

The Passing Show.

WILLA CATHER.

Fridtjof Nansen seems to have read pretty much everything and to have very decided opinions regarding literature, though he advances them modestly. The respect with which he speaks of the drama is amusing. In his benighted country they still regard it as a high form of literature. But then there are no Frohmans or theatrical trusts in Norway. He expressed himself as heartily disgusted with dramatic affairs in this country, so far as he knew them. Who directed his play-going in New York I do not know, but he only went to see Frank Daniels in "The Idol's Eye," and Maude Adams in "The Little Minister." Strange to say Maudie, the china kitten who is so dear to most masculine hearts, seemed to him "verra foolish."

O' course he considers Ibsen the great dramatist of the century, though he says that this verdict is by no means universal in Norway. It seems that the public there is divided; there are the people of the old school who bitterly protest against Ibsen and the red waist-coated radicals who wear his name on their sleeves. When asked what he considered Ibsen's greatest contributions to literature, he replied at once: "Brand and Peer Gynt, though only my own countrymen can fully feel the force of the latter." He thinks the American idea that Ibsen's dramas lack dramatic interest and are coldly intellectual for stage purposes a mere misapprehension, and says that they are the most effective acting plays that have been written in this generation.

When questioned as to what nation it, his estimation led the world of letters he replied: "Considered as a nation, the French of course. They have always been the teachers of the world in matters of art. Artistic conceptions change with every generation, just as Oedipus Rex, which was a noble drama in its day and voiced the feeling of its time would be impossible today. The French are such a sensitive, volatile people that they feel there changes first and so are always half a century ahead of the world. The attitude toward French fiction in England amused me very much. I was asked there if I considered Paul Bourget's novels good reading for the young. They seem there to always associate the nursery and the atelier. That is very amusing. I should no more bring up a child on Bourget than I should bring one up in the atmosphere of a studio. A painter does not paint for the young, and I cannot see why a novelist's craft should be more restricted than any other. If we followed out the English theory we should all end like China, where literature has become a jumble of moral precepts for school boys. Assuredly literature should be judged like music and painting, merely by the skill with which the theme is handled and the quality of individuality it expresses."

The principal feature of the Pittsburgh orchestra concert last week was the rendering of Anton Dvorak's symphony, "From the New World." I first heard Theodore Thomas' orchestra play the symphony in Lincoln several years ago. You will remember that it is built upon the old negro air of the south. It is a strange fact that the only folk-music we have, our

slaves gave us. When the symphony was first produced it was generally expected that it would echo "Dixie" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and other popular negro melodies of the time. As it did not, many people refused to see anything national in it at all. It was not until I heard the negroes singing down among the Blue Ridge mountains last year that I recognized anything national in the arias which Dvorak employed in the construction of his symphony. But having heard those wordless, minor melodies echoing through the silver silence of the Virginia moonlight, the plaintive air of this symphony, with the long note following the short in the accented part of the measure and monopolizing the greater part of the stress which would ordinarily belong to the short note, is unmistakable. I think, however, that in the first movement, the *adagio*, the composer pretty well exhausted his African theme, after that he seems to employ it very little.

The second movement, the *largo*, is placed in an altogether different atmosphere. The mountains of the Blue Ridge, the plantation fields of the Carolinas, the wide bayous of the Mississippi fade away and before you stretch the empty, hungry plains of the middle west. Limitless prairies, full of the peasantry of all the nations of Europe; Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Huns, Bohemians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Russians and Poles, and it seems as though from each of those far scattered lights that at night mark the dwellings of these people on the plains, there comes the song of a homesick heart. The principal is sung with exquisite effect by the English horn over a soft accompaniment of the divided strings, full of plaintive yearning. It is this song of homesickness, the exile song of many nations. The work of M. Devaux, who played the English horn was absolutely faultless. The *largo* closes with little staccato melody, begun by the oboe and taken up by one instrument after another until it masters the orchestra, as though morning was come, and the times for dreams was over, and the peasant was hurrying to his plow to master a strange soil and make the new world his own.

The *scherzo* and *allegro* were played in excellent style and with great dash and spirit. The ending, you remember, is particularly striking. It begins like any other ending, with a sawing and crashing and banging of many instruments, but when this instrumental explosion has reached its highest pitch, there comes that long, high final note on the wind instruments that seems to rise out of that vortex of sound like an aspiration, seems to rise clear into the evening sky and tremble there like a star. It is like the flight of the dove over the waste of waters, that last note, there is all the hope of the new world in it.

I sometimes drop in to dine at a little German restaurant down near the Carnegie music hall where a dozen or more of the orchestra musicians board. It is rather a wierd little place and the numerous palms give it a sort of roof garden effect and you might fancy yourself in a sort of half-way house on the road to gay Bohemia were it not for the proprietor's tow-

When you Mention the Name



SHAW,

you indicate the ACME of PIANO PERFECTION.

When other dealers offer you theirs for less money than that for which you

can buy the SHAW. Remember that they do it because they can. Why? Simply because their pianos are poorer in quality and cost less, their statements to the contrary notwithstanding.

Also remember that we have other GOOD pianos that we can sell you for less money. The very best values for the price to be had in the American market.

We also sell the Celebrated Washburn Mandolins and Guitars. Why not buy a Piano, Guitar or Mandolin for that Xmas present you are thinking about.

And then don't forget that the place to buy anything in the musical line and buy it right, is at the warerooms of



THE MATTHEWS PIANO CO.,

Western Representatives, 130 So 13th st.

headed children who dash in occasionally to coax pennies from the musicians. The chief attraction is not the menu, but the conversation of these jovial orchestra men, who are of so many different nationalities that they usually compromise by talking English. One will tell how he once bought a wonderful cello for a mere song, and another how he used to play flute accompaniment to a famous solo of Patti's, and another will relate his experience in the great orchestra at Bayreuth, and yet another will tell of old days in Weimar when the serene Liszt used to pass daily through the streets and when Eugene d'Albert married a blonde chorus girl, before he ever met the tempestuous Carreno, or of some story scene that took place between the great Madame Essipoff and Leschetizky in the golden time when they still cared enough for each other to quarrel. Charming gossip of a world so different from ours, where we eat and sleep and make pig iron and are respectable.

Occasionally the Reverend Heinrich Baehr, who is preacher to the unregenerate out at Homestead, drops in for a chat with his fellows. For the Reverend Baehr did not always preach at Homestead. Once, in his youth he was hausmeister in Wagner's home Wahnfried at Bayreuth and taught Wagner's son and Frau Cosima Wagner's children whom she took with her when she ran away from Haus Von Bulow. It seems that Baehr was originally a tutor in the family of one of Wagner's tenants, and one night the Wahnfried tutor ran away taking

with him a number of Frau Cosima's jewels and Baehr was called to fill his place. Think of having lived for years under the same roof with Wagner and now to be living in Homestead! He has often heard Wagner drumming out the airs in Parsifal with one hand on the piano, after which the master would laugh and shake his head, remarking: "Well; if I am not such an adept as Liszt, I can at least do better than Berlioz; I at least can play with four fingers, while he can only use a finger and a thumb." He often tells how Wagner insisted upon being called "the Master" by everyone in his household and how he sent people flying hither and thither

Will buy a pair of

- LADIES FINE
- BOX CALF
- HEAVY CORK SOLE
- VICI KID or
- FINE KANGAROO
- SHOES

At the
 Sanderson-Schulzmay
 THE FOOT FORM STORE
 and DAVIS.



1213 O Street.