POVERTY HER HARDEST MASTER

Mme. Valery in Her Last Sensation, a Snake Dance.

Mme. Odette Valery in Street Attire

Odette Valery, Once the Idol of the Public and the Terror of Managers, Now Plays to Want

HOW many of the beauties of the stage, where the auditorium has been thronged with thousands of their admirers, inspire true love? How many, carrying things with a high hand over managers and playwrights, can feel assured even of food and shelter?

One of the tragedies of the real life which, on the stage, is often so infinitely more romantic than any of its dramas, has reached its climax of poverty and wretchedness in Paris.

Beggared, hungry, disfigured, forsaken, a young woman whose beauty and grace have been the delight of two hemispheres, in the height of her youth and her triumphs has met misfortune such as only the most unhappy of her profession suffer.

ALL LOVERS of grand opera in the United States have seen her, have gazed in rapt silence upon the sinuous movements of her lithe young form, have thrilled under the glances of her great, dark eyes, have thundered salvos of applause at the moment when that exquisite vision vanished.

She is Odette Valery, the beautiful, perfect, undulant Odette, idol of America, idol of London, idol of Paris, idolized everywhere until haphazard fate, never more cruel in its blind hurling of disaster, robbed her of her loveliness.

They say it was smallpox, one of those attacks which, unless the greatest and most scientific care be exercised, leaves its victim so pitted and scarred that the most perfect contour of the flesh beneath the skin fails to escape showing its ravages in pits and even scars.

Odette, the gay and heedless Odette, was the last woman in the world to submit to the minute observance of those rules which alone might save her beauty. Even full knowledge of the certainty she confronted, if she did not secure careful treatment or failed to abide by it, that her prized complexion must be irretrievably ruined, was not strong enough to save her.

From the dazzling summit of her fresh successes, where men fought for her favors, Odette Valery suddenly fell into worse than nothingness. She who had been the toast and desire of the whole gay world of Paris could not now pass on the streets unnoticed in the safe obscurity of the merely commonplace-looking girl. She was too hideous, too repulsive to escape into humanity's pitiful oblivion.

What was worse, the supersensitive spirit of the artist, whose most brilliant work has always been herself, felt the horror of the metamorphosis more poignantly than would the proudest society leader in the land.

Odette, the fascinating Odette, had never depended on anything but her beauty, where other women can rely on position, wealth, brilliancy or, as many of them do, religion. Poor, pretty Odette had none of these; she had beauty only, which was more than enough. Without it, her proud and hatefully humiliated soul could see no life that was endurable within the sight of others. She could only hide herself, like some poisoned kitten, and in miserable secrecy await the inevitable end.

Odette would have died, quite gladly, but for one thing. Whatever she had been, there was something deep down in her heart which kept her still a woman. Nana's ruin might fall on her, she herself might be no stronger against dire fate than Zola's wretched demirep. But her short life of revel in riches, admiration and conquest has given her a child. And so, Odette has lived.

Hers is one of those figures of the stage that return the mind's eye with no effort of recollection, compelling as the hypnotic gaze of the serpents she twines about her in her most sensual dance. Salammbo was no more capable of searing her image on the memory of Matho than Valery hers upon all beholders. Even in her street attire, she was a woman to make people turn and stare because of her beauty, as now they stare because of her hideousness.

A QUICK TRANSITION

Four years, and a little more, mark her translation from mediocrity to the stars, and back again, but now to depths previously unknown to her.

In France the recruits to the stage generally come from nowhere; often, when a new and brilliant queen graces the boards, her ancestry is harder to trace than a dea's, and perhaps as inglorious. Mlle. Valery's was of that kind.

But she was young; she was lovely; she could dance, so what mattered her paternity, if she happened to have any? When Isadora Duncan was striving to make good her classic dancing, the exquisite Odette, with vastly less pretension to art, was giving Parisians the sensations felt by the Athenians of a couple of thousand years before.

In those days she was a music hall attraction—steadily progressing as a popular favorite, but still only one of the "artistes" of the popular song-and-dance places, whose position was different from that which attends the debut there, these later years, of some notable figure of the dramatic world.

