

We are prone to account as heroic little occurrences of the past which would not be considered in the present. This peculiarity of the human mind in part explains the criticism of the modern stage. It is only just, however, to observe that during the last sixty years there were many interpreters of the greatest classic roles, who were in the truest sense of the term masters of their art; and yet taken as a whole the general standard of excellence in the interpretation of the roles other than that assumed by the star, is incomparably better than it was even twenty years ago.

Now to-day with a large number of almost uniformly artists, it is true that the really great work of the star actors does not impress the average theatre-goer so much as it would were the star surrounded by less brilliant actors who are also looking to gain a reputation. The audience would lose the satisfaction now enjoyed of a well-grounded art work which is instructive to the auditor.

Our stage of to-day boasts of a great number of young men and women who are destined to rank with the foremost actors of days gone by. Of visitors to Canada, to whom may we listen with more pleasure than to the Ben Greet company; and very few can outclass Murphy as an Irish actor.

We have heard much of the great actors of the past, and therefore one feels warranted in comparing the work of the past with that of the present; and while nothing is farther from my purpose than seeking to minimize the splendid achievements of the great actors of the last century, I feel that not only does the stage to-day represent a higher degree of general excellence than ever before, not only are there more true artists and more performances that are works of art, but the standard of manhood and womanhood, the general ideals of the dramatic profession are higher than at any former period in the history of Canada.

Imagine the theatre-goers of another generation will be saying, "if you could have witnessed the Ben Greet company or Forbes-Robertson, or Irving, or Mantell, you would have seen something you could never forget."

I doubt not that many of those whose works we thoroughly enjoy to-day, but whom we are not in the habit of associating with the heroes of yesterday, will hold a high place in the pantheon of art when seen through the twilight of vanished years.

FRANK CORKERY, '11.