

Her Majesty the Queen." This fallacy ought to have been exploded before Lord Lorne was asked to dismiss M. Letellier; for Lord Lorne could not dismiss a "representative of the Queen" any more than the Governors-General under the old *régime* could dismiss the Lieutenant-Governors of their day.

The despatch of the Colonial Secretary finally settles this question. M. Joly urged him to refer it to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, but the Colonial Secretary's mind is not at all "mixed" like the Quebec mind. In his opinion "it is not the duty of Her Majesty's Government to decide whether M. Letellier ought or ought not to be removed." In his letter to M. Joly of May 20th he declines to refer it to the Privy Council, because there is nothing in the case which gives the Queen in Council any jurisdiction over the question. It is, he says, a parallel case to the New Brunswick School question, and the opinion of the Privy Council would not be binding on the people of Canada. The Colonial Secretary in his final despatch, declines to enter into the merits of the case at all. He confines himself to the statute and its interpretation, and thus establishes the fact that the Lieut.-Governor's powers are *statutory, not prerogative*. He does not seem to suspect that he is dealing with a "representative of the Crown," and he ignores all the contradictory theories which have been agitating the Quebec public; practically dismissing them as utterly irrelevant, and establishing clearly that the Lieut.-Governor of Quebec represents the Dominion Government alone, and that the prerogatives of our Sovereign Lady the Queen, and her Crown and dignity, are in no danger in this ancient and loyal Province.

Quis.

THE CHURCH AND THE STAGE.

When Charles the Second entered London at the Restoration he had his little joke. He said that, judging from his reception, it would really seem to have been his own fault that he had not come long ago, since everybody told him they had always wished for him with all their hearts. I recall the incident, as I note the sudden enthusiasm with which everybody seems to be seized in favour of the Stage. For centuries dramatic entertainments have been denounced from pulpit and platform; the theatre has been railed against as a pest-house, the actor has been perpetually reminded in life that he was a "rogue and vagabond" by Act of Parliament, and at his death begrudged Christian burial,—a thing actually refused to some of the greatest ornaments of the stage. And now all at once a change has come over the scene. The wind has shifted to quite another quarter. The Church has struck up a partnership with the Stage. It is discovered that we have all along been neglecting the great moral lever,—the prime instrument for social and intellectual culture—the most useful adjunct even to religion itself!

Everybody is naturally asking "Why is this thus?" and it is most difficult to assign why or wherefore; simply, there the matter stands. During the past few weeks the English papers have been talking of the elevation, reformation, and every other "ation" of the Stage, and all sorts of schemes and movements are now on the carpet. It was significant that the scheme of the Social Science Congress should have been strained so as to admit the reading of papers on the Drama, and this with a Bishop presiding—a Bishop, by the way who, to do him justice, took exception to the term "Social Science" when it was stretched to embrace this sort of stuff. A yet more startling fact is the announcement of a "Church and Stage Guild," which is designed to accomplish I know not what on behalf of both institutions. This is probably the oddest thing in Guilds yet hit upon. Extremes meet; the Bishop and the Ballet-girl are brought together on the same platform in a common cause, that of the elevation of the public taste in amusements.

It is a matter of history that the Church of the Middle Ages fostered the Drama to a remarkable extent. Probably only sacred dramas were actually played in churches or sacred buildings; but the younger clergymen undoubtedly took part in plays. It would be curious were things to come round again to the sort of union between things so long severed, as this Guild seems to foreshadow.

Following in the fashion, we have two ladies, Mrs. Pfeffer and Mrs. Crawshay, offering sums of money toward the establishment of a National Theatre, both being moved by a strong belief in the value of the Drama as a social institution. Out of this two questions arise: 1. What is a National Theatre? 2. What is the specific good which the promoters of it expect to obtain?

By a National Theatre, I suppose, is meant one subsidized by the State, or supported, in part, out of money contributed for the purpose. This is all very well if some object is to be achieved which is otherwise impossible. But what is that object? Is it to secure the representation of plays which the public care so little for that no manager finds their production a sufficiently remunerative speculation for him to venture upon? That would, in other words, be to give the public what they don't want, and are therefore not likely to profit by.

