

Actress Greater Than the Vehicle She Uses

By J. F. S.

"At last a noble deed!" cries Hedda Gabler. "At something had really happened that was worthy of last a sensible woman," exclaimed I when I had finished talking to an unknown subscriber over the office phone the other morning.

She called up and explained that she wished to take her two daughters to see Mrs. Campbell. Did the Journal think that either "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" or "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" was a fit play for two young women to see, and if so, which one had they better attend? The answer was by all means go, and by all means see Mrs. Tanqueray. It is scarcely necessary to explain that the woman was fortunate because she called me up. It was probably a mere chance that she did so. She might have asked some one else and in one case the reply would have been "chloride of lime" and in the other "utterly impossible."

I sincerely trust that the two young women went to see Mrs. Tanqueray. They probably didn't carry chlorides of lime in their opera bags and they certainly were not injured by the performance. In the first place they were accorded the opportunity of seeing Mrs. Campbell, who is, with the exception of Mrs. Fiske, the most notable woman to be seen on the stage of the smaller American cities today. Show me the woman who has nothing to learn from Mrs. Campbell and I'll show you a prodigy that will make you gasp. Pinerio has enough to answer for in the way of poor construction, extravagance of characters and misconception of life without being lamely charged with being unfit to see and hear. The most unfit thing about Mrs. Tanqueray is that its very strength, its cleverness, blinds one to the fact that at the vital point Paula's character—as drawn by Pinerio—swerves from the plumb line of truth and life. And by the same token Mrs. Ebbsmith's unfitness lies not in the fact that she has what we are pleased to term "sinned," but that Mr. Pinerio has drawn a woman too big for his point of view—so big that when Mrs. Campbell acts the part she literally, as Bernard Shaw has said, "plays Pinerio off the stage." He doesn't know what to do with this Frankenstein of his.

He stumbles around a bit and ends by having her appeal to the sensationalism and prejudice of the more ignorant in the audience, by hurling the Bible into the stove and pulling it out again with a scream.

This cry of indecency and unfitness is too ignorant, too narrow, to be accorded any respect whatsoever. I confess that so far as I am concerned it is beyond me to see wherein the evil of Mrs. Tanqueray and Mrs. Ebbsmith lies. They have done what is wrong. Granted. They suffer for it, and you have the play, its theme and its plot in a nutshell. But consider for a minute their wrongdoing, over which we are having such pious spasms of virtue. Is it portrayed in any manner in a way to induce others, no matter how weak-minded they may be, to go and do likewise? This is not made a particularly happy one. Surely retribution comes swiftly enough to satisfy the most orthodox. And does this wrongdoing hold a tall candle to the crimes committed nightly on other stages in Portland, crimes which are accepted without so much as a murmur, in spite of the fact that they are presented in the manner best calculated to play upon the imaginations of the simple people who see and evidently enjoy them? Unfortunately not.

"A nation of villagers" we have been called. The cry of the ignorant is heard in the land. It does not confine itself to the stage, but includes every detail of our civilization. The same people not long ago rose in their wrath and put down Bret Harte because he wrote "The Luck of Roaring Camp." Highly indecent work! Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" raised a hue and cry that has not yet died down. His name is still anathema upon the lips of insulted virtue. George Moore's memoirs must needs be expurgated before they are allowed to land. What would have happened had Guy de Maupassant written his tales and sought their publication in this country? And yet the most exquisite word painting that perhaps the world will ever read is bound up between the covers of "Flaubert and Gautier." But are they to be found on the shelves of our respectable public library? Perish the thought! Nietzsche! Faugh, come with the disinfectants. Wilde—the name is not to be mentioned to the prim young woman attendants, upon pain of instant ejection from the rooms of the building.

Gertrude Atherton recently raised her voice against this and her protest was received with a storm of disapproval. This called forth a letter to the New York Sun in which Harris Merton Lyon said: "Our young people are trained to write via the magazines and that is all that need be said. Even the 'good red blood' of London is nature faked at 15 cents a word. Most of us are willing to sit and write about Mercedes and her motor; and the rest of us are amiably content to read about her. If we do not take some deeds of hers and show the bitter, sardonic workings of the great law, from cause to effect, we are safe. We can keep on making a living as nice American writers and the mild and happy public will swallow the goodies." "The United States is the land of the happy ending; it worships in its writings a stupendous unimportance. The land of the free (freedom of the press), the words are empty. We are free to swallow literary pudding out of a decidedly tin spoon. We are false-toothed cunuchs in a passionate world."

