COMSTOCK VS. SHAW

Censor of Morals and Radical Dramatist of War—Bauer's Brilliant Work.

NEW YORK, Oct. 3.—(Special Correspondence.)—On with the fight! Let joy be unconfined. If that is not the exact quotation, it should be, for the fight has arrived. The principals in the game are George Bernard Shaw and Anthony Comstock, and the public concerned are those who know of Mr. Shaw, since it is likely that those who only knew Mr. Comstock will say as Mr. Comstock himself was guilty of saying: "Who is Shaw?" Still it shows that Mr. Comstock is not paying much attention to the young moon in the literary world, because if he were he would not need to ask, "Who is Shaw?" The trouble came about through Mr. Shaw's having heard that his books were ordered out of the libraries in America, and he issued a long and not by any means uninteresting statement concerning "Comstockery" in America. It came to the ears of the censor of morals in art and literature of America and while he confessed that he did not know that there was a Mr. Shaw he would look into the matter and promised positively to remove his works if this had not been done as yet.

It is another case of swallowing a camel and straining at a gnat, because while Mr. Shaw is daring enough and not infrequently shocking enough, he is not a circumstance to what may be encountered in many dramas and in modern, to say naught of ancient, novels. And when we come down to daily journalism as it is practised in some sections of the country, nothing that Mr. Shaw has ever offered can compare with stories that are heralded from bulletin boards and flaunted under great headings. The only element that is missing in the whole thing is consistency and that is always lacking in a movement of purification. Not that we do not need purification, but there is no such thing possible as a radical elimination of vulgarity through any means other than by great influences of refinement and such educational work as bring about refinement by themselves. This is not to be accomplished in a day, in a year, in a decade, but we need only to look around to realize that something has been at work in the the way of uplifting the masses. The question that strikes pretty hard is, do the masses need purifying influences or do the classes need them as much? When this is answered we shall know whether the morals of the people would suffer more from plain straighforward, unpalatable truths, such as offered by Shaw, than from these same truths glided, made acceptable and weakened through custom and because society rules certain things acceptable or otherwise. Shaw has used the stage from which to preach his lessons, and he never yet has been guilty of writing without a definite purpose. In other words, he offers a story with a moral to it. Contrast this with the moral tone of such plays as "Zaza," "Sapho," "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," and it would seem to any fair-minded person that Shaw's aims are far the nobler, since he does not descend to the baser side for the purpose of lending his works special attraction. However, the Shaw crane is just on and it is here with a vengeance.

The season of music is awake in Brooklyn just a little ahead of New York, but New York does not care about a trifle like that, since it will have one or two musical attractions ahead of everybody else and a few that nobody else will have. For instance, New York will have grand opera, and, be it told in a whisper, Boston will not. Conried is tired of playing to a loss anywhere and, as we are told, Boston is never a financial success. The reason given for this will be rather startling and not at all comprehensible to the layman—Boston is too musical! Visit the symphony concerts; not an empty seat to be seen, not a seat at the concerts of the Kneisel Quartet series, nor, indeed, at the concerts given by the Boston Symphony Quartet. But Boston does not regard opera as pure music and for that reason the patronage is seldom what might be expected. However, to return to Brooklyn and its season, it is interesting to note that the Savage Grand English Opera Company will open its tour at the New Montauk Theater October 2 in "Aida." They will remain one week, during which they will also present "Lohengrin," "Rigoletto," "Tannhauser," "La Boheme" and "Faust." Mr. Savage has assembled a superb company and every equipment is better and stronger than ever. The singers include Madame Serena, Gertrude Rennyson, Florence Scarborough, Millicent Brennan, soprani; Rita Newman, Rita Harrington, Margaret Crawford, Mary Eames Miller, contralti; Francis Maclennan, Joseph Sheehan, William Wegener, Thomas Best, tenors; Winfred Goff, Robert Kent Parker, Thomas David Richards, Arthur Deane, Ottley Cranston and M. L. Bowman, baritones and basses. The conductors are the Chevalier Emanuel, Elliott Schenck and Eugene Salvatore. Both Mrs. Scarborough and Miss Newman are Western girls, the former being from Los Angeles and the latter from San Francisco. Later in the season Mr. Savage will present the first English translation of "The Valkyrie," the second of the great Wagnerian cycle, of which "Rheingold" is the first, "Siegfried" the third and "The Twilight of the Gods" the fourth and last. It is usually called the Trilogy and "Rheingold" is regarded as the introduction, it being a very short work and in one act. This will be presented by a special company on about the same lines that the English "Parsifal" was given last year. Speaking of "Parsifal," it may be significant that the great work is only announced for two productions by the Conried Opera Company, so that after the overflow which we had last year those of us who became enamoured of the opera will probably go hungry unless we can satisfy ourselves with two offerings. This does not, however, preclude the possibility of supplementary performances.

