

# WORLD OF AMUSEMENT

## General Gossip

In a compilation of wide ranging contemporary opinion in the matter, Current Literature for August presented "The Verdict of the World on Tolstoy's Assault Upon Shakespeare," and it makes interesting reading for those who may care for the subject. The result is called "a triumph of world-verdict in favor of the Bard of Avon," and it is needless to add that it was inevitable.

Tolstoy's place among the world's notable men is such that his declarations against Shakespeare as a poet, a dramatist and an influence on humanity were bound to attract attention and excite comment everywhere. The article notes the fact that England and America were stirred to indignation by the assertions of the great ascetic and pessimist, and that they have responded with a continuous output of Shakespearean literature; that France contributes a symposium in which her most eminent men have taken part; that Germany has spoken definitely, and thus that "in three great countries, representing three great races, the case of Tolstoy against Shakespeare has been tried, and in each instance ended with the unqualified acquittal of the defendant."

It quotes Harper's Weekly, which, saying that "if Tolstoy's theory of art is correct, then Shakespeare must yield to his accusations," assumes that Tolstoy's claim as to common appeal as the test of the best art, if true, would crown Marie Corelli and Hall Caine and cause Shakespeare, Milton and Shelley to jettison their bays. Why Milton and Shelley, who have nothing to do with the case, great as they may be, should be set in a trio with Shakespeare does not appear. The statement of Harper's Weekly that "it is perfectly true that Shakespeare is not universally liked or read" is amazing, because it is not true. An exact examination will show that while this or that "popular" author, including Corelli and Caine, may sell many copies of their works of Shakespeare are steadily made known and perused than of any of them, and possibly a greater number than all of them together can inspire the public to buy. And this after generations that have absorbed a vast and unknown multiplication of his writings.

To get some idea of the real universality of Shakespeare, one has only to note his world-wide acceptance and worship. Pertinent to this are the sections of the digest in Current Literature relating to French and German opinion in this Tolstoy matter. In a symposium published in Les Lettres (Paris), nearly fifty literary men and artistic celebrities contributed. Denis Diderot has compared Shakespeare to the colossal St. Christopher of Notre Dame, "between whose legs we might pass without reaching to his groin." To Renan, Shakespeare was "the historian of eternity." To Victor Hugo he was "the god of the theatre." "Above Shakespeare," added Hugo, "there is nothing." Renan pronounced Shakespeare a universal genius. Rene Boylesse finds in his writings "a divination of what is called the modern soul." Jules Romains says "It must be confessed that the old Englishman dead is much more the contemporary of us younger men than the old Russian living." Paul Reboux sees in the Shakespearean cycle an incomparable social document. Chas. Henry Hirsch and others emphasize Shakespeare's influence upon French literature. Raoul Aubry, Andre Dumas and Robert Schaffer appeal to the persistence of the Shakespearean types as the best possible vindication of Shakespeare. Ludovic Halévy treats Tolstoy's criticism as a mere freak, and Jules Charles calls it a paradox. Paul Richard, Gaston Desvres, Gabriel Trarieux, Oswald Heanard, Rene Boylesse and others assign Tolstoy's dislike of Shakespeare to a sort of artistic myopia, induced by his excessive moral fervor.

A fellow voyager on Richard Mansfield's last Atlantic crossing in search of health told with a laugh that the sick man had always addressed his servants severely, always referred to himself in the third person.

Mr. Mansfield will have more butter—butter, dot, was his cry at the cabin dinner, which left the waiter gaping with amazement.

On that voyage was recalled the story

of his punishment of the extra woman whose ruling personal habit dominated her even while on the stage. The star, in the middle of an impassioned declamation of eight minutes, saw two loose jaws wagging, the large white teeth shifting their extra cargo of gum. The speech ceased. Mr. Mansfield strode across the stage to the shadows where stood the gum chewer. Seizing her arm he conducted her, not gently from the stage. Then returning he plunged into the interrupted fury of his stage lines.

Given opportunity to deny such tales of himself, he tossed them aside with the haughty remark that they all emanated from "the cheap jacks of his former companies."

They whom he hated higher in his service than these same cheap jacks put in occasional pleas for lenient judgment of the faults of their chief.

"He can't endure stupidity," they said of him "and carelessness always threw him into a rage. His greatest aversion was for mental slovens."