If the two Pinerio plays seen in Portland last week had in any manner deserved such indignant rebuke as was accorded them there might be some hope for them. To hear the talk of "naastiness" one would think that

Mrs. Patrick Campbell Gives Remarkable Interpretation of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" In "Mrs. Ebbsmith" She Wanders About in a Maze of Tedious Dialogue

The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, a play so admirably suited for Mrs. Campbell, and Mrs. Campbell, an actress so admirably suited for the play that the real merits and demerits of Mr. Pinerio's character drawing were absolutely lost sight of for the time being. It was impossible to think of anything but Mrs. Pat. She was there, and she was wonderfully gorgeous, and she filled the part of Paula to overflowing.

When she had left town and you were able to diagnose the attack you realized that in spite of the general effect of being successful, the play was bad in many details. The elaborate and labored explanations in the first act were as awkward as the elephants. Nothing was distinct until Paula herself came upon the stage. We took Paula as we found her, faulty almost commonplace, but still extremely interesting. Paula, who is rather ill-tempered and has nothing of the "higher life" in her, finds that her step-daughter is engaged to marry a man whose discarded mistress she herself is. The situation becomes critical and all the characters give up the fight but Paula herself. Now is Paula's chance to show that she is a great woman and hence Pinerio's to reveal that he has drawn a master character.

The husband draws a picture of the step-daughter—an unspokeable disagreeable but reasonably lifelike creature—dilates upon her innocence and purity and says: "I know what you were at Eilean's age. You hadn't a thought that wasn't a wholesome one; you hadn't an impulse that didn't tend toward good; you never harbored a notion you couldn't have gossiped about to a parcel of children." And Paula drops upon the ottoman, clasps her hands, nods her head and crying out, "O God! A few years ago!" indulges in a paroxysm of weeping. In short, she simply coincides with the popular notion that up to a certain time every one is innocent in thought as in deed. That moral fiber is not made until you reach the age of discretion. That people are constituted the same until they taste of the fruit of the tree, then to separate and go their individual ways. Feeling that all people were created free and equal, morally as well as every other way and that she has cast aside her opportunity of being equal, Paula gives up and commits suicide.

It must be admitted that Mr. Pinerio has revealed his great skill as a dramatist in many ways, not the least of these being the avoidance of a suicide before the audience. But if Paula had been given her chance! If Pinerio had allowed her to see that she was an individual and had the rights of the individual! If there is wrong for the unsophisticated beholder of Mrs. Tanqueray it lies in this fact—that Pinerio permits her to speak of her innocent childhood, draw a picture of it and then announce that she has changed so that she cannot face her pure and catlike step-daughter. It is to be very strongly questioned that any such change occurs.

In "The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith" we have another artificial woman, again, fortunately, played by Mrs. Campbell. Agnes Ebbsmith is the daughter of a platform orator and agitator. She marries and lives eight wretched years with her husband. At the end of that time she herself becomes a platform orator, loses her voice, becomes a nurse and meets an unappreciating married man whom she nurses back to health. He and she agree to spend their lives preaching their new-found doctrine—so, superficial Pinerio—of anti-marriage. The man proves to be weak, excitable, egotistical, hopeless, but Paula still believes in him. He insists that their partnership be something more than that of co-workers in reform. She holds out for the ideal, until she finds that he cares not a fig for her ideas. Then she decides that she will have her woman's one hour of triumph.

From this point the play descends rapidly. A clergyman offers her the Bible in the hope that it may restore her to "respectability." She takes it up and throws it into the stove. Why, in heaven's name, she does this I cannot comprehend. She says that it has made her eight years of married life accursed and that heaven and hell are in her own heart and her own brain. It is probable that she takes the Bible as the emblem of law and order. At any rate she yanks it out with a howl of pain when it has been burning for a minute or two. The clap-trap trick met with the approbation of the gallery. It astonished every one else in the audience. If she had decided that she must live her own life, beyond the offer suggested by the rector and his Bible, well and good. There were possibilities of interesting development. But she destroyed them and subsided into an uninteresting person, bound for England and a life spent in penitence because she had dared to be unconventional.

