Some Thoughts on the English Stage.

There are fashions in all arts, as there are fashions in the judgments and opinions about them. As a general rule, in a time of abundant writing, and widely diffused and there-fore superficial knowledge, the tendency is to depreciate contemporary art in all its forms. We may note this disposition in current criticism, not only of the theatre, but of poetry, painting, sculpture, and architecture. In all these the spirit of the time is always striving to express itself in new forms which appeal to popular appreciation, and obtain a great deal of it. But those who write about such things, having, or assuming to have, before their minds the labors of a long and illustrious past, are in the habit of contrasting the present with the past, to the detriment, almost invariably, of the present. This is at once an easier task, and one more flattering to the eritic's sense of superiority, than fairly and dispassionately to appreciate and account for the performances and position of any contemporary art. But the latter I believe to be a more useful employment of the an application of it to the stage, as that form of art of which I have most intimate and practical knowledge. However humiliating, at first sight, to all connected with the stage, may appear the comparison of the theatre as it is, and as it was in what are called its "palmy" days, by which I suppose is generally meant the fifty years comprising the last quarter of last century and the first of this, there never was a time of more theatrical activity than the present, if measured by the number of theatres built or building, and actively occupied, in London and the provinces, and by the production of new pieces, whatever their quality. It is a fact beyond dispute that all the London theatres nowadays, and the most considerable provincial ones, devote themselves all but exclusively to contemporary pieces. The old repertoire is only exceptionally and rarely resorted to. The Haymarket Company, on its annual autumnal tour, gives a series of the old comedies in the principal provincial theatres; and ene of them is every now and then put up for a few nights in the interval between the production of the novelties on which the theatre habitually relies; or a star, or aspirant to starry honors, foreign, English, or American, may from time to time appeal to public favor in a play of Shakespeare's, or some other of the "old masters" of the drama; but, substantially, the fact is as I state it, that the theatre now lives on novelties. little is the old drama counted upon, that, when it is resorted to, it has none of the advantages or appliances which are lavished on new plays. There is no cost or pains in preparation, and no elaboration of rehearsals. Any scenery or dresses are good enough for it, any cast will do, the old stage business is acquiesced in. There is, in short, except, perhaps, on the part of the "star" himself, or herself, no application of mind to the business in hand, whether by actor or manager, scenepainter or costumer. This shows that those who are most materially concerned in theatrical property do not value their power to draw on the accumulated wealth of our dramatic past. Thus far, at least, the stage asserts its vitality, that it is always assimilating fresh food. This is a frequent subject of complaint with one school of critics. They find texts for insisting on the sound and remunerative policy of a return to the old drama in the occasional instances in which new life is imparted to old forms by some striking or unfamiliar interpretation-as in the case of Mr. Fechter's "Hamlet," or Mademoiselle Stella Colas' "Juliet" -- or when interest is excited by the reappearance of an old favorite-as in the instance of Miss Helen Faucit's periodical returns to the stage-or where something like completeness of scenic presentation is attempted—as in the recent run of Macbeth at Drury Lane, with Mr. Beverley's scenery. But the experience of managers testifies against the critics. The old plays, they are unanimous in asserting, as a rule, and where there is no exceptional personal curiosity to be gratified, do not pay. If it was not for the provincial theatres, where the old "stock" plays still form part of the repertoire, we should not find our actors familiar even with the parts of Shakespeare which fall in their line of business, still less with those of any other old dramatist. The power of speaking blank verse with music and effect is hardly ever found among our younger actors; and with it is gone the whole stage manner of the ideal or poetic drama. Except Shake-speare, indeed, the famous dramatists of Eli-

