

Winter's Tale." "That ain't worth copying," argued Bob. "'Tis," retorted the other, "and if you are going to be so precious stuck up you can jest out home."

Which little picture—it was by Leslie, I think—reminded me of the Lyceum on Saturday night, when Mary Anderson, with the most charming of smiles and the most graceful of courtesies, thanked us for all our kindness to her. Enthusiastically we tossed nosegays on to the stage, or huge laurel-wreaths decorated with the Stars and Stripes, and again and again we called for the clever girl who has continued to fill the great theatre for so many months. What a play! Full of absurdities, of exquisite beauty, magnificently mounted, we all sit through the acts most contentedly, never pausing to reflect till after we had stood in the judgment halls of jealous King Leontes, had been out in the storm with the baby and the baby's luggage on sea-girt Bohemia, had watched (as Shakespeare watched in Warwickshire) the sheep-shearing scenes and the charming pastoral dance, that the acting, from the leading lady to little Prince Maximilian, left a great deal to be desired. It says much indeed for the delicate fairy-tale that it was entirely unspoilt by the hard common-place handling of Miss Anderson and her uninteresting company. Surely the Fotheringay must have trod the boards in much the same fashion in the Chetten's playhouse! One is reminded of her at every turn. A Mr. Bows must have taught the American actress when to smile or weep—she knows *how*—and the appropriate action with which to give due effect to those speeches which anon she utters in a distressingly deep tone, now in a girlish treble in which the ghost of an accent still lingers. For the rest she has indescribable beauty, which is much; and a certain amount of cleverness, which is something; but the unmistakable note of genius, without which no one can be great, is missing; and after the glamour of her presence has faded one feels the absence of something—is it heart?—in every brilliant glance, every cadence of her voice. By the way, she is drawn in charming colours by Mr. Black in his *Strange Adventures of a Houseboat* (admirably illustrated by Bernard Partridge, the Bernard Gould of the stage), and full-length portraits, now grave, now gay, profile, full face, three-quarters, meet one on every page. Like Midas, the writer turns everything he touches to gold, and he makes the story of the monotonous canal-journey as picturesque as, and far less hackneyed than, a Rhine holiday, and gathering cuckoobuds and cowslips by the way, presents you with the little wild flower bouquets, arranged in such a manner they are invested with qualities you never saw before. Writing essentially for Gilbert's Young Person (and wise that Young Person who, recognizing the sweetness and light of these pages of romance, sets aside *Red as a Rose* to *She for a Daughter of Heth*, shuts *Comin' Thro' the Rye* and opens *A Princess of Thule*) Mr. Black makes little attempt to please, I think any other but the girl novel-reader, and her sisters and her cousins—these musical, graceful, womanish stories are only occasionally tasted by the sterner sex—and to them almost entirely he appeals. It is good to have at hand an antidote to Ouida, Rhoda Broughton, Mrs. Campbell Praed, and one feels grateful to Mr. Black that he flavours his draughts, which might be thought a trifle insipid after *Moths*, or *Nadine*, or *Belinda*, so artistically, and gives them to us in blossom-decked goblets of such charming quaint designs.

As Black's novels are essentially English so too are Pinero's plays, owing no thought, no expression, to any foreign element whatever. Terry's white and gold theatre was filled the first night of *Sweet Lavender* with one of the most attentive, appreciative audiences I ever sat among, and we took every point, humorous or pathetic, with a heartiness that spoke well for our intelligence, and which was a good omen for the further success of the piece. The plot is of the slightest, and does not bear analyzing, I am afraid; that we cared little for, settling ourselves in our places after the first act, with the firm resolve that even if the young Temple barrister *did* marry the laundress's daughter we should be the last to complain, feeling sure, that contrary to one's experience, such a union would turn out well for once. But the dialogue of the men and women, who did not seem like characters in a play at all, is beyond all praise, and as each scene swiftly and naturally followed each other it was as if the roof had been lifted from real bachelor Chambers near the Strand, and we were actually looking on at the pathetic troubles, the humorous perplexities, of a set of human beings unconscious of our scrutiny, whose actions and speech were as spontaneous as our own, and whose length of life, like ours, was not to be determined by the fall of a curtain. The critics were good enough to do their best for *Partners*, to tell us this or that about it, to insist on its superior excellence: but we paid no attention to the useless columns of praise, and after three months' hobbling here it stopped as it deserved. Mr. Tree has many friends, but Mr. Terry has not, consequently *Sweet Lavender*, except in one or two of the leading papers (notably *Truth*), has not had anything like justice done to its excellent qualities, a grain of commendation being slipped into a bushel of fault-finding. As for *Punch*, he is incorrigible, administering blows right and left, knocking all the dramatists about the head one after another, sneering in a heartlessly cruel fashion at every one's plays—but Mr. Burnand's own. It was surely odd, we thought, that *Ariane*, unwholesomely nauseous, horribly dull, should have been immensely commended, and every one advised to go and see it; but the mystery was explained when a burlesque of the piece by Burnand was announced. Then we ceased to wonder at this exceptional gentleness to an exceptional odious play, for you know if we were not tempted by fair words to see the original we certainly should not care for a burlesque thereof. *Punch* should cease to criticise seriously if he cannot do so fairly. The little humpbacked gentleman resembles *Quilp* in the harsh dramatic notices, and has nothing in common with the kindly shrewd humourist who corrects the other sheets of the paper.

