SHAKESPEARE ON THE ENGLISH STAGE—NEW FALL BOOKS

REALISM ON THE STAGE A MODERN INNOVATION

Londoners Used to Be Pleased With Hamlet in the Garb of Dr. Johnson and With Cleopatra Dressed in the Style of a Dowager Duchess of the Eighteenth Century

By FELIX E. SCHELLING

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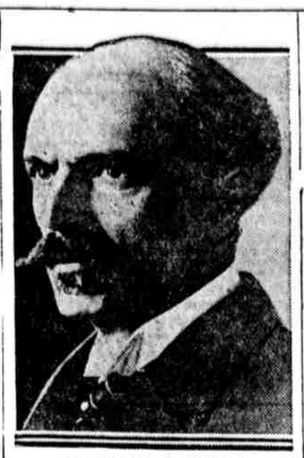
IN PROFESSOR ODELL'S "Shakespeare From Betterton to Irving" we have an exceedingly interesting and valuable book, all the more so because the author has allowed his material, which is abundant and well ordered, to tell his story. And that story concerns the fortunes of the Shakespearean plays on the stage from the reopening of the theatres on the return of King Charles to a time within our own contemporary recollection, including not only the stage history of the plays, but the manner of their presentation and the vicissitudes of the text at the hands of managers, actors, amenders, theorists and moralists.

THERE is a nice question, much mooted in the books, as to whether Shakespeare is better read or better seen on the stage, and of course the answer must depend on the nature of the reading and the seeing, which is much the same thing as the reader and the seer. The hearing of "The Merchant of Venice" or "Cymbeline" as the late Horace Furness incomparably used to read them was a rare privilege and a precious memory. But even more vivid is our recollection of the Shylock of Irving, of Miss Terry's Portia and Beatrice, and the hamlet of Forbes Robertson. Indubitably a play which will not act is not a play, whatever other fine name it may go by. And it is always a marvel how actable—I had almost written how actorproof—Shakespeare is. His plays are really difficult to spoil on the stage, although it is amazing how frequently that difficult feat is accomplished. Professor Odell's book casts a flood of light on just this point, affording us in the process a singular commentary on the growth of British taste and appreciation, alike for the art of acting and for the larger significance of Shakespeare's works.

NOTHING is so conservative and traditional as the stage, nor can anything be more certain than the gradual evolution of its successive features from age to age, however bewildered we may become at times in the details. At the Restoration a very definite process of change in the stage itself had already set in. To Burbage, who first played the great tragedy parts in Shakespeare's lifetime, the stage was a platform for declamation. The auditors in the pit actually stood about it on three sides, and such meager decorations as the time afforded were confined more or less to the rear. The stage, now for over 100 years, has become a picture, framed, in which the decorations have assumed the similitude of the actual by means of scenes and flies fashioned in perspective. A careful perusal of Professor Odell's book gives us the steps by which this transformation has come about, with much diverting detail by the way. For example, the absence of a drop curtain on the old stage, meeting with the demand for a change of scene, resulted in the absurd practice of changing the scene with the actors on the stage. It does not seem to have occurred to any one that a curtain might be lowered at such a moment, and then raised. It was a generation after the introduction of the drop curtain before anybody thought of lowering it between the acts. And when at length that momentous possibility was realized a painted drop was devised, similar to the scenes which had formerly remained set in the intermissions, the green baize curtain being reserved to mark, as formerly, the conclusion of the play.

