

The Love Letters of SARAH BERNHARDT to Victorien Sardou

Sarah Bernhardt Used Her Coffin, Given by a Lover, As a Trunk In Which To Store Champagne — "I Am Too Proud To Die."

By DORIAN HOPE.

What transpired during the month and a half that summer, when Sarah and Sardou were together, the little birds have not placed on record. The letters intimate, however, that they talked about more things than poetry and purple, for, from those days on, Sardou is "thee" and "thou," whereas he had only been plain "you" like the rest of us up until then.

Purple, at any rate, had apparently not been altogether overlooked. In several letters written after their return to Paris, there is some reference to that most royal of colors; she says once that, for his pleasure, since it is his favorite color, she is going to write an essay on it. She says some things, and some fairly absurd things, about it in different places. Then, in a letter, and in prose as poetical as there is, perhaps, in the language, her idea comes to its full fruition.

About Purple.

"Poet: 'Thou who art of the company of the unconscious legislators of the world, I salute thee affectionately. I have taken thy fair thoughts and sung them in a lower key; I have given them a more varied setting without trespassing upon anything that was not mine in the beginning as well as thine. If two poets spent a night under the wide skies together, they would both be privileged to go away and write their separate sonnets without subjecting themselves to charges of plagiarism as long as they did not borrow each other's phrase. Had I not such an intense horror for seeing things go into print, I could write a little book of essays called 'Purple and Passion,' and bring it out just to show thee that I can do it. Purple is, indeed, my favorite color, just as it is thine. It is on that foundation that we must stand united. It is so marvelous a color that the other months have borrowed it from the month to which it properly belongs. In name and notion, in temperature and tone, the months are individual and unalike, but there is none of them which does not share, in varying measure, the personality of another; generally of the month which precedes and of the month which follows."

"Now it is May. No flower in the garden wears a robe of gaudier beauty than the purple pansy, and he wayfarer of the forest beholds nothing in wild-flowerland richer than the wild wistaria, whose beauty, too sometimes fancies, is burdened with the tree it climbs. Then there are violets everywhere, and in the light summer wind the long planes of the lilac leap in all directions. It is May, but these flowers are of April; they were born of April and nourished in the cradle where fell her sun and showers and constitute her legacy to May. In the wake of May there will be manifold reds. (All reds, in fact, save the collared that comes in autumn.) Not a few will be pale and premarriage, colored like the lips of the maiden who has yet to learn the wonder of a kiss; (mine, since those radiant lights with thee, do not fall into this classification, surely), coral, pink, life-like, but these are transitional, and moments from which their crimson roses of late June evolve."

"Can desire fashion for our pleasure a sweeter, a more perfect condition of the mind than looking backward over the taste of years that are sped, able to distinguish one month from another, not by the falling of a tear or the parting for a far part of a friend, but only by the flowering of some wither or the waking of some rose?" SARAH.

Paris Without Thee a Morgue. The following letter was written several months later: "Where art thou tonight? Thy letter came but an hour ago—a cruel hour—I had hoped that Paris now without thee is but a morgue; before I knew thee it was Paris, and I thought it heaven, but now it is a wide desert of desolation and loneliness. It is like the face of a clock when the hands have been taken away. All the pictures that hung in my memory before I knew thee have gone and given their places to the radiant moments that we have spent together. I cannot live now away from thee—thy words, even though they were bitter words—would give chase to all the world's unbusiness and make me glad; my art has been nourished by them and softly rocked in their tender cradle until they are as ready to me as the sun and the sunlight and air. I am hungry for them as I would be for food. I am thirsty for them, and my thirst is surpassing. Thy words are my food, thy breath my wine. Thou art all to me. On returning to Paris I shall insist that thou givest thy apartment and comest to live with me in this great house which only has need of thy presence in order to become an enchanted place. Thou shalt have recourse to my books, to the great rooms, and hills, and the garden. And thou wilt have recourse to two open arms wherein thou wilt be enveloped lovingly. I would fonde thee as would a young mother her first-born. And thou wouldst benefit by my affection for thee just as I would benefit by thine. We must learn to contribute to each other's life. We must share out the things in the character of each that will be serviceable, and the things that will make us essential to each other—the things that will constitute an essential and harmonious counterpart of our own experience. I am



"What transpired during the month and a half of the summer when Sarah and Sardou were together in Brittany the little birds have not placed on record."

cently regarding the poverty in which the tragedienne's last days found her. Several years ago, it was in all the papers that Sarah Bernhardt was penniless, that she had lost her theatre, mortgaged her home and its furnishings, sold her manuscripts, become too old to act, and that the world was allowing its greatest actress to die in misery.

In consequence, some rich Americans got together and considered it to their interest to offer her three hundred thousand dollars for the inner story of her life, having chiefly to do with its love affairs, and for the full use of her name and cinema rights.

