

# WHEN THE KING REIGNS

Blizzards and Intense Cold Fail to Daunt Theatersgoers in New York.

**N**EW YORK, Jan. 31.—(Special.)—When the reports reach all points of the United States of a storm in New York, they come in the form of dispatches, and they are all pretty much alike, as far as headlines go, and yet the question is how many people really understand what such a storm as the one we are passing through at present means in a city like New York, without reference to its climate. The cold is not the only thing to be dreaded, notwithstanding the fact that this is very intense, and in many cases dangerous to life and limb, but the heavy fall of snow, with the wind blowing 50 or 60 miles an hour, can really not be described on the one hand nor understood on the other. In the first place, a storm like this blows up over night, and when there is no warning at bedtime, if one is a fresh air fiend the consequences may be amusing, to say the least. My first taste of the present storm occurred at about 7:30 A. M., when I made my way to the window to close it. As I did, before I was fairly awake I found myself in at least eight inches of snow, which was blown in half way across the front room, covering it not completely with about four solid inches of snow a large Morris chair in the window and other furniture. It took at least three-quarters of an hour to shovel snow from the parlor so that it could be removed while it was dry enough and cold enough to keep it from flooding the place. I was fairly surprised to hear of about 20 other people who had the same experience. This, however, is most trivial, in comparison to the hardship of getting around, and at no time was such a feeling of thankfulness and appreciation sensed concerning the subway as upon this occasion, for this was the only means of transportation for many hours on Wednesday. Why you stop to consider the enormous population who live from 10 to 15 miles away from their business, and that is even not counting those who live in the Orange, Brooklyn, and Long Island and all around in the suburbs. For these there is no recourse but to remain over night at some hotel, and upon occasions of this kind the hotels are so overcrowded that people are forced to go from one to the other by the hour before being able to secure a room anywhere. In any way, this means for the factory girls and shop girls who have only enough money to depend upon to pay a 5 or 10-cent fare? The scenes around the stations, especially at the Long Island and Railway, were really beyond description, with the hundreds who were hunched and shivering, and with no way to help themselves. There were many dealing with the paupers. That harrowing tale need not be told at this moment. However, it is upon occasions like this that the Salvation Army prove their true worth, and when they serve assistance to the fullest extent of their capability, both in the matter of housing and feeding this class of people under circumstances of this kind. One is at the mercy of chance for all supplies, since milk cannot arrive at its destination except on trains from out of town, and when these are late and milk bottles frozen and then broken, there is simply a milk famine, and meat, butter, eggs, everything else, is open to the same possibilities. In the case of the extreme cold the probability is that the gas freeze, both in the gas range and for illumination purposes. There are a few, but a very few, people who are supplied with coal ranges. This does not need a vivid imagination to understand what may happen during these blizzards or storms, whatever you choose to call them.

Now the most remarkable thing is in the face of such fearful hardship how is it possible for people to get to the theaters, and, still, they do. Of course, there is marked falling off in the audiences, but all audiences are large enough to make one marvel that even ten people were brave enough to come out in the sake of amusement. On the other hand, it is probable that the greater proportion of the audience consists upon such occasions of people who, being snowed up in New York, pass the time in this manner. It is an ill wind that blows no one some good; at least this is what some of the messenger boys thought on Wednesday night, when Harry Payne Whitney, who held two boxes at Field's Theater, telegraphed in from Long Island that he and his party could not get in, but to see that the boys from the different offices should have the privilege of the boxes. This was

done, and about 20 messenger boys in New York enjoyed the show by the thoughtfulness of Mr. Whitney. One might write for hours and still not describe a tenth of the incidents which face everyone who lives in New York during an occasion of this kind, and, whereas, for the sake of brevity, I have not described an adequate idea on the other.

