SOME COMMENT ON PLAYS PAST AND PLAYS TO COME.

The Olympic Theater has broken some records in the present season. Miss Marlowe's eight performances of "When Knighthood Was in Flower" show receipts in excess of those of any other group of eight performances in this lady's interesting career. The week just ended is the most successful of the present season.

Miss Mannering's St. Louis receipts with "Janice Meredith" broke the record for that piece, and held it even now. Miss Allen's St. Louis business was the greatest that has gone to "In the Palace of the King" so far this season, although it fell short of "The Christian's" enormous takings of the year before.

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Various opinions as to Miss Marlowe's new piece unite when the question of the star's individual performance comes up. Miss Marlowe's Mary Tudor is the best thing she has done. It contains more phases of womanly character than any part written in many years, and the Marlowe versatility is broad enough to cover all of them. The play itself is capital entertainment. To find the Middle Centuries smashing on the stage is in itself most welcome discovery. To find it currently comic is a delight. William Marion Reedy, who analyzes plays and things most skillfully, says that the story of "When Knighthood Was in Flower" ought to be set to music, with Jerome Sykes or Francis Wilson as the fat King Henry and Lulu Glaser or Alice Nelsen as Mary Brandon.

All of this may come about.

* * * *

The crush at yesterday's Marlowe matinee was one of notable things of this theatrical year. It was the biggest audience of the season—mostly feminine. Not at all curiously, the chief single point of interest was the Brandon-Tudor kiss, the best and least offensive love-making shown on the stage in many years. The attitude of the audience was interestingly different from the position taken by audiences that saw the "Sapho" scenes of last year. On that occasion the crowd was there, just about as it was yesterday, but it seemed to be half ashamed of itself. Yesterday there was no such suggestion. A wave of whispering ran through the audience.

"Now!" exclaimed a pretty girl who was there Monday night, and who knew what was coming next. "This is where he kisses her."

There has been no such kissing on the stage in this generation. There is nothing bad about it, nothing to shock, nothing that may be called scandalous by most prudish folk. Mary Tudor loves Charles and means to marry him. She tells all of this in her kissing—simply, cloquently, effectively. So it was no wonder that the great feminine audience of yesterday whispered and gasped in very delight when sweet Mary cuddled.

* * * *

From "The Gay Lord of Quex" these lines have been extracted:

A man loves to think a girl is like an angel—beautiful pink and white right through, with no clockwork. The moment she complains of headache, a toothache, or a chilblain on the heel, the angel game is off, and she's got to try and hold her own as a simple mortal. And as a mortal she's not in it with a man.

It sounds almost like the late Mr. Wilde.

* * * *

Miss Florence Rockwell, a young actress who has lived in St. Louis, has been engaged as leading woman for Henry Miller. Miss Rockwell has been most fortunate in her associations. She acted with the late Mr. Keene, with Mr. O'Neill and with Sol Smith Russell. Now she goes with the best actor of his class, Mr. Henry Miller. Miss Rockwell has always had much promise, but she has not yet reached the period of fulfillment. Mr. Miller's excellent art may prove helpful.

* * * *

Uncommon interest attaches to a piano recital to be given by Miss Stella Weiner at Memorial Hall next Friday evening. Miss Weiner is an exceptionally brilliant pupil of Mr. Victor Ehling. The complimentary recital precedes Miss Weiner's marriage, intimation of which has already been published. She will be assisted on the occasion of her recital by Mr. Homer Moore and Messrs. Heerich, Kielsmeier and Froehlich.

The programme will be as follows:

Quartet, op. 25 ..... Brahms
Allegro, andante con moto ..... Pierné
Mr. Heerich, Mr. Kielsmeier, Mr. Froehlich and Miss Weiner.
Chromatic Fantasie and Fugue ..... Bach
Miss Weiner.
Love Song, Walkure ..... Wagner
Mr. Homer Moore.
Etude—D flat ..... Liszt
Mazurka, op. 33, No. 4 ..... Chopin
Nocturne, op. 15, No. 2 ..... Chopin
Czardas ..... MacDowell
Miss Weiner.
Ich Grolle Nicht ..... Schumann
One More ..... Somervell
Marie ..... Jonas
Mr. Moore.
Widmung ..... Schumann-Liszt
Aria ..... Schumann
Gavotte Moderne ..... Hambourg
Miss Weiner.

* * * *

This announcement concerning Mme. Bernhardt's pronunciation of "L'Aiglon" comes from a high-class New York critical authority:

She pronounces it Leglohhhhng, with the accent on the Leg and the rest nasal. This settles a problem that has much distressed society.

