MR. HENRY IRVING.

HIS PRODUCTION OF "KING LEAR" AT THE LYCEUM AND SOME NOTES ON HIS ACTING OF THAT PART.

London, November 11.

Mr. Irving has long since attained a position where he is almost beyond criticism; in one sense of the word. He has the public with him, the public both of England and America. In replying to a recent censor who ridiculed "the simple folk who leave the Lyceum with an impression that they have seen a Shakespeare play, when they have, in truth, seen only a series of pictures," Mr. Irving himself said, with much force: "I must leave it, and I leave it willingly, to the memory and judgment of our audiences." So long as they are on his side and continue to fill his theatre, and to applaud him, what does criticism matter to him? Yet it appears that it does matter, and he sometimes even replies to it.

More than that may be said. He has become what we in America sometimes call an institution. His authority and influence are such that—I say it in all seriousness—an attack on Mr. Irving seems to many persons an attack on the Stage itself. He is the embodiment of dramatic art, the impersonation of whatever makes the Theatre irresistibly attractive to multitudes of people in England and in America. That is a state of things of which journalism in this country takes account. To print a harsh criticism of Mr. Irving would seem to certain editors like speaking disrespectfully of the Equator, or questioning the financial soundness of the Bank of England. So they somehow cause it to be understood that, while leaving their critics entirely free to express their real opinions, they do not expect those opinions to run counter in too marked a degree to the general opinion of their readers. And they do not.

The production of "King Lear" at the Lyceum last evening is a good illustration of all these propositions. It was an event not second in interest to an ordinary Lord Mayor's Day, and much superior to the one which actually occurred the night before, when all Her Majesty's Ministers from whom the country wished to hear speeches were, unhappily and unavoidably, absent from the Guildhall Banquet. There was the usual first night audience at the Lyceum; the usual lists of celebrities appeared in next day's papers; the usual elaborate accounts of the performance, but more elaborate than ever; the usual speech from Mr. Irving; and the performance of "King Lear" takes its place as a topic at dinner-tables for the rest of the winter. Whoever reads these long columns of criticism, in the usual newspaper-reading way—that is to say, hastily—will leave them with the impression that Mr. Irving's King Lear is an altogether admirable piece of acting; that the audience was enthusiastic throughout; and that the success of the production was complete. But if there be anybody who takes the trouble to scan these sentences more closely, or to read, if need be, between the lines, he will suspect that, in the minds of the critics themselves, there were considerable reservations.

As a piece of acting, Mr. Irving's Lear deserves what it receives: high praise. As a rendering of Shakespeare's conception, the merits of it have to be considered from a different point of view. Mr. Irving is clearly entitled to his own; nay, he is bound to have his own view, and to express it as vividly as he can. If you deny him that, you raise the further question whether he ought to act Lear at all; the question whether, having regard to the true nature of his genius—which in its own line is beyond dispute—having regard also to his methods, to his former experiences with such tragedies as "Macbeth" and "Othello," the more difficult tragedy of "Lear" lay necessarily within his sphere of duty; whether as actor or actor-manager. He has determined that it did. He resolved to be Lear, and I don't know that anybody is called upon to go behind that resolve, or to consider any of the abstract problems above stated, or hinted at. It is quite troublesome enough to deal with things as they are. Things as they might have been may be left to the examination of critics with more time and space at their disposal than the daily journalist can claim. Still less need he consider whether Lear ought to be acted at all. Perhaps he may be permitted to say that he agrees with Charles Lamb, and other judicious persons with delicate instincts, who hold this play to be unfit for the stage. Or perhaps he may put it in the words of a person of distinction, present on this occasion and conspicuous for the fervor of his applause,—who nevertheless remarked, when all was over, that he did not think Lear and his family and court pleasant people to spend an evening with. Nor are they.

The picturesqueness of Mr. Irving's personality and of his whole impersonation is its most striking quality. The appeal to the eye never fails, and the appeal to the imagination depends largely on this. In appearance, in bearing, in gesture, in movement, he is from beginning to end the consummate actor. The resources of his art, or many of them, are entirely within his control. I imagine the strongest impression left on the mind of the spectator was that; and the remark of every spectator would be, "How well he acted." If that is what Mr. Irving aimed at, his success was brilliant. But is that the aim? Will an audience be moved to tears or horror, to sympathy or hate, to pity or rage, so long as they are allowed to remember that the imaging of these passions is acting and nothing more? Did anybody forget Mr. Irving and remember only Lear? There were moments when perhaps they did; above all, in the first act, and in the beginning of the fourth. He began indeed so admirably that the house asked nothing more than that he should continue. It was only the hardened playgoer who shook his head, and said to himself that the first note had been struck too high. There is an unfailing rule in such matters. If there is no climax, there will be an anti-climax. The second and third acts were felt to be less effective than the first. The end of the fourth was less good than the beginning. The physical powers of no man are equal to a uniform strain during the whole of a tremendous tragedy like this. He must choose where and when he will be at his best. The tragedy of "Lear" is one long explosion of passion and of deep emotion. But the passion, the rage, the fury of the king are human. They are, spite of his senility, kingly and manly. Those were not the aspects which Mr. Irving chose to make most evident. He was tender, pathetic, sympathetic. But the note which was heard most often was not regal and not virile.