banished from the stage to the library. This shows, at least, that the theatres depend for support on audiences who are interested in presentations of contemporary subjects, or at least of subjects treated in a contemporary spirit. This is only the reflection in the theatre of a tendency apparent in all the other representative arts. Old pictures, were not for the demand of public and private galleries, would find but a poor market nowadays. It is only those of the highest class, such as the trustees of national collections and the possessors of great family galleries will compete for, that now fetch prices comparable with those commanded by contemporary works. Last century it was all the other way. Then the taste, real or affected, for pictures, was confined to the genuine or mock virtuosi, the men who, on the grand tour, had acquired a relish for the old masters, or the pretension to it. Now the great picture-market is among our merchants, traders, and manufacturers, whose sympathy is all but exclusively for works of their own time. There is something analogous to this in the theatre. Last century the stage lived mainly on the old drams, or on plays which in form and character reflected the past rather than the present. Comedy and farce had even then, it is true, the breath of contemporary life in them. But the serious drama was antique, or aimed at being so. There was no notion of extracting matter for deep or painful emotion out of contemporary life. This was sought exclusively in the ambitions, treacheries, loves, woes of remote and dignified personages, expressing themselves in artificial and stately rhythms. The Gamester is a solitary exception to this rule, and though its subject is contemporary, its form is studiously unnatural. And even comedy sought its materials mainly in one range of seciety, that of the artificial, highbred upper classes. If it went lower, it was to present some foil to these in a lower class just as artificial, and more unlike any contemporary reality. The great popular wave had not then, in fact, invaded the theatre. We see the rise of it in the last decade of last century, and its influence growing through the earlier part of the present, but generally in the shape of some sententious embodiment of unworldliness, or some impossible incarnation of humble, balf-grotesque purity-the country boys, for example, who are stock figures in the plays of the younger Colman, Reynolds, Morton, and their contemporaries. The formal old comedy which had employed the refined wit of Sheridan and the elder Colman, and the rare natural humor of Goldsmith,

zabeth and James may be said to be entirely

Tragedy, galvanised for a time by the electric power of the elder Kean into a more stirring and passionate life than the statelier art of the Kembles could impart to it, dwindled into dulness. We saw the last of it in Macready. But he brought to its aid, besides his own vigorous, pleturesque, and intelligent acting, and excellent stage management, all the attraction of a more complete and tasteful scenery and decoration than had ever till then been seen if the theatre. Charles Keag carried these aids and appliances still further, and by help of them kept the stage for a Shakespearian management of nine years, but only by dint of immense outlay, and with great help from burlesque spectacle, and such "sensational" melodrama as the Corsican Brothers and Pauline. Even then, it is understood that, though his large outlay was re-turned to him, it was with little or no profits.

So long as the patent theatres survived, there was a home in them for artificial comedy as for formal tragedy, and a body of actors trained to represent both with more or less finish and completeness. But the same influences, call them popular or democratic if you will, which were gradually modifying manners, political opinions, and literature, were at work in the theatre, both to san theatrical privilege and to new-mould theatrical amusements. The patents were broken down; all theatres were opened to all kinds of entertainments; actors became scattered; and whatever of artificial or stately in stage art had been maintained by the barriers of privilege, or the influences of tradition, began to melt away and make room for ways of acting and forms of entertainment bearing a more popular impress. In the change much was lost which those who look back will always regret. But the change was a natural one, wrought out in obedience to wide-working natural laws, on the whole of a beneficent and beneficial kind. And if we lost the school of artificial acting, we turned over these who would have been pupils in it to the higher and subtler, if more difficult, school of life. The teaching in that school, though less systematic and less easily enforced, is immeasurably better than any which can be obtained in the school which has now closed forever. But in the interval between the two systems, through which our actors are now passing, there is a time of transition, when we feel the want of the lessons of the one, and do not yet see the fruits of the other's teaching. And what is true of actors is true of pieces also. We have become impatient of the highly artificial comedy and long-drawn, stilted, and remote tragedy of the last generation, but we have not yet hit upon the form of stage art in which our great natural cravings -that for amusement and that for emotioncan be gratified, under conditions which satisfy refined as well as indiscriminating tastes.