* * * *

It is reported that Mr. Richard Mansfield will play in Stephen Phillips's blank verse "Herod," which has been done in England by Beerbohm Tree. Brief extracts from the piece, which tells of Herod's love for Miramne, follows:

I dreamed last night of a dome of beaten gold,
To be a counter-glory to the sun.
There shall the eagle blindly dash himself,
There the first beam shall strike, and there the moon
Shall aim all night her argent archery;
And it shall be the tryst of sundered stars,
The haunt of dead and dreaming Solomon;
Shall send a light upon the lost in hell,
And flaming upon faces without hope.
And I will think in gold and dream in silver,
Imagine in marble and in bronze conceive,
Till it shall dazzle pilgrim nations,
And stammering tribes from undiscovered lands,
Allure the living God out of the bliss,
And all the streaming seraphim from heaven!
And this, spoken over Miramne's dead body:
Why, if I am denied the sight of her,
If there hath been mischance to her—I say not
There hath been—yet so fineless is my will,
I'll create her out of endless yearning,
And flesh shall cleave to bone, and blood shall run.
Do I not know her every vein? Can I
Not imitate in furious ecstasy
What God hath coldly made! I'll recreate
My love with bone for bone and vein for vein.

* * * *

Eleanor Robson, who is well remembered in St. Louis for much acting well done, has left the "Arizona" company in New York to play under the management of Liebler & Co., who have had many successes, the greatest of which is the Viola Allen enterprise.

Next year Miss Robson will pass under the management of La Shelle & Hamlin.

* * * *

Miss Marlowe is very happy over the success of "When Knighthood Was in Flower." Speaking of it the other afternoon, she said:

"I believe that the play will gain in public esteem. This play has meant so much to me. I have nursed it as a mother would a child. I have thought of it and dreamed over it. I have seen it grow and mature. I feel that it is part of me, or that I am part of it, whichever you choose. It was just this time two years ago that I met Mr. Major and made my contract to have the play. It was in St. Louis at this time of the year. It seems like a coincidence that I should produce it here. This is something else that I am thankful for. When I read 'When Knighthood Was in Flower' I fell in love with it. I used to get letters from friends telling me that it was just the play for me and that they thought that the character of Mary Tudor must have been drawn from me. This was absurd, for, at the time, I did not know Mr. Major and he did not know me, but, strange to say, he, too, had received letters asking him if he had not drawn Mary from his knowledge of me. Thus it was that I first came to see a play in the novel, and to have the idea that I should like to produce it. We have been rehearsing it for a month only. Not so long a time as I should have liked. It has cost a lot of money to put on. How much I dare not say, nor even think, and I only hope that my bank account will hold out. I know that one pair of stockings alone cost $24. Isn't it horrible? But, then, we have spared no expense. I have bought and bought without asking the price of anything. I only know that I wished the play put on as it should be and I feel satisfied. Yes, I have been identified with the work of dramatizing the novel, but the most of it was done by my friend, Mr. Paul Kester."

* * * *

To the Editor of The Republic:

St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 30.—In a discussion of the leading actresses of the American stage I contended that Julia Marlowe is easily the most pleasing, the sweetest—if you will pardon a woman's expression which conveys something that no other word expresses—and the favorite above all. My friends gave me the merry ha, ha, declaring that Miss Marlowe's art does not approach that of Ada Rehan and Minnie Maddern Fiske. In reply to this I said that Miss Marlowe possesses a charm of manner that neither Mrs. Fiske nor Miss Rehan has. Being a constant reader of your reviews and valuing your opinion in such matters, I ask you to say something on the subject. If I am wrong I certainly have a lot of good company, for the theater-going public pays a great deal more attention to Miss Marlowe than to either of the other ladies. Witness the tremendous houses which Miss Marlowe draws. O. L. B.

Easily answered. Mrs. Fiske is a great actress, probably the best of the "abused woman" type now living. Ada Rehan was a great actress. Julia Marlowe is now a greater actress, from the standpoint of commanding versatility, than either. She will live to be a greater.

* * * *

Oscar Dane of the Lipman and Mann company, which opens this evening at the Century, in their new comedy, "All On Account of Eliza," is a St. Louis boy, the son of the Reverend Doctor H. J. Messing. His many friends and admirers here will, no doubt, give him a warm welcome. The part he plays in the comedy, and which is his own creation, is that of a typical, old, weather-beaten farmer. The comedy opened the season at the Garrick Theater, in New York. Mr. Dane, while here, will stop with his parents at their residence, No. 4129 Delmar boulevard.

* * * *

Wilson Barrett's problem play, "Man and His Makers," which is creating a decidedly favorable impression in the British Provinces, deals with the subject of heredity as opposed to man's will, aided by the godliness and goodliness of a woman's love. The play is said to be a sincere effort on Mr. Barrett's part to show that there is much more that is fresh and sweet and good in life and in human nature than the cynical playwriter of the day would have us believe, and at the same time it contains enough strong human interest to make it an attraction for the class of theater-goers who do not go below the surface and appreciate its psychological aspect.