The great opening musical event of New England and really of the East occurred September 27, 28, 29 at Worcester, Mass., and although in no way comparing with the brilliancy of the seasons of long ago the festival was incomparably greater than it was a year ago. Some of the choral works were exceptionally interesting, but to Harold Bauer must be yielded the palm, both as far as his infinite art is concerned and as attraction, if the enthusiasm of this Worcester audience counts for what it should.

The orchestral concerts seem to have made more of an impression in general than the choral, although it must not be forgotten that chorus work is the raison d'etre of the Worcester Festival Society. The festival hall is very large and the acoustics are extremely good, and as for brilliancy of audiences it is certainly conceded that no gathering could bear marks of more distinction. There were a great many notable music-lovers from Boston present and many from New York and all that interlying country. There was every evidence that the people had not much more than arrived from the country homes and the wonder is how so many handsome gowns were prepared so early in the season. It was suggested that hereafter the festival be held a little later, as it makes too much of a hiatus between that and the real season in New York and Boston, and also the artists are not always available so early.

Under direction of Wallace Goodrich, the chorus of Worcester has done splendid work and in many of the finer details they show a gain over past seasons. There still seems to be less volume in the climaxes than one might expect, but the tonal quality is nevertheless very good. On Wednesday night at the first concert Mr. Goodrich offered his chorus in selections from Cesar Franck's "The Beatitudes" and in a superb work of Mozart's which is very seldom heard and which would well repay any conductor for the trouble. This is the "Requiem," and it was beautifully given, in fact nothing that Mr. Goodrich has done has been manner in which he presented this classic gem. The chorus was pliable and elastic under his baton and they discharged their duty well. The soloists of the evening were Mrs. Corinne Rider-Kelsey, Mrs. Bertha Cushing-Child, George Hamlin, Julian Walker, George Leon Moore and Harrison Bennett.

The second day's events were full of interest and full of merit, including an orchestral concert under direction of Franz Kneisel, in which he had the assistance of Herbert Witherspoon, who sang Wotan's Farewell from Wagner's "The Valkyrie," and Mlle. Jolivet, a young violinist of much charm and ability. The work of Kneisel as conductor was never more fully demonstrated than in the extreme difficulties of the Beethoven Ninth Symphony, otherwise known as the Choral Symphony, because it closes with a setting of Schiller's "Lobgesang" for chorus and quartet of soloists. It is of extreme difficulty for the singers and further demonstrates that Beethoven could not write for the voice, because the strain is fearful and often reaches from the singers to the audience. The soloists were Mrs. Marie Zimmerman, Mrs. Helen Allen Hunt, Clarence B. Shirley and Herbert Witherspoon. Bruckner's "Te Deum" was a work of great interest, since it had never been heard in the East, and Mr. Goodrich gave it a masterly reading. The afternoon concert of the third day was by far the most important of the season's work and the evening was given to soloists entirely. The notable features of the concert were the playing of Harold Bauer and the first performance of George W. Chadwick's new symphonic poem "Cleopatra." Mr. Bauer gave a wonderful interpretation to the great Tschaikowsky piano concerto, and one which was different from any that we have yet heard. Mr. Bauer's art is noble in the highest sense of the word and all praise is by far too weak. He is certainly the most powerful pianist with orchestra that we have had the opportunity to hear and the accompaniment given him by Mr. Kneisel and the orchestra was certainly inspired and inspiring. The applause was deafening and his recalls were beyond count. The work of Mr. Chadwick was of more than ordinary significance on a programme of the Worcester festival, since Mr. Chadwick was for years conductor of the society and he holds an unique place in their affections. The work is bold and many times beautiful and effective in orchestral effects, but there is that inevitable tendency to long drawn out passages and many times one could but wish that it were ended, notwithstanding many really delightful and musical moments. Mr. Kneisel gave it with as much interest and as much care as if it had been written by the veriest foreigner instead of an American of whom we can afford to be proud. Mr. Kneisel also presented Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony and Mrs. Kelsey sang Mozart's "Voi che sapete." The evening concert offered a mixed programme presented by Charlotte Maconda, Mr. Hamlin, Isabel Bouton and Mr. Bennett.

EMILIE FRANCES BAUER.

TRAINING OF COSSACKS

Taught From Their Cradles to Obey the White Czar.

Everybody's Magazine.

"What a fine cook granny was!" relates the Cossack, in describing his childhood, "she made bright yellow cakes big as this big fur hat. It took a long time to bake the cake in the brick oven; it was so soft and delicate that even if you stamped on the floor and jarred the oven the big cake would fall into a lump of dough and be good only to feed the geese and the peacocks. So old granny used to hobble up and down in front of the oven waving off all of us who tried to get close for a smell, and even if one of us little brats shouted or swore she would curse us soundly in a whisper for making a jar in the air. If you've ever heard a Cossack swear you will see that granny was right, for a Cossack curse could stop a big locomotive running full speed down a mountain. Ha, ha, ha!" He leaned back and grew red with laughing.