BUT if the simplicity and incongruity of the scenes even in comparatively late times amuse us, even more ludicrous to our senses is the old costuming. It is surprising how recent a development is that of consistency of setting and costume—I will not speak of historical accuracy, for that is quite outside of the question. We laugh at the incongruity of the medieval sacred plays which conceived of the Nativity as taking place amid the rigors of a Yorkshire winter, but neither Pope, an editor of Shakespeare, nor Fielding, a great novelist, would have seen any incongruity in Macbeth attired in a full bottom wig—as became the dignity of tragedy—and the red coat and gold lace trappings of a contemporary British major general. The reader may see this figure in the frontispiece of Rowe's "Shakespeare," 1709, reproduced by Prof. Odell, and he may likewise see from the same work Hamlet attired as Dr. Johnson and his mother seated in the likeness of Queen Anne beneath a portrait of "the buried majesty of Denmark," arrayed as the Duke of Marlborough. It would appear that a certain conventional wardrobe was accepted for the stage for several generations, and it consisted of three sorts. First in order of antiquity came costume a la Romaine, a cuirass, lofty-crested helmet, buskins and heavy gloves. That delightful tragedy garment, the sweeping toga, doughtily to be tossed over the shoulder, had not yet come in. Secondly, there was the Asiatic-heroic, involving flowing—very flowing—robes, a turban, towering and feathered, and a scimitar; and lastly, there was the European, no matter of what era, represented by the costume of the moment, or rather a limp or so behind. The dresses of the actresses of old time were simply awesome. No one could then complain of scanty attire upon the stage. The question was to find the woman in caparisons. When Mrs. Bracegirdle acted the "Indian Queen," befeathered, befurbelowed and befanned, with two black pages bearing up a stupendous train and supporting a canopy rather than an umbrella over her head, there could have been very little room for anything else on the stage. Even as late as 1778 Mrs. Hartley, as Cleopatra, her hair a la pompadour, her spreading robes of state, hooped and garlanded, throned voluminously on a Chippendale armchair—she must have been quite unapproachable, even by Antony.



MAURICE HEWLETT
Who has written a novel of the Victorian age

ANOTHER interesting feature of Professor Odell's work is the complete account which he gives of the acting versions of Shakespeare's plays. The awe and veneration in which we hold every syllable of the Shakespearean text—the grave attention which we give to what James Russell Lowell once called "every Elizabethan goose-print"—was in no wise characteristic of our English forefathers. Shakespeare had taken his own wherever he found it; why should not his followers take of Shakespeare whatever they chose? And they certainly did exercise this prerogative from the scandal of Dryden's "Tempest," in which a boy who had never seen a girl is created to match Miranda who had never seen a boy, to the farces cut out of the comedies, "Macbeth," Davenanted into an opera, and "King Lear" Tatitified into a comedy ending. However, some of these remakings of Shakespeare for the stage are not so reprehensible. The conditions of staging had changed as well as the public taste, and some of the adaptations, such as that of "Richard III," by Colly Cibber, really make for dramatic unity and coherency. It may not be generally appreciated that this particular version of Cibber has held the stage almost to today. The late Mr. Mansfield acted, I believe, no other. As to earlier times, the great Garrick never acted "King Lear," except with Tait's happy ending in which Lear is restored to all of his five wits and Cordelia married to Edgar, while the same great actor's acting version of "Romeo and Juliet" arranged for the lovers a tender meeting in the tomb before death overwhelmed them.

TAMPERING with the classics is a very serious offense. But this is the point of view of the scholar. We should never cease to rejoice that Shakespeare was not a scholar, but a dramatist and an actor and a manager as well as a poet. I think that Shakespeare would have been the last man to regard the text of his plays as sacrosanct. The usages of his stage, as of ours, admitted alterations, cutting, adjustment, change and adaptation. This was what Shakespeare did to his predecessors and what he would have welcomed—and what he certainly got—at the hands of those who followed him; though it is to be confessed that success alone can justify the process, and he is a bold man who dares attempt this species of literary surgery. Wherefore let us not quarrel with the late Sir Beerbohm Tree for making a spectacle of "Henry VIII," with Henry Irving for reducing the twenty-six scenes of "King Lear" to sixteen or with anybody's Hamlet because it is not given complete, as Mr. F. R. Benson once gave it, "in six long, dismal hours." There is no space to comment on the wealth of Prof. Odell's gatherings in later as well as in these earlier times. His book with its valuable reproductions in picture is invaluable.

SHAKESPEARE FROM BETTERTON TO IRVING. By George C. D. Odell, professor of English in Columbia University. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $12.

"CAREERIST" CENTER OF HEWLETT NOVEL

Scene of Labor 'Champion's' Story Laid in the Victorian Age

Maurice Hewlett skips a few centuries, leaving his sturdy Icelandic folk in the distant past, and presents a novel of the Victorian age which he calls "Mainwaring," that being the name of the amazing egotist about whom this book is written.

Mainwaring is an Englishman of education and cultivated crudeness who appears as the forerunner of all the Bolshevists of a later century. Ostensibly the champion of labor (for what he can get out of this championship in personal advancement) he seeks in reality to pull down whatever he can lay his hands on, and to create a topsy-turvy condition generally.

