

A SKETCH OF THE GREAT IBSEN

SOME OF HIS PERSONAL AND INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS
PORTRAYED BY MR. EDMUND GOSSE—A ROMANCE-WIFE PROTECTED HIM FROM STRANGERS.

An exceedingly interesting addition to Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton's literary lives is Mr. Edmund Gosse's "Ibsen" (2s. 6d.). The purpose and scope of the volume may be best expressed in the author's own words: "In these pages, where the space at my disposal was so small, I have not been willing to waste it by repeating the plots of any of those plays of Ibsen which are open to the English reader. It would please me best if this book might be read in connection with the final edition of 'Ibsen's Complete Dramatic Works,' now being prepared by Mr. Archer. It is eleven volumes (H. Heinemann, 1907). If we may judge of the whole work by those volumes of it which have already appeared, I have little hesitation in saying that no other foreign author of the second half of the nineteenth century has been so ably and exhaustively edited in English as Ibsen has been in this instance."

AN APOTHECARY.
I have already sketched in these pages the childhood of Ibsen at Eiken and the long bitter years in an apothecary's shop at Grimstad. What "Blackwoods," Gosse, "Mr. John," the shop, Mr. John; sticks to plasters, pills and ointment boxes, inappropiate to the author of "Enidymion," was strictly true of the author of "Peer Gynt." At all events, those six years, from 1844 to 1850, were infinitely important to the fashioning of that remote and gloomy genius who was to devote the greater part of his long life to administering the severest doses to mankind. Says Mr. Gosse:

"He prepared a dose for a sick world, and he made it as nauseous and astringent as he could, for he was not inclined to be one of those physicians who mix jam with their julep. There was no other writer of genius in the nineteenth century who was so bitter in dealing with human frailty as Ibsen was. By the side of his cruel clearness, the satire of Carlyle is bluster, the hatreds of Leopardi shrill and thin. All other reformers seem angry and benevolent by turns, Ibsen is uniformly and impartially stern. That he probed deeper into the problems of life than any other modern dramatist is acknowledged, but it was his surgical calmness which enabled him to do it. The problem-plays of Alexandre Dumas flit with emotion, with prejudice and pardon. But Ibsen, without impatience, examines under his microscope the protean forms of organic social life, and coldly draws up his diagnosis like a report."

Of Dumas fils and Count Tolstoy—those other famous apothecaries of the nineteenth century—he had a low opinion. "He said to me, in 1899," writes Mr. Gosse, "of the great Russian: 'Tolstoy? He is mad!' with a screwing up of the features such as a child marks at the thought of a black draught."

ROMANCE.
And yet even into the life of this grim apothecary of humanity romance was insidiously to force itself: "In the season of 1859, among the summer boarders at Gossensass, there appeared a young Venetian lady of eighteen, Miss Emilia Barlach. She used to sit on a certain bench in the Pterothal, and when the poet, whom she adored from afar, passed by, she had the courage to smile at him. Strange to say, her smile was returned, and soon Ibsen, who had been sitting at her side, he readily discovered where she lived; no less readily he gained an introduction to the family with whom she boarded. There was a window seat in the salle a manger; it was deep and shaded and flowering shrubs. It lent itself to endless conversation." Some time afterwards, when Ibsen's genius had woven this amorous net to the somber passion of "The Master Builder," Miss Barlach, perfectly heart-whole on her side, sent him a photograph signed "Princess of Oranien," thus openly, too openly for the sensitive poet, identifying herself with Hilda Wangel.

A PROMINENT FIGURE.
Ibsen, as all the world knows, spent his last years as a prophet possessing honor even in his own country. In Christianity he, formerly the Enemy of the People, was to become "our greatest citizen," and unconsciously, through citizen," and unconsciously, he lent himself to this national exultation: "He had become more like a strange physical object than like a man among men. He was visible broadly and quietly, not conversing, rarely moving, quite isolated and self-contained, a recognized public spectacle, delivered up, as though bound hand and foot, to the kodak-hunter and the maker of 'spicy paragraphs.'"

A PERSONAL SKETCH.
After 1891 the great cosmopolitan left his own country no more. Ten years before, in 1881, in the grand-danville Club in Rome, Mr. William Archer met him for the first time, and gave of the great dramatist what, in the words of Mr. Gosse, "is perhaps the most careful pen-sketch of him in any language." It runs as follows: "I had been about a quarter of an hour in the room, and was standing close to the door, when it opened, and in glided an under-sized man with thin, very broad shoulders and a large leonine head, wearing long black frock coat with very broad lapels, on one of which a knot of red ribbon was conspicuous. I knew him at once, but was a little taken aback by his low stature. In spite of all the famous instances to the contrary, one instinctively associates greatness with size. His natural height was even somewhat diminished by a habit of bending forward slightly from the waist, begotten, no doubt, of short-sightedness and the need to peer into things. He moved very slowly and noiselessly, with his hands behind his back—an unobtrusive personality, which would have been insignificant had the head not been strictly proportionate to the rest of the frame."

