

## MRS. LANGTRY.

In presenting our pictorial supplement this week we expected to offer it to a public, a proportion of whom had seen Mrs. Langtry in the flesh, had formed opinions about her beauty and had settled her position as a dramatic artist. What the reporters pleasingly call the "devouring element" has, however, changed all this. Mrs. Langtry's histrionic ability is still a mystery to us, and numerous, but indifferently-executed, photographs are all we have to guide us in determining Mrs. Langtry's claims to personal loveliness.

There is nothing about which tastes differ so much as physical beauty. Not only do individual tastes differ, but those of nations are as wide apart as the poles, and a typical English beauty may be considered homely in this country, and a daintily beautiful American girl be regarded as "finnickin'" or a "doll" in England. They say that where there's smoke there's fire near at hand, as poor Mr. Abbey found to his cost on Monday, and as Mrs. Langtry's reputation for beauty is phenomenal and has lasted now for four years, we may at once accept the fact that she is regarded as a beauty, or even as the beauty in England.

Court, fashion, literature and art have praised her without ceasing. Great painters like Millais, Leighton, Miles and others never seem to tire of transferring her features to canvas. Poets, such as they are, have sung the praises of her eyes, her hair, her complexion and her carriage. She has been introduced into a score of fashionable novels, and the "society journals" of London have, during the last four years, devoted more space to her than the doings of all the rest of the "professional beauties" put together.

Years before Mrs. Langtry went on the stage she was a "personality" to all England. Not only did the golden youth of the metropolis pursue her through park, theatre, fancy fair, ball-room and garden party, but provincial youth from Manchester and Liverpool, spent much of the time they should have devoted to cotton and corn when in London to following imaginary Mrs. Langtry all over the fashionable quarters of the city.

Richard III's mortification at finding six Richmonds on the field of Bosworth was nothing to the disgust of Manchester "blood," who, in the course of one day, at a frightful expense in cabs, fancy fair and theatre tickets, saw eleven Mrs. Langtrys in eleven different dresses, and with eleven different noses, pairs of eyes and heads of hair.

We are afraid that the Manchester youth was imposed upon by some of the "curled darlings" of society, who are not above perpetrating harmless, and even feeble, practical jokes. Indeed, in 1880, this diversion was carried to such an extent that provincials were very chary of taking suggestions from their metropolitan cousins and friends, and contented themselves with forming critical or admiring groups outside the "Stereoscopic Company's" shop in Regent Street, where hideously painted photographs of Mrs. Langtry struggled for popular favor with those of Kate Vaughan, Connie Gilchrist and Ellen Terry.

However, all this, ludicrous, snobbish and even vulgar as it was, proved the extraordinary hold Mrs. Langtry had over the public imagination, which was almost daily whetted by the journals of society and the London correspondents of the provincial newspapers. These latter gentlemen devoted more time to fashionable quarters than even they did to the "Lobby" of the House of Commons, and were prouder of a bit of "exclusive Langtry news" than of a private and unimpeachable "tip" concerning Cabinet Ministers or the fate of a government.

When Mr. Edmund Yates, in his *World*, first announced that Mrs. Langtry was going on the stage, he was credited with the news sensation of the hour. Had he announced the appearance of Mr. John Bright on the stage of the Gaiety Theatre he would hardly have created more astonishment. All the other "society paper," especially Mr. Labouchere's *Truth*, stoutly denied the statement, and a newspaper war arose on the subject. Mr. Yates stuck to his statement, and in a few weeks had the gratification of actually seeing Mrs. Langtry on the stage, though this time it was amid amateurs and in the cause of charity.

Thus the ice was broken, and after two more charitable performances Mrs. Langtry stepped boldly on the stage of the Haymarket Theatre as leading lady, appearing first as *Miss Hardcastle*, in "She Stoops to Conquer," and next as *Blanche Haye*, in "Ours." The wild, almost delirious excitement of the public to see the fashionable beauty was a thing to be wondered at, smiled at and even wept over. Whether her *Miss Hardcastle* or *Blanche Haye* were good, bad or indifferent mattered not a jot to the public. They went to see Mrs. Langtry, not with the eyes that nature gave them, but with something resembling the "double million magnifying gas microscopes of extry power," spoken of by Mr. Sam Weller.