"Well, well! And my good, fat mother—what borsch (soup) she used to make in the deep earthen bowl! When she poured it all splattering into the brown earthen basin, two or three feet across, then we brats used to stand around, each with his wooden spoon. We each dipped out a big chunk of meat; always fair play, each had his turn; if one of us took two pieces, how quick old granny would beat him in the face with her spoon! And when the meat was all gone, then we dipped up the thick, red tomato soup—every spoonful, I can tell you. We young dogs were always hungry.

"Only we Cossacks have kept ourselves untainted by all this new science. It eats like a cancer into the power of our Czar. But we alone are just as our grandfathers were before us. And I think my young son—he is a bold, big fellow—I think he, too, will stick to the ways of his fathers. These propagandist devils never try to come to us, for they know we are safe against them; all their new, slushy ideas roll off our brains like water from the back of a goose. Not a drop of socialist slush sticks on.

"Why? Because from our cradles we were taught to obey; to obey without stopping to think it all out; to obey two fathers—our own father and the Czar. When the Czar commands, then I do. You see my young daughter asleep over there? Well, if the Czar said 'Tear her in pieces!' then I should do it, though I might kill myself right afterward. That's what a Cossack means by loyalty."

The Moon Uninhabited.

Harper's Magazine.

The moon being much the nearest to us of all the heavenly bodies, we can pronounce more definitely in its case than in any other. We know that neither air nor water exists on the moon in quantities sufficient to be perceived by the most delicate tests at our command. It is certain that the moon's atmosphere, if any exists, is less than the thousandth part of the density of that around us. The vacuum is greater than any ordinary air pump is capable of producing. We can hardly suppose that so small a quantity of air could be of any benefit whatever in sustaining life; an animal that could get along on so little could get along on none at all. But the proof of the absence of life is yet stronger when we consider the actual results of actual telescopic observation. An object such as an ordinary city block could be detected on the moon. If anything like vegetation were present on its surface we should see the changes which it would undergo in the course of a month, during one portion of which it would be exposed to the rays of the unclouded sun, and during another to the intense cold of space.

Jerome K. Jerome (pronounce it Jerum, please, if you would be correct) has thrown the semiliterary, as well as the ultras into a fever of excitement in the expectation of hearing that noted idler express some of the idle thoughts. However, remembering the difference between what we hoped the "Dolly Dialogues" would be in the lips of their creator and what Anthony Hope really was as a lecturer and reader, we will save our supply of enthusiasm until October 17, when Mr. Jerome (pronounced Jerum) will make his first appearance at the Empire Theater in London.

Some people are just cynical enough to ask why George Ade does not lay off one season, because nobody can write so many plays as he does without running short of material, at least of original material, and it is assuredly originality that has been Mr. Ade's long suit. "Just Out of College" is just out of the basket, and it serves to star young Mr. Wheelock, who makes the most of his opportunities. Joseph Wheelock, Jr., is well cared for in the way of a part, and there is a great amount of jollity and mirth to which he contributes his personality to a great extent. There is nothing forced in the fun—this could not be, coming from Mr. Ade—but the situations which give the opportunity for merriment are very much so, and there is just about as much plot as you can get out of the title. The cast, with few exceptions, an able one, was as follows:

Edward Worthington Swinger	Joseph Wheelock, Jr.
Septimus Pickering	Eugene Jepson
"Silvers" Mason	Charles Jackson
Prof. H. Dalrymple Bliss	George H. Snyder
Ernest Bradford	George Irving
Rufus	Harry Frees
A Collector of Souvenirs	Louis Eagan
A Solicitor of Insurance	George Alryn
A Subscription Book Agent	Howard Hull
A Delegate from the Union, a Train Caller	M. B. Pollock
A Ticket Seller	Tully Marshall
Jack Lindsay	Albert W. Meyer
Harvey Hughes	Jack Devereau
Tom Catlin	Paul Pumphrey
Caroline Pickering	Katharine Gilman
N. W. Jones	Mabel Amber
Genevieve Chizzle	Georgie Mendum
Luella Jenkins Pickering	Louise Sydmeth
Bernice McCormick	Blanche Stoddard
Aunt Julia Swinger	Mrs. E. A. Eberle
A Newsstand Girl	Elene Foster
A Lonesome Lady Traveler	Frances Comstock
A Busy Lady Traveler	Maud Sinclair
Miss Larksum	Lillian Seville
Miss Byrd	Louise McNamara
Miss Blythe	Myrtle Tannehill

TRAINING OF COSSACKS

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