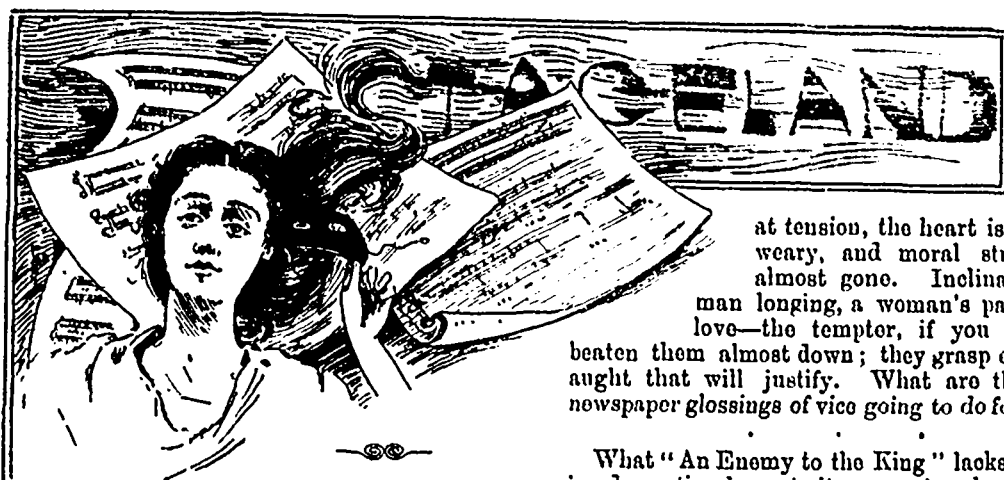




ON AN ACTRESS.

"Aye, she played rarely, though it had been played
A hundred times, and some of more renown
Have played it worse; but she bewitched the town
Dowered with ethereal loveliness she swayed
All hearts to love, while music lent soft aid;
She moved, she spoke, and when she would, drew
down

Laughter unquenchable, the player's crown,
Symbol that all her frolic rule obeyed.
Aye, she played rarely; but myself who knew
What grief had gripped her in its chill embrace,
Could hear dumb weeping in her words, and through
Her every pose the anguished soul could trace,
And pierce the frippery of art unto
The pallor shining in her perfect face."

* * *

Yvette Guilbert has come and gone, and the
cities she visited are the purer and saner by her
departure.

Those who went to hear her are responsible
only to themselves, or rather to that highest self
which is the conscience of each. But the press
which bestowed upon her columns of laudation
holds a larger and graver responsibility, since its
influence is unmeasured, and none can tell where
its utterances shall fall, nor who shall weigh
them.

There are many aspects possible anent this
question of press responsibility; it contains germ
matter for endless debates; but the issue in the
case instanced is plain.

Yvette Guilbert is an artiste, and one of excep-
tional temperament—that goes almost without
the saying, since otherwise she could neither have
secured nor held public attention to the extent she
has done.

Singers of indecent songs may be heard in
New York at any time—if one goes low enough
in search of them. Guilbert differed in that her
songs were more indecent, and were sung with
more artistic finish than any previously heard there
—that was all.

Cover it as you will with fascinating verbiage,
the fact remains that this French girl came from
Paris halls, and made her reputation in New
York by singing songs that even that city dis-
allowed for their indecency, vulgarity and repul-
siveness. That she sang them artistically was
sufficient condonation in Paris; but in New York,
for many months after her first appearance, it
was considered *risque* for reputable women to
attend her recitals.

The great city got used to it after a while; the
Parisienne had imitators by the score who sang
her songs, without her art, and New York simply
shrugged. Yvette Guilbert has helped to lower
even New York's lowest permissible standard.

Vice is never so dangerous as when it loses its
grossness, and evil is never so insidious as when
wrought in the tapestry of picturesque words.

Out in the country place, in village and town,
there are women fighting silent inner battles—
terrible battles—with honor and home sanctity
urging on the one side, with a passion of love on
the other. They have fought until every nerve is

at tension, the heart is sore and
weary, and moral strength is
almost gone. Inclination, hu-
man longing, a woman's passion for
love—the tempter, if you will—has
beaten them almost down; they grasp eagerly at
aught that will justify. What are the pretty
newspaper glossings of vice going to do for these?

What "An Enemy to the King" lacks in genu-
ine dramatic element, it covers by the exquisite
beauty of its scenic effects. Criticism is
lulled in æsthetic content. The senses are ab-
sorbed in superb sunsets, purple shadows, the
yellow glories of autumn leaves, soft trailing vines,
sweet singing birds, exquisite forest scenes be-
neath sunlight and nightfall—an enchantment of
natural beauty, in the absorption of which the
weakness of the play is quite forgotten or over-
looked. "By distracting people's attention, you
can hoodwink them completely," says Miss Dou-
gall's philosophic burglar in "Beggars All," and
the truth holds good upon the stage, as elsewhere.

