

THE PLAYHOUSES.

Plays with a purpose continue. Ibsen, it would appear, has a mild rival in Holland who thinks it wise to use the stage for the discussion of grave social problems, and both Mr. Jack Grein and Mr. Jarvis deem it expedient to translate the Dutchman's view of the propriety or impropriety of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. The result is a clever and painful little play called "A Man's Love," admirably acted by Mr. Leonard Boyne, Miss Mary Rorke, and Miss Gertrude Kingston at a recent matinee for the aid of distressed women. These artists are apparently of opinion that there is no recognised limit to the expression of their art—a very dangerous doctrine indeed, that has never been held from the days of the Greek dramatists down to to-day. The realistic craze is rapidly carrying us away with the tide. No one quite knows where it will stop. We are told that conventionality is old-fashioned; that the stage is to hold the mirror up not to nature, but to the depravity of the age in which we live. So at one theatre we hear a mother of three children calmly arguing that the cares of her offspring are a secondary consideration to that of her self; and we are summoned to a theatre on a warm afternoon in midsummer to behold innocent women and girls pained in a public theatre by the details of an illicit love between a married man and his wife's sister. It may be all very true; but, true or not, where are we to draw the line? The Greek tragedians thought that the grandest expression of grief was the pained and tear-stained face hidden in the toga. The masters of Greek art would not permit the barbarous side of tragedy to be expressed on the stage. Murder was committed behind the scenes. The hideousness of life was left to the imagination. It is not so now. Sardou, in the "Tosca," brings on to the stage, with gratuitous brutality and barbarism, the blood-stained wretch, reeking from the torture-chamber. Ibsen allows his unhealthy-minded Dr. Rank to discuss forbidden subjects with his friend's wife, and this new Dutch author, whoever he may be, illustrates with force, no doubt, but with conspicuous bad taste, the drama of sin that is being enacted in an apparently virtuous household.

Does it never occur to these Ibsenites and ultra-realists that in the interests of the stage they are killing the goose with the "golden eggs"? England has hitherto prided herself on a healthy stage. Fathers and brothers could take their wives and sisters there without hesitation or fear of annoyance. Now this cannot be the case any longer if these grave social questions are to be discussed before the innocent, and to be falsely labelled "amusement." All honour to the pure and energetic women who take interest in questions affecting the well-being of their sex and society at large; but they themselves would be the last to urge that they can be properly, or conveniently, debated in a public theatre to which the ignorant, the innocent, and the unscientific are freely invited. No one can call in question the moral that underlies such a play as "A Man's Love"; but many may very reasonably object to the manner in which it is discussed. It does not follow that every circumstance in our social system is fitted for illustration by art, nor is it needful that we should arrive at the truth by that form of realism that dangerously borders on suggestiveness. If the stage is really the mirror of the age, then society tolerates discussions and encourages illustrations that would have been voted tedious but a few years ago.

The Ibsenites, encouraged by the "success of curiosity" obtained by "A Doll's House," are seriously contemplating a production of "Ghosts," which, if permitted to be performed in public by the Lord Chamberlain, would certainly bring their card-house about their ears. It may be, from the point of view of social science, a very noble and edifying work; but it is wholly unfitted for the purposes of the stage, and would be voted intolerable by all who have the best interests of the stage at heart. The craze of the advanced Ibsenite is to extol woman at the expense of degraded and dissolute man. But they are wholly over-stating their case. There are bad men as well as bad women in the world. But at the same time there are hundreds and thousands of good and pure women in the world, who, conscious of man's chivalry at times of temptation and man's honour in time of need, who would cry shame on the pessimist who could quote Mrs. Ayling's husband in "Ghosts" as a type, and who would protest against the male sex being typically represented by the hero in "A Man's Love." Is there no woman who will stand forth to say a word in favour of the men who are still chivalrous and the husbands who are not wholly degraded?

