banqueting-hall, being haunted by the memory of the strange being for whom she has conceived an unholy, sensual lust. She must see again this mystic stranger who has repulsed with disgust her approaches; she must gloat again on his form, his hair, his lips. These latter she apostrophises many times in the most extravagant phrases. To accomplish her end, she gains over the chief of the guard, Narraboth, who yields to her witcheries and permits the prophet Jochanaan to appear. But the seductions and proffered charms of the courtesan are repulsed with disdain; maledictions are hurled at her, the debauchery of Herod and his court are arraigned with fierce invective, and their dire punishment is foretold. The prophetic threats of Jochanaan do not turn Salome from her purpose or extinguish in her the fire of lust which consumes her. The personal qualities of the prophet are again commented on, particularly his lips, that scarlet mouth against which she must press her own. The prophet, with a gesture of profound loathing and contempt, reënters his cell. Herod and his wife Herodias, the mother of Salome, enter the scene from the palace. The former, a weak, besotted being, fixing his gaze on Salome, beseeches her to perform one of her seductive dances, which before have calmed his neurasthenic moods. Salome refuses, her mother seconding her in the refusal to gratify the ignoble monarch. For the coveted gratification of his eyes, Herod again demands the performance of one of Salome's voluptuous poses, this time offering her whatever she may choose to demand. Salome complies, and performs before the infatuated Herod her famous Dance of the Seven Veils. As the price of this highest effort of her skill, she demands the head of Jochanaan the prophet on a salver. The King, feeling some compunction for his thoughtless promise, offers to the dancer the temptations of other desirable things in place of the lugubrious object named by

Salome as the price of her fascinating efforts. She declines in succession the proffer of Herod's famous diamonds, of his unique emeralds, and, lastly, of all his marvellous white peacocks—the pride of his gardens, the wonder of the whole world—insisting on her right to name the promised recompense. Herod is compelled to accede, and gives the necessary instructions. Preceded by an instant of perfect silence, painful in its intensity, a mailed arm is seen to emerge from the cistern. The hand grasps a platter on which rests the head of Jochanaan. This Salome clutches, being at last able to gratify her perverse hysteric lust for the lips of the man, now dead—caresses she could not procure while he was living. This scene, which for realism and perverse animal passion has surely never been equalled, sickens even Herod himself. He commands his guards—"Kill that woman!" This they do, crushing Salome under their massive shields.

This delectable distortion of the simple and dignified Biblical story—a king's concubine, who, reproved by a prophet for her relations with the monarch, demands her enemy's head as the price of her daughter's efforts to amuse the debauched tyrant—was written first as a drama by Oscar Wilde, originally in French. In this he was aided, so far as the phraseology was concerned, by Bernard Lazare and Pierre Louys. One or two performances of it were given by a society called L'Œuvre, which exists for the occasional production of works by dramatists of different nationalities, but generally of very "advanced" ideas. So the first performance of 'Salome' as originally written was in Paris, October 28, 1896. The English version is said to be a translation of the original made by Lord Alfred Douglas. As the recent performances given in Paris of 'Salome' were in the German version, specially prepared for the composer, some of the crudities of the text, being in a foreign tongue, were not so prominently objectionable.

The reasons that could have induced Richard Strauss to lend his wonderful talent to the setting of such a libretto can be known only to himself. Perhaps the very freedom, the audacity, of the writer's idea, its extravagance, tempted one who admits in music's realm no rules, laws, or restrictions, except those perhaps he may impose on himself. The performance lasts about one hour and fifty minutes. Not a single moment of repose is experienced during that hour and fifty minutes, not an instant of fatigue. The hearer is hurried along breathless through the most extraordinary complications of rhythms, harmonies, and colours, until he arrives panting at the end. It is as if one awoke from some ghastly nightmare, with an unpleasant flavour in the mouth, a fast-beating heart, and a general sense of having been whirled through space at an incredible speed. It can scarcely be claimed that the themes employed in 'Salome' are always of great distinction—nay, some are distinctly commonplace—or that they typify in any sense whatever the personages whose character they are at times supposed to reveal. But with what skill these themes are thrown about, crossing one another, apparently in inextricable confusion; and yet managed with a skill, a virtuosity, perfectly astound-

ing! It gives one the sensation of a clever juggler throwing glittering balls about in the air, but each of which describes its own appointed orbit, is kept in sight by the performer, and falls at last into the place for which it was destined. Even the apparent confusion and wild incoherence of some parts of the score of 'Salome' are only tempests and torrents of sound let loose and intentionally designed, by their very cacophony, to form a vivid contrast to what follows. The melodies, or rather melodic phrases, used by Strauss are of the peculiar, brief, incomplete type also affected by some of the more pronounced "verism" Italian school. They seem asthmatic in character, terminating as abruptly as they began, and leaving no very clear idea as to why they should have begun at all.