If it failed to be, it was partly from over-elaboration. He has carried out in its most literal sense the very doubtful maxim he laid down in his article in the October "Nineteenth Century" on "Some Misconceptions About the Stage." "In the expression of character," says Mr. Irving, "rhythm is subordinate to dramatic significance, and except in the most rhetorical passages, every sentence should be expressed as a new thought, and every thought with a varied intonation." His practical interpretation of that law is to divide many lines and sentences of Shakespeare into as many separate parts as there are words, with a marked pause between each two. The slowness of this method may be its greatest fault, but it has others. An actor who has Shakespeare's lines to deliver can hardly desire to make his hearers believe that he is improvising, or is thinking out as he goes along either suitable expressions for his thoughts, or the best method of delineating emotion. But such is the effect. Meantime, he loses his hold on the house. No attention can be kept fixed during this prolonged sluggishness of delivery. Mr. Irving has, apparently, a theory that he must give his audience time to take in his meaning. He knows his audience better than they know themselves, and he may be right, theoretically, when his audience is English. But, practically, he gives them time to take in his idea, and to let it go again before the next is ready for their acceptance. The effectiveness of the death scene was impaired by its extreme leisureliness. It was admirable as an exhibition of technical knowledge, of mastery over all the details of woe and of the final agony, but it lasted too long. Mr. Irving, had his position permitted, might have observed many of his audience looking about them to see the effect of it all upon others. The effect upon themselves was not maintained.

More might be said on such points as these, and on those eccentricities of elocution which he chose once more to exemplify. Or perhaps he did not choose. The nervousness of a first night may account for many of them. Long habit asserted itself against more recent resolutions, and you heard fame pronounced in four syllables, and sterility in fourteen. There were moments when the actor's power of clear articulation seemed to abandon him altogether, and during parts of important scenes he was unintelligible. Such blemishes seem almost wilful; almost, but not quite; as if they were so many illustrations of the notion, now in firm possession of the English stage, that because every great actor has had mannerisms, the mannerisms were part and proof of his greatness. Of course they are not. He is great in spite of such faults; not because of them. They do, however, serve as a test of his ascendency, of his force of character; and of the weakness of character of the mere idolater who thinks he must idolize what is bad as well as what is good. Mr Irving has seen his Lyceum and other audiences accept and extol what is least admirable in his acting; the contortions of the Sibyl as well as the inspiration; devoutly believing the contortions to be a kind of divine evidence of inspiration. But he is too good an actor to be spoiled even by foolish hero-worship.

It remains none the less true that Mr. Irving's Lear is a marvellous performance. It is nothing to say that no living English actor but himself is capable of it; none could approach it. He has a theory of Lear, and he works on it consistently. He has Miss Ellen Terry as Cordelia, with all her sweetness and charm, or with as much of them as the part allows her to display. He has Mr. Terriss to rob Edgar, by the hardness of his method, of the sympathy to which he is entitled. He has Mr. Cooper as Edmund; the one noticeable actor of the troop. He has all the art of the stage-manager—it is his own—and all that unequalled felicity in the arrangement of stage-business which has given the Lyceum its pre-eminence ever since he controlled it. He had as much splendor of scenery and costume as the play would admit of. And when all is said, the secret of this, as of so many other first nights and long runs at the Lyceum, is individual. The secret is Mr. Irving. He is well entitled to protest against the notion that people flock to the Lyceum for scenery and accessories. They do not. They crowd that capacious theatre to see himself, and the only possible explanation of his long reign, of his undisputed and unchallenged superiority, is the singular beauty and singular power of his acting.

G. W. S.

INDIVIDUALITY OF TYPE-WRITING.

PECULIARITIES BY WHICH THE WORK OF DIFFERENT PERSONS CAN BE RECOGNIZED.

The typewritten page has no individuality for most persons, but a study of the subject shows many characteristics by which the work of different machines and different operators can be distinguished. This field presents fewer opportunities than does that of the handwriting expert, but is, nevertheless, of some interest and importance. In a legal contest the whole case might hinge on the authenticity of a page of type-writing. For instance, it became necessary in a court not long ago to find out whether one page of the long type-written document in evidence had not been replaced with another in which some of the words had been changed. In this case, of course, the suspected page was written on the same kind of a machine as the others. The difference between instruments of the various manufacturers was, therefore, of no service.

An expert stenographer and teacher of type-writing was called as a witness. In reply to questions put by counsel he said that as a general rule it was not difficult for an expert to distinguish between the writing done upon different machines of the same manufacture. Two instruments might write so nearly alike as to make it impossible to determine upon which of them a certain sheet was turned out. Still there were many little marks of variance in the writing of different machines, and even of the same one, at different times or when used by different persons. The witness did not believe that the page in question was written at the same time that the others were, nor by the same person. All might have been written on the same machine, but not consecutively.

The reasons given for this conclusion were, in the first place, that the type used on page seventeen were clean; on the others, many of the small letters were clogged up. The "e" and "s" were especially bad. The ribbon used for page seventeen was not so much worn as that for the rest of the document, and the writing was more uniform in color; the latter fact was in part due to the superior skill of the writer of the single page. The letters were in better alignment on that page than on the others, in which the "t" and "e" were badly out of their proper position. In page seventeen, the "1" was accurately centred; in the rest it was to the left of where it should be. The "p" was upright on the suspected sheet, and leaned a trifle on the others, being turned in the bar. The one sheet, also, had a wider margin by two spaces than those which followed and preceded it.

When asked why he believed that different persons wrote the sheets he said that the operator who turned out page seventeen was more expert than the other. The former's touch was more uniform; none of the letters seemed to override each other, as was sometimes the case on the other pages. His punctuation marks did not perforate the paper. The indentations of his paragraphs were six spaces, against five on the rest of the document. He used three spaces between his sentences; the others, only two. The first made a space after a comma; the second did not. The writer of the bulk of the paper was less acquainted with the rules of punctuation than was the other man. One man always put a period and a colon after the words "to wit;" the other used only a comma. For the figure 1, in the paging of sheet seventeen, a lower case "l" was used; on the other sheets, a capital "I." The jury could hardly help agreeing with the expert's conclusions.

