DRAMATISTS OF TO-DAY

ROSTAND, HAUPTMANN, SUDERMANN,
PINERO, SHAW, PHILLIPS,
MAETERLINCK

Being an Informal Discussion of their Significant Work

BY

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THREE or four passages in the following pages appeared originally in *The Dial*, which used to give me opportunities to write on these matters, for which I have always been grateful. I have not thought it necessary to break the continuity by quotation marks or acknowledgment. Ultimately it is due to the indulgent kindness of the editor of *The Dial* that these papers came into being at all, and where there is so much general obligation, it is not important to note a few particular paragraphs.

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A NOTE ON STANDARDS OF CRITICISM

Of old a "Critick" studied the masters in any given form of art and thus learned the rules of that art. He might then consider whatever came to his notice and pronounce it good or bad. We commonly do much the same sort of thing now, when we read merely for fun. We have, every one of us, got together, consciously or unconsciously, some ideas on what's what as to novels or short stories or plays or pictures, and when we read or hear or see anything, we instinctively form some judgment of it according to whatever those ideas may be. The process we perhaps express by saying, "I don't pretend to know anything about criticism, but I know what I like." Whether we acknowledge it or not, we commonly form our opinion about current books and plays on some such basis.

This mode of judgment, still popular with the general reader, was abandoned by many brilliant critics some time ago. It seemed foolish to com-

pare indifferently artists of all countries and ages, to call Shakespeare a barbarian because he was not Sophocles, or Sophocles an old grandmother because he was not Shakespeare. And with the growing idea of natural development in every line of human interest came that form of criticism which seeks to explain every work of art by the circumstances, which views it, not in and by itself, but in its coming to be. The idea has taken all forms: Herder in Germany, Mme. de Staël, Chateaubriand, Sainte-Beuve, Taine in France developed the idea, not only as applied to the character of any individual artist, but as the expression of the spirit of national life. Morelli immensely influenced the modern criticism of painting by bringing the matter down to the psychic and physical habits and powers of any given artist, and there have been many minor efforts to do the same thing in literature. The main idea is in all cases the same: the work of art —picture, poem, play—is the result of certain forces; if you would rightly understand the art, first get at the forces. This view may seem to be historical or scientific rather than critical; if everything is just what it had to be in the due course of nature, can we call one thing better than another? Taine was extremely ingenious in offering an answer to this question.

The world was getting rather accustomed to this idea when it was called upon to accept another. Ruskin proclaimed that art was a teacher, and drew away after him a third part of the art-lovers of the world into a place whence it has been hard to escape. In time it appeared, however, that it was not especially necessary that art should be a teacher: the significance of the earlier criticism of Walter Pater lies in the fact that he saw that art was a power working upon the human spirit. This is so obviously the case—indeed Hazlitt had assumed it a century ago—that it was natural that the idea should be carried to its logical conclusion by somebody. Anatole France presumably came upon it himself, for it is the most natural accompaniment of his delightful effort to reduce everything to $0 = 0$. And many others have used the idea with great effect, notably Mr. Berenson, who, having found out to the uttermost jot and tittle how Italian art came into existence, now goes on and tells us what it was and has been to the world, and what it may be to us.

The drama is more a personal than a theoretical matter. Every one goes to see plays; every one is in some way or other affected by them. In most cases the effect will be no more than comes from a period of rest to a spirit wearied by the rest-

less work or play or ennui of life from day to day. A relaxation, a recess, a recreation; such is the theatre to most. But even as such it must be something more. If this man always does one thing and that man does something else, they will certainly differ in time. If one man commonly goes for an evening's amusement to so-called vaudeville, and another for an evening's amusement commonly goes to see Shakespeare (supposing he had the chance), there will surely be some difference finally, other things being equal, between the two. The theatre is too powerful a stimulus for any spirit at all sensitive to escape it wholly. Let us look at its possible effects.

This, at least, is what I commonly find myself doing. No one will entirely avoid being dogmatic or descriptive; no one will avoid some thought of environment or influence or development. But the main thing is the effect upon the spirit. I shall not of course emulate the example of Ruskin, with his notion that art is didactic and that one must become as a little child at the feet of prophets, who at the present day are as apt to resemble Hosea as Isaiah. Nor shall I follow the steps of the charming arch-sceptic of our time, which lead to that void of absolute zero in which his spirit bathes with such obvious refreshment. I remain on an isthmus of a middle state. Somewhere about

halfway between the holy mountain and the abyss do I mount beside the puppet booth and give, as though a barker, some comment on the dramatists of our day.

From such a standpoint no one will expect broad and comprehensive surveys; the real pleasure and stimulus in a mountain view, say, or indeed any other view, does not consist in a mastery of all the details; it is something very different. A delightful landscape charms one at the moment and makes itself thenceforward an influence in the mind, so that one is happier at one or another moment for the thinking of it. So it is with other things in life, and especially with art; one is immensely struck by a picture, it may be, and it remains in one's thoughts a long, long time, having part in all sorts of unknown psychoses; one hears music, and a melody or a phrase stays by one, often running in the head in very trivial fashion, but often serving finer ends. To discern and analyse these things is something that criticism has hardly tried to accomplish, but it is certainly a thing to be done. The purists always think they can tell you what correct pronunciation ought to be, but it is really necessary, first, to know what everyday pronunciation is. Before one can lay down the law as to how one ought to

feel about a drama, it is but reasonable to try to find out how one really does feel.

And this is somehow not a very easy matter: it would seem as though people after a play preferred to think rather than feel. It is not very difficult to think about a play that one has seen or read, and that may be the reason that most people do so. But note theatrical criticism and see how little consists of impression, save in the most general terms, and how much of knowledge, opinion, gossip. It is true that one must have a good deal in the way of facts and recollections; the impressions made by a play upon a mind like Locke's white paper will not be of much interest in a complex civilisation. One must do a good deal in the way of description and analysis of character, construction, situation, for that is often the only way that one can present one's impressions, and those things are immensely interesting and valuable for themselves or in relation to other criticism. All is, they are not the main thing here: if they were, I should have to apologise for many omissions and, I suppose, not a few commissions. No one, I hope, will carp at my neglecting academic system and completeness. I have so much lecturing on literature from day to day, so much of the academic way of looking at things, that it is really a means to mental health to do

something else. There are many other dramatists of our day who ought to have their part in any real treatise on the current drama. From the ferocious Strindberg on the north to the equally ferocious d'Annunzio on the south, from the symbolic Mr. Yeats on the other side of the water to our own Mr. Clyde Fitch, whose cymbals tinkle rather differently, there are several dramatists as interesting as some of whom I speak. And then there is Ibsen; no one can neglect him, nor, indeed, have I done so; for although Ibsen is not precisely a dramatist of our day, he is a remarkable influence on the drama of our day. To us in America Ibsen belongs to the past or to the future, surely not to the present. And since there are many books and essays on Ibsen, I have thought it as well not to attempt any new estimate of his work. In fact these papers make no attempt at a complete and systematic view. In trying to form such a view of the work of our time, much of the freshness and spontaneity would be lost, and even then the game would not be worth the candle, for in a few years something would turn up that would make what had been systematic seem very desultory. Current criticism should, I suppose, result from something pretty definite in the way of ideas, but I doubt if it need result in anything definite in the way of system.

A play presents its material to us in a concentrated form attained by certain devices which, though literary in character, are usually developed from the necessities of the stage of the period. When the play is actually presented on the stage, its effect is heightened by many devices which are not literary in character, as acting, stage-setting, and so forth. It is interesting to note these devices, these ways in which the impression is made upon us, to point them out, to talk of them. There is an immense amount of very interesting stuff here; indeed, it makes the greater part of technical dramatic criticism. But it is all only means to an end; the real end is that we ourselves shall be affected somehow or other by the play. If we are nowise affected, or affected in a way we dislike, we might as well stay at home; or if we are at home reading the play, we might as well read something else or nothing at all. Our interest in these contemporary dramatists is that we get something from them.

This something, in the case of a play of any value, always lasts for a while, perhaps a day or two only, perhaps merely during supper after the theatre, but generally longer. To state precisely the general nature of this effect in simple language is not at all easy; I do not know that it has ever been very systematically analysed. Neglect-

ing, however, such accidents as a sweet smile, a phrase of music or of words, a beautiful dress, we may say that we shall usually have in mind a bit of human experience. This experience may be, in its general circumstance, familiar to us, as in "Candida," or it may be quite unfamiliar or even impossible, as in "Die versunkene Glocke," but human experience it is, or it does not remain long with us.

Just what we do with this new possession will differ according as we differ, but the main things that we do will be one or another of these following. We may deal with it as we should with any piece of real life, laugh or cry over it at the time, think about it and talk about it afterwards as though it were real. How was it with Mrs. Tanqueray? Was it right or wrong that the world should have used her as it did? Our views on these matters may very probably be influenced by the dramatist, but we commonly neglect that consideration and think and talk as we should of real people. Or next, we may be pleased with something in the play because, though not real life, it is such an absolute resemblance of it. Miss Prossy, for instance, and "Prossy's complaint" will give a thrill of pleasure because they so perfectly resemble something that may not in itself be so very interesting to us. It is very fine, we

say, because it is so true. Thirdly, this human experience may concentrate itself, as it were, in a figure or situation that will appear to us to imply or signify something of importance, which figure or situation will recur to the mind at one time or another with a good deal of the original feeling with which we first experienced it. This is one reason why Mme. Bernhardt is such a powerful ally to any dramatist: she readily makes herself a dramatic figure.

This last process, I rather think, is the most specifically connected with the drama. The first is a little naïve; it reminds one of the many stories about inexperienced persons in the eighteenth century or in frontier towns or early in life, who thought that the play actually was real life. It is something which has no especial connection with the drama; it may occur well enough with any form of representative art just as it may with life itself. The second is a great pleasure undoubtedly; it has been noted by many an analyst before and after Pope; still it gets from the drama only what one may get from all literature and all graphic art as well. The last seems to me the pleasure particularly dramatic, for just this result the drama is particularly fitted to give by all its especial powers and devices, and to quite the same degree no one of the other arts can give

it. Something of the kind we have from painting and from fiction and poetry, but the drama combines the powers of the two. It gives us figures for the eye and for the imagination at the same time. To have such impressions is in itself an æsthetic pleasure of the purest kind. What results from it is another matter.

ROSTAND

When M. Edmond Rostand became a member of the French Academy, he was accepted as a man of letters of the first rank by a body which has made mistakes, but still holds the respect of the world. His reception was therefore an event. I read that even from the outside of the Palais de l'Institut one could "measure all the importance of that ceremony." To perform that feat, my authority continues, it was enough, at least for an observer well up in his "Tout Paris," to see the people going in and coming out; the different persons of importance in "les mondes littéraire, artistique, scientifique, aristocratique, diplomatique," who formed groups "d'un charactère suggestif et d'un interêt documentaire." Not being very strong myself in "Tout Paris," I must confess that the only one of these groups presented by *l'Illustration* that was of real interest to me was that consisting of M. Rostand himself in a cocked hat and a cloak, with a sword sticking from under it, preceded by an usher. And from a consideration of the other groups, I incline to think that the

importance of the occasion may be measured, perhaps, but not fully estimated, by a consideration of the persons who were present at it, although it is of interest to be told that there were more guests than there have been at any such occasion in the last half-century.

In fact various writers have estimated the significance of the event in a totally different manner. They have considered it as bringing forward the question of M. Rostand's position from the standpoint of literature.

From the standpoint of literature it will be observed, rather than from the standpoint of the theatre. For it seems obvious that a man need not have any position in literature by virtue of theatrical masterpieces alone. Other positions he will have thereby, but not a position in literature; for that one must produce books that people will read. Literature is a matter of letters rather than of sounds, one may say. A man may be a great talker, but only rarely does one gain a place in literature by conversation alone; Boswells are too rare. One may be a great orator, but even so, one is known in literature by the printed form, as when Macaulay wrote out his speeches, ten and twenty years after he made them, not in the precise words he had used, which were irrevocably lost, but in words which he might have used. So with

the dramatist. If his work have anything of literature in it, it will be something that will stand the test of type.

The theatre, undoubtedly, produces often matters that are most delightful when put in book form, but the theatre, as such, is not concerned in that fact. Of the innumerable forms of the drama, many have little about them that can be called literature,—melodrama and farce, as a rule, the clever extempore drama of Italy and other lands, the pantomime which often has a strikingly dramatic quality without a single word, and, we may add, the now extinct Weber and Fields burlesque, which seems to have been a theatrical genre of great interest to the student of the stage, in its possibilities at least.

This matter is clear enough to the keen-eyed critics of M. Rostand's own country. They looked upon his reception into the Academy with interest, because, as they said, although he had dominated the purely theatrical criticism, he had not, up to that time, wholly won over the critics of literature. "If the people of the theatre can hardly speak of M. Rostand without a sort of amorous emotion in the voice, literary people have been able, on the contrary, to make him the subject of a more unmoved criticism." Such at least was the view of M. Gustave Kahn, who went on to consider "la

valeur littéraire" of the author of "Cyrano" and "L'Aiglon."

I must leave M. Kahn to his own opinions, for it is surely none of my business to controvert or agree with the ideas of a French critic on the position in French literature of a French dramatist. But the point is noteworthy in this way: M. Rostand had a great success, out of France at least, for reasons that were somewhat non-theatrical, or that were at least supposed to be. In Germany the critics, at least, laid stress upon his ideas and in this country something of the sort was the case. Not that it was not delightful to see his plays at the theatre; not that, had he presented his ideas in other forms, they would have been as successful as they were; neither of these suppositions is the case. But given the theatrical success of M. Rostand, a thing that he possessed in common, for instance, with Mr. Clyde Fitch or Mr. David Belasco, that which was the staying quality, outside of France at least, was the literature and not the extreme theatrical skill.

Of course many of those most ready or competent to speak on this subject are of a very different opinion. But what will you have? A man cannot be always thinking like other people, he must wander off by himself sometimes. And if, in such wanderings, his views are false or foolish, the best

thing to do is to speak them out, for then he will be corrected by those who are wiser. So I offer my view of the literary element and quality in the work of M. Rostand with perfect cheerfulness, even though it is very different from that of—well, various people of consideration. And there is certainly pleasure in looking over the work of M. Rostand, as though he were not a successful playwright who may be seen (let us hope, again) at the theatre, presented by the most charming or the most dominating of the actresses of the day, but rather—what shall I say?—rather as though he were one of the great dramatists of the literature of the past, whose work is now withdrawn from the glare of the footlights and enclosed silently between covers, for the delight, not of the groundling or the man from the street, but of the pale student under the midnight bulb or the member of a popular literary club.

In M. Rostand's first work for the stage, "Les Romanesques," he was surely attractive, but not very much more. A writer who thinks that in that charming little play we have M. Rostand "tout entier, où il est le meilleur, dans la picaresque et la funambulesque," seems to miss so much suggested by the later plays that one is tempted to ask: Is it really there, all this that we think moves us? or can it be that we are reading into

the work of the poet ideas which were nothing to him and thereby neglecting the very things that were in his own mind the real ones? Yet I shall for the moment believe that it is not so, and go on to say that "Les Romanesques" is not what might be expected of the author of "Cyrano de Bergerac." Not because it is slight, nor because it is little more than attractive, but because it is a delicate satire upon the tribe of romancers in general. Percinet and Sylvette, two young people who live on estates separated by a high wall, are full of a fine desire for colour, and beauty, and charm. They long for a wonderful life and condemn the commonplace. Their fathers appreciate their disposition, too, and, not unwilling to pose a bit themselves, they affect to be bitter enemies. The lovers are transported into the seventh heaven and become Romeo and Juliet. How can they be united? They suggest ridiculously impossible plans, and then their fathers humour them with a scheme of their own. It is delightful while they think it genuine, but when they find out that they have been tricked they are enraged. Sylvette refuses to be married and Percinet goes forth to seek for adventure in the world. Of course he returns and the play ends happily, as the saying is.

M. Rostand's great triumph was in romance. Is it to be said that to begin with a burlesque on

romance and to succeed with a romantic triumph shows a lack of sincerity?

That is not just the way to put it. Men do not often jest at what they deem great. But they do jest (and often very bitterly, as Rostand does not) at the world's perversions of what they deem great. Rostand believes in romance, let us say, but he has his laugh at the romancers. Did not Sir Walter make fun of Julia Mannering?

These charming lovers are doubtless silly; they think they must have exquisite mystery, recondite sensation, something strange, out-of-the-way, fascinating, anything in short that they have not got. But so it is also with their everyday fathers: they also think they will be satisfied with what they have not, but when they have it, Pasquinot is bored at Bergamin's watering pot, and Bergamin is bored at Pasquinot's always having a button off his waistcoat. Youth is one thing, age is another, but both, in so far as they substitute dreams for reality, are fair food for wit.

But what is reality? And here Percinet speaks possibly for M. Rostand.

"It was real for us who thought it real.

Sylvette. No. My being carried off, like your duel, was all made-up.

Percinet. Your fear was not, madame."

The mind that is sincere makes the reality, but

people are too ready with the conventional commonplace as with the conventional romance. Romance itself may be real enough if it only be real romance and not the conventional, the make-believe, the fashionable. Percinet on the road, Sylvette in the garden, learn that life is not made up of phrases and attitudes.

This was the thing that the Realists and the Naturalists and the rest had always had in mind. They had laughed at the old romance and its costumes and properties, its phrases and attitudes. They themselves presented truth.

So would Rostand, only he would present truth differently: the realists presented truth by its ever-varying myriad circumstance, he would present it by its essence, its idea, its type. Hence "La Princesse Lointaine."

In "La Princesse Lointaine" we have the idealist, the ultra-romantic Rudel, faithful to the very door of death to the Princess whom he has never seen. But we also have the Princess, too, and she is not faithful. She fondles the idea of an absent lover devoted to her image, and when she hears from the redoubtable Bertrand that her lover is at hand sick to death, awaiting her on his mattress laid on deck, she will not go to him. And why? The subtle Sorismonde suggests a reason. "You will not see him who was dear to you in the

divine splendour of a dream, because you would not see him in the horrible haggardness of the fact; you would keep the recollection of your love still noble."

"Ah, yes!" says the Princess, "that is the only reason."

But it is not really the contrast of the visionary love and the haggard fact that moves her. It is the contrast between the imaginary love and the actuality of the passion that she feels for the messenger. Sorismonde tells her that she passes from a dream into real life. She says herself that she denies the pale flower of the dream for the flower of love. But when the experiment is made it appears that the flower of love, that the actuality of life, has been bought at too high a price, that there was something even more real in the imagination, in the dream, in the romance. Squarciafico cannot understand such a thing when it occurs in his own humorous accompaniment to the lyric motive. He grasps it no better than the average realist. "But I am opening your eyes!" he says to the sailors. "And suppose we prefer to keep them closed?" they say in their blundering faith, not differing much from many readers of Zola. It is only when she has given up the passion of actuality, and returned to the old ideal that she believed in, that Melissande finds herself on firm

ground. At the end she knows the one thing needful.

"La Princesse Lointaine" was not successful upon the stage, I believe, and it is not wholly convincing here and there when one reads it. That goes rather without saying. Had it been a first-rate play, M. Rostand would have been famous before "Cyrano." There is much that is beautiful in "La Princesse Lointaine." The indomitable hero, the faithful sailors, the audacious quest, the intensity of the moment of action, and a very exquisite reconciliation to the tragic end remain in one's mind and may well outweigh a lightness and over-refinement of handling. At least one is impressed with the feeling that here is one who can say his word on the deep things of life and give his imagining the form of beauty. And here is a word spoken with no uncertain voice for the power of romance.

As to "La Samaritaine," that is certainly a matter rather hard for the average Anglo-Saxon to handle. It is hard to understand the mental attitude which conceived the play. It is of course not the simplicity which presented much the same thing five centuries before, in the mystery plays. But then it is hardly the balmy scepticism with which another Frenchman, some time since, offered the world a Galilean idyl in exchange for an

inspired Gospel. However we take it, though, we have a play made from an episode in the career of the greatest idealist the world has ever seen. To my ears, however, all that rings true in the play is that which reminds me of words otherwise long familiar. The play was not unsuccessful, but excited no great interest.

It was at the very end of the year 1897 that "Cyrano de Bergerac" was produced and at once achieved an immense success in Paris, and not very long after, throughout Europe and America. It was a great day for Romance, a second "Hernani."

In the history of the literature of the nineteenth century Cyrano de Bergerac will be a well-remembered figure—would be something much more than that, except that people do not read plays as much as they read novels. But even as it is, Cyrano de Bergerac is, and will remain, one of the great figures which the French literature of our time offers the world. As we look back, any one of us, into the vista of our earlier days, and recognise the figures that arise from the readings of our youth, the first to strike us, when we think of our early acquaintance with French literature, is the figure of the heroic d'Artagnan. Or is it Consuelo? Never mind—the elder Dumas and George Sand were the great French writers of our earlier

days, as they were of an earlier part of the century. It must have been later in life that we became acquainted with the Comédie Humaine and Marguerite Gautier, with Madame Bovary and the Rougon-Macquart family. Whether it were so or not in our own individual youth, it was practically so with the youth of our time. To readers nourished on Byron and Scott, France gave the "Three Musketeers" and "Monte Cristo," "Mauprat" and "Consuelo." Then came the turn of the tide, and a generation brought up on Dickens and Thackeray and George Eliot put aside childish things and were thrilled by the tragedies of Balzac, Dumas fils, Flaubert, Zola. Of course there were other realists, too,—realists everywhere,—but these were the men who represented France, and who created the typical characters that seize the imagination and recollection of all.

Then, as the century was coming to an end, France presented another figure,—and that not realistic, but romantic again,—presented it to a world that was ready to enjoy romance once more. Just as a generation fed on Scott welcomed d'Artagnan, so a generation fed on Stevenson welcomed Cyrano de Bergerac. The pendulum had swung back.

When, after the duel in the first act, a brilliant and heroic musketeer strides out of the crowd and

shakes the victorious Cyrano by the hand and disappears, the incident is more significant than the audience appreciates. "Who is that gentleman?" says Cyrano to Cuigy. "It is M. d'Artagnan," says he, and Cyrano turns round; but the older hero is gone, and Cyrano holds the attention alone. The two are alike and are different. Both are heroes who fire the old-time savage element of the soul,—Gascons, swordsmen, indomitable, men of the compelling word and the convincing stroke, hot-blooded, honourable, heroic. But there is also a difference: one is striking, brilliant, magnificent, and the other is almost grotesque. He is cruelly grotesque; there is nothing to lighten it; it is nothing one can pity, like a hump or a club-foot; nothing one can delude oneself into thinking fine, like a mountain belly and a rocky face or a Rochester sort of hideousness; nothing that one can fancy is significant, like a birthmark or a distorted mouth. All these things the world would forgive or forget. Here is something ridiculous, something that would make any of us shiver and writhe if we saw it by our fireside. Here is something that touches us cynical, susceptible, bantering people, touches us in a very tender place.

And yet one swallows it, and with it all minor matters. Cyrano might, by an enemy, be called a

bully and a braggart, but that possibility is quite lost in our general sympathy. We do not think of that any more than of his nose; we feel only that he is a noble figure. This is rather a curious thing. It is the result of Realism, I take it. In the old, old fairy tale, the beast stopped being a beast when he was loved. The monster became Cupid. But Realism pricked that bubble, and we recognise to-day even in literature, as a rule, that human nature is, and will long continue to remain human. We must accept the strange mixture of the god and the animal. We must recognise that the old-time dreams are dreams—beautiful, encouraging, inspiring, to be remembered and to be thankful for, but not truths that we shall ever know. Realism fixed upon us the pre-eminent thought of our time that the triumph of the spirit is despite the flesh, and the new Romanticism profited by the lesson. Our English romancers—Mr. Stanley Weyman is a good example of a hundred—did not quite dare. They were conscious that their heroes must not be the old-time impossibilities, but they compromised, as a rule, by having their heroes chumps, stupid though well-meaning, and of course successful at the end. They did not dare to go to the impossible extreme which so often makes the type. M. Rostand did dare to do so, and succeeded.

Is it a curious thing this swinging over to Romance? We used to think that romance was something for children. They read about d'Artagnan fighting duels or Ivanhoe in the tournaments, while their elders read (aloud) Anthony Trollope's accounts of everyday life reaching the culmination of excitement in a rattling fox-hunt. And then suddenly we found that the tide had turned. Not suddenly, perhaps, for long ago I remember my inward wonder when a man whose taste I esteemed told me of his joy in "King Solomon's Mines." No, it was not sudden, for no change in taste is sudden, but it was sure nevertheless, so that it is perhaps not the less curious.

Still we may ask, Is the new Romance the same as the old? Is Scott the same as Stevenson? Is "Cyrano" the same as "Hernani"?

Certainly Stevenson is not Scott. He is not so large a man for one thing, but for another he is not of the same kind. So far as real life is concerned there is no comparison, Scott is the only one to think of. But so far as romance is concerned, there is little enough comparison either. Incomplete as Stevenson is, powerless often to express his own convictions, he never tried to present figures as empty of real significance as the Master of Ravenswood and the Disinherited Knight. He sought for the romance of the spirit and not for

the external romance of costume and circumstance that satisfied Scott. In fact, Realism has had its effect, for it has made people more serious.

Cyrano is surely a character for the playwright. "Mais quel geste," he says. It surely was a good attitude,—just why who can divine?—that throwing the bag of crowns on the stage. Nor was Cyrano ever at a loss for such attitudes. He is quite without affectation when he sets forth to march through Old Paris at the head of that strange procession of musicians and soldiers and actresses, as well as when the Spanish officer asks: "Who are these so determined on death?" he replies: "Ce sont les cadets de Gascogne!" and charges the crowd of Imperialists with the few that are left.

Such things are characteristic of him. He must do them. We cold-blooded creatures do not understand such things. They seem perhaps senseless to us and foolhardy, we do not know what they mean. This melodramatic character thrills us perhaps, but we cannot sympathise because we cannot interpret. To us Cyrano is an actor, and we Anglo-Saxons are not individually apt to act, nor to respect the actor as such. So we miss one side of the man, one of his perfectly natural means of expressing himself.

Only this one side, however, need we miss, if that

to some degree. For this dramatic expression so natural to Cyrano, as I suppose to all French and many more, is but one side of the character. It is a mode of expression for certain things, but not for everything. There are things about Cyrano that do not come to such expression.