For the orchestration, nearly every known instrument is employed by the composer. Not content with these, he essays to obtain new effects from them by employing a mode of writing which requires other technique than that hitherto demanded. His double-basses are employed like 'cellos; these play at heights heretofore allotted to the violins, which in turn are heard in the regions usually connected more particularly with flutes and piccolos. From the point of view of sonority, Strauss perhaps has gone farther than any of his predecessors. In this groove of the musical art, it is surely impossible to advance, unless one strive to obtain still greater power by doubling or trebling the entire orchestra. In brief, few will dispute the colossal character of Strauss's 'Salome'—many will question its grandeur.

The Interpretation

For this the very best means available were employed. The principal rôle in the work, viz., the orchestra, was that of Colonne, numbering 110 performers. The rehearsals had been carefully directed and prepared by M. Gabriel Pierné. All the performances (six) were directed by the composer in person. Salome was sung by Fraulein Emmy Destinn and Miss Olive Fremstadt, who had sung the part on the single performance of the work in New York. The other parts were entrusted to competent and experienced artists; but, as the music scarcely recognises the limits or characteristics of the human voice, it will be understood that, with perhaps the exception of Destinn, they all excelled much more as actors than singers, as was designed by the composer.

Glasgow Herald 25 June 1907

ENTERTAINMENTS.

KING'S THEATRE.—"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST."

The piece at the King's Theatre is one to be seen, rather heard. "The Importance of Being Earnest" was described by its author as being for serious people, but that was the expression of an irrepressible wit's personality. No one could be serious and listen to the brilliant dialogue and witness the comical situations with which the piece abounds. The story is trivial enough, but this serves to accentuate the charm of its setting. Mr. Monckton Hoffe's company bring the necessary lightness of touch, and the audience were kept in laughter almost from beginning to end. The leading part of the hero—a Justice of the Peace in Hertfordshire who has invented a scapegrace brother on whose shoulders to lay the blame of his escapades when he visits London—was in the capable hands of Mr. C. J. Nicholson. It is upon this gentleman and his friend Algernon Moncrieff, and upon their two sweethearts, that the burden falls of this amusing though impossible piece. Mr. Monckton Hoffe himself played the friend with much skill, while the young ladies were suitably portrayed by Miss Hester Newton and Miss Nora Hope. A number of minor characters were cleverly sustained. The comedy was preceded by "A Queen's Messenger," a drama in one act, vividly represented by Mr. Nicholson and Miss Hope.

Bystander.

The Tudor Novel
Again

Mrs. Charles Brookfield has already made her name known as the author of semi-historical books; and it is, therefore, quite comprehensible that she should try her skill at the historical novel. In *My Lord of Essex* (Sir Isaac Pitman: 6s.) she attempts to illustrate a passage in the life of Elizabeth's brilliant favourite. The episode chosen is the expedition to Cadiz, but the interest of the book lies in the struggle between the younger Cecil, son of the great Lord Burghley, and the idealised Essex himself, for prosperity and the favour of Elizabeth. Essex, a vain, vapouring person, one is afraid, in history, appears here as a youthful and dashing gallant, crazy for war and adventure. He has a fascinating figure, and, as Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson put it, "a leg," and, of course, Elizabeth's weakness for him is brought well to the front. Historical novelists are unkind to Elizabeth. Her struggles, her personal courage, her cleverness in keeping out of Continental entanglements, are rarely shown us; but, instead, we have her with withered, rouged cheeks, and an ancient coquetry, pursuing Essex in the manner of a heroine of Bernard Shaw. Still, historical probabilities are not too much offended here, and the action is also cleverly and clearly managed. One can hardly think that the dialogue—a most difficult thing to do properly in an Elizabethan novel—is altogether pleasing. At that time, the language was in a rich confusion, and almost any kind of phrase can be justified by reference to Elizabethan literature. Still, it is not very tactful to use expressions like, "Does that matter these days, Essex?" which recall America—a world then, as Oscar Wilde would have said, only just "detected." After that, one might expect to hear Elizabeth telling Essex to come "right here." But, fortunately, this is spared us.

Daily Graphic.

END OF THE SEASON AT HIS MAJESTY'S.

MR. TREE'S "LAST LEAVES."

