

MANTELL AS "KING JOHN"

ESSAYS A PART WHICH MANY TRAGEDIANS REJECTED.

He Was at His Best in the Quieter Scenes—In Others There Was Plenty of Sound and Fury but Not Much of Kingliness—An Adequate Production.

Mr. Robert Mantell's compelling motive in returning to New York at the New Amsterdam Theatre last night in a production of Shakespeare's tragedy of "King John" was one to be commended. He desired to present to the public one of the Elizabethan master's works which is seldom to be seen and to do it in a dignified manner; and, truth to tell, Mr. Mantell has done all that Mr. Mantell could do to achieve these ends. But, truth to tell also, it is doubtful if it is worth the pains of Mr. Mantell, or in fact the pains of any actor short of one possessed of towering genius.

If one is not in error, "King John" was first seen in this country when Edwin Booth enacted the part. Both Macready and Charles Kean also undertook it, the latter in this country, while the part of Lady Constance was one that Mrs. Siddons is said to have played with great effect. The character of King John is not, however, one to attract prominently the attention of tragedians in search of channels through which to pour out all the epulence of their equipments and Garrick is reported to have been so dissatisfied with it that after first appearing as the evil King he abandoned that character in favor of the part of Faulconbridge in the same play.

It is a pretty late day for the feeble reviewers of this time to devote much attention to any analysis or discussion of the tragedy "King John." The glances of the commentators would have attended to that so thoroughly that it would probably be highly entertaining to hear what Shakespeare would say if he were to learn what he had really been trying to say in this play without knowing it at the time.

It is sufficient for the purpose of the present moment to remind the public that none of the flock of commentators ever held "King John" to be one of Shakespeare's greatest achievements, though it contains isolated passages which give scope for the talents of the greatest of tragic actors. Such scenes are, for example, the grief of Lady Constance when bereft of her son, the little Prince Arthur, the scene in which King John insinuates into the mind of Hubert the idea that he desires the death of Arthur, and the denunciation of Hubert by King John when the monarch believes the execution of the actual command has wrought him irretrievable ruin.

For the rest, to a modern audience the tragedy, even when read in the closet (which is a badly ventilated place supposed to be especially designed for Shakespearean studies), seems spasmodic, episodic in the extreme, and in fact, aside from the occasional flashes of the true Shakespearean passion and imagination, it is little more than a series of historical tableaux none too closely knit together. Those who can remember Edwin Booth's impersonation of the evil son of Henry II. will be able to say whether it was possible for genius to bind these tableaux together into a vital entity. Certainly nothing but genius is capable of such a task.

"King John," as we know of him from history and as being an attractive character. He was weak and vacillating, even in his evil impulses. "He was of amiable stature," says Holinshed, "but of looks and countenance displeasing and angry and not so hardie as doubtful in time of peril and danger."

Like most weak men clothed with authority he was fond of bombast and prone to lay the consequences of his own mistakes of judgment upon the shoulders of those who served him. He came to an ill end from poison administered by a fanatical monk and nobody seems to have regretted his manner of passing, save the effervescent Faulconbridge, the son of Richard of the Lion Heart, who had a wicked master with a vigor and a courage worthy of a nobler cause.

Mr. Mantell has given this tragedy a production to be properly described as adequate, though one regrets that men at arms of the twelfth century should see fit to clothe their feet in white rubber-soled "sneakers," which are scarcely adapted to long marches.

The text has been cut with good judgment and nothing vital to the story has been omitted. Mr. Mantell's own performance was about what would be expected of him by those familiar with his quality and achievements. The quieter scenes found him at his best, and in the scene in which he persuades Hubert to promise the murder of the young Prince Arthur, claimed as his throne, he really compassed an effect that was thrilling in its haunting suggestion of a dark and guilty purpose. Here the actor's fine and mellow voice was heard to excellent effect. In the larger scenes there was plenty of sound and fury, but little that was truly kingly.

Miss Marie Booth Russell essayed the touching character of Lady Constance. She is the possessor of a regal figure and a face of classic strength, but it would be idle to say that she was equal to the demands of the part. Indeed, it would be difficult to find an actress on our stage who is.