We Anglo-Saxons want ideas or we think we do. All else we put aside as being superficial, insincere, and so miss the greater part of the dramatic spirit of the Latin. But Cyrano has his ideas, too, as well as his poses. He is less conscious of them perhaps, but he has them, or rather, as we should say of his poses, he is them.

Cyrano is in fact a type—a type of the largest class of people in the world (for it includes every one), namely those who do not get what they know they deserve, who find no chance to do what they know they could do, who are so much greater to themselves than to the cold world. He is also the type of a much smaller class who do not make a fuss about the matter, but carry it all off so gaily and finely that no one has any consciousness of complaint, murmuring, repining; indeed perhaps there is at bottom hardly a suspicion of anything of the kind. From the girl who is not like other girls, from that strange commercial traveller some years ago who published poems that his friends might know his real self, to the philosopher with his " To

be great is to be misunderstood," or to the professor who fretted and fumed and lamented, and tormented himself "because, as he acknowledged to himself, the Thou sweet gentleman was not sufficiently honoured," to the great Queen exclaiming: "If my people only knew me as I am!" we all nurse an ideal in our hearts and most of us know that it will never be realised, even that it cannot be realised. For one reason or another, doubtless,—not always a nose,—perhaps even it is the necessary nature of things, though that is rarely the view that we take of it.

And so Cyrano takes our sympathy. We are even as he. With him it is a nose, with us fortunately a something else, that prevents our standing forth to the world for all we are worth. This, besides many minor matters, good each in its own way, is the thing that unconsciously touches all.

Yet, because M. Rostand is not Shakespeare or some one like him, we do not have everything. Some would say because he is a Frenchman, decadent, pessimist, morbid, he has nothing more to say than just that. Here is a man who was fine, strong, brave, good, and never got his due. What of it? Well, the rest is silence, or nearly so. The last act is pathetic, touching, but not illuminating. Certainly Roxane did not love him,—or suppose she did, what of it? He had no

comprehension of it. And suppose he had had, what then? Would that have been what we feel the true, the inevitable end? I fear not.

Still it is a beautiful play. To-night, seven years after I read it first and saw it on the stage, I read it once more, and that with some misgiving. But the beautiful verse has lost none of its beauty; the gaiety and verve and spirit have lost none of their lightness; the situations have lost no thrill; and the play has much the same meaning as that first night when I read it, and it pursued itself through my mind till morning,—as much and more.

When a man does something very fine indeed he may well fear—or at least his friends may fear for him—that he will not be able to do something else worthy of being compared with it. Until we get used to it, genius so often seems accident. There must be some high wave that no other wave will reach. When M. Rostand had surprised the world with "Cyrano de Bergerac," it was not unnatural that the world should suppose that the next play would not sustain the effect.

Such doubts were set at rest on the appearance of "L'Aiglon," when the book was read, and doubly so when the play was seen. Many thought that M. Rostand had bettered his masterpiece.

This tragedy, with its poor, weak little hero, with all its frivolity, all its decadent circumstance, made a stronger effect than its wonderful predecessor—stronger, if less obvious.

As before, we have under very special conditions a figure of general appeal. This young man, yearning after that great inheritance which he hears, which he feels is his, imagining it in all sorts of glittering and deceptive circumstance, treasuring scraps of others' reminiscences, gaining hope from misinterpreted detail, indulging his fancy with aimless triviality, daring in ill-advised effort,—for he hardly knows just what, —failing and surrendering himself to the inevitable currents of life and even death,—he is not for us particularly the young Napoleon, he is merely what he essentially is, a poignant example of the fate that stands ready for all humanity.

"L'Aiglon" was first produced in New York not long after a revival of "Hamlet," so that it was not unnatural to think of the Prince of Denmark in his weeds of customary black while looking on the French prince in his Austrian white. Without comparing M. Rostand with Shakespeare, we may still compare the great figure of English romanticism in its heydey with this later figure of French romance. It is perhaps singular that in an age pre-eminent for exuberant conception and

fulfilled achievement the greatest creation of literature should have been the man who thought too closely on the event, and kept on living to say, *This thing's to do,* until circumstances took the matter out of his hands. Not less singular is it—if either be singular at all—that at the end of a century of unrivalled material achievement should appear this presentation of the prince who strove to realise his fancies and failed.

So M. Rostand is not merely a Romanticist in the sense that he gives us rattling sword-and-mantle plays, in which things happen, according to the saying of the day. He is that sort of neo-Romanticist whose figures are types—a romancer, we may think, of the school of Hawthorne. And his figures generally typify the same thing. Rudel is the poet whose love for the ideal leads him to his own death, happily unknowing of the reality which is nearest him. Cyrano is the average man, perhaps, though one of immense talent, the man who sees what he really is, what he really might be, perhaps, but reconciles himself slowly to the impossibility of ever making the ideal conquer the world. And the Duc de Reichstadt surely is an idealist of the first water. No confident holder of the faith in the presence of undeniable fact was more determined than the Duke as he listens to Metternich and finally breaks

the mirror. He, too, gives way to the fact of the matter, but he is broken and not bent.

What is it that leads M. Rostand to this presentation of invariable failure? Is it because he is morbid, cynical, pessimistic, etc., etc., etc.? Hardly. It is due to something far more general than such possibilities, namely, the tragic quality of great drama—I had almost said of great literature. In spite of all that has been said about the agreement of literature and life, there is this singular and important difference, that literature is in its greatest moments tragic, and that life is not. M. Rostand writes as he does because he is a dramatist, a poet, a man of letters, and not a pastor, a philanthropist, or a philosopher. As such he cannot present the world as being all delightful and right in the end. No great poets while they were great have done so; Job, Helen, Hamlet, Don Quixote, Faust, Colonel Newcome,—these all are tragic figures.

I cannot pretend to explain, from the standpoint of æsthetics, why this should be so. The frivolous (and I am often one of them) will say that every story must have an end, and that death is the only end that will stay ended, among matters of importance. Minor matters certainly come to an end, as clothes, for instance, the best even of dinners, light loves in the portal. But with the

really important things it is different. Marriage, of course, often plays the rôle of conclusion, on the stage or in the book, but it is one of the unrealities of comedy that it does so. Look about for an end, and you will find it hard to think of any but death or disappointment, which, if it be really an end, is much the same thing.

Without taking this view too seriously, we shall perhaps admit that it is not for literature to demonstrate that things are going all right. That seems rather the office of philosophy (if it wants to try it) or of religion. Literature is for our emotions. Now happiness is emotionally delightful, but by its very nature it is not permanent. "Even in the very temple of Delight, veiled Melancholy hath her sovran shrine," said Keats, with that direct, far-seeing intensity of his. While man is what he is, mere satisfaction can never be final. And however this may be in art in general, or even in literature or in poetry, it is readily enough seen to be so in the drama. Comedy certainly is delightful, but the great things are tragic. And that is because a great dramatic moment, one that will remain with us, be permanent, must be complete in itself—that is to say, final. Now Romeo and Juliet in the tomb of the Capulets are final figures. So Hamlet as he utters "The rest is silence." So Lear on the

heath, beyond even the power of Nahum Tate. Comic figures there are also, but one cannot bear to think of Falstaff always laughing. Romantic figures there are too, suave and beautiful. Ferdinand and Miranda, as they play at chess, and certainly we should like to believe them eternal, but the appeal is very *ad hominem*, and the wise will take it for no more than it is.

So Cyrano throwing his bag of money on the stage is a permanent figure. "Quel geste," he says, feeling the thing to the bottom, but without troubling to analyse it. So L'Aiglon breaking the mirror is a permanent figure. So Rudel on the deck of his galley.

These figures give us dramatic moments. But they also mean something, and we Anglo-Saxons are dead set on seeing what they mean. "The most popular play of the final decade of the century presents no problem whatsoever, and avoids any criticism of life," says a critic of eminence, as though it were a fault. Mme. Bernhardt and M. Coquelin, however, see that these things have their meaning for those who appreciate them and never think of explaining. So M. Rostand. He contents himself with dramatic figures. They justify themselves. Explanation belongs to the philosopher.

And we, too, may be satisfied with M. Rostand,

in spite of the invariable shade. A greater man would perhaps be more reassuring. Tennyson has King Arthur fail because it is not in the plan of things for any individual to bring in the millennium, and Browning believes that a man's reach must exceed his grasp. We need not be concerned at M. Rostand's being a pessimist, if such he be; it is often a fine thing to recognise and admit pessimism as an element in life. It is of course a pity that his handling is not perfect; the last acts of "Cyrano," of "L'Aiglon," are they not weak? But even here there is something in harmony with the idea.

HAUPTMANN

Ten years ago, say, the name of Gerhardt Hauptmann was a magic name; it was almost a charm in itself to cause the most glorious æsthetic thrills. It represented the finest things in literature. It is now rarely heard. "So sinks the daystar in the ocean bed, and yet anon flames in the forehead of the morning sky." There is fortunately plenty of time.

Hauptmann, however, never achieved such immediate, such inordinate, such universal success as did M. Rostand. But though he became more gradually, if less widely, known, he was, in a way, more stimulating and inspiring thereby. M. Rostand became famous at one stroke. With Hauptmann each new play was a successive emotion and excitement. Every new play was a new revelation of the soul of the artist; it raised, for one and another while, those clouds which keep from the average soul that intellectual horizon which it longs for, that emotional sunlight which puts everything into the vivid reality, and makes even common things for the time being lovely.

Hence the thrill with which one first read the words—

"Open the window. Let in Light and God!" To those who had followed Hauptmann play after play, they had the added demonstration of actual experience.

It was in 1889 that "Vor Sonnenaufgang" was given by the Freie Bühne. The performance was made a battlefield between the old school and the new. The inordinate excitement of that war, of the war of which that was a campaign, has now died down. I remember it, and would wonder at myself for having been so stirred by it, did I not remember also how sincere the emotion was. "Horrible things were witnessed" in that play; "A picture of hell itself would have paled by the side of it; Zola and Tolstoi would have had to confess 'He can do better than we.'" Such were the expressions of Spielhagen some time afterward, who held the battlefield to have been a Waterloo for the new school.

When we look back it seems natural enough. Hauptmann was of a very sensitive, artistic disposition. He had not found his real power in his efforts at sculpture, nor in his studies in zoölogy, nor in his essays at poetry. It was very natural that, unless he had been strongly impelled in some very different direction, he should have

followed the influences of the moment. And given so much, it was not remarkable that he should have gone ahead of the advance.

When one reads Hauptmann's early plays, "Vor Sonnenaufgang," "Das Friedensfest," "Einsame Menschen," one thinks, necessarily almost, of Tolstoi, Zola, Ibsen. They give us pretty consistent realism in form and matter. The last is by far the best, but if Hauptmann had done no better, he would hardly remain in the minds of those who have no especial turn for German literature. Looking back to the play, I recall most readily the figure of Anna Mahr. It is almost worth while to re-read the play to vivify that strong and delicate figure, typical of so much of the life of her time and of ours, at once suggestive and tragic. And yet even as a figure—entirely aside from the play—Anna Mahr is not the dramatic figure that will flash to mind in Magda. And whether she be or not, the play itself is certainly not greater than "Mutter Erde." So far at least Hauptmann had not shown himself greater than Sudermann or Max Halbe. He went on, however, and did more.

He remained a realist, even a naturalist. But there is not much reminiscence of the great leaders in the plays that immediately followed. Hauptmann now strikes out more for himself. In "Die

Weber " he goes as far as one can readily imagine the stage can go. The play is written of a weavers' strike. It is not, however, a play that takes a weavers' strike for a background, or a setting, or a situation in which a hero, or heroine, other characters shall be presented. The play takes the strike itself for its subject. There is no hero and no heroine; characters there are, but only because there must be people on the stage to have any play at all. The same people do not hold our interest; quite a new set of people appear in the third act, and we hardly hear of the old ones. The strike, however, is before us throughout; the strike is the only character of importance; men and women appear and disappear only that the strike may be presented to us. An extraordinary conception, and one subversive of the common ideas of the stage, but logical enough realism. Hauptmann read about the strike in a pamphlet, and proceeded to put it on the stage. The wonder is that he could make it seem dramatic and powerful. This wonder, however, he was able to accomplish.

Still realistic, but this time with a truly artistic contempt for logic, Hauptmann next produced a play about a beaver-skin. You may see it on the German stage to-day: " Devilish funny, but no drama and no art," I am told by a wholly com-

petent authority. I am sorry to say that of it I can read only about one word in four, which gives me but a fragmentary idea of what it presents. I must pass it by; I have enjoyed Hauptmann greatly without it.

This play, however, and another, "College Crampton," I learn from the conscientious biographer of Hauptmann, were suggested in spirit by Molière. And without as a rule going into the question of influences and sources and so on, it is curious to note for the moment the different forms in which this realist presents himself to us, or, rather, presents his view of the world. Realism, in Zola's phrase, consists of the facts of life seen through a temperament. Hauptmann's temperament would seem to be that of the chameleon; he is a modern Proteus, and sounds his horn from under many disguises. In his first play he is like Tolstoi, in his second like Zola, in his third like Ibsen. In his fourth we see through the eyes of Dr. Zimmermann the pamphleteer. In the fifth it is Molière. Certainly (if Zola be right) it is a curious thing that the man will not see through his own temperament.

Still it is to be remarked that another man, and he also the greatest artist in letters of his nation of his day, did just the same thing. Robert Louis Stevenson was a very different man from

Hauptmann, and had a very different view of the world. But he was like him in that, whatever his temperament, his artistic and poetic nature was always curiously trying and testing new and particular methods and ways of doing what he wished to do,—"Dr. Jeykll and Mr. Hyde," "Prince Otto," "Treasure Island," "Will o' the Mill," "The Black Arrow," he is as romantic as Hauptmann is realistic. We might recognise all those books as by the same man, but in them, as in Hauptmann's first plays, we see the man using the different forms, the modes of expression that we are familiar with elsewhere. It is not that an original genius must of necessity invent an original form; that is far from the truth. But that an original genius should adopt such varying specialities of form, each of which seems characteristic of something in itself, that does seem singular. It would seem to be one of the curious things in the psychology of the artist that the most exquisite natures often have this mimetic character. Perhaps it is because they are the most sensitive; Whistler was a man rather like that.

In all these things, however, Hauptmann was a realist, by which I mean that he was absorbed and interested in the facts of life, and thought it well to present them in much the same way that

he saw them. The romanticist does not do that: he commonly presents his view of life in forms that he has not seen. M. Rostand has something to say; he likes to present it in forms very different from the forms he sees around him. A fanciful anywhere "if the costumes are pretty," the marvellous East of the Crusades, the bare but glowing hills of Galilee, Old Paris, Schönbrunn and the field of Wagram,—these places and the people appertaining to them are interesting to him. They recur to his mind, take form and combination there, gain a significance from his theory of life, from their relation to it, and when they develop into a finished play they are found to present a fact or facts, a meaning, a lesson, even, for such as wish to be taught, but all in the glowing, glorious, poetic, imaginative, beautiful figures that the poet loved.

It is not so with Hauptmann. His ideas are different from those of M. Rostand for one thing. M. Rostand stands aloof and generalises. But Hauptmann is near enough to be intensely moved by great wrongs and great struggles for redress. He is so near the particular thing that he becomes absorbed in it. Why should a man who wants to present the cruelty and crime involved in the failure of a great strike, why should he write about the Sacred Mount and the belly and the members?

True, Shakespeare took that way to say what he wished to say, but then Shakespeare can hardly have felt about current life as Hauptmann did. He was a larger man and had larger views, but certainly he controlled very well any great sympathy he might have had for some of his more limited brothers and sisters.

Hauptmann went in for it seriously. He would show the world as it was. And whether he took the method of Ibsen or of Molière, he was always there himself with his sympathy, his ideas, and his poetry.

For that he was a poet appeared in what came next. I like "Hanneles Himmelfahrt" best of all Hauptmann's work, and I am quite sure that it is the most characteristic thing he has done. I mean to re-read it at this moment. Or, rather, I would, except that here it is better to write from one's recollection than with one's eye on the text. The drama ought to make, to have made, an impression on one; if it does not it fails, and by as much as the impression is not lasting, by so much has the drama failed of its possibilities.

From the midst, then, of a time years back, a time full of other work and other interests, a time separated from Now by all sorts of differences, appears the figure of Hannele cowering in her miserable little bed, and of the Angel of Death

looming up affectionately before the high stove; and again of the little girl all aglow with interest and excitement, and the good and kind tailor, who has brought her the white dress and crystal slippers; and again of the appearance of the stranger, the worker, the physician, him of the robe without a stain who comes to guide her whither she is to go.

Well, and what of it all? I can imagine some disagreeable person saying. Frankly, reader, I do not quite know. Those figures were very beautiful to me once—if I read the play again they would be beautiful once more.

But beyond that they have their significance. I cannot now remember just what they did signify to me once, nor can I say that in Hauptmann's mind they ever signified such and such thoughts. That would give something of a false idea. Hauptmann, himself a thorough-paced realist so far, now presents an object different from anything that had come from his hand. It is now realistic psychology, as we may say, that is the main thing. Here is the country almshouse and the wretched creatures in it; here is a poor, abused little girl who is brought there to die. The play follows her last hours and presents her feverish and fantastic thought. All that follows—the figure of her dead mother, the three angels, the sudden

changes, the great angel with dark garments and dark wings, the village tailor, the stranger—is but the creation of the fading power of the childish soul, mingled curiously with the realities of the Deaconess, Pastor Gottwald, and the poor creatures of the almshouse. That, as a subject for a "dream poem," was Hauptmann's interest, I suppose, and not such and such ideas signified thereby.

Still the figure and the passing dream bring ideas and moods, and bring, too, moments of serenity to the soul, even when somewhat choked with the materialities of ashes and sugar plums.

In this play Hauptmann is more himself than ever before or since. Heretofore he had tried different forms, henceforward he tries more; there seems no end to his power of varying the mask of form. But everything else that he wrote could be put alongside of something else. The early plays have easy analogues; even "Die Weber" was preceded by Verhaeren's "The Dawn," which is not unlike it. The later plays, too, are in general not unlike others. "Die versunkene Glocke" is one of a number of Märchendramen, "Florian Geyer" is a historic play, in form at least much what Wildendruch might have written; in "Fuhrmann Henschel" he was said at once to have "returned" to something that his admirers approved.

But "Hanneles Himmelfahrt," the Traumdichtung, resembles nothing else that I can think of. It has all the rest of Hauptmann,—the realism, the psychology, that we have seen,—joined to the romance and the poetry that were to have freer play in years to come. In motive it is a little like Maeterlinck's "Mort de Tintagiles," and creates something of the same effect. But that is a very different kind of work, and entirely lacks the vitality which is one of the virtues of "Hannele."

Like most of the previous plays, "Hannele" created a considerable stir, this time on religious grounds as well as those of art. Hauptmann went on calmly, and instead of trying to do again anything he had done well once, he wrote a historical drama, "Florian Geyer," into which he put his whole energy, only to meet with a failure. It was followed by "Die versunkene Glocke," the play which made Hauptmann really famous, by which he is generally known.

And yet the play is, in a way, not representative. If you read only "A Tale of Two Cities" you might perhaps wonder that Dickens is often thought of as a humourist. If you read only "Die versunkene Glocke" you will wonder, perhaps, why Hauptmann should be thought of as a realist. For it is a romantic, fairy play in

poetry, very different certainly from the plays which had gone before, and different too from those that followed. It is without much doubt the greatest piece of work of its author, but it is work in a very different direction from that in which we are accustomed to look for him. It was first acted in 1896, and will doubtless be remembered by many either at the Irving Place Theatre or as given by Mr. Sothern.

The play begins at once. Up the mountain, into the old, undisturbed world of romance, comes the artist, broken-hearted at the failure of his work for men. He had tried, perhaps, to do too much, and has met failure.

It is very beautiful, certainly, this world of romance. It was beautiful on the stage, and it is still beautiful in the play, for one of the charms with which literature compensates for its lack of vivid visual impressions is that it lasts. It is like the walls of Camelot, which were not built at all and are therefore built for ever. So we can go at will to that upland mountain-meadow, with its violets and primroses, and the bees that sip gold from the crocuses, and the pines that rustle round about. There the Nickelmann lives, or there he appears in the spring from his home deep down underneath the hills. He is hoary and covered with moss and weeds. There, too, lives the wood-

scrattle, a coarse and licentious creature who strangely smokes a pipe. There, also, are dwarfs and elves. There is Rautendelein, half human, it would seem, and half a bit of nature. She plays with the bee and teases the Nickelmann and dances with the elves, if she chooses, and jeers at the wood-scrattle and his goatish legs. She has a grandmother, too, a wise woman, who leads rather a surly existence among these simple folk and feeds the little Trolls with milk. The German forest is certainly a fine place, and I have always loved it, from early readings in Grimm down; we have no such creatures in our forests. And I have forgotten the dwarfs who are there, too; and all is up on the mountain-side, far above the abodes of men. Nature has withdrawn to herself before the march of civilisation. What elements of humanity there are are merely animal, unless we except the natural knowledge of the Wittich.

So much the play certainly has developed and carried out with description and picture; so much for every one, whether more or not. Nature and art the play presents, and like any fine big piece of work, it is full of all sorts of things that reward a reader who may come again and again, as one may climb a mountain again and again, and always find something new on the way, although there is always the same view from the top. When

Keats wrote " Endymion " he very sensibly noticed that it was one of the things that people liked, to have enough in a poem to be able to pick and choose, to find always some new charm or something perhaps that had once charmed and then slipped from mind. In this forest region we can walk often, always finding something to notice, something quaint, beautiful, stimulating.

Into this world of nature wanders Heinrich, the artist. He had almost finished a great and beautiful work and has been bitterly disappointed by failure at the final moment. He gains by chance a glimpse of Nature in her secret beauty and charm. Before he is brought back to the valley by his friends who have come to look for him, he sees Rautendelein.

And here, with the very beginning of the action of the play, comes an element into the play that is not so simply handled—namely, that which is loosely called the symbolism of the play. It would seem that in this play of the Artist and Nature and the World of Men, there must be some hidden meaning. It arouses our curiosity,—a little, I am afraid, like a cryptograph,—we want to know what it all means.

The artist who has endured a bitter failure has a glimpse of the secrets of nature, and though borne down to his home on lower levels, it is by

one of the spirits of nature that he is cured. He leaves his home, and with the fresh, natural being he has learned to know he goes up the mountain, back to nature once more. He finds his strength increased tenfold. But the power of humanity is too strong; his dead wife draws him down from his retreat. And as for his beautiful spirit of nature, half human as she seems, the power of nature is too much for her; she is drawn down among the founts at the foundations of the earth. This is the essential story of the "Versunkene Glocke" shorn of its colour, and beauty, and body. What would Hauptmann signify by it?

If it were pretty obvious that he wished to signify something of importance, I should think that one ought to know what it is. But as the significance is clearly something not, on the face of it, obvious—for the author's countrymen have presented quite a number of different explanations of it—I am content to read the play as a play rather than a conundrum.

So then it may be asked: Is the figure of Heinrich without significance? And, if so, why should any dramatic poem have significance? What does Rudel stand for? Cyrano? L'Aiglon? If these figures are significant, why not Heinrich? Surely it is an eccentric outcome to one's speculation that presents M. Rostand as the dramatist of ideas and

Hauptmann the dramatist of legendary romance alone.

The play certainly offers us dramatic situations. Let us take one at random. The Pastor has come to persuade Heinrich to leave the mountain where he is living joyfully and doing great work and to return to his home. The artist is flushed with success; the visitor is by no means disconcerted at what he sees around him. "Now God be thanked!" says he. "You are the same old friend.

Heinrich. I am the same—and yet another, too. Open the window. Let in Light and God.

Pastor. A noble saying.

Heinrich. I know none better.

Pastor. I know of better—still that one is good."

Here, certainly, in these few words between the Artist who has abandoned his place among men and gone to the heart of nature, and the Priest who has gone to put before him the claim of a power higher than nature, here there certainly is significance, such as any one can see, such as is almost explicit in words and characters. But further there cannot be any symbolic significance found for it which equals the real and fundamental significance of the words and situation. Take the simplest kind of symbolic significance—let us

say, there are Art and Religion. Surely any such abstraction as that is absolutely empty of meaning when we compare it with the creation of the Artist and the Man of God. We have the meaning when we merely create in our minds Heinrich, the Bell-caster, who is at work among the mountains, and the Pastor of his earlier days, who seeks to bring him back to his home. I do not mean to go into it as a question of Realist or Ideal Philosophy, but merely to speak of it as a matter of the drama. And here, we may say without the slightest doubt, that whatever abstract idea may be implied in words and situation, it can add little to the real meaning of them. Compared with the intellectual and emotional powers which could create the situation and words, any further thinking which could be tacked to them by allegory, will seem feeble in the extreme. "To one reader, 'Die versunkene Glocke,' conveys a certain impression; to another an entirely different significance may be suggested. Both may be right." On the other hand both may be, and probably are, wrong, if "significance" means explanation of the meaning, for the real appeal of the drama is not in any significance or meaning, but in its figures and its situations and what they are. Heinrich leaves his wife and children and goes up the mountain with Rautendelein. Why say that it typifies anything

more than Rip Van Winkle, who did much the same thing, except that his elfish beings were stout little Dutchmen instead of charming young women. The situation is certainly one which makes a wide appeal to all sorts of lurking instincts of the heart. Man is not yet so absolutely civilised that such a rush to freedom does not at times seem an escape from bothers and monotonies which he would often be without. But is it any real addition to the impression to say that Art finds Domesticity irksome and seeks the freedom of Nature? I fancy not. That is a very simple piece of generalisation and from a very small number of examples, but however that may be, it is not as a generalisation that the thing will interest us. If we wanted a generalisation we should go to the moralist, who would give us the facts with the proper inductions and deductions. What we want is something for the imagination, something that we can sympathise with, something that will have more effect upon the fierce fret and grind of darker moments than any abstraction has yet been found to have. And that we get from the figure itself, not from any meaning which it symbolises.

No—I think we shall gain little by inquiring as to the symbolism of "Die versunkene Glocke." If it were real symbolism it would be another thing. In real symbolism—as that of William

Blake—the poet, or the painter, has some meaning that he conveys by absolute symbols, which, unless we know their meaning, will give us no more hint of it, than a page of Plato would give a newborn child. Thus, in Blake's illustrations to the book of Job, we observe the moon to be sometimes in one corner of the picture, sometimes in the other. That conveys a difference of meaning. I forget what it is—I thought it of interest at the time I knew it—but the point is that unless you know that difference of meaning, you will miss the idea of the picture. That is real symbolism. If you do not know the key to Blake, it is impossible (unless you make one) to know what his pictures are about.