The quality of uniformity is one in which good type-writers may differ greatly. Some strike harder with the right hand than with the left, and thus stamp their work indelibly. Others occasionally "shadow" letters; that is, blur their outlines, by holding the key down too long or by striking it sideways. Perhaps the idiosyncrasies of punctuation are the most trustworthy earmarks of all. The force of habit impels operators never to vary from their own practice in given cases. Take the sentence: "When did you go there—Monday?" One man would put a question mark after "there;" another a comma; still another a dash, or a semi-colon, a comma and a dash, a semi-colon and a dash might also be used. A skilled man always follows his own usage in such cases.

INTELLIGIBLE PRICE MARKS.

From The St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Very few stores now adhere to the old plan of cipher marking. Experience has proved that a majority of customers prefer goods to be marked in plain figures, no one liking the idea of two sets of figures unless he is sure he is among the favored ones who get the benefit of the lower scale. It is said to be the practice with the medical fraternity of some towns to grade their charges to patients according to the style of house in which they live, and the same idea prevails so much as to retail stores that ladies have been known to send servants down to stores because they could get a larger discount. Other ladies are careful never to dress very well when shopping, and this shows how firmly the impression prevails that a genuine one-price store is a novelty. The easiest way to get over this impression is to have every article marked in plain figures, so that the customer may see that one price prevails for all. This is easier than arguing that the abuses feared are reminiscences of the old days when the evils of caste were much more rampant than now, for experience proves that the fear certainly exists, no matter how absolutely it may be without foundation. Ten years ago part of the education of a store clerk used to be the mastering of the cipher plan adopted in marking, but this is now quite a small matter. As already stated, most stores mark their goods in plain figures, and the few that do not adopt a very simple plan for denoting the price.

A KANGAROO BOXER.

From The London News.

An exhibition of boxing of an unusual character has been secured by the management of the Royal Aquarium. Professor Landerman, an Australian pugilist, will box a kangaroo seven feet high. It is said that the kangaroo boxes scientifically, and hits harder than the ordinary pugilist. The exhibition appears to have been given in Melbourne and Sydney—the combatants being so severely mauled that some were in hospital for months afterward. Professor Landerman and the kangaroo came over from Australia in the Ormuz. On arrival offers of engagements were made by the managers of the principal halls in London, as much as £150 per week being outbid by the Aquarium Company. It appears that during the voyage this kangaroo and his mate broke through their cage whilst the Ormuz was coaling at Colombo. Boats were lowered, and the male kangaroo saved. So solicitous was Landerman for the well-being of his boxing kangaroo that he never left it from that time until its arrival in dock, it being thought that the animal would not survive its wife's loss. There will never have been such a novel exhibition of boxing. John L. Sullivan, although challenged, refused to fight; and Madame Sarah Bernhardt was so amused and taken with the exhibition at the Criterion, Sydney, as to offer £1,000 for the animal.

TOPICS IN PARIS.

A FEVER OF IMPROVEMENT—AN ARISTOCRATIC WEDDING—SATIRE AT THE CHAT NOIR.

Paris, November 18.

Parisians are at the present moment beginning to suffer from an attack of "improvement fever" such as raged here in the days of Baron Haussmann and of his master, Napoleon III; for a well-authenticated rumor has become current to the effect that magnificent alterations are about to take place on the Boulevard des Italiens and the adjoining streets, in view of the Great Exhibition of 1900. Plans in connection with these improvements have already been drawn up by M. Letorey, a distinguished architect, and laid before the Municipal Council by M. George Berry, Municipal Councillor of the Opera District. They provide among other things for the prolongation of the Boulevard Haussmann to the Rue Laffitte, the enlargement of the Rue Taitbout, and the foundation of a superb Museum of Commerce. According to the latest reports the work will be taken in hand with energy immediately after the New-Year fetes are over, so that it may be completed for the opening of the Exhibition of 1900.

A far less pleasing bit of news for those who still care for remembrances of "Auld Lang Syne" is the announcement that the historical Chateau of Malmaison will shortly be sold at auction. It was the favorite residence of Napoleon I and of Josephine during the Consulate, and it surely seems a piece of useless vandalism to deliver the poetical old house, with its quaint and lovely gardens, to the tender mercies of some "fin du siecle" contractor, who will demolish it in the same ruthless manner as the neighboring Palace of St. Cloud, and raise on its site rows of the horrible "jerry-built" suburban villas, with green shutters and flat roofs, which are the ideal of the retired Parisian shop-keeper. The old chateau, it is true, is now in a rather dilapidated condition, but it might easily, at a comparatively small cost, be restored to its former glory, and ought by right to be preserved from destruction. It was purchased in 1798 by Josephine for the sum of $40,000. At her death she left it to her son, Prince Eugene de Beauharnais, whose heirs sold it in 1829 to a wealthy Swedish banker. In 1841 Queen Maria-Christina of Spain bought it for $150,000, and subsequently sold it to Emperor Napoleon III for $220,000. The latter presented it to the State, and to-day it is valued at $500,000. Great efforts are being made by several enthusiastic Bonapartists to save the old palace and to convert it into a Napoleonic Museum, which might be added to the collection of "Historic Monuments of France"; but it is scarcely likely that this will be done.

The death of General de Negrier and that of the Marquis Hervey de St. Denis have saddened the beginning of the winter season here. Both were prominent personalities in Parisian society, and will be much missed. General de Negrier was a distinguished soldier. In 1859 he captured, at the head of his brigade, the Cemetery of Solferino, and in 1870-'71 he displayed the greatest valor on several battlefields. He leaves a son, who is the youngest and most promising general in France at the present moment, and who is now in command of the 7th Army Corps at Besancon. General Francois de Negrier, who was killed in Paris during the Revolution of 1848, and who, after distinguishing himself greatly during the battle of Waterloo, where he received five wounds, became in later years Governor-General of Algeria, was the brother of the deceased.