To employ a pregnant distinction of Goethe's, our stage has discontinued the attempt to "realize the ideal," while it has not yet succeeded in the more fruitful effort to "idealize the real." The condition which every manager prescribes to the dramatist is to paint real life. As all real life is made up of joy and sorrow, it follows that what is sought is meither pure comedy nor unmixed tragedy, but something which shall move in turn smiles and tears-which shall alternately amuse, and thrill, and move. It is worth remarking that there is hardly one of the plays of Shakespeare which does not fulfil this conditien. Not one of his comedies but has its undercurrent of sadness or tenderness, breaking out in passages of sweetness and beauty which exquisitely enhance the gayety, wit, and humor in which they are set; hardly one of his tragedies but has its note of humor, relieving the pity and terror out of which it breaks; and the same thing holds good, in the main, of all the best Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Pure comedy and unrelieved tragedy are alike growths of a more corrupt and feebler time. It is so far a sign of health in the contemporary stage that the demand now is for drama, which admits the blending of tragic and comic elements. That this demand melodrama-by which I understand a form of piece in which the play of emotion and character is subordinated and sacrificed to startling incident and scenic effect-is not to be wondered at. It is not easy, out of the dulness and decorum, the commonplace, staidness, and sameness of life about us, to extract matter of amusement and emotion, or excitement, without trespassing on the domains of farce, slaug, and vulgarity for the one, or resorting to the dark regions of crime and forbidden passion, or the thrilling effects of physical peril, for the other. These are the resources of the sensational drama, which for the moment all but exclusively occupies the stage. It is the upshot of the demand for real and contemporary incident and strong emotion working together, and is to be displaced not by any revival of the dramatic masterpieces of another and widely different age, but by plays in which the same elements of dramatic effect are embodied in more artistic and refined forms. The elements of tragedy are always at work among us; and the selection and presentation of them in a dramatic form, with their due accompaniment of the quaint, eccentric, humoreus, and trivial, which, combined with wit, constitute the comic woof of life, will be the work of any conspicuous dramatic power to be found among us at this time,

That there are many things working against the development of such a talent I think may be shown. The tide of the time sets more to the writing of novels than of plays. Except in a few conspicuous cases, in which mere business talent and long experience of the theatre (before as well as behind the curtain) are combined with marked cleverness in the contrivance or adaptation of dramatic situations and the clothing them with dialogue, managers do not pay so well as publishers, and are, as a rule, much less liberal-minded intelligent, and pleasant to deal with. Then, whatever vividness there may be in having your conceptions set forth in action, there are the enormous and inevitable disadvantages of imperfect or blundering presentation. one character well embodied on the stage, the dramatist is likely to have ten marred or mained by his acters if he trust them with anything beyond the most well-worn commonplaces of the boards. The approaches of the author to the theatre are difficult and unpleasant. Managers, most of them actors or ex-actors, are too busy with the details of their daily work to give much attention to the dramatic essays of untried men; and the tried men are apt to be content with the tried subjects and sources of effect. Few of the managers have a standard of taste a shade higher than that of their public, or any aim beyond that of making their theatre pay by the most obvious means. They find or think it easier and safer to rely for profit and popularity on the class which now frequen's the theatre, than to seek to attract a more fastidious or refined public, which they feel would be at once narrower and harder to please. A condition of dramatic improvement yet lacking to our stage is a manager who should combine with activity, promptitude, and regularity in business, and the other requirements for commercial success, a degree of literary culture, refinement, and social standing which would enable him, gradually degenerated into more and more while consulting the taste of his time, gradu-trivial humors and stagey eccentricities. ally to elevate it, by giving it the best of which

it is capable, and so by degrees to bring back , patural character. At the head of these is the to the theatre that class which has been allenated from it by the bad taste, bad manners, vulgarity, and extravagance too frequently presented on the stage. To second the efforts of such a manager we want a more independent, intelligent, and exacting criticism in the press. They must be backed, too, by attention to such material conditions as well-chosen hours of performance, comfortable sitting and hearing accommodation, and the absence of petty exactions by boxkeepers and so forth. In all such matters managers have been content to go on in the old grooves, forgetful of the changes at work outside the theatre, such as the multiplication of rival amusements, more culture, enhanced fastidiousness of manners, and a higher notion of comfort, later hours of meals, increased distances, and difficulties of access to the thea-The influence of such a manager as I am desiderating is required in every detail of the theatre, behind as well as before the curtain. Even in matters of which the public know nothing, as the ordering of the coulisses, greenroom, and dressing-rooms, so as to encourage habits of self-respect and good breeding in the actors and staff of the theatre, there is great room for his influence. At present, nothing can be more depressing, or in the long run degrading to all in a theatre, than the inattention to cleanliness, politeness, and the usages of civilized life generally, to be found behind the scenes. Again, there is a wide field for the influences of such a manager in the conducting of rehearsals. He ought to be able to second the directions of the author, or to replace him, not only in guiding the business of the stage, but in seeing that dialogue is correctly given, that errors of emphasis, faults of pronunciation, violations of manners and proprieties, are checked and set right; in a word, that the anthor's work is done justice to by the actors. Rehearsals at present are, as a rule, slovenly and careless, insufficient in attention to the necessary business of the play, while almost always cruelly wasteful of time-harassing and wearing to good and attentive actors, though laxly indifferent to the faults and blunders of bad ones. In a word, in this as in other matters of theatrical government, there is evidence of a want of respect alike for the actor's craft and the public requirements. It is evident that the manager has little sense of any but a very low kind of taste to be satisfied, or of any public opinion to be faced which is likely to be either exacting or outspoken. I place the want of such a manager is I have shadowed forth in the very front of the conditions of theatrical improvement. Many will think my hope that the want may yet be supplied a visionary one.

