

A bill has been presented in the United States Senate establishing a national university of medicine. The bill appropriates \$100,000 to be expended in ground and buildings, and \$1,000,000 to be placed at interest, the proceeds to meet the expenses of the university. The professors' chairs are to be opened to all medical schools, the great object of the institution being the general advancement of science.—*Michigan Argonaut.*

IRVING-TERRY.

DEAR 'VARSITY—I have been to the play—yes, I have been to the play four times—and you ask me to give you such impressions as the performances made on me, a casual spectator.

Well, I have seen much, I have wondered much, I have laughed much, and—I have wept not a little, but I fear that there are not words in me to tell the half of it to you.

I will wander a little about my subject first in order to acquire some measure of confidence in the task.

It would be well, dear 'VARSITY, if sundry well-meaning people,—those who occupy a large portion of the upper gallery, for instance, would take it for granted that Shakespeare, and even other minor dramatists, were writers of considerable merit. You ask me what I mean. Well, it is this in plain language. We go to the theatre to see the thoughts of play-writers rendered to us with the proper accessories of gesture and tone; in a word, with all the accompaniments of Life. And while there we endeavor to applaud when and where this is done with the greatest measure of success. But these well-meaning people of whom I spoke are seemingly so overcome by the very words of the author, quite apart and away from the manner of their delivery, as to vent vociferous plaudits on the sentiment of the lines.

Let us in future resolve to cheer and clap Shakespeare in our study, and reserve our theatre applause for the acting.

I saw a respectable old gentleman down whose mild cheeks the tears were trickling during the last act of *Charles I.* suddenly assume a ferocious expression as the beautiful pathos of the scene was interrupted by a burst of Boeotian applause from the upper gallery, and utter in a painfully audible voice the words, 'D—n the gods!' This remark would have found an answering echo in many breasts.

I heard a song from Olympus on Thursday night; it had reference to some complications which arose in connection with a Fish-ball. I heard it again on three other occasions, and, as it was almost the sole musical effort of the gallery during Irving's visit, I am inclined to believe that he and his brother actors will return to England with the fixed idea that our staple Canadian food is Fish in the form of Fish-balls, or at least that we hold this dish in such reverence as to direct most of our lyrical efforts towards the praise of it. Why did you not, dear 'VARSITY, send a few 'selected voices' from your Glee Club to honour the occasion.

There was a certain small boy who said a good thing which shall be permitted to pass to posterity through your immortal columns. This youth concentrated in himself the wit of the upper gallery—an indifferent easy task—in the following fashion:

Observing a box, the atmosphere of which was misty with lofty collars and eye-glasses, he watched for one of those rare delightful lulls which fortunately Olympians allow sometimes to occur, and, in his shrilly piping voice, thus spake—'One,—two,—three,—four,—five,—six,—seven,—eight,—nine,—ten. Fifty cents apiece!' There was a sudden relaxation of many orbicular muscles and a tinkling of eye-glasses!

But I have already glanced at the audience too much, let me look at the stage for a few moments, and first at the most beautiful figure on it—on any stage, I had nearly written, but the form of poor Neilson rises before me and I cannot write the word.

To me it seemed that the most striking features in Ellen Terry's acting were—first, its intellectuality,—second, its spontaneity. Every word, gesture and movement are so evidently the product of her own individuality; her intelligence is in accord with the author's in the minutest point, and not alone are his lines mastered but what lies between them has become hers, and the writer's very genius speaks through her lips. Not as though she were uttering the words of another, but as if the play of thought had instantly suggested to her such and such expression of her prevailing emotions.

Very few actresses have attained the art of losing all stage-consciousness to the extent that she has. There is no intimation of the fact that an audience is before her, nor are we ever unpleasantly reminded that she is playing to it. Fortunately it is unnecessary to describe Ellen Terry, for it would be impossible. Her beauty—a beauty of expression, speech and motion, cannot be fixed on paper, nor can any photograph do it justice. It therefore boots not to tell the color

of her eyes or hair. All I can say is that she is womanliness and grace incarnate.