The Marquis Hervey de St. Denis was one of the wittiest men of the age. He possessed to a supreme degree the art of making the most abstruse subjects amusing to his listeners, and his conversation was a perpetual feu roulant of bons mots. His wife the celebrated Marquise Hervey de St. Denis, is still one of the most beautiful women in Paris, and certainly one of the best-dressed ones. She is moreover a particularly bright star in that coterie of grand dames of which the Duchesse de Luynes, the Marquise de Galliffet, the Princesse de Sagan, etc., are so well-known members. She has been much talked about, but her salon is nevertheless the rendezvous of the fashionable world in general, and of the Faubourg St. Germain in particular, and it is a great loss for society that it should now be closed by the death of the Marquis.

To come to more cheerful topics, I may mention a great wedding which is about to take place here early next month, namely that of Mlle. de Luynes, sister of the Duc de Luynes and granddaughter of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld Doudeauville, to the young Duc d'Ayen, son of the Duc de Noailles. The families thus united are among the most ancient and distinguished that figure in the Almanach de Gotha. From the thirteenth century the De Noailles have played a prominent part in European history as soldiers, diplomatists and ecclesiastics. One of them was beaten by George II at Dettingen, and another was recently French Ambassador at the Italian Court. The Ducs de Mouchy and Princes de Poix belong to a younger branch of the same stock. Both on her father's and her mother's side the future bride can claim an almost equally illustrious ancestry. The marriage will be celebrated at the Castle of Dampierre, one of the most beautiful ancestral homes in France. Dampierre has not changed in any respect since the day the Duke de Luynes went away to the War of 1870. He was killed at the battle of Patay, and beside his tomb the Duchess vowed never to forsake the name of her hero and to keep the father always in the memory of the children. Respected by the Revolution, Dampierre is, as it was in the time of Louis XIV., superb and imposing. Between the windows are bronze statues, and among these are the busts of Connetable de Luynes and his wife Marie de Rohan. On the ground floor are the salons, the library, containing twenty-five thousand volumes, the theatre, cabinet of natural history, etc., above the Minerva salon with the famous "Minerva of Simart," a copy of the Pantheon Minerva. This Minerva is worth a fabulous sum because in its composition have been used sapphires, turquoises, ivory, gold and silver. It was in 1890 that the Duke and Duchess of Teck were received at Dampierre, and many have been the illustrious guests in this, one of the grandest castles in France.

The young couple are to spend their honeymoon at the Duc de Noailles's famous chateau of Maintenon, which they will in due course inherit. It is situated in the department of France known as the Eure-et-Loire, was a present from Louis XIV to Mme. de Maintenon, and she in her turn gave it to her niece, who married the Duke d'Ayen, son of the Marechal de Noailles. This castle was built during the reign of Louis XII, and the towers and chapel of this epoch are standing at the present day. Mme. de Maintenon built the right and left wings, but the gallery of the left wing is decorated with the portraits of the Noailles from the Crusaders until the present time. The dethroned Charles X, coming from Rambouillet, passed the night at Maintenon, and the apartments occupied by him are pointed out to visitors. To this day the servants repeat his last words to the host and hostess—"I do not wish civil war and bloodshed in France, and I am going far away."

Mlle. de Luynes is twenty-two, and, while not beautiful, possesses a most pleasing expression, and her fiance, who is but one year older than she is, is reported to be very much in love with her, and has lavished upon his fair lady presents worthy of Haroun-al-Raschid's treasure chamber. Among the marvels of the "corbeille" is a parure of sapphires surrounded with matchless diamonds, including a double tiara, a stomacher, a necklace, a pendant, two brooches, earrings and four bracelets of unparalleled magnificence. The bride's wedding dress will be of point d'Alencon over white satin, and belonged to her great-grandmother, her grandmother, and her mother in turn. Mlle. de Luynes was a few days ago one of the bridesmaids of her charming friend Mlle. de Lur-Saluces, on the occasion of the latter's marriage with the Comte de la Panouse. This wedding was extremely pretty, and the Church of Sainte-Clotilde, where it was celebrated, was a perfect bower of beautiful flowers on that morning. Both the Lur-Saluces and the De la Panouses belong to the most ancient aristocracy of France, and the numerous guests present were all members of the exclusive Faubourg. The religious ceremony was superb, and seemed a kind of "revanche" for the petty persecutions to which the French clergy are now being subjected.

Among the many features of this persecution may be included the decree which has been issued by the Socialist Mayor of Saint-Denis forbidding the clergy to accompany funeral processions attired in their surplices. The rector, the Abbe Iteney, had an interview on the subject with the Archbishop of Paris, and it was decided that the clergy should submit to the ukase of the aggressive functionary pending judgment by the Council of State, before which the affair will be brought. It was argued that an unseemly dispute ought to be avoided at all costs, so when the decree came in force the cure issued a notice to the effect that the clergy would—much to their regret—be unable to accompany funeral processions to the cemetery. The Abbe Iteney added that he must again protest in the strongest terms against such a flagrant violation of the "rights of the Church and the family."

