

all. There is a horse, old and lame, who keeps the family. He is the only one who works. My mother was a dairy-maid like myself. She can scarcely read. I grew up like a weed," etc. I tell you that woman impeaches Heaven as she stands there.

Later she puts a written confession and a rose on the window sill for him, telling him if he can marry her after that to come to her without a word. Her mother finds the letter and burns it. He finds only the rose.

The second act opens with the wedding feast. The strain of the piece is for a time relieved by the comedy of the milkmaids and dairymen in their Sunday clothes. Then Tess enters, carrying her bride roses, and with her those dear little children she means to make so happy. Her farewell to her old companions of the dairy must be seen to be appreciated. As they go out, the sulky milkmaid who is in love with Angel hangs back, and Tess goes up and puts her arms about her with such simple dignity and tenderness as I have never seen before. At last Tess and her husband are left alone, and begin to pace the floor together in their restless happiness.

Her husband makes his confession, she learns that he never got her's. She makes it now. I cannot tell how. I can only see her again before me, on that sofa, his arms about her, her hand over his shoulder, twisting a handkerchief into a mere pulp. I can feel again that awful silence when she came to the things she could not tell. I can see that distraught man go out bare-headed into the night, and that heap of bridal finery crouched wailing on the floor. That scene is not one to write of. When you have witnessed it you have gazed upon the naked soul of womanhood and stand ashamed and afraid.

The next act is in the cottage at Marlott. The old father is dead, there is nothing to eat in the house. Abram is down with the fever. The bailiffs have come to set them out in the street. Tess has come back from another fruitless effort to get work. Her mother flies at her in tantrums and in torrents of abusive language upbraids her for not going back to Alec d'Urberville. She takes it all smilingly, kneeling by her little brother's pallet, holding his hot head, crooning an old ballad to him softly, looking into the child's eyes for the only love there is to help her in all the world. Dear me! no one who has ever had a little brother can sit dry-eyed through that. She makes the love for that child so real, that love that is religion to some of us who have no creed. Sometimes I think actors are so busy studying the great passions that they quite overlook the quieter loves, which, after all, are the most satisfactory in life. I never saw this love of one's own kin done perfectly on the stage except in two instances; one where Crane hugged "Bobby" in "Brother John," and this scene of Mrs. Fiske's with Abram.

Marian, the milkmaid, comes in and tells Tess that Alec d'Urberville is still following her, remarking, "You kin try a woman beyond her strength." Tess stands there, that poor, frail little woman with the ragged shawl about her shoulders and her sick brother at her feet, and her infuriated mother still storming about the room, and says almost lightly, "No, not me." Ah! And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!

Alec d'Urberville comes in as the bailiffs are tearing up the furniture. When he has exhausted every other persuasion, he tells her that Angel Clair is dead, and Marian confirms it. Tess sinks stupidly into a chair mut-

tering, "No, no, Marian! Not dead! Souls can't go out of the world like that, can they?"

The bailiffs pull the bed from under her shrieking brother, her mother screams her curses in her ears; then something in that great heart snaps. She throws her hands over her ears crying, "Mother, Mother, for God's sake stop a minute! Alec d'Urberville, where are you? I will go with you!"

There was no man to help her, no God. I know of nothing like it, save in the old Greek tragedies where men and fates and gods united to drag the daughters of Hellas to their doom.

The last act has been written of so often and so well that I will say little of it. I remember most vividly where, returning from Alec's room, she meets Angel Clair. She raises her arm, and stands against the wall like a crucifix. She simply does not breathe at all. She staggers to a chair in long, loose strides as though she were falling to pieces. Then she utters a single cry, "Marian!" Could that trumpet note have come from that frail lady?

The maid crouches before her, self-convicted. Then, without looking at him, in a high, shrill voice, quite different from any other tone she uses in the play and as unlike her own voice as mine is, Tess says: "I waited, and waited, and you did not answer; I waited until they lied to me and said you were dead. He helped us, he is here, I am with him—" That hand falls to the table, and Angel Clair goes out.

Then follows that murder which is absolutely unique in histrionic art.

One needs to see something like this occasionally to remember that the drama is not an amusement or a diversion merely, but a great art, which the greatest artists of the world have served. This woman has earned that often misused title of artist. She has crossed that treacherous isthmus which lies between the troubled, inconstant tides of commercial art and those remote, still waters whose depths are not gauged and whose stars do not set. Few ever cross it. Ah, there have been so many whom we hoped would be what this woman is, so many of those lights that failed. There was Anderson, and Morris, and Margaret Mather, and there is Nether-sole, a violent school girl with the gifts of a goddess. Will she or will she not? Who knows!

But of this woman there is no doubt. Less gifted dramatically than any of them, she has the rare intelligence which, if less direct and compelling, is at least more fixed, more infallible.

No, no, she will not fail us, not she! As long as those great eyes look at you across the footlights, you can stake your faith upon her, that she will be first, and always and preeminently an artist, that she will feed her art with her life. No, we shall not lack our champion, not until death puts out the light in those eyes.

She will feed her art with her life; yes, that is it. Olive Schreiner once wrote a story of an artist who painted pictures in a wonderful red color that none of his fellow-painters could imitate. They sought the world over for a color like that and never found it. He worked on, growing paler day by day, never revealing his secret. But after he was dead, when his fellows went to put his grave clothes on him, they found an old wound over his heart with open and calloused edges. Then they knew where he got his color.

Alfred de Musset said the same thing much better in his ode to Malibran, which is one of the masterpieces of French literature. It was written after Malibran's death. My scholarly friends will laugh at the translation, but I

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merely wish to get at the idea.

"Had you but smothered that devouring flame  
Which your throbbing heart could no longer hold,  
You would be living now, and still see following and applauding you  
The careless crowd of this world-weary world.

Knew you nothing of man's ingratitude?  
What dream deluded you to die for the world?  
What votive flowers made you so mad  
As to weep real tears upon our stage,  
When artists, crowned a thousand times,  
Never felt one in their eyes?

Why did you not smile with averted face,  
Like other players, emotion feigning?  
Instead of that delirium when you sang the willow song,  
Why not merely have held your lyre with grace?

Did you not know, mad artist,  
That those great cries which welled up from your heart  
Heightened the pangs of those wasted cheeks,  
That every day the hand you placed upon your burning brow  
Trembled more than it did yesterday,  
And that to cherish grief is tempting God?"

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