"Get home, and—go to bed!" whereat his noble visitor withdrew, clothed with indignation as with a garment."

AN ACCIDENT.
Gentle in voice and gesture, the poet's bitter comments on men and things gathered a new intensity from the way in which they were uttered. Constantly attacking the ills of humanity, he was singularly indifferent to the ordinary incidents of life. "I was myself," says Mr. Gosse, "the witness, in 1899, of his sang froid under distressing circumstances. Ibsen was descending a polished marble staircase when his feet slipped, and he fell swiftly, precipitately, downward. He must have injured himself severely, he might have been killed, if two young gentlemen had not darted forward below and caught him in their arms. Once more set the right way up, Ibsen softly thanked his saviours with much fragility of phrase—'Tak mine Herre'—tenderly touched an abraded surface of his top-hat and marched forth homeward, unperturbed. Indifferent, or apparently indifferent, to the ordinary routine, Ibsen's observation of detail was singularly acute. On entering a room he found it impossible not to note the carpet's pattern, the color of the curtains, the objects on the walls, all of which minutely shows itself in his stage directions. And he carried this minuteness of detail very much further than stage directions, into the very hearts of his characters, about whose life-history he knew all kinds of details and ramifications: 'Nothing was unknown to him of their experience, and for nearly two years, like a coral insect, he was building up the scheme of them in silence. Odd little objects, fetiches which represented people to him, stood arranged on his writing table, and were worked until his death, the enigmatic Demurgos of a new poetry and a new faith—a prophet with no passionate message upon his lips, a seer who pointed certainly to the lights, but who held a microscope to the shadows, and who had been inculcated with the wisdom of Voltaire, and you have at least a guess at the heart of Henrik Ibsen."

CENTENNIAL OF THE WALTZ

WALTZING 100 YEARS OLD—ITS CENTENNIAL TO BE CELEBRATED BY PARIS GRAND OPERA.

A hundred years ago the armies of Napoleon found the peasants of Thuringia dancing a new dance. It was gay and audacious; so novel in both step and tempo, so thrilling and heart-melting that the armies of Napoleon almost forgot fighting while they learned it. It was danced by couples. The man took his partner by the waist, while she clung to his shoulder. The two other arms were held out, stretched, hand always clasping hand. And round and round the couples whirled to music with a strange new lilt, languorous and agitated, soothing and exciting, sentimental, diabolical. "Now, that is dancing!" said the soldiers of Napoleon, and they took it with them, taught the conquered nations in full compensation, and in 1808 they brought the waltz to Paris. Thus the world has waited 100 years.

This year is the centennial of waltzing, and in Paris we are to have a grandiose celebration of it at the opera.

Of course, there are French patriots no more willing to give complete credit for the waltz to German peasants than, for instance, those of Boston who are to admit the "Boston" had its rise in St. Louis, Mo. According to such—and with them Charles Malherbe, archivist of the Paris Grand Opera—the waltz is old French—so ancient that it got forgotten in the twelfth century," says the learned Malherbe, "the waltz was known in Provence and called the volta. Then it was not only danced, but sung while dancing, and the song was called the ballade. Under Louis XII. (year 1500) the volta was brought to Paris, where it remained in vogue at the court all through the sixteenth century. Would we recognize it as the waltz? Though slow and pompous, with much of the waltz about it, it was certainly in waltz time. All the same, this volta waltz was so forgotten away back in the year 1600 that only savants like Malherbe can dig up vestiges of its music; and the waltz went on 200 years completely ignorant of it. "Imperial waltz, imported from the Rhine, famed for the growth of pedigrees and wine."

So sung Lord Byron just 100 years ago, while they were cabaling for and against the new dance in the gay French capital; and no better evidence of the waltz's newness could be asked than the outcry that started up spontaneously against its supposed impropriety. For a month the fate of the waltz again trembled in the balance, when

"gentle Genlis, in her strife with Stael, would even proscribe it from a Paris ball!"

Which, of course, seems now absurdly understandable. To understand that strife and the extraordinary animus of Byron's "Ode to the Waltz," we must remember that nothing resembling its positions and movements were then known in the European capitals.

To hold one's partner by the waist seemed utterly audacious, while to keep a grip of her hand all the time induced the great poet to exclaim:

"Can caught from cold Kamchatka to Cape Horn, with waltz or after waltz be born?"

Evidently yes; but they did not know it. The mazourka, a wild sort of cotillon, having been heard of and polka, was already being danced in remote parts of Europe by the Poles, Hungarians and Czechs. The schottische was to be introduced into Paris considerably later, about 1830.