She compels admiration even as the hoydenish *Letitia Hardy*, and before the stately *Portia*, uttering Heaven's justice to the earthly tribunal, we are fain to fall down and worship. The picture of *Antonio's* advocate, as erect, majestic, with upraised hand she pleads her cause, and quotes a law mightier than the laws of Venice,—'that in the cause of Justice, none of us should see salvation'—is an ineffaceable memory.

The character of the consort of the unfortunate *Charles*—did we ever till now think of him as unfortunate—is portrayed with exquisite tenderness and womanliness, but it is more than this, we see the queenly figure, undaunted by the perils that surround her, with regal mein commanding the obedience even of the 'traitors,' and, tireless and fearless doing more than man's work in rallying round her lord and husband his scattered forces. And we see her, the necessity past, and her task completed, fall into his protecting arms, and sink to his breast a trembling, sobbing woman.

What wonder that a hush fell over the house, and glasses grew too dim to use.

For the monarch himself we feel new and unexpected emotions. If his faithlessness and fatal obstinance drenched many broad acres of English ground with blood, if he broke his plighted faith and estranged all his truest friends, there was one bright spot on his life, he loved his Queen, and he met his death like a man.

Henry Irving shows us all that was fine in his character and demands our unwilling admiration for the man that lived a despot but died a King.

In all the plays presented,—save perhaps the *Merchant of Venice*, the support of the Company was good—so good indeed that nothing more could be desired,—but the veteran Howe, in *Charles I.*, Terriss, in *Louis XI.*, and several other characters about the king in that play, rose above the average. Nor must I forget *Gobbo*—*Launcelot Gobbo*—who played his parts admirably.

The setting of the plays was perhaps as good as anything we have seen in Toronto, though, naturally, much inferior to the scenery and stage appointments at Irving's own theatre in London.

But, dear 'VARSITY, my interest, as your's does I am sure, centres around Irving and Terry alone, and I confess I could not tell you even now how they were habited. This is no doubt a very masculine statement, but I am sure there are many fair friends who can supply you with details, and inform you whether the shade of Terry's dress was *old gold* or *mignonette*.

Irving, of course, took the chiefest part at all the performances, and exhibited the most marvellous versatility in his get-up, as well as in his acting.

Difficult it was to reconcile the dying *Louis XI.* with the dandified *Doricourt*, and no less hard was it to believe that these were one and the same with the demon-haunted *Burgomaster* and the balked *Shylock*. Poor Israelite! he was hardly used after all.

The last play, *Louis XI.*, gave undoubtedly the greatest scope for Irving's tremendous power, and it seemed to me that he had gone to more pains to master the character of the French king and had spent more time and study on it than on any other.

The childishly superstitious monarch who dreads the death he deals out so unsparingly, who forgets his diabolical plots at the sound of *Angelus* to mutter an *Ave*, stands before us startlingly and painfully real. And I can imagine nothing more ghastly than this figure of Death, clad in regal robes and maintaining to the last some measure of kingly dignity, gibbering prayers and curses in a breath.

His hour has come. Through the gathering darkness he sees the fierce eyes of death glaring at him. The breath of the grave sweeps over him and chills his marrow; his eyes are filled with terror and despair; he shrieks a prayer and, king to the last, struggling to his feet he commands a greater king than he to stay his hand! Slow falls the curtain, and as it falls we think to hear France cry with no feigned joy, '*Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi.*'

Well, dear 'VARSITY, I have trespassed on much of your space, and I fear to small purpose, but pray receive the above impressions, as genuine at least, albeit only those of a 'casual spectator.'

Yours, CAMP STOOL.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

I.

HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

It was the good fortune of James Russell Lowell to be born in the intellectual city of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and to be the son of a Unitarian clergyman with a mind of superior order. No doubt the advantages arising in connection with these two circumstances largely explain the fact that he was able to gradu-