

## LONDON DRAMA.

DR. PRIMROSE HAPPY AND THANKFUL—  
"THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

London, June 20.

An atmosphere of hospitality and good feeling pervaded the Lyceum Theatre on Saturday night, when Sir Henry Irving and Miss Terry were again welcomed to the stage which has witnessed the triumphs of their career. The ordinary relations of players and audience seemed to have been reversed. The actors, instead of entertaining the galleries, pit and stalls, were the guests of the evening, whose coming was hailed with a mighty roar of welcome, and whose presence among their friends and admirers was the signal for a three hours' demonstration of personal devotion and affection. I have seen Sir Henry Irving and Miss Terry on many a first night at the Lyceum Theatre, but never have I known a homecoming of such warmth and unaffected cordiality. Men and boys had been standing all day at the entrance to the pit in order to be on the front line when Dr. Primrose and Olivia should appear at the wing; and when the happy moment came they rose in their places and roared with delight. For three hours the enthusiasm never ceased. There were recalls with deafening applause after every act, and at the final fall of the curtain there was an outburst of personal affection which had a deep undertone of sincerity. The first words spoken by the Vicar of Wakefield to the villagers and neighbors: "You make me happy and thankful by your kind welcome!" provided the cue for those beyond the footlights. They petted and overwhelmed with kindness the returning actors, and proved that an English welcome could be as hearty and spontaneous as an American welcome.

There was no sign of advancing years or physical weakness in Sir Henry Irving's performance. His voice was clear and resonant; in movement he was more alert and in facial expression and byplay he was more flexible than ever, and his impersonation had a serenity and completeness which denoted maturity of powers without mental anxieties or carking cares. American sympathy and support had been the invigorating tonic which he needed, and the homecoming, with its sense of English pride in the recognition commanded abroad for achievements of the first rank on the stage, was like a fillip of champagne. An actress in the audience said to me: "He seems inspired to-night. I have never known him to act with such subtle power." Another actress paid her tribute to him by rising in the box and with face flushed with emotion and excitement leading the applause at the end of the second act. This was Signora Eleanora Duse, whose own work had been fairly electrifying London audiences with its artistic method and power. Possibly it was the presence of this great artist that incited Sir Henry Irving to refine his own processes, and certainly he has seldom acted with so complete a concealment of the artifices and means by which his effects were produced. There was not a theatrical pose or movement during his entire performance. The art was out of sight and apparently out of mind, and the impersonation of the sweet natured, didactic Vicar had the touch of life which came from supreme naturalness and realism.

## ARTIFICIAL, YET HUMAN.

"Olivia" is an old fashioned play, which, in the language of the critics, is "unconvincing" in its theatrical asides, arbitrary conversion of a false into a true marriage, and the suspicious repentance of a rake when he finds himself legally bound to his wife and out of favor with his rich relation. It is a play which may be artificial in plot, yet is brimming over with human nature. It supplies both Sir Henry Irving and Miss Terry with impersonations of character which are worthy of their art; and its central theme is the love of home, with the father's tenderness for an idolized daughter and the penitent homesickness which comes after folly. There may be sweet scented flowers and bright gleams of color even in an old fashioned garden with its artificial borders and parterres; and there is no lack of tenderness, pathos and homely sweetness in this old-time idyll. Certainly nothing could be either more affecting or more truthful than Sir Henry Irving's exposition of the simple-minded, generous and pious old vicar.

The effects are produced at first by many little touches, as in the case of the Robespierre which Americans have recently been admiring. The vicar's character is denoted by the side lights thrown upon it by his relations with his critical parishioners, his worldly minded wife and his flighty daughter, bewitched by the attentions of the squire. There is not a trace of senility or infirmity in the vicar. It is a study of old age sharply differentiated from Corporal Brewster, and the makeup is equally effective. There is something in the wistful, far away glance of the eyes and the mellow radiance of the smile that suggests the character before a word has been spoken. It is a revelation of goodness and simplicity, for which peace is as the breath of life—peace in the parish where idle tongues are wagging, quiet in the household where the wife's ambition is overlapping itself, and reconciliation with the daughter, who cannot be reproved for deceit and treachery when his own heart is overflowing with thankfulness over the recovery of the lost. In the byplay the vicar's character is brought out in sudden flashes of nature like the smile of self-appreciation when a favorite sermon is praised; or the transfor-



JAMES HALL, THE BOY OARSMAN OF THE HARLEM ROWING CLUB.

mation of the cheery face into hopeless misery when he finds his daughter's room empty; or the impetuous search for the brace of pistols when he realizes that there are wrongs to be avenged; or the outstretched arms into which the missing one is drawn after he has vainly attempted to chide and reprove her.