In addition to the ultimate weakness of the principal character—which was made interesting again by the characterization and semblance of importance lent it by Mrs. Campbell's acting—the play was wretchedly constructed. The conversations of the lay figures were tedious beyond endurance and the too, too evident explanations, the constant scurrying to and from the all-important stove, didn't help matters any. Mr. Pinerio's plays are important because they are serious and, particularly in the case of Mrs. Tanqueray, interesting attempts to portray vital phases of life, seen from the Pinerio standpoint. And such attempts are not going to hold any young woman or old woman, or young man or old man. If Pinerio's detractors based their attacks on the immorality which lies in the lack of verisimilitude of the characters, well and good. But to brand them with the blanket charge of being indecent is foolish and lazy.

time a football uniform which was formerly worn by Carl Flanders, the famous center rush of Yale. In a dispatch to his partner, Daniel Edwards, of Reno, Nat C. Goodwin announces that he has canceled his further engagements for the year on the stage, and after playing three weeks at Chicago will go to Reno to devote all his attention to his mining interests.

Laurence Irving has suggested a tribute to Count Leo Tolstoy in the nature of a pilgrimage of Englishmen of high standing to Tolstoy's home. The party will travel on foot, or third-class on the railroad, and lodge with the people along the route.

Carlotta Nilsson is soon to make her appearance under the management of Robertson of Chicago in an adaptation of Giuseppe Giacomini's drama, "Falling Leaves." The production will be made about Easter, probably in one of the Shubert houses.

William Collier, besides acting in "Caught in the Rain," is hard at work upon the manuscript of a new play, to be done in collaboration with Haddon Chambers, and shortly due for final consideration by Charles Frohman.

actress who recently invaded New York with her company, seemingly hoping to rival Nazimova, has folded her tents and gone, \$25,000 poorer and some wiser.

Ernestine Bohmann-Helk, the contralto, sails at the end of June for Germany, where she will go first to Bayreuth to sing in the festival performances. She will also appear at the annual Wagner festival in the Prinz-Regententheater in Munich.

Now that the war in vaudeville is over there is likely to be an increasing exodus from the variety to the No. 3 houses, because the competition which produced the big salaries is at an end. May Irwin is reported to be on her way to London and Paris to find a comedy in which to appear.

After the termination of his season in "Classmates," Robert Edson will go to Europe for a tour of the continental cities.

The daughter of Eleanor Dugg, Signorita Manchetti Duse-Cecchi, was married recently to Edward Bulough, an Englishman and an Oxford don.

Forbes Robertson, the English actor is negotiating for the British rights to "The Witching Hour," which he wishes to produce in London.

Harrison Gray Plake has received from Roberto Bracco, an Italian dramatist, a copy of the Italian version of "The Merry Widow," which he has translated into English.

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PANTAGES

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from St. Agnes, translated by him for use on the Italian stage.

Anna Held and her "Parisian Model" company will go to London at the end of the present season for an extended engagement at the Drury Lane theatre.

Ruggiero Leoncavallo, the Italian composer, celebrated his fiftieth birthday on March 8. He was born in Naples. His best-known opera, "I Pagliacci," was brought out in Milan in 1892.

COLLEGE TO OFFICE.

Commissioner Says the Latter Is a Post-Graduate School.

College men by the score finish up their education in the patent office at Washington, according to the commissioner of patents. In an article in American Industries the commissioner calls his department a "post-graduate school."

"The examiners in the patent office," says the commissioner, "are all graduates of colleges, and 90 per cent of them have been graduated in general and patent law. With office experience they become invaluable in the service, but after almost three years of experience in the patent office, when they are most valuable in their work, they resign and accept outside positions. Thus the office has become a post-graduate school for the technical and legal education of young college men who enter its service."

"The General Electric company has in its patent department at least 12 men formerly examiners in this office, and other corporations have taken hundreds. Out of a corps of 300 examiners 125 have resigned from the patent office within a period of less than five years. It is only necessary to remark that the

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THEATRICAL NOTES.

Raymond Hitchcock has renewed his starring tour in the successful musical farce, "A Yankee Tourist," by Messrs. Richard Harding Davis, Wallace Irwin and Alfred G. Robyn.

Henry W. Savage's Chicago "Merry Widow" company begins its eighteenth week at the Colonial theatre tomorrow night. The alluring Viennese operetta is the biggest success in Chicago's stage history.

The grandfather of Frans Lehár, the composer of "The Merry Widow," was a poor husbandman. His father preferred fiddling to farming, however, and after studying music in the small city of Sternberg became an army bandmaster.

Frank C. Payne, one of the foremost and most able producers in America, has been selected from his staff by Henry W. Savage to look after the publicity promotion of "The Merry Widow," when the Ade classic is produced in London, on April 20, at the Adelphi theatre.

When Thomas Meighan appears as Billy Bolton in Henry W. Savage's forthcoming production of "The College Widow" in London, the well-known leading man will use as his third role