The first row of stalls at the Haymarket Theatre presented one solid phalanx of opera glasses every night the "beauty" appeared. The people behind levelled their lorgnettes at the attraction from between the heads of the people sitting in front of them. The hire of opera glasses, not usually an extensive business in a London theatre, became one of boundless profit and extent. Even the gallery of the Haymarket Theatre bristled with "spy-glasses," and an enthusiast with a marine telescope used to nightly take his place on a back seat in the al-

titude devoted to the "gods," and drink in the joys for which he paid his shilling.

To criticize Mrs. Langtry's acting under such circumstances was absurd. The Haymarket Theatre was simply a show, and the audience an assemblage of sight-seers. Mrs. Langtry's provincial tour was a repetition of her London experience with the difference, that while the enthusiasm was equally great, the manners of the public were very much better.

The story of Mrs. Langtry's brief theatrical career has been told often, artfully and comprehensively. Public curiosity on this side of the water is, we expect, not unlike what it is in England, and Mrs. Langtry's "drawing powers," during her brief season, will be found to rest with her personal claims. If she should again visit us, she will, no doubt, be judged after the kindly, but critical, fashion, to which other dramatic artists have become accustomed.

Among the questions most frequently asked in New York at this moment are, "What is Mrs. Langtry's Christian name and what is Mrs. Langtry's age?" In answer to this we have to say that the Rev. Mr. Le Breton's only daughter was born at St. Hillier's, Jersey, almost twenty-six years ago, and was baptized with the charming name of Lillian, which is abbreviated to the more familiar "Lillie." When Mr. Millais first painted her, his picture hung in the Royal Academy and in the catalogue appeared as "A Jersey Lily," the title was not intended as a pun on the lady's name, but as a tribute to the marvelous complexion which the painter tried to reproduce on canvas. Before the lady thus became famous she was living a comparatively humble, or, as they say in England, genteel life with her husband, an Irish gentleman of moderate fortune.

Before Mrs. Langtry was "discovered" by the world of art, she was almost a stranger to London, and positively unknown to the fashionable world. She was enjoying a life of modest pleasure, completely novel to her as a country-bred woman, and had as much idea of being called a "beauty," as had her worthy husband. When she found greatness thrust upon her, she accepted the situation with a calmness and dignity which are peculiar features of her character.

She accepted homage without agitation, and among her personal friends, and even among her lovely rivals, acquired a singular popularity through the frank simplicity of her character. Mrs. Langtry had, during her most brilliant London seasons, two most formidable rivals in the persons of the Countess of Lonsdale and Mrs. Cornwallis West.

In character, manner, and appearance, these three ladies presented striking contrasts. Lady Lonsdale is almost a giantess, with a massive head, great eyes, and the figure of a Roman matron. Mrs. Cornwallis West is rather petite, and in manner is piquant, Parisian, and perhaps frivolous. Lady Lonsdale, as became a woman of her proportions, was somewhat masculine in voice and bearing, while Mrs. West's habit is what is irreverently termed "kittenish." Between these two extremes stood Mrs. Langtry, the perfection of womanhood—at least to English eyes.

"Her voice was ever soft, gentle and low, an excellent thing in a woman," as poor *King Lear* says of *Cordelia*, her manner was always stately and graceful without being statuesque and imposing, and whether upon analysis her claims to beauty were greater or less than those of her two famous rivals, it is certain that she cultivated them both in fashionable and popular favor. Three years ago stories of the somewhat eccentric doings of the "professional beauties" received wide currency, and one to the effect that a "beauty" went "too far" even for the good nature of the Prince of Wales when she dropped a piece of ice between the royal collar and the royal neck, was related with Mrs. Langtry as its heroine.

Perhaps it is hardly worth while to correct the details of this little bit of gossip, but in case it should be, we may say on the authority of those who "know," that Mrs. Cornwallis took the frigid liberty which his Royal Highness so haughtily resented, and that lady dropped out of the princely sunshine while Mrs. Langtry continued to bask in it. Fashionable life in London cannot be lived for nothing, despite Mr. Thackeray and Becky Sharpe. Mr. Langtry's modest fortune was unequal to the demands made upon it. Necessity was thus the very prosaic reason which drove Mrs. Langtry to the stage and enrolled her among the army of woman workers, of which Miss Emily Faithful is the devoted champion.

Her success, at least, in the art of money-getting, has been prodigious, and without the display of any special talent, it is probable that Mrs. Langtry's name will be sufficient to conjure up a small fortune. But those around her, who have worked with her, and watched her, declare that her industry is phenomenal, her patience untiring, and her intelligence of the brightest character. These, surely, are qualities invaluable to a student of any kind of art. As Mrs. Langtry has, at least, good looks, youth, education, high breeding, and is descended from a long line of ladies and gentlemen, we can wish her all the success she deserves, and hope that she may prove an acquisition as well as an ornament to our stage.—*Music and Drama.*

THE Khédive recognizes the merits of the special war correspondents. We are told "they will have orders presented to them, and they will be suspended from the neck by a yellow riband." A sad end.

