

pen of Marie Corelli is still fecund and the fiction of Marion Crawford is still published there is no danger of our American actors becoming too intelligent. It is strange that our actors fall into such drivelling and careless habits. It is a sort of custom and tradition in America that an actor must lose whatever scholarly tastes and habits he may have been born with. It is not necessary. Those foreign fellows manage to keep them all their lives, and yet they can act a bit. The crying need among American actors is not so much talent as intelligence; not so much intelligence as culture, knowledge of the things that are. I was talking "the drama" last season with one of the most popular and successful comediennesses of one of the best metropolitan companies, and she insisted on talking about "Isbens" Ghosts and chirped blissfully on as though the world and all its treasures were hers. I was rather floored by that. I supposed that she would at least know the few things immediately pertaining to her profession. Again I spoke of George Meredith to one of our leading "stars" and certainly one of our best comedians and he replied with charming confidence that he did not like his "Esther Waters," but he thought "Lucille" a beautiful production. If in a moment of madness you should mention Fiske to one of them he would think you meant Clyde Fitch and pity you for your ignorance. We have brighter men than Henry Irving and men more talented, but they let themselves go. That is a habit with Americans. To be cheap successfully, to do the trivial well, that's all that matters. We produce clever farceurs and we write the best rot in the world, and our cocktails are excellent.

Speaking of American literature—O, its a great act! American literature—reminds me of what a really excellent story Marion Crawford has just spoiled in the *Century*. Why he did it no man knows, for his mistake was one of the most palpable sort and one most easily rectified. If he had simply stopped short six months ago he would have left one perfect work of art to make his children proud of his name. The last six months he has devoted exclusively to mutilating it. Well, Mr. Crawford is a true American; he has made a "good thing" out of literature, he is what we call "a success." He publishes a new novel every few months and writes countless "articles" beside. He is a very rich man. In each of his bulky volumes there is evidence of his talent, talent that if it had been treated with reverence might have been invaluable to the world. Somehow Crawford's career seems one of the saddest things in this present chapter of American history. We deserve it so richly. I have always thought he suggested Henry James' melancholy "Lesson of the Master." It hits him much harder than the expurgated part of "Trilby" ever hit Whistler. I thought though, when "Casa Braccio" began, that perhaps now that Crawford was rich and famous enough, perhaps he was writing that one story for his own personal pleasure and satisfaction, to satisfy the yearning in him that cannot yet be dead. But I suppose the curse of having sold one's self is that one is always brauded with a trade mark and can never escape from the habits of his vice. Truth once betrayed tracks the betrayer to his grave. He had better go out at once like Judas and hang himself. Like Midas, the Phrygian, when he seeks for beauty he will find only gold, gold that cannot buy perfection.

So Lasselle's scientific talk is no mere midsummer madness, no mere artist's freak, but a fixed and unfortunate fact.

He has actually invested his fortune in a big chemical factory over in France and will devote the rest of his life to science. And yet he has not lost his voice nor acquired permanent tonalitis. He simply declares that science was his first love and that he has returned to it. That may be true, but even M. Lasselle must acknowledge that art has made a pretty good substitute all these years, from a remunerative standpoint at any rate. Of course if Monsieur really finds bisulphate of copper more exciting than grand opera he has a right to choose it. And now the news comes that Jean and Edouard de Reszke have bought a lot of landed property in Poland near Czentochow and Plawne. I suppose next season we shall hear that they have retired to their Polish estates and gone to practicing agriculture, and that Calve has returned to her chickens for good, and perhaps Melba will discover a latent passion for drawn work or china painting. Then we may as well close the Metropolitan and the Auditorium. When France and Poland desert us we have little left, heaven knows.

Poor Bernhardt is in trouble again. A young woman named Klein has been protesting for several years that she is Bernhardt's daughter, and recently she has become so violent in her persecutions that she makes life almost unbearable, and Bernhardt has sent her to an asylum. A certain Parisian newspaper insinuated that she had used the peculiarly powerful influence she held in certain quarters to get the girl out of the way. The actress was enraged and Maurice, her son, challenged the editor to fight. In spite of the fact that Mlle. Klein has red hair I am inclined to think that her claims are unjust. Bernhardt would not have any scruples about acknowledging her. But it must be awkward though, to be by a large, raw-boned, red haired mademoiselle who wants to call her mamma.

In her last interview with a reporter Bernhardt said that she was shocked and grieved that the women of Paris should wear bloomers. It is too bad about the women of Paris! She said furthermore that she considered them highly immodest and degrading and the sight of them was painful to her. Speak gently! It is a sad and cruel thing that Mme. Bernhardt should be shocked. Masculine costume is well known to have unspeakable terrors for her, and I suppose even bloomers are enough to frighten her. To tell the truth she should never travel without a chaperone and every precaution should be taken to preserve her tender illusions.



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