Upon former occasions I have given descriptions of the auction sales of antiques and of private houses, which occupy the attention of a certain portion of New York's population. This year there have been more than ever before, since a very large number of the St. Louis exhibits were brought to New York and sold by auction after holding the art exhibitions, but not within years has a sale awakened the degree of curiosity and interest as the one which is on this week, consisting of the sale of the furnishings and effects of Mrs. Frederick Neilsen, mother-in-law of Reginald Vanderbilt, together with the household furnishings of Frederick Gebhardt, who is a brother of Mrs. Neilsen. To say nothing of the things on exhibition, the sights in the auction-rooms would have furnished volumes for the comic columns and the conversation of those who were present, covering the whole of human nature, or, rather, of the weakness of human nature. One belidame in particular attracted the attention of every eye in the auction-room as she sat in enveloped in a shawl, and with nothing of an air of supreme satisfaction and porcine supremacy. As might have been expected, her eye was attracted to the richest picture in the room, which may or may not have belonged to the collection of Mrs. Neilsen and Mr. Gebhardt. After the limit of \$5 she modestly belidamed her willingness to give \$5. Someone in the audience, who was much interested in the amusement of the auctioneer, raised her two or three, and the lady trotted an even pace, when finally it was knocked down to her at an exorbitant figure. In the next stage whisper she murmured, "Ain't that a bargain? I tell you I know good things when I see them." And to the edification of all present, she announced in the same sort of a stage whisper that she was going to sell some of the things in her house and buy up half the treasures that graced the home of "Reggie's" mother-in-law. This is only one example and one type of the people that you meet at the auction sales, which really form a distinct amusement, apart from the art atmosphere inherent to them.


The musical event of the week was the debut of Eugene D'Albert, Carnegie Hall, which was given in full concert upon the occasion of a concert at which M. Ysaie conducted for D'Albert and D'Albert conducted for Ysaie. No one who is interested in the musical advancement of New York can fail to deplore such sensational methods, as the concert was far from satisfactory, and at best it did not give the impression of a masterpiece. D'Albert is a colossal artist, and a man who stands at the greatest height in his own line, which is as pianist or a composer. The influence of such sensationalism, as I stated before, is a bad one, and nothing could be more far from the truth to hear the Beethoven Krouzer sonata in Carnegie Hall, even by such an artist as D'Albert. Ysaie, because a sonata is chamber music, and chamber music is intimate or it is nothing. As a matter of showing the attitude of the great artist, to this I will quote Franz Kneisel, whose quartet concert in New York City are completely sold out to subscribers to the full capacity of Mendelssohn Hall. Upon numerous occasions there have been suggestions for Kneisel to replace these dates may be understood from the fact that he is booked as soloist, as it is possible to do, and, consequently, his engagements may arise. He will be the next soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and great interest centers upon this appearance among those who are really musical. Much more interest indeed is shown than in

his debut which artistically must be regarded as unfortunate. D'Albert will be heard at West at San Francisco and probably Portland, Or.

It will be interesting to the many friends of Mark Hambourg in this country to hear that he has a younger brother, Jan, a pupil of Ysaie, who is said to be a very fine violinist. In Germany the brothers are to appear jointly in concert.

If the opening of the week presented a great concert with D'Albert and Ysaie, the close was notable for the last pair of concerts conducted by Safonoff, the great Russian, who has aroused New York to the highest pitch of admiration by his remarkable qualities as conductor. On Friday afternoon and Saturday night Safonoff again demonstrated his great art and his reading of the Pathetic Symphony of Tchaikowsky was something that can never be described in words. This was the piece de resistance. However, his marvelous reading of the Beethoven Second Symphony was quite on a par with the Russian work, and its forcefulness and virility were fairly overpowering. In the presence of two such tremendous symphonies as the Beethoven Second and the Tchaikowsky Sixth, the Sixth Symphony, the Schubert-Liszt "Wanderer Fantasia" for piano and orchestra, played by Jose Da Motta, was singularly out of place, and for some estimate of this new pianist I will wait until he is heard under different auspices, which may serve to judge him by himself and not as a part of such a concert as would enlist the services of such noble interpreters of art as a Paderewski, a Hoffman, a Bauer or a D'Albert.

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## WAS JULIET A FOOL WOMAN?

If So She Had Much Company, for the Drama Is Full of Them.