Dr. Primrose is indeed one of the most lovable and sympathetic of Sir Henry Irving's impersonations. It not only commands admiration for essential truthfulness, perfection of stagecraft and consistency of idea, but it also touches the heart and brings tears to the eyes. It cannot be praised too warmly; yet I fancy that it is the easiest work which the great actor does on the stage. The qualities of the character are his own. Dr. Primrose has scholarly tastes, quiet dignity, simplicity of manner, sweetness of temper, serenity of mind, tenderness of heart, a genial optimism, an almost credulous faith in human nature and nobility of character. All these traits are characteristic of the actor himself. His has been a life devoted to high ends with sincerity of purpose, and he has dignified his profession and elevated the stage; and he has taken everything as it has come, good fortune or ill, successes or anxieties, with unflinching serenity of mind, and he has remained at peace with all the world. He has been Dr. Primrose off the stage, and it is not strange that he plays the part with the perfection of naturalness. It is only necessary for him to be himself.

## MISS TERRY'S OLIVIA.

Miss Terry as Olivia has one of her most delightful parts. She is lovely in the capriciousness of her moods and tender and subtle in the series of leavetakings with the family when she is about to run away from home. Nothing could be finer or more truthful than her sudden rush for the door when she has reached the limit of self-restraint, or her revulsion of feeling when she discovers the perfidy of her lover and repels him with scorn and loathing. Mr. Fred Terry is admirable as the heartless rake; Miss Baird is a charming Sophia, and all the subordinate parts are well taken, including those of the two children, Miss Beatrice Terry and Miss Queenie Tarvin, who are natural actresses without a trace of precocity. It is a delightful entertainment which Sir Henry Irving has provided for the celebration of his homecoming.

I have little space in reserve for the sumptuous and artistic revival of "The School for Scandal" at the Haymarket Theatre. The last revival of this play was at the Lyceum Theatre four years ago, when Mrs. Campbell was, or tried to be, Lady Teazle and Mr. Farren played Sir Peter, with Mr. Forbes Robertson as Joseph Surface and Mr. Fred Terry as Charles Surface. That was a notable and successful production, but the Haymarket cast is in some respects even more brilliant, and the stage setting is more artistic and beautiful. Miss Emery, who had previously delighted her friends with a most charming impersonation of Lydia Languish, surpassed their expectations as Lady Teazle, and was most fascinating in the old time costumes and in the byplay of demure coquetry. Mr. Cyril Maude, who made a fine character of Backbite at the Lyceum production, has emerged with subtle power and farcical humor as Sir Peter, and offered playgoers a fresh illustration of his range and versatility. After developing a remarkable talent as an eccentric comedian of singular individuality, he now succeeds in keeping the farcical elements well under control. The cast, with Mr. Sydney Valentine, Miss Lottie Venne, Mr. J. O. Blythe, Mr. Paul Arthur, Miss Constance Collier, Miss Beatrice Ferrar and other excellent artists in conspic-

ous parts, is excellent. The true comic spirit pervades this production, and the undertone of social satire is clear and unmistakable. It is a brilliant and most delightful performance.

I. N. F.

## A TEN-YEAR-OLD OARSMAN.

JAMES HALL, OF THE HARLEM ROWING CLUB.

James Hall, the midget sculler who declares that he is the champion oarsman of his years in America, is only ten years old, and exceedingly small for his age. As an oarsman, however, he towers head and shoulders over any other boy of his years ever seen on the Harlem River. He is a full fledged member of the Harlem Rowing Club, and also the official mascot of that organization.

Jimmy is the son of Frank Hall, a manufacturer of theatrical and sporting knit goods, and he lives with his parents at No. 1,952 Park-ave. His father was an oarsman before him, and is still a member of the Wyanoke Boat Club. The boy began to row two years ago, and soon became the pride of the river. He insisted on rowing the big shells of the club, so his father recently bought him one of his own. The shell is 21 feet in length, and weighs about nineteen pounds. The narrowness of this frail craft can be judged by the fact that it has only an eight-inch centre. The sculls used by the proud owner are only a foot shorter than the regulation size for adult scullers. Jimmy and his racing shell together do not weigh more than seventy-five pounds.

The boy is a bright pupil in the West One-hundred-and-thirty-fourth-st. public school, and every day after his studies are over he hastens to the river to take a spin in his shell. He is always ready and eager to give any of the older oarsmen a brush, and the speed that he gets out of his racing machine is remarkable to behold. He recently got caught among a lot of tugs and tows. He kept his head, however, and although he "lost his oars" once or twice he withstood the wash and finally pulled out all right. He was not half so badly frightened as the captains of the tugboats.

## MORE BOER TEXT TELEGRAPHING.

BUT THE BRITISH KNEW SOME APPROPRIATE QUOTATIONS.

From The London News.

Hitherto the accounts of Boer dispatches by Scriptural quotation have reached us from American sources, and have not been read without some suspicion that they might be mere illustrations of American inventiveness and American humor. To-day, however, the news of another correspondence by citation of Scripture texts comes through Berlin. The messages are said to have passed by heliograph between De Wet and Cronje, at the instance of President Kruger. The Psalms of David constituted the code for reference. Mr. Kruger began by announcing that reinforcements were on the way, and quoting "Save me from the lion's mouth," etc. De Wet transmitted the encouragement to hold out, but preferred to send his own quotation from the Psalms: "But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded." It was certainly a more cheerful text in the circumstances. Cronje replied that he was getting short of provisions, but Psalm 20, vii. The texts were thus banded about for two days, Cronje once pathetically referring to a passage which, on being looked up, is found to be a complaint that vain is the help of man. Here the British began to read the heliograph messages, and put in a quotation of their own at the end of an emphatic warning that further resistance was useless bloodshed. This appropriate verse declared, "They shall fall by the sword, they shall be a portion for the foxes." When his enemy began to quote the Psalms against him Cronje surrendered.