It is a pity, for many reasons, that Mr. Robert Buchanan had not the time to put his strenuous objections to the new dramatic teaching in a proper dramatic form. Doubtless he will do so anon, for he understands the stage, and has never at any time degraded it or lowered it in the eyes of those who understand its social value as well as the necessary limitations of Art. Unfortunately, such a play as "The Old Home," coming as it does at this moment, does more harm than good. The new Vanderbilts play was evidently not written as a dramatic counterblast; so, on the whole, it is a pity that the discussion was even indirectly touched upon. Besides, Mr. Buchanan has accidentally played into the hands of his enemies by reproducing, without much skill, the commonplace villain of the stage and the equally commonplace lay figure known as the "repentant Magdalen." The stage must no doubt be provided with villains and Magdalens, but they need not necessarily be of the stage stogy. Such concessions may very fairly be made to the opponents of ultra-conventionality, and it was doubly unfortunate in this case that the stage villain was acted wholly without subtlety or enlightenment. This Ibsen controversy will raise a howl against the military ruler of homes, who has the swagger of an ostler and the manners of an 'Arry; and it was a thousand pities he was ever reproduced at this unfortunate moment. He has added fuel to the artistic flame. But, on the other hand, there is much that is interesting and worth seeing in the new play. Mr. Thomas Thorne is in every way excellent as a good-hearted Colonial millionaire. His brother, Mr. Fred Thorne, is equally good as a grumpy but tender-hearted old merchant; and it would be worth walking many a mile to see Miss Winifred Emery as the gentle and lovable heroine of the simple story. We have no more natural actresses on the stage than Miss Emery, and few as charming. Her clever husband, Mr. Cyril Maude, is the victim of circumstances. He has appeared once or twice, with considerable success, as a "Chappie" or a "Johnnie," or whatever the typical idiot of the day is called, and so it would appear as if he were doomed to reproduce these brainless boobies *ad infinitum*. They are bad enough in the street, the stalls, and the salon. But a little of them goes a very long way on the stage. Mr. Cyril Maude should henceforth refuse to play a "Chappie" or a "Johnnie." He would improve his artistic reputation and relieve the audience of an unmitigated nuisance. And Mr. Robert Buchanan should be the last man to pander to the silly conceit of the low sporting prints that dabble with theatricals. These creatures are not types of English life, and are not heard of outside the drinking bars of Fleet-street or the Strand. C. S.

THE OTHER SIDE.

The sweet pure breath of the morning breeze is upon me, the lights and shadows of a summer sky flicker around me—as, standing on the edge of the shining firth, I strain my eyes across its blue breadth of waters. And as I stand and gaze, I become conscious of a strong desire to know what lies on the far-off shore beyond them. Veiled in a luminous mist which has drifted in from seaward, it suggests, with its soft vague outlines and dreamy adumbrations, all kinds of fine possibilities. I think of curving bays, where the ripple plashes with a low sweet murmur on the sloping sands; I think of lofty promontories, where the blown trees tell of the stress of winter storms; I think of sheltered inlets in which the fisherman's boat lies, with its black hull safe on the pebbly beach. And then I see, in fancy, the broad, green country spreading inland, dotted with villages and white church spires, and bounded by ranges of bold hills, with deep, dark masses of foliage nestling in their quiet hollows—but who knows what may not be on that Other Side? What haunted fairyland or bright Arcadia of woodland and pasture, of dell and dingle, of mossy orchard and blooming garden-croft, echoing, perhaps, with "the shrill pleasing sound of many pipes"? Is it not always so? Does not the mind always amuse itself with the fond illusion of the Other Side? Here—here gather the cloud, the gloom, and the omen; here are satiety and weariness; here we have seen, known, tasted of everything; here the red rose of hope has paled into the white rose of disappointment. But there—in that fresh, new world—what may we not expect? If we can but cross the waters, what shall we not discover—on the Other Side?

When we have reached the lower terraces of a mountain height, or the base even of one of those fair round hills which swell out of our English plains, graceful in its outline as the liberal bosom of a beautiful woman, we become conscious, I think, of a restless desire, an eager curiosity to know what this natural barrier conceals. Here be "woods green as any"; here be "all new delights, cool streams and wells, arbours o'er-grown with woodbine, caves, and dells"; here the lush grass grows ankle-deep in the moist meadows, and the sunshine spreads in waves of amber light over uplands prodigal of wine and oil; yet are we not content. We refuse to linger on the threshold of the Unknown; are as athirst to pass beyond it as ever was stout Cortez to launch his bark on the untraversed tracts of the great Pacific. It is the mystery of the Unknown, of the Possible, that attracts us; imagination taking possession of it, enriching it with landscape and seascape such as no man has ever seen, with graceful and gracious creatures such as no man has ever known; it is the magic, the enchantment, of the Other Side.

Did you ever try to imagine with what feelings, in the early days of geographical discovery, the traveller in a hitherto unexplored country would come upon some great inland lake, some high barrier of snow-clad peaks, and, halting to take breath as it were, would conjecture what might be in store for him on the Other Side? He might not always indulge in pleasurable anticipations. Sometimes his thoughts might rest on fierce tribes of savages, anthropophagi, perhaps, or monsters with "heads that do grow beneath their shoulders"; or on parched deserts, where the wayfarer, stricken by the heat, and maddened by thirst, might haply perish; or broad wastes of ice and snow, where death would not less surely claim its victim. Even such gloomy forecasts as these could not stifle his curiosity, or prevent him from penetrating to that Other Side. But I suspect that, generally, his expectations were widely different; that he dreamed of cities of gold, like that Manoa which beguiled the fancy of Raleigh—or of the beautiful valleys and flowing streams of the Earthly Paradise—or of that Fountain of Immortal Youth which Ponce De Leon sought in vain. As Pizarro marched on into the opulent provinces of Peru, persistently dazzled by the hope of more precious spoil than had yet rewarded his conquering sword, so do we in life go on from vision to vision, from one aspiration to another, from one ambition to another, always expecting, always credulous that we shall find what we want—though we cannot define, even to ourselves, what that want may be—on the Other Side.