## Bennett's All Star

Manager Driscoll, during the two weeks that Bennett's Theatre has been open, has been, as it were, feeling the pulse of the general public. He made no mistake when he put on the all star, greater advanced vaudeville, and the splendid record for humor, excitement and refinement that has characterized the bills will be maintained. The shows this week have all been, and the seating capacity of the theatre, large as it is, has been generally taxed to its utmost, while on a number of occasions "standing room only" has been the cry. As far as advance bookings are a criterion good-business is assured for two weeks to come.

"Next week," says Manager Driscoll, "we are going to put on a show that could not be eclipsed by that running in any house in the United States. It is to be composed of artists who are generally featured all around the Keith-Proctor circuit. Take Rose Coghlan, for instance. She has a reputation second to none in the legitimate, and her advent into vaudeville was considered as distinctly strengthening it. She will be seen here in her great one act play, 'The Higher Law.' In this Miss Coghlan is assisted by a large company of competent actors and the act is teeming with excitement. It may be appropriate to mention that when it was played in Philadelphia its reception was so good that the manager of the house tried to book a return engagement. He was unable to do so, as this act was wanted all over the circuit. Bennett's has been extremely fortunate in getting it, and its success is almost assured."

"For sheer thrilling excitement it would be hard to beat the looping the loop act of Mlle. Carlotta, on a bicycle. The young lady descends down an incline at a terrific pace, and rounds the loop in full view of the audience. In this it is a case of sheer nerve and strength, as there is absolutely nothing to keep the machine in line but the rider's guidance. Mlle. Carlotta has the unique distinction of being the only woman in the world who is accomplishing this act. Patsy Doyle, the quaint Irish comedian, I think needs no introduction to the theatre-going public of Hamilton. He is a man of an entirely new act, and it will be bound to prove amusing, as it has come to us with the best of recommendations from the cities Pat has shown in this season. Bernier and Steele, who we are putting on, are a brace of fine singers, and have a very interesting act. Foster's dog is a marvel of canine intelligence, and besides doing everything but talk, gives an imitation of Paderewski at the piano. I have not heard him myself, but those who have heard him say, 'It must be confessed that the old Englishman dead is much more the contemporary of us younger men than the old Russian living.' Paul Reboux sees in the Shakespearean cycle an incomparable social document. Chas. Henry Hirsch and others emphasize Shakespeare's influence upon French literature. Raoul Aubry, Andre Dumas and Robert Schaffer appeal to the persistence of the Shakespearean types as the best possible vindication of Shakespeare. Ludovic Halévy treats Tolstoy's criticism as a mere freak, and Jules Charles calls it a paradox. Paul Richard, Gaston Desvres, Gabriel Trarieux, Oswald Heanard, Rene Boylesse and others assign Tolstoy's dislike of Shakespeare to a sort of artistic myopia, induced by his excessive moral fervor."

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ROSE COGHLAN.  
Who will appear all next week at Bennett's.

in. The Bennettograph is to show two entirely new and original films. Music for next week:  
March—The Four Kings... Aba Tsch Selection—Nordland... Victor Herbert

James T. Powers, who is starring in "The Higher Law," and will be seen at the Grand shortly, in all his career has never had such unlimited opportunities as he has in this musical comedy. This statement is made with the full knowledge that Mr. Powers was the leading comedian with the Augustin Daily Musical Company for seven years, and where all of his parts were arranged by Mr. Daly to suit his somewhat peculiar methods.

The greatest theatrical triumph of years, Wright Lorimer's massive and gorgeous drama, "The Shepherd King," is booked for early presentation in this city, with Carl Eckstrom as David, assisted by the original company and production.

"The Top of the World," a new American extravaganza, will be the attraction at the Grand Opera House next Tuesday evening. As a spectacle it presents a series of glittering pictures of rare beauty. The comedy is bright and diverting and the musical numbers are melodious and of the whistling variety. Great stress is laid upon the dancing. Bailey and Austin, Laughlin and Kathleen Clifford have individual and ensemble dancing numbers that are expected to create a furore, and the Collier ballet is said to be more popular than any pony, peanut, broiler or snail ballet of the past. Among the other prominent principals of the company are John D. Gilbert, Arthur Hill, Harry Fairleigh, Will F. Phillips, Bessie Franklin, Roger Dolan and many others.

The chorus of seventy is sure to be the cynosure of all eyes, for it presents an array of beauty not often seen in present-day productions. "The Top of the World" is a fairy story that will appeal to all the grown-ups as well as to children. Its sole aim is to drive away dull care. Soon after the engagement here, "The Top of the World" will go to the Grand on balance of the season. Seats are now on sale.