With Hauptmann, as with most artists with whom the question is raised, the matter is different. With them we generally have, not almost arbitrary symbols, but typical figures. The difference is very clear. The cross is a symbol; the fish used to be a symbol. But nobody could have guessed what they were symbols of who did not know the associations which gave them meaning. On the other hand, the Good Samaritan is no symbol; as soon as any one knows who and what he was his significance is plain and needs no explanation. In like manner Heinrich is doubtless a typical figure, just as Faust is, or Manfred, or Brand. But

whatever he is a type of, he himself is, so that one who knows him, and who feels his passion and his action, has what the poet meant to present, and more important, has it in the form in which the poet meant to present it. A man may prefer to translate the poet's language into his own, but that will be because he does not understand poetry, or does not like it. It may be a curious intellectual exercise to speculate farther, but unless there is very good ground for supposing that the poet himself went farther, we shall probably miss what he meant to express in aiming at what he did not think of.

Of the succeeding plays of Hauptmann, I do not propose to speak. Those who thought of "Die versunkene Glocke" as the beginning of a new epoch, received a shock in "Fuhrmann Henschel." "Die versunkene Glocke" was presented toward the end of 1896; a year afterwards appeared "Cyrano de Bergerac," and it appeared that a great romantic awakening was beginning. It seems almost cynical for Hauptmann at such a period to be considering the situation of a Silesian carter, who having promised his dead wife not to marry, now wished to marry the maid of the house. The play was psychological. Now psychology has its romance, but "Fuhrmann Henschel" did not carry on the torch uplifted in "Die

versunkene Glocke." Nor did "Schluck und Jau." This was a thoroughly characteristic piece of work; at a time when the world thought it knew what Hauptmann could do, he proceeded to do something quite beyond anybody's reckoning. Few, however, cared for the "Shakespearean" farce, nor am I among the number. "Michael Kramer," "Der rote Hahn," and "Rose Bernd" were not such surprises, but they were not much more successful.

As has often been remarked, Hauptmann is an individualist; he chooses any form that he sees fit for self-expression, but he will not harden into an everyday conventionality even of his own making. You may sometimes find two of his plays that seem very much alike, but rarely are there three of a kind. But he gives you himself in each.

And his subject-matter, too, is likely to be individualistic. John Vockerat and Anna Mahr find themselves together in opposition to the world about them; if they "live their own lives" (*i. e.* do as they please) they will harm other people's. Heinrich the Bell-founder pursues life in his own way, in despite of the pressure upon him of the ideas and ways of the world. They are not, as a rule, powerful personalities, nor does Hauptmann generally represent them as victorious—indeed the reverse is the case—but they are individ-

ualists. The reverse is shown in "The Weavers" and, I suppose, in "Hannele." It is a very common modern motive, appearing in all sorts of forms, mingling often with such inconsistencies as socialism. Even where it is not pre-eminent in Hauptmann, you will commonly feel its influence. He seems to hold himself aloof with the resolve to be himself, letting the world take him or leave him as it will. Of his fifteen plays hardly a half can be said to have been successful, save with the most devoted.

In such a case there is a curious, perhaps a wholly unpoetic interest in "Der arme Heinrich." The play is founded on the poem of Hartmann von Aue; the story tells how Heinrich, lord of Aue, a brilliant and splendid knight, distinguished by the king and famous for his exploits in the Crusades, chief paladin of the Holy Roman Empire, at the very height of his glory and the vigour of his life and joy in the world, was suddenly struck with leprosy. Instead of being the most wonderful of those remarkable combinations of imagination and action which the mediæval chivalry holds out to us, he became simply an outcast, an object of loathing, one who had to live in some squalid place by himself, and who had to strike continually on a wooden clapper that people might know that he was near and avoid him.

That is a fine subject for the individualist; a leper has to live his own life partly because no one else wants to live any part of it for him, and partly because no one else will let him share a life in common. In the beginning of the play Heinrich is among those who are devoted to him, a liegeman of the house of Aue, an old retainer, a farm tenant and his wife. They are not only his followers, but they love him, before they know his secret. Then his clapper sends a shiver through them.

There is therefore an interest, perhaps unpoetic, in the lord and leper. Why does Hauptmann, whose heroes seemed ready to stand out for themselves against God and man, who lived their own lives and died their own deaths, why does he now present to us the figure of one who, in his pride, is guilty of insolence to God and is struck down by the powers he has scorned into a terrible irony of the state to which he aspired And why, as a sequel to Heinrich the Bell-founder, does he elect to present a man, who, in seeking the highest, falls to the lowest, and must be rescued from the most awful depths by the unselfish devotion of a girl who, so far from wishing to live for herself, desires rather to die for him?

I cannot say, nor do I believe it necessary at once to determine. Read and study a man's life and his writings, and the eccentricities and incon-

sistencies are smoothed out and what was strange appears sane. But does the work mean more to us? It certainly does, if we misapprehended it before and know it rightly now. It is well enough for an experiment to think we can take a poet's work in some sense and meaning other than that he had for it, but in the main we lose thereby, for we get ourself and not the poet. In the long run we must always wish to interpret a poem by the poet's whole life and work.

But that with "Der arme Heinrich" is not, I believe, possible. The genius of Hauptmann is constantly baffling us. So I take the poem much as it stands, an old German saga, with all the charm of mediævalism in its material and great simplicity and reserve in its handling, and a devoted almost mystical air that is much in the tone of "Hannele." With the other great play, "Die versunkene Glocke," this one stands in strange contrast. They present to us two conceptions which are consistent only as many of the strange antinomies of life are consistent, in being both true at once, we cannot well say now. The two strains of revolt and resignation; one in the figure of the artist maintaining himself stiffly through the darkness till daybreak, and the other poor humanity (prince like beggar girl) which bows the head and finds happiness in submission.

These three plays, I find, are almost the only ones of Hauptmann that I care much to look over, that abide in my mind. Perhaps it is because I am growing more romantic with the added years (contrary to the usual notion that youth is the time for romance) and do not care so much for the sanded arena of the world as in the period of youth. Perhaps, also, I should not have liked "Der arme Heinrich" twenty years ago as well as the story of Heinrich the Bell-founder. But now, having paid my money (in various ways), I rather like to take my choice.

SUDERMANN

THERE used to be, in Germany at least, quite a general critical opinion which placed Sudermann as a dramatist somewhere between Hauptmann and Wildenbruch. Hauptmann was the delight of the advanced guard and Wildenbruch was the favourite of the conservatives; Sudermann seemed to be somewhere between the two. As far as one could learn, however, he was not admired by advanced guard and conservative alike, but on the other hand was condemned at least by the ultras of each party. One side called him a compromiser and conventionalist, and the other said that he merely used old technique for exploiting sensational claptrap in the way of so-called ideas. The more advanced said that his dialogue was written for schoolgirls, the conservatives said that his material was light-headed extravagance. He was, I believe, in Germany the representative of "Realismus," while Hauptmann's particular lay was "Naturalismus," and Wildenbruch's I don't know just what.

For myself I am inclined to like this middle po-

sition and to think of his plays in the words applied to that unknown dramatist whose works were caviare to the general (not that Sudermann's are), namely, that it is "an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning." His method is, comparatively speaking, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. In other words, while Sudermann's plays have not the brilliancy and exhilaration of some of the dramatists of our day, in form at least, and dialogue, they are well put together and written. But with such matters it would be impertinent for me to meddle, for one would hardly expect one who did not follow German literature pretty closely to have an opinion on these things.

Nor are they much in my line, although there is or may be a good deal of interest in them. If one have read more or less of the literature of the last twenty-five years in the various parts of the world, and seen pictures, and heard music, and gone to the theatre, there is fascination in these considerations of schools and tendencies and influences, past, present, and future. There is something inspiring in the largeness of it. And certainly, too, there is a sort of lyric fervour in Hauptmann which one may feel the lack of in Sudermann. And in Wildenbruch there is doubt-

less something, too (only I can never quite get at it), which brings out by contrast the qualities of Sudermann. And it must be inspiring to read "Sturmgeselle Sokrates" and to speculate on the future of the German drama.

But all that, in itself, seems to me to neglect so much. Sudermann is to me so personal a writer that when I see a play of his or read one (which is much more often), all talk of influence or estimates falls into the background, while my sympathies and emotions are more wrung, I believe, than by any of the others, and always have been. Not that it is everything to have one's sympathies and emotions wrung,—it does not necessarily mean the highest art,—but it surely is something, and a something that does not leave one free to consider questions of criticism. Nor can it be to me alone that the plays of Sudermann make a very personal appeal. Bernard Shaw can undoubtedly show us hollow places in our modern life so that we recognise the truth with a quick thrill of pleasure. But however things ought to be, there are some things that thrill us now. And if Sudermann cannot, or does not, see just what life should be, he certainly can give us sudden realisations of what life actually is; can touch us to the quick by his poignant moments of life as we realise it, moments in which we cease for the time from being so-

cial figures and relapse into individualism. M. Rostand takes us as individuals and touches us by an appreciation of select moods, of our higher and better moods; he presents to us, in his curiously pessimistic way, moments of personality, ideals of possibility, of standing rigidly in one's own self while the world melts and crumbles away below. But if Sudermann cannot or does not have much to say about the ideal, he certainly can give us keen feelings of the way our personality comes in contact with those personalities next to us, who are with us day by day, enveloped, save for one time and another, in the impenetrable reserve that keeps us commonly each to ourself.

Sudermann's motives are always, in his most characteristic plays at least, combinations of those great conflicts, or at least antagonisms or discords of life, that every one, here in America to some degree, as well as in Germany, finds among the conditions with which he must take account. Home and the outside world, the old generation and the new, conventionalism and individualism, personality and society, faith and new ideas, art and everyday life—who is there to-day who has not some personal experience of such things as these? Strife or conflict may be too stern a name for them in ordinary life; but surely they make disharmonies, incongruities, and often worse. Do

they make up more of our life to-day than they did of the life in other times? I cannot say, but certainly they make much. And it is an evidence that Sudermann sees life truly, in its larger lines, that, in his stronger plays, they are rarely missing.

Not that these motives are always dragged into his dramas, but it would seem as if these ideas, being often in his mind, continually influenced his choice of subject or the moulding of his material. "Die Ehre," his first play, has much the same subject as Wildenbruch's "Die Haubenlerche": each concerns the relations of a rich family to a poor family among its dependents; each shows the rich offering benefits for a return in flesh and blood and honour. There are strong situations in each play and both were successful on the stage. But Wildenbruch's play is thin and conventional compared to Sudermann's, on account of the conflicting motives in "Die Ehre" to which one easily finds an answer in one's own life. Robert, who has been ten years in India, accustomed to a larger, more modern life, comes back to a restricted, old-fashioned, very lower middle-class family; Alma, who has stayed at home, has been continually escaping from the annoyances of parental control to the temptations of the free, half-bohemian circle to which she finds her way.

It is all the same sort of thing that we may easily see around us; it does not take particularly striking forms as we see it, but it would if a dramatist should deal with it. Robert comes back from the freedom of his independent life to the pettiness of his old father and mother; so do hundreds of boys and girls come back from college, say, to the farm. Alma, who chafes under the restrictions of the elder generation, wishes to seek the glittering show of pleasure in her own way; and we have examples of that, too, from the farm to the city, or from the house to the street. It is no great exhibition of genius to have noted so much, but it is, I think, a piece of genius to conceive an action that shall be a focus for half a dozen such motives, to carry it on by characters that shall continually represent them to us, and to express them and comment on them by continual epigram or chance remark that strike us surely and often remain in the mind.

Just what the action is seems to me of lesser importance, if only it be interesting. "Die Ehre" was a successful play, and the critics, as a whole, paid very little attention to what I have been speaking of. Thus Bulthaupt, who is representative enough, criticises the play severely because of Graf Trast's disquisitions on Honour. Now that turns the play into what is hideously

called a problem-play. And further, it makes the play something that we, over here, cannot easily get hold of, for our ideas on Honour are different in many respects from those current in Germany, and though we may understand their feeling well enough, and Sudermann's criticisms of it, yet it can hardly be a matter which we shall feel very keenly. Most Americans, I fancy, would agree with Graf Trast—he is meant to be a man who had seen the world—in his view that Honour differs with different people, being one thing in one nation or class and something else in another, and that if conventional honour were dispensed with in favour of duty, the world would be quite as well off.

But is this sort of speculation the play? Is a play the resolution (however good) of such a problem? Hardly; here is a play of men and women and the tides of life. Surely such things are more interesting than questions and problems, certainly more widespread.

Whether they are or not, this may be said: the same discords or disharmonies of life that one observes in "Die Ehre" are to be seen in "Sodom's Ende." It is true that this play ostensibly differs from the former; that play offers us, according to the critics, a criticism of current conceptions of honour, and this, they tell

us, is a criticism of some current conceptions of artistic life.

But if one do not think of such things, one finds that here too we have personalities and the currents of life of our time. Here is the cramped home of the ruined proprietor turned milk-inspector, and the phosphorescent rottenness of his son Willy, a notable figure in the great (Berlin) world of art and ideas. Here are the simple conceptions of the old people and the younger but decadent world of the critics, and those who catch up their words. Here is the dim but deeply rooted conception of duty and the half-acknowledged sophistries of those who think their own thoughts and live their own lives. Perhaps the play is not so broad as "Die Ehre," but it is stronger in its action, for each play of course has some action which finds its course in the interaction of the forces of the world which it portrays. Its chief figure is more striking than Robert in "Die Ehre." Willy Janikow is not so much a character as a personality. The artist of promise, son of parents whose life is now of the hardest, the man who has come to success in a world where he cannot keep his head, loved by so many and such a hard master to himself, I remember him well sitting in the fading daylight in his father's house, which he is about to leave,

murmuring "Reinheit, Reinheit." I remember him well as he gathers himself together in his studio, but too late, with the cry of "Arbeit!" just as the curtain falls. Somewhat conventional that is, without a doubt; Sudermann uses conventional modes of expression in a way Hauptmann would never do, and that seems to take away from his power with many. But I do not think that it stands in the way of effect; it does not seem to stand in the way of sincerity.

But it is in "Heimat" that all these motives have freest play. As it is given in English, the play is always called "Magda," and that is something of a mistake. And the character of Magda has attracted the greatest actresses of our day,—Bernhardt, Duse, Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Fiske,—and that, though not a mistake, is something that rather veils the true nature of the play. Each of those powerful actresses was so intent on her rendering of the principal woman in the play that she gave no great pains to the presentation of the play as a whole—perhaps, indeed, did not understand it.

Curiously enough, a theatrical critic of great ability showed not long ago how one may readily see one thing so well that he sees others very ill or not at all. "In the discussions the play first called down upon us," he remarked on seeing Mrs.

Fiske as Magda, "it was assumed that it dealt with the question of parental authority. . . . It was also assumed that it dealt with the problem of the new woman. . . . I wish to suggest that this view is very short-sighted. Beneath the transitory details of the play it seems to me that there is a motive which is eternal." Certainly there is, and the only thing noteworthy in this remark is that it is a suggestion resulting from "a growing suspicion." While seeing Duse and Bernhardt and Mrs. Fiske, the suspicion grew upon his mind that this play was not the exploitation of a current "problem," but that it had a motive of eternal interest. At first he missed the real things in the play. That may have been because he was a theatrical critic, and naturally most interested in the acting. But Magda is not the only character in the play; she is the most brilliant, but probably the pastor, Heffterdingt, was the author's chief effort. And the play is not specifically about the new woman and parental authority. It presents to us, as "Die Ehre" does, the contrast between the provincial life and the big world. It shows us, as "Sodom's Ende" does, the conflict between the quiet virtues of home and the brilliant temptations of art. It shows us, as "Es lebe das Leben" does, the difference between fulfilling one's own personality and follow-

ing the normal and narrow ideas of duty. Nor is that all; it does show us paternal authority, but that is only the German form taken by the constant difference between the older generation and the newer. It does show us the new woman, but that is only a current form of the difference between new ideas and conservatism or conventionalism, as you may choose to call it. In one situation as a focus are all these lines of life. Nor is it in the situation only—the return of the brilliant prodigal daughter—that these motives are implicit. They are everywhere indicated in the lines of the characters.

"Modern ideas," says the old soldier, "oh, pshaw! I know them. But come into the quiet homes where are bred brave soldiers and virtuous wives. There you'll hear no talk about heredity, no arguments about individuality, no scandalous gossip. There modern ideas have no foothold, for it is there that the life and the strength of the Fatherland abide. Look at this home! There is no luxury,—hardly even what you call good taste, —faded rugs, birchen chairs, old pictures; and yet, when you see the beams of the western sun pour through the white curtains, and lie with such a loving touch on the old room, does not something say to you, 'Here dwells true happiness?'"

And when Magda looks about her, "Every-

thing's just the same," says she. "Not a speck of dust has moved." And her mother answers, solicitously, "I hope that you won't find any specks of dust."

And when Magda speaks to her sister, "Come here—close—tell me the truth—has it never entered your mind to cast this whole network of precaution and respect away from you, and to go with the man you love out and away—anywhere—it doesn't matter much—and as you lie quietly on his breast, to hurl back a scornful laugh at the whole world which has sunk behind you?"

"No, Magda," says Marie, "I never feel so."

One might copy out pages of quotations, so remarkable is the way in which the action of character upon character brings out motives that are vital. I will confess that I hardly know whether all this is precisely what one would call dramatic. But that is something that must be put aside for the moment.

These things should touch people deeply. They are not merely interesting problems. Few of us ever consider the problem of the new woman or of parental authority with the idea of finding any answer to it. But here is a home with good things and stupid things and silly things, doubtless, as many other homes have, and to it comes this glorious outcast who has not been feeding on swine's

husks, but has reached fame and acquired fortune and wealth and an immense retinue. In just that form we shall probably never know that motive, but every man whose wife and daughters are constantly in the world of society, and every woman whose husband spends his evenings at the club, and whose boy goes out on the streets, will be able to feel it. And so it is with the rest. As problems, we have no earthly concern with them. In the special forms which they take in Sudermann's plays we have not much to do with them, and often nothing at all, but essentially we know them and can respond to them.

And that the drama can present them is evident from these plays. That they are essentially dramatic material is another matter; it would seem as if the novel gave a wider opportunity. Sudermann is a novelist as well as a dramatist, and an exceptionally powerful one. I am not familiar with all his works, but in "Frau Sorge"—the best known of his novels on this side the water—it certainly appears that he does not use the advantage that he seems to have to present largely and fully the dominating currents of human life. Instead of so doing he seems to narrow his grasp to one powerful motive. It may be that the novelist, who must work so much by description where the dramatist can work by presentation, the

temptation is to confine oneself. However that be —and it is no present business of mine—the impression of Sudermann's plays is certainly that of a world of active impulses and of human figures living and moving therein.

It has been said, however, and perhaps it seems obvious, that Sudermann's dramatic theme is "in all his pieces the one single conflict in which free personality stands with the exactions of society," and that "he never allows it to be doubtful that he stands on the side of personality and that he is a champion of its rights." If this were the case, it would take away the chief element of his power. It is true that not a few dramatists in Germany as well as elsewhere, and other men of letters as well as dramatists, have presented of late the rights of personality as against the pretensions of society or some kind of society. It has always been a favourite motive, for artists are always men of personality, and they are apt enough to present its claims. But in the present generation the idea has been more common than before. "To live one's own life" has become one of the catchwords of modern literature. Merely among modern German dramatists we can see the motive in Hauptmann and in Max Halbe, in each very tellingly presented, and we can see it also in Sudermann. But I cannot think that it is his only dra-

matic theme, even his pre-eminent interest. It occurs in his plays, but always in connection with other motives. In " Die Ehre " there is no doubt that Robert and Leonora resolve finally to rescue themselves from a world in which they cannot draw moral breath. Graf Trast, too, had long ago emancipated himself from the follies under which he had grown up, and in the play he appears as the representative of freedom of thought against the conventional correctness of social etiquette. And Sudermann here is on the side of those who honour duty more than the arbitrary dictum of society, as poets and sane-minded people have been for a good while. But poor, silly little Alma in the play is also a disciple of personality: she also wants to live her own life as much as any girl who went into a shop instead of a family because she wanted freedom. She wants to do as she pleases and is bored to death with the restrictions which her grave brother's ideas of decency would lay upon her. And with Alma the author shows no more sympathy than one would naturally have for a charming and wrong-headed young woman.

Nor in his next play was he particularly the champion of personality. The idea, the antithesis, is more important in " Sodom's Ende " than it is in some other plays, but I should not call it

the main motive. Willy Janikow is a man of personality; but what is the society with which he is in conflict? He is not in conflict with the society which purchases his picture and prevents his painting any other; if he were, Sudermann might be "on his side and fighting for his rights." The society that he is in conflict with is the society represented by the household of his father and mother, and for his conflict with this society Sudermann does not ask the support of our sympathy.

In "Heimat" there need be no question that the idea of personality is pre-eminent; the very fact that so many great actresses have liked the part of Magda shows that clearly enough. But though Magda is the protagonist of personality in its strife against the demands of society, yet even here we cannot say that Sudermann leaves no doubt as to his own opinion. So far as the drama is concerned he has no opinion: he lets each person speak as he ought and do what he naturally would do. But the play throws its weight as much on the side of society in the person of Pastor Heffterdingt as it does on the side of personality as represented by Magda. And wherever Suderman be champion he allows nobility to the words of the pastor.

Magda. "And your calling—does not that bring joy enough?

Pastor. Yes, thank God, it does. But if one takes it sincerely, he cannot well live his own life in it. . . At least I cannot. One cannot exult in the vigour of his personality—that is what you mean, is it not? And then, I look into so many hearts—and one sees there too many wounds that one cannot heal, ever to be very blithe."

If Sudermann hold a brief for personality, he is a very honourable opponent and allows the champions of duty and of the rights of society a very fair chance. Even in despondency the Pastor is fine, as when he says to the woman who rejected him long before: "Yes, I have had to deaden much within my soul. My peace is as the peace of a corpse."

In fact, as one reads the play undominated by the power of some great actress, one may readily feel that Sudermann is the spokesman for a well-ordered life in common rather than for anarchy. In fact, that gave the play its name.

When we come to "Es lebe das Leben" there we need not deny that the main theme is the right of personality and there without doubt Sudermann gives us an idea of his position in the figure of Beate. And here he gives us the idea that there are natures that have some excuse for transcending social law. Still this is but one play: it was from a criticism of it that I drew the remark quoted

above, and I fancy that the influence of this particular piece was enough to colour a little the critic's recollection.

Sudermann does not carry a brief for individuality as his chief stock in trade. That is one of the things that I like about him. Hauptmann rather does so, but Sudermann's view of life is much larger than one motive merely, and it is that which gives the exhilaration to the reading of his plays, for it is only the self-absorbed mind that views the world as a struggle between personality and society. One can certainly analyse the matter so that it looks as if it were. For instance, one antagonism that appears often in Sudermann's plays, because it appears often in life, is the opposition between old and young, between one generation and the next. It is one of the commonest causes of misunderstanding. And to the young man or the young woman this matter looks as if it were the great case of Personality vs. Society. But it rarely is. The young man only thinks that he wars with society because society is represented in his mind by the precepts and powers of the elder generation. If the children could get the upper hand, as in "Lilliput Levee," our individualist would find that everybody was on his side, and that he could live his own life as much as he wished, if it did not interfere with anybody else. The two

oppositions are based on quite different sets of fact. The antagonism of personality to society is one of the feelings absolutely necessary to the preservation of individual life, namely of life itself. The very fact that a man must feed himself first before he can be of use to society shows that there must be something of this self-assertive element. In some natures it will be more powerful, in some less; there will never be an agreement for it or against it. But the opposition between the older and the younger generation is a wholly different feeling and arises, so far as the older generation is concerned, from the conservatism that grows on a man as he grows older, from the increase in wisdom and knowledge of results, and from a lack of sympathy that comes partly from a poor memory and partly from absorption in work. Given these characteristics of mankind as it grows older and given also progress in the world, then you must have opposition of some sort between those who are just coming on the stage and those who are already there. In just the same way we could see that the motive of personality in strife with society combines easily with other motives which Sudermann observes in the world and presents in his plays. But they are not all one motive; they are many: probably more than I have noted.

What can we say is the effect of such motives,

how is it with us when we have them impressed strongly upon us? Is it not exactly the effect of the tragic figure? The great tragic figure affects us as the tragedy of Rome affected Lord Byron. "What are *our* woes and suffrance?" By comparison with great misfortunes of general appeal and nobly born, our own griefs and miseries and complaints against fortune calm down for a time. But here is something different. Sudermann has no great tragic figures—at least not in these plays. Willy Janikow, it is true, expires at the last moment, but we feel that it is only the necessary result of all that we have seen, nor is he ever presented in such a way as to rouse all our sympathy. In "Heimat," Magda does not die at all: she probably goes back to her brilliant life. It is the old Colonel who dies, full of years, retired from active work, as ready to go as any of us. Beate is a tragic figure, but as such rather an exception.

Sudermann's power is not the power of tragedy as is M. Rostand's. He makes a powerful impression, but it is stimulating rather than calming, possibly intellectual rather than emotional, on the whole. Here is life, we say, complex, conflicting in its currents, unharmonious. It takes a man to keep afloat and pointed in the right direction. And with that we straighten up a bit (morally)

and take a little more credit to ourselves for our handling of such a matter. Then when a tight nip comes we can regard the matter a little better from the eye of reason. If it be one thing to perceive the truth of the artist and another to be moved by his power as a dramatist, Sudermann gives us chiefly opportunities for the former. The latter is not wanting in our experience of his work, any more than it is with a good many other lesser men who write plays. But it is in the former direction that he is pre-eminent.

PINERO

I SHALL never, in all probability, be one to deny that Mr. Pinero is a consummate playwright. As to whether he be a great dramatist, whether his plays be literature, whether he can be said to offer to the world a " criticism of life," whether he have a message—these are points on which I can imagine some discussion, can imagine even taking part in it, but I cannot readily think of a dispute as to his craftsmanship in stage technique.