* * * *

At the Olympic Theater, beginning Monday, December 10, the Bostonians will make their re-entry in a new comic opera by Victor Herbert, named "The Viceroy." This composition has never been heard here and comes with a cordial indorsement from other cities. Victor Herbert, as a composer needs no introduction here, as his work in "The Serenade" and other operas would augur well for this latest work. From all accounts the opera is said to be replete with dainty melody, has a whimsical story for a background and is gorgeously and graphically illustrated by special scenery and costumes. The cast will include Barnabee, MacDonald, Hilda Clark, Frothingham, Josephine Bartlett, W. H. Fitzgerald, Albert Parr, Adele Rafter, John Dunsmure and other well known artists of the lyric stage.

* * * *

Very pleasant and gratifying is the news that has from time to time reached St. Louis concerning the success of "When We Were Twenty-One," the new comedy, which Mr. N. C. Goodwin and Miss Maxine Elliott will present at the Olympic Theater tomorrow night and during their brief engagement there. The play tells of the enduring friendship of four middle-aged bachelor friends, of whom Richard Carewe, the part played by Mr. Goodwin, is one. They became friends in their youth, and a fifth shared in the sacred association. The fifth one died, leaving a son, who in the play has grown to manhood's estate, bearing the soubriquet of "The Imp." The "quadrity," as the four bachelors are called, voluntarily undertake the bringing up and education of this "Imp" played by Henry Woodruff. He is sowing his wild oats in a series of dramatic adventures, and the effort of the bachelors, especially of Carewe, to remove him from his folly, forms the pivot of the story.

These rude remarks about a St. Louis prima donna come from the pen of the New York Journal's critic, Mr. Alan Dale:

The role of Fleur-de-Lys was sung by Miss Grace Van Studdiford, a comely young woman, who sings pleasantly and with the wild abandon of a blanc mange. Miss Van Studdiford looked very nice indeed, and extremely tidy in her own boudoir.

In this connection it is well to say that Miss Van Studdiford has received much cordial attention at the hands of critics who have journeyed to the Metropolitan.

Miss Gertrude Quinlan, whose Pitti Sing in last year's Castle Square production of "Mikado" was one of the distinct hits of the season, and who appears Monday night as Estrelda in "El Capitan," has the reputation of being the "quickest study" among the Castle Square forces. "Quick study" in stage parlance means the ability to memorize the music lines and stage business of a part in short order. All things considered, it is one of the greatest and, according to most stage managers, the most grateful accomplishment of the stage artist. Like all phases of mental equipment, it is hereditary. It cannot be acquired. Given an active mind, a love for the profession of acting, and a general adaptability to sudden circumstances, the assumption of a part or role in a theatrical performance is comparatively easy. Only the hardest kind of work, real playing, makes it possible in the absence of the attributes. A finished performance comes to many actors and singers only after the most painful effort on the part of themselves and the stage manager. Indeed, it very frequently happens that what appears as a spontaneous, inspired effort on the part of this or that footlight favorite has been achieved only after every inch of energy has been exhausted.

With Miss Quinlan the opposite is the case. She not only comes to the rehearsal "letter perfect," as the saying goes, but that same first rehearsal puts her into position to assume any character that plays "opposite" to her own. . . r versatility extends even further than that. She memorizes the choruses and frequently knows the "business" of all the male characters as well. The stage manager considers her a jewel whenever she subdues her mischievous ways during the rehearsal. Otherwise he has his uncomfortable quarter of an hour with her. Miss Quinlan believes that it is well that stage managers, being by nature autocrats, must not have their own way all the time. Her success is undoubtedly due to her mental alertness. This enables her to come on with every detail of her part thoroughly familiarized. She therefore can devote all her time when in sight of the audience to the study of that audience.

Her first impression of the assembly gained, she maps out h work to suit the particular assembly before her, and before her first scene is half over she convinces the house to the full extent of the importance of the part she has assumed.

This story is told of her in Philadelphia, where some four years ago she sang a minor part: The prima donna, on her exit in the middle of the second act, stumbled in the wings, fell and fainted. Efforts to revive her in time for her next entrance failed. Miss Quinlan was in the audience. The stage manager sent for her in a hurry. Miss Quinlan donned the prima donna's costume and completed the performance, saving it and the management, with not a bit of difficulty. In St. Louis, in the past season she has done this repeatedly, and not a little of her popularity on both sides of the footlights is due to this fact.