## AN ACTOR'S JOKE.

I think that one of the most reckless affairs with which I have ever had to do, occurred at the house of a friend of mine, who was himself fond of a joke, and had, at home, abundant opportunity for the making of one. A regiment had just arrived from the Crimean War, and was forwarded to Glasgow to be quartered there. My friend asked the officers to dine immediately after their arrival, although he was a stranger to them all except by reputation. He invited me to go with them, remarking, "Now, Ned, let us have some fun," and we at once concocted a plan. I know his residence very well, and could do anything I pleased with it. With his leave I sent for a stonemason and told him to ascertain where the flue from the fire grate made its exit on the roof, as I wanted him that night, during the dinner, to call down the chimney in answer to any question I might ask. My friend, the host, meanwhile was to introduce me to his guests as a celebrated American ventriloquist, who was about to appear in London, and was acknowledged to be the most extraordinary artist of the kind in the world. While the meal was going on, Colonel ———, a very aristocratic old man, gradually began to throw out suggestions, and to lead conversation in the direction of ventriloquial subjects. I, of course, pretended to be very bashful, and to avoid any allusion to the theme. After much solicitation, however, I consented to speak, as he suggested, only two or three words. Mark you, I had timed the experiment so that it should be exactly eight o'clock, or within a few minutes of it, when I knew that my mason would be keeping his engagement at the other end of the chimney. Going to the fireplace, I shouted at the top of my voice, for it was a deuced long way up, "Are you there?" but there was no response. I came to the conclusion that, as by this time it was raining very hard, the stonemason had got sick of the whole business and left the roof. Imagine my surprise, when in eight or ten seconds afterwards, just as I had turned, and was going to tell the colonel that my failure was due entirely to an ulcerated sore throat, a deep voice was heard hallooing down the flue, "I don't hear a word." The colonel, officers, and all the guests looked perfectly staggered. I immediately took advantage of the situation, and remarked, "There, you see how badly I did! You noticed what a guttural tone there was in my voice?" but they all crowded round me, and said it was the most extraordinary thing they had ever heard in their lives, and begged me to repeat the experiment. I had previously made the arrangement with the mason that when I said "good bye" three times he would understand that I required him no more. I therefore shouted out "good bye" three times, and, getting no response, concluded that he had gone, and thought no more about the matter. About an hour after this the colonel was leaning against the mantel-piece smoking a cigar, when he turned to me—I was on the opposite side of the room—and said, "Colonel Slayter" (by which name I had been introduced to the company), "I have no hesitation in saying you are the most extraordinary ventriloquist alive. Now, in my own little way, I occasionally try to amuse my children in the same manner; but it is really absurd, after the wonderful effect you have produced, to give you an illustration here; still I will try. For instance, when at home, I sometimes put my head up the chimney and shout, 'Are you coming down?' and the old gentleman accompanied the action to the words. Judge of our utter amazement when a yell was heard in the chimney, 'Oh! go to Jericho! I have had enough of this.' Everybody looked at him as if for an explanation. Taking in the situation quickly, and carelessly stepping forward, I said, 'There, gentlemen, that is my last effort: I am suffering so much from bronchial affection that you must really excuse me from any further exhibition. One and all of them gathered around me and again shook my hands, expressing amazement at the high art I had evinced, and promising me a magnificent reception whenever I should appear in public. It was as much as I could do to preserve a serious face. The joke was too good to keep long; and in a little while afterwards, in the course of conversation the host said, 'By the way, Sothorn, do you remember so-and-so?' 'What!' said all the officers, looking up. 'Sothorn!' I thought this was Colonel Slayter." "Oh, no," replied my friend, "this is 'Lord Dundreary.'" That was my first and last experience as a ventriloquist.—*The Theatre.*

