THE PALL MALL GAZETTE

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TO-NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENTS.

PLAYWRITING UP TO DATE.

THE critics are unanimous this morning in praise of the boldness and originality of the new play by Mr. JONES which was produced at the Haymarket last night. Unpleasant it may well be to the prudes, and tiresome to the frivolous; but to those who look to the drama as a serious and vital element in life, "The Dancing Girl" will be a pleasant relief from the conventional themes and barren motives of so much of modern stage-work. There is no direct preachifying in the play; but there are many good morals. The theme is in many ways unpleasant. A profligate Duke and a wanton woman, who combines the two soul-sides of Quakeress and Dancing Girl are not agreeable characters. But as treated by Mr. JONES they have the great merit of being real. The dramatist has not rung the changes with stock characters on stock themes. He has studied modern society with a fresh eye, and discovered in it motives for original treatment. Of course there are many people who very naturally and properly go to the play only to laugh; and by such people Mr. JONES'S plays may well be voted too strenuous. But in the field of "serious" and "legitimate" drama, Mr. JONES has in his recent works achieved the great success of revealing, in original fields, the dramatic element in modern life. The permanent elements of great tragedy are the same in all ages. Pity, and pathos, and fate know no change of time or circumstances. The work of the dramatist in each age is to reveal the working of the great laws of moral necessity, and the play of tragic feelings, beneath the characteristic conditions of his own time. The author of "The Middleman" and "The Dancing Girl" has many defects; but he has at least the virtue of perceiving and rendering the dramatic texture of modern life.

It is a very shallow view which supposes that motives for great dramas are to be found only in the past—in events as hackneyed and as old as "Pelops' line Or the tale of Troy divine." To take the large events of only a single year, how magnificent a field for an historical tragedy there would be in the story, freely treated, of Prince BISMARCK'S fall! Treated, we mean, as a SHAKSPEARE (or a BLOWITZ) would treat it. The journalist may have invented, as they say, but the dramatist would certainly have utilized, that splendidly dramatic incident of the visit to the Empress FREDERICK. The fall of WOLSEY offered no such material. There was no interview between the Cardinal tottering to his fall and, say, Queen KATHARINE. Nothing could be conceived more dramatic than the scene of the old Chancellor, scarcely able as yet to credit the determination of his King to cast him off, unable to conceive his office without himself or himself without his office, humbling himself to sue for aid in his weakness from the woman whom all the days of his power he had set himself to thwart and belittle. Coldly yet sadly the Empress answers him that BISMARCK has made her powerless to help BISMARCK, that it is idle now for the very hand which destroyed her influence with her son to clutch at it as if it still had power to avert his fall. What a scene! It is just one of those which concentrate the essence of a period or a life-time into one intense passage, appealing to the strongest and simplest human instincts. The proud old man bows his head, and goes out in silence; at a window, perhaps, a procession is seen passing with red flags flying: the cries and catchwords typical of the new era of labour come floating in; and the intent house can hardly keep back its applause to the end of the soliloquy bidding "farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness."

Or if an English dramatist preferred a theme nearer home, could anything more magnificently tragic be imagined than the fall of Mr. PARNELL? Mr. JONES has found scope for much interesting psychology in the story of the Dancing Girl and her ducal lover; but it cannot compare for a moment in opportunities for subtle characterization with the story of what Mr. GLADSTONE well called "The Two Mr. PARNELLS," Mr. PARNELL at Eltham, and Mr. PARNELL at Westminster; Mr. PARNELL before Mr. Justice HANNEN, and Mr. PARNELL before Mr. Justice BUTT; as Hero and as Co-respondent; as alternately belauded and denounced by his English allies; as the terror and then the target of his Irish followers: what possibilities of "situations" there are in all these contrasts! And, as for the play of motive, only a psychology informed by the genius of a great dramatist could hope to unravel and explain one of the most perplexing, and therefore one of the most fascinating, characters in modern history. And then behind the strange story of the PARNELL Crisis, with its piquant situations, its perplexity of motives, its reverses of fortune, how superbly there moves the figure, as it were, of Necessity; with what awful and unerring effect the Moral Law is seen to work its irresistible way, making men and policies alike subservient to its justification. In the rough and tumble of party strife, we seldom seize the larger significance and the broader motives in the events of our own day. These it is which the dramatist might interpret to us. Perhaps, if Mr. JONES could forget the fear of the Lord Chamberlain and the fate of "The Happy Land," he might yet write a great PARNELL play. It is a pity that the subject should be wasted on the Pantomime.

SOME RELICS OF ROSSETTI.