And the polka itself, coming from Bohemia by way of Vienna and Baden, was to take Paris and London by storm in 1844. The extraordinary thing about the waltz was that it came before them. All this and a vast lot more will be told in a splendid waltz ballet on the boards of the Paris Grand Opera, where the famous Messenger is now director. Messenger is a great enough composer to be freely permitted—for a centennial celebration like this—to take his waltz material from all the great composers. And what rich material!

Many cases of astigmatism arise from the practice of reading in bed, particularly by persons recovering from a severe illness. It strains the muscles of the eye to such an extent that they alter the curvature of the cornea, the normality to which the terms astigmatism are applied. The nineteen women in the Finnish parliament have already presented 26 bills relating to the reform of marriage laws, the legal position of illegitimate children, protection of minors, public education, the liquor question, etc. MINARD'S LINIMENT RELIEVES NEURALGIA.

Some Stories of Blind Tom

NEGRO PIANIST LONG A GREAT MONEYMAKER.

Profits Probably as High as \$20,000 a Year—Said To Have Made \$200,000 on a Trip Abroad—Grew to See a Little—Delighted in Cries of Pain.

New York Sun: Few public performers ever played to more money than Blind Tom, who died recently. He was prominently before the public for twenty years, and after that when his trustees were changed he still continued to play, but not with as much success. His new managers did not know how to handle him properly, and handling Tom took lots of tact. Until only a few years ago he played and his last appearance was probably on the variety stage. For forty years he had been an attraction, and in the last half of that time he played in almost every town of any size in this country and Canada and made tours on the other side of the Atlantic. Even in small towns he did well, and as running this show was not an expensive affair the profits were large. A statement of accounts made by his old manager showed that in one month in 1884, which was spent in Virginia, the receipts were more than \$4,000, and the expenses \$2,000. He usually kept on the road for nine months out of the twelve, so that his yearly profits may have averaged about \$20,000. On his trip on the other side it was said he realized about \$200,000, so that Tom while in good hands was a source of steady income.

It is singular that his old manager, Thomas Warhurst, who for twenty years took him all over this country and through Canada, died six months ago, and it was under his management that Tom was most successful. He was then well cared for and well coached in his work, and he earned many thousands of dollars for the Bethune family, on whose estate he was born a slave.

About twenty years ago Blind Tom got into the country where he was born during slave times and later General Bethune acted as his trustee. It was said that up to 1870 he had earned more than a quarter of a million dollars. Gen. Bethune then turned the trusteeship over to his son, John G. Bethune. John Bethune ran a racing stable which was said to be supported by Blind Tom's earnings. He died in 1883, and after his death his widow brought suit against the Bethune family, alleging that she was the rightful trustee of Blind Tom. In this she was supported by Charity Wiggins, the mother of Blind Tom. Mrs. Bethune won her suit, and since 1886 Blind Tom has been in her care, but she only succeeded in making a success of him for a few years.

Blind Tom was born a few miles from Columbus in the county of Muscogee, Ga., on May 25, 1849. His parents were field hands of the pure negro blood, with nothing to distinguish them from the mass of their race, except that his mother had small feet and hands and was of an active, merry temperament. He was born on the estate of Thomas Greene Bethune, where his parents were slaves. Tom was born blind, and as he was unable to learn anything from sight it was generally thought that he was idiotic. When very young he showed a great fondness for sounds, and musical sounds exerted a controlling interest over him. He learned to talk when young and spoke clearly, but his words had no meaning and were simply imitations of what he heard. Mrs. Bethune, when he heard that Tom's mother had said Tom had not sense enough to learn, declared this was a mistake. He went to Tom and said: "Tom, sit down." Tom repeated the words. The general then repeated the order and at the same time said Tom on the floor. "Go up," said the general. Tom sat still and repeated. He then ordered Tom to get up, and lifted him to his feet. Next time Tom was told to sit down he did so at once, and promptly rose to his feet when ordered. From that time Tom learned quickly. Everyone tried to teach him.

When Tom was about 4 years old a piano was brought to the house and as soon as he heard this Tom was entranced. One night his mother had neglected to lock her door and Tom disappeared. He found his way into the Bethune house through an open window and early in the morning the piano was heard. Tom was seated before the instrument playing one of the pieces he had heard, and playing it correctly with both hands and using the black as well as the white keys. From that time he was allowed the use of the piano and soon he began to compose himself. He would sit at the piano for hours. When asked what he was playing he would say, "That was what the trees said to me," or "That is what the birds say." One day a German music teacher of Columbus heard Tom and declared that he knew more music than he could teach or learn. Tom was later coached by some pianists. They played for him and he learned what they played and afterward repeated it in public. In this way Tom learned to play thousands of pieces, and in his repertoire were sonatas of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Bach, Mozart, all the best known marches, many of the pianoforte solos well known, plantation songs, and a number of original pieces descriptive of what he had heard.