## LOVE SONG.

From The Pall Mall Gazette.

If I could sew a pillow for your head,  
Soft, silken, stuffed with every pretty thought;  
If I could lay a carpet where you tread  
Of all my life's most radiant fancies wrought—  
Could spread my soul as canopy above you,  
Your sleep, your steps, should know how much  
I love you!  
But, as Life goes, to the old sorry tune,  
I stand apart, and see thorns wound your feet,  
Your sleeping eyes resenting star and moon,  
Your head rest, restless, on a breast unmeet,  
And say no word, but suffer without moan,  
Lest you should guess how much you are alone!

## HEROIC TREATMENT.

From The Sketch.

"I don't agree with you! I see no obligation whatsoever. To be quite frank"—  
He paused abruptly. He was actually blushing; but the faint tinge faded quickly from his cheeks, and left them unusually pallid.

"Yes?" said Lieutenant Winston, encouragingly and quite unblushingly.

"Oh, I don't know!" stammered the other man. "Are you really serious? If so, you must be—pardon me for saying so—either the most heartless beggar I ever met or the most absurdly sensitive."

"In other words, a knave or a blithering idiot—eh, Metford, old chap?" said Winston cheerily.

"Exactly! I hope it is only a case of temporary insanity!"

Dr. Metford was one of the ablest of the younger physicians in the West End of London; but, being also one of the most stupidly modest of clever men, his professional income barely sufficed to pay the rental of his rooms in Gower-st. Some day he may discover that it is possible to be overmodest and that inward self-depreciation leads to penury, and then he will remove to Harley-st. and begin to make progress toward affluence.

Winston did not fail to observe the tinge of color on the Doctor's face, nor its quick disappearance; but he gave no sign of recognition. Never before had he seen his old college chum look half so handsome as when that fleeting show of rosy color tinted the man's cheeks, nor half so pathetically glum as when it vanished.

"She saved my life. I think you will admit that, Doctor? How many women would have taken the risks that she took? Would any other woman in the world have sacrificed herself as she did?"

"Any number of them!" declared the Doctor, sentimentally, although a fitting smile upon his face said, "None of them, bless her!"

"Your medical men are utterly heartless cynics," protested Winston, shrugging his broad shoulders.

"Utterly," admitted Metford. "Now, I am so unromantic as to attribute your recovery chiefly to your castiron constitution, a rattling good physician—must sound my own trumpet if you won't blow it for me—and Old Nick's merciful consideration. Your cup of iniquity is not yet quite brimful; your liver and all the rest of you, including your heart, are as sound as a bell."

"I know well what I owe you, Metford, old chap!" said the convalescent in a grateful tone, and with an affectionate grasp of the biceps of the doctor's nearest arm. "You don't appear to be aware of it, but you're a long way the cleverest medicine man in London, head and shoulders above all the rest of 'em. If you weren't such a confoundedly modest beast"—

"Skittles!" interjected his physician, in much confusion. "You can't think how I hate that kind of talk!"

"Nevertheless, I mean it, old chap! Just you think the matter over seriously! Well, to proceed; my sister Jess says that Miss Wethered—who, by the way, comes of tolerably good stock—was very different from the ordinary professional nurse, and that, during those weeks when my very valuable life hung on a slender thread, she absolutely sacrificed herself to save me. My recovery, Jess says, is due entirely to her devotion. Not very complimentary to you, eh?"

"Mrs. Trevelyan is modesty and every other grace personified!" declared Dr. Metford. "So far as I could see, she 'sacrificed' herself almost, if not quite, as magnificently as—as the—paid nurse!"

"Be that as it may," persisted Winston, "I have chatted the matter over very seriously with my sister, and she says, imprimis, that Mary Wethered is, barring the wings, an angel; secondly, that the said angel without wings would make a jewel of a wife, and, thirdly and most troublesomely, that I shall be the most ungrateful beast on earth and the stupidest old duffer if I don't straightway let the lady know I think so. Unfortunately, as I protested to my sister, and have admitted to you, I can't honestly say that I am the least bit in love with Miss Wethered. I like her very much, you know, and all that sort of thing—possibly more than I like any other girl of my acquaintance—and I have reason to believe that she is not entirely indifferent to me, and that if I only—"

The doctor's lips curved scornfully, involuntarily, and a glow of color that was hardly a blush suffused his face.

"And Jess tells me," continued the young officer imperturbably, "that I might do a very much worse thing than marry Mary Wethered. You know, old chap, I've led a lot of a life in India and elsewhere! Terrible lot of racketing! We army men, you know—! So, you see, old fellow, I—er—oh—you know—I—well—er—love is for me a dream of the joyful past, and not a