

THE PASSING SHOW

Patti, dear old lady, now that she has lost her voice, is going to start out in a musical pantomime called "Mirka, the Enchantress" in which she does not have to sing a note except one little solo right at the end. We did think that perhaps when she lost that everlasting voice finally and forever she would let us rest, but no, not so. Now she appears in a deaf and dumb creation in which she does not have to speak. She, whose only charm was her voice, is actually going to Paris this fall in a play in which she does not sing. She will establish herself in Sarah Bernhardt's Renaissance theatre, and the poor Parisians will feel it their duty to go to see her because, forsooth, thirty years ago this woman used to sing.

So Jean de Reszke, it seems, is not overjoyed at the prospect of Calve's return. Perhaps it is because, like Eames, he does not like to see her eat with her knife; perhaps because he has sometime in the past happened to come in contact with her peppery temper; perhaps because he is a little, just a little bit afraid of her. De Reszke is a great artist, a perfect singer, and he still makes, in spite of his fifty odd years, as graceful and charming a lover as any prima could wish for. But after all age is age and art cannot quite conceal it. Youth's candles are burnt out and with what shall he meet that ardent flame, that scorching whirlwind of passion with which the Spanish woman will descend upon him every night? It is only when he plays with Calve that people call de Reszke "cold," and he does not like being called cold. He is not cold at all; he is always tender and sympathetic; but a tenor must have more than tenderness to hold his own with Calve, and one does not have that at fifty, not even tenors.

There is an amusing "scrap" going on in New York just now between Richard Mansfield, actor, and G. Bernard Shaw, playwright. Last summer Mr. Shaw wrote a play which he called "Arms and The Man," and Mr. Mansfield played it. Mr. Mansfield thought the play was a satire and played it as such with magnificent success. Everyone else, thought it was a satire and the critics heaped unconditional praise upon the head of Mr. Shaw, saying that such a piece of audacious cynicism had not been flung at the world for years. They called Mr. Shaw the master cynic since Juvenal. Well, now after this realistic masterpiece has run for a whole year as successfully as any masterpiece or work of merit can ever run in New York, and after Mansfield's impersonations of the hero, *Captain Bluntschli*, has become a by word for delicate irony Mr. G. Bernard Shaw says that Mansfield has spoiled his play and ruined his reputation. He declares that he never meant the play to be satirical, and that if rightly played *Bluntschli* would be one of the most pathetic and touching characters in the world. Mr. Shaw apparently forgets that in London, where the play was played seriously, it was a dead

failure, while in this country it was one of the season's successes. Undoubtedly Mr. Mansfield's irony made the play, and if it was a gratuitous invention of his own brain, then the greater Mansfield he. However, Mr. Shaw wrote the drama, and if it has succeeded beyond its deserts he has a right to object, though such a proceeding is somewhat uncustomary.

Things like this make one wonder how much of what we call the art of the world was intentionally so. I have always wondered just what Shakespeare would say if he could read the forbidding tomes of Shakesperian literature written in all languages, and I have always privately maintained the Browning commentaries and encyclopedias were largely instrumental in bringing about that gentleman's demise. It is queer what work the philosophers and critics make of artists anyway. If Shakespeare were alive today he probably could not answer the vexed Shakesperian questions. As Henry James says, he simply planted his genius and let it grow and he was not particularly responsible for or even concerned about the form it took.

Several years ago I visited a spiritual medium who for the small sum of one dollar evolved the shade of Sir William Shakespeare. As soon as I was assured that the great William was at my service I breathlessly began.

"Can you remember clearly when you wrote the third act of Hamlet and what you intended?"

"Yes, I can," in ghostly accents. "Well, did you want him to be the eternal type of irresolution, introspection, failure, that was higher than success, a being so delicately attuned spiritually that decided action was repulsive and impossible to him? Did you want him to typify the spirit too much purged of earth?"

A moment's silence in the darkened room. Then the answer came with fearful distinctness:

"No, I wanted a drink."

Since then I have always believed in spiritualism and when I meet a medium I uncover my head.

News comes from London that Mrs. Pat Campbell who scored such a tremendous success as *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, is able, because of a peculiar formation of the breast bone to wear a lower cut than any other woman on the stage. And yet they say she continues to fool with "methods" and waste her time on "art." How very foolish of Mrs. Pat, when she has such a neck. Art is a poor excuse anyway; a sort of apology for existing invented by people who haven't got necks and things. Its all very well for Bernhardt and Duse to talk about art when they have to wear chokers. Art and chokers go together somehow. But what need have people like Mrs. Pat of art? They are art themselves—God's art.

Now that Mark Twain has lost all his money people say he is insane. Some of us thought he was insane most of the time he was making it, either he or the American public.

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At a recent open air performance of various Shakesperian roles De Wolfe Hopper made such another large sensation as *Falstaff* that he has decided to buy out Crane's outfit and play the character regularly. Let's see; De Wolfe is six feet seven in his stockings with a big thundering voice that sounds like a whole bowling ally in action; a princely pair of legs and such irrepressible good humor that he can make you laugh by merely standing still. Well, he may do. I should not be greatly surprised if he made an excellent *Falstaff*. Besides he has seen Maurel play Verdi's *Falstaff* and that's a whole Shakesperian education in itself. He will probably handle the lines smoothly, for it must be remembered that this is not his Shakesperian debut. Didn't he use to play *Juliet* to Marshall P. Wilder's *Romeo* years ago?

Pauline Hall, who will soon be with us again has been doing Europe on a "quad" this summer. The chances are that she will be prettier and plumper and jollier than ever. But after all bicycling has its disadvantages. Pray heaven that she be not tanned!

"Tribby" is being played in Chicago. "The Gallery Boy" went to see the play, and here are his impressions of the opening scenes: "De orchestra tumbled a little, an' up went de rag. A nice, fat, muddery loidy came out an' dusted de furniture, an' talked wid herself. Den in cums as big an actor as Sullivan, an' he had whiskers an' golden hair, an' de loidy called 'im Taffy. 'She must be sweet on 'im,' said Chimmie. Den in cums anoder feller wid a rush Scotch accent, an' she called 'im de Laird. Dey all changed togs, an' trun tings on

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