MY father had a great respect for art, but very little for artists. In the sixties he knew D. G. Rossetti, F. Sandys, E. Burne-Jones, A. C. Swinburne, and others of the Pre-Raphaelite cult in literature and painting, and in the bulk they had but little honour in his land. Still he always spoke of Rossetti as a grand man; head and shoulders above his associates, with a magnetic personality charged with greatness, although with an unromantic eye to the main chance. I was accordingly surprised to find my father, about three years ago, in the Gothic act of destroying a bundle of original Rossetti letters. Some had already perished, but a dozen or so remained, and the extracts now given have been taken from the salvage stock at the request of the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette.*

A number of these letters form an interesting series, and might be called "The history of a picture's birth." The picture is the "Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee," and is referred to on pages 82 and 278 of Mr. W. M. Rossetti's description of his brother "as designer and writer" which was published last year. It is there spoken of as "a smallish sketch in oils," but, as will be seen, it should have been able to lay claim to being more than a sketch. The letters and the whole transaction throw an interesting light on the life and nature of the man. Early in 1863 my father was introduced to Rossetti by Frederick Sandys, and, on being shown a photograph of the original pen-and-ink design, was struck with the beauty of the conception, and gave a commission for an oil on the same lines at the price of 200 guineas. The dimensions were to be 21 inches by 24, as appears from a businesslike letter of the artist of June, 1863. It was understood that a larger picture on the same subject was in commission, and this is certainly that referred to in Mr. W. M. Rossetti's book on page 47 as being suggested to Mr. Heugh.

Some time at the beginning of June, in 1863, my father wrote to Rossetti, asking him to undertake not to paint a third picture on the same subject, and in reply he received the following—excellently illustrative of the "eye to the main chance:"—

> I think I ought hardly to preclude myself from making, if I wish, a small copy of the Magdalene picture after the large one is finished. The commission for the large picture was taken some years ago and at a price greatly below what I should now ask, and I ought, therefore, to reserve as far as possible the power of making further earnings in connection with it. Nevertheless, it is very possible, and even probable, that I might never have the patience to do the thing a third time after yours and the large one. . . .

Now, not only was the large picture never finished, but it appears from Mr. W. M. Rossetti's researches that it was not even definitely commissioned, for a hitch had occurred between the painter and Mr. Heugh

OUR KITH AND KIN.

BLUNDERS OF YOUNG NATAL.

Examination blunders are a never-failing joy, and the queer muddles they discover to us as existing in the heads of children—whether colonial children or home-grown—are worthy of close study by all teachers. In Natal the head Education Inspector has issued a report embalming some of this educational material. Young Natal is not quite clear even about Dark Continent affairs. It holds that "Bishop Colenso he died at Khartoum," and that while besieging the same town Cardinal Wolsey was killed. What some of the children know of Stanley's latest discoveries is that "Stanley went to relieve the Psah"; "Stanley sailed round the globe to find a water-way to India, but ran against America"; he "met pimgies and Livingstone in the African forest"; he "is still going on discovering places"; he "bad secretly arranged his marriage before leaving England"; and "the Queen is very pleased with Mr. Stanley for discovering so much of the Nile."

LORD CARRINGTON'S COLONIAL IMPRESSIONS.

A special meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute has been summoned for Monday evening, January 26, not at the Métropole as usual, but at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, to hear Lord Carrington, the late Governor of New South Wales, discourse on "Australia as I Saw It." In compliment to his old and early friend and companion, the Prince of Wales, president of the Institute, will take the chair.

COUNSEL FOR CANADA.

Sir John Sparrow David Thompson, whose sudden appearance in the Supreme Court of the United States has created a new situation in the Behring's Sea dispute and a flutter at Washington, is "Minister of Justice" as well as Attorney-General for Canada. Curiously enough, when a practising barrister at Halifax he acted (with the American lawyers) as counsel for the United States before the Fishery Commission then sitting under the Treaty of Washington, so he is not without experience in International disputes. In 1878, when only thirty-four years old, he became Attorney-General of Nova Scotia, and for a couple of months in 1882 he was premier of that province, but left politics for the bench, only to leave the bench for politics three years later, when given his present place in the Federal Cabinet. His father was an Irish Protestant, a native of Waterford, but Sir John has turned Catholic, and in the Dominion Parliament he represents a Nova Scotian county (Antigonish) inhabited largely by Roman Catholics of Highland Scottish descent. The feat for which he is best known to Canadians generally is his great speech in defence of the Jesuit Estates Act of the "Liberal" Government at Quebec, which the Conservative Government at Ottawa was in vain implored to veto in the interests of religious equality.

PARLIAMENTARY PORTMANTEAUX.