## TEA DRINKING: ITS EFFECTS.

The sense of ease in respiration and increase of general comfort after taking tea is well known, as is also the fact that tea tends to induce perspiration, and thereby to cool the body. Hence, in reference to nutrition, we may say that tea increases waste, since it promotes the transformation of food without supplying nutriment, and increases the loss of heat without supplying fuel, and it is, therefore, specially adapted to the wants of those who usually eat too much, and after a full meal, when the process of assimilation should be quickened, but is less adapted to the poor and ill-fed, and during fasting. To take tea before a meal is as absurd as not to take it after a meal, unless the system be at all times replete with nutritive material; and the fashion of the day of taking tea at about five o'clock can only be defended when there has been a hearty lunch at one or two o'clock, and

an anticipated dinner or supper at seven or eight o'clock. For those to take tea before dinner who eat little or no lunch, must be so far injurious, and tend to promote irritability of the stomach. As a matter of comfort, however, it is to be observed that a cup of tea in health is always refreshing, and to those accustomed to its use, always welcome. It may also be added that whilst tea promotes assimilation, there is no ground for believing that it promotes the digestion of food in healthy persons, and, therefore, it is not usual to take it with, but after, a principal meal. Indeed, but few persons could tolerate a tea dinner as a daily habit, however agreeable it may be as a change of diet; and by the universal consent of mankind, tea is less fitted to accompany meat than starch and fat. I have not referred to the effect of tea on the mind, because it is not capable of proof by weight and measure; but it is an action which is universally admitted, and is quite in keeping with the action of tea upon the respiratory tract as a respiratory excitant. There can be no doubt that, under certain circumstances, it quickens the intellect, both in thought and imagination, and takes away the tendency to sleep, so that in experiments which we made hourly through three days and nights, tea taken twice during the night prevented any desire for sleep. This is not always the same on any person, neither is it uniform on different persons, nor does it actually correspond with the quantity of tea taken. Moreover, it appears to be measured by the mode of preparing the tea, so that a strong infusion which has been poured off the leaves, and kept hot for a considerable period, has greater effect.

## ECHOES FROM LONDON.

LONDON, Oct. 28.

It is believed that there will be some honours bestowed by the Queen to commemorate the opening of the Courts of Justice. This does not mean that the coming Lord Mayor will be made a baronet, but indicates doubtless that this rank will be given to Mr. Street, the able son of the genius who conceived the idea of the Courts, and many great works. Mr. Bloomfield, it is said, will be made a knight.

AMONG the fantastic ideas which now and then invade the brains of all yachting men none have been accepted with more glee than that of the wealthy owner of the *Pearl*, who has converted his yacht into a magnificent hothouse filled with exotic plants, and provided with every convenience for giving the most brilliant fêtes in the midst of orange trees and bananas, from which the fruit may be gathered fresh and ripe. The friends of the yachtman call him "Monte Christo," and by that name is he known all along the Mediterranean.

THE ladies intend to have a public rejoicing meeting in London ere long, to celebrate their great victory, namely, that of obtaining the Married Women's Property Act. It is due to their splendid organization that they have got what they wanted; they have always triumphed by these means, and no doubt at the reunion the opportunity will be given of broaching another female grievance. Committees die very hard after being successful. Will they interest themselves in the deceased wife's sister question? It is still a fine opening for feminine agitation.

THE Junior Army and Navy Club, which has migrated from Grafton street to St. James's street, having for a *vis-a-vis* Arthur's, also an establishment that will hold all the club's spoils, was at first rather interfered with in the carrying out of the alterations which were necessary to give the club splendor and comfort. Some official body, we believe the Board of Works, objected to its interest in ancient lights being infringed, so the club had to stop a story short in its architectural intentions. The members have now the gratification of hearing that the ancient lights' claim is waived, and the club can do what it likes, towering heavenward without let or hindrance. While the consequent building is going on, the Junior Army and Navy Club's members have had friendly offers of hospitality from half a dozen clubs, where they will be made quite at home.

AGAIN it is said that the Speaker will retire. He only awaits the formal completion of the present session before resigning his high office and applying for the Chiltern Hundreds. He will sit out the debate on closure, but he will not be the presiding authority which is to carry it out, and the state of his health is such that he at least will not desire that the winter session should extend over a month. Sir Henry Brand will, of course, be raised to the peerage and receive the usual pension; but the peerage he will receive will not be the ordinary viscountcy which is given to the Speaker on his retirement, but an earldom. Sir H. Brand is now the heir to the premier barony on the roll of English peers. To be at the top of the list of Barons is a high honor as matters go than to be at the bottom of the list of viscounts, and so he will be made an earl, an honor usually reserved only for Prime Ministers who are made peers from the ranks of commoners. It is the custom to give the pension for two lives, but these old customs are now being broken down, and perhaps it will transpire that Sir Henry Brand will only have secured a pension for one life with the earldom.