Mainwaring, always a poseur, marries the daughter of a workingman, and then cruelly neglects her, even allowing her to act as a servant in his establishment, while he dilly-dallies with a high-born lady who alternately loves him and is bored by him. Meanwhile there steps in a friend who had cultivated Mainwaring out of sheer curiosity, and falls in love with this surprising person's humble little wife. Whereupon Mainwaring wants her back and is in a fair way to take her back when fate intervenes.

This latest novel by Mr. Hewlett is done with his usual skill and finished technique, and, as it is nearer the times in which we live, perhaps contains more of real interest to the casual reader than a number of his "period" novels which have preceded it in the last few years.

MAINWARING. By Maurice Hewlett. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

Wilson Satirized

The ardent friends of President Wilson who read James M. Beck's "The Passing of the New Freedom," if any of them are so curious as to read it at all, will froth at the mouth because of what they will call his unfairness. Yet Mr. Beck in his handling of Mr. Wilson has only made use of the opportunity which the course of the man placed before him. He has exhibited the egoism of the former president of Princeton through quotations from his own remarks and he has arranged his matter in such a form as to make Mr. Wilson his own severest critic. The book is a piece of political satire of so pungent a character that it is likely to become historic.

THE PASSING OF THE NEW FREEDOM. By James M. Beck. New York: George H. Doran Co.

AT THE FREE LIBRARY

Books added to the Free Library, Thirteenth and Locust streets, during the week ending November 4.

Miscellaneous

Barker, Arthur—"British Corn Trade."
Hale, I. C.—"An American's London."
Howard, A. L.—"Manual of the Timbers of the World."
Howe, J. A.—"Stones and Quarries."
Le Broton, Mrs. John — "White-magic Book."
Leckey, J. B.—"Pan-Americanism: Its Beginnings."
Loeb, S. I.—"Everyman's Child."
Loreburn, R. T. R., First Earl—"How the War Came."
Macdonald, J. R.—"Parliament and Revolution."
Marble, A. R.—"Women Who Came In the Mayflower."
Popenoe, Wilson—Manual of Tropical and Subtropical Fruits."
Powys, J. C.—"Complex Vision."
Quick, Sir John—"Legislative Powers of Australia."
Thomas, Edward—"Industry, Emotion and Unrest."
White, Benjamin—"Gold."

Fiction

Blasco, Ibanez, Vicente — "Enemies of Women."
Deland, Margaret—"Old Chester Secret."
Edington, May—"Married Life."
Galsworthy, John—"In Chancery."
Hope, Anthony—"Lucinda."
Hueston, Ethel—"Eve to the Rescue."
Johnston, Mary—"Sweet Rocket."
McFee, William — "Captain Macedine's Daughter."
Pocic, Ernest—"Blind."
Post, M. D.—"Sleuth of St. James' Square."
Raine, W. M.—"Big Town Round-Up."

Children's Books

Dunn, J. A. — "Jim Morse, South Sea Trader."
Fitzhugh, P. K.—"Tom Slade at Black Camp." "Tom Slade at Temple Camp." "Tom Slade, Boy Scout." "Tom Slade, Motorcycle Dispatch Bearer." "Tom Slade on a Transport." "Tom Slade on the River." "Tom Slade with the Boys Over There." "Tom Slade with the Colors." "Tom Slade with the Flying Corps."
Lavarre, W. J.—"Up the Mazaruni for Diamonds."
"Scouts' Book of Heroes."
Tolman, A. W.—"Jim Spurling, Fisherman."

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SHOW METRIC METTLE

"Pennsylvania Verse" of Campus Bards Varies From Free to Cadenced Modes

Volumes of college verse are always interesting as giving a possible index of the future crops of the nation's poets. Granting the premise that a great deal of what is best in poetry emanates from the man who has gained his education in the University of Life, it is nevertheless true that winners of higher degrees must still be counted upon to make up a large share of the country's literary brotherhood.

For this reason the reader of a volume of verse compiled from the writings of college students naturally scans the contents for the outstanding figure, in whose work there lurks an apparent high hope of future greatness. Often this figure is forthcoming, but sometimes, even when the standard of the poetry is high for college verse, a golden mean is achieved rather than an exceptional brilliance.

