

be the culminating splendour of their general appearance. Others, with a greater appreciation of the occasion, and the solemn dedication entailed upon them, prefer—and I heartily approve of their choice—to wear a beautiful but very simple attire, which embodies or carries with it the feelings and tone of the wearer's mind in its suitability to the purpose and ceremony for which it is intended. I have a funny fancy—a romance, a sentimentality, a superstition—call it what you will—that one's wedding dress should be worn on the day of one's marriage, and on that day only, and never again. I have been so disgusted with innumerable brides that I have seen, appearing and re-appearing in their bridal finery perpetually, and I recall one in particular, who was not extremely youthful either, who even after the birth of her little girl still presented herself at evening parties in the everlasting old white satin dress and orange blossoms



that had done duty so interminably since her long-past wedding day. I, therefore, give you a sketch of a costume that is simple, and yet rich enough to please people of both ways of thinking. The underdress is entirely composed of white *crepe de chine*, in a plain skirt very slightly gathered to the waist, and trimmed with a flounce round the hem. The bodice is quite plainly drawn to the neck, and waist, which is encircled with a girdle of any white flower preferred, the same reappearing in tiny posies to keep up the puff of the sleeves, also in the neck, and in the hair. The train is of white silk, brocaded with the now very fashionable design for such beautiful stuffs, of true lover's knots. It is quite untrimmed, being sufficiently handsome, in the richness and thickness of its own texture. The veil is of tulle, and, when the wearer has them, should be fastened to the hair by diamond stars, or pins.

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To dress the neck tastefully is a great art, and it is one in which French people excel, seeming to have a special talent for manipulating the dainty "confection," as they are called, that are used for this purpose. There are all kinds of pretty novelties appearing now in this line, such as chemisettes of *crepe* with tiny pleated frills down the front to wear underneath silk jackets, others puffed, or crimped like shells, forming a soft fluffy border to the neck of red, lilac, rose, or blue. Then there are ruffs of delicate black lace intermingled with little sprays of lilac, or any other spring flower. Many of the ordinary neck trimmings are of galon worked with beads of various colours, and edged with that kind of fluffy ravelled silk that so much resembles feathers. Lace, however, is to be far more worn this year than hitherto, and on many a thin summer dress you will see a wide piece of cream coloured, or *ecru* lace turned out from the neck, and allowed to fall either like a round collar on to the shoulders, or as a pointed piece that terminates only at the waist. So I give you a sketch of this pretty fashion; also a simple jabot of lace, or chiffon, for a high dress, and another lace arrangement that will be found very useful to smarten up the bodice of an old silk dress for



home evening wear. Of course there are innumerable other ways, but I think that you will find these new—and, I hope, useful—for the present.

Our London Letter.

LONDON, June 6, 1891.

It has in every way been a very eventful spring publishing season, *pace* a number of reviewers who have, in default of anything special to write about, and having exhausted what as a matter of fact was a very long list of particularly interesting and entertaining books, been complaining of its barrenness. One of the literary events has been of course the *debut* of the new firm of publishers, of American extraction, Messrs. Osgood, McIlvaine & Co., who act over here as the agents of Messrs. Harper Brothers, of New York, who have hitherto been represented in a spasmodic sort of way by Messrs. Sampson, Low & Co. These new publishers are beginning very auspiciously, having already published some of the best books of the year, notably Mr. Oscar Wilde's "Intentions" and Mr. Thomas Hardy's "A Group of Noble Danes," in which novel Mr. Hardy deserts his native Wessex and his simple country folk to write about fine ladies and of 'good society.' Perhaps the change is welcome, if it only helps to show Mr. Hardy's versatility, but his admirers will be grievously disappointed if they have no more of his charming descriptions of Dorsetshire life and scenery.

To tell the truth it is getting quite wearying—I mean the daily chronicling of Ibsen's success. He is triumphing all along the line, and the worst of it is that his enemies don't see it. Some of them are men of culture, men of refinement, but their language when they get on the Ibsen question is like that of the Heathen Chinee, 'plain' to use a very mild word. "Hedda Gabler," what a success it was! The old critics tried to argue that it was the acting, which they granted was magnificent, of Miss Robbins, of Miss Lee, of Mr. Sugden and Mr. Scott Buist which saved a bad play and which turned it into a success. And then when the piece is placed in the evening bill and only runs for a short time to indifferently poor houses, they turn round and say in effect "What did we say? Why that Ibsen was a fad, a fashion of a lot of morbid young men and women which would never be a success when played before the general public." Of course not; that is just the best of it, even in the failure the (so-called) Ibsenites get the best of the very poor argument. Ibsen is the dramatist of the cultured few, not of the many, who can see no beauty, truth or power outside the productions of the playrights' ring—H. A. Jones, Pinero, J. R. Sims, Pettit and a few others. A good book is produced, a book in which the author has not sacrificed art to sentiment, or truth to balderdash, and although it may be hailed of the critics as a token of great joy, it is not a commercial success. Of course not, really great writers are always ahead of their generation; the only books which pay are those which are 'written down' to the intellect of the general reader, or sensational novels. The contempt of the masses should be the literary artist's greatest reward—he can then feel that he has done

