

rôle. This fact helps to explain my anticipation of the revival of English dramatic art, owing to the very dearth of adaptable French material. The morality of the French stage and the nature of its subjects are apart from the question here; suffice to say that the old formulæ are going out of fashion, and that by starting from reality in the spirit of the modern French artists, English playwrights may hope to create personal, original, and native pieces, peopled by national characters acting in a setting of national life and manners.

Daudet undertakes to reproduce upon the stage aspects of real life as he has seen and felt them. His aim is to free the theatre from conventional characters, and from dramatic tricks, and to substitute for them the illusions of reality, of surroundings and of atmosphere, which he obtains in the novel by means of description and observation. This, too, is the ambition of Becque and of Zola. Indeed the latter regards the stage as a living picture in which man is the most important element, where facts are determined only by acts, and where the eternal subject remains the creation of original figures animated by human passions, as illustrated in his "*L'Assommoir*," and "*Le Ventre de Paris*." The continual progress of the realistic tendency is certain, and the consequences will be that French plays as they become less conventional will become less adaptable, and the French stage will be more and more unintelligible to an English audience. English managers will be therefore obliged to call upon English playwrights for native pieces. English life, both middle class and popular, presents a vast field for observation, and surely reality is more interesting and more inspiring than a scenario by Victorien Sardou.

CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS UNDER THE FIRST EMPIRE.

In February, 1810, Napoleon discussed and decreed the establishment of a Censor Board, to superintend printing and publishing in France. Booksellers could only obtain a license if their manners were irreproachable, and their conduct above suspicion with respect to patriotism, but, above all, in attachment to the dynasty. Printers had to keep a diary of all the work they turned out, with name of author, etc.; this diary was to be always open to the inspection of the police. The censor had the right to examine each work, indicate changes to be made, suspend the printing, seize, if necessary, the sheets struck off, and even break up the type. The latter attentions were paid to Madame de Staël's "*Allemagne*." In addition, there were fines and imprisonment; the former constituted the salary of the censors, so the more they condemned the more they gained. Society, said Napoleon, ought to consider death as the fitting punishment for those who aim at its destruction; that printing was an arsenal which ought not to be at the disposal of everybody; it was not a natural right, and no one should be accorded a patent to print unless enjoying the confidence of the Government, that is, who was in harmony with its politics.

Curiously enough, it was a bull of Pius VI., then prisoner at Savona, which came first under the censorship. Napoleon sent Comte Portalis, the director of the Board, at once into exile for not stopping the publication of the Pontiff's manifesto. Two generals were next entrusted with the censorship of journals, books, theatrical pieces, etc. It became thus the reign of the sword, not of the scissors. Side by side with the "shearers," as the censors were dubbed, was a body of writers, paid—out of "a reptile fund"—to manufacture public opinion. Barère, the hideous victim-finder of the guillotine, was among the enrolled. Having passed his life denouncing politicians, he next considered it right to breakfast with the prefect of police, and accept a fee for denouncing *littérateurs*. The police became the real censors—and fearing not to do enough, did too much.

A report of the proceedings of the censors was presented weekly to Napoleon; and from being eight at commencement the censors rapidly increased to eighty. Every work recalling souvenirs of ex-royalty was tabooed; it tended to revive affection, and so wounded the interests of the State.

After the Pope and Madame de Staël, Turgot was put in the Imperial "Index." In a history of Louis XVI. all that personally related to His Majesty was emasculated. In one "*Universal Biography*" the articles on Charlotte Corday, Cromwell, and Chénier were so scissored that their authors would be justified in disowning such an affiliation. Dictionaries were pitilessly Bowdlerised. A trick was once played off, when, under the term "spoliator," "Bonaparte" was the sole definition given.

Flattery did not hit the mark always, for the Corsican Pietri having written "the Emperor was worthy to overthrow kings," the censors added "he overthrew only his enemies." Another writer having eulogised the Russians, the censors considered that in time of peace there was no harm in praising a nation which His Majesty had the glorious habitude to beat in time of war. In a history of the cruelties of the Turks towards French prisoners, the recital was struck out, because in case France made war against the Ottomans, it would be necessary to utilise these atrocities to crack up the French army. The "*Life of General Monk*" was suppressed; it was viewed as a kind of Banquo's ghost. The "*Memoirs of Madame Clarke*" were also prohibited, because showing up royal mistresses would degrade the dignity of kings by drawing attention to their human frailties. Dante's "*Divine Comedy*" had also to undergo an operation; so had a volume of Christian Anecdotes, as they exalted the Pope above the Emperor. It did not follow that a work, having been officially disinfected, would be allowed to be printed, and often, when printed, it was refused the permission to be sold. Poetry, to wrap round cossagues, was not interdicted, as it was an attempt to apply poesy to sweetmeats. Madame de Genlis published a book on the influence of woman in literature; it was sum-

marily suppressed, because it added nothing new to what was already well-known. Some works were even prohibited for having no literary merit. Composers of songs were harshly dealt with; one writer was allowed to sing his own stanzas to afford him the advantage of being hissed.

