

THE PASSING SHOW

HELAS!

To drift with every passion till my soul
Is a stringed lute on which all winds
can play,—

Is it for this that I have given away
My ancient wisdom and austere control?
Methinks my life is a twice-written scroll
Scrawled over on some boyish holiday
With idle songs for life and virality
Which do but mar the secret of the
whole.

Surely there was a time I might have
trod

The sunlit heights, and from life's
dissonance

Struck one clear chord to reach the
ears of God.

Is that time gone? lo! with a little rod
I did but touch the honey of romance
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?

Oscar Wilde.

I did not know whether to give the name of the author of that lament or not, for he has made even his name impossible. He wrote it a year ago when he was a young man, a first honor man from Oxford, the most lionized of all young English lions, the wittiest of young wits, petted by all the great ladies of the kingdom, but it was a foreshadowing of doom. One wonders if he knew then how true it was. One wonders if he remembers it now in his prison. As poetry it is not bad, and he did others much better. He wrote dramas that will be models to English play-wrights of the future. He might have been a poet of no mean order, he might have been one of the greatest living dramatists, he might have been almost anything, but he preferred to be a harlequin. I am not speaking of his crimes against society, which all men know. I am speaking of his crimes against literature, which came much earlier, which only a few saw and lamented. We are told that there is only one sin for which there is no forgiveness in Heaven, no forgetting in Hell. That is the sin against the holy spirit, not the holy spirit of the Trinity, but the holy spirit in man. The sins of the body are very small compared with that. To every man who has really great talent there are two ways open, the narrow one and the wide, to be great and suffer, or to be clever and comfortable, to bring up white pearls from the deep or to blow iris hued bubbles from the froth on the surface. The pearls are hard to find and the bubbles are easy to make and they are beautiful enough on a sunny day, but when a man who was made for the deep sea refuses his mission, denies his high birthright, then he has sinned the sin. What evil he does after that belongs to the police records, to psychology, to what you will, but not to literature. His name is "Marked with a blot, dammed in the book of Heaven." This man was not only a comedian, he was a buffoon. He used the holiest things for ends the basest. He made the ark of the covenant a trick box, the anointed spear a harlequin's wand; he took the tapers from the altar for festival lights and brandished them in the wild melee of a carnival night. So little would have changed it all, a little sincerity, a little reverence for his own gift, and as he

himself once wrote:
"And the mighty nations would have crowned me,
"Who are crownless now and without a name,
"And some orient dawn had found me kneeling
"On the threshold on the Home of "Fame."
O the pity of it, the irony of it!

And yet, as Howard Pyle said in a fairy tale, "Naught that has died can ever live, naught that has lived can ever die." The author of "Helas" is in prison now, most deservedly so. Upon his head is heaped the deepest infamy and the darkest shame of his generation. Civilization shudders at his name, and there is absolutely no spot on earth where this man can live. Cain's curse was light compared with his. About him are men of lesser crimes than his, men who stole perhaps because they were hungry. And yet, suppose through those prison walls a great song should echo, suppose through those prison windows a great sunset should flame, what soul there would know and understand, would thrill with that rapturous appreciation which, whatever the creeds may say, is the very ecstasy of prayer? Who but this man most shamed of all, who is, in spite of himself, spite of the world, an artist still? You can not kill it, that heavenly birthright, that kingly dower which makes men akin to the angels and to see the visions of paradise. You can not give it to women, nor drown it in wine, nor stultify it with vice. You may belittle it, stunt it, distort it, but it is of God and it knows not death.

The Orientals sometimes make rings in the form of a serpent, and in the serpent's head they set a gleaming jewel. They have a legend about such rings. When Satan fell from Heaven he became a serpent and every mark of his holiness and high estate departed from him save one; the jewel, blessed of God, which had adorned his angel's crown sank deep into his flat head and became embedded in the flesh. The serpent in rage would mangle his head against the rocks, but the stone was harder than adamant. He would bury himself in the slime and cover it with mud, but filth could not dim the luster of the jewel. That is Satan's eternal torment, that he can not be wholly evil or wholly lost, that through every baseness and every degradation he must carry the birthmark of heaven, the signet of the Sons of God.