good work, and the Philistine may scoff in vain. The merits of a piece of music are not judged by the number of its admirers, or we should have the professors extolling 'Two Lovely Black Eyes' instead of Beethoven, 'Little Annie Rooney' instead of Mozart; nor is the picture in the Royal Academy judged by the crowd which surrounds it, for it is the cheap, the tawdry, the sentimental, the trashy which attracts the masses. Another young actor of promise has essayed one of Ibsen's most difficult *roles* this week. (By the way Miss Ellen Terry has relieved herself of the opinion that the characters in Ibsen were so easily played—how could so clever an actress make so ridiculous an error?) Miss Rose Norreys is the third Norah we have seen, for "The Doll's House" has been acted three times, once by Miss Janet A. Church, who rose to absolute greatness in the character, and once by Miss Marie Fraser, who attempted too difficult a task, and now Miss Norreys, an actress who has done some very excellent work in the few years she has been before the public, and is now acting in one of the chief *roles* in "The Dancing Girl," has attempted the character and has succeeded but indifferently, although in the first scene she was particularly happy, for here her youth and natural spirits were of the greatest service. And now because this one actress has failed, and only just failed, the *Daily Telegraph*, which arrogates to itself not only the largest circulation but also the position of the premier theatrical daily, exclaims that now Ibsen is finished with, that his influence is over, and that he metaphorically, and his plays literally, must be put on the shelf. Oh, the pity of it!

Indeed everything points the other way, for the last fortnight has seen two burlesques, or rather satires on the whole Ibsen gospel, if gospel it is. Mr. J. M. Barrie (at least popular rumour, which in this case is almost certainly correct, ascribes to him the authorship) has written a smart little travesty in one act, which is now being acted at Toole's Theatre. It is described as a "Hedda in one act," and is entitled "Ibsen's Ghost; or, Toole Up-to-Date," and every line of it is extremely funny, full of subtle allusion and quaint quips. "Hedda Gabler" is the particular play burlesqued, but "Ghosts" and "The Doll's House" are also made the subject of laughter which rippled continuously from start to finish.

The other satire was by Mr. Robert Buchanan and was necessarily not so light or humorous, for in quiet legitimate humour no one can beat the clever author of "Window in Thrums" and "Thrums Gossip." Mr. Buchanan's play was tedious—very. He had attempted to burlesque the Ibsen gospel in a three act play of serious import, and necessarily failed—a burlesque if it is not spun out by songs and dances should never be longer than an act. "The Gifted Lady" as the play is called, (the title was changed from "Heredity" at the last moment for copyright reasons) might almost be taken as a dramatic version of the same author's "Coming Terror," which was noticed in this column some few weeks back. Mr. Buchanan stated in the book his likes and dislikes, and they are all dragged in by the heels, into his new play, for no other purpose than to be kicked and cuffed—metaphorically of course. The play was a failure, which the artists engaged did their best to obviate—Miss Fanny Brough, Mr. W. H. Vernon, Mr. Harry Paulton and Miss Cicely Richards all slaved at their barren parts, but with very little success. The wit and the sparkle were conspicuous only by their absence, and it is impossible to turn stone into cheese.

The Rev. Dr. Hermaan Adler, who was promoted on Thursday last to the post of Chief Rabbi of "The United Congregations of the British Empire," comes of a very old and a very distinguished Jewish stock, his father, who died last year, having held the post of Chief Rabbi before him, and his grandfather having been Chief Rabbi of Hanover. Dr. Adler is a graduate of the London, and Doctor of Logic of the Leipsic University, and is exceedingly popular among the English Jews.

The revival of Dion Boucicault's "Formosa" at Drury Lane is worthy of a casual mention. For these modern days the play is totally impossible, both from an artistic and pecuniary point of view—it is unreal and of the stage, stagey. The scene in which the Oxford and Cambridge boat race is introduced is admirably stage managed and given an opportunity for lavish display, but the two crews disport themselves in a totally impossible way—the fault is not theirs but the author's who apparently knew nothing of University men and of their life.

GRANT RICHARDS,