It takes an extraordinary wealth of tragic power to pour out that perfect flood of maternal grief over the cruel fate of a princely son with such passion as to make it seem anything but lines that are being spoken by an actress. Certainly they seemed little else as spoken by Miss Russell.

The famous scene in the castle room when Arthur so moves his jailer to compassion as to prevail upon him not to burn out his eyes with a hot iron if not for the pitiful beauty of the language put in the childish Prince's mouth, and last night its melodramatic quality was the more clearly revealed by the inadequate manner in which the language was spoken.

In the course of it is sacrilege to say it, but there is no denying that without the presence of histrionic genius to vitalize "King John" upon the modern stage is dull-deadly dull.

HOPKINS MEN DINE.

Alumni Here Elect Dr. Simon Flexner President for the Coming Year.

The New York alumni of Johns Hopkins University held their sixteenth annual dinner last night at the Yale Club. The retiring president of the association, Dr. William Thompson, presided. There were fifty present. Among the men who made the most telling talks were Dr. John M. Glenn, Dr. Rufus Cole, Everett Wheeler and Dr. Simon Flexner. After the dinner the alumni association elected Dr. Flexner as its president for the coming year.

"RIGOLETTO" AND "MANON."

A Reversion of Type Made No Disturbance at the Manhattan Opera House.

The operatic joys of last night at both houses were in what might be called "second sittings." At the Manhattan Opera House Mr. Hammerstein offered to his eager auditors that tried and true veteran of the operatic battlefield, "Rigoletto." Despite the fact that the tenor of the occasion had applied the tape measure to the type in which his name was printed and found it a fraction of a point below its market value, and had thereupon uttered loud cries of woe, the performance went on according to advertisement and the sismograph in Mr. Hammerstein's office recorded nothing greater than the landslide of a small bluff.

Mme. Tetrazzini was the *Gilda*. It is a role which she has often sung, but last night she exercised special care. She was very exact in her delivery of "Caro Nome" and again there might be a complaint that the type was not just the right size. But all went well. Her husband again presented his striking impersonation of the jester, and Mr. Gilbert was a most effective *Monterone*. On the whole it was an excellent performance.

"Manon" was sung for the fifth time at the Metropolitan Opera House last night. The audience was one of moderate size and moderate rapture. Miss Farrar, who had the title role, was in better voice than she was at the last presentation of the opera. On that occasion she and Mr. Caruso did some singing and a great deal of shouting, but last night the prima donna sang more and shouted less.

LAURENCE IRVING IN A SKETCH.

"The King and the Vagabond" Makes Vaudeville Goers Take Notice.

Laurence Irving and his wife, Miss Mabel Hackney, gave seasoned vaudeville consumers something so periously poetic at the American Music Hall yesterday that with the bang bang music of Harry Von Tilzer still in their ears Mr. Irving's sketch, "The King and the Vagabond," had to force its way into appreciation through sheer force of the acting of the principals. This was of a nature unusual in vaudeville houses.

Mr. Irving essayed to bring the memory of his distinguished father, Sir Henry Irving, into vivid presence by playing the part of Louis XI. The sketch was one Mr. Irving wrote himself, adapting it from De Zola's play of "Le Capitaine Corcoran." It is a very fetching little story it is, and one reminiscent of McCarthy's "If I Were King."

The work that Mr. Irving put into his quick delineation of the senile old monster on the throne was forceful and effective. In portions of his characterization the last act of the *Louis XI.* of Sir Henry Irving was very nearly touched. Miss Hackney played the part with a sprightliness and boyishness that carried the spirit of the playlet. The support and the setting of the piece were both excellent.

NO GERMAN THEATRE RECEIVER.

Court Denies Dr. Baumfield's Application, but Property Must Be Transferred.

