

not time to be leisurely; nor intellectual freshness enough to think much over its recreations and diversions, nor sufficient tenderness of conscience to delight itself with the finer workings of heart and spirit. When it goes to the theatre, dialogue must be subordinate, action predominant; and plot and incident superficial and broad, so as to tickle forth the smile that lies just beneath the skin and to draw the ready tear from the proximate eyelid. Try any popular play of the day by the tests herein suggested, and it will be found to conform to them, whatsoever other qualities it may possess.

The constitution and feeling of modern society is democratic. There is no longer any class privileged by birth or station to arrogate to itself an exclusive or major share of popular interest or attention. The penny newspaper and the interviewer have changed, or materially helped to change, all that. This democratic form and spirit must be reflected back upon the public in the drama, or the public will not feel the drama to be of any general account, and will leave it to the patronage of the select few till it dies of starvation. Apply, also, this suggested test to any popular modern play and that play will be found to conform to it.

A good company, adequately starred and well outfitted with costumes, scenery and properties, with a repertoire of famous comedies of eighteenth century life or authorship, not long ago played to more empty benches than one who likes and believes in the theater could wish to see. What is the cause? Evidently the range of human sympathy in these plays is not wide enough for the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Plot and incident are tied closely down to the lives, manners, tastes and feelings of a landed aristocracy that has largely ceased to cut a figure in current life. The professional man, the man of business, the man of humble life but boundless opportunity—he was not regarded by the dramatists of a century ago, nor the material environments of himself and his kind. The dramatists of a century ago took for their characters, scenes, incidents and accessories the people and things that then filled the public eye, and they wrote with their finger upon the pulse of that part of the public whose payments into the box office supported the stage of that day. The playwrights of the present epoch must follow the same rule and method, and in so far as they do so, and the rule and method is applied with complete skill and talent, their work will succeed; not without a struggle, of course, or it is just as true now, as in the days of Goldsmith and Sheridan, that a good play may be unjustly damned by applying to it the critical standards of an obsolete state. It is Shakespeare alone, among English speaking dramatists, who is "not for a day but for all time." The ordinary playwright should never forget that he is for a day, and a day only, and govern himself accordingly. In so doing, he will be able to do his fair share of stage elevation; if he tries to do more, he will almost certainly fail to do anything. But has not the public a duty towards the stage? It will be asked by some. Nothing more than a general duty to be virtuous towards all men and in all things. The lawyers, doctors, architects, artists, and other professionals do not ask the public to help them to be collectively good;

they conserve their class morals and interests by arrangements made and enforced among themselves, and desire and expect nothing from the community in general but common sense and common honesty.

As for the stage, it is a fair and reasonable question, taking each full and large, whether it is not to-day as good as the church and even better than the press.

B.

HORACE, ODE XVIII. BOOK I.

My Varus, oh plant not in Tibur's green meadows

Round Catullus' walls trees in place of the vine;

For Bacchus has curs'd all abstainers with shadows,

Nor can dull care be drowned but in goblets of wine.

At wine over war and o'er love there's no mourning—

Father Bacchus and Venus fair drinkers all bless.

Yet the Lapidæ's quarrel with the Centaurs gives warning.

In drinking to flee from the curse of excess.

Yea Bacchus in hate spurs the worship of Thracians

By blinding their blear'd eyes to wrong as to right;

Let me not then annoy him with drunken libations,

Nor his mysteries drag from the shade to the light.

Cease these orgies of vanity, pride, and fierce passion,

This blowing of trumpets and beating of brass,—

Such excesses but lead into wild indiscretion,

Making holiest secrets more lucent than glass.

JAMES A. TUOKER.

PARIS LETTER.

What is the precise object of a Labour Day Manifestation? In possession of that test one could measure the importance and trend of these demonstrations. Here and in the provinces the turnout of last Monday was abortive. It has frightened nobody, it was not accepted as serious by anyone, nor was its presence measurable by numbers. The citizens went about their business as upon ordinary days; no traffic was suspended; no busses or vehicles had to take side streets. There was a large number of operatives abroad, in demi-Sunday toilette, more occupied as lookers-on than as manifestants. Pedestrians suffered from the streets being left unwatered; this strategetic inconvenience for citizens is ever adopted when the military are expected to act; dry pavements facilitate cavalry charges and the gallop of artillery. Perhaps, too, it is as well to keep water-barrels in the background; these like cabs, omnibuses and vans, are the readiest rudiments for a barricade.

The present manifestation clearly demonstrates that the working men of Paris have no sympathy with the individuals who cry out for the "three-eighths," and that the latter are simply socialists steeped in utopias, possessing no property, so having nothing to lose, and who have no following. The operatives of Paris are divided into three serious classes; those who work in their own homes on their own account, or who work by the hour, or by the piece; for such, the shibboleth of "eight hours a day" is a farce. The

wind-bags have no hold on these artisans; the latter at same time are not thick-and-thin admirers of capitalists and employers; they demand labour ameliorations, but not by street parading, violent harangues, etc.; they rely on their voting bulletins and legislation.

The opening of the picture season ever takes place with the punctuality only equalled by that for blazing at partridges or pheasants. Many ask, what is the use of these salons or annual shows of paintings; they exhibit not progress, but falling away in the fine arts. Among 2,000 tableaux, perhaps not a baker's dozen merit the compliment of being excellent. And what life-waste the remainder represent. What becomes of all these paintings after they have been hung up for their allotted few weeks? A well-known authority suggests that the suspension of these shows for a few years would be the best way to promote art. In the salon of the Champs Elysees, just opened, there is an average of talent, and a small mean of art. It would seem that the painters were in a hurry to catch a market; there is a commercial haste about their productions; they give us images, not pictures; they copy subjects, but do not conceive them. So the public looks on unmoved, for where there is no pleasure, there can be no art. The majority of the exhibitors seem to rely on a large canvas and a gorgeous frame wherein to represent uninteresting commonplaces. Artistic talent does not come by nature, like reading and writing following Dogberry; it presupposes genius to conceive, and patience to execute. Happily, photography is mercifully coming to the rescue of the situation, by superseding the mechanical strata of painters. The shows for the general public are rich mines for the observation of manners. Everyone considers it to be a religious duty to do the salons; to be able to say, "I was there." Observe how they disturb, by airing their remarks in a loud tone of voice, to astound country cousins and split the ears of the groundlings. One good these annual shows effect; a brisk business for the neighboring restaurants, where you are certain to encounter twelve-month forgotten friends and to converse upon everything—save pictures.

Society is at last becoming seriously alarmed at the frightful progress horse-betting has made and the depravity it begets. Even Rochefort, who is a notable tourist, has raised his voice against that gambling contagion. But it is too late; betting has struck root in manners, and cannot be eradicated, can the evil be moderated? Even that is questionable. Since the government has taken in hand the regulation of racing bets, on the courses, and makes some millions yearly by the tax it levies on the authorized pools. Staking on horse races has become, not only an institution, but a profession. Unable to register bets in the tobacconists' shops and the pubs, servants—of both sexes, and small boys—now club their savings—and their priggings, and delegate an old hand to attend the race course, and plank down their sous as instructed. That is co-operation with a vengeance. Not a day but the papers relate the history of individuals ruined by betting at race courses; the passion is more incurable than drink. Cashiers dip into their employers' safes for ephemeral aid to meet