However this may be, I am unwilling to abandon it. I believe nothing would tend more to bring about its realization than the application to the shortcomings of the stage as it is of a vigorous, honest, and practical criticism-not the kind of criticism which finds, either in contempt or good-nature, an excuse for abandoning all attempt at disori-minating praise or blame, or that which habitually depreciates all existing stage art, in plays or actors, because it is unlike the kind of acting and writing which the critic likes better, and which is nothing, in fact, but the application of inapplicable standards—but a criticism which, if it professes to judge what is set before it, will judge it honestly, closely, and carefully; above all, never passing over instances of gross impropriety, disrespect, or defiance of the public, on the part of actors or managers, and never, on the other hand, omitting recognition of even the humblest merits. It the critic criticizes at all, he is bound to do as much as this: if he considers what is before him unworthy of criticism, he should say so, and give his reasons for saying so. I cannot believe that such criticism would be useless, and I am certain it would not be superfluous, At present there is far too close a connection between critics, dramatists, managers, and actors, for the former to pass judgment on the latter with either impartiality or indepen-

To show that the hopes I have expressed are

not beyond the range of pessibility, I would point to the French stage, on which many of them have found their fulfilment. It is true that the condition of things in the French theatre is not, at this particular moment, a very favorable one. Long, showy, and costly spectacles, like the Biche au Bois or Cendrillon, mere pretexts for the display of nudities, immodest dances, and showy cenery, or pieces in which music is made the vehicle of inde cent double-entendre, and the slang of the demi-monde, have recently occupied it, to the exclusion of better matter. Its comedy and vaudeville turn more on the violation of the seventh commandment than is wholesome or compatible with our notions of decency. Its drame, like our own, deals too much with coarse and repulsive forms of crime and lawless passion. But when allowance is made for all this, and much of it is temporary, the French theatre still keeps abreast of the times, still enlists among its authors many of the keenest and readiest wits of the age, can still confer literary reputations and academic chairs, is the most profitable as well as the most popular form of authorship, still furnishes amusement to all classes, from the highest to the humblest, and interests all orders of intel ligence and refinement. Its actors are still admirable for finished truth and good taste, its theatrical administration and government present a contrast to our own for the regularity order, completeness, and fulness of rehear sals, and the subordination and discipline enforced in the theatre. In Paris, unlike London, may be seen a number of companies. each made up with a view to a special order of performances, and fitted to fill the cast of these with completeness, from the humblest part to the highest. Some of these theatres, subsidized by the Government for that purpose, devote themselves exclusively to the highest class of performances, serious and comic, and are associated with a school for the instruction of actors and actresses, whose students compete annually for prizes, the highest of which carry with them the right to a debut, and often the chance of an engagement at the Theatre Français or the Odcon. The difference between the stages of the two capitals, in all these respects, is reflected, as might be expected, in their performances.

An Englishman, whose standard of stage art is at all high, feels humiliated by the thought of what English stage art is, while witnessing the performance in a French theatre. It is like an entertainment addressed to quite a higher order of minds than is catered for in the English theatre; refined where ours is valgar, delicate where ours is coarse, graceful where ours is clumsy, and throughout bearing that impress of culture, taste, and intelli-gence, the presence of which is so rarely visible on our stage.

In thus praising the French theatre I seem to be pronouncing the condemnation of our Comparison of the two is, indeed, most humiliating to English self-conceit. But I have referred to the French theatre not so much for the sake of comparison as by way of example of a stage which respects and fulfils the conditions I desiderate in our own as regards its art, and apart from its morality.