The application of Maurice Baumfield for the appointment of a receiver for the German Theatre was denied yesterday by Justice O'Gorman in the Supreme Court. Baumfield is suing for \$3,650 back salary as manager of the theatre and alleges that the directors accepted for production early next season a new comedy of American life by Kellott Chambers. Gustav von Seyffertitz, stage director for Miss Maude Adams, has been engaged for a limited engagement following the conclusion of Miss Julia Marlowe's season in "The Goddess of Reason," which has been extended until Saturday, March 27. Dr. Southern will begin his season on March 29 and will appear in repertoire, including "Hamlet," "If I Were King," "Rigoletto" and "Lord Dunsinore."

NEWS OF PLAYS AND PLAYERS.

Charles Frohman Announces the Cast for Bernstein's "Israel."

Charles Frohman announces that his principal production next season will be Henri Bernstein's "Israel," the cast of which is now completed so far as its principal members are concerned. Mr. Frohman will present "Israel" without a star. The three principal members of the company will be Miss Constance Collier, James O'Neill and Holbrook Blinn, playing respectively the mother, the father and the son—the chief characters in the play.

Harrison Grey Fiske has engaged Consuelo Bailey for the rôle of *Lulu* (the chorus girl) in his forthcoming production of Roy McCordell's comedy, "The Gay Life."

Another new act was added to the Hippodrome circus yesterday. Ella Bradna and Frederick Derrick appeared in a riding act and were well received. Henry B. Harris accepted for production early next season a new comedy of American life by Kellott Chambers. Gustav von Seyffertitz, stage director for Miss Maude Adams, has been engaged for a limited engagement following the conclusion of Miss Julia Marlowe's season in "The Goddess of Reason," which has been extended until Saturday, March 27. Dr. Southern will begin his season on March 29 and will appear in repertoire, including "Hamlet," "If I Were King," "Rigoletto" and "Lord Dunsinore."

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B. B. Johnston's Will Upheld.

The will of Benjamin B. Johnston, over which there has been a contest for several days before the Surrogate's Court in Brooklyn, was admitted to probate yesterday. Most of the estate, valued at about \$3,000,000, was bequeathed to Thomas S. Faulkner, a cousin of the testator. Several relatives joined in the contest, alleging that the deceased was mentally incapable of making a will.

"Brewster's Millions" at the Academy.

"Brewster's Millions" were dissipated last night at the Academy of Music, where Edwin Ables successfully reassumed the rôle of a spendthrift before a large and appreciative audience. The play was supported by the original company.

Leaves Estate to Wesleyley.

BOETON, March 8.—By her will, filed today in the Probate Court, Ellen A. Kendall left her residuary estate to Wesleyley College to found a professorship bearing her name. It is provided that if the fund exhausts itself, the residue of the bequest shall be used to aid worthy students.

MIMI AGUGLIA IN "ZAZA"

SICILIAN ACTRESS GIVES A CONVINCING PERFORMANCE.

Shows Admirable Restraint in the Strong Scenes and Makes the Whole Part Realistic—Her Support was Only Creditable—Only a Fair Audience.

In the presentation of "Zaza" at Mr. Frohman's matinee performance at the Criterion Theatre, Signora Mimi Aguglia with her Sicilian troupe, now back in New York, for the first time gives her American audiences the opportunity of comparing her art with that of other actresses in a well known play. It needs no long dramatic memory to recall Mme. Réjane, Mme. Nazimova and, of course, Mrs. Leslie Carter, not to mention lesser lights.

The long cast called the whole forces of the Aguglia, Balestrieri and Anselmi families and they all acted creditably. The first act gave the opportunity for much concerted action in which the lesser lights of the company showed the liveliness and unity which marked the Sicilian plays. There was the same contrast between the vivacious materialism and freshness of part of the players and the careful acting and beautiful enunciation of another part.

A remarkable bit of consistent character acting was Signora Anselmi's disreputable stage mother; pretty Signora Virginia Balestrieri had her hair torn out again, and little Miss Desdemona Balestrieri, though a trifle too big for her part, did the child's part very nicely. Signor Bongini as the impresario, Signor Lo Tarco in a minor part, the old beau, the waiter and all the men did very well indeed.

