

NEW YORKERS CRYING OVER JEROME K. JEROME'S PLAY

Forbes-Robertson's Hit in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" — A London Success Transplanted — James O'Donnell Bennett Tells How It Touches the Heart and Makes People Feel Gentler.

James O'Donnell Bennett, the celebrated dramatic critic of the Chicago Record-Herald, writes that paper from New York, as follows: "The spectators at 'The Passing of the Third Floor Back' laugh while their eyes are full of tears and pity the erring while they themselves aspire. It is a play that makes people better by making them gentler. They leave the theatre a little sadder, a little subdued, and as it is when a throng is hurrying from a playhouse that what Dr. Johnson called the anfractuosity of human nature are very apt to be revealed, so when the audience is leaving Maxine Elliott's Theatre, it may be observed that men and women are more than a shade solicitous for one another's comfort, that they go out decorously, and that the unfortunate being who steps on a lady's train is usually the writer of these lines — is not withered with a glare, but amiably forgiven."

no doubt the maid did it; the rest are all boarders. All of them love money and some of them get it in devious ways. The Hussey is about to marry herself to the Satyr, who is a disolute, voiceless, old retired bookmaker, and she bitterly imparts her determination to accept Joseph Wright's claim, and generally not over-clean hand. The Rogue and the Cad slip into the room while it is empty and steal the tea which has been placed in the whiskey decanter. When it has passed the lips the Rogue gives utterance to one of the gems of the play: "I say, it makes you lose your faith in human nature, don't it?"

There is a knocking at the door. It is heavy, slow, insistent, and it is thrice repeated. The maid and the landlady have been talking, and the maid has just said, "What's the good of us? What's the use of us?" "That is her recantation of life. Against the landlady's orders she has hung in the window a placard stating that the little room on the third floor at the rear is to let. "Some ragtag and bobtail, no doubt," says the landlady, and is not willing that the maid should answer the door. The knocking continues—like a command, like a pleading. "Might be the very one you're waiting for," ventures the servant, and hurries from the room. And so it comes to pass that it is the humblest in that household that admits the Passerby, and it is to the nearest room beneath that mean roof that the Passerby comes.

The slavey comes back from the entrance hall with a strange light shining in her face, a kind of awe and a great peace in her eyes. A tall man follows her, and as he greets the landlady he bends upon her a grave, kind, searching gaze that flusters her a little. But she begins to barkain with asperity and with lies. Two pounds ten is the price of the third floor back, she says. She has had more, but to him it will be two pounds ten. The kind and gentle man treats him so generously. He asks a few friendly, chivalrous questions that please her and touch her self-respect. The room suddenly glows with a cleaner light when he enters, and it shines. It seems a cheerful enough place now, and the landlady's aggressiveness has fallen away from her like an ugly outer garment that she took yesterday. She begins to falter and affects to see a cheerful enough place now, and the landlady's aggressiveness has fallen away from her like an ugly outer garment that she took yesterday. She begins to falter and affects to see a cheerful enough place now, and the landlady's aggressiveness has fallen away from her like an ugly outer garment that she took yesterday.

It is a sort of, God-forgotten place and the inmates of it are petty, aggressive and deceitful, but they are intensely human and very plausible, and they thoroughly understand each other. "Once in the course of the afternoon the sun peeps in at the long windows, and the weary little maid cries, 'God blime us, if it ain't the sun! I'd almost forgotten him.'" Her remarks concerning those whom she serves are candid. "The tricks and the dodges they're up to—'s like 'em in a den of lions. Cat and dog from the time they gets up in the morning till they goes to bed at night."