The "fudge scene" in the new musical comedy girls' play, "Cupid at Vassar," is one that takes wherever the play is given. The girls have been rehearsing their college songs in the room of the most popular girl in college, Kate Newton. Incidental to the music a conception known as "fudge" is being made in a chafing dish. "Cupid at Vassar" is to be presented at the Grand on Monday night. Seats are now on sale.

Langdon McCormick's latest play, "Jesse Left the Village," has good points. The scenic as well as mechanical portion of the production excels all other efforts, while the cast is all that can be desired. The Green Corners' Symphony Band is one of the many features to especially mention. This play will be seen at the Grand next Thursday and Friday nights and Friday matinee.

Miss Isabel Irving, the delectable American comedienne, who is to be seen at the Grand on Wednesday as the star in the new play, "The Girl Who Has Everything," has had a decidedly interesting career upon the stage, and her experience, in spite of her youth, has been a large one. Miss Irving stepped direct from the schoolroom of real life, at the age of fifteen, to enter upon her theatrical career, and her first part was that of a little schoolgirl in "The Schoolmistress."

While with John Drew, Miss Irving found her greatest successes in "The Marriage of Convenience," "One Summer's Day," "The Liars" and "The Tyranny of Tears." She played her first Shakespearean part when with the Daly company, taking the role of Audrey in "As You Like It." Other successes she achieved were Faith in "The Last Word," "Nancy & Co.," "The Railroad Love," "The Great Unknown," the part of Helen in "The Hunchback," and the part of Titania in "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Miss Grace Cameron's last vaudeville engagement was in South Africa, and on the long voyage to her native land, when not thinking of "home, sweet home," she was studying the part of Dollie in her new play, "Little Dollie Dimples," in which she will be seen at the Grand this afternoon and evening, and when she arrived in New York was letter perfect at the reading rehearsal. Miss Cameron has had many offers to return to vaudeville, but now that her success as a star is

## ON THE QUESTION OF STAGE MORALS.

Out in St. Louis a newspaper discussion is waging on the old, old topic of the morals of the stage. As is usually the case, the writer, who condemns all things theatrical, from open-work hosiery to Heperized leading woman, displays in every paragraph an ignorance of his subject so appalling that one must conclude he has never read the Clipper or Frederic Edward McKay's Daily Talks to Young Girls.

Helene Lackaye rushes to the defence of her profession, although exactly why she should go to the trouble is not clear. Everybody knows that the stage can produce about as pretentious a set of morals as could ask for this side of Sodomy; but so, for that matter, can every other walk of life, providing you look for it. There are earnest, honest, respectable men and women in the theatrical profession, and there are the other kind. But because a married clergyman recently eloped with his ward, there is no inference that every man of the cloth is a libertine. Really, the topic is worn so threadbare that it is scarcely worth further discussion.

The St. Louis man who has sniffed only the offal in his nosings into the drama, signs himself "A. W. R." and concludes this gem of nonsense: "Booth, one of the greatest tragedians, assured she has turned a deaf ear to the 'two-a-day' managers."

Under the leadership of Mr. I. W. Lomas, the house orchestra will play the following programme at next week's shows:  
March—Under the Banner of Victory... (Franz V. Blou Concert waltz—La Barcarolle... (Waldteufel Selection from The Honey-mooners... (Geo. Cohan Intermezzo—Martinique... William Lorimer (Exit march—The Tournament... (Harry Lincoln

A show that will maintain the fast pace of the first three weeks of "advanced vaudeville" is promised at the Savoy next week. W o o d w a r d's Seals, credited with being the greatest animal act before the public, will be the chief attraction. That the act merits the praise bestowed upon it is vouched for by its long and successful run at the New York Hippodrome and the fact that it is playing the Klaw-Eranger houses as one of "advanced vaudeville's" most sought after attractions. The work of the animals is remarkable, genuinely interesting and they are said to be among the finest examples of animal training on the continent. Captain Woodward, has been complimented every place he has appeared for the degree of perfection to which he has trained seals. They do some great juggling stunts, innumerable other tricks and the playing of the seal band is a feature.

Miss May Belfort, the English singing comedienne and a London favorite, who has been meeting with great success in this country is sure to provide a thoroughly enjoyable number. Her humorous character songs are sure to be appreciated.