The first funeral under the new condition took place a few days ago. It was that of a widow named Marguerite Colette. A small crowd had gathered near the church, in front of which some policemen were stationed. The men removed their hats respectfully as the cortege passed by, and the absence of the clergy gave rise to some indignant remarks, all the more so as the relatives appeared much distressed. At the conclusion of the services in the church, the procession wended its way to the cemetery unaccompanied by a single priest. While people dying at Saint-Denis are to be buried according to the Mayor's order, those who desire to be married by "civil rites" have everything in their favor. At the last wedding in the Town Hall, the Salle des Mariages was profusely decorated with plants and flowers. After the Mayor had tied the nuptial knot, an orator especially engaged in Paris made an appropriate speech, and the "Wedding March" of Mendelssohn was played on a piano. Some of the friends of the bride and bridegroom next sang the waltz from Gounod's "Romeo et Juliette"; "Bebe," by Henrion; the "Romance of Maitre Bathelin," by Pazin; the "Marche aux Choux" of Chateau, and finally the duet from the "Ode Triomphale" of Augusta Holmes. The engagement of the orator from Paris is a new departure at "civil weddings." The hint was apparently borrowed from the procedure followed at the funeral of obscure persons whose friends want to have a panegyric pronounced over them, as is customary in France at the graves of notable men. Those desirous of obtaining the services of a professional panegyrist usually find him in a wine-tavern contiguous to the graveyard. He is known as the "Monsieur du Cimetiere," and has always on hand an assortment of orations to suit customers of every description. He only needs a few hints about the life and career of the defunct, and then evolves from his imagination a biographical sketch so brilliant and eulogistic as to make the mourners and general auditors believe that in the deceased the world lost one of its greatest men.

A selected number of Parisians were invited to the Chat Noir last Monday to witness a performance that M. Rodolphe Salis intends to give at Chicago during the Exhibition. Once the Chat Noir was a saloon, the refuge of the Bohemian with long hair and unkempt beard, the rendezvous of the incoherents, the decadents, and other eccentric people. Now it is the place of meeting for the "pschutteux," and it is furnished like a museum. Rodolphe Salis was an unsuccessful painter and poet, who decided to do something original. He established himself as a beerseller, but a beerseller out of the ordinary lines—a gentleman beerseller. He gave himself the name of "Gentilhomme Cabaretier-Seigneur de Chatnoirville-en-Vexin," arrayed his waiters in the green palm-embroidered coats of the French Academicians, and addressed his customers in the French of three centuries ago, in the language of Rabelais. At first his shop was a modest one, on the exterior boulevard Rochechouart, but he was surrounded by joyous companions with his own tastes, painters and poets. These decorated his walls, and drank his beer. Great artists have presented the stained glass windows and the pictures that ornamented the walls. Until recently the proprietor cared to be patronized only by men of talent, and it may be safely said that every one that has made a name in art and letters has visited this cabaret.

"Le gentilhomme poete" opens to one in the representation he is preparing for Chicago. Every political, literary and social celebrity of France is touched with his satire. I am afraid that Chicagoans will say they have never witnessed and never listened to so objectionable a representation. Among those who contributed to the programme were Paul Delmet, Jacques Ferney and Masson, the long-haired poet. The Chinese shadows are the most interesting part of a performance at the Chat Noir. The scenery is a piece of white cloth, for the actors are but shadows.

THE WESTERN UNION'S TIME SERVICE.

From The Boston Transcript's Washington Letter.

The five-foot time-ball to be dropped at the World's Fair will be made of canvas on a steel frame. It will be wound up each day to the height from which it is to fall, and it will be set and electrically connected in such a manner that the breaking of the circuit at 12 noon will release it. The cable by which it will be controlled has already been laid, connecting the new observatory with the entire Western Union Telegraph system. Within thirty days it will be in operation, the touch of a button at the Washington end of it instantaneously transmitting notice of the hour over 250,000 miles of wire. When that button speaks the whole country will listen, and the hands of 70,000 electric clocks all over the United States will point to the correct minute and second. There are 7,000 such clocks in New-York City alone. All railways, factories and industries of every kind pay attention to this signal. Three minutes before noon each day all the Western Union lines are cleared of business, every operator takes his finger from the key, circuits are opened, and at the instant when the sun passes over the seventy-fifth meridian the spark of intelligence is flashed to all parts of the country. It requires less than one-fifth of a second to reach San Francisco.

The 12 o'clock signal sent from Washington indicates 11 a. m. for Chicago, 10 a. m. for Omaha and 9 a. m. for the Pacific coast, the United States being divided into four perpendicular strips and each strip setting its clocks by the time of the meridian which bisects it from north to south. Thus each strip is only one hour later than the next strip to the east. The Western Union company earns about $1,000,000 annually from its electric-clock service, charging $15 a year for setting each clock at noon daily. The time sold thus profitably it gets from the Government for nothing, but anybody can have the same privilege free of charge by putting an instrument and a wire into the observatory. Captain McNair, the naval officer in charge, is anxious to furnish time-ball service to private individuals and concerns in every seaport city, only demanding as a condition that he shall have a return wire furnished him, in order that he may publish corrections in the newspapers. Such time-balls would enable mariners to correct their chronometers. It was chiefly for this purpose, in fact, that the time service was originally established.

LUTHER'S GOBLET.

Berlin letter to The London Standard.

The goblet out of which the Emperor drank at the banquet the other day at Wittenberg, and to which he alluded, both at the beginning and at the end of his speech, is at present in the possession of the University of Greifswald, which bought it for 140 thalers (£21) from the family of a professor named Brockmann, in July, 1801. It is a goblet of silver, with a lid, gilt all over, and its Gothic form and decorations are in pretty close harmony with the style usual in Germany about the year 1520. It is 45 centimetres (17.7 inches) high, and 28 centimetres (about 11 inches) in diameter. It was carefully examined lately by an authority on such matters, Professor Lessing, of Berlin, who published the results of his investigation in the "Annals of the Royal Prussian Collections of Art." The part of the goblet intended for the liquor is hammered in knobs, arranged in two rows of eight knobs each. It is twisted in at the middle, so that its circumference there is less than above and below. The lid also is hammered in knobs, the tops of which are bound together and taper into a slender twig crowned by a pomegranate. The high base shows Renaissance features, the chief of which is the wreath of acanthus leaves.