But that was the era, too, when the capable actors, singers and dancers of vaudeville were gradually usurping leading places in the legitimate. Odette was destined to be one of these. All who saw her realized that they were in the presence of a rare endowment of grace and skill. France, too firmly conservative to give her at once the honor of the highest rank, lost her at times—to Germany, to Austria, to Italy, to Spain, to London, as important engagements promised her fresh fame and larger rewards.

In her specialty, as a dancer, this undulating flame of beauty was sweeping onward and upward, as surely and as gayly as a charming Cleo de Merode in hors, or a Sybil Sanderson, or a Gaby Deslys, or a Carmencita. Paris has a cruel way with them, usually, in the end; they are like its aeroplanes, goading always to the heights and then suddenly, if Sybil Sanderson's health breaks down or Cleo's most notorious lover forsakes her, crashing down to poverty and oblivion. Those who, like the forehanded Carmencita, save their easily gained riches and greet middle age with the cold, grim smile of safe prosperity, are few and far between. To most of them, as to Odette, the future has no frowns; it shall be rose-colored when there's $0. Meanwhile, they await the coming of some crowning glory.

WAS STARTLING LONDON

Odette's came in 1908. She was startling London, which, by the way, is of all great cities the most eagerly imploring to be startled. She might have departed from London with only London's plaudits ringing in her ears had not the wizard who creates destinies been in the city at the same time, and had not some generous turn of luck sent him to see her performance.

Lightning and young love are not more instant than Oscar Hammerstein when he beholds his prize. Actress, singer, dancer, whatever she may be, he knows on the spot that she must be his alone, and he storms the citadels of her ambition, cupidity and artistic sensibility, like Mohammed of old at the gates of Christian Constantinople. He can forget as instantly as he admires, which was just then fortunate for Mlle. Valery.

For what to him, under the magic spell of her serpentine poses, were the beauties of Mlle. Dazie, who had been leading his ballet in his Manhattan Opera Company? Hail, Valery! adieu, Dazie!

Caesar-like, he saw, and conquered. Odette was his. In the fall New York beheld her, leading the ballet in "Aida" and other spectacular grand operas, astonishing, yet alluring, vast audiences with her garlands of living snakes.

The critics hastened to discriminate. No; Valery was not a dancer in the class of Genee. They recalled, later, that she had never been of the stamp of Pavlowa and Lopoukowa. She was herself—beautiful, graphic, graceful, expressive.

Well, Oscar knew that better than anybody else. She was there for that purpose. He emphasized, he illuminated her peculiar talent. He had plays planned for it—little, pantomine ballets in which her power of conveying a story by the mere expressions of her face and the postures of her form were afforded its widest latitude. There are throngs who will remember her in "La Chair," or "The Flesh," and in "The Death of Cleopatra," as a creature whose fire seemed to carry across the footlights straight into their kindled hearts.

But Oscar can forget. And Odette developed the artistic spirit. She loved the gorgeous lavishness her position allowed; she detested the discipline of a manager whose wit can cut like a knife. She could be a terror when a single hint of affront insulted her newly acquired majesty in her art. She made her return to Paris as many another star has made hers, confident that, at last, she had humbled destiny to the dust under her twinkling feet.

LAVISH FROM LONG HABIT

And so it seemed. Until a year ago, Mlle. Valery was the vogue. When the stage failed to provide her with the lavish income her mode of life demanded, she confided gayly independent of its aid. She had her mansion near the Bois de Boulogne; she had her motorcars, her horse equipages, her flashing jewels. It is easy to see, Paris remarked, that our dear little Valery has arrived.

All at once she vanished. Whither—how? No one knew, and, alas, no one cared. In Paris, if you do not ride the town with whip and spur, it will trample you in the mud—not angrily, for it prefers to be ridden; but simply heedlessly, because then you are in its way.