One reason for this, I am willing to admit, is that I have but a very hazy idea as to what stage technique is. Mr. Howells—who, to be sure, will not be accepted as authority by all who are learned on this point—Mr. Howells, or at least one of his characters, says in " The Story of a Play " that there is no such thing. They talk about a knowledge of the stage," says Maxwell, " as if it were a difficult science, instead of a very simple piece of mechanism whose limitations and possibilities any one may seize at a glance. All that their knowledge of it comes to is claptrap, pure and simple. They brag of its resources, and tell you the car-

penter can do anything you want nowadays, but if you attempt anything outside of their tradition, they are frightened. They think that their exits and entrances are great matters and that they must come on with such a speech, and go off with another; but it is not of the least importance how they come or go, if they have something interesting to say or do." So the disappointed playwright to his admiring wife. I have never been quite sure whether that were Mr. Howells' own view or merely the result of his observation of literary men who write for the stage. I presume it may be the latter. I have a considerable interest in stage technique and would enjoy of all things having its fine points exhibited to me by one who knew. But the professors of that science whom I have known have always seemed rather too general and glittering for my academic mind to follow them. I notice of stagecraft, however, that it is esteemed of great importance on one side of the footlights and of none at all on the other. In this respect it somewhat resembles the technique of painting, as Mr. Henry Arthur Jones pointed out a year or so ago in the *Nineteenth Century*, although he grounds his opinion on very different reasons.

I know of no good treatise on the subject, and it is, in fact, rather hard to find out just what playwrights and actors consider the really important

things in the plays they present. I have noticed one or two little things that may serve to give something of a notion. In Miss Clara Morris's very interesting "Life on the Stage" are one or two bits of mention of the actor's art, of which the following is the most suggestive:

"Mr. Daly wanted me to get across the stage, so that I should be out of hearing distance of two of the gentlemen . . . [There were many expedients for crossing, but none pleased Mr. Daly, until Miss Morris suggested a smelling-bottle] . . . He brightened quickly—clouded over even more quickly: 'Y-e-e-s! N-o-o! at least if it had never appeared before. But let me see—Miss Morris, you must carry that smelling-bottle in the preceding scene—and, yes, I'll just put in a line in your part, making you ask some one to hand it to you—that will nail attention to it, you see! Then in this scene, when you leave these people and cross the room to get your smelling-bottle from the mantel, it will be a perfectly natural action on your part, and will give the men a chance of explanation and warning.'"

Notice that new line in her part,—that shows necessities and possibilities which Shakespeare did not have to consider. Not so with the following, which comes from an interview granted by Mr. Stephen Phillips to a newspaper man:

"When I read 'Herod' to [Mr. Beerbohm] Tree, he was at the outset bored, sceptical, and wanted nothing so much as to get through with it. Gradually he grew more and more interested and excited, until I came to the passage where trumpets are heard in the distance. 'Ha!' he said to his secretary, 'you see the reason of that?' Then he turned to me, and said: 'Have you ever been on the stage?' He did not know I had ever been an actor, but he divined it in that one touch." So far Mr. Phillips in the interview: the interviewer, R. D. B., continues, "I repeat that if it had not been for his intimate knowledge of stagecraft, his career as a playwright might have been cut short right then and there, for Beerbohm Tree vows that it was just this thing that made him accept the young man as a coming great poet."

The last remark, if true, throws floods of light upon our question, as well as upon Mr. Tree's capabilities as a critic of poetry.

Of this sort of stagecraft, I fancy Mr. Pinero must be a master, of the things belonging wholly to the stage and necessary to make a play go; the thousand and one little things, which, if they are perfect, no one notices. Of course the smelling-bottle and the trumpets are merely accidents; they may even never have existed; but they serve to illustrate a kind of thing that is obviously of im-

portance in any art, even though it is rarely understood, quite naturally, by a majority of those who enjoy that art. We need no more inquire into it than into the details of an actor's make-up.

Of a more important kind of stagecraft, too,—which can be dimly perceived even by one so stage-blind as a literary critic,—Mr. Pinero is a master. The management of incidents and events so as to bring out strongly and rightly the situations and the characters—of this art Pinero is master as well as of the other. I have generally considered the best example of his skill to be the moment in "The Profligate" when Janet Preece sees Dunstan Renshaw and Lord Dangers, but perhaps something from "Letty" will be better remembered. In the third act of that play Mr. Letchmere (excellent name—a corruption probably of Lechmore) and his sister are good representatives of a fine old crusted family who are beginning to get afraid of themselves as being a little too representative. Each is engaged in an affair that shows signs of going a bit too far. Mrs. Crosbie resolves to break hers off; there is to be a good-bye dinner with Coppy, the future co-respondent; and she invites to it her brother, who is devotedly fond of her, begging him to stick to her that evening and see that she does not get a chance to be run away with by her emotions, and Coppy. So he does: he dines

with them and they have a very pleasant little dinner, and then just as they are about to leave the restaurant, it appears that the room is to be taken by Mr. Mandeville, who is celebrating his engagement to Letty. Now Letty is the young lady with whom Mr. Letchmere has been carrying on: it was rather supposed that he was not going to see her again, now that she was about to marry nicely "in her own class." He does, however, see her, is asked to stay a moment for a glass of wine, does so, arranges to run away with her, but for the moment neglects his sister, who grasps the opportunity of being herself. That seems to me excellent. The forces that move these people are inexorable. Letchmere loves his sister and wants her to be better than he, an absolutely necessary element in family feeling. He will do anything for her to make her so,—anything except not loving some one else's sister. So that situation is excellent. So is the next. Having persuaded Letty to leave her awful fiancé for him, and while very happily planning with her a delightful future, he suddenly learns that the expected has happened: his sister has flown or rather flitted. He loves his sister, certainly, but he feels strongly that she is in a manner disgraced. In the momentary softness of heart, Letty recovers herself and regains terra firma. She subsequently marries "in her own

class " and is very happy. Letchmere, I am afraid, goes to the dogs. It takes time to tell these complicated things, but they are certainly fine pieces of work.

Or take the second act of " Iris "—the end of it—another masterpiece in its kind. Maldonado has left Iris his cheque-book, which she scorns to use, though she does not give it back. But an old friend in trouble appeals to her; Iris wants money to help her out and signs a cheque. She is in fact drawn into the power of Maldonado by her very generosity; that almost certain quality in easy, pleasure-loving characters, sometimes the only redeeming quality, delivers her over to her enemy. Surely that is very good because, though a prearranged matter of detail, it is founded on human nature.

But to get away from these matters of stagecraft or even dramatic art, matters that I must ever handle gingerly, to another subject that now and then comes up, namely Mr. Pinero as a man of letters. Not long ago I saw an article on the editorial page of an influential journal, which began by saying that " another literary " artist had " undertaken to reunite literature and the stage, whose divorce has been so open and so dogmatically decreed by the melodramatists." This interested me: I had heard talk of the divorce, although I had

not known that it was the melodramatists who had pronounced the decree, and I was glad to hear of the reconciliation which the article went on to speak of as almost if not possibly quite successful. It seemed a good deal for one single work to accomplish and I became curious about it. The literary artist in question was Mrs. Craigie or John Oliver Hobbes (I'm sure I don't know which to call her—or him; it's very awkward about the pronouns,) and the means of reconciliation was "The Ambassador," which subsequently appeared in print.

I thought it rather strange that John Oliver Hobbes should be spoken of as a leader, as one of the very few men of letters who had had to do with the theatre. But I found that the article drew the line pretty sharply, for it appeared later that "Dumas and Pinero are almost the only men who take a high grade of literary art to the theatre." I think this must surely have been before "Cyrano de Bergerac," and certainly before its author had been elected to the Academy. Still, even then it seems to leave out a good many.

But, after all, what is a "literary play"? What is meant by "taking literary art to the theatre"? I don't know anything else to say, just now, except that a literary play is one that can be printed in a book and read with satisfaction by a

cultivated person; namely, some one like oneself. I do not see that much can be said beyond that. The fact that a man is or is not professionally connected with the theatre has nothing to do with it. Molière was an actor, Lessing a dramatic critic, Sheridan a manager; yet they contributed to literature much more, so far as the drama is concerned, than Voltaire, Klopstock, and Addison, who were distinctly men of letters.

It may seem foolish to say that a literary play is one that is printed in a book. Still there can be no doubt that there have been plays, even "literary plays," which never made a part of literature simply because they were never printed. People saw them, liked them perhaps, and forgot them: and there was an end of it. But if you print your play and can get the right people to read it, then it becomes literature, in the sense, of course, that a great deal else becomes literature. Now a good many of Mr. Pinero's plays have been printed, so here we have a topic that may readily be discussed.

Mr. Pinero has written a great many plays and those of different kinds. "The Magistrate" is a delightful farce; "Sweet Lavender" is an attractive idyll. But Mr. Pinero's claim to consideration is not founded on farces or idylls: he is thought of especially as having written "The Second Mrs.

Tanqueray" and a number of other so-called "problem-plays." Mr. Brander Matthews' severe reprehension of M. Rostand could never be made of Mr. Pinero. Whatever be the case about a criticism of life, he certainly is supposed to present problems; whether he be really influenced or not by Ibsen or Dumas, he has some characteristics that remind us of them. What may be said of him from this standpoint?

I do not care for the term "problem-play." It may be a convenient expression for a play that presents a problem, but certainly it is inelegant; one would never speak of an adventure play, a history play, a manners play. But more fundamentally the term is at fault because problems as such are not especially good subjects for plays. Plays deal with life, and life does not consist very largely of problems. The sociologist and the legislator deal with problems, but the average man or woman has not much to do with them save as an interesting intellectual exercise. We are all concerned with living, doubtless, but living does not involve many problems, save of a very practical nature, as how to manage a small income or how to bring up one's children or how to carry on one's business or how to settle one's religion or politics. Otherwise the main thing is how to carry out an ideal which forms itself within us, not by

the resolution of problems generally, but in much more subtle ways. And even if problems were a current factor in life, a play would be a poor place for the exploiting them. A novelist may perhaps deal with problems, for he has space in which to argue them pro and con, but arguments are not very interesting to listen to.

Nor if problems were a fair test of the playwright, would Mr. Pinero fare very well. He does not, so far as I know, present himself as a problem-solver, but suppose for a moment that he did. What are his problems? "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" presents possibly the problem, "How can a woman with a past become a woman without a past?" This problem clearly has the simple answer that she cannot do it at all, to which it may be added that no one else can either, by means observable on the stage. "The Profligate" seems to raise the novel problem, "Is it a good plan to marry a rake to reform him?" "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" has what is really more of a question, "Can a man and woman live together as intellectual companions?" which, however, is a matter that sensible people (not reformers) will not spend much time upon. So I do not feel that Mr. Pinero's problems would make him more worthy of attention than various other dramatists.

Even if he had problems, however, they would

not make plays. A good play generally gives us some action that in its condensed dramatic form will move us somehow, be an active factor in our thinking and feeling; it gives us some character often typical of an idea, or of something that we are thinking about. By virtue of being a play it may be able to burn these things in upon our memories. "Macbeth" gives us the wages of sin in the form of death to the finer life and finally of the death of the body. "Hamlet" gives us the man of thought in the world of action. Here Mr. Pinero might have something to give us. If he have anything to say, being a master of stage art, he should be able to create some figure typical of some great element in life, some action or situation which gathers into a focus some great experience.

I fear he does not do so. His shady ladies soon become very shadowy in the mind. The solutions to his "problems" are like that of Alexander over the Gordian knot. "When Mr. Pinero essayed to write plays such as these, dealing with the deepest problems of life," writes a recent critic, "he challenged comparison not merely with the world of dramatists, but with the world of thinkers." It is going rather far to call Mr. Pinero's problems the deepest of life or to fancy that the world of thinkers has ever been very much concerned with them. Mr. Pinero does not make much of them,

they do not remain with us; they hold our attention while they are acting, but we soon lose them from mind. This is really not so much the fault of the thinker as of the artist. Sudermann, to take an example not so often trotted out as Ibsen or Dumas, is not a thinker, and yet "Die Ehre," "Sodom's Ende," "Heimat," while they do not offer us problems and their solutions, do offer us presentation of some of the great contrasts and contradictions of life.

Mr. Pinero's latest plays, "Iris" and "Letty," will not be called problem plays by any one. "The Gay Lord Quex" depicts what the marquess himself calls "a curious phase of modern life." So in an extended sense do "Iris" and "Letty."

"The Gay Lord Quex" can hardly be one of those plays which we enjoy from its truth to nature, for few of us have had the privilege of knowing a social world where a man can flirt with a manicurist at noon and with a duchess at midnight. Those who can compare the play with life itself will regard it as a picture of manners. But more broadly the interest in the play lies in the cleverness of the intrigue, and in a minor way in the character of Lord Quex himself. From the rather doubtful atmosphere of "establishments" which serve a double purpose, and Italian gardens and boudoirs which seem to be used for one only,

he emerges with more credit than any one would imagine on his first appearance. But the real thing is the extreme cleverness of the turns in the third act, wherein the manicurist and the reformed rake pit themselves against each other. This is dramatic construction; something which I admire immensely when I see it and consider it impertinent to praise.

"Iris" and "Letty" have as much construction and more real body to them. The phases of life which they present are more general. If we do not know them, we have known others pretty nearly like them. And if not even that, we can see some pretty general principles of life upon which they are based. The first shows us a bit of the world that is dependent on pleasure. Iris and her friends enjoy life while they have money (whereby they can make others minister to their pleasures), but when they lose it, they are all at sea. It is true that Maldonado is a millionaire banker, Kane a working solicitor, and Trenwith goes to work out his destiny in Canada. But there is not much doubt that Maldonado did not work for his money, while Kane, of course, stole his, and as for Trenwith's making a competence in British Columbia in two years, we on this side the water are simply incredulous. Poor old Croker had got to middle age without being useful in the world, and

so, when he lost the money he had inherited, he couldn't think of anything but being a club secretary, and as for Iris herself, of course that is the whole play, the picture of the weak nature so dependent upon its luxuries that it must follow the easiest path to them.

As for "Letty," it seems to me as strong a piece of work as anything Mr. Pinero has done. It presents no problem but merely an element in life, namely, a glimpse of a world that has run to seed, particularly of an old family which has kept its money but lost its power of behaving decently, or rather, perhaps, has not moved on with the rest of society. With this is contrasted the world in which Letty lives, sordid, coarse, stupid, and yet with the elements of happiness in it. In a way the play challenges comparison with "Sodom's Ende" and "Ghosts." It need hardly be said that Mr. Pinero does not burn in his idea with the atrocious firmness of Ibsen. And it should be said that he is not so convinced of the real excellence of good, honest, innocent life as is the German, and consequently cannot make his picture of it convincing to the audience. Still one follows Letty intently: at first it all seems disagreeable, true, incomprehensible, but it clears up as the play goes on, until finally, in the last half of the fourth act, the aim of the dramatist comes out clearly, and line

after line is added with perfect definiteness and surety of hand. And the Epilogue, though possibly not absolutely sincere, is really the right thing.

Mr. Pinero is not a thinker, a moralist, or a philosopher. Nor does he appear to think that he is. Mr. Henry Arthur Jones writes articles in the magazines on the function of the drama, and the renascence of it, and the aims and the art and the other things of it, but Mr. Pinero seems content to write plays. He does not pose as other than a dramatist: his admirers may talk of his problems, but his own work does not give the impression that he takes himself or his work over seriously. His plays are not sermons nor polemics, they have no arguments and no prefaces. They are simply plays, and for the moment, at the theatre, they are remarkably good ones.

How good they are at the theatre every one knows; how good they are even to read is apparent when we read the works of some other successful playwrights, say of his predecessor Robertson. Robertson's comedies are in a general way not so very unlike Mr. Pinero's. They do not present problems, but that is merely because problems were not in fashion in the sixties. Robertson presents questions, and between questions and problems, so far as the dramatist is concerned, there is not

much difference. Neither can be settled by a play; each gives a playwright a theme which may affect his audience keenly. But Robertson's "School," for instance,—which happens to be the only one of his that I have at hand,—Mr. Pinero is certainly miles beyond that, partly because everybody is, but also in part because he is really more of a man of letters than Robertson. It is true that Mr. Pinero is first and foremost a man of the theatre. When "The Ambassador" appeared it was curious to compare it with "The Princess and the Butterfly," which came out about the same time. The two plays were of much the same general kind, comedies of character and incident, set in the same world, mostly in the same place, more or less alike in plot if not in motive. Mr. Pinero's play is certainly the more theatrical if you come to analyse it closely: everybody has something to do, to be sure, but often somebody has no reason for existing, save to do some special thing that the play demands. The dialogue of both plays is smart and showy, but Mr. Pinero's is often conventional and artificial, while in "The Ambassador" there are often touches of nature that might pass unperceived on the boards. There is not much to choose as to the characters, but Mr. Pinero's are somewhat more mechanical in that they are all people who exhibit the motive of the

play, show the effects of middle age, in different ways. One is a woman who still loves her husband, one a woman who chiefly loves her dinner, and so on, and they are not much more. But if Mr. Pinero is the more theatrical, it must be remembered that he is writing for the theatre. The theatre has its conventions, and it would be absurd to imagine that even to-day we could transfer a bit of real life from the parlour to the stage, and have it seem across the footlights as it seemed across the room.

In the Fifth Reader, or perhaps the Fourth, there used to be a tale about two sculptors who made two statues to go up and be set on a very high place. The reader may remember it; one statue seemed coarse and rude till it got where it was intended to be; the other, which was very charming and delicate when examined down below, lost a good deal when it was put in place. It is the same thing here. Mr. Pinero knows the stage better than Mrs. Craigie: he is somewhat conventional and confined, but he must know the stage. Ladies wear rouge on the stage and put lines under their eyes, and do other things which would not render them attractive in the parlour, and so do the men. Some of these things about Mr. Pinero that we do not care for are necessary for the right effect across the footlights.

And as to the other things,—the delicacies, the quiet touches, the delightful half-tones,—we must be content to miss them at the theatre. Of course we may mourn that these things cannot be on the stage, that they can get no farther than to be realised by the kindly imagination, that they seem to lose character and colour when incorporate in real flesh and blood. We may mourn at all this, but it will be without reason. Our keenest pleasures, our most delightful thrills or chuckles, do we really wish to share them with the multitude?

The stage is still a public place. It is not outdoors and boisterous as it was with the Elizabethans, but still it is not exactly a place for intimacies. Let us be content to have our poetry as we want it, to ourselves at home, and on the stage to have what the stage can give us, effective figures which will live in our minds, effective situations which will sum up whole developments, effective actions which will typify whole experiences. These things can doubtless be gained otherwise; books and pictures often give them to us. But nowhere do we get them with the same force of impression as on the stage, for the stage has a hundred means of directing, concentrating, focussing what life spreads out at large, upon one spot of our attention.

BERNARD SHAW

It is hard to take Mr. Bernard Shaw seriously, for he has such a gift of wit and paradox that he is apt to seem desirous of appearing frivolous. It is hard also to write about him, for he has written a good deal about himself much more cleverly than most people have written about him. He has a much better knowledge of the subject and a superior gift of expression. Yet the attempt must be made, for he really is serious in the main. He wishes to accomplish something worth while and he will do so, too, or do something in the direction. If one cannot get into touch with him, then so much the worse for oneself.

I was about to begin by saying that Mr. Shaw was not so much a master of stagecraft as some other people. Just then, however, I saw in a paper that a distinguished Shawian actor affirmed him to be greater in dramatic construction than Shakespeare. That made me pause. It is true that the remark was made at the University of Chicago, an institution whence newspaper report is apt to offer us matter much more highly col-

oured than the original: still such may have been the opinion of the actor in question. I do not, however, believe that it is Mr. Shaw's. Mr. Shaw himself says somewhere, with his usual candour and even modesty, that he is not remarkable for stage technique. His plays, he seems to think, are technically like other plays. He says that he is better than Shakespeare in one respect, and here not a few will probably agree with him, but does not claim superiority in the matter of stage construction. There is not very much point in the comparison. Shakespeare made his plays for his own theatre, which was very different from ours, and much of his absolute stage technique is to-day impossible. Take the fifteen scenes (more or less) in the third act of "Antony and Cleopatra," and in the fourth; that is something out of the question now, and so it is with some other matters. In a large way I suppose Shakespeare had more dramatic art than Mr. Shaw; certainly he managed to write more plays that did and do well on the stage.

But stagecraft is not Mr. Shaw's particularly strong point, although, like most literary men who write plays, he seems to be well settled in the opinion that he knows quite enough about the matter for practical purposes. It may be doubted, however, whether his work is especially

well fitted for the stage. He can write, I suppose, almost anything, and he has written a dozen plays. Some of them have appeared on the stage, and that with a greater or less success for the time. But a determined criticism would probably show that their success was due not so much to their dramatic character as to something else.

Mr. Shaw's real matter of importance is not his dramatic art, but his ideas or his way of thinking. He is a critic and a dramatist, it is true, but at bottom he is a Radical, a Revolutionist, a Socialist, I believe. His plays may be successful as plays, and he is naturally pleased or displeased, but the real root of the matter is in the ideas. In fact, I suppose his ideas rather interfere with his success as a playwright, because they prevent his taking the stage seriously. He says that he did not at first, and results would seem to show that he did not afterwards. He generally cast his plays "in the ordinary practical comedy form in use in all the theatres," but we may infer that he could with equal ease have cast them in any other form; indeed, his later plays have been of various kinds.

It seems not unnatural that when a man has mainly at heart the exploitation of some idea or conception, and considers the dramatic part of the business of minor importance, he will not be

a pre-eminent success on the stage. The actor considers the acting and the stage management of immense importance, and the ideas of very little or none at all, and even he does not always succeed.

It would certainly not be worth while to attempt to present a boiling down of Mr. Shaw's ideas. For one thing his object in writing is generally to express them, which he does commonly much better than I should be able to. But, for another thing, he has so many ideas. He is, and for a long time has been, a champion of a different order of society, and as such has not only had many good ideas of his own, but he has expressed them excellently and very amusingly. Add to that all the ideas that he has imputed to Wagner, Ibsen, Nietzsche, and you have far too many for a short essay. But still it will be worth making a try at the general nature and character of his ideas as presented in his plays, or at least of his dramatic character.

Mr. Shaw has published eleven plays. Of these "Widowers' Houses" deals with the position of a man who lives on money used by somebody else in ways he cannot approve. This is a pretty important matter in modern life: it brings in what may really be a problem to many. So many people nowadays—I suppose it was so always—

live on the work of others, that it is rather important to know how the money is employed which gets your bread and butter. "Mrs. Warren's Profession" presents a girl whose mother has educated her with money made in a peculiarly dishonourable manner. This is not so common a case; the particular manner brings up various phases of the question which are so special that the general nature of the problem is largely lost. "The Philanderers," which is called an "unpleasant play," has no definite problem, but is more a satire on what used to be called the "new woman." These ideas we need not discuss: they are but special forms taken by the general motive power of Mr. Shaw's thinking.

It is with Mr. Shaw as with most men: you will best get at them when they are not dead set on some special object. "Arms and the Man" has no special target, and for that reason, perhaps, it was more successful on the stage than Mr. Shaw's earlier pieces. Taking as a setting the vague possibilities for romance offered by Servia and Bulgaria, Mr. Shaw calmly produces a strictly realistic play. He presents the world as it is—not especially in Servia or Bulgaria, for I suppose he has no especial knowledge of those countries—but the world in general, and creates a very amusing satire. It is a satire, and it is

amusing, but it has enough hits at truth to be a little more than that. Mr. Shaw gets everybody off their high horses—the soldier, the gentleman, the romantic young lady—we see and acknowledge the various pretences and affectations of life as we have often done before. Mr. Shaw wishes to get at the real facts, the real springs of action, but he does not get much farther than others have done. That, I suppose, was the reason that "Arms and the Man" was not more successful on the stage than it was. Its object was satire but not very vigorous satire, nor on very new lines. It was more quaint, I should say, than anything else. Still, beside its particular satire, it has plenty of touches which show the more general purpose of the man. In the first act, where the Servian soldier has sought refuge in the room of the Bulgarian young lady, we see constantly that we are to have the real thing, tinctured with epigram, it is true, but still nearer the real thing than melodrama.

"*Some* soldiers," says Raina scornfully, "are afraid of death."

"All of them, dear lady," answers the man, "all of them, believe me. It is our duty to live as long as we can, and kill as many of the enemy as we can."

There is satire and epigram there, but there is

also a certain sort of reality and great reasonableness. There is plenty of it. "Bless you, dear lady," says the man, "you can always tell an old soldier by the inside of his holsters and cartridge boxes. The young ones carry pistols, the old ones grub." It may or may not be so, but at any rate it is a resolute doing away of conventional romance, of the romance of pictures and books and so on, for the reasonable view which is willing to make an effort after the facts. It need not be that Mr. Shaw knows as much of what real soldiers actually are as Mr. Kipling. That particularity is rather beside his purpose: his especial aim is to open our eyes now and then to the impossibility of carrying through half the notions that have grown up in the minds of every one from books and pictures and superficial talk, mingled with our own childish imagination and self-centred desire. That sort of thing will not stand the test of experience; people are always coming to grief by depending upon it; better open one's eyes and interpret what one really sees by a little common sense.

When you have your mind set on this sort of thing it must be hard to think of doing anything else. I think it is remarkable that Mr. Shaw should have any dramatic construction at all. I remember nothing of it in "Arms and the Man,"

which is, all the same, one of the cleverest and most amusing plays that one reads. I am sorry to say that I never saw it, but I suspect that it does not make quite so much difference as with some other plays.

"You Never Can Tell" is another delightful play. It is on the face of it more frivolous and, indeed, more impossible, if one may say so, than "Arms and the Man," but it is full of the same sort of eye-openers as the other, and in the passages between Valentine and Gloria it begins to get quite close to some of Mr. Shaw's later heresies. That delightful waiter, too,—I'm sure he would have made an Admirable Crichton if he had had half a chance. Let us get on, however, to "Candida," for that is, I take it, the best of Mr. Shaw's plays, and certainly it is the one that most people will happen to have in mind now, unless perhaps "Man and Superman" be eviscerated and exposed on the stage some time in the winter.