The hour of tea is approaching when the play opens and it is in the course of that function that the lodgers are made known. On the playbill they are indicated for the purposes of the first act, which is called "The Prologue," thus: A Cad, A Bull, A Hussey, A Sloven, A Painted Lady, A Satyr, A Shrew, A Snob, A Rogue. The Cheat is the landlady, the Sloven the maid, the Painted Lady a spiteful spinster of 40, who substitutes the half-burnt candles for her room for the fresh ones on the piano-forte down stairs, and tells the landlady she has

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trying to lure the Passerby into investing in a bogus silver mine, but his proposition is received with such quiet courtesy and with such simple gratitude that his would-be millionaire share his good fortune with his fellow men that the swindler is abashed. Earlier in the conversation he has denied his race, but the Passerby has said, "Some of my best friends say I have loved most dearly were Jews," and he has, in a way that seemed quite casual and altogether unpatronizing, caused the ancient and noble pride of race to spring up again in that degenerate breast.

And the upshot of the matter is that the Jew withdraws his offer to let the Passerby invest his money in the worthless mine. "If anything should happen to go wrong," he says, "well, I should feel as if I'd been selling the whole of the Jewish race for a couple of hundred pounds. It ain't worth it!" And so the godlike hand works in the mass, and the heaven sweetens it and it rises above the mean and the low, and becomes honorable because it is service, and caste becomes hateful because it is cruel. Confession, abnegation and high resolution are drawn from each other's throats. The exercise of a politic nobility and a sweet tactfulness, and in the last act, it is called "The Epilogue," we find the characters thus disposed: An Old Bachelor, A Maiden Lady, Two Lovers, A Rich Aunt, A Husband and The Servant, A Wife, The Lady of the Jew House, An Entertaining Friend, A Person.

We are not told how long the Passerby tarries, but when he departs his work in that house is done. He has discovered even to the slavey the secret of her inheritance of gentle birth, not in the conventional sense, but in a sense that both heaven and earth exalts her when she grasps the glory of it in her tired arms—and she can proclaim herself to herself and to him as "sart of a lady who nobody knows about—like you're a gentleman, sir."

He passes from them as he came—like sunlight and soft music. They want him to stay from them some pledge. He only smiles and says, "You shall give me as a promise that through all things you love one another." And he will not say good-by, but "as friends at eventide we will merely say good-night."

One cries out for him to stay. "I'm a servant," he replies, "I have my work." The little maid says, "It was so kind of you to come." "I came because you wanted me," he says, and a smile that both heaven and earth exalts her when she grasps the glory of it in her tired arms—and she can proclaim herself to herself and to him as "sart of a lady who nobody knows about—like you're a gentleman, sir."

This simple allegory by Jerome K. Jerome is the one solid dramatic success of the New York season. Nightly the house is crowded, and the play will remain here until New Year's. It could stay until spring. Even if "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" were not acted with the exquisite perfection Mr. Forbes-Robertson and his company put in on the stage, it would be difficult for the most case-hardened reviewer to say so. It would seem like seedling. As a matter of fact the performance is flawless. It was Sir John Hinde, who on the night of the play in London said to Mr. Forbes-Robertson that he and his associates had acted like inspired beings.

And so they do not. They present a beautiful work in a beautiful way, and in all the writer's memories of acting there is no more remarkable impression—than the impression produced by the marvelous clearing of the disconcerted, disolute, greedy, evil contented, and the other characters in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" when the benediction of the stranger's presence is laid upon them. The transformation is effected in view of the audience and what a relief, eighteen tons of which he has eaten, along with five tons of fish and 10,000 eggs and 350 pounds of cheese. If he had never known his stry, he would have served at once they would have come to him in a train of cars, the pod containing all his past being over three miles long.

HEALTH BULLETINS FOR DOGS. The boarding houses for dogs are now crowded with pets, whose mistresses on going abroad have had reluctantly to leave them behind. Fish and fowl through the avenues of the London season. They are taken to Asot and Goodwood. They are the life of the house that party at Hely and they sail the bus day out of the spot during Cowes week. But when the fashionable woman goes to Trouville, to Marbledown or Carisbad, the English quarters have a serious result. The comforting companionship of her canine pet.

