

Clarence the "Royal Box."

The fourth act, however, is alarmingly productive of happenings. It is one of the strongest acts I remember having seen in any play. The first scene is in Clarence's dressing room. The Countess Felsen enters through a private door—Alas! Our modern dressing rooms have no such conveniences—The interview is not wholly satisfactory to Clarence; the lady assumes a patronizing attitude and throws in his face his rival the Prince of Wales. I must say for the Countess that she would have been rather a goose to have succumbed to Mr. Coghlan's frigid wooing. He is an artist, that man, and endowed with an intelligence above most of his fellows and fine sensibilities, but he is icy and no mistake. While Clarence is pouring out impassioned words in a manner enthusiastic but quite passionless, Count Felsen and the Prince are announced. The Countess flees through that dear little secret door—shudder, O Mr. Daly, and test the walls of the Temple of Drama!—leaving her jeweled fan behind her, which her husband promptly picks up. When the husband has departed Clarence tells the Prince he is nervous and unstrung and begs him not to go to the Countess' box tonight or it will put him beside himself and he will ruin the play. The Prince informs him that he will not only see the Countess, but that she will sit with him in the royal box, reserved only for royalty and those whose relation to royalty are questionable. He goes out and the stage manager comes in to say that the curtain has been rung up.

"Then ring it down!" shouts Clarence. "Give them their money back! There will be no performance! I won't play, I won't play!"

The manager shrieks, prays, entreats, but Clarence flies into a convulsion of rage and shame. He looks a very giant as he picks up a chair and sends it crashing across the room, throwing himself down on the couch crying "I won't play, I won't play!" But the little boy for whose family the benefit is given kneels to him and tells his pitiful story, and the big fellow gets up, saying that mill horses must grind and it matters very little that their hearts break.

The second scene is the remarkable scene of the play. The entire theatre is darkened while the Prince and the Count and Countess Felsen come out and take the front box on the stage left, which is draped in red and hung with the arms of England. That completes the "atmosphere." The audience seems far away and you fancy that you have been asleep and have awakened in the good old days of George the Third. The curtain rises on the balcony scene in "Romeo and Juliet." Clarence comes on with the usual line, "He jeets at scars who never felt a wound." In the box the Prince is bending over the Countess, whispering in her ear; her eyes are on him, not on poor Romeo. On the stage is Clarence, stumbling through his lines, his back turned squarely to his poor Juliet, his eyes fastened upon the royal box. The Countess laughs, looking up into the Prince's eyes; Clarence, on the stage, stops short in his speech. The stage manager rushes on the stage in despair, poor deserted Juliet sighs "Romeo, Romeo," to relieve the situation. Romeo tears off his wig and cloak and rushes down to the footlights:

"Away all of you! I am not Romeo, I am James Clarence! That man in the box there is the Prince of Wales, and men are his tools and women are his playthings!" With a shriek of laughter he throws his arm across his face and falls back into the arms of the distracted Montagues and Capulets, falls stiff and stark at full length, that huge fellow, like a man struck by lightning, and lies there uttering that horrible laughter while the curtain goes down.

The actor's work has been so rigidly

confined by the line of the footlights, that the effect produced by crossing them and throwing the action out into the audience is tremendous, and only the intensity of the situation saves this daring invasion from being inartistic. It is only a stage trick if you will, but it is one of the most effective and successful ever executed. The whole audience cowers before that man's rage as if his denunciation included them—the long suffering player's revolt against the smug, self-satisfied world that applauds and patronizes and despises him.

The last act is as simple and calm as the fourth was stormy. The blonde Countess proves herself utterly unworthy of even a passion below zero. Clarence is arrested and remarks that he doesn't care, for even an actor must have a "real trial and go to a real prison." But the Prince of Wales, who is a good fellow—though dull after the manner of his house—and who knows his betters, steps in and dismisses the constable, saves Clarence from a duel with Count Felsen, and sends him to recuperate in America with Miss Celia Pryce, who in spite of frequent and vigorous rebuffe, has fondly and faithfully pursued him.

I believe that this is a greater play in some respects than "David Garrick." It is not so smooth and well finished, but its dramatic effects are stronger, its dramatic spirit more intense. It lacks the warm human interest, the mellow classic flavor of "Garrick," but, dramatically speaking, it is more effective. In "Edmond Kean" the Shaksperian scene used was from "Hamlet." Mr. Coghlan has rightly judged that the balcony scene from "Romeo and Juliet" will be a ore popular. That scene, along with the Venus de Milo, and a few other things has really dawned upon the general consciousness and the public accepts it as one of the things that are. But this substitution makes it necessary for the actor to assume for a few moments a role for which he is obviously unfitted by nature.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Coghlan has emasculated the love story to such an extent, but good heavens; we have love stories to burn; witness "The Police Patrol," "The Still Alarm," "A Guilty Mother" and "The Span of Life." But to find a play that has individuality, literary quality, which brings about one the best and wits and genial spirits of other days, that is another matter.

Mr. Coghlan is the same baffling actor as of old. His work has the priceless charm of a keen and discriminating intellect, and of an almost infallible artistic taste, and it still lacks the brutal strength and vivid coloring of the mighty earth-forces which his physiognomy so strongly suggests. The lack of warmth in this big rugged fellow is quite as astonishing as its terrific presence in the fragile person of Mrs. Fiske.

At any rate, we owe Mr. Coghlan much gratitude for giving us a play so replete in intellectual interest, so strong in execution, not glaringly historical nor romantic, yet one which has all the finer suggestions and seductions of romance, and through which the stately Muse of History speaks in those subdued and melancholy numbers which lull the soul to dreams like the refrain of an old song.

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A WISH.

I wish that I might truly be
A Christian scientist.
Of all the sciences 'tis first—
The best upon the list—
Because, if you believe in it,
All trouble you have missed.

For instance, if your pocket is
As empty as can be,
Make up your mind that it is full,
You'll own the treasury,
For when you can imagine funds,
Of pauperdom you're free.

And should you hunger as you walk,
Amid the city's din,
Make up your mind your dining,
With your kith and with your kin,
On ruddy ducks and Burgundy
And toothsome terrapin.

And if you have no clothing that
Will warm you when you freeze,
If so it be your shivering from
Your bald spot to your knees,
Pray summon up an ulster—in your
mind—
And be at ease.

Oh yes, it is a lovely thing
To be a scientist,
Who suffers not from trials or
From any present twist,
And just by fancy can remove
All trouble from his list!
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Talkerly—We must not forget that we owe a debt to posterity.

Buzzfuzz—I can't see why we should prefer posterity to living creditors.

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A Suggestion.

"Popper," said Willie, "why did you buy a golf coat?"
To play golf in, my son," said Mr. Willis.

"Did you need it?"
"Of course I did."
"Then I need a top coat to play tops in. I seen 'em advertised."

Marie—Jess says that she will not cross the water again this year unless she gets a guarantee from the steamship company that the vessel will become disabled before she reaches England.

Estelle—Dear, dear! Why so?
Marie—She says that it takes all of a six-days' voyage to work up a flirtation to the proposal point, and she wants the extra ten days to get a clincher, you see.

Eve—Stop punching me, Adam.
Adam—Well, I guess a man has a right to punch himself in the rib.