"Candida" carries the process of eye-opening, so dear to Mr. Shaw, one step farther than "Arms and the Man." First we have the Rev. James Morell, a Christian Socialist, and therefore at war with the many evils and falsenesses of our social life, and intent in bringing in a good, strong, and honest way of life among people who are too much

bent on making money and enjoying themselves to consider carefully the ways in which they do so. Certainly the character is inimitably good, and when we think chiefly of that kind of pleasure that comes from seeing people and things presented in a perfectly natural way and with a perfectly sure touch, aside from what they happen to be, when we answer with a thrill to every certainty of portrayal, and chuckle to ourselves at every small point of human frailty painted for us just as it is, why, the Reverend James appeals to us as few figures upon the modern stage. We have him at his best in the contrast with Mr. Burgess, the "man of sixty, made coarse by the compulsory selfishness of petty commerce"—there we have him at his best, and he makes the right impression, a go-ahead, clear-visioned, plain-speaking man, understanding the world and taking it for what it is. "Well," he says to his old scalawag of a father-in-law, "that did not prevent our getting on very well together. God made you what I call a scoundrel as he made me what you call a fool. . . . It was not for me to quarrel with his handiwork in the one case more than in the other. So long as you come here honestly as a self-respecting, thorough, convinced scoundrel, justifying your scoundrelism, and proud of it, you are welcome. But I won't have you here snivelling about

being a model employer and a converted man when you're only an apostate with your coat turned for the sake of a County Council contract. No; I like a man to be true to himself, even in wickedness. Come, now; either take your hat and go, or else sit down and give me a good scoundrelly reason for wanting to be friends with me." We certainly have here one who sees through the shams of modern life, and by the very clearness of his vision, somehow, has power to make all others feel all their sham pretentiousness. And as he transfixes the ridiculous commercialist who is trying to make friends with the Mammon of righteousness, we feel that he and we are of those in the front rank of progress, the men who know what is right and so can do it.

And then appears Candida and her poet. He is, to start with, singularly and strangely frank, and strange and singular in other ways. As he and Candida drove from the station he was tormented all the time with wondering what he ought to give the cabman. He is not made to get along well in an everyday world—that is, not as the world considers getting on well.

But it soon appears that the poet is there to show us a range of view above the Reverend James. A poet is a man more sensitive than the rest of the world, and who therefore sees more than most

men, and who has more power of expression and therefore says what he sees more exactly. James could of course say good things. "The over-paying instinct is a generous one; better than the underpaying, and not so common." "No, no," says Eugene, "Cowardice, incompetence," which it often is, at least in the case of feeing, which was the thing they were talking about. The poet opens up on Morell at once, and comes out of each encounter on top.

"Eugene, my boy," says the cheerful optimist, who has just learned from Eugene that he loves his wife, "you are making a fool of yourself—a very great fool of yourself. There's a piece of wholesome, plain speaking for you."

To which Eugene answers, "Oh, do you think I don't know all that? Do you think that the things that people make fools of themselves for are any less real and true than the things they behave sensibly about? They are more true, they are the only things that are true."

We cannot, perhaps, immediately understand such a point of view. I will confess that when "Morell grasps him powerfully by the lapel of his coat, he cowers down on the sofa and screams powerfully," I rather sympathised with the bigger man. And when Morell called him a little snivelling, cowardly whelp, and told him to go before he

frightened himself into a fit, I had enough red blood in me to agree with him. But really, of course, it is not anything especially to admire in a man that he is physically so much more powerful than another that he could knock him into a cocked-up hat. We feel that among our own kind of people (whatever kind it may be) it is nice to be big and hearty and strong, and to feel that we could knock the stuffing out of this or that little fool of our acquaintance. But we never make the comparison broader and think that a good, powerful steam-fitter, or a solid coal-handler, is any better than we because he could do us up. So clearly the Reverend James is not a finer fellow, with all the breadth of chest; indeed, he would be the first to discredit the reign of brute force, in spite of the charms of muscular Christianity.

In fact Marchbanks gives us a second eye-opening, and we perceive that the first was, in a measure, deceptive. Mr. Shaw was playing with us. The first was too easy. It is not so much to see through the deceits and shams of society nowadays. Thackeray and Carlyle are not read by everybody, but their chief standpoints are pretty common property. Indeed it is so much the fashion to look beneath the surface that it is not at all hard to take the pose. But really to know what is what, really to react to the facts of life, to be

really genuine, that is no easier than it was in the days of Teufelsdroeckh, or of Gulliver, or of Piers the Ploughman.

Not that the Reverend James is absolutely a pretentious gasbag any more than Marchbanks is an inspired prophet. He has a definite, a positive part in the world's work. You cannot reform the world with a few epigrams; most reformers are impracticable persons, which means that they cannot determine details, do not like to take the trouble to make their ideas fit complicated cases, are puzzled at any specific correct thinking, have not patience and skill absolutely to know anything, except a few general principles, "great laws of life," as their admirers subsequently call them. They are not the people to do the work of reforming the world; the world has to reform itself. But it can only be got to reform itself by middlemen, so that the reformers have to have followers, commonly men who do not entirely understand them, but who get full of better ideas than they had before, at least, and who incite the world to work itself over into something a little better than it was before. The new ideas are handed around in predigested tablets, and get to be rather the thing. Then the original thinkers retire or are retired to the background, and the reign of talkers begins. The Rev. James Morell is a

typical talker. The original thinker is a dreamer and doesn't like to do anything. The talkers are commonly men of vitality who have neither the imagination to dream nor the patience to think for themselves. They want to do something in this world, but, having no notion of just what they can do, they take it out in talking. They believe absolutely in what they say, while they say it, and they rouse people to a state of excited conviction by the hypnotic power of their language, as Mr. Morell did at the meeting of the Guild of St. Matthew. It is these latter people, those that listen to the talkers, who go ahead and do the world's work in reforming itself; but as they are creatures of the emotions rather than of the intellect, they never follow people like Marchbanks because they do not understand them nor like them, but do follow people like Mr. Morell because they do like them and do not have to understand them.

Of course Mr. Shaw is one of the Marchbankses, but he is not entirely without sympathy for the Morells. Who can be entirely without sympathy for them?—big, strong, hearty fellows. How much better it is that they should earn a living by talking than that they should have to hoe corn all day on a farm or dig dirt on a railway. They do more good, too.

In "Candida" Mr. Shaw sometimes loses the reformer in the dramatist. Yet he does not do so wholly; he certainly shows a sympathy toward the end for the Reverend James which is not entirely consistent. Recollect that scathing description of his family home. "You should come with us, Eugene, and see the pictures of the hero of that household. James as a baby! the most wonderful of all babies. James holding his first school prize, won at the ripe age of eight! James as the captain of his eleven! James in his first frock coat! James under all sorts of glorious circumstances!" That is about as bitter in its satire as we can wish: Mr. Shaw puts it in the mouth of the man's wife. That was the right thing to do, and yet he also allows us to feel a little sympathy for him.

"Candida" is undoubtedly an excellent piece of writing, full of those flashes of reality that are the great thing with Mr. Bernard Shaw. People sometimes discuss it as a play with all seriousness; ask about its problem, about the character of Candida, about the poet's secret, and such things. They are all beside the point. One may talk of them if one will, just as one may (indeed must) admire Miss Proserpine Garland. But the real thing in the play is that it gives a standpoint from which to view the world.

Appreciating this, we may proceed to Mr.

Shaw's latest utterance, "Man and Superman," which I saw in the paper the other day is to be produced in New York shortly with notable omissions. This, perhaps, makes it unnecessary to write about it at present. The play has been written, and Mr. Shaw has also written a criticism upon it, so that no one else need try his hand upon it. There still remained the possibility of saying and showing either that it would do on the stage or that it would not. I was going to say the latter. But there is no use saying it now if the play is to be acted before this gets into print.

"Man and Superman" is far more a play of idea than most of Mr. Shaw's. "Arms and the Man" gave us an idea of the standpoint of Mr. Bernard Shaw; he was a realistic satirist. "Candida" went a step farther; it made it clear that here was a realist and a satirist who was not a mere promulgator of everyday realism (like Balzac, say) nor of everyday satire (say Thackeray). Mr. Shaw, it appeared, was an entirely modern person, an out-and-out advocate of neo-realism. Neo-realism is merely the presentation of the ultimate facts of life in any way you like. In "Man and Superman" Mr. Shaw, having pierced to the secret of the ultimate development of Man from protoplasm to the Superman, presents it to us in a piece of extravagance, ostensibly in the garb of

to-day, with automobiles and so on, but really of an entirely fanciful nature. This mode of presentation is worth remarking: it is almost a note of Mr. Shaw's dramaturgy. The expedient is that of a frankly impossible motive carried out in a very realistic manner. "The Philanderers" and "You Never Can Tell" were entirely absurd and impossible in conception, but entirely realistic in execution. The other plays do not have quite so much of it, but there is usually some: in "Candida" the calm discussion of which man the lady is to go with seems almost as though Mr. Shaw thought it a natural proceeding, but of course it is not more so than having Cleopatra carried into Cæsar's presence in a roll of carpet (I hope that is not historical) or having General Burgoyne march from Boston to Albany to meet General Howe. "Man and Superman" is quite as fantastic as any romantic play: the main difference is that it is not so interesting; the dashing across Europe in an automobile pursued by the girl one is destined to marry, and landing among a set of Spanish brigands, the chief of whom has been a waiter at the Savoy, serves as a vehicle for Mr. Shaw's views as well as anything else, but in itself it has no imaginative character, and, indeed, is rather a dull sort of humour.

But the form is not a matter of great impor-

tance, though I wish it were really amusing as Mr. Shaw could have made it. The constant play of idea is the main thing or else the great idea at bottom. It is hardly necessary to say that the true nature of the great truth promulgated in the play is not easily grasped even in reading, would be less easily understood if the whole play were given on the stage, and will not be even guessed at if the third act is much cut. It is to the effect that the process of development of man into a higher form (the Superman) is to be carried on by sexual selection just as his development from lower forms has been, and that in this process women (do or should) wish to get married in order that they may have children, and not for any minor motive that fancy or romance or conventionality or policy may try to push into prominence, and that men, having been of use in this process, have about as much place in the economy of nature as a sucked orange at breakfast. That seems a curious idea for a play. Mr. Shaw presents it to us by the spectacle of two young ladies, one of whom marries secretly and persuades the father of her husband not to disinherit him, and the other marries openly, having persuaded her own father before dying to place her in charge of the person she had singled out for that purpose. A slight action is given to the piece by the dash of

the not-yet husband across Europe in an automobile in flight from the girl who intends to marry him. All the other characters come after him in another automobile, and all fall among comic brigands.

All this circumstance appears to me to be pretty poor stuff, and I shall take leave of it merely by saying that, were it a hundred times poorer, the play would still be worth reading for the constant cleverness of the dialogue and the occasional seriousness of the matter conveyed. The theory of the play I suppose to be entirely false, but I have no concern with it, one way or the other. It gives Mr. Shaw a chance for his epigram, and his epigram gives us a chance at getting at a bit of truth now and then, or of thinking that we do, both of which are exhilarating sensations. We need not swallow them all any more than we swallow the ocean when we go in swimming,—in fact, we could not do so if we tried, —but in the constant effort to keep intellectually afloat and to swim about, we find ourselves materially invigorated and refreshed.

This realistic brilliancy is the great thing about Mr. Shaw. For the moment, I think, everything else becomes dull and tawny beside this white light. Pinero seems to be the merest boy, smoking cigarettes and talking of things that he knows as

much about as the rabbit does of the purposes of nature. Sudermann is evidently one who makes not even an effort to see beneath the crust of custom and convention of a thousand years. Hauptmann, with all his brilliancy, is merely the bright child who amuses you by telling how he gets the better (or else doesn't) of oppressive elders, a jam-pot rebel against meat and potatoes. Rostand is the painter of very exquisite and charming pictures to illustrate Jack-and-the-Beanstalk and other such classics. This man, on the other hand, has had life under his microscope and knows its secrets, has put himself in touch with real scientists who know the constitution of the universe, and who now presents to us, with the sugar coating that we demand, a few of the ultimate facts of life, that we may like or dislike, understand or not, but which are facts.

Such is something like the first impression that Mr. Bernard Shaw may fairly make on one who reads or sees his plays. Not that one will necessarily admire him or care about his ideas, but it seems very hard to deny them entirely or to get round them and him. You are on his side throughout the play, even if, when it is over, you are astonished to find what company you have been keeping.

First impressions and second thoughts are often

different. They are with Mr. Shaw. First impressions will be more or less of the kind that I have described: second thoughts are sure to be anything except that. The particular change that comes over one in regard to Mr. Shaw is that his white light loses brilliancy, and perhaps goes out. That is to say, shortly after you have been decidedly under the influence of his brilliancy, his cleverness, his realities, you find yourself not quite sure just what those ideas were that so short a time ago seemed, if not indubitable, yet at least absolutely there. For this there is a twofold reason.

The first is that, though he writes plays, Mr. Shaw does not present his ideas dramatically. They are as they happen to be stated in the dialogue, they are what they are, that is all,—and enough, too, some may think. But for a dramatist it is not enough. The drama has particular ways of giving impressions. They are very effective ways, and they result often in powerful and long-continued impressions. If, however, a man writes plays and does not avail himself of the possibilities of the drama, then he gets all the drawbacks of the drama without its attendant advantages. And as a means of presenting ideas the drama has one serious drawback, namely, lack of space. The dramatist has the means of com-

pensating for this disadvantage, he can even turn it to his own purpose. He will make up for his lack of opportunity in statement somehow; if he is going to do anything, he will have action, situation, characters to carry the thing, to make it stay in our mind, to serve us as tokens of the ideas. If we do not have this, if we merely have the people on the stage telling each other one thing or another, even if it be in epigrammatic dialogue, we shall not get any more out of it than we usually do in hearing people tell of things. We cannot expect to remember all that we are told; we may remember or we may not, according as the ideas strike us at the time. Now "Widowers' Houses" and "Mrs. Warren's Profession," which are the two of Mr. Shaw's plays that have the least interesting ideas, are the two of which the idea remains most readily in the mind, because in each case, what idea there is, is expressed in a dramatic way. It is embodied in a figure, Vivien returning to her work at Frazer and Warren's, Trench shaking hands with Mr. Sartorius; these people remain in our minds in a manner sufficiently suggestive of the idea that is necessitated by the existence of each. But the other plays do not leave much of an idea; admirable characters some of them have, and to be remembered for themselves (the waiter, the Reverend James, 'Enery Straker),

but not for any ideas implicit in them. So the ideas have to trust to whatever statement of them there may happen to be, and in a drama such statement is always insufficient; sometimes in a good play we have explanations of theory, like Graf Trast's disquisition on honour in "Die Ehre," but generally the dialogue of a play is not well fitted for that purpose. We do not, then, remember Mr. Shaw's ideas very well, and thus in a short time he becomes, as far as any effect is concerned, much like anybody else.

The second reason that his ideas do not affect us much is hardly worth mentioning after the first. It is that his ideas, as a rule, are not such as can in any way be promulgated on the stage. Some ideas can: the constant effort of the idealist, the constant strife of the individual,—these ideas (it is fair to call them so) can be dramatically presented. They may not be worth so much in the practical affairs of life as a correct understanding of the way that man is going to get married in his development into future ages, or the way man should manage whatever marriage he happens to be concerned in now, but they seem to be more susceptible of dramatic presentation. Take a thesis like that of "Man and Superman" or of "Candida," if you can get at it. It will be found to be a social generalisation, which, even to be

considered, must be presented either on the basis of reason or of authority. A play is the place for neither. The Germans are apt to think that Shakespeare wrote his plays to present great and often complicated social ideas, but if he did he was wasting his time, for that is not the kind of idea the drama can present effectively. It can present the conception of the disharmony of the man of thought in a world of action as in "Hamlet," the place of young love in an old civilisation that is tired of it, as in "Romeo and Juliet," but those are much simpler notions.

But of course it is of no earthly consequence whether Mr. Shaw is a dramatist or not. He can write most amusing plays, and, now that the whirligig of time has spun a bit, we can see them on the stage. And if we do not always get his Ideas,—or at least do not remember them when we do get them,—yet still something remains. We have had a constant challenge and stimulus, a frequent opening of the window. We shall constantly turn to his work with the desire for reality and the curiosity to know the essential under the superficial, and the assurance that by holding on and constantly purifying our vision, we may see well enough to get a step or two nearer the truth.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

"SUDDENLY, out of a clear sky, the poetic drama is upon us."

Some time ago a gifted and brilliant critic began an article with these extraordinary words. They served him chiefly as introduction to an account of a particular poetic drama which had been produced with "large and wholesome and prudent success" at Pittsburg. But they were inspired by Mr. Beerbohm Tree's acceptance of the play of "Herod," by Mr. Stephen Phillips.

I quote them now, because they made such a singular impression upon me that I think they may appeal to others. They seem to me to represent a very curious critical frame of mind, I think it should be called; a sort of disposition, as it were, a feeling that there is such a thing as "the poetic drama," that its appearance has been earnestly looked and longed for, that by one act of good-natured magic on the part of Mr. Beerbohm Tree, a great consummation is about to come to pass, and that an epoch-making moment is at hand,—or rather was.

I may be singular in not having ever held such a view, but I confess that, though I should be glad to see more good plays at the theatre, I do not care a pin to have them poetic dramas.

In fact, when Mr. Phillips seeks to restore poetry to the English stage, he strives against wind and tide. Every great poet of the 19th century tried the same thing and failed. Coleridge finally succeeded in getting Sheridan to produce "Remorse" at Drury Lane; it was successful and is now not even read. Shelley chose the drama mainly as a means for lyric poetry, and should not be counted. Keats, Mr. Phillips's forerunner, —but it would be pressing the matter to say that he did anything of the sort, though he did write a play. So did Wordsworth, though it was never presented. Scott's "Doom of Devorgoil" was by no means as successful as the commonplace dramatisations that followed upon the Waverley novels as they appeared. Browning wrote several plays for the theatre, and though they were not failures, they have not kept the stage. The same must be said of Tennyson. As for Swinburne, it is not probable that he meant his plays for the stage any more than did Byron, who, however, appears occasionally in a spectacular "Sardanapalus" or a literary "Manfred."

In fact, if we compare the 19th century with

the age of Elizabeth we have a curious contrast. About 1600 we have a large group of dramatists who as poets were at least of the second order ("all but one"), producing plays that appear to have pleased and delighted the play-going public, while three centuries later we have a series of poets of greater poetic power than the Elizabethans, who are certainly unable to hold the stage, or, as a rule, even to obtain a footing there. Further we may remark that even as literature, as poetry, the drama of the 19th century is not comparable to that of the 16th.

Such is the verdict of history which Mr. Phillips or any one else who attempts "the poetic drama" moves to set aside. If we ask as to the grounds, we have the rather vague idea that there ought to be poetry on our stage, that the drama is the highest form of poetry, that it is a shame that we cannot have poetry at the theatre as well as the French or the Germans.

Turning the matter over in our minds, we may ask why any other poet should think of succeeding in the direction where the most successful poetry of Shakespeare is a failure. Mr. Bernard Shaw says that Shakespeare "still holds the stage so well that it is not impossible to meet old playgoers who have witnessed public performances of more than thirty out of his thirty-seven reputed

plays, a dozen of them fairly often, and half a dozen over and over again." He adds that he has himself seen more than twenty-three. I do not doubt the statement, but it is beside the mark. There is no doubt that perhaps a dozen of Shakespeare's plays hold the stage, but certainly not by virtue of their poetry. Rather, it may be well believed, in spite of it. Not long ago I saw, as did many others who were greatly pleased by it, a very beautiful performance of "Romeo and Juliet" given with wonderful scenery and costume and very good acting. It is easy to say of such performances that they are very pretty but not Shakespeare, but I should not have said so of this one. It did not give us everything of Shakespeare, but it did give us much. I do not think that ever before was I so impressed with the beauty, the pathos, the tragedy of the old story. But with all that, the poetry of the play was not there: the characters, the action, the situations, the settings were strongly given, but the Shakespearean poetry seemed absent in spite of the words. In the beautiful scene beginning:

"Wilt thou begone? It is not yet near day,"

we had a strong and realistic presentation, but the poetry of it seemed to me to have vanished. It may be that the lines were not very well given, but I

incline to think that the reason for my impression was that the adequate circumstance dulled the imagination, that the realism was too much for the poetry.

Some of the most sympathetic critics of Shakespeare have held some such notion. Lamb could not bear "Lear" on the stage, nor Hazlitt "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and both for the same reason, that the realism destroyed the poetry. So thought one at least who saw "Ulysses" a year or so ago.

"This isle," says Ulysses,
"Set in the glassy ocean's azure swoon,
With sward of parsley and of violet,
And poplars shivering in a silvery dream,
And swell of cedar lawn, and sandal wood,
And these low-crying birds that haunt the deep."

Or

"Little bewildered ghosts on this great night!
They flock about me—
Wandering on their way
To banks of asphodel and spirit flowers.
Ah, a girl's face! A boy there with bright hair!"

Are not those exquisite passages? Surely, but what have they to do with the theatre? Certainly the stage setting of "Ulysses" was ade-

quate. Many of the scenes were extremely beautiful. I remember the gradual taking form and shape of the coast of Ithaca as being particularly so. But for all that the poetry did not harmonise.

To revert to Shakespeare once more. I am inclined (in my dry-as-dust, academic, mole-like way) to account for his practical exclusion from the stage. Managers who watch the public mind say that Shakespeare generally lacks "heart-interest," that he presents no problems, or something of the sort. But the matter lies deeper.

Shakespeare wrote his plays for a stage very different from ours. It will perhaps be said that ours is better, that we can give his plays much more effectively than the Globe Theatre could do, and also that Shakespeare would gladly have taken advantage of our possibilities had he been able. These things may be so and yet the important thing is not, say, that we can give Shakespeare better than his own theatre could, but that we do give them very differently; and also, not that Shakespeare would have written with pleasure for a more developed stage than he had, but that he did write especially for a stage less developed than our own.

It is wrong to imagine Shakespeare as an inspired barbarian, his eye in fine frenzy rolling,

pouring out poetry for posterity. What he really thought of posterity in connection with his plays may never be known, but there can be little doubt that he wrote his plays with a definite consideration of just the conditions under which they were to be presented. There was undoubtedly an element of the business man (surely a part of Shakespeare) dealing with the business proposition, namely the Globe Theatre and the Lord Chamberlain's men. It was not that Shakespeare wrote merely to please the public. It was that he knew his powers so well that he could easily please the public and be a poet too. So he dealt with the actual conditions in his own way. Instead of grumbling at the interruptions of his comic actors, he used them for his own ends. Instead of shrugging his shoulders, merely, at the clumsy way in which his boy heroines managed their skirts, he put them into doublet and hose whenever he could. Instead of being cribbed and confined by the simple scaffold of a stage, he used every opportunity given him by the stage-management of his day. Instead of feeling any lack of the scenery with which the masques of Ben Jonson were beautified, he took advantage of the chance for descriptive poetry.

And he produced a drama very appropriate to the Elizabethan stage. That stage relied almost

entirely upon the dramatist and the actor. The dramatist provided a mobile and fluent dramatic poem, and the actor presented it with his best ability in declamation and gesture. Our conception of realism at the theatre was unknown. Our idea of spectacle was confined to the amusements of the upper classes.

So far as real conditions are concerned the Shakespearean Hamlet was an actor clad in the costume of his day, standing on a stage in the midst of the audience, even surrounded on the stage itself by a half-circle of spectators. Let us think of that when next we see the melancholy Dane in appropriate costume (of the 11th century or the 16th, as the manager happens to choose) seated on an antique chair on a stage that gives with historical accuracy all the circumstance of the palace of Elsinore. And if we will so think, let us ask whether the poetry written for the situation in which there was nothing else will be likely to satisfy our hearts when our eyes are glutted by the brilliant actuality that has become so important to us.

I think not. The poet at the present day who writes for the stage deliberately puts himself into competition with costume, scenery, and music. Wagner alone has consciously sought harmony in such competition, and with Wagner his music

has certainly triumphed at the sacrifice of the rest.

Mr. Phillips may succeed on the stage, but it will be in spite of his poetry and not by reason of it. Let me speak again of the newspaper story, which is typical, if not true. When he read "Herod" to Mr. Beerbohm Tree, the actor-manager listened without remark until he came to a place where there was the sound of distant trumpets. At this he began to have confidence. "He had not known that I had been an actor," remarked with modest pride the poet who had seen pass unnoticed the lines:

"And all behind him is
A sense of something coming on the world,
A crying of dead prophets from their tombs,
A singing of dead poets from their graves.

I ever dread the young."

No, I fear that poetry has no place on our stage and that she will not have, at least just at present. The Elizabethan drama gave poetry to people who could not otherwise get it. It was public poetry, recited for those who could not read. Do we to-day wish to listen to poetry? It may be a doubtful question, but I incline to think that we read so much that we do not wish merely to listen to anything. Who is there when some-

thing is read aloud from a newspaper, but wants to take the paper and read for himself? Who is there that having heard a poem from the lips, even of a good reader, does not wish to take the book in his own hand and read it. Poetry is hardly a public art. It is true that Lowell read an Ode on Commemoration Day and Holmes read many poems to the class of '29, and we should all be glad to have heard either. But in the main we like to have our poetry in the privacy of our firesides, of our pensive citadels, of our hearts. I have no desire to hear beautiful poetry in a crowd: I had rather be by myself and have it alone. So, unless I am singular in this respect, poetry will not flourish on our stage.

The attentive and logical reader will probably incline to think that this is a short-sighted view in a period which has produced the poetical dramas of Rostand, and various others. I cannot help that. I am not going to try to explain why the various nations of Europe are different. The French theatre is different from ours and so is French poetry. "To what shall we attribute it," wrote somebody in the *Quarterly Review*, "that the frivolous and ignorant audience of Paris, content with a dark and heavy house, a dirty scene, and six fiddlers, shall listen with earnest attention to a lifeless translation of

'Philoctetes,' while the phlegmatic and reflecting citizens of London, in a gaudy house glittering with innumerable lights, demand show and song and bustle and procession and supernumerary murders, even in the animated plays of Shakespeare? . . . But, whatever the cause, the fact is undoubted, and whoever writes for the theatre must submit to take it into account." That was nearly a century ago; to-day the circumstances are very different, but not the essential fact. I follow the advice and take account of it in my view that, whatever may be the tendency and nature of the Latin races, the English and Americans do not value poetry at the theatre or anywhere else in public.

Of course it does not follow that because poetry is not for the stage, there can be nothing for the stage but costume and scenery. There is room for much else, and whatever be its name, it is something which will always tend to make the stage finer the more of it there is. There is a passage in Byron's "Manfred" that will illustrate the matter better than I can explain it. It comes in that scene in the Hall of Arimanes where the phantom of Astarte rises and stands in the midst. Manfred speaks:

"Astarte! My beloved! speak to me:
I have so much endured—so much endure—

Look on me! The grave hath not changed thee more
Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst me
Too much, as I loved thee; we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not—that I do bear
This punishment for both—that thou wilt be
One of the blessed—and that I shall die;
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence—in a life
Which makes me shrink from immortality—
A future like the past. I cannot rest.
I know not what I ask nor what I seek;
I feel but what thou art, and what I am;
And I would hear yet once before I perish
The voice that was my music—speak to me!
For I have called on thee in the still night,
Startled the slumbering birds from the hushed boughs,
And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
Which answered me—many things answered me—
Spirits and men—but thou wert silent all.
Yet speak to me! I have outwatched the stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain search of thee.