In "The Rake's Progress," a dramatic episode founded on Hogarth's pictures, she gave evidence of strong dramatic power. A special added attraction of exceptional merit will be Robert Fitzsimmons, ex-champion pugilist of the world and his wife, in a skit, which is said to be as clever as any in vaudeville. Aside from the interest that Lanky Bob is sure to create with this, his first appearance here on the variety stage, it is said to give a performance that is thoroughly entertaining. His wife, Julia May Gifford, is making a strong impression.

At the Conservatory. The Conservatory Bowling Club is the latest addition to our city's musical institute. It is proposed to utilize the lawns of the Conservatory as a rendezvous for the recreation of the teachers, directors and stockholders. Considerable interest is already being manifested in this departure. The teachers are also organizing to forward the best interests of the school, and have placed three essential, one on art, one on recreation and one on advancement.

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## Sappho and Phaon Is a Poetic Piece.

One of the most important and interesting events of the theatrical season will be the production to be made by Harrison Grey Fiske of Percy Mackaye's poetic drama, "Sappho and Phaon." Mme. Bertha Kalich, who became an English speaking actress of eminence upon her assumption of the title part in Maeterlinck's "Mona Vanna," will have the role of Sappho, and the production is promised for the early part of October.

Mr. Mackaye is the young poet-dramatist, whose first work, "Jeanne d'Arc," found acceptance at the hands of E. H. Sothern and Miss Julia Marlowe last season.

"Sappho and Phaon" will more than compensate the student of the drama who reads the play in advance of its production. Those defects which marred "Jeanne d'Arc" in a certain degree are not apparent in the newer play. There is present a more vital and cumulative dramatic interest. The dramatic movement is rapid; the tragedy becomes vivid and real, and the story gains in sweeping and compelling power as the plot unfolds. As a piece of poetic writing it ripples melodiously and evenly.

The opening scene of the play is placed in the indefinite future, but the later acts go back to a period 600 B. C.

The first act, which is in the nature of a prologue, is the scene of an excavation at Heracleum. A box, many centuries old, is brought to light by a workman, and it comes into the possession of an American tourist, whose imagination is vivid. Upon opening the box he finds among its contents a number of vials, the handles of several brushes and a number of other objects, and at once jumps at the conclusion that he has discovered the make-up box of Actis, the Roman actor. He unearths also the manuscript of the tragedy of "Sappho and Phaon," by Varius, and ruminating over his discoveries and their possible significance, the American begins to dream, and in his vision of the Heracleum of other days he sees the gay and thoughtless throngs of Pompeians, utterly oblivious of the impending doom.

As the dream continues, the modern scene fades from view, and in its place is seen the dressing rooms in the private theatre of Varius, who, accompanied by Horace and Virgil, has come from Rome to watch a performance of his own play. Actis is making up for his part, and Naevola, cast as Sappho, and with whom Actis is madly in love, is teasing her lover. Once more the picture fades and the interior of the theatre is brought into view, the performance of "Sappho and Phaon" claiming the attention.

Pittacus and Alcaeus are the most persistent wooers of the fair Sappho, who is adored of all men, but each suitor in turn is rejected, and not until she sees Phaon walking past in the street does she learn what love is. To Phaon her love goes out boundlessly despite the knowledge that he is a slave. Even the revelation that Phaon is in love with Thallassa, a slave girl, by whom he has two children, does not discourage Sappho, but rather it increases her determination to bring the man to her feet. Calling to her aid all a woman's wiles she finally attracts Phaon, but he comes not as her slave, but as her lord and master.

Alcaeus and Pittacus, the disappointed lovers, learn of the romance, and in jealousy plot against the lovers. Phaon is taken into captivity. He escapes and goes to the temple to offer a sacrifice to the gods. The strains of a lyre reach him, and in his hatred of the plotting Alcaeus he creeps forward, thinking to find in the musician the object of his hatred. He strikes a cruel blow behind the pillar and kills his little son.

He is seen bending over the tiny body when Thallassa, the mother, enters with a babe in her arms, seeking for the child. Phaon suddenly comes to a realization that his duty to the slave girl compels him to relinquish Sappho, and, taking up the body of the dead child, he goes once more into the temple, accompanied by Thallassa.

Sappho likewise sees in a flash the utter hopelessness of her love, and with a despairing cry throws herself into the sea. Her final speech is one of the most beautiful passages in the entire drama and, being well worthy of quotation, follows:

Ths sea, The teeming, terrible, maternal sea, That spawned us all, She calls us back to her.