The appended appreciation of the music of "El Capitan" is probably the only technical estimate of this composition yet written. It is from the pen of Waldemar Malmene of this city:

The opening chorus introduces the nobles of Castillian birth draining their golden goblets; the music is sparkling, like the choicest wine of royal Spain, and vivacious throughout, especially in the Unison passages. A short solo by the Princess Marchioni, the wife of Medigua, the recently appointed Viceroy of Peru, is followed by the more elaborate aria of Isabel, her daughter, "Ah, Beautiful Land of Spain," in both selections Sousa aims to impart to the music the characteristic expressions of the Spanish national dances, notably that of the "Cachuca," in which the rhythm is well marked by the castanets. Veranda's tenor solo, "From Peru's Majestic Mountains," is of a martial character, full of sweet melody; the refrain is taken up by the chorus, forming an excellent climax. The opening chorus is repeated, the principals having at the same time an effective counter-melody.

The second scene begins with a vigorous chorus in march time, which greets Don Medigua, whose personality as the comedian of the opera is easily shown in the humorous ditty, "If You Examine Human Kind," and when afterwards he declares "a tempus goes against my grain, I'm just as mild as mild can be," all of which is emphasized by the refrain, "Tra, la, la, la," in which the chorus chimes in.

Estrelda's solo, "When We Hear the Call to Battle," supported by the chorus, introducing the third scene, is unique, but reminds slightly of Sullivan, and is, nevertheless, very effective.

Isabel's air, "Oh, Spare a Daughter's Aching Heart," is pathetic, while Don Medigua's solo, "You Praise My Heart So Touches," has a very characteristic accompaniment. In the subsequent two-step march Sousa appears in his happiest mood, to which the finale, introducing a dainty little waltz by Estrelda, "Rash Is the Man Who Would Question a Maiden," forms a very effective climax.

The second act is ushered in by the drill chorus, "Your Chest Throw Out in a Marked Degree," in which the orchestra has the chief burden, although it consists of but a quaint repetition of a two-measure phrase, until the melodious strains of the drummer boys' "A Sailor's Life May be Romantic" is introduced. The duet between Estrelda and Don Medigua is extremely funny in its character, but none the less interesting from a musical standpoint. The double chorus of Spanish and Peruvian ladies, "Bowed With Tribulation," in which the principals participate, is ingeniously worked out by the composer. A charming waltz melody is wedded to the words, "Just Suppose That Your Career," sung by Isabel, at the close of which the composer gives the singer an excellent opportunity to exhibit culture and compass of voice. The sextet, "Don Medigua, Here's Your Wife," is one of the most interesting numbers in the opera. The comic vein of the situation is musically most felicitously interpreted.

There is a force and verve in all the catchy phrases with which Sousa has enlivened the scene and situation of each of the participants, while the orchestral treatment shows rare skill which will bear favorable comparison with anything which either Offenbach, Sullivan or Genee has ever written. Who could help feeling hilarious when the ensemble joins in the coda, "Papa, Dear, I So Miss You, I Must Kiss You."

The third act is, musically considered, very brief, but none the less interesting. The duet between Isabel and Veranda has a delicious flavor of sentimental melody, to which the underlying harmony and skillful orchestration lend additional charm, all of which show the composer's fertile imagination. Don Medigua has another jovial ditty, in which the waltz, "Then Adieu to Care, in the Wine So Rare," has a captivating tune, in the composition of which, judging by its length, Sousa must have taken a special liking.

"A Typical Tune of Zanzibar" is another gem of refined musical comedy which never fails to call forth the warmest applause, due to both the comedian and the composer. The introductory chorus to the entrance of the Spanish troupe, full of joyous sounds, leads directly into the finale, "We Beg Your Kind Consideration," in which Medigua has the burden of the song until chorus and principals unite in forcible tones to bring "El Capitan" to a glorious close.

WILLIAM PRUETTE.
As El Capitan at Music Hall this week.

FRANK MOULAN.
As Pozzo in "El Capitan."

BILLS IN PROSPECT.

The cast in "El Capitan" at Music Hall this week will be as follows:

Don Medigua ..... William Pruette
Pozzo ..... Frank Moulan
Chanino ..... Wm. Hinshaw
Verrada ..... Reginald Roberts
Scaroba ..... Edwin Clark
Nevada ..... H. Haynes
Montalba ..... J. P. Coombs
Herbana ..... Chas. W. Meyers
Estrelda ..... Gertrude Quinlan
Princess ..... Blanche Chapman
Isabella ..... Maude Lillian Berri
Taeltorna ..... Idelia Terhune

Mr. Nat Goodwin and the beautiful Miss Maxine Elliott will be in St. Louis this week, beginning tomorrow evening. They come to the Olympic and will present a play about which all sorts of pleasant things have been said, "When We Were Twenty-one," by Henry V. Esmond. The play tells of the enduring friendship of four middle-aged bachelors who try to bring up the orphan son of a fifth friend in the way he should go. Mr. Goodwin is one of the bachelors. "The Bostonians" will be the next attraction at the Olympic.