The goblet must have been made at Augsburg, for it bears the silver stamp of that city, the pine-cone. On the edge of the foot-plate is engraved the dedication, "The honorable University of the Electoral town of Wittenberg presents this wedding-gift to Dr. Martin Luther and his bride, Kethe von Bore. Anno 1525. Die Martis post festum Johannis Babtistae." The weight of the goblet is engraved on the bottom: "wiget, 84 lot" (it weighs forty-two ounces). A silver medal in honor of Luther, dated 1630, was afterward fastened to the inner side of the lid. All that is known of the history of the goblet after Luther's death is that it belonged to an ecclesiastical dignitary, Superintendent General Mayer, of Hamburg, in 1704; that it was in the possession of his heirs at Greifswald in 1752, and that it was bequeathed by them to Professor Brockmann. There is a copy of it by the court goldsmith, Vollgold, in the Industrial Art Museum in Berlin.

MANNEQUIN NOBLES.

AN INDUSTRY OF TITLED PEOPLE.

Among my numerous acquaintances in London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin, there are several who follow the calling of a "lanceur" or "lanceuse." Some of them are of ancient lineage and lofty rank, while others belong to the theatrical world. This profession of "lanceur" and "lanceuse" is not openly avowed, but it is, nevertheless, one that is very popular and enables many members of the Old-World nobility to live on the fat of the land as luxuriously as millionaires, while possessing neither estates, rent-rolls, nor fortune of any kind.

In Paris, for instance, there are a Count and Countess de S——, whose entertainments during the season are recorded every week in the chroniques of the "Figaro" and of the "Gaulois." They occupy a magnificent apartment in one of the streets adjoining the Parc Monceau. It is exquisitely furnished and filled with incomparable treasures of art. Their superb dinners are served on priceless china and glittering plate, the table is covered with rare exotics, the wines are perfect and the maitre d'hotel and the footmen correct and imposing. There are no less than ten highly bred horses in the luxurious stables of the Count, while his equipages are known to all Paris. The Countess is one of the principal leaders of fashion in Paris; she wears magnificent jewels, while nothing in the way of description can do justice to the exquisite elegance of her toilets. If her dresses should sometimes border slightly upon eccentricity, she manages to invest them with a chic of her own, which creates a furore among the many wealthy Parisiennes, who are always anxious to adopt a new fad and to strive to imitate in everything the lovely grande dame in question.

Notwithstanding all this appearance of vast wealth, fortune and luxury, the combined income and independent fortune of the Count and Countess does not exceed 15,000 francs, or $3,000, a year. The very grand appearances which they manage to keep up are attributable to their successful operation as "lanceurs." The magnificent furniture is provided free of cost from a great furnishing house in the neighborhood of the Rue de la Paix. The exquisite pictures, the Petitot enamels, the old ivories, the Gobelin tapestries and Venetian cabinets which fill the tastefully arranged rooms belong to a leading picture and bric-a-brac dealer. The latter, when he happens to come across some wealthy customer anxious for particularly fine works of art, refers him to the Count, who is generally believed to be a wealthy connoisseur and an habitue of the Hotel des Ventes of the Rue Drouot. Purchasers who might be ready to drive a close bargain with a mere dealer would never venture to do so with the Count, and, as a rule, consider themselves fortunate in securing at any price objects which have figured in his collection. Indeed, so celebrated is he as an expert that the mere fact of a work of art having been comprised in his collection is sufficient to enhance its market value. When the Count does effect one of these sales he hands over the proceeds thereof to the dealer, and receives in return an exceedingly handsome commission.

Wine merchants stock the Count's cellar with their choicest brands free of cost, knowing well that when that celebrated gourmet has negligently remarked, as he sits with his friends over his after-dinner claret and liqueurs, "Oh, by the by, taste this Chateau Montrose; I bought it from X. a week ago, and find it better than any I have yet tasted," orders will come in thick and fast. Flowers, fruit, magnificent fishes, fowl, venison, the marvels of confectioners, and all the greatest delicacies both in and out of season make their appearance on the table of the Count and Countess in a similar inexpensive and profitable fashion. It is the same with the horses and carriages, which do not remain very long in the possession of the Count before being replaced by new ones. Nor do the maitre d'hotel, the footmen, the chef, and all the many other servants who work under the orders of the imposing-looking Austrian major-domo of the Count and Countess ever receive a centime in the shape of wages. The proprietor of one of the great intelligence offices of the Faubourg St. Honore sends them thither, to obtain by two or three months' service, a reference from the Count, armed with which they can subsequently succeed in obtaining excellent places with the very best people. For the Count is reputed very fastidious and exacting, and his household is regarded as irreproachable.