This is the case with the book of "Pennsylvania Verse," just issued by the Rhymers, a literary organization at the University. The book is their second essay in the field of verse, and, as a whole, is the equal of their 1917 volume, but there is no outstanding figure.

The volume contains poems of the most divergent tynes, the melodious, metrical lyric and the exotic, apparently schemeless vers libre. Dr. Cornelius Weygandt, of the English department of the University, edited the volume for the students, a task performed by Prof. Albert E. Trombly on the former occasion. Dr. Weygandt has shown a rare judgment in his choice of the different varieties of verse and their arrangement. If the writing in them is not always inspired the fault thereof lies in the individual author.

One of the most attractive examples of the more conservative cadenced verse-form is that written under the title of "Pierrette's Song," by Miss Clarice Ruth Wilson, which runs as follows:

"Oh, haste thee, haste thee, Pierrot!
For see, the moon begins to wane
And jasmine will not always blow,
Nor nightbirds murmur love's refrain.

("He comes! I love him! Ah, how fleet!
And yet the waiting was so sweet.)

"Ah, haste thee, haste thee, Pierrot!
My lips are cold without thy kiss.
With youth so short, why then forgo
A moment, even, of youth's bliss?

("At last! He whistles! Now we meet!
And yet the waiting was so sweet.")

The influence of Amy Lowell's keen Italian hand is shown in such a fragment as the following, called "Silence," written by Louis C. Zucker, the most radical of the young poets:

"While muted, earth palls bitterly
How sharp a pallor violates me—
Wound in tatters on glowing spars
My home-turned sound-swell beats at and chars."

The rest of the same poem is of a like character, as are other pieces by Mr. Zucker, who invents words as easily as Mr. Gilbert in his merriest comic opera moments.

Other poets and poetesses are more understandable and follow the middle track. Robert E. Spiller and Richard W. Hatch are two excellent examples. Both follow accepted standards and achieve dignity and beauty, if not grandeur or genius.

Miss Dorothy Ramsey has unusual thoughts in a number of her poems which are of the realistic school in subject matter. Miss Felice Darkow achieves considerable success with such unusual forms as the villanelle.

The volume, which contains about eighty poems and seventy-five pages, is dedicated to Ernest Frank Hausser, a deceased member of the organization.

PENNSYLVANIA VERSE. Edited by Professor Cornelius Weygandt. Philadelphia: Published by the Rhymers, University of Pennsylvania.

The Busy Miss Gibbon

Miss M. Morgan Gibbon, the sister of Perceval Gibbon, the English novelist and war correspondent, is a close rival of her brother, both in craft of writing and in outdoor sports. Miss Gibbon has just published her first novel, "Jan" (Doubleday, Page & Co.), has a second one on the press and is writing a third.

NEW BOOKS

An outline characterization of the latest publications. More extended review will be given books worthy of special notice.

Fiction

AN OLD CHESTER SECRET. By Margaret Deland. New York: Harper & Bros.
Another typical Old Chester tale in novelette form.

HOW MANY CARDS? By Isabel Ostrander. New York: Robert M. McBride.
A new Roundsman McCarthy detective story.

MISTER EUSTACE. By Henry James. New York: Thomas Seltzer.
Five of his earlier short stories never before published in this country.

THE SLEUTH OF ST. JAMES SQUARE. By Melville Post. New York: D. Appleton & Co.
The hero is the chief of the investigation department of Scotland Yard.

CLOUDY JEWEL. By Grace Livingston Hill. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.
Another of this writer's charming stories of wholesome romance and tender appeal and blithe humor.

MEMMO. By Joseph Spencer Kennard. New York: George H. Doran Co.
Across a background of modern Venice the author has drawn his story in the magic colors of old Italian romance.

General

THE NEW DECAMERON. By various writers. New York: Robert M. McBride.
The "second day" contains stories by a number of familiar and new British writers.

RIGHT ROYAL. By John Masefield. New York: The Macmillan Co.
A long narrative poem about a horse and a steeplechase.

THE PASSING OF THE OLD ORDER IN EUROPE. By Gregory Zilboorg. New York: Thomas Seltzer.
The secretary to the ministry of labor in the Kerensky government records his impressions.

MEMORIES. By Lord Redesdale. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.
A distinguished diplomat of more than forty years' service recalls his experiences in Russia, Japan, China and at home.