A play that is new to St. Louis will be presented at the Century tonight by Louis Mann and Clara Lipman. It has the rather fetching title of "All on Account of Eliza" and is written by Leo Ditrichstein. The two stars have deserted plays of French naughtiness in atmosphere and betaken themselves, in their new roles, to rural scenes and to pastures new. They come from the Garrick Theater, New York. Next week "The Burgomaster" comes to the Century.

At the Odeon Sunday concert this afternoon at 2:30 Mr. Robyn will be at the organ, Mr. Joseph Menown will sing "For the Sake of the Past," Miss Marietta Bagby will sing "The Storm" and Mr. Joseph Erman will be at the piano. The second part of the programme will be the cantata of "The Holy City" by the full surpliced choir of the Holy Communion Church, with Miss Luella Webb, Miss Marietta Bagby, Miss Eugenia Getner, Mr. Joseph Buse and Mrs. Leslie Fitch, soloists, and with Mr. Robyn at the organ.

Eddie Gerard will head the new bill at the Columbia this week in "The Soubrette and the Cop," with Jessie Gardner as the soubrette. Edgar Atchison-Ely will show what the future duke may be. Patti Rosa, supported by four others, will present "A Woman's Dilemma." Fred Warren and Al Blanchard are on the programme, and so are Belle Davis, with pickaninny chorus; the Four Olifans, Joannie Carroll, Mr. and Mrs. Kenton, Miller and May, Leona Donnie, Kent and French, the Hechows and the Kinodrome.

At the Imperial this week William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" will be the bill. Manager Giffen says that he is willing to test the saying that "Shakespeare means ruin." In presenting a favorite love story, he doubtless runs no risk. Mr. Lewis will play Romeo, Mr. Ratcliffe Mercutio and Miss Odell will be the Juliet. To-morrow evening a benefit will be given to Mr. Otto Hagan, who built Hagan's Opera-House, now the Imperial.

"Across the Pacific" is the title of the play which comes to Havlin's this afternoon. It is said to be the most pretentious of the realistic melodramas produced of late, involving the use of two curtands of special scenery. There is a Rough Rider band. Among the principals of the cast are Harry Clay Blaney, Robert Gaillard, Leslie Mathews, O'Kane Hillis, J. P. Tucker, Pearl Seward, Virginia Donner and Gracie Hull. "The Eleventh Hour" will come to Havlin's next week.

Miss Eugenia Blair opens her St. Louis engagement at the Grand Opera-House, beginning with the matinee of to-day, in "A Lady of Quality." This play is taken from Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett's famous novel of the same name, and the story begins with Clorinda Widdairs as a boisterous tomboy, and ends, after many exciting events, in her marriage to the Duke of Osmonde. "The Telephone Girl" will be the attraction at the Grand next week.

Mr. David Bispham, the noted barytone, will be the soloist at the first concert of the Morning Choral Club at the Odeon Tuesday evening, December 11. He will be assisted by the club, the members of which have put much work and enthusiasm in their season's plans.

Sam Devere's Own Company comes to the Standard this afternoon for a week's engagement. Much good vaudeville talent will be in evidence, and there are some attractive scenic and electrical effects and stage settings. The next attractions at the Standard will be the Utopian Burlesquers.

The giving away of a handsome upright grand piano to some one of the audience, a practice established at previous Kunkel concerts and one much appreciated by the ladies, is again a feature in connection with the following programme at the two hundred and eighty-ninth concert next Wednesday evening:

Duo for Two Pianos—Sarabande and Variations ..... Conrath
Messrs. Charles Kunkel and Louis Conrath.
Violin Solo—Souvenir de Haydn grand fantasie ..... Leonard
Mr. Herbert Bauersachs.
Song—Grand aria from Philemon et Baucis ..... Gounod
Miss Mae Estelle Acton.
Piano Solo—Played on the silver-tone upright grand piano, to be given away by a committee of three ladies chosen by the audience.
(a) Twilight Musings (reverie and waltz) ..... Johnson
(b) Ripling Waves (caprice) ..... Jacob Kunkel
Mr. Charles Kunkel.
Violin Solo—Liebeslied (Song of Love) ..... Conrath
Mr. Herbert Bauersachs.
Song—Grand aria, Caro Nome, from Rigoletto ..... Verdi
Miss Mae Estelle Acton.
Piano Duos on Two Pianos—
(a) Gavotte, Queen of the Ball ..... Pirani
(b) Andante, Celestial Harmonies ..... Himmel
(c) Midsummer Night's Dream music
Kunkel-Liszt-Mendelssohn
(1) Nocturne. (2) Dance of the Fairies. (3) Wedding March.
Messrs. Charles Kunkel and Louis Conrath.