All the play turns, however, on two characters, Zaza and her recreant lover. Signora Aguglia's conception of Zaza in the first act is pretty common. The dressing and undressing scene is a queer example of realism. There is nothing suggestive or indecent about it, though the actress does not hesitate to display her figure; the impression is of course reality and that is true of her endeavors to entice her lover as well. Nothing indicates the woman who will appear in the third and fourth acts.

In the third act, where Zaza encounters her lover's wife and child, the audience perhaps expects the exposure of the earlier Zaza. There Signora Aguglia surprises them. The restraint and pathos of the scene with the child are wholly admirable. The scene on which the curtain falls is natural and effective.

The fourth act is the climax of the play, and here Signora Aguglia showed the talent which has endeared her to the comparisons to which her managers have subjected her. The scene in which she exposes her recreant lover is absolutely striking. It is like the best of the Sicilian country girl tragedies. She is suffering, heartbroken woman; there is not a word or a gesture too much. Her acting and singing are of a high order and are well seen. At the end her Zaza attracts all of the audience's sympathy.

Signor Toto Majorano's acting was remarkable. In all the plays in which he has appeared he has shown a certain quality in some scene of passionate violence. Here he has an utterly ungrateful part to play and must hold himself in check throughout. His resistance to the actress's enticements in the first act, the way in which he showed without words that he was lying in the second, and the manner in which he betrayed his real feelings in the fourth were examples of excellent art.

The audience, though fair, was not as large as the performance deserved. It was composed in large part of Americans who appreciated the artistic finish of this Italian Zaza. The lack of public spirit and of patriotism in the Italian portion of New York has been the early performance of the Sicilian troupe, and it was evident again in the conspicuous absence of Italians at the first representation of Mimi Aguglia's Zaza.

THE COLUMBIA SHOW.

"In Newport" Pleases a Large Audience at the Waldorf.

When the doors of the grand ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria opened last night for the first performance of "In Newport," the annual variety show of the Columbia University Players Club, practically the entire undergraduate section of the Morning-side Heights college trooped in, accompanied, of course, by their mothers and sisters. Most of them, however, had their best girls along, who said nothing but "Oh!" and "Ah!" and "How funny," as they watched the boy feminine stars and the boy chorus girls.

Every one who has ever seen or heard of a variety show knows that the players who have to essay feminine pretensions have no little trouble with their dresses, their hair and their hats. On the whole the amateur players got through their ordeal last night in first class shape and their dresses were little the worse for wear. "In Newport" too came through its first trial with flying colors, and when the actors get things running smoothly they should make a pretty good impression. Their efforts met with lots of approval from the large audience last night.

The play had rather more plot than is usual in Columbia shows and everybody was humming the catchy lyrics when the performance was over. The star of the show is Edna May, a beautiful, "artificial" girl that ever happened. Bulwinkel is only a freshman, but last night he was the *Prince Elena of Kronstadt*. The play had come to Newport in search of her wandering fiancé, the *Prince Karl*, who had been in America for some time and whom Alonzo K. Todd, an oil king, was trying to buy for his daughter Sylvia.

There is just about enough music to cover up the plot fairly well, and the large chorus makes plenty of well rendered melody. The rest of the play had come to Newport in search of her wandering fiancé, the *Prince Karl*, who had been in America for some time and whom Alonzo K. Todd, an oil king, was trying to buy for his daughter Sylvia.

College atmosphere is on the stage in abundance, with Columbia atmosphere predominating. The college and the graduate jokesmiths get in some good work on their "profs," and in one song they even go so far as to introduce Brander Matthews, Dean Van Arman, who the play had been as Van Arman, William Allen Hewey and Nicholas Murray Butler in his Oxford dip and his scarlet Cambridge gown.

Water E. Kelley, who had been the leading comedian in six former variety shows, came on for his seventh season as the minstrel who owned the name of *Harold Pembroke*. *Harold* didn't get in many funny yarns, but his whole performance was ludicrous enough, for the audience was convulsed.