Speak to me! I have wandered o'er the earth,
And never found thy likeness—speak to me!
Look on the fiends around—they feel for me;
I fear them not and feel for thee alone—
Speak to me! though it be in wrath—but say—
I reck not what—but let me hear thee once—
This once—once more!

Phantom of Astarte. Manfred.

Manfred. Say on, say on—I live but in the sound—it is thy voice!

Phantom. Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills. Farewell.

Manfred. Yet one word more—am I forgiven?

Phantom. Farewell!

Manfred. Say shall we meet again?

Phantom. Farewell!

Manfred. One word for mercy! Say thou lovest me—

Phantom. Manfred!"

(The Phantom disappears.)

I presume that the imaginative, the appreciative, the artistic reader of this passage is always profoundly moved by it. I was never specially moved until I saw the play given upon the stage. Then, amid a good deal of frippery and foolishness, the intonation alone of that last word "Manfred!" gave the whole scene a glory that it has

never lost. In a life in which (like most) much average work and play, much old commonplace and new experience tends to dull the keen sense of the beauty of bygone moments, there remains to me always the poignant passion of that voice as from the open tomb, giving an emotion so intense that current reality, even, fades before it into a forgotten dream. Some readings in Heredia, the sight of the Winged Victory as she stands at the head of the staircase, the Garden act of "Tristan," the first thrilling delight at the pictures of Rembrandt —not to mention matters that do not belong here —none have a surer place in my recollection than this. I could say as Hazlitt said of the Man with the Glove: "What a look is there. . . that draws the evil out of human life, that while we look at it transfers the same sentiment to our own breasts and makes us feel as if nothing mean or little could disturb us again."

But this is not the poetry but the situation. And it is the situation that the drama, and especially on the stage, can give as nothing else can. Everybody can parallel the case, from the prose drama as well as the poetic—I could say myself a passage in the third act of "Sodom's Ende" ("Reinheit!") as well as the end of the third act of "L'Aiglon." And those who go much to the theatre count on such moments, for they are far more a possibility

for the stage than for literature or even poetry. I cannot recall a case in my seeing Shakespeare save where Mr. Booth sprang up after the play in " Hamlet."

But to return to Mr. Phillips. It was probably this electric moment that Mr. Tree noticed when he heard of the trumpets in Herod. Mr. Phillips, as a former actor, doubtless knows a dramatic situation. Whether he has power to create one of the first order is another matter. There are situations and situations; a single melodrama may have a dozen. But will they be real ones? One needs the stage to judge. So far as reading is concerned, I should say we had one at the very end of " Herod."

Of course one hopes that Mr. Phillips will create more, for if he does he is a friend to the human race, immeasurably lightening its miseries and adding to its joys. To have a wonderful possession of that sort is a great thing. Even so, however, what has it to do with poetry, unless it be that poetry is smuggled in along with the drama for literary respectability's sake, as some earnest critics would have us believe that an idea may be smuggled into poetry as a sort of ballast?

Mr. Phillips has written very charming poetry, some lines of which are apropos here. They occur in the words of Idas to Marpessa.

" Not for this only do I love thee, but
Because infinity upon thee broods;
And thou art full of whispers and of shadows.
Thou meanest what the sea has striven to say
So long, and yearnéd up the cliffs to tell;
Thou art what all the winds have uttered not,
What the still night suggesteth to the heart.
Thy voice is like to music heard ere birth,
Some spirit lute touched on a spirit sea;
Thy face remembered is from other worlds,
It has been died for, though I know not when,
It has been sung of, though I know not where.
It has the strangeness of the luring West,
And of sad sea-horizons; beside thee
I am aware of other times and lands,
Of birth far back, of lives in many stars.
O beauty lone, and like a candle clear
In this dark country of the world! Thou art
My woe, my early light, my music dying."

Those are very beautiful lines, but if they rightly represent Mr. Phillips' power, do they not mark his language at least as not dramatic?

But if a man write dramas—poetic or not—for which the stage can do but little, it does not follow that the dramas are without value. Of course the judgment of half a dozen theatrical critics or of a whole theatrical audience will never

establish that. They may say, or show clearly by their actions, that the play is not suited to the stage,—of which the purpose is not so much, as an eminent lover of the theatre is said to have remarked, "to hold the mirror up to nature" as it is rather to offer the public a very special and delightful kind of pleasure. But a drama may not be in the least suited to the stage, and yet be a very good thing for all that. There are and have been many stages—Greek, Elizabethan, French, our own, not to mention Chinese and Japanese; no play was ever written that could suit them all, although each form of theatre must offer some opportunity for creating the true dramatic thrill. A play cannot be good for all; perhaps it may be good for none, and yet be a source of very great pleasure to "those that like that sort of thing."

Just what that sort of thing is, is not a very difficult matter to state. There is a convenience in the dramatic form that enables some men to express themselves better in that way than in any other. Browning was a man of that kind: he had a curiosity in regard to life and a sympathy for living people that made him enter into his characters and speak for them, as it were. He did so in his first poem, "Pauline," which was a monologue; in his second, "Paracelsus," which was a

dramatic poem with no possibilities for the stage; and he did so in "Strafford," which he made a regular stage-play for Macready. Then—if I may touch dangerous ground for a moment—he wrote "Sordello." Tennyson, the story goes, said he understood but two lines in this poem—the first and last—and that neither was true. Now, the lines are as follows:

"Who will may hear Sordello's story told."

"Who would has heard Sordello's story told."

It may be admitted that "Sordello" is not a very simple narrative, but it certainly is a narrative. The lines are quite true, for the story is told—well or ill, of course—that is, it is not in dramatic form. Browning explains this at the beginning of the poem, in a passage which was presumably beyond Tennyson's comprehension, but which now, thanks to sixty years of Browning clubs, will be as clear as cosmic jelly.

"Never, I should warn you first,
Of my own choice had this, if not the worst,
Yet not the best expedient, served to tell
A story I could body forth so well
By making speak, myself kept out of view,
The very man as he was wont to do,
And leaving you to say the rest for him."

That puts the matter fairly enough: Browning liked to let the man speak for himself, so he commonly wrote in dramatic form. When he undertook to tell the tale himself the results were not so good. The same desire came over Tennyson as he grew older, and, though his earlier poems are mostly narratives, his later volumes are full of dramatic poetry. Every dramatic poem is not a play, but a play is dramatic poetry of the most developed and fullest kind. Browning and Tennyson both wrote plays as well as other forms of dramatic poetry, and so have various poets, often without much thought of the stage, like Byron.

After all, why not? I think some of Mr. Phillips' best poetry is in his plays. I have quoted lines from "Ulysses" and some from "Herod." Here are some from "Paolo and Francesca":

Francesca. "All ghostly grew the sun, unreal the air,
Then when we kissed.
Paolo. And in that kiss our souls
Together flashed, and now they are one flame,
Which nothing can put out, nothing divide.
Francesca. Kiss me again! I smile at what may chance.
Paolo. Again and yet again! and here and here.

Let me with kisses burn this body away,
That our two souls may dart together free.
I fret at intervention of the flesh,
And would clasp you—you that but inhabit
This lovely house.

Francesca. Break open then the door,
And let my spirit out."

I have not seen the play acted. But those who saw it on the stage, did they not perhaps "fret at interference of the flesh"? It would seem as if it might well be so, as one reads that fourth act. After all, is it the actual love affair that attracts us, that common intrigue so like a thousand others save for the intensity of its passion? Do we want to see two live, beautiful, charmingly dressed young people in each other's arms? I think hardly. It is the essence of the poetry, the soul going out of itself, that we want, and that is in the lines. There is another "Francesca" on the stage, and that, I am told, has too much real blood in it. I should think it likely. Real blood, like a real pump or any realistic setting, distracts the mind, which for the time would be conscious only of its own emotion. It is like a magic-lantern show going on with the curtain raised and daylight coming in.

Mr. Phillips has power to stir those subtle ele-

ments of our being that respond to poetry. It seems that he wishes also to stir us in a different way. It is to be hoped that he will not be like the dog with the bone in his mouth, who lost his own chop in trying to get another. Or, rather, the figure is wrong, for it is we who lose, if loss there be. Mr. Phillips will always have the satisfaction of being a poet.

MAETERLINCK

It was some years before M. Rostand became a familiar figure in the literature of the time that M. Maeterlinck appeared, and in a very different manner. Although a dramatist, he became known from the printed versions of his plays. It was in 1893 that translations of his earlier plays were published in America, and up to that time few in this country had ever heard of him, fewer were acquainted with his work, and none had ever seen his works upon the stage.

M. Maeterlinck was introduced to the wider world of letters under the cloud of comparison with Shakespeare. In America and England, at least, he was therefore received with a smile, as one of those humorous " movements " that flutter after each other like exquisite humming-birds through the Parisian world of letters. He had been called, by M. Octave Mirbeau in the *Figaro*, the Belgian Shakespeare. If he had been called the Ollendorf Shakespeare, the Puppetshow Shakespeare, or the Nursery Shakespeare, the name would have conveyed more accurately the impression which he

made at first. Some people became very angry at him: Max Nordau, a violent person of that day, called him a mental cripple, an idiotic driveller, an imbecile plagiarist. In general, people merely could not understand him at all, though they could see that some of his ways were funny. The well-known dialogue—people may not remember that it was quite as remarkable as the burlesques on it:

MALEINE

"Wait! I am beginning to see.

NURSE

Do you see the city?

MALEINE

No.

NURSE

And the castle?

MALEINE

No.

NURSE

It must be on the other side.

MALEINE

And yet . . . There is the sea.

NURSE

There is the sea?

MALEINE

Yes, yes; the sea. It is green.

NURSE

But then you ought to see the city. Let us look.

MALEINE

I see the lighthouse.

NURSE

You see the lighthouse?

MALEINE

Yes; I think it is the lighthouse.

NURSE

But, then, you ought to see the city.

MALEINE

I do not see the city.

NURSE

You do not see the city?

MALEINE

I do not see the city.

NURSE

Do you see the belfry?

MALEINE

No.

NURSE

This is extraordinary."

It was, very. There were undoubtedly things to be said for such dialogue; still it was funny, though not uproariously so. Then his princesses,

the babies with long hair: in one piece seven of them, each as infantile as all the others put together—no one takes them seriously. There was certainly a good deal that was humorous about M. Maeterlinck.

Nor did those who admired his work always hit upon just the right things. I will here mention myself, merely as an example of one who was much taken with M. Maeterlinck's first writings and yet was quite unable to see what has turned out to be the important thing in them. It chanced that another poet published about the same time a collection of dramatic pieces which resembled in some ways M. Maeterlinck's plays. It is not important whether or no they were imitations—probably not. But they were very like them, and I allow myself to quote a few lines written ten years ago about them.

It was under the title "The Antennæ of Poetry," and although the article itself showed little critical keenness or foresight, the title, as appeared later, was not a bad one. In my then view people like Maeterlinck were experimentalists, and fulfilled a useful function in poetry, or any other kind of art, being always on the lookout for things that were new, amusing, or edifying. And in what they offered, as in these cases, the interesting thing lay largely in the mode of ap-

preciation or presentation. "They are not conceived," I remarked, "in any approach to the classic manner, but in a manner ultra-romantic. For although the main emotion is always present before us, it is not presented simply, but always by means of a multitude of extremely fine and delicate nuances, indefinite hopes and fears, presentiments, imaginings and spiritual accompaniments, premonitions almost occult, faint ripples of emotion, little wavelets that skim over the waves of passion." Such to my mind was the characteristic of Mr. Sharpe's work, and of M. Maeterlinck's, too, except that the latter was more of a true dramatist, having greater power of drawing character.

It was not very clever of me to have found nothing more to say on the first five plays of M. Maeterlinck. That I should have entirely missed the real purport of his idea and been wholly taken up by the accessories, shows one of the practical difficulties that any one has to meet in dealing with a new effort of romanticism. What I noticed, the general tone and method, the character-drawing, all that amounted to nothing; M. Maeterlinck would have been himself without either quality.

One thing in the article, however, was, I believe, good, and that, as I have just said, was the title. Not in precisely the manner in which I conceived

it, but still in a way near enough to mention was the name significant. And this I say, not because I think so myself, but because almost the same phrase was afterward used by Maeterlinck in "Le Trésor des Humbles," published some time afterward, when he spoke of Novalis as "one of those extraordinary beings who are the antennæ of the human soul." That was not precisely the same thing, but it came rather near it. I was thinking of poetry, and Maeterlinck was thinking of life. As it turned out, that was the main line of his interest. People who considered him only as a curious experimenter in dramatic form were wrong about him, as also those who bothered their heads and their readers by talking about symbolism. Symbolist he may have been to some degree, and experimenter, and various other things. But in the main his interest was in philosophy, and has been ever since. He writes plays or studies the habits of bees, not merely as diversions, but as means of expression or attainment of something concerning the problem of life.

Before the publication of "Le Trésor des Humbles," M. Maeterlinck had been known as a philosophic man of letters. Every serious author is more or less philosophic; he has something to say of the general principles of life; he can hardly avoid having some philosophy, although he may

make no effort to state it systematically or even directly. In this new book, however, M. Maeterlinck became a literary philosopher and sketched for his readers his theory of life. The remarkable thing about the book was not that M. Maeterlinck should have a philosophy, but that he should try to express it definitely, for the main idea in style of his previous work had been that his thoughts were not such as could be definitely expressed, and indeed that idea was rather the foundation of this book. Still, for all that, by "Le Trésor des Humbles" M. Maeterlinck presented himself as a philosopher of a known school, and his work was seen to have a place in a known tendency of our time.

M. Maeterlinck now appeared to be a mystic. The name Mystic is a vague one and comprehends people as far apart as Plotinus and George Fox. Mystics are perhaps not much farther known than as they are known to be mystics. Still the word gives us some idea of a standpoint. A mystic I take to be a person who believes in the acquirement of truth by intuition rather than by any process of reason and argument. Thus the person who sees visions is a mystic, the person who has presentiments, the person who has something borne in upon him. Any one who believes in gaining truth by some process more direct than the ordinary

process of rational thought is, in so far, a mystic. There have been Christian mystics and mystics who were not Christians; the word has been very loosely used. M. Maeterlinck, like others in what was called in those days the neo-Christian movement, had been interested in Carlyle and Emerson, but also by those more commonly thought of as mystics—Eckhard, Ruysbroek, Boehme.

His particular view, however, as presented in "Le Trésor des Humbles," was not the mysticism of any of these. It was, I believe, his own. "It is idle," says his book at the beginning, "to think that by means of words, any real communication can ever pass from one man to another." How, then? By Silence: in the great silent moments of life, such moments as everybody knows, experienced in love, sport, work, religion, not necessarily moments of great emotion, but moments in which we seem to become aware of much. It is M. Maeterlinck's idea that in such moments we may become aware of much; indeed, that in such moments only do we get to know anything worth knowing. Those who attune themselves to such moments, who learn to use them, find deep meanings in presentiments, in the strange impression produced by a chance meeting or a look (the words are in the main Maeterlinck's own), in the secret laws of sympathy and antipathy, of elective

and instinctive affinities, in the overwhelming influence of the thing that had not been spoken.

The precise view of the universe which M. Maeterlinck held to result from such moments, or from such receptivity, need not be stated just here. What is of interest now is to show the dramatic side of it. It is obvious that such an idea has dramatic possibilities. In the matter of conveying an idea without saying anything—by the secret means of sympathy, instinctive affinity, strange impression—Mme. Sarah Bernhardt would seem to be a mystic of the first water. It was not precisely such powers, however, that M. Maeterlinck had in mind when he thought of the drama as a means for the expression of his idea. What he had in mind he said in an essay on "The Tragical in Daily Life," a short statement which put a whole dramatic art into a nutshell. For a philosopher of M. Maeterlinck's type the essay is singularly definite and logical in its arrangement.

First, as to subject: must it always be some violence? "Does the soul flower only on nights of storm? Hitherto, doubtless, this idea has prevailed." But a new idea is becoming known, and he turns to painting to show that Marius triumphing over the Cimbrians, or the assassination of the Duke of Guise, is no longer the type. The painter "will place on his canvas a house lost in the heart

of the country, an open door at the end of a passage, a face and hands at rest, and by these simple images will he add to our consciousness of life, which is a possession that it is no more possible to lose." Nor will the drama deal with extraordinary convulsions of life; why should the dramatist imagine that we shall delight in witnessing the very same acts that brought joy to the hearts of the barbarians, with whom murder, outrage, and treachery were matters of daily occurrence?

So much for subject: next, M. Maeterlinck spoke of action, or, rather, the lack of it—and presented his view of a "static theatre," namely, a drama in which there was no action at all, a view which followed naturally from his conception of subject, which suggests the question, Are these motives suitable to the drama? It has only been shown that they are possible in painting, which is something very different. It is under this head that one comes on the *locus classicus* of the static dramaturgy.

"I admire Othello, but he does not appear to me to live the august daily life of Hamlet, who has time to live, inasmuch as he does not act. Othello is admirably jealous. But is it not perhaps an ancient error to imagine that it is at the moments when this passion, or others of equal violence, pos-

sesses us, that we live our truest lives? I have grown to believe that an old man, seated in his armchair, waiting patiently, with his lamp beside him; giving unconscious ear to all the eternal laws that reign about his house, interpreting, without comprehending, the silence of doors and windows and the quivering voice of the light, submitting with bent head to the presence of his soul and his destiny—an old man who conceives not that all the powers of this world, like so many heedful servants, are mingling and keeping vigil in his room, who suspects not that the very sun itself is supporting in space the little table against which he leans, or that every star in heaven and every fibre of the soul are directly concerned in the movement of an eyelid that closes, or a thought that springs to birth—I have grown to believe that he, motionless as he is, does yet live in reality a deeper, more human, and more universal life than the lover who strangles his mistress, the captain who conquers in battle, or 'the husband who avenges his honour.'"

And finally as to the dialogue. It is the common opinion that the words of a play should be directed especially to the action of the play, and, theoretically, one would be likely to say that there should not be any word at all that should not get the action ahead. M. Maeterlinck pronounces to

the contrary. The only words that count in his view are those that at first seem quite useless. It is the words which are caused by the demands and necessities of the case that are as insignificant as the action itself. Who thinks that the best conversation at dinner consists in asking for the salt, or saying you will have some bread? Here the only words of high worth are the useless ones. So in the drama, says M. Maeterlinck, who, by the way, does not use so material a figure. It is the super-essential meaning that we must open our ears for; it is that which we must get if we are to get anything at all.

All of which is very systematically reasoned out on a basis not at all difficult to understand.

What, then, were the dramas made upon this basis, so different from the common theory of the day? A theme from the simplest daily life, an action where nothing happens, a dialogue where the only words of value are the meaningless ones. One will readily suppose that any drama made on such principles will excite all the astonishment that was shown on the first appearance of the plays of Maeterlinck.

It will be a surprise to those who do not remember, to learn that the only plays of M. Maeterlinck's first publication that were received with scoffing were those in which he did not carry out his

principles, so that people could recognise them. "La Princesse Maleine" and "Les Sept Princesses" were the two of his first four dramas that excited great derision. But "Les Aveugles" and "L'Intrus"—where theme, action, and dialogue follow his own ideas—were received with respect.

The first-mentioned plays do not, ostensibly at least, carry out M. Maeterlinck's ideas. What is the action of "La Princesse Maleine"? Marius and the Duke of Guise shrink into insignificance in comparison with this little lady who goes through battles and murders to sudden death. How is it with the "Seven Princesses"? If their souls do not flourish in a night of storm it is certainly in a period of strange agitations. In these two plays we have nothing simple, natural, normal; all is as wild as the delights of our despised ancestors.

But in "L'Intrus" it is not so. It is not a remarkable scene, only a family around the evening table. Nothing remarkable occurs; indeed, nothing at all occurs, that we can see. Nothing is said of any importance save as we happen to perceive the importance of chance words, and yet what a powerful little piece it is. How it goes on the stage I do not know (nor much care till I may chance to see it), but one cannot read it without feeling its power. "Les Aveugles" is not

quite so consistent; it is not a matter of ordinary occurrence for a priest to lead a party of the blind whom he is overseeing, into a wood, and then suddenly die. But the piece is almost as effective as the other.

These two pieces made their impression with perfect sureness, even though conceived according to the curious theories we have just noted. It is true that the ideas which they conveyed were not hard to grasp: the approach of death, the position of humanity with a dead church. There may have been ideas signified in "La Princesse Maleine" and "Les Sept Princesses," but they could not be so readily imagined. Yet M. Maeterlinck's theory was, in a measure, justified by these two failures, for whatever ideas these plays may have meant to convey was lost in the extravagance of the subject and the action, even though the dialogue was as simple as in the others.

Indeed it is now apparent that, in spite of theory and in spite of failure, these two were the typical pieces. The others presented, curiously, it is true, but by a symbolism by no means uncommon, ideas that could readily be expressed in other ways, and have often been so expressed. "There is a stillness of death," says the Father in "L'Intrus," and reminds us that it is all based upon a common and everyday conception, and that

it represents no new truth and indeed no truth at all. The ideas are common and have been often expressed. It was M. Maeterlinck's desire to present ideas that had not been expressed, that could not be expressed by common means. Let us imagine that he wished to convey something in "La Princesse Maleine" and in "Les Sept Princesses"; it is not necessary, nor at present useful, to try to determine what it was, but the very nature of the plays leads us to the belief that it was not anything that could be conveyed by usual dramatic methods.

With this idea in mind we may turn to "Pélléas et Mélisande." We shall find it in form at least, like the plays just mentioned, something contrary to the theories of dramatic art which the author had put forward not long before. But as those theories were founded upon a definite and intelligible system (however we may disagree with it), we may be sure that the opposition is but superficial. "Pélléas et Mélisande" is a play of love and revenge, like various others; it has a sufficiently definite action, like an ordinary play; it has a dialogue which carries that action along, as the common stage dialogue does. It would seem that M. Maeterlinck had persuaded himself that what appeared to be characteristic in "L'Intrus" and "Les Aveugles" was not essen-

tial, that he could gain his effects in the manner of a conventional play. He therefore has ordinary subject, action, dialogue. If we would get at his idea, then, we must neglect these conventionalities and see what is left.

The story of a man whose wife falls in love with his brother is not essential; if it were we should suppose that M. Maeterlinck had something essential in common with Stephen Phillips, which would probably lead us into neglect of the chief virtues of each. The strange region of romance with its castles and caverns, its midnight meetings and violent murderings, that too is not essential; if it were, we might imagine that we had to do with a man like M. Rostand or Hauptmann, though this is pre-Raphaelite romance and theirs is romance of very different kind. But the story, the setting of "Pélléas et Mélisande" have too much in common with other plays for us to think that they are of prime importance with M. Maeterlinck. They are the very things he pronounces to be useless. If we neglect these matters, what is left?

Into a dark, and old, and melancholy world, a world not utterly without gleams of sunshine and a flower or two, but still constrained to its gloom by its own people, and by the people of ages long past, into such a world comes a spirit of beauty from a faraway and unknown place. Here

in this gloomy world are such people as we know: a powerful, active man, a child, an old man whose wisdom has taught him only that the riddle of the universe is unsolvable, and a young man. Whatever the relations of these people may have been, they are disturbed by the newcomer; the new charm and beauty bring delight but also discord. It is the young man that especially understands this new companion; the feeling of others is but external and superficial, his understanding is vital. But conditions are such that they cannot be to each other what they might, and both perish; leaving the world much as it was before, save that there is a remembrance left of the exquisite and beautiful one, who will some day take the place now made vacant.

It is not very difficult to see what there is in that, —all that need be said is that M. Maeterlinck does not deem it necessary to make it very obvious. He is content to give us his drama—there must be some action, characters, dialogue—and to suggest to us continually matters of wisdom and destiny that cannot be put in straightforward words without losing some of their truth; to present to us the possibility of a life of the spirit which shall be fuller and more beautiful than the life to which we are accustomed. Is it then beautiful to love your brother's wife? we may ask. M. Maeterlinck

presumably believes that to love any one is beautiful. He presents spiritual things by common means; he wants to convey the idea of a love which overrides the barriers of the intercourse to which we are accustomed. The barrier of marriage seems to be the one which commonly occurs to him, but in itself that is but an accident, resulting perhaps from lack of imagination, perhaps from other causes. He wants to present to us an intercourse of the spirit and by the very nature of the case he must depict it in some physical form; in just what form is not important.

But let us not rush upon the notion that we must seize the mystical meaning, bear it forth and feast upon it alone. The symbolism has its story which is necessary to it. Why does the soul have a body? We may not be sure, but we know that since it has, we must admit it to consideration. M. Maeterlinck's play is a play even without regard to any symbolism at all. "As it was presented yesterday," wrote somebody when Mrs. Patrick Campbell gave it in London, "at the Royalty Theatre, you felt the poetry of idea, the delicacy of suggestion, the rarity and remoteness of it all. What does it all mean? Anything beyond what lies upon the surface? Perhaps, but at a first hearing, at any rate, you are content to enjoy the beauty, the romance of Maeterlinck's creation."

We may enjoy the externals thoroughly, even though the essential continually haunts us with a vague sense of heightened significance.

M. Maeterlinck's following plays may be readily appreciated after " Pélléas et Mélisande "; we have the same externality and the same suggestion of spiritual life and conversation. In " Alladine et Palamides " we have the same contrast between gloomy castle and bright world, the same conflict of lovers with the rigidity of common life. The story is not precisely the same as in " Pélléas et Mélisande," but there is quite as much love, jealousy, and death. These we need not wish away, as Keats says, but we should take them for what they are worth, and fix our desire upon the spiritual content, the super-expressive element to which we shall respond only by calming ourselves of outward thrills and emotions. " Aglavaine et Sélysette " is not very different at bottom, though the mise en scène is not quite the same.