"The Queen's Lace Handkerchief," Johann Strauss's opera, follows "El Capitan" at Music Hall. Manager Southwell made the change as against "Romeo and Juliet," announced earlier in the week, after a long-distance talk with President Savage of the Castle Square Company.

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DIVINE SARAH AT HOME

—She Discusses With Coquelin Her World, Her Sex, Her Art and Her Critics.

BY EMMA KAUFMAN.
REPUBLIC SPECIAL.

New York, Dec. 1.—Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, greatest of French actresses, on a tour through the United States, is amazing critics by her youth, as exemplified in manner, gesture, form and face. Her years by actual count are 56.

At the Savoy Hotel in New York City, at dejeuner, the second breakfast, dear to the French heart, she is receiving.

M. Coquelin, greatest of living French comedians, now in his fifty-ninth year, is her guest.

Doctor Cassarato, who explains his existence admirably as Mme. Bernhardt's doctor of beauty, is all attention.

Her secretary, who claims no greater name than that, hangs on her gesture.

Two maids attend her.

Two fox terriers, M. and Mme. Dennis, alone seem unimpressed. They roam at will.

An old friend sits at her left, another opposite her.

Cards, notes, men, women, critics arrive and depart.

SCENE I—The Throneroom.

Pale and emaciated, in an ecstasy of enthusiasm, the secretary of Mme. Bernhardt received me.

"She will," he cries, "she consents! She will see you! Yesterday, no; but to-day, yes. Ah, la Bernhardt! Mme. Bernhardt!"—a long pause then, with infinite expression—"Is Mme. Bernhardt! Be pleased to follow me."

I follow in the glow of his ecstacy through dim corridors. I reflect that I am about to face the only Sarah, the golden voiced Sarah, the divine Sarah, etc.

I wish to thank the secretary.

"What is your name?" I ask.

"Me? Ah, Mademoiselle, I have no name; I am the secretary; Mme. Bernhardt's secretary."

His eyes glow with appreciation of the honor, his lips are wreathed with smiles, his pallor increases. We are at the door of his sovereign.

"Enter," he cries, throwing it open.

The throne, a Savoy Hotel arm chair, is there, but no queen.

The lunch table is set with flowers and glass. The attendants are drawn up in line. Several guests sit about, silent, adding to the oppressive hush of expectancy.

A small man, with a small mustache, and excessively French shoulders contemplates the throne with rapt attention. Presently he moves it slightly to the left.

"He has the right," explains some one. "He is Bernhardt's Doctor of Beauty."

"A draft!" he says with his shoulders.

The Secretary clasps his hands in agony and gazes at the crevices of the windows.

"She will come soon," he whispers.

A gentleman in an arm chair looks at me benevolently. "You are lucky," he remarks, "you Americans. How generous she is to come here! And you—you will see her at home!"

"At home!" echoes the room.

The Secretary rolls his ecstatic eyes from me to the door. The next moment I understand why.

SCENE II—Bernhardt, the Woman.

"Ah, my friends, all of you; good morning."

It is the voice of gold issuing from between vermilion lips that some one has prettily called a rhyme.

Dame Bernhardt, artist to her jeweled finger tips, paints almost as well as she writes, and writes almost as well as she speaks. She extends her hand and a vassal kisses it where it is not jeweled.

From finger to finger and knuckle to knuckle the gems flash gorgeous and uninterrupted. The middle finger of the right hand alone is bare. On the thumb there is a great green emerald, on the index finger there is a gold bard of Egyptian workmanship, reaching to the middle joint, topped by a single strand of diamonds, set with a simple pearl. The little finger is ablaze The one next to it is decked in jade and more diamonds.

One word as to the hand that holds this splendor. It is small, white and tapers exquisitely.

Mme. Bernhardt, in a trailing gown of white velvet that reveals itself under a sort of coat of white satin, sinks into her chair at the head of the table. The sleeves of the outer garment are caught up with strands of pearls, and about the waist is a girdle of the same. Chains of gold and emeralds, heavy with glittering pendants and jeweled medallions, are about her neck.

She eats oysters, smiles inimitably upon her guests and tickles their ears with her "golden voice."

The secretary stands entranced. The Doctor of Beauty watches Madame intently as she swallows her food.

Occasionally he adjusts a blind. Occasionally he pulls a curtain. At a signal from his shoulders an afghan is brought for her feet. At another a cape of ermine and sable is laid across her back.

As her notes fall the room hangs on them. When any one else speaks it is to intrude a question.

"Is it my farewell tour? How can I say? At least I shall not return for five years, and in five years I may grow old."