When one looks out over the chaos and confusion of wasted life and wasted talent, one wonders whether Oscar Wilde, and all the rest of us for that matter, will not have another chance. Another chance to try our tools, for after all that is all that matters, that we do our work, our best work, until our tools break in our hands. Another chance where the toys and dear delights that distract us in our youth, and the vanities and falsehoods that mislead us in our age will not allure us nor perplex us any more. Where we can look at white light without shrinking and not long for the flare of gas lamp nor the glow of firesides. Where the soul can feel as here the senses do, where there will be a better means of knowing and of feeling than through these five avenues so often faithless,

THE LANSING THEATRE

ED. A. CHURCH, Mgr.

TUESDAY OCT 1
TOO MUCH JOHNSON
WEDNESDAY OCT 2
ON THE BOWERY
THURSDAY OCT 3
THE SILVER LINING
SATURDAY OCT 5
THE PASSING SHOW

FUNKE OPERA HOUSE

F. C. ZEHRUNG, Mgr.

SAM T. JACK'S EXTRAVAGANZA CO

-IN-

THE BULLFIGHTER

A monster spectacular production Twelve living pictures Magnificent costumes and scenic effects

FRIDAY OCT. 4.

SATURDAY Oct 5, matinee at 2 p. m.

Seats on sale at Zehring's drug store Wednesday Oct. 2.

REGULAR PRICES

NEBRASKA COLLEGE of ORATORY

GEO. C. WILLIAMS, Principal

FACULTY

GEO. C. WILLIAMS
MISS MINNOW GILLUM
L. A. TORRENS
DR. H. M. GARTEN

OPENS Sept 5
IN THE
Y. M. C. A. BUILDING

INSTRUCTION

ELOCUTION
DRAMATIC and LYRIC
ART
ORATORY
PHYSICAL CULTURE
FENCING, ETC.

Send for a catalogue

ROYAL GROCERY CO.

1032 P St, Lincoln Neb.

This is the place you are going to stop at and order your goods when down town or have our solicitor call on you Why? Because you get better quality of goods for your money. Don't forget to order a sack of our Anchor patent flour. You should try our Teas and Coffees. They are absolutely pure. A trial will convince you.

PHONE 224

ROYAL GROCERY CO.

that alike save and lose us, that either starve us or debauch us. Perhaps.

"Blot out his name then, record one lost soul more,
One more task declined, one more foot-path untrod,
One more devil's triumph and sorrow for angels,
One more wrong to man, one more insult to God."

So after all M. Victor Maurel is coming back to us, M. Victor, Victor in acting and Victor in song. No matter what else grand opera gives us this season, if it only gives us him, his *Falstaff* and his *Iago*.

now by two tiny untrained voices, two cunning twins whom Sybil has brought back with her from her retirement. This is a downright misfortune for Miss Sanderson. A prima donna's reputation will stand a good deal, duels, divorces, and such small matters, but twins have not been tried before and I fear they will prove fatal. It makes her appear so ridiculous. Twins are very prosaic and then they are very troublesome and Miss Sanderson's hands will be full with bringing out two new operas and the "care of two little ones." She has not yet said what their names are, indeed she has said very little about them. People say Sybil's mamma is very indignant and disgusted. I should think so!

Sybil Sanderson has gone back to Paris to sing. She is through with her colds and her explanations and her excuses. Her American failure and her non-appearance in Paris are all explained

Richard Mansfield is very, very ill of typhoid fever and lies in his town residence attended by his nurses, the best and most watchful of them being his wife, Beatrice Cameron. I hope before

Fall Styles of **DUNLAP'S**

Celebrated Hats

Now on sale by

J. A. SMITH, Sole agt.

1137 O St.