

THE PASSING SHOW

New York has drawn the line, and it has drawn it most severely, upon Charles Frohman's new French melodrama "The City of Pleasure." The new play has many and various attractions, scenery, costumes and all the rest of those glittering substitutes for real merit, but it lacks dramatic unity and it lacks decency. And yet, lacking these two things, strange to relate, the play is not popular in New York. Even the famous duel with knives between Annie Sutherland and Ella Proctor Otis could not save it.

Hall Caine is on his way to this country and will arrive in New York early next week. For the last three years there has been a sort of exodus of "the great" to America. Englishmen of name and Frenchmen of renown have indulged in American tours, but among them all there has been no stronger or more vigorous writer. Whatever may be said of Hall Caine's exaggeration, inconsistency and strained situations, the real force and power of the man remains undisputed. He is an island man. He is not a man of the world. He exaggerates like all men who are bounded by a narrow horizon. His work all lacks perspective. But the power of imagination is there. I know of no more powerful description than that of those terrible love scenes between *Phillip* and *Kate*; in the wild poetry and blasting power they are almost like those stormy recollections of *Ottima* in the conversation between *Ottima* and *Siebold* in "Pippa Passes."

Elenora Duse is no better. About six weeks ago a noted London specialist stated that Signoria Duse must give up tragic roles for this season, that tragedy was killing her. She was simply dying of too much emotion. What, an actress dying of emotion! Why, that is their element, their stand by, their long suit. They thrive and grow robust upon it. But there is more in what the doctor says than one might think. Signoria Duse is dying of her own peculiar kind of emotion, the kind that has made her great and unique in art. Other actresses of the emotional school are demonstrative and impulsive. They suffer and they vent their suffering. Their methods are simple and transparent; they pour out all their self inflicted anguish, and when it is all over they are merely tired as children are after excitement. Their emotions are wonderfully simple and they go no deeper than those of a child. But Signoria Duse does not allow herself even to suffer openly. In these days that is forbidden to a woman of good breeding. She must smile and smile and be a martyr. Signoria Duse is as well bred on her stage as she would be in her drawing room. The losing of herself in her part is only the half of her work. Keeping her part within herself is her individual and self imposed task, the art that is all her own. She is as considerate of other people's feelings on the stage as she would be in her own house. Though

really I don't suppose she thinks much about her audience or their feelings. She only does it to be truthful. In this generation, when so many of us live altogether upon the false and artificial, when all life is tuned an octave higher than nature, there are a few souls to whom the truth is necessary and all important, for nature evens herself out after all. Elenora Duse is one of these. She suffers as the women of her time have learned to suffer, in secret and in silence. The great art of other women is disclosure. Her's is concealment. She takes her great anguish and lays it in a tomb and rolls a stone before the door, walls it up and hides it away in the earth. And it is of this that she is dying, this stifled pain that is killing her. As I said once before it is hard upon a woman when she acts with her soul. That wears out so much sooner than the senses.

I always knew that some dire doom would befall the woman who wrote "Little Lord Fauntleroy." It has fallen. The curse has come upon her, for Frances Hodgson Burnett, the preacher of sweet domesticity, the apostle of the conjugal and the maternal is negotiating for a divorce from Mr. Frances Hodgson Burnett, a gentleman little heard from. The feud between them is so bitter that Mr. Burnett left home upon hearing of Mrs. Burnett's intended return to America. Poor Mr. Burnett! Perhaps he knows even more than Mrs. Frances about that "One She Knew Best of All." Let us remember that she also wrote "That Lass o' Lowries" and forgive her.

The London *Daily Telegraph* says that "Olga Nethersole is the most emotional *Camille* ever played in English." Then heaven deliver us from Miss Nethersole's *Camille*! The same paper says gravely that her *Camille* is a woman from the first act to the last. Well, I should hope so. Under the circumstances anything else would be awkward.

Calve announces that although she gets \$1,650 a night and has her traveling expenses paid, she is compelled to pay for her own board and lodging. Poor Calve, how can she afford it?

They tell us that Mme. Nordica is at Lucerne in Switzerland in the best of health and spirits. Of course she is. Nordica's constitution is of iron and steel. She is as robust as she is phlegmatic and her nerves and muscles are equally invulnerable. Nothing could phase her. She is always calm. I shall always think of her as she appears in the last act of the "Huguenots" singing that magnificent duo, wringing her hands and laboring like a stroke oar to work up a little emotion, and shyly taking the hair pins out of her back hair until it wriggled down over her shoulders in order to look grief stricken and woe begone. Ah yes, I believe the good news from Switzerland. Anyone who could sing "Ah Raoul, my despair," with unperturbed calmness will always enjoy good health. Her constitutions must be perfect and she will certainly be an octogenarian.

By the way, where is Mme. Nordica's

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new Hungarian husband whom she was to wed this summer? Has he too disappeared in a balloon or hurt himself turning hand springs, or disabled himself in any way? Surely nothing but death or disappearance could avert Nordica's affection.

Sir Henry Irving was kind enough to talk to a reporter who met him some forty miles out at sea. He spoke very hopefully of an epoch of National American drama. He said he had recently been reading Fiske's work on New England and that he was struck with the wonderful opportunity for a national drama on the Puritan epoch. There is, he says, something intensely dramatic in what the Puritians lived and suffered; in the stubborn warfare they waged against nature, some-

thing tragic in their failure to subdue the flesh and the devil. The New York and Chicago papers are making a great "miration" as Uncle Remus would say, about Sir Henry's words of lore on the dramatic features of Puritanism. But that is not particularly new. To me the wonderful part of his statement is that he had been reading Fiske. If one were to hear of an American actor reading Fiske it would be alarming. His manager would warn and caution him and his leading lady would throw herself at her feet with tears and supplication. If I should hear of Nat Goodwin or John Drew reading Fiske I should tremble for the future of the American stage. I should feel like penning an epitaph upon the art of Mr. Hoyt and writing "Nit" upon the tombstone of Eddie Foy. But we are safe. So long as the

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