"Telephone messages and telegrams are flowing in all directions from anxious ladies who want to buy a dog for their pet's health," said yesterday a lady who has a country residence for dogs at Pinner, in connection with her toilet salon in the west end. "Practically every first class dog has a serious result. The dogs arrive with their scents and plumbings. One little creature has a solid silver set of toilet brushes, including a toothbrush. 'Beloved' brought his own lace-edged pocket handkerchiefs—London Mail.

INDIA'S SLEEPING CARS. The latest sleeping cars in India are fitted luxuriously. Like most foreign cars they are divided into compartments, but a corridor runs from end to end of the car. Each compartment contains two berths. The upper berth is of peculiarly ingenious design, so compactly constructed that a car may be run with all kinds of conveniences. Every compartment has an electric fan under the control of the passenger, and of the three electric lamps one is a small night lamp that can be kept burning all night without inconvenience. If a party is too large for a single compartment, a sliding door connecting with the adjoining compartment can be thrown open, and on the other hand, if the passenger desires he can lock his door, pull down his Venetian blinds and be secure from intrusion. At each end of the coach a roomy bath room, with a large bath sunk in the floor, the walls lined with mirrors and equipped with every imaginable sanitary device. There is also a lavatory compartment. It is said that the coach has been approved by the railway board as the standard type for Indian rolling stock.—Springfield-Union.

Titled Women Write Books

Lady St. Helier, Lady Cardigan and Lady Wilson Publish Memoirs — Racy Reading.

Three English women have recently launched upon a critical world of volumes of memoirs. They are the Countess of Cardigan, Lady St. Helier and Lady Sarah Wilson. The first volume to appear was the Countess of Cardigan's "Recollections," which astonished society about five weeks ago. Lady Cardigan has reached the ripe age of 82, and apparently all she has been able to recollect sufficiently to write about has been scandals, spiteful tales of long dead friends and much that pertains to her own beauty, intelligence and charms in her early womanhood.

Following closely upon Lady Cardigan's work came Lady St. Helier's "Memoirs of Fifty Years." Here we have Victorian society in quite a different light and so quietly and carefully described as to render the book somewhat dull in parts. Yet Lady St. Helier is a skilful if not a brilliant writer, and she presents with sympathy and tact the people she has met and the events she has witnessed. Apparently she never leaves her own country and many in other lands.

The daughter of an ancient Scottish house, Lady St. Helier was related to many people of mark. To begin with, Lady Ashburton was her aunt, which was a link connecting her with Carlyle, Brookfield, Browning and a host of others. Doling and Sydney Brooks stayed at her father's house. As a girl she was taken to see Patti's debut, and she met Palmerston, Disraeli and Mrs. Norton at the same time.

Her first marriage was to Col. Stanley, with whom she travelled all over America. Her second husband was Mr. Jean, a brilliant lawyer, afterwards Lord St. Helier. Every one worth knowing came to her receptions and she tells many anecdotes of interest concerning the great men of her day. Of Carlyle Lady St. Helier writes an amusing description and tells of a meeting he and Browning had with the late Queen at the demerai at Westminster. Carlyle and Browning were at the time and set down unobtrusively, saying, "I'm an old man." Browning, not less anxious to distinguish himself in

all probability, never got in a word, though he tried, and the bitter blow was when the Queen said to him, "What an extraordinary man Mr. Carlyle is!" "My son," it is related that once he scalded himself with hot milk and talked of nothing else until happily he was asked to read "Maud." Lady St. Helier puts the story more fully, however, and she expresses the opinion that women are much better looking nowadays than they were a quarter of a century ago. Also she remarks that if young people are older in present times, at least old people are younger.

The third book to appear is Lady Sarah Wilson's "Memoirs of South Africa." Lady Sarah, who is a sister of the present Duke of Marlborough, went to South Africa during the Boer war, and her recollections of that time are interesting and well written. Before that she had been in that part of the world several times, and had met and talked to the men who have counted for something in the struggle and reconstruction of South Africa, Rhodes, Kruger, Merriman, Jameson, Cronje and many others.