Accordingly, their representative called on her in Paris, and disclosed the offer. She listened silently until he had said the last word, and however good the money sounded in the ears of the poor actress, she came to her feet with French indignation. Ringing for her servant, and indicating the front door, said: "Sir, it is incredible that you could approach a lady with such a proposition!"

"I Will Welcome Thee With Flowers." The following letters require no editorial comment, explaining themselves as clearly as they do. They were written from the beginning of 1885 on, and are arranged in the order of their sequence:

"Dear boy, Christmas time has no more fascinating surprises for a child than have the hours when thy letters come, for me."

"Through my love for thee I have walked back to the light-hearted days when I ran in the fields, and jumped, and made merry over everything."

"From now on thou art going to be the staff on which I will lean for support, and I promise to love thy feet. 'Hasten back, great dawn-like thing, and let me welcome thee with the purple flowers that thou lovest, in my hair, and my arms bare and open. We will make life an unending twilight of silver shadows and perfume.'"

"The days go by on leaden feet now until thou returnest! But they will pass these heavy, lingering hours, and we will be together again. I shall meet thee unadorned, and unadorned shall I be beside thee. 'I will wear one bracelet even, lest thy jingling down one of thy divine whispers.'"

"EVER THY SARAH."

"I Want To Help Thee." "Dear boy—Thy room has been put in order and is open-armed, like me, waiting for thee."

"I hope that I am going to be given the privilege of reading every act of the play as thou writest it, just as I did when we shared the prelude to the other."

"Thou shouldst really be working upon that now, instead of whatever part doing. Yes, I do want to read it all and give thee my comment, and help, such as they are, because I want to help thee and put at thy disposal all my resources, whatever they are."

"Physical work belongs to my art, and, in a measure to thine also, but thine art is more sensible, and I want thee to do thy very best, which is very great."

"My first suggestion is that thou try to be always the most brilliant possible. When all is said, nothing is said."

"When Montaigne wrote 'Que sçait-on?' he wrote something infinitely more informing than was written by any of his contemporaries in a whole book."

"It will not be insistent, however, if

"Thy Words Are My Food, Thy Breath My Wine," Wrote Sarah to Sardou — "Hasten Back and Let Me Welcome Thee."

thou thinkest that I am not worthy of this confidence. I will understand thee perfectly if thou refusest. I refuse people often enough myself to appreciate from what variety of reasons it can be done."

"It is only the people who do not refuse things that I cannot understand. Thou hast refused thyself to me in a way, and I love thee all the more for it."

"About the discussion on marriage in the first act, I think less than about the other one. One of the archbishops of Canterbury, in the course of a talk on lawful marriage as apart from the other thing, said that it was cheaper to buy the butter than to keep a cow!"

"A thing of this kind is good, and pointed, when it is said once. Repetition is never good in plays, however good the thing is."

"In life, anything becomes a pleasure if one does it often; in drama, anything becomes stupid that is said too often, and more than once is often. Shakespeare never repeated anything, said that, principally, on that account."

"Do not go out for extremes; it does not look natural, somehow. The lithe-limbed lord, thou art the object of the ultimate syllable of my desire, and I would have thee known by the very best that is in thee."

"Learn moderation. Do not make thyself a part of the enormous society that always demands a postscript or a fifth act; of those who cannot even exchange a kiss without attempting, simultaneously to exchange tension."

"With devotion, 'SARAH.'"

Her Lover Gave Her a Coffin. "Dear Love: 'Thy letter telling me that thou

were sick came to me this morning, and thou hadst had violent pains in thy head and in thy side all day!'

"If thou are not better before tomorrow evening—by which time thou wilt have received this—write me, and I will come to thee, unfailingly."

"Thou are fortunate, after all, perhaps, to have a nurse among thy intimate friends. I have always claimed that a woman should always have at least one physician and one dentist among her lovers, in order not to have such tedious bills as those to pay."

"One of my early lovers was a coffin-maker. I knew that I would have to die as well as anyone else, and as I was always lived up to every franc that I made, and did not know in what circumstances death would find me, I asked him for a coffin, and he gave it to me."

"Thou hast seen it here in my house, but I did not tell thee its history."

"When I travel I use it as a trunk, putting into it the most fragile things possible, and the railway people, thinking that it is a corpse, handle it with tender care and bowed heads. I had it full of champagne on the occasion of my first crossing to the United States."

"Every woman should have a coffin-maker among her lovers, if only out of respect for her family, as it is they who have the coffin to buy when she dies, regardless of their circumstances at the time."

"Now, thou are going to be better—thou are too beautiful to be truly sick. Thy lips so scarlet that I have dwelt upon are now so marvelous for fervor to ravish, and I will not hear of such a thing for one minute."

"As I said, write me in any event, and I will come to thee. In the meantime, God bless thee, my angel."

"SARAH." (Copyright, 1923, by Sarah Bernhardt.)

Cholera Infantum A Fatal Disease of Children.

Cholera Infantum, or summer complaint of children, is one of the most dangerous bowel complaints during the summer months.