Odette, her loveliness lost in her illness, with only her child to care for, was pawning her jewels. Stair by stair she retreated, as they do in Paris, from the lower levels to the upper stories, until, when she went at last to the woman who had taught her the first dance steps she ever learned, she was quartered in a room of a sixth-floor tenement, starving with her child, whose need alone had forced her to the appeal.

The Opera Comique has an esprit du corps or, at least, its dancing teacher has. She took up a collection for the fallen star. It amounted to $25. In that brief time, all the regard that was left her in her own profession amounted to $25. It was the hoof of Paris, pressed somewhat more lightly than usual on the brow of failure.

She may not perish thus. She has been too famous for Paris to forfeit all reputation for humanity by letting her die of hunger. They will give her a benefit or two, and find a humble post which she can fill for wages of food and fire and wind-swept rooftree. A few years from now, if the once beautiful Odette be lucky, she may be helping patrons of the Opera Comique off with their wraps and murmuring words of meek gratitude for the tip that means a little piece of meat in the meager plate of soup at home.

As Mme. Valery Appeared Some Years Ago, When at the Height of Her Fame

An Odd Fertilizer for Plants

MANY persons who have house plants and flowers in the garden which do not seem to grow and bloom as they should, wonder how some people seem to grow flowers with little apparent effort.

One of the most important secrets of success, both indoors and out, is to know what is needed for fertilizers.

In many instances it is difficult to secure soil that is not impoverished and naturally deprived of the essential elements required by nature to produce healthy foliage and brilliant and profuse bloom.

One of the easiest methods to secure the required elements to enrich ordinary soil is available to all. Take bones from meat that has not been salted, such as fowls and fresh meats from the butcher, break them into small pieces and place quite a lot in an earthen jar. Cover with a solution of strong lye.

After it has stood for a few days, stir it thoroughly, and it will become a sort of mush. If possible, add a little soot from the stove or fireplace and stir again.

Place a teaspoonful of this mixture in a gallon of water and apply this to the soil about the plants twice a week. If the plants seem to have merely existed in a poor soil, give them a little more, or the same amount oftener.

The foliage will soon brighten up and the flowers, if any, will soon show a great change. If the plants have not been blooming, they will soon begin.

Nitrogen, phosphoric acid, potash, lime and other essentials are secured from such a mixture. A little of it thoroughly incorporated in the soil of an open bed will certainly assist greatly where it is difficult to obtain the proper kinds of manure.

Soil sprinkled with water mixed as described will produce fine vegetable growths. It is possible in this way to make good use of all the bones that accumulate in a home.

Huge Shadows of Men in the Sky

IN THE famous Harz mountains and at the summit of Pambamarca, in Peru, the shadows of mountain climbers are cast in the sky greatly magnified and reproducing every movement of the person.

In the Harz mountains the so-called Specter of the Brocken is a most perfect reproduction of mountain climbers. Every movement of the arms and legs, head and hands, is as natural as life.

When objects are carried, flags or banners waved, and all sorts of antics indulged in, the reproduction is so good it is really astonishing.

For many years such phenomena were looked upon with awe and superstition, but recent investigation has shown that they are only the result of natural laws. The conditions are due to rarefied atmosphere and mists. Everything must be exactly right to produce the most perfect picture in the sky, but this situation not seldom occurs, and visitors are often treated to what is simply a wonderful display of what is known as mirage.

The surface of the peaks and rocks and other objects can be seen at the same time the mountain climbers' reflections are cast upon the mists in the sky about the mountain tops.

Are the Kaiser's Fierce Faces a Photographic Fraud?

The Kaiser as He Used to Look — On Either Side Are the Fierce Photographs Showing the Kaiser in Recent Years

ANOTHER imposing fraud exposed, one of the most imposing in the world—no less a personage than his imperial majesty, Kaiser Wilhelm, most savage of monarchs in captivity.

When the revelation of his duplicity reaches his ashamed eye there will be a haughty and exclusive German ruler who will be hunting hurriedly for a hole to crawl into, with an added impulse to pull the hole in after him.

There have been other royal frauds, plenty of them, but none who have quite made so long a record for keeping up the illusion they tottered or so profoundly impressed with it the peoples of the earth.