The interesting question is up. The Doctor of Beauty sees me gazing at Bernhardt in the sunlight, and his eyes challenge me.

At 56 it is true that Mme. Bernhardt has no wrinkles. But the score is none the less paid. It is true that she has not a sign of gray in her titian-tinted hair, cut short for l'Aiglon.

"When one is young it grows again quickly," explains a vassal.

Age Is Surely Creeping On.

It is true that there are no bags under her eyes. It is true that the crows' feet have been arrested. But time tells even bulwarks of stone. The head dress of the Sphinx of Egypt is trembling with the ages—the paws and breast have fallen, the stone facing is worn. Yet the genius of the sculptor is preserved.

The genius of Bernhardt is young, but not her contour. It is true that her face has the delicate flush—

Ah, it is all admirably well done, whether the Doctor of Beauty did it, or Bernhardt herself, or the good Lord before either of them.

"I found Doctor Cassarato invaluable to me," says Madame, in answer to a question; "so I stole him away from the others—Rejane and all. He looks after my health!"

"I eat everything and I never exercise—never. I execute none of those things you call calisthenics. I rest.

"The thing that exhausts me is to be ennuyee. How it ages one!"

That "ennuyee" of Sarah Bernhardt! To translate it would be a desecration, to describe it would be as impossible as to describe the enunciation that has made her fame. But, ladies, by the advice of Mme. Bernhardt and her Doctor of Beauty, who nodded his head to her words, avoid it.

"Is not the fashion in which you wear your rings your own?" she is asked.

"Yes, yes; my invention," Mme. Bernhardt holds aloft her emeralded thumb. "I introduced the wearing of the thumb ring. It suited my hand, and I placed it there. But I did not say to other women, 'go and do likewise.'

"Women should dress to suit themselves. Each one to her own individual style. They should follow no leader. I invented the mousquetaire glove. I wore it. What an absurdity followed! Stout and short arms rushed into it. And I—how thin I was! So thin that the wrinkled glove suited.

"Then I have a figure fitted to this—the girdle. Kangaroo, you call it? Well, I am built that way. But for every woman to try to be so! What a horror!

"No, each woman to her style. And she must have here, in her brain, the sense to create one that improves her. Out of mediocre material, with taste, with individuality, what may not be attained!"

Morality Should Be Fashioned.

Mme. Bernhardt is toying with a medallion of crystal at the end of a long, jeweled chain. Some one admires it. On it is painted exquisitely the Virgin Mary.

"I am religious enough to love it," she says. "Yes; I am religious, though I do not follow forms. Besides, I believe in forms for children and ignorant people only."

"And morality?" asks some one.

"Ah, that is to be good, good as each one of us understands it. For you, perhaps, one thing, for me another. Like dress, it should be fashioned to the wearer."

An irrelevant question is asked about marriage.

"I believe in it," answers Mme. Bernhardt, "only if the union is happy. The idea that each one of us should marry is absurd. For each of us——"

At this moment the secretary whispers inopportunely, in an ecstasy of interrogation:

"Monsieur Coquelin?"

"Coquelin! Ah! Coquelin," cries Bernhardt. "Let him come up"!

Mme. Bernhardt arranges a place. Her guests hold their breath, watching her thus working for another. Her Doctor of Beauty has a protest in his shoulders.

"His bread, his olives, his celery, his boutonniere—ah, there!"

Enter Coquelin.

SCENE III—Mme. Bernhardt and M. Coquelin.

He comes into that atmosphere of adoration bluff, hale, hearty, unaffected, with not a suggestion of the actor about him.

"Late, certainly," he says, "when they keep me waiting downstairs fifteen minutes! Fifteen minutes, Sarah, is a whole scene. An actor has been made in it and unmade—and oysters have been eaten."

"My dear boy!" There are tears in the golden voice. Coquelin bends and kisses her hand. And then he falls to on ham and eggs. Everybody joins his level. For a few minutes the conversation is like this:

"Do you sleep, Sarah, mon amie?"

"Yes, Mon Cher, last night for the first time since I have arrived."

"Milk, Sarah, you drink milk?"

"Yes, when I feel tired, to recover from my fatigue of the ship."

Mme. Bernhardt's Doctor of Beauty approves with his shoulders, and smiles from his corner upon the milk.

"Come in," says Mme. Bernhardt, in answer to a knock. "It is almost all the English I speak. Why? Because to speak it spoils my French. They accused me four years ago when I returned to France of speaking with an American accent. Women are so adaptable!"

"No, no," cries Coquelin; "I have found some quite the contrary. My child, there is only one Bernhardt."

The secretary breathes with rapture.

The Doctor of Beauty beams under the compliment.