She stayed with Cecil Rhodes at Grahamstown and gives a quick sketch of him wandering through the rooms of his house reorganizing his glassware after his morning ride. Sometimes a gardener or bailiff would ask for two or three dozen roses or fruit trees. "There is no use," he would exclaim impatiently, "in two dozen of anything. My good man, you should count in hundreds and thousands, not dozens. That is the only way to produce any or expect to make any profit."

Lady Sarah had her adventures when the war was in progress. She was collared once as a man masquerading as a woman, and another time was arrested as a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. She was at Mafeking during the defence of that city, and gives an interesting picture of it. Her humor did not desert her in those trying times. She called home to her sister: "Breakfast today, horse sausage; lunch, minced mule, curried locusts. All well."

SEVENTY YEARS OF EATING

In That Time a Man Consumes 95 Tons of Food and Drink. If a man of 70 years was starving, it would probably be little comfort to him to think that he had consumed in the course of his life fifty-three and three-quarter tons of solid food and forty-two and three-quarter tons of liquid, or about 1,229 times his own weight in both solids and liquids, but it would be true. The average man of average appetite and purse he would have eaten fifteen tons of bread, which would have made a single loaf containing 1,200 cubic feet and appearing about as large as a young suburban home, and on this bread he would have spread one ton of butter. If his bacon had been cut in a single slice, says Harvey A. Wiley, all this would have served at once they would have come to him in a train of cars, the pod containing all his past being over three miles long.

He has had 5,000 pounds of sugar, 1,500 pounds of salt, 8 pounds of pepper and 100 cans of mustard. Three plints of liquid a day would have amounted to 75,000 plints, or 42 1/2 barrels. He would have smoked about a quarter of a million. The "evangelists" are easily among the most unique figures of the city, and the most a great demand as one realizes who passes that way frequently, for they pen daily many letters of business and stories of happiness and sorrow—not to mention the "cactus de amor" for brown Rouges and discolored Jutes.

There are about eighteen of these men and women—however, there are only two or three women—who from 9 to 10 o'clock in the morning in all the afternoon offering their services with pen or type writer to the unlettered one of the capital at from 6 to 12 cents, according to the length of the copy. There is a blonde young woman among the number who is an expert typewriter; another woman, no longer young, offers her services free to the poor the nineteenth day of every month; this is one of her ways of honoring San Jose, as he is guardian of the nineteenth day of March. She is a woman of benevolent bearing, who seems to thoroughly enjoy a good cigarette. Her family's name once represented both wealth and pride in this city, and she is able to converse and write in three languages.—Mexican Herald.

TEA ADULTERANTS. Adulteration of tea, now practically unknown in this country, was common enough 70 years ago. The Times of May 14, 1833, reports the case of a defendant charged at the Mansion House with gambling, who stated that he earned from 5 to 6 shillings a day by picking sloe leaves and black and white thorn leaves in the fields around Camberwell and selling them for a penny a pound to a local cowkeeper. The cowkeeper was visited, and it was discovered that he disposed of the leaves to tea dealers in the city. As the duty on tea was 18d, and the cheapest tea on the market fetched 4s a pound, huge profits must have been realized by the fraudulent dealers.—London Chronicle.

DROPPING FROM THE CLOUDS. Glancing up at your parachute to see if the cords are disentangled, you grasp your trapeze rope by one hand, your cutaway line with the other, cross your legs around your trapeze bar, collect your thoughts, and pull the knife. At once the wind rushes past you, the parachute opens, and you are falling as if from a high stage into the water at the baths. You look overhead to see the parachute open, the parachute cloth is dropping in a bunch to reach you as it were, but before it does your weight tells, and pulls the cord straight, the

GERMANS BECOMING NERVOUS PEOPLE

Severely Taxed by the Daily Ways of Living. Hitherto Americans have enjoyed the reputation of being the most nervous people on earth. Of late, however, a great demand as one realizes who passes that way frequently, for they pen daily many letters of business and stories of happiness and sorrow—not to mention the "cactus de amor" for brown Rouges and discolored Jutes.

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