APART from those who have been on intimate terms with the Kaiser, and only among the millions who have never had the sight of him, there isn't a man who doesn't feel that it would be safer to meet a grizzly with a sore head in a narrow alley than the Kaiser on the broad expanse of Unter den Linden in Berlin. The grizzly might possibly be more peaceable than he looks; but the Kaiser, most people think, would invariably pounce on the chance one of those

[illegible] Fraud? Well, it is all over. The royal photographer, the man who has been making all these pictures of his majesty, has been indiscreet and has allowed his experiences with his august patron to become known.

These fierce photographs are premeditated frauds, the Kaiser's fierce faces and false faces, specially assumed by his majesty to sustain his reputation as a fiery, untamed king who bosses the royal eagles with a face of frowns and a hand of iron. In reality, no more mild and pleasant gentleman has ever welcomed American millionaires to his native realm or grinned in more pleased delight whe.. some gay scadog of our navy publishes poems on "Hoch der Kaiser."

"Will your majesty be pleased to sit for a photograph today?" inquired the artist of the camera in answer to a summons that meant just that.

If he had said it to Bismarck, or Frederick the Great, or to one of the other genuine terrors of the Fatherland, the answer would have been:

"No, Oscar; donner und blitzen, Oscar, nein! I sent for you to see how you'll look standing on your head and thinking of some more fool questions."

And, by donner und blitzen, Oscar would have stood on his head till his ears were blue. But Kaiser Wilhelm only smiles, appreciative of the timid deference, and answers:

"Yes, my good friend. Let us have an artistic seance to try whether we can improve on our previous efforts."

Then he throws a chest; thinks of the latest thing the crown prince has done in the way of showing that he has the nerve to believe he's a man because he's grown up and married; frowns until his forehead looks like a relief map of Switzerland, and inquires:

"There, how'll that do?"

"Fine!" avers the photographer, and snaps the relief map with its accessories.

The kaiser suddenly remembers the wicked Socialists, and on top of them the last whoop from Paris on the subject of Alsace-Lorraine. He holds his breath a while to enhance the effect. He has a secret hunch that a British suffragette in all her glory hasn't anything on him at that particular instant.

"Get it quick!" he cries. "Do you think I can look insane with rage all day?"

"I have it, your majesty," says the royal photographer.

A few more fits along the lines of wrath, imperiousness and menace and the posing ends. Next day appears the artist, trembling for his results. The kaiser studies them, one by one. And one by one they go into the wastebasket.

"I know you do your best, and so do I," he apologizes considerately. "But these poor imitations of the War Lord who ought to be ruling the mightiest empire of the world will never do for publication. Come around next Thursday. I have a banquet on for Wednesday night, and I'll probably have enough dyspepsia hanging over me to make me fit for an oil painting in the costume of a cuirassier. It may be too good an expression to waste on a photograph. Have you anything to suggest?"

"Oh, your majesty," in meek deprecation. "But I must say that my wife thinks I am most terrible the morning after I eat Pumpernickel complicated with Hasenpfeffer and really old, strong kraut."

"I shall have them all served; thank you. Thursday morning, then."

Only once in the experience of the camera man has the kaiser ever willingly and with premeditation consented to have his picture taken smiling. That was when it was intended for his mother. To her, if to no one else, he was willing to reveal his true self, the self of the man who is at heart the pleasant, shrewd, cordial gentleman, but, from the head, is impelled to maintain a pose he imagines pertains to his empire's ruler.

It is only in the last score of years that these fierce portraits have been invariable—since he began to train his mustache to the stars and insisted on being accepted as a husky, dangerous War Lord. Earlier portraits show him for what he really is, with his features quite composed and his face rather expressionless than afire with spirit.

Perhaps when the kaiser has had twenty years more of ruling and diplomacy he may change his mind again, to the discovery that has been made by many another man—that there has never been any need of looking dangerous, and that, for all his frowns and ferocity, the world has formed a more just idea of the good fellow he is than he wants it to.