**N**OW that we are on this subject of the modern and "unpleasant" drama, it is impossible to refrain from remarking upon Mr. Bronson Howard's contribution to the Herald's symposium of last Sunday on what it called the "problem play." If any one equals Mr. Howard's knowledge of English stage plays of the 19th century, he does not come to mind; and Mr. Howard's knowledge is as analytic, as philosophic and as deeply human as it is wide. What he knows about the evolution of tastes in the playhouse, the gradual development of understanding and sympathy on the part of the actual public, would make an important chapter in the history of our recent civilization.

Highly characteristic is his opening remark that the very term "problem play" is a misnomer. Invented to fit plays that raise a social question, it is now applied not only to plays that, instead of raising a question, enforce a thesis, but also to all plays treating illegitimate love. In the strict sense of the word, as Mr. Howard wittily remarks, the only one of Pinero's plays that may be called a problem play is "The Wife Without a Smile," and here the problem, judging by the reports of the English critics, is what in the world it all means—if it means anything! But to Mr. Howard's own words: "There has never been a period of the drama, in any age or country, from classic Greece down, when illegitimate love was not treated in a very large proportion of the plays produced. In order, therefore, to bring the term within useful limitations I should define it something in this way: "Problem play—a play dealing with the emotions of a fool woman of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. "I think this definition will be, in effect, though not, of course, in form, the definition of the term adopted by future historians of the English drama.

Ever-interesting Problem Plays.

From this point of view the problem play is extremely interesting at the present moment, because the "fool woman" still exists in droves sufficiently numerous to form an important class in our society. There are too many of them off the stage to be ignored on the stage. I cannot illustrate the exact meaning of the term "fool woman" better than by calling attention to the "fool girl," who almost dominated the stage of centuries because she was so numerous in real life. I refer to the seduced girl, over whom entire audiences once wept, and who can hardly squeeze a tear now from the back row of the gallery.

Mrs. Inchbald, as early as 1808, said that the "unfortunate" had then ceased to interest people if she belonged to culti-

vated society. In other words, to be "unfortunate" merely showed a weakness or inferiority, and so was undramatic. In the latter part of the 19th century, and first in America, about 70 years after Mrs. Inchbald's discovery, the seduced girl, even of less cultivated and the lowest classes of social life, lost her public interest. Since that time she has been regarded simply as a "fool girl" and access to the dramatic stage is for merely collateral purposes in play.

The high evolution of the married woman in real life has been and is going on rapidly. The proper dignity of her sex is asserting itself. If she has a brutal, unsympathetic husband we sympathize with her breaking heart, but we begin already to suspect that she is a fool lacking the natural dignity of her sex. If on that account she turns to the love of another man, we are becoming weary of the woman who does this, and she will under the dramatic name of "fool woman" of social life, relegated to the limbo of popular indifference, where the "fool girl" has been waiting for her more than a quarter of a century.

That is a blast of common sense for you, as fresh and stimulating as it is experienced and wise! Is a fool woman, Medea Gable? Is she a fool woman? He it noted, are fresh and interesting. But neither is likely to hold the attention of the world very long. Tanqueray is a very different sort of person. Here is the oldest of the professions, and the most universally practiced.

As to Suderman's Marikke, at least a doubt is put in the question. What end does she have? Is she a fool woman, but with a difference. About real passion, sheer and unselfish, there is an inherent nobility which in our hearts we all instinctively recognize. Was Juliet a fool girl to consent to a clandestine marriage? Was Othello a fool husband to believe the tales of an obvious villain against his spotless wife? Was Lear a fool father to give over his kingdom to his two villainous and hypocritical daughters? To Puck, it may be remembered, all mortals were fools. Be it not Shakespeare understood that the truest and worthiest path to the sympathy of an audience was to give his characters the frailties of their kind. He made only one stainless hero; and Henry V, colossal in all things, is a colossal failure, on the stage and in literature.

After all, this question of fool or not fool is hardly the final question. What end does the drama in passion, aspiration, sin. So long as it is true, and of universal significance, it makes no small difference whether it made the subject of poetic or realistic drama, comedy or farce.—John Corbin in the New York Sun.

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