WALTER POWELL.

A TRIP TO ENGLAND.—VII.

THE East of London, which is the old city, is, as all know, the business quarter. Let the worshipper of Mammon when he sets foot in Lombard Street, adore his divinity, of all whose temples this is the richest and the most famous. Note the throng incessantly threading those narrow and tortuous streets. Nowhere are the faces so eager or the steps so hurried, except perhaps in the business quarter of New York. Commerce has still its centre here; but the old social and civic life of the city has fled. What once were the dwellings of the merchants of London are now vast collections of offices. The merchants dwell in the mansions of the West End, their clerks in villas and boxes without number, to which when their offices close they are taken by the suburban railways. On Sunday a more than Sabbath stillness reigns in those streets, while in the churches, the monuments of Wren's architectural genius, which in Wren's day were so crowded, the clergyman sleepily performs the service to a congregation which you may count upon your fingers. It is worth while to visit the city on a Sunday. Here and there, in a back street, may still be seen what was once the mansion of a merchant prince, ample and stately, with the rooms which in former days displayed the pride of commercial wealth and resounded with the festivities of the olden time; now the sound of the pen alone is heard. These and other relics of former days are fast disappearing before the march of improvement, which is driving straight new streets through the antique labyrinth. Some of the old thoroughfares as well as the old names remain. There is Cheapside, along which, through the changeful ages, so varied a procession of history has swept. There is Fleet Street, close to which, in Bolt Court, Johnson lived, and which he preferred or affected to prefer to the finest scenes of nature. Temple Bar, once grimly garnished with the heads of traitors, has been numbered with the things of the past, after furnishing Mr. Bright by the manner in which the omnibuses were jammed in it, with a vivid simile for a Legislative deadlock.

In days of old when the city was not only the capital of commerce and the centre of commercial life but a great political and even a great military power—when not only did kings and party chiefs look to it for the sinews of war, but its trainbands were able to hold their own in the field of Newbury against Rupert's Cavaliers—the Lord Mayor was one of the most important personages in the realm. Foreigners, and notably the French, persist in fancying that he is one of the most important personages of the realm still, and an ex-Lord Mayor showed himself well-informed as to French opinion, though not so well instructed in the French language, when travelling in France, he inscribed on his card "*feu Lord Mayor de Londres*." But now the curious pageant, resembling that of an exaggerated circus, which on the 9th of November wends its way from the City to Westminster at the installation of the new Lord Mayor, is an apt emblem of the state of an office which struggles to keep up its outward splendour when its intrinsic grandeur has passed away. The Lord Mayor represents the city's majesty and provides its turtle: he is the official patron of benevolent movements and charities, he is still treated by Royalty with formal consideration, and receives a special communication when a Prince or Princess is born. But the power which city kings, like Gresham or Whittington, wielded has passed away and the genuine dignity with the power. The great chiefs of commerce do not take the office, which in truth has acquired a certain comic tinge. The essential qualifications of its holder are ability and willingness to spend money freely in the hospitalities of which the Mansion House, once the home of serious counsels, is now the proverbial scene, and which are generally said to be more lavish and sumptuous than intellectual. To borrow a phrase from Tom Moore, "he who dines at the Mansion House dines where more good things are eaten than said." He goes to "feed" in the most literal sense of the term on turtle and champagne. "Oh, Sir, I am so hungry," said a beggar to an Alderman, who was on his way to a Lord Mayor's feast. "Lucky dog, I wish I were," was the reply. Perhaps the most important remnant of former greatness is the customary presence at the Lord Mayor's inaugural banquet of the Prime Minister, who is expected to take that opportunity of delivering himself to the nation on public affairs. The Prime Minister, being the real king, this may be said to be the real king's speech, though like the constitutional performance of the same kind it is naturally apt to be buckram.

A sumptuous relic of the great commercial city of the Middle Ages are the city companies, with their great estates and their splendid banqueting hall. The halls of the Goldsmiths, the Merchant Taylors, and the Fishmongers' Guilds will well repay a visit. Of the ancient functions of these companies little of course remains. They are now mercantile and social fraternities, with the dignity of antiquity, and such influences as belong to any great corporation exercising a splendid hospitality and making a benevolent use of part at least of their wealth in the maintenance of schools and charities. Some of them have assumed a political tinge, the Goldsmiths being Tory and the Fishmongers Whig. The axe of reform has for some time been laid to the root of this tree; but the tree still stands and excellent repasts are spread under its shade.

Society has migrated to the Westward, leaving far behind the ancient abodes of aristocracy, the Strand, where once stood a long line of patrician dwellings, Great Queen Street, where Shaftesbury's house may still be seen, Lincoln's Inn Fields, where, in the time of George II., the Duke of Newcastle held his levée of office-seekers, and Russell Square, now reduced to a sort of dowager gentility. Hereditary mansions too ancient and magnificent to be deserted, such as Norfolk House, Spencer House, and Lansdowne House, stayed the westward course of aristocracy at St. James's Square and Street, Piccadilly, and Mayfair; but the general tide of