

It is hardly to be expected that, in a free country like Canada, a section of the people, which forms a solid and substantial provincial minority, backed up by the constitution, with the example of other provinces before them, and the spirit, if not the very letter, of the law on their side, will feel disposed to accept a very dry crust in lieu of the loaf demanded.

Mr. Laurier has been allowed a free hand in the matter; but it is doubtful whether any settlement, which does not win the ready acceptance of the Manitoba minority, will be endorsed by the Catholics of Quebec, who, at the elections, confided the question to the justice of their most distinguished living fellow-countryman.

The last three potentialities it would be useless to dismiss before they have assumed the more tangible shape of probabilities.

SODES.

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## The Drama.

THE ACTOR JUDGED BY HIMSELF.

Stanley Jones, in To-morrow.

THE unkindest critics of the theatrical profession are to be found among the actors themselves. Walter Bagehot used to say that the cure for admiring the House of Lords was to go and look at them. The cure for adulating the theatrical profession is to see theatrical life as it is lived: not in the glamour of the footlights; not in their private lives—which are, like other men's and women's, what they choose to make them—but among actors in the pursuit of their calling. When dramatists speak of the hebetude of actors, they may be suspected of prejudice, and the failure of many bad plays, no doubt, is attributed by their authors to the actor's lack of comprehension. Yet nobody who has ever endured the fatiguing experience of a rehearsal can have been impressed by the general intelligence of the company taking part in it. Not a few of them seem incapable of thinking for themselves, whilst others think of themselves, and of nobody else in the piece. Only in rare instances does the actor consider his own part in relation to the whole play; though the story of the tragedian who knew "Hamlet" with everything but the Prince of Denmark left out, and followed the play only by his cues, is probably the invention of a malicious rival. But the ordinary playgoer can have no idea how much the composition of the beautiful pictures presented on the stage is the work, not of the actors, but of the stage manager (to say nothing of the scene-painter and the stage-carpenter), who may be an actor with a particular talent for this practical work—amounting in the superlative degree, as in the case of Sir Henry Irving and the late Sir Augustus Harris to a positive genius for organization—or to a dramatist endowed with illimitable patience. It is not only the newspapers and the crowd who have given to the actor a place of importance ridiculously out of proportion to his consequence in our national life. The recognition that acting has received, above all the arts, in the highest quarters, has directed more public attention to the actors apart from their work than they deserve. When the members of the theatrical profession presented to the Prince of Wales, on his fiftieth birthday, a gift of a gold cigar box—said to have cost a cool thousand pounds—they acknowledged their indebtedness to His Royal Highness for the increased respect extended to their calling; and the liberal patronage of the Prince of Wales, hardly less than the improvement in their material circumstances, has helped no doubt to influence the public mind. . . . But this great respect for the theatrical profession is not often shared by the members of the profession themselves. The cardinal virtue of self-respect does not exist among actors as it does in other professions. The petty jealousies, the mean intrigues, and the unworthy rivalries, are perhaps inevitable in a profession in which personal advantage is everything. A standard of measures and of morals—a professional etiquette—can hardly be maintained, but it should not be difficult for the theatrical profession as a body to add to its dignity in the eyes of the public. The feeling that it should do so exists among the actors themselves. There is yet another lesson in dignity and self-respect that the members of the theatrical profession have to learn; and that, as the intelligent reader will have guessed already, is to refrain from speaking so much about themselves.

## Music.

MR. W. E. FAIRCLOUGH will give, during the coming season, his fifth series of organ recitals in All Saints' Church. The programme of the first recital, which is to take place at four o'clock to-morrow afternoon, is an interesting one. In addition to the organ solos of Mr. Fairclough, two vocal numbers will be rendered by Miss Sally World, soprano.

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## Art Notes.

STAGE ART IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME.

Magazine of Art.

THEORISTS have sometimes argued as though Shakespeare consciously realized and rejoiced in his freedom from the trammels of scenery, and deliberately rejected the ministrations of the painter. This, of course, is a mere illusion. There is not the remotest reason for supposing that if scene-painting had been practised in his day, Shakespeare would not have availed himself of its aid, or would not have been able, under the conditions it imposes, to express his genius in the utmost perfection. I have sometimes wondered why no attempt was made to adapt to the stage the scenery which, under Elizabeth and James, was lavishly employed in the Court masques. I have even been inclined to argue that Shakespeare cannot have been the alert impresario, the consummate showman, of some people's imagination, because this idea never occurred to him. But a little examination dissipates all surprise. It was not pictorial scenery, as we understand it, that was employed in the masques, but elaborate pieces of mechanism and constructed "properties." No more than the plays of the time were the masques presented within a picture-frame, like that supplied by our proscenium; and this frame is obviously essential to anything like a picture. The stage of the masque, as we see from numerous drawings, was often, if not always, simply the floor of some hall, the spectators occupying either the galleries or raised benches along the walls. The "real tree" and the "real pump" were in great demand. Arbours and fountains and grottoes abounded, along with complicated and ingenious pieces of mechanism, something like those which we now see in Christmas spectacles. Ben Jonson's famous coadjutor in many of his masques was not a painter, but an architect and mechanist—Inigo Jones, to wit. Now these constructed properties, suitable for presentation on an open platform, our ancestors did not fail to use on the regular stage. We have all heard of the "hell-mouth," and other like properties, which the Elizabethan stage borrowed from the mediæval mysteries. "Practicable" erections were no doubt common enough, and there is every reason to suppose that the "pleached bower" of *Much Ado* and the cave of *Cymbeline* were not left entirely to the spectator's imagination. The main fact to be borne in mind, however, is that the frame, the proscenium, is essential to a stage picture, and that the Elizabethan stage possessed no proscenium. There must be an absolute line of demarcation between audience and stage before scene-painting, in our sense of the word, becomes possible. It is true that scenery of a certain sort had come into use before the line of demarcation was strictly drawn; but the whole history of theatrical construction shows a steady shrinkage of that portion of the stage which extended in front of the proscenium. The final disappearance of all trace of the Elizabethan platform belongs to our own day. Its last remnant, a space of from three to eight or ten feet between the curtain and the footlights (technically termed the "apron"), may still be seen in some old-fashioned playhouses; but in almost all modern theatres, except those built for musical purposes, there is no appreciable space between the curtain and the "float." It is noteworthy that the first scene-painter who has left any permanent mark in theatrical history, De Louthembourg, was the contemporary of Garrick who was the first to draw a hark-and-fast line between stage and auditorium by clearing the stage of that portion of the audience which used to encumber it. The upshot, then, is that the whole configuration of Shakespeare's