One of the best touches in the play is revealed
incidentally by that charming actress, Mary Hamp-
ton. Her role of Mille, de Variora is that of a
brave girl, a heroine, indeed. But the splendid
courage that enables her, in the climactic act, to
face death fearlessly, falters and vanishes before
the toad that obtrudes itself upon the interview
between her and her lover in the forest's depths.
She takes refuge on a stump; and the lover's
promise that he will kill the obtruder in return
for a smile from his lady, wins, after repeated en-
treaties, a very wan and fictitious smile indeed.

To be vanquished by a toad, to face death in
love-loyalty—it is a woman in truth.

James A. Herne, whose 'Uncle Nat' in 'Shore
Acres,' has captured the hearts of the theatre-
going public, recently lectured, or rather talked,
to a charmed audience, from a Congregational
pulpit, in a city across the line.

Among other interesting things, he asserted
that the most sublime play he had ever seen was
"The Passion," in which James O'Neil imperson-
ated Christ.

This was the play, it will be remembered, which
was produced in San Francisco, but prohibited
from the New York stage, by the Mayor of that
city.

There is a natural repugnance to the thought
of the sacred drama becoming a theme for the
stage, at least inasmuch as it involves the imper-
sonation of the Divine Man as a central role;
yet were it possible to have this holy play played
holily, and approached reverently by both actors
and audience, it is doubtful whether it could be
surpassed as a spiritual force and impressment.

And such artists as James Herne, with his lofty
conceptions, dignity of purpose, and finely sweet
ideals, leads us to believe in the possibility.

Never had the gay finale of the first act of
"Martha" a more tragic ending than that given
it on the evening of
February 11th, at
the Metropolitan
Opera House, New
York, when Armand
Castelmarty, the
basso, fell upon the
stage dead, as the
curtain dropped to
an applauding house.

Mons. Castelmarty played the role of *Tristano*,
an old beau; who, as those familiar with the
pretty little opera will remember, comes to the
village fair in company with *Lady Enrichetta* and
Nancy, and is tormented and laughed at by the
village maidens.

Tristano acted and sang as excellently as usual
—only excellence is tolerated at the Metropolitan
Opera House. At the close of the act they danced
about him in a teasing crowd; the old beau
grasped his hair, forced his way through the
maidens and fell, as though exhausted, upon
a table which stood at the side of the stage. The
curtain fell for the close of the scene, amid great
applause at the basso's good acting; and at the
moment of its dropping Castelmarty rose from the
table and fell in the centre of the stage—dead.

At the opening of the second act it was
announced that Mons. Castelmarty had been taken
ill, and that an under-study had taken his place.
The music rippled on; the maidens danced; the
rich voices of de Reszke, Mantelli and Mario
Engle rang out the sparkling music; the house
sparkled and glittered, laughed and applauded. If
the footlights looked a trifle dim to misty eyes
upon the stage, if the merry choruses were
caught here and there with a sob, those who
listened were none the wiser; while within the
little dressing room beyond the stage wings, the
most brilliant singers in the opera world to-day
bowed over their voiceless confrere.

Some charming and informal evenings not
known to the general public are those given by
the recital and dramatic class conducted by Mr.
H. Shaw, the well known teacher of expression.

Mr. Shaw leased the Bickford homestead last
autumn, and during the past season the handsome
and lofty drawing rooms have witnessed many
pretty and interesting bits of private theatricals.

On one or two evenings of each week the
students assemble to rehearse some portions of
the various plays assigned them, and amid kindly
laughter over natural mistakes and falterings, and
much earnestness of purpose, some good and
effective work is done.

On one such evening, for instance, the final
scene from the "Merchant of Venice," a scene
from the "Scarle Letter," and one from "Pyg-
malion and Galatea," were rehearsed. Each
scene was in different stages of preparation, and
in the hands of students more or less advanced,
which added to the interest.

The first was excellently rendered, a young
Shylock and Portia doing work that would be ac-
corded recognition on a public stage; the second
was even more interesting, since in it Mr. Shaw,
who possesses marked histrionic talent, assumed
the role of Arthur Dimmesdale. The last scene
revealed a splendid comedy gift in one little
woman, but being a first rehearsal, ended in con-
fusion, much laughter, and a provoked prompter.

At the close of each scene, Mr. Shaw gave pro-
fitable, pointed and brilliant little criticisms of
the various roles—which were in themselves a
revelation.

Mr. Shaw has an extensive acquaintance in
the theatrical world, and frequently a member of
some company at the Grand will come up after
the play, his experiences adding to the interest of
the evening.

On the evening in question it was Mr. Abbey,
of the Roland Reed company—a prince of story
tellers.

FAITH FENTON.