One of these was "The Rain Storm." When very young Tom used to stand in a passageway and listen to the rain rattling on the roof, and from this he made his "Rain Storm." He was not far distant from the battle of Manassas, and this he made the subject of another piece. Tom was born blind, but when 3 or 4 years old it was noticed that he spent much of his time with his face turned toward the sun. In time he developed a little sight. He could see luminous bodies, and persons whom

he knew well he could recognize when a few feet away.

When in public Tom would play what he was told to. When he had finished and was applauded he would turn toward the audience and applaud himself by clapping his hands. He seemed to take as much enjoyment out of his performance as his listeners. He was always happy when he was with a piano, and when he and his managers arrived in a town he was often locked in the hall in which he was to play during the evening. He would make it as full as he could play like a child. His meals were always served to him in his own room, and when the food was brought to him he would always insist that the sugar bowl should be as full as it was possible to make it. Unless it was full Tom would storm and refuse to eat anything. Then when he had finished his meal he would steal the sugar left and hide it. He was so helpless that he had to be dressed and even to have his face washed. It was not everyone that he would allow to attend to his toilet.

On one occasion his manager had to leave him in the hotel, and before leaving him explained how he could regulate the heat in the room. "Now," said he, "if this room gets too hot turn this radiator this way, and if too cold turn it the other way," and he illustrated what he said by guiding Tom's hand. Then to find out if Tom understood he asked what he would do if the room was hot. Tom had his fingers on the radiator and with ease pulled it out.

When very young Tom used to like to hurt other children so that he might hear them cry. It was thought that he did not do this out of cruelty but because of his fondness for all sounds. Once he choked a younger brother nearly to death, and at another time he burned an infant sister. This mania lasted all his life, and any exclamation indicative of pain always gave him great pleasure, although he always expressed sympathy for the sufferer. Once when in a small town his manager locked him in the hall as usual and Tom amused himself with the piano. When his manager returned he was surprised to find Tom holding a man down on the floor and almost choking him. The man was yelling and Tom was delighted.

Another peculiar fancy of Tom's was to stand on his head. Among the first things he would do on entering his bedroom was to jump over the foot of the bed head first and stand on his head on the bed. This he would do over and over again, and then rub his hands and chuckle.

When Tom first made his appearance many musicians were sceptical as to his abilities and many visited him. One of the first was Prof. Geo. A. Kelly, of Pittsburgh. Tom was four years old at the time and in order to test him Prof. Kelly played a piece of his own composition, which had not been published. Tom played it at once as accurately as the professor, with precision as the professor. Thirteen years afterward Prof. Kelly saw Tom again. Tom remembered the incident of many years previous and played the professor's piece for him again. Tom could name any note played on a piano, and musicians would try to catch him by striking keys at random, and however discordant the chords might be Tom would name every note with extraordinary quickness. He did this for Charles Halle, for Moschies and other noted musicians.

The Albany Argus of January, 1866, described Tom as "a wild, uncouth figure, angular at all points which should be curved and curved at points that should be straight. His limbs were loose jointed, close woolled, thick lipped, sprawl footed, with forehead almost covered with kinky locks, eyeballs prominent and distended, and an idiotic, staring expression of countenance." The Argus also stated that the African in his unadorned and barbarous condition. It then described what Tom could do, how he would name any note struck, how he would call off correctly twenty notes that had been played rapidly, how he played Beethoven's "Sonata Pathetique" without a false note or discord or omission.

Tom's wonderful memory lasted through his life. When last performing in Brooklyn he was visited by the daughter of his old manager and asked if he remembered one who had gone twenty-five years before. "Why, yes," said Tom, "she used to wash my face," and then he talked of his old friends and seemed happier than he had been for a long time.—New York Sun.

A SUBMERGED PRESBYTERIAN.

At the close of one of the recent Chapman-Alexander revival services here, the minister of a certain church went down the aisle, according to his custom to greet the strangers in the congregation. "I don't think you are a member of this church," he said to one as he warmly shook his hand. "No, sir," replied the stranger. "Well, you will not think me unduly curious if I ask to what denomination you belong," asked the minister. "I suppose," responded the other, "I'm really what you might call a submerged Presbyterian." "A submerged Presbyterian!" exclaimed the minister. "I should be glad if you would explain." "Well, I was brought up as a Presbyterian, my wife is Methodist, my eldest daughter is a Baptist, my son is the organist at a Unitarian Church, my second daughter goes to a Congregational Sunday school." "But," said the minister, "you contribute doubtless to some church?" "Yes, I contribute to all of them," was the answer; "that's what submerges me."—Philadelphia Exchange.

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