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December 1st, 1880.

THE TIMES.

It is said that when Dr. Cummings was declaring the near approach of a general dissolution of the world he took a house upon a lease which was to expire some years after the Dr. imagined houses of that description would be required. Canon Baldwin is telling us that in a few weeks we shall be called upon to attend the burial of poor old Father Time, but the Canon is making arrangements in the Cathedral for new stalls and other things with the idea of a prolonged period of service in the church. So I fancy that the Canon is not much troubled by his readings of prophecy.

The Manager of the Academy of Music announced that the "free list" would be positively suspended during the sojourn of the much accidented Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt. It must have been a cruel blow to the great army of "dead heads." I have no doubt that many of them feel that a personal and public wrong has been done, but it would be a right and just thing to burn that free list. Dead headism has got to be an institution, not only as to places of amusement, but with regard to all kinds of public entertainment. The railways and steamboats have generally abolished it, but for plays, lectures, concerts, &c., it is in full force. A convenient thing, no doubt, for the said "dead heads," and not always an inconvenient thing for managers, for it gives them a chance to serve their friends at no expense to themselves; but it is not exactly the same thing to artists.

Unquestionably it is a good and inspiring thing to lecture sing or play to a full house, but butchers and hotel-keepers and other such matter-of-fact people are not disposed to take inspiration, or newspaper

reports, in payment of their bills. Lecturers and all kinds of artists have to go through the common-place duties of eating and drinking, and the appreciative cheers of "dead heads" do no part toward providing a joint. It may be very kind of the "d. h.'s" to wish to honour the artists by sitting down at their table of entertainment, but at best it is a cold comfort when the net return is *nil*. I am opposed to this "free list" business; it is not only a nuisance, but an utter unfairness to those who get their living by giving public entertainments. They have spent time and money to get an education; their natural ability, or acquired skill, or both, must find them a living; what they do in public is their actual daily labour, and why should any one expect to have it for nothing? Will the "d. h.'s" return the compliment to the artists? I have not heard of a case. They have no idea of trade reciprocity.

I was going to say that the newspaper "d. h." is the worst of his kind, but on second consideration I am disposed to say that there is a still lower degree in the race—the ecclesiastical "d. h." He is a liberal minded man—a cosmopolite theologian—fond of sermons and music which can be enjoyed; and so he is a wanderer, although not a prodigal. He appreciates every part of the service; the sermon cannot be too intelligent, and it must be eloquent; good music charms him; he is semi-reverent during prayer, and smiles benignantly as he nods to the passing plate, as one who should say: Really, my friend, I do so much of this sort of thing that I must curb my generosity just for once.

The Ecclesiastical "d. h." is often the escort of ladies. He knows all about the popular preachers, and having roused the curiosity of some lady friends during the week by relating some anecdotes of one of them, he offers to take them to church on the Sunday. He calls for them, and at the church door speaks intimately with the verger to get good seats; cushioned and where good hearing can be got, they must be: the collection is taken up and our good "d. h." puts a shining five cent piece for himself and companions, while a sense of satisfaction breaks all over his face as if he would say, "I always like to support these institutions liberally; you see, they must be kept up and encouraged, and really, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

I thought that they had succeeded in abolishing the iniquity in England, but evidently they have not, for I have come across the following from *Truth*:

"I see in the newspapers doleful wailings because those who enter a theatre with a free pass are required to give fees to attendants. The non-fee system is undoubtedly the fairest one to all, but I have no sort of sympathy with these complainants, who constitute a class of theatre-goers, and who come forward with very little grace to protest against extortion. Owing to managers objecting to their theatres looking empty, most of them are in the habit of distributing "free-passes." When once a person has been "blooded" with one of these passes, he never pays to cross the portals of a theatre. He teases managers and managers' friends to get him a pass, and there is no meanness for which he is not ready in order to attain his end. If he be accustomed to go into the stalls or the dress circle, he regards a "pit order" as an insult, and from his gratis reserved seat he looks down with contempt upon those who have paid for humbler places. Generally, he is the severest critic of a performance, and nothing pleases him better than to have an occasion to express his disapproval of it. What is the difference between this man and a shabby beggar who asks for broken victuals, and then objects to them if they be not cooked to his taste? As for his protests against having to give sixpence to an attendant, he ought to have the decency to hold his tongue, and to recognise that, however objectionable the demand may be, he at least is not in a position to denounce it."