Boucheron, the great jeweller of the Palais Royal, who has just migrated from thence to the Rue de la Paix, loans to the Countess priceless jewels of novel design which she wears at balls and dinners, with the result that the clever tradesman receives large and expensive orders for tiaras, necklaces, rings, etc., "just like the one which you made for the Countess de S." The Countess returns the gems to Boucheron as soon as their value as a trade producer has become lessened, and is thereupon furnished with other sets. She receives a liberal percentage upon the purchases made by the many wealthy admirers of the gems she wears, and, moreover, the jeweller often presents her with a ring, bracelet or glittering necklet in recognition of her services. Great dressmakers furnish her with beautiful and novel, if sometimes rather odd, costumes, lingerie, ball and dinner gowns, costly furs in winter and elaborate bathing suits in summer. She takes especial care to inform her distinguished friends and acquaintances that such a frock was bought from so and so, and that this mantle or teagown was made by X. or F., thus bringing custom to the house in question. Moreover, when a marriage is about to take place in high life, the Countess, who knows everybody, places herself at the disposal of the overwhelmed mother to aid her in the choice of a trousseau, china, glass, plate and jewels. She also assists the bridegroom-elect to select the presents of the corbeille, the horses, carriages and furniture destined to become his future wife's property. Such services bring money freely into her coffers, for Parisian tradesmen are far from being ungrateful for her distinguished patronage. I may add that the sudden vogue and European reputation of the perfumer Leutherie and of the confectioner Pignan were caused by the immense advertisement which the Countess gave them, and many other successful tradesmen are similarly indebted to her.

All this, though suspected and hinted at by some unkindly disposed persons, is only known for a certainty to a few very intimate friends of the couple. Any disclosure as to the source whence their affluence is derived would be received in Parisian society at large with incredulity. It would not be considered possible that people bearing so grand a name, and possessed of such unblemished ancestry, and of such perfect breeding should soil their hands with anything so vulgar and bourgeois as touting for tradesmen.

Besides the Count and Countess in question there is another great lady who bears the title of Marquise, and has recently become a widow, who has successfully followed the profession of "lanceuse" for ten or fifteen years. Although of somewhat plebeian birth, she is nevertheless received even in the most exclusive circles of the noble Faubourg, and is a welcome and frequent guest of the Countesse de Paris at Stowe Palace. She has no fortune of her own, neither had her husband, who was many years her senior. But yet she is always exquisitely dressed, wears jewels which create sufficient sensation at the opera and elsewhere to secure mention in the newspapers, and drives perfectly appointed carriages. Her friends declare that she is enabled to secure all these luxuries by her industry and talent as a painter, but no one to my knowledge has seen any of the work of her brush. Her luxury is merely the result of her industry and perseverance as a "lanceuse."

Of course no matter what the supposition or rumors may be, the profession of "lanceur" and "lanceuse" may be carried on with impunity and success as long as there is no public and printed intimation of the character of their operations. Thus, for instance, the Marquise above referred to has, I hear, just narrowly escaped exposure in a court of law, in connection with the bankruptcy of the once famous Parisian couturiere, Rodriguez, who is now in an insane asylum. Madame Rodriguez was in the habit of furnishing dresses free of cost to a certain number of ladies of the grand monde, and also of the stage world, by way of advertisement. When, however, she became financially embarrassed, these ladies were dismayed to find that the dresses which she had undertaken to make for them gratis figured on her ledgers as goods delivered to them in the ordinary way and still await payment. On the bankruptcy of Madame Rodriguez these accounts were included among the assets of the couturiere, and were placed by the assignees in the hands of lawyers for collection. Some of the ladies, as, for instance, the Marquise, submitted to the demands and paid the accounts in full rather than to court a public discussion concerning the terms on which the dresses mentioned therein had been furnished. But others, notably an ex-premiere danseuse of the opera named Brach, and Mlle. Hadamard, of the Comedie Francaise, declined to pay, and have fought the matter out before the civil tribunal of the Seine, with the result that they were acquitted of all liability in the matter. The court held that the dresses for which they were called upon to pay had not been furnished in the ordinary manner, but merely by way of advertisement. During the proceedings the "premieres" or forewomen of the principal couturiers in Paris gave evidence, showing that it is quite an ordinary and accepted practice for the leading tailleurs de dames to provide not only actresses, but also ladies of the highest rank and position in society, with dresses free of cost, "a titre de reclame." Indeed, the premiere of Madame Rodriguez actually went so far as to furnish the judges, for their personal information, with a list of great ladies who compete with dramatic stars as tailor "mannequins." The discretion of French magistrates is proverbial, and hence it is that the fateful list was not included in the published proceedings of the trial. But the escape has been a very narrow one, and unless I am much mistaken the "lanceuses" belonging to the great world will henceforth adopt the precaution of my friend, the Comtesse de S., who makes a point of never accepting a dress on the "mannequin" system, without receiving at the same time a receipted bill for the amount which it costs.

EX-ATTACHE.

HOME FOR SHIPBUILDERS.

WILLIAM H. WEBB'S INSTITUTION APPROACHING COMPLETION.

The home for the institution which William H. Webb has founded on Fordham Heights, and which will keep his memory green in long years to come, is now approaching completion, though it will be late in the spring or early in the summer before it is ready for use. The building is in a position which the New-Englanders would call "sightly," and commands a beautiful view of the surrounding country. The fact that the solid rock had to be blasted out to make the cellars and foundations has caused the work to be somewhat delayed. It was Mr. Webb's first intention to build on Fordham Heights a home for old shipbuilders whose days of work were over and whose means of livelihood were insufficient. Here he proposed that old men who had spent their lives in working at shipbuilding should be surrounded for the rest of their days with every comfort. If they had wives, the wives were to be with them, and the old couple could journey down with the shadow hand in hand. Then Mr. Webb decided to change his scope and plan, and besides taking care of what had been to provide for what was to be. He determined to bring the past and the future of shipbuilding together there on Fordham Heights, and to add to his home for the old a school for the young. So, when the building is finished, there will be in one part of it a home for the aged and in the other a school where from twenty-five to thirty young men will be instructed in the art of shipbuilding.