I may now indicate what seem to me some of the chief reasons why these conditions are satisfied in the French theatre, and wanting to our own. Some of these reasons are rooted in

manners, their aptness to understand a demi met, their volubility of discourse-all tending to make of them good setors and good judges of acting. A French audience is critical, from parterre to paradis; it sits in judgment on the play and the performers, and so helps both authors and actors incalculably, encouraging the one to write and the other to act delicately, and, as it were, allusively, in reliance on the ready intelligence which will appreciate the subtle point in a phrase, the shade of meaning in a look, a shrug, a scarcely perceptible movement or gesture. This sort of andience puts a premium, so to speak, on point and finesse in stage art. Contrast our dear British public in these respects. The critics, it is said, used last century to occupy the two front rows of the pit. I fear that they might now be compressed into even less compass. I am sure less than two rows would accommodate them now. The presence of the critical element in our theatres is not sensibly felt by any outward sign drawn from the reception given by the audience to anything in play or actors. On the contrary, there is a burst of applause, a hundred to one it is for some passage of bombast or claptrap in the play, or some egregious piece of rant or vnlgarity in an actor. I need hardly point out how this recognition by applause of the wrong thing tends to deteriorate and vulgarize both play-writers and actors, leading both to look te coarser and coarser tricks of effect, and more and more rankly spiced baits of ap-plause. The very word "claptrap" is exclusively English. The French have no equivalent for it. The sparingness in noisy applause of French audiences led to the introduction of the claque into Paris theatres-the organized clappers, Entrepreneurs de succès dramatique, as their founders styled them-and the presence of the claque has now completely destroyed, in all besides, the habit of applauding with the hands. In England we want no claque, Heaven knows. The public applands but too loudly what is neisy, coarse, and overdone, without any misguidance but that of its own bad taste. No doubt there is a body of sounder opinion and more refined judgment in the house, but it does not manifest itself audibly. The habit of hissing is all but extinct, and, indeed, much of what is applauded would not deserve hissing but by way of protest against the applause. And yet it has often seemed to me as if appreciation and stupidity were strangely blended in our British public. They have certainly a quick and keen sympathy, especially with anything that appeals to them as virtue, nobleness, or disinterestedness. I think I have rarely seen real excellence, even of the subtler and more refined kind, fail, in the long run, of appreciation at their hands; and yet I am certain that any given audience in any English theatre is unable to distinguish between gold and pinchbeck, in what is set before them on the stage, either in the way of writing or of acting. Only one thing they are intolerant of—anything that to them is dulness. Unluckily, much is dull to a blunt, coarse slow taste that is not so to a more refined, subtler, and quicker one. Make an English public laugh or cry, and you are safe. They ask only to be moved-whether to tears or laughter matters little; indeed, they like nothing so much as to be stirred to both alternately. But do not ask them to follow the development of an intricate character, to note the cross currents of conflicting emotions, or the subtle underworkings of human nature in action, unless the character, emotion, and action have, besides their deeper and more metaphysical interest. a very palpable, strongly-marked outer side to them. And yet Shakespeare's work is here to show us that the same British public may be fitted with a dramatic aliment which shall satisfy its coarsest appetite, and shall yet satisfy the cravings of the finest fancy and the loftiest imagination. It is a striking fact that Hamlet is the play oftenest acted on the English stage. Nor does Hamlet stand alone, though it stands highest among Shakespeare' plays, as a proof how that mighty master could provide in the same dish food for the humblest and highest intelligences, could reconcile all the exigencies of a stage which in his time as now, was anything but nice in its feeling, with the deepest and highest conditions of imaginative creation, could write at once for British playgoers, down to the sinful sixpenny mechanic (Ben. Jonson), and for the loftiest and most far-reaching wits of the civilized world.

quick and delicate intelligence of the French

cople, their mobility, their ease and grace of

It must be admitted, with Shakespeare before us, that no dramatist has a right to say the British public are a swine before which he will not fling his pearls. I must, however, still maintain that it is not a critical public. It knows what amuses or interests it, but cares not to know or consider how it is amused or interested. It will not, like the French public, trouble itself to discover the author's aim, and then set itself to judge how far he has succeeded in carrying it out. It sits down, solidly, if not stolidly, before the green our-tain, as if it said, "Here I am. Move me— make me laugh—make me cry." The French public asks gayly and eagerly, as it takes its place in the parterre, "Voyons, what have you to show me to-night? What is the mot de 'énigme you ask me to set my wits to? Develop me your plot-prepound me your social problem-work me out your clever and interesting situation."