It begins with a profuse diarrhoea, the stomach becomes irritated, very often accompanied by vomiting and purging, and the matter excreted from the stomach has a bilious appearance. The child rapidly loses flesh, is soon reduced to languor and prostration, and in a great many cases death ensues.

Mothers, if any of your children become sick with cholera infantum, do not endanger their health—perhaps their life—by experimenting with some new and untried remedy. Get one that has stood the test of time—one that will quickly offset the vomiting, purging, and the diarrhoea. This you will find in Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry, a remedy that has been on the market for the past 73 years.

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From Sarah Bernhardt:

"Thy words are my food, thy breath my wine."

"If one's sins cannot be improved upon by experience and made more exciting and original and big with each lesson, what is the need of ever sinning?"

"There is no satisfaction in stealing jam all one's life—that act is valuable only as a stepping stone to greater things."

"Mounting the ladder to the shelf where the jam is one finds the implements for blowing a safe. For this person there is a future."

"Every new leaf that I have ever seen turned over was far worse than the original one."

"People are always asking me to live down my pasts. It takes every minute of my time living down my own future."

"Hasten back, great dawn-like thing, and let me welcome thee."

"Every woman should have a coffin maker among her lovers."

a sin which was not proportionate to her years, seemingly. I am perfectly horrified to hear that you have committed that sin, the father tells her. 'But, your grace, I did it nevertheless.' 'And it is all the more horrible, remembering that you are at such an advanced age when you should certainly know far better,' he added. 'But, your reverence, it happened fifty years ago; I am no longer capable of such sins, and I just love to keep talking about it.' 'I had no sympathy for the old fellow, and gave him nothing. People are so ridiculous, asking you to believe that they want to turn over new leaves. Every new leaf that I have ever seen turned over was far worse than the original one, and would have been better off returned. At no moment of a man's life is he either more or less than he is at every other moment of his life. Men never change. That is the tragedy of men's lives. Women always change. That is theirs. . . . Life is so absurd and paradoxical. People are always asking me to live down my pasts, whereas it takes every minute of my time up, living down my own future. 'My dear boy, weigh all that I have asked of thee, and let me have a word saying that thou art coming soon to take up thy residence here with me. Impatiently.'"

THY SARAH. In her efforts to uplift and inspire others, Sarah Bernhardt was indefatigable. She was forever ready to extend a helping hand to the young in their steep ascent to recognition. In this way she stood to the young of the continent as did Alice Meynell to the young of England.

This is nowhere better illustrated than in an instance of little more than a year ago, when she played in "La Gloire" when she lent to the silly, inarticulate, unintelligible play of the notorious, thoroughly incompetent Maurice Maeterlinck the glory of her name and the charm of her voice and personality. She did this for one reason only. She knew that it meant the raising of all the honors of mortality upon the son of her great friend, the author of "Cyano de Bergerac," "L'Aiglon," and "La Samaritaine," and his wife, also a lifelong friend.

Sarah Bernhardt's heart was ever with others of her profession. She financially helped many a stranded chorus-girl and put new life into her with encouragement. Often she found engagements for them. And for the great ones in the field, too, she had no less feeling. When Eleanor Dusa played in Paris, papers attacked her for her ill-breeding. "Thoughtless, untraveled boys," Sarah called the editors. "They have attributed to ill-breeding what is simply and purely and quite natural—Italian, no less and no more."

SYMPTOMS OF ANAEMIA An Inherited Tendency To Anaemia May Be Overcome

Some people have a tendency to become thin-blooded, just as others have an inherited tendency to rheumatism, or to nervous disorders. The condition in which the blood becomes so thin that the whole body suffers comes on so gradually and stealthily that anyone with a natural disposition in the direction should watch the symptoms carefully. Bloodlessness, or anaemia, as the medical term is, can be corrected much more easily in the earlier stages than later. It begins with a tired feeling that rest does not overcome; the complexion becomes pale, and breathlessness on slight exertion, such as going upstairs, is noticed.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are a home remedy that has been most successful in the treatment of diseases caused by thin blood. With pure air and wholesome food, these blood-making pills afford the correct treatment when the symptoms described are noticed.

You can get these pills through any dealer in medicine, or by mail, postpaid, at 50c a box, from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Company, Brockville, Ont.—Adv't.

"Open the Basket, Ma!"

Two hours yet to lunch-time, but you know how it is on a picnic when that great, big out-door hunger comes over you!

Any kind of sandwich makes the right response, but real de luxe holiday effects may be obtained with special fillings—chopped nuts-and-dates; tomato and mayonnaise; egg-and-lettuce; cold sliced ham or chicken with chopped hard-boiled eggs.

No. 13—Cream Cheese and Walnut Sandwiches

Moisten one cream cheese with a tablespoonful of milk. Work in one-eighth teaspoon of salt and one-fourth cup of chopped walnut meats. Cut Neal's Bread in rather thin slices and spread with filling. If a dainty size is desired, cut each sandwich in four small triangular shaped pieces.

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