TAHITI DAYS. By Hector McQuarrie. New York: George H. Doran Co.
A narrative of "happy days and wanderings among the 'isles of tranquil delight.'"

THE AMERICAN SUPREME COURT AS AN INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL. By Herbert A. Smith. New York: Oxford University Press.
The professor of jurisprudence at McGill University and a former fellow of Magdalene College, Oxford, discusses the original contribution of the American constitution to democracy.

COLLECTED POEMS. By Alfred Noyes. New York: F. A. Stokes Co.
All of his verse from October, 1913, to date of publication.

THE ROMANCE OF MADAME TUSSAUD'S. By John Theo. Tussaud. New York: George H. Doran Co.
A fascinating work about a great London institution. Hilaire Belloc writes the introduction.

MODERN PUNCTUATION. By George Summey, Jr. New York: Oxford University Press.
Its utilities and conventions, authoritatively described by the associate professor of English at North Carolina College.

JOHN BURROUGHS, BOY AND MAN. By Clara Barrus, M. D. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co.
A sympathetic account of the fruitful life of the man whom Walt Whitman describes as "a child of the woods, fields, hills."

TECHNIQUE OF PRACTICAL DRAWING. By E. S. Pilsworth. New York: The Macmillan Co.
For students, teachers and professional artists.

LETTERS TO A NIECE. By Henry Adams. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
Mable LaFarge, to whom the distinguished publicist and historian addressed these missives, writes a sympathetic memoir. The volume also contains his unusual poem: "Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres."

STUDIES IN HISTORY AND POLITICS. By Herbert Fisher. New York: Oxford University Press.
The British minister of education has written with rare scholarship and thoughtfulness on such subjects as Napoleon, the value of small nations, and French nationalism.

WHAT I SAW IN RUSSIA. By George Lansbury. New York: Boni & Liveright.
The editor of the London Daily Herald, with a circulation of hundreds of thousands, and himself the spiritual leader of the British labor movement, shows the effect upon the Russian people and upon Russia of the "Allied policy of war, intrigue and economic blockade."

MODERN CHINA. By Sih-Gung Cheng, M. A., B. Sc. New York: Oxford University Press.
A timely and valuable addition to the Histories of the Nations series. It is a study in politics, but is free from political or racial bias.

A TALE OF A TUB. By Jonathan Swift. New York: Oxford University Press.
Edited with an introduction and historical and explanatory notes by A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith. The sumptuous volume also includes "The Battle of the Books."

OLD CAPE COD. By Mary Rodgers Bang. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
The land, the men, the sea, the history and the customs of yesterday and today charmingly and fully described.

LINES OF LIFE. By H. W. Nevinson. New York: Boni and Liveright.
Distinguished poems of authentic poetic quality and fine feeling for humanity by a noted and truly notable English journalist and publicist, who in this slender and charming volume proves the right to add poet to his other titles.

EMPRESS EUGENIE IN EXILE. By Agnes Carey. New York: The Century Co.
A chatty narrative which gives all the main facts of the life of the lately deceased spouse of the third Napoleon, with special attention to her long years of exile.

THE MAKING OF THE REPARATION AND ECONOMIC SECTIONS OF THE TREATY. By Bernard Baruch. New York: Harper & Bros.
One of President Wilson's most trusted advisers discusses moot points in the Versailles treaty, in the formulation of which he was an official participant.

Poetry

FLAME AND SHADOW. By Sara Teasdale. New York: Macmillan Co.
The first book of the poetess since "Love Songs," which won the poetry prize in 1920.

THE POEMS OF HENRY VAN DYKE. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
A new and revised edition, including many hitherto uncollected poems.
The poems of Dr. Van Dyke are the creation of a true and tender poet. They have both distinction of form and charm of thought. The nature poems are quick in observation and rich in feeling and sympathy. The poems on anoting will strike a chord of delight in many bosoms.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF RECENT POETRY. Compiled by L. D'O. Walters. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co.
Devoted to some of the contemporary British poets, including examples by several of the new men and women.

THE FORERUNNER. By Kahlil Gibran. New York: A. A. Knopf.
Rodin called Gibran "the William Blake of the twentieth century." His parables and poems are given in free verse or polyphonic prose. An unusual book rich in mysticism, symbolism and oriental coloring.