A staff of competent instructors will have charge of the school and tuition and board will be free. Everything pertaining to the designing and building of ships of iron or wood will be taught, and the young men will be graduated as naval architects. The draughting-rooms for the schools will be in towers above the roof of the building, so that excellent light can be obtained from all sides. There will also be an immense "laying-off room," where the drawings of the students can be laid off in patterns of the actual size of the part of the ship designed. In short, the school is to be completely equipped in every respect. Naval architecture and shipbuilding in America owed much to William H. Webb in the past and it will owe much to him in the future. Long after he is dead his genius will live in gliding keel and shapely hull, and generations of sailors yet unborn will step the decks of ships designed by graduates of the school of his foundation.

There will be accommodations in the part of the building devoted to the home for about 150 old people. Any one who has made his life-work that of doing something which pertains to the building of a ship will be admitted, even the caulkers, the painters and the carvers of figure-heads, if there is room and they are poor. Preference will of course be given to men whose work was directly that of building the ship. The institution will be governed by a board of trustees, among whom will be the president of the Chamber of Commerce, the president of the New-York Hospital, a professor of Columbia College and the president of the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen.

The work on the building is being pushed forward rapidly, Mr. Webb desiring to see the institution opened in the spring if possible.

THREE LITTLE PRINCES.

From The London News.

Of the daily life of the three eldest Imperial Princes our Berlin correspondent writes: The princes, as is generally known, are very simply and strictly brought up. Every day, summer and winter, they get up at seven in the morning, and have breakfast at a quarter to eight, consisting of tea and rolls. The meal never lasts more than a quarter of an hour. Punctually at eight their lessons begin. The Crown Prince, as well as the Princes Fritz and Adalbert, are each taught separately, but for some hours the Crown Prince and Prince Fritz are taught together. The Crown Prince, who is most zealous, and takes all his lessons in earnest, is much further advanced than his two brothers. The play hours during the morning are filled up with gymnastics, games of ball, digging, etc., in the playground, near the right wing of the New Palace. At a quarter to ten they take luncheon—sandwiches, claret, and natural mineral water, which beverage is much drunk at the Imperial table.

After lunch they again have lessons for a short time, and then take their riding lessons, either in the riding school in bad weather, or in fine weather out of doors. The Crown Prince, who is an excellent rider, with a firm seat, has lately begun to ride. His white horse, "Abdul," which he received on his birthday from the Emperor, is a handsome large Arabian, with a long tail and thick mane, of faultless build, proud bearing, and a most graceful step. After their riding lessons they sometimes take a ride in the neighborhood of the New Palace, accompanied by the Crown Prince's Military Governor, Major von Falkenhayn. The Princes Fritz and Adalbert accompany the Crown Prince on their ponies, and it is a pretty sight to see the younger ones trying to keep up with their elder brother. They very often take a drive in their pony carriage, the Crown Prince driving. This little basket carriage is drawn by a white pony, hung all over with silver bells, and its name is "Seehund."

MINISTERS IN BUSINESS.

From The National Review.

An old-fashioned Yorkshire Baptist preached every Sunday for fifty years and repaired shoes throughout the week. The good man, who knew his Bible by heart, studied Jonathan Edwards, Matthew Henry and Dwight, and paid his way. Some of his brethren sneered and respectable persons turned up their noses at his leather apron, but the common people heard the old man so gladly that he did more real good than did many a pulpit thumper attired in the bravery of gown and bands. He was one who knew how to make the best of both worlds, and at his death left his widow a house and money in the bank. There is a dissenting preacher in one of the eastern counties who is thoroughly conversant with the qualities of those herbs and simples which old women employ so effectively. The result is that his skill is in constant request by his neighbors. John Wesley was no mean physician, and even wrote a book on medicine. Ministers who possess the requisite knowledge and skill, following in his steps and despising Mrs. Grundy, might easily render the healing art both profitable and helpful to themselves and to others.

A minister of my acquaintance, who is no mean man of science, has gained both money and friends by the sale or exchange of fossils, lepidoptera, coleoptera, and botanical specimens. He gratifies his own tastes and gives pleasure to others at the same time. His church officers, however, charge him with wasting valuable hours and bringing discredit upon his office. If he only lay upon his study sofa evolving arguments for the refutation of such as do not believe in the devil, these men would be satisfied and go on sanding the sugar in peace. A minister not far from London carries on the trade of florist; he grows fine roses and other choice plants, all of which find a ready and remunerative sale at Covent Garden. When he began he traded with borrowed capital; now he is comparatively wealthy. An active pastor, who has now retired from both ministerial and commercial life, was for many years partner in an iron-bedstead business, and was not ashamed. He was accustomed to boast that his connection with business enabled him to live in a good house, to dress his wife well, to educate his children, to keep a respectable table for his friends, to help the poor, and to benefit the Church, all of which was true.

DEEP-SEA FISHES OF THE PACIFIC.

From The Overland Monthly.

About one hundred species of deep-sea fishes have been obtained by the Albatross in the depths of the ocean off the continental slope of California. These creatures are, as a rule, very soft in body, almost black in color, and many of them covered with phosphorescent spots, by which they can see their way in the darkness. They live in the open sea, at a depth of two to five miles, and their soft bodies at this depth are rendered firm by the tremendous pressure of the surrounding waters. In their native haunts the light and heat of the sun scarcely penetrate; the darkness is almost absolute, and the temperature of the water is at the point of freezing. The creatures living at these great depths are not, generally speaking, descended from the shore species of the same region; they constitute groups by themselves; and forms very similar are found in all parts of the ocean from the poles to the equator.

THE SOUTHWESTERN EXPRESS of the Pennsylvania Railroad is the new solid vestibuled night train for Cincinnati and St. Louis. Its fast time and superior equipment have already established its popularity.