

art of the stage-actor. The study of dramatic history is a sound basis for the latter to build on; in plain speech it would supply him with something realistic to say, which a technical training would enable him to say well. Any art, worthy the name, must obviously be the expression of a universal and forceful idea—as the art of the Pre-Raphaelites embodied classic completeness or that of the romantic poets, painters and musicians, infinite hope, infinite despair—aspersion. Carried to the last conclusion the art of declamation and so forth seems essential to the actor only in so far as it naturally reveals an idea or situation that has previously been brought home to him as vividly as if it had originated in his own experience. It is doubtful, however, if many stage favorites have had experience of such range, intensity and power as would render possible or sincere anything but a very objective handling of a complex and powerful situation—unless it were for one thing—a live familiarity and sympathy with the great minds of the past to whom high thinking and bright speaking were as natural as their intellectual growth. Technical art and natural talent based on ordinary experience, imagery, and quick observation are to be taken for granted, but it is doubtful if these alone are sufficient to interpret justly either Shakespeare or Sheridan. They frequently fail in impressing deeply the imagination of an intelligent audience. Particularly is this the case when the older drama is attempted. The mere narrative of history here will help the actor but little, and it is not long before he may realize that, although the old dramatists wrote for all time as well as for their own,—between the days of Edward VI and Edward VII, there has arisen a gulf which requires careful bridging. It is the actor's business to make the crossing, and here his individual genius comes into play—a genius springing up from out of the past as it has been revealed by a consistent and continuous study of social and dramatic progress. The successful actors have been those who have not trusted their own talents too implicitly. Johnston Forbes-Robertson, the greatest Shakespearian since Garrick (whose later years he copied in the following respect) is appreciated in the more scholarly world by reason of minute and valuable researches which have thrown light upon the Elizabethan age and for investigations which have been concerned even with such matter as practicable antique stage setting, the minutest detail of middle age costume, 15th century tapestry and incidents of local interest peculiar to that time. The fruit of such Hallam-like exactness has resulted in relieving the modern stage apparatus from much of that gaudy translation, unnecessary, and at best improperly Turner-esque, with which the minds of theatregoers for several generations have been deluded into believing authentic. Ellen Terry and Sarah Bernhardt, two well-known, though widely differing actresses, have each supplemented a chequered experience with similar practice. Julia Marlowe and Viola Allen, both talented Shakespearian women, meet the most eminent authorities on common ground when it comes to a discussion of dramatic history, and neither as yet have complained of "the academic mind."

It has never been found practicable to cover thoroughly the whole field of the drama in one course, nor is it urgent at first that the later phases of the