Mr. Tree concluded his present season on Friday night with an extremely interesting selection from the work which he has produced during the past few months. The programme began with the pretty second act of "The Winter's Tale," with Mr. Basil Gill, Mr. Lyn Harding, and Miss Viola Tree in their old parts. This was followed by the third act of "A Woman of no Importance," the play which until Friday night held the bill and which is curiously interesting because, in spite of its epigrammatic smartness, it is so singularly old-fashioned. In the third and fourth acts it touches real emotion and even tragedy, but Wilde, in his plays, was superficial, with the result that we only find conventional melodrama. The next item in the long programme was the fourth act of "Antony and Cleopatra," finely played by Mr. Tree and Miss Constance Collier; after this came that amusing one-act play "The Van Dyck," with Mr. Weedon Grossmith in his old part of John Peters, while, to conclude, the second act of "Colonel Newcome" was given. It was a wonderful programme, remarkable not only as showing specimens of the varied pieces produced during the season, but for the evidence which it afforded of the versatility of the players. At the fall of the curtain, after a most enthusiastic call, Mr. Tree made an interesting little speech, in which, after briefly referring to the past season and to the visit to Berlin, "fraught with pleasant memories," and a visit which he hopes to repeat, he forecast the future. After the provincial tour, the new productions will be Mr. Comyns Carr's version of "Edwin Drood," Mr. W. J. Locke's "The Beloved Vagabond," and the new version of "Faust" by Mr. Stephen Phillips, assisted by Mr. Comyns Carr. In this Mr. Basil Gill will play Faust and Mr. Tree Mephistopheles. During Mr. Tree's absence His Majesty's Theatre will be occupied by Mr. Oscar Asche and Miss Lily Brayton.

THE BOOK OF THE HOUR.

FRAULEIN SCHMIDT AND MR. ANSTRUTHER.*

I HAD intended to thank Countess Arnim for the great treat she has given all lovers of literature by her latest book. But I will be more modest, I will thank her on my own account alone. For the longer I live the less certain am I of my own taste and the less certain also of the quality of what professors and so-called cultivated people call "literature."

I feed in a literary sense upon dainties. I like Stevenson, Pater, Oscar Wilde, Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, and at one time I was proud of my taste. I thought it grand to sneer at Guy Boothby, R. H. Savage, G. R. Sims; and a really popular writer like Miss Corelli made me ill. But I am beginning to see my mistake. There is absolutely no reason on earth why W. S. Gilbert should not be as great a poet as Byron, and live as long or longer. It is purely a matter of opinion—my opinion against that of another person. Annie S. Swan sells by millions, Countess Arnim by hundreds; yet I can read about Elizabeth and her German garden every day and all day, whilst I cannot get through two pages of Annie S. Swan, which shows me quite clearly that I must be a fool, judged by ordinary standards.

The delicate, the noble, the refined in literature does not live like the banging, clattering schoolboy fighting and lovmaking of Shakespeare or Marlowe, whose lines have lasted 300 years and are now more popular than they were in the days of Queen Elizabeth. The whole world loves the transpontine melodrama of "Gotterdammerung" and understands it; but when "Don Giovanni," the most terrible musical tragedy ever written, is put upon the stage it is turned into a comedy to suit modern ideas.

Hans Richter once gave it as it was written but I don't think anyone knew what was going on, the audience slept peacefully through the tragic music and only woke up to listen to Leporello.

Therefore do not read about Fraulein Schmidt because I ask you. I am, as you can see, wrong. But if there are any readers of MAMMON who like delicacy of truth, sly humour and a curious power of making most ordinary things appear quite extraordinary, I advise them to try the little olive-green volume. Don't get it from the library, it is not that sort of book. Buy it, read it a little each day in the sunshine on a windy hill. There is no plot. Mr. Anstruther just goes to Jena and learns German in the house of a professor. He falls in love with the daughter of the professor, as any healthy boy would, and when he goes away home, becomes engaged to another girl. Rose-Marie listens to his explanations, suffers and recovers sufficiently to write 370 pages of letters to her old lover. Very simple, isn't it? To fill a book with letters just telling of the every-day thoughts of a German girl in a little German town? Anyone could do this, but could anyone except the authoress hold our attention from first page to last, force us to read and re-read the little book, and when we had read it swear on oath that we would read it again. That is what I call art. For there is nothing in the book, no plot, just Rose-Marie, the lover, the professor, the servant, Joey (a really amusing boy), and his fiancée Vickie. Rose-Marie has the silliest views of life—she believes in Goethe and the sentimental school—she loves an open-air life, simple food, short skirts, long walks. I think she wears Jaeger combinations; her boots are nailed. She is the last girl any man would love outside of Jena, where pretty girls are rare. Mr. Anstruther promptly became engaged to Miss Cheriton as soon as he could. Rose-Marie was good enough for him in Jena, not in London. I think the book should be read aloud by all high-school mistresses to their classes as a warning. The business of a woman is to capture man; having captured him to bear children, and get the man to pay all expenses. To completely fulfil her mission woman has developed a cunning, a greed and a tenacity of purpose which no other animal possesses. She knows quite well that she cannot hope to capture her prey in the usual straightforward clumsy male fashion, so she has developed graces, she flatters and coos over the helpless male, she wears the gaudiest clothes, paints her face the most brilliant colours, dyes her hair red and

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