The audience was quite a distinguished one, for in addition to many well known patronesses Baron Mayor des Planches, the Italian Ambassador at Washington, and Elbert H. Gary and a number of other notables were present. Dustin Farnum to marry. CHICAGO, March 8.—Dustin Farnum, the actor, and Miss M. B. Conwell, his leading lady, are soon to be married. Mr. Farnum refused to give the date. He got a license last Thursday under the name of D. Lancy Farnum, 34 years of age, and married Miss Conwell. Her residence was given as Cadiz, Ohio. Through the kindness of Miss Amy

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NEW THINGS AT MUSEUM NOTABLE ADDITION OF GREEK AND ROMAN ART WORKS. Marbles, Bronzes and Other Objects Bought Abroad in 1908—Paintings by Sorolla Acquired—The Hearn Collection Increased by Seven Pictures.

YERKES GALLERY HITCH. Syndicate That Bought Debts Sufficiency of the Title.

Townsend of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association a sword formerly owned by George Washington has been temporarily loaned to the museum. The attention at the museum shows an increase of \$1,224 over the same month last year.

A hitch has occurred over the sale of the art gallery of the late Charles T. Yerkes at Fifth avenue and Sixty-eighth street, and yesterday counsel for the Mutual Life Insurance Company, which held the mortgage for \$250,000 on the property and under whose order the property was sold recently for \$277,500, applied to Justice O'Gorman for an order to compel the syndicate of real estate dealers who made the buying bid to take title to the property.

Justice O'Gorman reserved decision. Henry Morgenstern, Max Marx and Andrew J. Connick are said to be members of the syndicate that bought the property.

Princess Lwoff-Parlaghi—at least that is the way she authorized the Hamburg-American Line's Hamburg representative to put her on the passenger list of the steamship Deutschland, in yesterday from Hamburg—was unwilling to be interviewed. In this she violated precedents that she had established on other occasions of landing and sailing. When she sailed from this port last June she took away a little zoo, in which were sea-going crocodiles and pelicans beyond a lot of other creatures that were more familiar with the shores than the ocean.

Whether Mrs. Lwoff-Parlaghi is a princess or not, she has a suite quite as good as those that are worn by them on a voyage. Her own physician, Dr. Herman Strobel; her secretary, Frederick M. Doherty, and a tall bodyguard named Zuercher, in gray uniform and with feather in his cap, were among them. Accompanying her were twenty trunks, with twenty more coming on another ship. Her secretary said she would go to Lakewood for recreation and that later she would resume her artistic task of painting the "twenty greatest living Americans."

All the Princess's trunks were decorated in paint with the Austro-Hungarian colors.

Mrs. Hunt Buried in Newport. Newport, March 8.—The body of Mrs. Catherine C. Hunt, widow of Richard M. Hunt, the architect who died in Egypt, was buried at Newport today. Accompanying the body from New York were Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Howland Hunt, Mr. and Mrs. Richard H. Hunt, Herbert Hunt, Pay Director and Mrs. Livingston Hunt and the Rev. Dr. Huntington Grace Church, New York, who read the committal service.

New York Zeta Psi. A number of the Zeta Psi fraternity now in New York met at the Hotel Imperial last night and organized the Zeta Psi Association of New York. Third Deputy Police Commissioner Hanson was elected president and F. Goldkowitz Sheriff secretary and treasurer. They decided to have the first dinner at the Imperial on May 8 and expect to have a new Cabinet officer as guest of honor.

The Metropolitan Opera Company announces that it has engaged Edmond Clément for the new French company. Mr. Clément is the first tenor of the Opera Comique in Paris. His career has been confined to Paris, where he was born in 1868.

The Seagoers. Sailing to-day by the Holland-America steamship No. 4, Nordland, for Boulogne and Rotterdam: Mrs. F. A. Manning, F. Berkeley Smith, Mrs. A. M. Webb, Francis Thayer and H. J. Van Watering. Dr. Lyman Abbott and the Right Rev. B. B. Usher were passengers by the Porto Rico steamship Ponca, in yesterday from Ponca.

Arrivals by the Panama Railroad's steamship Colón, from the Canal Zone: Rear Admiral W. C. Wise, Gen. E. L. B. Davis and Lieut. John Downes and Paymaster F. P. Lester of the navy.

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