In " La Mort de Tintagiles," however, we have something rather different in form and in motive. It is a very simple and affecting little play, although less theoretically consistent with M. Maeterlinck's dramaturgy than others. The child in the grip of the dark and powerful queen, the devoted sisters, their watch and their failure, Ygraine's desperation and revolt,—these are

almost too typical, too symbolic. To present a symbol is nothing new, even when done with consummate sensitiveness and mastery of feeling; it is a language not unlike the metaphors of every day. What M. Maeterlinck seemed to be feeling for was the suggestion of much by means of little or even nothing. And in spite of the beauty of this little piece, I cannot feel in it the elusiveness that I have thought it M. Maeterlinck's design to convey. Of the other plays "Intérieur" is not unlike "L'Intrus" in its general character, and "Sœur Béatrice" is rather after the fashion of some other things. I will confess honestly that I have quite failed, however, to get at it, except so far as the obvious exoteric proceedings are concerned. But I believe we need not pause on these plays, for there are others more important.

"Ariane et Barbe Bleue" is a significant little piece because it is a sort of commentary. There are castles and caverns as in the other plays, but at the moment that M. Maeterlinck diverges from the nursery tale we see at a flash much. When Ariane looks at the keys which Bluebeard has given her, and at once selects the forbidden key, with the calm "That is the only one of value," one can see at once, not allegory, not symbolism, but that M. Maeterlinck throughout is assured that in prospecting for truth it is useless to go

where people have gone before and found nothing. He searches in those very places which are forbidden by convention, or authority, or fear of ridicule, or hope of praise, just because the things which were allowed to all have been explored by all, to no great effect so far as his own interests were concerned. That which is permitted is of no value; it will only distract one's attention. If one regards the prohibitions of the world, one will go no further than the world. So Ariane at once makes for the forbidden door. Her nurse opens various other doors that are not forbidden and finds heaps of diamonds, pearls, rubies, and other trivial things. But Ariane opens the forbidden door and finds—all M. Maeterlinck's heroines. She finds them in a dark cavern which she makes light by letting in the sun. They are dazzled at first. When they can see, they long to go to the woods, the fields, the ocean. They look upon each other, and when they see each other as they are they think it very strange. Still, when they gather in the hall of the jewels and Bluebeard is delivered to them, they cannot make up their minds to break their bonds. They care for him till he returns to consciousness. Then Ariane says that she must go away. Nor will she ever come back. One after another: Mélisande, Sélysette, Ygraine, Bellangère, Alladine refuse to accompany her, and

she goes forth alone, leaving them in the hall of jewels.

Somehow one cannot take all that seriously, but in spite of the humour that cannot be denied (indeed it should surely be appreciated) there is something well worth having. *Ex oris infantium;* children have not the wisdom of us elder folks, of course. But we do not deny the frequent value of their clearsightedness. I confess that M. Maeterlinck's long-haired ladies had appeared to me not wholly in keeping with the Treasure of the Humble, Wisdom and Destiny, the Buried Temple. When I read "Ariane et Barbe Bleue" I began to see a glimmering of light on the dark river.

When you begin on "Monna Vanna" you are all at sea again. Here is no symbolism, certainly, whatever there be elsewhere, and no realism either. "Monna Vanna" is not conceived for the static theatre, nor for the romantic theatre that we have become accustomed to. It is a play of the Italian Renaissance, and in externals might be by anybody. If it were by anybody else, one could read it easily enough; but being by M. Maeterlinck, we feel that there must be more than meets the eye.

The first accustomed figure in a world of ordinary strangers is the old man Marco. He has the air of calm wisdom with which we are familiar from M. Maeterlinck's philosophical writings; he

is representative of eternal justice; if not of common sense, yet of that sense wherein we "see into the life of things" and which greets us so often if not in M. Maeterlinck's plays, at least in his philosophy. We recognise it and respond to it. In this play, however, his wisdom is not generally recognised; it is indeed intensely irritating to others on the stage. Marco brings to the captain of beleaguered Pisa the offer of the Florentine besieger; let his wife, Monna Vanna, go to the tent of the conqueror in mantle and sandals only, and the town shall be spared. Guido is outraged; Marco imperturbable. "Why do you consider if you have the right to deliver a whole people to death in order to delay for a few hours an evil which is inevitable; for when the city is taken Vanna will fall into the power of the conqueror." The Maeterlinckian wisdom is not understood, save by Vanna herself, who immediately accepts the offer. Guido is indignant and outraged and we certainly must sympathise with him, but how much less wise he is than the other.

When Monna Vanna comes to the tent of Prinzivalle she learns that they have met before; he met her as a child and has loved her for twenty years during all the rush and change of a captain of condottieri. There is something noble in such devotion and Vanna receives it at its true worth.

It is something different from everyday sentiment and feelings. They return together to Pisa.

When they get there it is not remarkable that Guido does not appreciate this noble love as his wife has done. Guido is of the world and cannot understand that people will not do as seems most natural to him. Marco alone appreciates; for the rest no effort can make a really fine piece of Quixotic idealism seem for a moment possible. Those who want to live at a higher level must be satisfied with very few companions.

But I believe M. Maeterlinck succeeds in putting us on his side. Real justice appears beautiful in Marco; real morality in Vanna; real love in Prinzivalle. Such people will understand each other even if everybody else holds them worse than fools or knaves.

The best commentator on M. Maeterlinck, or at least the keenest, is M. Maeterlinck himself. "Joyzelle" is full of explanation. For the moment we may neglect its dramatic character and take it for criticism. Merlin has gained power because he has found Arielle, he has "realised his interior force, the forgotten power that slumbers in every soul." This is the main thing; it is not the common, everyday intellect, will, emotion that will give us an apprehension of a reality that stands all tests; it is something that we are con-

scious of in silence as in "The Treasure of the Humble," in ecstasy as in "Pélléas et Mélisande," in wisdom and justice as in "Monna Vanna." To those who do not know, Merlin is a bad magician, just as Marco is a heartless philosopher; but he has only "done a little sooner what they will do later," for the age is on the dawn of a spiritual enlightenment. The world waits for clear day; a few young men now dream dreams, a few old men see visions, but the time is approaching when the clouds shall lift that now hang within a little of the horizon. In the play Merlin waits for his son who is to attain by love; who will achieve more than his father just because he is to win by love what the other has gained by knowledge. Joyzelle is love, unalloyed, incorruptible, perfect. She denies everything that contradicts her intuition; like Ariane she perceives that the very forbidding of anything renders it necessary; like Monna Vanna she scruples at no trial. Unlike most people she cannot be influenced by something that has no relation to her.

This is the enforcement of M. Maeterlinck's fundamental idea; the laws of life are not to be deduced from the apparent circumstances of life; they are to be appreciated by intuition; they are therefore best known, not by words, by deeds, by that which can be seen and heard, but in silence,

not actively but passively. Such communication with the absolute gives one a certain kind of disposition of which the motive power is love and the directing power wisdom, but of these the latter is the servant of the former.

Such is an abstract statement of the ideas which are at the bottom of M. Maeterlinck's work. They are fundamental conceptions, however, and on them is based a dramatic art which does not seem to have varied very much from the original statement. In "The Double Garden" he gives us a more recent view in commenting on the drama of the present. The action is still unimportant. He does not still insist on the principle that there should be no external action, but the particular acts are not of importance. Pélléas may love his brother's wife, Monna Vanna may go to the tent of a victorious mercenary, Joyzelle may emulate Judith,—certainly all the events have the same character, perhaps but a Gallic accident,—but in themselves the acts are entirely indifferent and might be something else. The dialogue is still simple. It does not continue the effort at realism which people used to think so funny, but it still aims to suggest rather than to state. It carries on the action, but its true purpose is to disseminate communication of a super-essential character. In fact the whole aim is to attune the modern mind

to an appreciation of the mystical, to get it to be direct and to disregard circumstance.

A good deal in M. Maeterlinck's dramas has been held to be symbolic. I cannot attach much importance to the opinion. A symbol is not an effective mode of expression. Unless a symbol in long process of time, or otherwise, has attached itself to our emotional life it is rarely of much importance. The hearth, the flag, the cross, these doubtless are symbols, and of immense power, and further they are symbols having what is practically accidental connection with the thing they symbolise. Hearths are sadly uncommon nowadays, flags present either a fancy or a convention of a forgotten heraldry, and the cross is an immense power even when its historic character is forgotten. These symbols have power over us, it is true, but chiefly because their extraordinary and universal acceptance has associated them inextricably with our moral nature. The symbols of men of letters rarely have this power unless there be some real likeness at bottom, as in the conception of a progress from this world to the world to come. Where there is no such reality the symbol is fanciful and has little lasting power. The symbols of Hawthorne, the scarlet letter, Zenobia's flower, have meaning only by the moral vitality which they express.

A symbol, if it be nothing but a symbol, merely serves to mystify, to obscure. Arthur Rimbaud's idea that *A* symbolised blue (or whatever colour it was) and the other vowels, other colours, would obscure matters if any one paid any attention to it, because, although people do attach conceptions of colour to sounds or letters, they differ very greatly about it, so that symbolism of that sort is not expressive, but obscuring. M. Maeterlinck has no desire to be obscure: in his essays he tries to state very simply and directly his ideas on a very inexpressible matter. I remember no symbols properly so called in his philosophical writings, though there are figures for the moment here and there.

The figures and circumstances in his plays, with a few exceptions, are not symbolic; they are examples, types, concrete cases, which are things very different from symbols. They have reality, they have a real marvellousness, to use his quotation from Reaumer, instead of a marvellousness that is changeful and imaginary. M. Maeterlinck himself says that he has long ceased to find in this world any marvel more interesting or more beautiful than truth, or at least than man's effort to know it. And so in his book "Les Abeilles," although there is the constant idea in mind that in the hive we have a form of life that may give

us some knowledge of human life, there is nowhere any fancy as we may call it, but wherever an analogy is perceived it is presented very simply and with abundant explanation and limitation. "Let us not hasten to draw from these facts conclusions as to the life of man." Yet there is throughout that singularly interesting book the constant feeling of an analogy that is rarely expressed. The bees act under the impulsion of a power external to themselves, it would seem, to which we cannot give a better name than the spirit of the hive. They are aware of this spirit and they obey it: but it does not appear that they know it intellectually or obey it consciously. M. Maeterlinck's representative figures are like the bees, they are unconsciously under the domination of the spirit of the race, of the destiny of humanity, of the wisdom of life. The feeling leads them to strange acts, it is true, but it does lead them. Maeterlinck presents them to us and that in a form in which we may sympathise with them. That is his work as a dramatist. It is not his business to preach either by symbol or sermon. He is content to present the essential things of life as he recognises them. He presents them in forms in which, as nearly as may be, those things which cannot be spoken can be made evident.

OUR IDEA OF TRAGEDY

Some years ago Mr. Courtney delivered three lectures at the Royal Institution which he published under the title, "The Idea of Tragedy." So far as offering any explanation of the power of tragedy in this world, he was not very successful. The essence of tragedy, thought Mr. Courtney, lay in the conflict presented. But every one knows that conflict in itself is not tragic: as commonly thought of, conflict may be tragic and may not. Mr. Courtney spoke of the Attic tragedy as presenting the conflict of the human will against fate, of Shakespearean tragedy as presenting the conflict of the human will with the laws that guide the universe. When he got to modern times, however, his courage failed him: "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" was his ideal, and he saw very clearly that there was no conflict there to make tragedy. So he abandoned his idea and took a new one: inspired by Ibsen, he added that in modern tragedy the main idea is failure to achieve one's mission.

The first of these ideas was by no means new. It will be found in many places in æsthetic litera-

ture. Let me quote a statement of it not so common as some others: it has in it some very interesting criticism of poetry:

"Say what meant the woes
By Tantalus entailed upon his race,
And the dark sorrows of the line of Thebes?
Fictions in form, but in their substance truth,
Tremendous truths! familiar to the men
Of long-past times, nor obsolete in ours.
Exchange the shepherd's frock of native grey
For robes with regal purple fringed; convert
The crook into a sceptre; give the pomp
Of circumstance, and here the tragic Muse
Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills,
The generations are prepared; the pangs,
The internal pangs are ready; the dread strife
Of poor humanity's afflicted will
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

In that passage Wordsworth expresses his idea in almost exactly the words of Mr. Courtney, and says, too, that this conflict between will and fate, the subject of Greek tragedy, is still a power ready to the hand of the poet of the day.

The other notion of tragedy, too, may be found in the poetry of our day, notably in that of

Browning, whose tragedy, when he presents us with tragedy, generally consists, not so much in strife, as in failure to do that which was possible, that which one's best nature demanded. It is of this form of tragedy he writes in the "Lost Leader," where Wordsworth served him as example as he has served me with precept.

But all this seems to me a little superficial. Granted that tragedy consists sometimes of a conflict, a strife, whether between the human will and fate, or between humanity and natural law; sometimes of a failure to fulfil one's mission, to be what one might be, to "live one's own life," according to the phrase of the day or the day before yesterday,—it is still a question why these matters should affect us as tragedy does affect us. That is my interest: literature or art, tragedy or any other element in it is vitally important to us, only as it affects, touches, moves us. And any theory of tragedy, to take any real part in our thinking and feeling, must make clearer to us why we are moved, or how, in order that we may appreciate, in the tragedies that we see, the things that are really strong and true.

It may first, however, be a matter of interest to some unsophisticated souls who have no theory on the subject, and have often enjoyed tragedies keenly without any, to know why we should wish

to discuss the idea of tragedy in the drama of our day. Why the idea of tragedy rather than the idea of farce or of comedy or any other idea? Or even why talk of such abstractions at all?

Let me explain why nobody should be without a theory of tragedy. I may add that I have already presented the matter to the public, to the acceptance, unfortunately, of no one that I ever heard of, and to the utter rejection of one competent authority on the drama. If I do not endeavour to controvert the opinions of this latter learned critic, it is not because I do not respect them. It is because the spectacle of two academic theorists disputing on the matter of tragedy—two budge doctors of the Stoic fur disputing over the fit of a buskin—would be inharmoniously humorous. So I must bid her farewell (ave atque vale!), my fair theorist with her "tragic blame" and so forth. I shall never convert her—perhaps no one else—but I shall enjoy tragedy all the same in my own way, more, I hope, than it is possible to do in hers.

We may well enough discuss the idea of tragedy in the drama of our day, or of any other, because by the pretty general consent of mankind, or that part of it that cares for letters, tragedy is regarded as the highest and noblest literary form. A great tragedy stands higher in the estimation

of the world than a great lyric or a great novel. Aristotle considered tragedy the crowning achievement of the human intellect, though the Greeks in general gave the first place to Homer. The English world considers Shakespeare the greatest author of all times, though Keats thought that the epic was the truly great form and Poe the lyric. These are differences of opinion and the question is not very important: some of the world's masterpieces are tragedies and some are not. In the drama, however, tragedy easily holds the most important place. We like to laugh at a farce, to be thrilled at a melodrama, to be charmed at a comedy,—and we may not like a tragedy as much as these things. But generally people admit that it is greater. It may be too great for us at some given time,—there will be plenty of evenings when we had rather go to some bright comedy or some exciting melodrama, or even to the vaudeville or the music hall, if it comes to that, as it often does, —than to any tragedy ever written. But that is just as we do not always want to read the very best literature, do not always want to be hearing classic music, do not always want to be looking at the Sistine Madonna, say; do not always want to wear our best clothes and sit in the parlour. We acknowledge pretty generally that tragedy is the great thing, though we may not be always in

the mood for it. Few persons of taste can experience profoundly the emotion of a great tragedy and hold that any other dramatic form is equally great.

This theoretic view we might present on the basis of current facts. That is, practically all the great plays of which we have been speaking are tragedies. We may not feel quite sure just what is conveyed by the term tragedy, but we can generally tell one when we see it, if only by the simple fact that the chief figure dies at the end, or at least comes to an end in the particular world in which we know him, which is much the same thing. There is nothing essentially noble in death, I suppose, nor is death on the stage always tragic, but we do have this particular ending in "Cyrano" and "L'Aiglon," in "Die versunkene Glocke" and "Es lebe das Leben," in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," in "Pélléas et Mélisande," though not in "Candida," presumably.

And if the greatest of our modern plays have the same purpose as the greatest plays of the old Athenian days, of the great Elizabethan time, of the French classic period; why, it is worth our while to spend a time in studying out their essential characteristic, if it be only that we may be sure to gain from these plays the highest form of pleasure, that we do not get too much interested

in minor matters, but find out in them what is best.

For it is well to remark that there is no especial importance in the abstract definition of the term "tragedy" or of any other term in æsthetics. That is in itself a matter of slight moment for us. There is, it is true, intense pleasure in speculating on æsthetic subjects for those who like it (as I do), just as there is intense pleasure in speculating over any other point in psychology, or any other science. But that is something for the lover of speculation, not for the lover of literature: it has, as such, no more to do with the appreciation of the drama than any other kind of speculation. Many people have an intuitive delight at fine things on the stage, which is far more intense than the reasoned pleasure of a cut-and-dried critic. It is not for the importance of the definition that it is worth while to go over the subject.

No, it is for a more practical reason. It is that we may have a notion of the true sources of pleasure, or, rather, of the sources of the truest pleasure. A dozen people will go to the same play and enjoy a dozen different things. One had eyes for the costumes, another for the stage-settings, another was carried away by the sweet smile of the actress, another got "a great moral lesson" (I suppose there must be such people, or the matter

would not figure in the advertisements), another was delighted at the careful dramatic construction, another enjoyed the fine delivery of the poet's lines (that couldn't have been in America, unless perhaps it was the Chorus in "Henry V."), another was immensely impressed somehow in a way he could not explain. If we are one of these and talk to some of the others, and find that we have really missed something worth while,—or, to put it more simply, if we find, on reading a criticism the next morning, that there was more than met our eye,—why, then we may feel as though we had not got from the play all that was there. And if we go again we shall perhaps aim to get the true thrill, and look out especially for it. Our friend who said of "Cyrano de Bergerac" that "The most popular play of the final decade of the century presents no problem whatever, and avoids any criticism of life," was one who looked in "Cyrano" for problems and criticism of life, because he thought that a great play ought to have those things. A problem, in the sense in which people say that Pinero deals with problems, "Cyrano" has not, and a good thing, too. And as for a criticism of life, it certainly does not have that in potted form. Those things it does not have; what it does have is better worth while than either. But the point is that such a critic does

not get from "Cyrano" even that which it has, because he looks for something it had not, which, to his mind, was the real thing.

Now with tragedy it is commonly supposed that there is something especial about it which influences all men; that human nature is such as to be susceptible to this something, which appears in all sorts of forms, always different, but always having upon the souls of men the same moving effect. Just what this something is, the critics have found it hard to say. Just what is the moving effect that it has, has been occasion of various explanation. But it is the pretty general opinion that in all tragedy there is a single something, and that people are and have been affected by it in much the same way. It is not necessary that this should be the case. The Athenians were very different from us. It might be that there were things about their tragedies that have no especial effect upon us, and that we enjoy things to which they paid small attention. With the Elizabethan drama there is no doubt of the matter; Shakespeare's audiences cared greatly for things which are even distasteful to us, and we enjoy things which they hardly noticed. But these things are minor matters; the real tragedy is the same to-day that it was in Shakespeare's day, that it was in the time of the Greeks. If, then, we see some

great and common quality in all great tragedy, if we see some great and common quality in human nature now and two thousand years ago, and if the common quality of great tragedy seems to bear some relation to the quality of human nature, far more if it seem to be a natural cause of it,— why, then we may well believe that the success of a great tragedy, the existence in it of a lasting appeal to mankind, comes not from accident nor from art, but from the presence of the truly tragic quality which moved the Athenians in the days when Æschylus presented "Prometheus Bound," which was felt when "Hamlet" was just put on the stage, just as it is felt to-day in not a few pieces which for minor reasons we cannot compare with those masterpieces of the human mind.

To talk over this question is to attune ourselves to it. It is not a matter of definition which one may read in a book and learn by heart. It is a matter of looking into one thing or another and trying to feel keenly what is there. It is doubtless the case that some people feel artistic beauty keenly with no sense of why or wherefore, and it is probably the case also that other people feel artistic beauty, just as keenly but in a somewhat different way, with more consciousness of causes and reasons. Both kinds of enjoyment are good

if both be intense and genuine. A person who enjoys keenly, with no idea of why, has usually more artistic appreciation than the person who thinks much or reasons. But both may enjoy more keenly by training, or, in this case, by talking or thinking over the matters in question and discussing the characteristics that are of interest.

The first and simplest idea of tragedy is of a play with an unhappy ending. That is not very abstruse, but it is characteristic of all tragedies—Greek, Elizabethan, French, modern—what more would you have?

Why, this much more, a knowledge of why an unhappy ending should be pleasing to us, why we should think it delightful to see an unhappy ending,—in fact, whether every unhappy ending is pleasing to us,—why any one should call the writing of a play with an unhappy ending the top achievement of the human intellect? In other words, is not this unhappy ending something necessary to tragedy, perhaps, but not the essential characteristic? In logic a quality always to be found, and yet not essential, is called an inseparable accident. For instance, it is in England an inseparable accident with a clergyman that he wears a white tie, and yet this costume has no essential connection with his holy calling. Perhaps the true and essential tragic quality necessitates

an unhappy ending as far as the chief character is concerned, and yet that unhappy ending is not itself the essentially tragic thing. In fact this is almost necessarily the case, for in a tragedy we feel the tragic quality long before the end, and therefore it cannot be the end only that has the tragic quality.

And, even if it could rationally be the case, the unhappiness of the end would hardly be a sufficient explanation, for we should still want to know why the end seemed to us unhappy. A tragic ending is often the death of the hero. But death is not necessarily unhappy—in a large way, that is. To those immediately concerned it is always a cause of unhappiness, it is true. But death is a necessity, and we would not, even if we could, avoid it; even M. Metchnikoff agrees to that. It is the natural, the appropriate end of our life here. It is often not tragic at all, but triumphant, glorious. Why is such and such a death unhappy? The word merely begs the question and puts us on a new inquiry no easier than the old.

So those who like to speculate on such matters have thought of other reasons, and a good many other definitions and descriptions of the idea of tragedy have been put forward. I shall not deal with them for many reasons, one of which is that it would take a whole book instead of the tail-end

of one, and another, that it is more amusing to hear a man talk of what he thinks himself, than of what other people think.

It is the general opinion—and a very natural one—that, in trying to determine the nature of the tragic quality, we must find something which does not belong to the drama alone. We use the word "tragic" far too widely to confine ourselves to anything to be found only in dramatic form. If it were for no other reason than that the drama represents life, we might say that whatever is effective in a large way in the drama will be an element effective in life as well. But then, also, we use the word, half figuratively perhaps, but still broadly. In all forms of literature we have what we may call tragedy, and in life as well. Indeed, if we were going into a general theoretical consideration, we ought to go far beyond the narrow limits of the drama; all literature, all art we ought to examine, history, life we ought to consider to find the essential of the tragic quality.

Looking on the matter, without confining ourselves necessarily to literature, tragedy seems to depend largely upon a sense on our part of insoluble mystery or strangeness, in some action or bit of life that we are viewing. Such a sense everybody must have very often had in viewing life, art, literature. Let us consider a case or

two; take the example of Heinrich the Bell-caster, he whose love of art led him away from his home to a mountain-top; led him to desert his wife for a mountain-spirit; led him finally to that point where his wife sought refuge beneath the waters of the mountain tarn, while his mountain-spirit vanished away to the home of the Nickelmann. Here would be a tragedy entirely aside from Heinrich's dying. It would be a tragedy surely, even if he were left alive, because we can see how life would continue with him. And why a tragedy? Can we analyse it? For one thing, we may note that we have here a pretty general motive, the contest between the life of art and the everyday life of home, the contest that finds expression nowadays in all sorts of forms, notably in d'Annunzio's "Giaconda" and Sudermann's "Heimat," or in the figure of Marchbanks in "Candida." The thing is this: here is Art, the pursuit of the Beautiful, the care-charmer, the teacher, the great amuser of mankind, the recuperator of the weary by ever-changing delight—art is all that, is it not? a very necessary factor in life, I am sure. And yet how often does this very necessary factor jar and collide with and crush that other very necessary factor, namely, the simple, plain, good life of the home, of morality, of every day. And *vice versa.* Is there not an instinctive contrast

between the idea of the artist and the idea of the father, the citizen, the respectable everyday man? There certainly is, although we may get over it by thinking we ought to, and that there should be any such contrast, that there should be a conflict, as it were, between these two important elements in life, that they should seem inharmonious, is surely, to me at least, a very strange thing, a matter not yet solved and made plain to us. Hence pictures of this strife, if they be broad and general, give us the tragic element. If they be well done they impress us powerfully, because they thrust us into a region where we are afraid, where we cannot reckon upon results, where we cannot answer the pressing questions which come, but have simply to acknowledge that we do not know.

Not that everything that we do not understand is tragic. There are many things that we do not understand at all, although we always behave as though we did, namely, those things that are a great joy to us. The nature of love, for instance, is very imperfectly understood by us, yet happy love is not tragic, because, though we do not penetrate to its depths, it seems all right and precisely what it should be. It does not seem to us a mystery, it seems very natural and necessary, and, indeed, when we get used to it, an everyday affair. The normal course of love is like the normal course

of many other things: the question of comprehension, of understanding, simply never comes up in regard to them, we do not try to understand them, we see that they work to the advantage of mankind, that they are in harmony with life as we look at it, that we could not make them better in any detail, and so, whether we grasp them intellectually or not, we do not trouble ourselves about them. And yet sometimes even happy love, since we have spoken of it, has its tragic element. I spoke a few pages back of Mr. Sothern's presentation of "Romeo and Juliet." One of the most beautiful moments in the play, and yet the most pitiful and the most tragic, was that scene at the Capulet feast, where these two who loved at first sight first are conscious that they love. It is not that we know what is about to happen to them that gives us a thrill. No, it is simply the strange sight of these two, their souls in their eyes, moving mechanically in the world of masquers, Juliet in the dance, Romeo by the wall, with life to them a totally different thing from what it was a moment before. Certainly a very strange conception, and well calculated to stagger any one without great indifference or great confidence in the order of Nature and in her always proceeding in the very best way. Still, as a rule, such situations are not conceived of as tragic.