I say, again, that the contrast of moods in the two audiences involves, and in many respects accounts for, the differences of English and French stage art. It lies at the bottom of the greater delicacy, finesse, and subtlety of the latter; of the tendency in our own theatre, on the author's part, to fly to violent emotions and situations, and on the actor's to exaggerated delineations: tempts both, in fact, to the strongest dramatic stimulants - those which, according to the cunning with which they are used, may be the motives of a play of a Shakespeare or the subject-matter of a Surrey melodrama. The want of quickness in an English andience is also felt as a hindrance both by dramatist and actor in the necessity it involves of doing everything which the andience is meant to bear in mind very palpably and deliberately, and, as it were, with an emphasis. One of the most experienced and sucpessful of modern dramatists ones said to me: "When I want the andience to understand that one of my characters is doing something, I always arrange that the actor shall say, in effect, 'Now, I am going to do such and such a thing-now I am doing it-now I have done it.' Then you may hope the audience will nuderstand you." This ingrained difference in the character of audiences is a fundamental and final fact, and any bad effect it may have on English stage art cannot be evaded or remedied, except by the general quickening and refixing of intelligence, in other words, by education.

But there are other points of theatrical administration mainly in which our theatre is suffering from evils which have been remedied, or have never grown up in the French theatre. Theatres in Paris confine themselves mainly-though by law no longer compelled to do so-each to its special class of entertainment, classical tragedy and comedy, drame, light modern comedy, farce, vandeville, feerie, and spectacle, musical bouffonnerie, as the case may be, and each has a company sufficient and specially adapted for its specialty. Hence the sense of completeness in French performances which is so rare in this country, though there is a more visible aim at it now than there used to be within my remembrance. The good actors and actresses of London are so scattered that it is hardly possible to cast any full piece completely; and their number, in proportion to the theatres, is so small that it is almost im possible to keep any sufficient body of them together against the temptation of high salaries and the prospect of being "cook of the walk" in some rival establishment. Till a company of actors have worked together for some time they cannot act their best. A body of even second-rate actors, by working in company under good guidance, may come to give very creditable and satisfactory representations. In London it is rare for a company to hold together above a few seasons. The Haymarket company is a conspicuous example of the good of working together, though it exemplifies, perhaps, not less strikingly, the need of judicious infiltration of more new blood from time to time, than its manager has found or thought it desirable to infuse. It is not to be lost sight of that there may be a keeping together of bad actors as well as good ones, and a steadiness in evil habits, and confirmed stinginess and slovenliness which is really ruinous, while it is apt to pride itself on being respectable.

The frequent migration of actors is connected with another pregnant evil of our stage—the unsatisfactory mutual relations of actors and manager. Instead of a body of liege subjects under a paternal government, or devoted and obedient soldiers under loved and trusted general, our theatrical companies, with rare exceptions, are homes of strife, bickering, and insubordination, where the constant struggle seems to be on the part of the manager to get the most he can for the least out of the actor, and on the part of the actor to turn the manager to account, as exclusively as possible, for his

own gain and glory. The sense of a common interest, of a duty of each to other, cheerfully rendered because certain of acknowledgment and return, I have rarely seen governing the relations of manager and actors. Our theatres are eminently combative and competitive as distinguished from from co-operative associations. Hence the constant difficulties about parts, and the internecine struggles between the pretensions of actors, the frequent refusal of characters, and, as a consequence, the impossibility for either manager or dramatist of making the best of even the poor materials supplied by our "scratch" companies. For this state of things -the result of a chronic disease of the theatri cal system-actors and managers must share the blame between them. It would, I believe cease under my ideal manager.

I believe this difficulty is not experienced in France in anything like the same degree as here. There the rule is that the actor engaged as principal for a line of character plays in each piece, if it be the best part in the line assigned to him, whatever the absolute merit of the part may be. The working of this rule is helping by the system of what is called "feux"—that is, payments made to the actor on each night of performance, in addition to weekly or monthly salary.

The inattention, slovenliness, and insufficience of rehearsals is another besetting sin of the English theatre which is not found in the French. Our managers and actors seem not to have even an idea of the pains and thought bestowed on this indispensable preliminary to performance by French authors, managers, and actors alike, thanks to which a piece sometimes undergoes almost complete modelling," in the progress of rehearsals.

Here I must conclude this paper, sensible

that it by no means exhausts the subject. As far as it goes, it represents honestly some results of a long and varied experience.

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