The ham and eggs pass, and with chicken en cassarole, Coquelin becomes eloquent. He tells stories of the Comedie Francaise, of the great actors he has known.

Some one starts the ball rolling by a commonplace question enough.

"What is the paramount quality that an actress should have?"

"Charm," says Mme. Bernhardt, "if a woman. A beautiful voice, if a man. Is it not so, Coquelin?"

Contempt for Her Critics.

"True, true. Without the voice he is nowhere. Without charm—adieu, Mademoiselle! Then pay attention to no one. Make up your mind and go ahead. If you listen to critics you are lost."

"Critics!" Mme. Bernhardt snaps a jeweled finger in contempt of them.

"Do you remember Rostand?" asks some one.

"Yes, exactly," answers Bernhardt. "I remember the day he came to me to read 'La Princess Lointaine.' I had a room full of critics. They said: 'He is no good.' Did I listen? Not I. I said: 'His verse is great! I shall play it!' Suppose I had listened? No l'Aiglon!"

"No Cyrano!" sighs Coquelin.

"How many men have you inspired?" cries one of the group to Sarah.

"Rostand," answers another, "Sardou, Richepin, Catulle, Mendes——"

"Enough, enough!" interposes Bernhardt. "I interpreted, that is all."

"That is all," repeats Coquelin, and, with a great actor's grace, raises her hand to his lips.

"Here, Coquelin, I have a dollar for your Home for Old and Invalid Actors, acquired through my autograph. Some one sends me a dollar for it!"

The secretary raises his eyes to heaven. The Doctor of Beauty beckons with his shoulders for a footstool at Madame's feet.

"Apropos," says Coquelin, "I have sold an autograph letter from Rachel, sent to me by Samson's daughter, showing that Rachel, France's greatest actress—before your time, Sarah—would have been nothing without the greater Samson to instruct her.

"She was a mirror, an instrument. You—you are your own Samson!"

"All my life I have done as I pleased. I have said I like this—I will do it!' I have never had an adviser."

"While we are on the subject of teaching," says Coquelin, "only one who can act can teach. A man who theorizes is not a teacher.

"'How—how must I do it?' asks the pupil.

"Then there is but one way to answer—get up and do it. If you cannot do it, you cannot teach it."

"Ah!" says Bernhardt, "one may lack the voice, the temperament."

"Nevertheless, one may show how, with a squeak, with no voice at all."

Coquelin tells stories of the great Talma, of his modesty, of his wonderful voice, of his tremendous poise.

"Some one would go to his dressing-room to announce his great scene. He would be chatting calmly. At the last moment he would rise quietly, plunge into sight of the audience and into a great tirade that would sweep them off their feet.

"Never, never could I do that," cries Bernhardt. "If I have a scene to play I must be in it. I must put myself in it before I can touch it. To chat till the last moment—impossible. I must feel. I must be the person."

Her Tears Are Real.

"But, my child, there is but one Bernhardt," answers Coquelin.

The secretary's eyes seem to pierce the ceiling.

The Doctor of Beauty contents himself with adjusting a screen. And it is now that his shoulders command that a sable wrap be brought for Madame's back.

"Do you weep, then, real tears?" ventures a visitor.

"Real, absolutely real," cries Bernhardt, "from my heart. The sound of my own voice makes me cry. Certain tones in it affect me. If they do not, I know they are false. I lose my voice. I hear in it those tones that people like."

"Ah, it is the old discussion," says Coquelin; "when you simulate death you do not die."

"Not actually, but I suffer. Ah! my boy! believe me, I suffer!" murmurs the voice of gold.

"Look for a moment at Rubinstein and Paderewski," continues Coquelin. "Rubinstein, absolutely overpowered by his own playing, unnerved, used to strike a dozen false notes. Paderewski, hypersensitive, yet controlled, reunites his possession till the last note is struck. He is, therefore, the greater artist."

Mme. Bernhardt assents gently with occasional little gestures. Presently her eyes fill with tears.

A late visitor announces that Mr. Sothern, the actor, is very ill and that there has been danger of having to amputate his leg.

"Ah!" cries Bernhardt, "it almost happened to me once. I was playing Jeanne d'Arc. My leg was hurt in its casing of steel. For forty-eight days they thought they would have to amputate it. Ah! My poor son, my Maurice, how he suffered at the thought! And I—I planned my future. How do you think, Coquelin?"

"You would go about with a cane," grunts Coquelin, considering a filet.

Tells of a Chicago Offer.

"Me hobble—me? Ah, horror! Coquelin, you are no poet!"

He straightway becomes one.

"If you had hobbled, Sarah, it would have become the fashion to hobble."

Bernhardt sighs and dismisses her guests after the manner of Queens, by disappearing from view.

Mr. Harry Leighton

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