How thankful should we feel, I think, that this Other Side exists, to nourish and maintain in us the divine gift of imagination, to widen the scope of our feelings, to extend the range of our thoughts, and to relieve us from the deadening pressure of facts and certainties! How we should rejoice that the world is not a flat, dull surface of uniformity; not a monotonous plane which the eye could embrace at a glance, with no room for the exercise of the fancy, no place for knight-errantry or chivalrous adventure! How thankful we should be for the broad rivers and the lofty mountain-summits—the Orinoco and the Mississippi, the Himalayas and the Alps; for the league-long lakes and the rolling seas, beyond which we can still locate our land of dreams; can find a dwelling-place for the phantoms of our brains; can create our Utopias and people them with visions! Yes; let us thank the Heavenly Powers for giving us the boon of that Other Side! W. H. D.-A.

Some earthquake shocks have been felt in the Little Rhondda Valley.

The Prince of Wales has sent 100 guineas to the Lord Mayor as a contribution to the fund in aid of the Pasteur Institute of Paris, and for the assistance of English patients seeking its services.

On July 1 the price of inland post-cards will be reduced. Stout cards will be sold in packets of ten for 6d., and thin cards in packets of ten for 5d. The prices of cards taken in less quantities and of reply cards will be in proportion.

Lord Herschell presided at the fifty-seventh annual festival of the Inland Law Clerks' Society, at the Freemasons' Tavern, on June 26. There was a large gathering of legal celebrities, the list of honorary stewards including every Q.C. of the highest position.

Miss Phyllis Broughton's action against Viscount Dangan for breach of promise of marriage remains in the list of causes for hearing. It is understood, however, that the case has virtually been settled on the terms that Lord Dangan shall pay £2500 to the plaintiff and all the costs.

Mr. Punch has been to Paris, and what the Autocrat of Humour saw on his triumphal progress thither, and in the lively French capital, especially gay just now with its Exposition and Eiffel Tower, are vividly portrayed—pen and pencil maintaining a well-sustained race—in an extra given (for the first time) with this week's Punch.

The elections which will take place next week in the Royal College of Surgeons will be the first in which voting-papers will be used, and the result is looked forward to with very much interest. There are three vacancies in the Council to be filled, and those engaged in the reform movement anxiously desire the election of Messrs. Tweedy, Lawson Tait, and Rivington.

Oxford has been full of visitors taking part in the Commemoration festivities. On June 24 the Philharmonic Society gave a concert in the Sheldonian Theatre, which was attended

by a fashionable audience. The procession of boats on the Isis which followed attracted thousands of spectators. There were also a garden-party at Wadhams, a ball given by the Gridiron Club in the City Buildings, and balls at Magdalen and Wadhams colleges. Next day's programme included a grand flower show in Trinity College Gardens in connection with the Royal Oxfordshire Horticultural Society, the camp athletic sports of the University Rifle Volunteer Corps at Headington Hill, a ball in the hall of Worcester College, and the Etonian Club ball in the Corn Exchange.

The ratepayers of Brentford have unanimously adopted the Free Libraries Acts.

In the Newington Sessions House on June 19 a handsome "loving cup" was presented to Sir Richard Wyatt, in recognition of his labours for eighteen years as Clerk of the Peace for Surrey. Sir William Hardman bore testimony to the great services rendered to the country by Sir Richard Wyatt, both as Clerk of the Peace and as Parliamentary Agent to the Treasury.

June 23 being Hospital Sunday, collections in aid of the Mansion House Fund were made in the churches and chapels of the metropolis. The Lord Mayor attended Divine service in Westminster Abbey in the morning, and in the afternoon he was present at St. Paul's Cathedral, where he received the Judges. In the places of worship of the Jewish community collections for the fund were also made on Saturday.