General Kleber having been described as a rival to Adonis, the author was reminded that the remark was untrue; the General might be as beautiful as Mars, but not as Adonis. A Guide to Versailles, Paris, and London was objected to; the author was considered ignorant of orthography, and so perverse as to be unable even to copy correctly. One lady-writer was accorded permission to publish, her penmanship was so beautiful. The Imperial censors were very severe against obscene publications, and when the Empire disappeared, the same men who protested against the censorship under Napoleon were the first to demand its continuance against the Press for the restored Bourbons; among the inconsistent were Guizot and De Sacy. When Napoleon returned from Elba he expelled the Royalist censors; Louis XVIII. reinstated them after Waterloo. Chateaubriand observed a part of the task of the censors commenced after sunset, as there is some work that can only be executed in the dark. Villemain, after being one of the most rigorous of censors, became one of the warmest advocates of liberty of writing.

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

MONKEY NATURE.

A GANG of apes, old and young, came down to the beach regularly every morning to look at the ship. The old men and women would seat themselves in rows and gaze at us, sometimes for an hour without changing their places or attitudes—seeming to be absorbed in wonder. I became quite familiar with some of their countenances. The young people did not appear to be so strongly impressed. They would walk about the beach in twos and threes—making love, most likely, and settling future family arrangements. The children, meanwhile, would be romping around the old people, screaming and barking in very delight. If a boat approached them the old people would give a peculiar whistle, when the younger members of the tribe would betake themselves at once to the cover of the adjoining jungle.

A hunting party, landing here one morning, shot one of these old apes. The rest scampered off, and were seen no more that day. The next morning, upon turning my opera-glass upon the beach, I saw the monkeys as usual, but they were broken into squads, and moving about in some disorder, instead of being seated as usual. I could plainly see some of them at work. Some appeared to be digging in the sand, and others to be bringing twigs and leaves of trees, and such of the *débris* of the forest as they could gather conveniently. It was my usual hour for landing, to get sights for my chronometers. As the boat approached, the whole party disappeared. I had the curiosity to walk to the spot to see what these semi-human beings had been doing. They had been burying their dead comrade, and had not quite finished covering up the body when they had been disturbed! The deceased seemed to have been popular, for a large concourse had come to attend his funeral. The natives told us that this burial of the monkeys was a common practice. They believed in monkey-doctors, too, for they told us that when they have come upon sick monkeys in the woods they have frequently found some demure old fellows looking very wise, with their fingers on their noses, sitting at their bedsides.—*Scene in the island of Pulo Condors off the coast of Cochín-China, in "Service Afloat," by Admiral Raphael Semmes.*

A VERY PUNCTUAL HUSBAND.

I WOULD solemnly warn all women about to marry to ascertain beforehand that their contemplated husband is not what is called a fidget. A leaning towards intemperance may be greatly mitigated in a husband by one's keeping the cellar key and not allowing him any pocket-money; but a fanaticism for being always before the time, it is difficult to repress and impossible to extirpate. Better that a bridegroom should not be at a church door until after the rubrical hour, and your marriage be postponed for a day, than that he should prove himself a fidget by presenting himself at the altar before the clergyman or yourself is ready for him. Your self-love may suggest that such haste is only the result of his eager devotion; but do not deceive yourselves, young women—he would have been at the church equally early if it had been to bury you. Tompkins himself is in many respects an excellent husband, and I do believe is very fond of me; but it is timeliness first and feelings afterwards with him, I know. When business calls him on a journey, only one eye drops a tear at parting with his wife and offspring; the other is fixed on the clock to see that the cab is sent for in time to catch the train. That "catching the train" is the thought that makes him thin and keeps him so. Much of his time is of necessity consumed in travelling, but not nearly so much as he spends in preparation for his journeys. The day previous to an expedition is mainly occupied in packing his carpet bag and writing out his direction labels. He leaves over night, as in a will, the most elaborate directions for the proceedings of next morning, with a codicil, appointing that he shall be called half an hour earlier than he first considered soon enough. This last command is wholly superfluous, since he always wakes of himself long before the appointed hour and proceeds to ring the house up. Previous to this he has kept me from my rest since earliest dawn by perpetually getting out of bed to see if it is going to be fine. Upon this depends the momentous question: "Shall he take his waterproof coat, or not?" If he does, it should be strapped up at once with the other things already lying on the