As matters stand, there is a strong inducement for managers to produce the classic masterpieces of the English stage in the most attractive way, because there are no author's fees to pay, and each piece carries with it a traditional claim to acceptance. The objection is that it won't pay; and the reason of its

not paying simply is that play-goers prefer something else. "Oh, but it would be different," enthusiasts say, "at a really National Theatre." It might be so, but all experience points the other way. France has a "really National Theatre," which plays its classic masterpieces to empty benches, and only keeps up its prestige by producing novelties by living authors, many of them of a kind which would be shunned here as outraging common decency.

The truth is that in the Arts, as in everything else, you must go on a commercial basis. You must provide the article people want, and you can do little in forming their taste, and making them want what they ought to want. Poor Haydon, the artist, committed suicide because people passed by his pictures and flocked in crowds to see Tom Thumb. Foolish fellow! He was old enough to have known that not even an Act of Parliament could have turned the tide from the "disgusting dwarf" to the big pictures, and that if Tom Thumb worshippers could by any power have been made Haydon worshippers, their little souls could only have accorded him a Tom Thumb worship.

The one use of a National Theatre is, I believe, the creation of a school of actors. This, which would result from exceptionally good management—though the chances are that the management would be exceptionally bad—would be a distinct gain. Good acting is a very delightful thing; but from much that I have read I fancy that the bishops and the baronets, the ladies with money and the rhapsodists without any, are not in the main concerned to secure this. They want to make the theatre serve particular purposes. It is to raise, to refine, to "elevate the masses," and to "teach great moral lessons." All very well this. These are important objects, but they can only be secured incidentally. Intelligent people are, of course, quick to see that the Drama is a most potent means of affecting the public mind. When you go to a play you see as well as hear, and because "things seen are mightier than things heard," and, when seen and heard too are mightiest of all; so the impression created is far stronger than any that is produced by reading only. But then the audience must be thoroughly interested in what they are looking at.

The fact is all that could be done by a National Theatre in the way some of its promoters want, would be to provide it with funds so that the best pieces might be put on the stage, and played in the best manner, and thus give a house, unexceptional in itself, a chance of competing with the many other houses given over to frivolities and vulgarities, and not supported by acting, but by such meretricious adjuncts as only in some cases to stop short of absolute indecency.

In spite of Guilds and organizations, the stubborn fact remains that people will only go to the theatre to be amused, not to be instructed or improved. Both instruction and amusement may be offered them incidentally, as I have said, but amusement must be the magnet. There was in my youth an ingenious custom by which the London 'prentice who went to see the pantomime was compelled to sit out "George Barnwell," in order that the moral lesson of that dreary old tragedy (which was really most immoral, only they didn't think so) might sink into the 'prentice soul as a corrective to the vagaries of Clown and Pantaloon. It did not answer. The tragedy came in time to be played in dumb show, so great was the uproar, and Pantomime is now left master of the situation. So it will always be, when the attempt is made to use the Stage to supplement the Pulpit or the Young Men's Christian platform. It depends for its vitality on its power of gratifying as an art, not of improving as a moral agent; and the only vital Drama will be that which pays. Subsidy implies want of vigour, which is but another name for want of attraction; and I have little more hope for the "Church and Stage Guild" than I should of a society for disseminating broadcast copies of Æsop's Fables, with the "morals" printed very large, and the Fables printed very small, in the belief that thus the Fables would be overlooked or casually glanced at, while the "morals" were devoured with avidity. Human nature does not work that way.

Unfortunately the foregoing thoughts on a National Theatre are not applicable to Montreal, for here we have no sympathy with the "poor player," our experience of the Stage is best expressed in Sprague's lines:—

Lo! where the Stage, the poor, degraded Stage,
Holds the warped mirror to a gaping age;
There; where to raise the Drama's moral tone,
Fool Harlequin usurps Apollo's throne;
* * * * *
Where m'ning dancers sport tight pantilettes,
And turn fops' heads by turning pirouettes.

"CONCERNING BACHELORS."

That "only religious Daily" (the *Witness*) seems to have given up its Protestantism and come to the conclusion that "they manage those things better in France,"—more especially "concerning bachelors." It does not know, poor "religious Daily," innocent of all wickedness and the evil ways of the world as it is, that the department of the Rhone, in taxing bachelors for the maintenance of foundling hospitals, is merely trying to relieve the State of the expense of a burden of sin more largely shared and caused by its family men than by its bachelors.

On such a text the *Witness* founds a short sermon on the necessary duty of all men to marry, for the good of their country, in order to add to population.