The department of implements in the Royal Agricultural Society's Show at Windsor contained several exhibits particularly worthy of inspection. The largest of these was that of Mr. J. Harrison Carter, milling engineer, of Mark-lane, whose machinery is of very general interest, as it is used by owners of large estates, agricultural chemical manufacturers, manure merchants, corn and fodder grinders, and many other manufacturers, for disintegrating materials of almost every description. Mr. Carter had about a hundred tons of various materials at his stand, to grind during the week. The Coventry Machinists' Company, whose London establishment is on Holborn-viaduct, sent their latest patterns of improved bicycles and tricycles; Messrs. T. J. Syer and Co., some useful carpenters' tools for farm-work; and Mr. G. Cheaver, of Boston, his "Idiocarthartes" water-filter. Among the leading exhibitors were Messrs. Sutton and Sons, the seed merchants, to whom the sowing of all the grass-seeds in the show-yard and the supply of the whole of the floral decorations, including the inside and outside of the Queen's and other pavilions, had been entrusted.

A number of guests assembled on June 24 at Lambeth Palace, by invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, to meet Monsignor Sophronius, Archbishop of Cyprus, who is now on a visit to this country as the guest of the Cyprus Society, an association formed to promote education and hospital work in the island. Amongst the company were the Greek Archimandrite (Monsignor Plessas), General Sir Robert Biddulph, late High Commissioner of Cyprus, and Major-General Sir F. Goldsmid, President of the Educational Committee of the Cyprus Society. The Archbishop, in welcoming his Beatitude, alluded to the ancient and ecclesiastical associations connected with Cyprus, and spoke of the Cyprus Society as an organisation which was earnestly labouring for the benefit of the island. He urged that the best way to help the Eastern Churches was to promote the education of the clergy. Major-General Sir F. Goldsmid read an address of welcome on the part of the Cyprus Society, the main objects of which, he said, might be comprised under two heads—hospital and educational. Sir G. Bowen having also given an address of welcome in Greek, the Archbishop of Cyprus read a reply in Greek, and a vote of thanks to the Archbishop of Canterbury closed the proceedings.

THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY AT WINDSOR.

The Royal Agricultural Society of England, under the Presidency for this year of her Majesty the Queen, opened its annual meeting on Monday, June 24, at the Royal Borough of Windsor, and continued it during the week. The implements department of the show, with the working dairy, had been opened on Saturday, the 22nd, when it was visited by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge. The Prince and Princess of Wales, with some of their family, inspected other departments, the show of cattle, horses, sheep, swine, and produce, on the Tuesday and following days; and the show was honoured by the presence of her Majesty on Thursday and Friday. This is the Jubilee year of the Society, the fiftieth anniversary of the granting of its Charter of Incorporation having been celebrated, on March 26, with a State banquet at St. James's Palace, given by the Queen, and presided over by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, who is acting President of the Society for this year. The present year's show at Windsor was by far the greatest and finest that has ever been held.

The Show-yard, having an extent of a little over 125 acres, was situated in Windsor Great Park, in an open sloping glade, surrounded by the woods of the park. It had been arranged by Mr. Wilson Bannison, surveyor to the Royal Agricultural Society. The entrance to the park was a very handsome structure, first erected for the Newcastle Show, and used last year at Nottingham. On each side of the entrance were the seed stands and the exhibits of other miscellaneous agricultural articles; and next to these, on each side of the yard, was the machinery in motion. The breadth of the yard expanding from the entrance, five avenues of shedding, occupied by implements, seemed to branch out in fan-like form. The centre avenue led to the Queen's Pavilion, a handsome structure built in the middle of the show-ground. This building was the great architectural feature of the scene, having a frontage of 64 ft. and a depth of 54 ft. In the front was a fine porch, over which was a panel containing the Royal arms of England, handsomely executed. At the sides were verandahs from which her Majesty could obtain views of the show in every direction. The porch led into the hall, and the hall into a commodious reception-room, 24 ft. by 18 ft. There was also the luncheon-room, 26 ft. by 18 ft.; and, besides these, there were five other rooms, all luxuriously furnished by Messrs. Shoobred and Co. The Queen's Pavilion was probably the finest building ever erected in any agricultural show-ground. Visitors will also have noticed the Royal box in the centre of the grand stand, surmounted by the Royal arms and the Royal standard of England, where, for the first time, the parades and judging could be witnessed by the Queen and Court.

The total length of shedding erected for the show was 50,069 ft., apportioned as follows:—horses, 8912 ft.; cattle, 12,953 ft.; sheep and pigs, 3978 ft.; implements, 10,803 ft.; machinery in motion, 2538 ft.; refreshments, 1634 ft.; special shedding, 2541 ft.; farm produce, 1200 ft.; herdsmen's rooms, 1944 ft.; miscellaneous purposes, 3566 ft.; all covered with 170,000 square yards of white canvas, supplied by Mr. Unite.

The numbers of live stock entered for this show were—horses, 996; oxen or cattle, 1654 head; sheep, 1109 pens; pigs, 265 pens; poultry, 861 pens; this large display had been brought about by a prize list that is unprecedented in amount.