

THE PASSING SHOW

I heard the other day, a story about a poem, and since Richard Harding Davis thought it good enough to write about I will tell it myself. A few months after Anne Reeve Aldrich, the poet, died, some of her best verses appeared in *Harper's* under other initials than her's. If I remember rightly the verses ran something like this:

"If it were land, then weary feet could travel,  
If it were sea a ship might cleave the wave,  
If it were death sad eyes could look to heaven  
And see through tears the sunlight on a grave.  
But land nor sea nor death keep us apart,  
But only thou, O unforgiving heart."

"If it were land through piercing thorns I'd travel,  
If it were sea I'd cross to thee or die,  
If it were death I'd tear life's veil asunder.  
That I might see thee with a clearer eye,  
But land nor sea nor death keep us apart,  
Forget, forgive, O unforgiving heart."

Miss Aldrich's friends were indignant and wrote to Richard Harding Davis demanding an explanation. Mr. Davis' only answer was a story which appeared next month in *Harper's*, telling the experience of an editor who published a poem that was mailed to him signed with false initials. In Mr. Davis' story the editor traces the poem to the plagiarist and threatens him with open disgrace. The only explanation the young man offers is that his sweetheart was fond of poetry and that he stole the verses to win her favor. I am inclined to think that the story was true and that Mr. Davis simply told the facts in the case, for as a story the production was more interesting than artistic.

Madame Melba has honored this soil once again. She is already *en route*, leaving her big talented boy at school in England. It seems almost impossible that she has a boy of her own who is studying Latin and harmony on his own account. It's rather hard to think of opera singers in a maternal aspect anyway. Of all those singing women though, I should imagine that Melba would be the most comfortable one. She may be more erratic than the conscientious Eames, and she may forget her boy sometimes, but when she remembers its worth while I warrant.

Of course every one knows that Langtry has lost her jewels, the newspapers have been impressing the fact upon us ever since it occurred. But the secret details are known to few. The truth of the matter is this, that the order presented the bank clerk for the delivery of the jewels, written in Langtry's hand and signed with Langtry's signature, was forged from a recommendation of a complexion soap written by the fair Lily in a thrifty moment. This should certainly be a warning to the fair actresses who supplement their salaries by sending their photographs and signatures to advertise liver tonics they have never tasted and cosmetics they have never used. It is an undignified custom and it is putting one's own reputation and the public favor to very mean ends. At any rate Langtry will not soon write advertisements stating that she is "pleased and benefitted" by Somebody & Co.'s soap for the complexion.

So Amelia Rives-Chandler, the eloquent apostle of the small winged god,

Amelia whose books are upon one everlasting subject, whose adjectives all have one taste, whose descriptions all tend toward one end, and whose harp has but one fervid string, has been granted a divorce. For the Chandlers' sake I am glad of it. It was a terrible trial for the family to be tied in any way to an erratic, semi-commercial proclaimer of the supremacy of love like Miss Rives. Of course Amelia Rives was received in Richmond and Washington, but only in that condescending, considerate fashion that artists, one and all, leaders and camp-followers are taken up by society. I warrant Mr. Chandler's aunts and great aunts and cousins are all rejoicing and offering up prayers of thanksgiving that young Chandler is well out of it. And as for the man himself, he probably has experience enough and to spare. If the imaginative and fervid soul of Amelia has tried all her absurd theories upon him I do not wonder that he is weary.

There was no sensational evidence in the case at all; the only reasons given were that it would be more convenient for each of them to be free and that a divorce would be "an accommodation mutually accepted." In other words they were tired of each other, and Mrs. Chandler being scarcely a woman, but merely a free lance of a very trashy order of fiction and a disciple of a most dangerous and treacherous school of modern thought, decided to put an end to it. For like all the women of her particular school, Amelia Rives has no sense of responsibility, only a few high sounding and superficial theories of the kind by which such women excuse their lack of womanliness. And upon a few metaphors and similes she obtained her divorce. It looks dangerously like the philosophy of Victoria Woodhull. When Amelia Rives married six or seven years ago no one who had read her violent fiction expected that she would remain married very long or that she would make young Chandler particularly happy. A woman of her strained and distorted opinions would not be likely to do so. It is useless to say that the quality of one's work is no indication of his life. An author's work is the product of his mind and his feelings, if they are erratic, everything in his life is erratic.

Margaret Mather is not content with domesticity. She is discontented to such a degree that she drove her husband down one of the principal streets of Milwaukee, lashing him with a buggy whip, a few weeks ago. They were out riding when the trouble began, it seems. Suddenly Mrs. Pabet caught up the buggy whip and struck her husband across the face. He jumped from the buggy and started down the street. She stopped, tied the horse and followed him down the street, striking him again and again as she overtook him. Since the unfortunate affair the Pabet family have been trying to patch it up and Margaret, when interviewed by reporters, has thrice hissed histrionically that it is a "cruel, cruel lie," but hundreds of the good citizens of Milwaukee saw it and although they like Pabet beer, they will not forget such disgraceful behavior. There is no doubt about the truth of it, and it is the beginning of an end that is not far distant.

Of all the talent wasted and the careers

borrowing from health.



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abandoned there is no more hopeless and irreparable than Margaret Mather's. The woman is still young and still beautiful, but every career is shut to her. She has burnt the candle at both ends, and now she can have darkness for the rest of the journey. It is awful to think that any one who could play *Juliet* as Margaret Mather once played it should come to this. That she is no longer sought for by artists nor admired by the public nor respected by society. She is neither flesh, fish nor herring, so to speak. Heavens! how she could read those line of *Juliet's*. "Believe me love, it is the nightingale." I can hear the despair and pleading of that great voice now, It was a voice that throbbed and pulsed with feeling, that waxed and waned, that fell upon those who heard her like the