Another great mass of circumstances is not tragic, even though it presents us with most noteworthy inconsistencies or incongruities. This is where the circumstances are trivial or superficial. Matters of this sort are not tragic, but comic. The foundation of the Ludicrous is often said to be the incongruous, and the incongruous is that which for the moment is inconsistent. And the inconsistent is something that we cannot for the moment harmonise in our thoughts or render comprehensible. The ludicrous often, indeed always, depends upon the point of view. Thus a dignified gentleman walking on the street steps on the ice or upon a piece of orange-peel and falls down. It is very funny to some people, but the man himself rarely perceives the humour of it. It is incongruous, the contrast between his dignity and his lack of dignity. For the moment the mind of the spectator refuses to correlate the ideas. But in a minute the situation becomes perfectly natural; pitiable, but not tragic. Experience steps in and tells us that there is nothing incongrous or inconsistent. And the matter ceases to be ludicrous. If you come home and tell some one that you saw a dignified man fall down upon the ice, you cannot, probably, make it seem funny to anybody else because, although it is incongruous to them as it was to you, so far as the minor aspects of the

matter are concerned, the mind is not taken by surprise, and regards the matter as one of the necessary and normal results of winter.

Other cases, however, present more difficulty in discrimination. There are not a few cases where the same thing may seem tragic or humorous. The classic example, as we may say, is that of Mr. Shandy and My Uncle Toby. Here were two brothers who loved each other devotedly, and yet were totally unable to understand each other. As Sterne handles the situation, fixing attention on minor points, veiling any deeper feelings that might have been aroused, it is very purely humorous. But after all, it is not a humorous situation if dealt with seriously. Two beings bound together by close ties, loving each other but never able to understand each other, something like that is the situation on which Ibsen built "The Doll's House." The same thing may often be comic and tragic to different people. The nose of Cyrano de Bergerac was intensely humorous to many about him: it was so incongruous that it was enough to make anybody laugh who could keep out of the way of the owner. But to Cyrano himself it was far from humorous, and it shows the power of the dramatist that he makes us forget the ridiculous possibilities, so that the figure of Cyrano is really a noble one.

Incongruity is merely inconsistency, merely that we cannot comprehend two things in one thought. Incomprehensibleness is at the bottom of tragedy. We must have something great, something of importance, and then, if the incongruity, the inconsistency, be brought out strongly and poignantly, the thing is done.

One reason for disagreement as to tragic quality is that it often happens that a thing is important to one set of people, but not to another. Then there will be difference of opinion. For example, the so-called problem-plays of Mr. Pinero. These plays are not great tragedies because they (and their problems) do not make a very wide appeal. For example, "Iris": the motive of "Iris" is that of the weak woman who wants to be good but wants more to have an easy, delightful, luxurious, lazy time. That motive may be capable of tragic force. Such women may have much charm and beauty of character, so that in easy circumstances they add to the true joy of the world. Iris was such a one. She was even more: she was—in ways that did not trouble her—good and generous. Now, why should such good characteristics all be overbalanced by this one evil? Further, Iris was practically betrayed by her own generosity. Why should one's doing a good thing lead one inexorably to the doing such wrong

things that one's life is wrecked and other people's too? There seems to be, then, the possibility of tragedy there, because that is one of the mysteries of the human heart and of divine law. But even were the motive more strongly worked out, the tragedy would not be a great one because, in the form in which it comes to us, it is not of wide application. I suppose I do not know a single Iris myself, and I question whether the average man does. I may be able to imagine them readily, I may be able to judge that there are not a few of them in certain spheres of life. But the question does not come near enough home to me, or to most people, for us to call it really tragic. So of Mrs. Tanqueray, Mrs. Ebbsmith, and the rest of Mr. Pinero's problematic ladies. They are immensely interesting to themselves and their friends, no doubt, but only by great art could they be made so vivid to the world at large as to become great figures. Alexandre Dumas achieved the difficult feat when he created Marguerite Gautier, La Dame aux Camélias, commonly called by us Camille. When I saw the play I was a boy in college; it is a season when such motives seem more real than in after years. I remember perfectly well standing up in the back of the theatre with the tears rolling down my cheeks. In fact I remember myself much better than I remember

Marguerite Gautier, though I occasionally stimulate my memory by reading the play over. The fact is that she does not have a universal appeal.

The more important the case, the wider the appeal, the more certain of success,—other things being equal,—is the tragedy. It is in this way that I explain the success of M. Rostand. The motive of all his plays is the same. It is not very clearly presented. It is usually conceived in a spirit that impresses the audience as pessimistic, but it is always there and always the same and always the strongest motive in the world. It is that of the failure of the idealist to attain the height of his aspiration.

In the "Princesse Lointaine" the imaginative Rudel loves the ideal princess of Tripoli. He dies before attaining his ideal, but also before he knows what his ideal was worth, save as an ideal. In "Cyrano de Bergerac" we have a man who has, and who knows that he has,—and we know it too, —tremendous powers, but who is never able to realise them, who is never able to appear to the world as he knows he is. There is that fatal impediment. Purely typical that is, but every one has something of the sort, for it is inherent in human nature that the flesh should hold back the spirit. In his case the spirit of the man is so fine, he is so brilliant, so vigorous, so courageous,

that he carries it all off with a vitality that makes us almost forget the tragedy. But it is there all the same. In "L'Aiglon" we have the idealist once more, the man who has the greatest ideal of his time, the finest, noblest, most splendid possibility, at least, waiting for him, calling insistently, beckoning, but he cannot ever reach it, chiefly because he cannot even understand what it is. To the Duc de Reichstadt Napoleon was a man of victories and processions and uniforms. He realises as the play goes on that he cannot even in thought rise to the ideal before him, much less realise it in fact. He is noble because he even then clings to his ideal because it is an ideal. A tragic figure he is on the field of Wagram, relapsing into the pathetic when in the last act he becomes, as one might say, more of a child than ever. And this constant defeat of the idealist in this world I take to be a matter not thoroughly understood by us. It is true that the poets offer their explanations, Tennyson with his

> "O me! for why is all around us here
> As if some lesser god had made the world,
> But had not force to shape it as he would,
> Till the High God behold it from beyond,
> And enter it and make it beautiful!"

and Browning with his constant optimism:

" Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? "

But I cannot say that the explanations make it very clear to me. Still it is the incomprehensible nature of the thing that makes it striking. It masters us; if we understood it, we should master it. If we understood it thoroughly, and saw that it was just as we should imagine it, or as we might ourselves have arranged it, or even as we acknowledge just, then we should not think it anything very much out of the common run. It would make us cynical, perhaps, or hopeless, but it would not be the *medicina mentis* that tragedy is.

Such—at any rate let me assume it, for the time, in spite of conflicts, missions, tragic blames, and anything else—such is tragedy always, a pursuing of some of the strange and unexplainable courses of life. The finer and nobler the actors, the greater and more general the evil that they do not escape, the greater the tragedy. We see it in the Greek drama, and we see it in the Elizabethan. In the " Prometheus " we have the friend of man, and therefore one who must endure a life of torture, as so many friends of man have endured since his day. In " Hamlet " we have the man in whom the godlike reason was stronger than in any

other man of his time, and who therefore fell a victim to an unscrupulous politician. And the same thing is in modern plays, as we have seen, whether presented in the beautiful and glittering forms of romance or in the more immediate forms of everyday life.

There can be little doubt that the element is there,—may be found, I believe, in every great tragedy in the drama, literature, in life. But even if so the real question is: Is it this that thrills and holds us, when we read the drama or see the play? Is it this that impresses us with what we call the Tragic?

To give a sort of answer to this question I must be a little pedantic. We all know the position of Aristotle in the intellectual world, how he dominated the thought of man for centuries and is today as wise as ever, though not so dictatorial. He thought about almost everything in his day and he did not disdain the drama. He viewed the Athenian drama of his time just as he viewed the science, the oratory, the politics, the constitutional principles, and everything else. He analysed its power and stated it in words that have given the theorists great opportunities.

"Tragedy," he says, "is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with every

kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action not of narrative, through pity and awe effecting the proper *Katharsis* of these emotions."

This word *Katharsis*, it seems generally agreed, was a medical term, meaning much the same thing as our word *purgative*. Tragedy is a purge to the moral nature, it would appear, is the idea of Aristotle. It is an influence upon our moral nature, a purifying, strengthening, reviving influence. It does away with certain evils that annoy our daily life. Its very bitterness—like the purge in "Pilgrim's Progress"—has this effect upon us, and we listen to a tragedy with the same acrid sense of tonic improvement that we feel when we are getting over a cold, say, or an illness. That seems to be Aristotle's view: I take it to be pretty sound. It shows that two thousands years ago he noticed what we may notice to-day.

Certain things in human life have this effect upon us, though they commonly work in rather a drawn-out way, and in art, in so far as art represents life. In tragedy we appreciate Man as Pope thought of him, that much-neglected poet who said so many things so much better than any one else could ever say them. Pope saw the fact, though he had not the artistic feeling to put it in any but an intellectual way:

"Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise and rudely great;
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,
He hangs between, in doubt to act or rest,
In doubt to deem himself a god or beast,
In doubt his mind or body to prefer,
Born but to die, and reasoning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little or too much;
Chaos of thought and passion all confused,
Still by himself abused and disabused;
Created half to rise and half to fall,
Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all.
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled,
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!"

The glory to the eye of faith, but the jest to the comedian and the riddle to those in whom the spirit is tuned to the note of tragedy.

Or in other words, when we have put before us one of those poignant scenes, or situations, or moments, or figures of human life, where good and evil, strength and weakness are so inextricably mixed, where all that might, that should turn out so well, does turn out so ill, then we cannot comprehend intellectually, do not try to, we can simply receive the impression emotionally or spiritu-

ally, we cannot but be seized by a mixture of pity and awe, as Aristotle says. And that feeling is our feeling for the Tragic.

It leaves us calmed and quieted. Things seem a little different. Everyday matters at which we were so hot, for the moment are small and petty. We feel in a confused way that life is something fine, big, and noble, and that we ourselves are not the only people of importance. It does not last, of course; we shall again be angered, ridiculous, blunderers, but for the time we are satisfied. We are willing to continue our lives in their silly individuality, feeling that we may confidently trust in a power whose detailed purposes have not been explained to us.

Such in its result is the general effect of the greatest art. It is of great art that that figure of the beautiful youth that Emerson mentions is typical, Phosphorus, whose aspect is such that all persons who look upon it become silent.

APPENDIX.

PERFORMANCE OR PUBLICATION

In the following lists are the dates of the first performance or publication of the plays of our dramatists. They do not pretend to do more than to show the place of each play in the author's career, and to give a general idea of his activity and of public interest in his work. Many matters of curious interest are therefore omitted. This is especially the case with Bernard Shaw and M. Maeterlinck, whose plays have been performed at all sorts of times and places, but not, as a rule, immediately on writing. Performances in countries or languages other than the author's have been noted, but without idea of completeness, to give an idea of the way the author has come before the public. The facts come wherever possible from the published texts of the authors, but in other cases from periodicals, newspapers, dramatic lists, etc.

EDMOND ROSTAND

(Unless especially mentioned, the place of production was Paris)

1894. May 21. Théâtre Français. LES ROMANESQUES: Comédie en trois actes en vers. Given at the Empire Theatre, New York, February 24, 1901, by the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, under the name of "The Fantastics." It has also been given of late in German at the Irving Place Theatre.

1895. April 5. Théâtre de la Renaissance. LA PRINCESSE LOINTAINE: Pièce en quatre actes en vers. The part of Mélissande was created by Mme. Sarah Bernhardt.

1897. April 14. Théâtre de la Renaissance. LA SAMARITAINE: Evangile en trois tableaux. The part of Photine by Mme. Bernhardt. The piece is said to have been very successful, and, I understand, has several times been revived during Holy Week.

1897. December 28. Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin. CYRANO DE BERGERAC: Comédie Héroique en cinq actes en vers. The most

brilliant theatrical success of the decade. In the United States it was given by Mr. Richard Mansfield at the Garden Theatre, New York, October 3, 1898. In London, at Wyndham's Theatre, with Mr. Wyndham as Cyrano, April 19, 1900, it did not seem to hit the public taste. It has been given, in a translation by Ludwig Fulda, in many cities of Germany and Austria, and in New York also. Given in French at the Garden Theatre, New York, December 10, 1900, by Mme. Bernhardt and M. Coquelin.

1900. March 15. Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt. L'Aiglon: Drame en six actes en vers. First given in the United States at the Academy of Music, Baltimore, October 15, 1900. At Her Majesty's Theatre, London, June 1, 1901. In French at the Garden Theatre, New York, November 26, 1900, by Mme. Bernhardt and M. Coquelin.

GERHARDT HAUPTMANN

(Unless especially mentioned, the place of production was Berlin)

1889. October 20. Lessing-Theater, under the auspices of the society Die freie Bühne. Vor Sonnenaufgang: Soziales Drama. The production of this play was an immensely exciting event, being regarded as a battle between the new school and the old. Like most of the plays following, it has been given at the Irving Place Theatre, New York.

1890. June 1. Lessing-Theater. Das Friedensfest: Ein Familienkatastrophe. This play had already appeared in the newspaper *Die freie Bühne.*

1891. January 11. Deutsches Theater. Einsame Menschen: Drama. This had been presented shortly before by the Freie Bühne. It has been given in German in New York, by Mr. Conried, of course, and in English as " Lonely Lives " at the Empire Theatre December 11, 1902, by the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

1892. January 16. Deutsches Theater. College Crampton: Komödie in fünf akten.

1893. February 26. Die freie Bühne. Die Weber: Schauspiel aus den vierziger Jahren. The play was to have been given at the Deutsches Theater, but was forbidden, and so not presented there till September 25, 1894. It has been given in Paris as "Les Tisserands" at M. Antoine's Théâtre Libre.

1893. September 21. Deutsches Theater. Das Biberpelz: Eine Diebskomödie.

1893. November 14. Königliches Schauspielhaus. Hanneles Himmelfahrt: Traumdichtung in zwei Theilen. There were difficulties in regard to the presentation of this play also. It appeared the next year at the Théâtre Libre, Paris, and also at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York.

1896. January 4. Deutsches Theater. Florian Geyer. As first presented this play was a failure, to the great chagrin of the author, who had put his best work into it. He revised it subsequently, and it was given at the Lessing-Theater, October 22, 1904, but I have not been able to get a satisfactory account of the nature of the revision or of its success.

1896. December 2. Deutsches Theater. Die versunkene Glocke. This play has been Hauptmann's great public success; it at

once stirred up criticism and controversy in Germany, and became more widely known than anything he had yet done. It was given to crowded houses by Frau Agnes Sorma at the Irving Place Theatre, New York, April 29, 1897, and afterward. It did not appear in English, however, until December 21, 1899, at the Hollis Street Theatre, Boston, where it was presented by Mr. Sothern.

1898. November 5. Deutsches Theater. FUHRMANN HENSCHEL: Schauspiel in fünf Akten.

1900. February 3. Deutsches Theater. SCHLUCK UND JAU: Spiel zu Scherz und Schimpf.

1900. December 21. Deutsches Theater. MICHAEL KRAMER.

1901. November 27. Deutsches Theater. DER ROTE HAHN: Tragikomödie in vier Akten.

1902. November 29. Hof Burgtheater, Wien. DER ARME HEINRICH: Eine deutsche Sage.

1903. October 31. Deutsches Theater. ROSE BERND: Schauspiel in fünf Aufzügen.

HERMANN SUDERMANN

(Unless especially mentioned, the place of production was Berlin)

1889. November 27. Lessing-Theater. DIE EHRE: Schauspiel in vier Akten. Often given in German. In English ("Honour") at the Criterion Theatre, New York, January 26, 1905, by the American Academy of Dramatic Art.

1891. November 5. Lessing-Theater. SODOM'S ENDE: Drama in fünf Akten. This play also has been widely given in German. The first performance that I have noted in English is "The Man and His Picture," Great Queen Street, London, March 8, 1903.

1893. January 7. Lessing-Theater. HEIMAT: Schauspiel in vier Akten. This is the most successful play that has been written of late. It holds the stage better than anything even of Rostand or Hauptmann. The character of Magda has attracted the greatest actresses of the day—Mme. Bernhardt, Signora Duse, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Mrs. Fiske, Mme. Mojeska, as well as the chief German actresses. It has

been given almost everywhere, often under the name of "Magda."

1894. October 6. Lessing-Theater. DIE SCHMETTERLINGSSCHLACHT. Eine Komödie in vier Akten.

1895. November 11. Hof Burgtheater, Wien. DAS GLÜCK IM WINKEL: Schauspiel in drei Akten.

1896. October 3. { Lessing-Theater, Berlin; / Hof Burgtheater, Wien. } MORITURI: Drei Einakter; TEJA; FRITZCHEN; DAS EWIG MÄNNLICHE.

1898. January 15. Deutsches Theater. JOHANNES: Tragödie in fünf Akten und einem Vorspiel.

1899. January 21. Deutsches Theater. DIE DREI REIHEFEDER: Ein dramatisches Gedicht in fünf Akten.

1900. October 5. Deutsches Theater. JOHANNESFEUER. Given in English as "St. John's Fire" at the Empire Theatre, New York, by the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, December 1, 1904.

1902. February 10. Deutsches Theater. ES LEBE DAS LEBEN: Drama in fünf Akten. Given at the Garden Theatre, New York, October 23, 1902. At the New Theatre, London, June 24, 1903.

1903. October 3. Lessing-Theater. DER STURMGESELLE SOKRATES: Komödie in vier Akten.

ARTHUR WING PINERO

(Unless especially mentioned, the place of production was London)

1877. October 6. Globe Theatre. Two Hundred a Year: A Comedietta in One Act.

1879. September 20. Lyceum Theatre. Daisy's Escape.

1880. June 5. Folly Theatre. Hester's Mystery: A Comedietta in One Act.

1880. September 18. Lyceum Theatre. Bygones: A Comedy in One Act.

1880. November 5. Theatre Royal, Manchester. The Money Spinner: A Drama in Two Acts. This was the first play of Mr. Pinero's to attract much attention. The production at Manchester was praised, and the play was brought to London, where it was given, January 8, 1881, by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Mr. John Hare, and others. It was considered worthy of note at the time by an accomplished critic that "Mr Pinero invents his own plots and writes his own dialogue," a remark very significant as to the English stage in 1880, a year

in which "Forbidden Fruit" and "The Guv'nor" were the popular successes.

1881. October 27. Folly Theatre. IMPRUDENCE.

1881. December 29. St. James Theatre. THE SQUIRE: Given the next year, October 10, at Daly's, New York.

1882. March 24. Court Theatre. THE RECTOR: A Play in Four Acts.

1882. October 31. Toole's Theatre. BOYS AND GIRLS. Mr. Pinero was still on the stage and took a part in this play.

1883. July 30. Prince of Wales' Theatre, Liverpool. THE ROCKET: A Comedy in Three Acts. Given December 10, 1883, at the Gaiety Theatre, London.

1883. November 24. Haymarket Theatre. LORDS AND COMMONS: A Comedy in Four Acts.

1884. January 12. Globe Theatre. LOW WATER: A Comedy in Three Acts.

1884. Written at this time, but not presented. THE WEAKER SEX. It was to have been given at the Court Theatre, but was supplanted by the following more noteworthy piece.

1885. March 21. Court Theatre. THE MAGISTRATE: A Farce in Three Acts. This is a capital piece, though how good one can hardly appreciate without comparing it with some adaptations from the French of the same time. It was remarkably successful (ran for more than a year), so

that it determined the general line of the Court Theatre for some time. It was given at Daly's Theatre, New York, and has since been presented all over Europe and the English colonies.

1886. March 27. Court Theatre. THE SCHOOLMISTRESS: A Farce in Three Acts.

1886. October 23. Saint James' Theatre. THE HOBBY HORSE: A Comedy in Four Acts.

1887. January 27. Court Theatre. DANDY DICK: A Farce in Three Acts. Given at Daly's Theatre, New York, October 5, of the same year.

1888. March 21. Terry's Theatre. SWEET LAVENDER. With the exception of "The Magistrate," this is the most popular of Mr. Pinero's earlier plays. Indeed, Mr. Winter holds it to be "a thousand times better than all his noxious analyses of social sores." It was given at Daly's Theatre, November 12, 1888, and has been seen of late in New York given by Mr. Terry, for whom it was originally written.

1888. September 28. Theatre Royal, Manchester. THE WEAKER SEX: A Comedy in Three Acts. Written some years before, but put aside in favour of "The Magistrate." Given at the Court Theatre, March 19, 1889.

1889. April 24. Garrick Theatre. THE PROFLIGATE: A Drama in Four Acts. This

play, which was the first strong piece of work in the kind wherein Mr. Pinero is now most distinguished, did not excite especial attention. It was not produced in this country until 1894, when people had become interested in the author through "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray."

1890. April 23. Court Theatre. THE CABINET MINISTER: A Farce in Four Acts.

1891. March 7. Garrick Theatre. LADY BOUNTIFUL: A Play in Four Acts. Not entirely successful, but given in the fall (November 16) simultaneously at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, and the Boston Museum.

1891. October 24. Terry's Theatre. THE TIMES: A Comedy in Four Acts. Of this play Mr. Pinero himself writes that "It lays bare no horrid social wound, it wrangles over no vital problem of inextricable perplexity."

1893. March 7. Court Theatre. THE AMAZONS: A Farcical Romance in Three Acts. Given at the Lyceum, New York, the next year.

1893. May 27. Saint James' Theatre. THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY: A Play in Four Acts. Given by the Kendals at the Star Theatre, New York, October 9, 1893. With this play Mr. Pinero begins to be considered seriously; it has been much dis-

cussed, and good critics have held it to be a great tragedy; a view which, I hope, (pp. 93, 94, 176, 195) is quite erroneous. Mrs. Patrick Campbell created the part of Mrs. Tanqueray, and the part did something of the sort in return. There have been French and Italian versions given in many places, but I do not hear of it in Germany.

1895. March 13. Garrick Theatre. THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH. A very good play. Done by Mr. John Hare, at Abbey's Theatre, New York, December 23, 1895. Given September 22, 1899, at the Lessing-Theater, Berlin, under the name "Die Genossin."

1895. October 16. Comedy Theatre. THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT. Given at the Lyceum, New York, January 6, 1896.

1897. March 29. St. James' Theatre. THE PRINCESS AND THE BUTTERFLY; OR, THE FANTASTICS: A Comedy in Five Acts. Given at the Lyceum, New York, November 23, 1897.

1898. January 30. Court Theatre. TRELAWNEY OF THE WELLS: A Comedietta in Four Acts. Given at the Lyceum, New York, November 22, 1898.

1899. April 8. Globe Theatre. THE GAY LORD QUEX: A Comedy in Four Acts. Given in New York by Mr. Hare a year or so

later. Also at the Lessing-Theater, Berlin, January 13, 1900, where it was pronounced by the only critic I have noted, "reichlich langweilig und . . . ein bedauerliches Zeichen für das Tiefstand des englischen Geschmack." The remark is in itself an interesting sign of German taste.

1901. September 21. Garrick Theatre. IRIS: A Drama in Five Acts. Given at the Criterion Theatre, New York, September 23, 1902.

1903. October 8. Duke of York's Theatre. LETTY: A Drama in Four Acts and an Epilogue. Given at the Hudson Theatre, New York, September 12, 1904.

1904. October 9. Wyndham's Theatre. A WIFE WITHOUT A SMILE: A Comedy in Disguise. Given at the Criterion Theatre, New York, December 19, 1904.

Some translations or adaptations have been omitted.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

(Unless especially mentioned, the place of production was London)

1892. Independent Theatre. WIDOWERS' HOUSES.

1893. { Written for the Independent Theatre, but not performed. } THE PHILANDERERS; MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION. This last was given by the Stage Society at the New Lyric Theatre, January 4, 1902.

1894. April 21. Avenue Theatre. ARMS AND THE MAN. Was also given by Mr. Mansfield at the Herald Square Theatre, New York, September 17, 1894. A few months ago, December 8, 1904, given at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, under the name of "Helden."

1894. Written for Mr. Mansfield, but not acted at the time. CANDIDA. Given at Carnegie Hall, New York, December 9, 1903, and at the Court Theatre, on April 26, 1904. Given at the Königliches Schauspielhaus, Dresden, November 19, 1903.

1895. Written but not publicly given. THE MAN OF DESTINY. Given by the American

Academy of Dramatic Arts at the Empire Theatre, New York, February 16, 1899, and at the Neues Theater, Berlin, February 10, 1904, under the name "Der Schlachtenlenker."

1896. Written but not publicly given. You Never Can Tell. Given January 9, 1905, at the Garrick Theatre, New York.

These seven plays were published in 1898 as "Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant."

1897. October 1. Harmanus Bleecker Hall, Albany. The Devil's Disciple. Also September 26, 1899, at the Princess of Wales' Theatre, and at the Berliner Theater, December 1, 1904, under the name "Ein Teufelskerl."

1898. Apparently not given. Cæsar and Cleopatra. Captain Brassbound's Conversion.

1899.

These three plays were published in 1900 as "Three Plays for Puritans."

1903. Published. Man and Superman.

1904. September 26. Berkeley Lyceum, New York. How He Lied to Her Husband.

1904. October. Court Theatre. John Bull's Other Island.

There have usually, I believe, been semi-private performances of Mr. Shaw's plays, for the sake of securing stage rights, but the dates are not readily obtainable, nor would they signify much if obtained.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

1899. Published. PAOLO AND FRANCESCA: A Tragedy in Four Acts.
1900. October 31. Her Majesty's Theatre, London. HEROD: A Tragedy.
1902. February 1. Her Majesty's Theatre, London. ULYSSES: A Drama in a Prologue and Three Acts. Also given at the Garden Theatre, New York, September 14, 1902.
1904. Published. THE SIN OF DAVID.
1905. Published. NERO.

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

The dates given, except the last two, are those of publication. As the plays were not immediately performed, I have added a few dates of first performances in various countries, but the list is very incomplete.

1892. L'Intrus. Les Aveugles. Les Sept Princesses. The first two given by the American Academy of Dramatic Arts at the Berkeley Lyceum, New York, February 21, 1893, and January 18, 1894, respectively.

1893. Pélléas et Mélisande.

1894. Intérieur. Alladine et Palamides. Given at the Carnegie Lyceum by the American Academy, February 18, 1896. La Mort de Tintagiles. Given on the Sezessionsbühne, Berlin, November 12, 1900.

1896. Aglavaine et Sélysette.

1901. Ariane et Barbe Bleue; ou, La Délivrance Inutile. Conte en trois actes.

1901. Sœur Béatrice. Miracle en trois actes.

1902. May 17. Nouveau Théâtre, Paris. Monna Vanna. Pièce en trois actes. Given at the Königliches Schauspielhaus, Munich, September 27, 1902. It was forbidden in London, and in America has been seen only in German at the Irving Place Theatre, New York.

1903. May 20. Théâtre du Gymnase. Joyzelle: Pièce en cinq actes.

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