We have heard before now of the trunk full of stationery (including a handsome paper-cutter) which awaits every member of the Canadian Parliament on his arrival in Ottawa at the beginning of the session. But it seems that the legislator's salary is also supplemented by a portmanteau! Now a House Committee has decided that a new portmanteau every session for each law-maker is just a little too generous, and that one valise per Parliament will suffice. Three hundred of superior quality, solid leather, to cost £5 a piece, have been ordered to start with, though the present Parliament has only about a year of life before it at most. The members of the Press gallery, it appears, have also been getting valises—this being in harmony with the discreet policy of allowing newspapers the use of her Majesty's mails gratis from one end of the Dominion to the other—but no improvement in quality is promised for them. The "Parliamentary hands," and heads of the Civil Service, by-the-bye, also enjoy the freedom of the mails, and the privilege is often abused, an M.P.'s signature on an envelope serving to carry a good deal besides the M.P.'s correspondence.

SAMOAN AFFAIRS.

Things seem disorganized in Louis Stevenson's land. King Malietoa obstinately refuses to form a Government until the arrival of the Chief Justice appointed under the provisions of the Berlin Treaty. In the meantime, says a correspondent, "crimes of all descriptions, especially in the outlying districts, have been alarmingly prevalent, and scarcely any efforts have been made to discover and punish the offenders." The name of another of our story tellers is soon to be represented in Samoa, as we are told that Mr. Basset Haggard, a brother of Mr. Rider of that ilk, will represent Great Britain on the Samoan Land Commission.

THE ANNEXATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

"It is the opinion of Newfoundlanders in Canada," says the Montreal *Daily Witness*, "that public feeling in favour of joining the Dominion has grown greatly during recent years. The middle class, who think for themselves, are said to be now as strongly in favour of confederation as formerly they were opposed to it. The official class and wealthier merchants are believed to be still, as they always have been, opposed to confederation. Since the extension of the franchise the power has passed from their hands to that of the fishermen. The fishermen and labourers of the eastern districts are held to have no opinion on the question. The manifesto of the Prefect Apostolic, in the name of the people of the western part, in favour of union with Canada, may start a movement all over the island." If Newfoundland enters the Dominion before the present dispute with France is settled, however, it is feared that inter-racial troubles may be the result in Canada itself.

Sandys had at this time just gone down to Norwich on a visit to us, and had paid a farewell call at Rossetti's :—

I hear Sandys called here yesterday while I was gone to Hampton Races with Val Prinsep.

Imagine Rossetti at "Hampton Races with Val Prinsep"—sombre, in inverness cape, deep-eyed and deep-thinking, as he looks in our portrait. This sketch is taken from a signed photograph by Messrs. W. and D. Downey of Newcastle-on-Tyne, dated about 1863, and now in my possession. I presume a satisfactory answer was sent, for the next letter is dated June 20 and merely states that "the picture being already in hand I shall be glad to receive the £70 by return as you kindly propose." A second £70 seems to have been sent in 1864, but no more was heard of the picture for nearly two years. In the meantime, in February, 1864, a pair of live pea fowl were sent to 16, Cheyne-walk, from our house, and these brought a picturesque acknowledgment :—

The peacocks have arrived safely and are gorgeous beyond expression, real treasures! I have housed them for the moment in a large disused servant's hall on the basement, but am going to have other provision made for them immediately. Many and many thanks for them. The cock seems very tame and tractable. The hen less so as yet.

These birds were probably one of the commencing links of the chain that led to the little bull Mr. Whistler would remember so well.

On the 4th of December, 1864, Rossetti introduces himself in a new character. Speaking of a water-colour of Legros's, now in my possession, he writes :—

You will receive the drawing of the "Death of St. Francis" in a day or two. . . . You must know I have generally been his business secretary, but he will have another now, as he has got married.

It is not every one who can boast of having had a Rossetti for a private secretary; nor is it every one who would have exchanged him for such a commonplace substitute as a wife.

The "Magdalene" reappears on 1st May, 1865: "I am taking your 'Magdalene' in hand again, and shall have finished it without fail in six weeks or two months *at latest*, probably earlier." The letter goes on, after some apologies for the long delay, to ask for the remainder of "its price now on its last resumption instead of on delivery," and then gives us an insight into the great man's business habits :—

If you will oblige me in this, may I ask you to send me the money on receipt of the present letter, in the form of two Bank of England notes for £50 and £20 respectively by post registered, in which form I know by frequent experience that they will reach me quite safely. I always request, when it occurs to me, that money may be sent thus, as cheques, particularly country cheques, give me much trouble through my having no banker.

The eye to the main chance here gives a glint, slightly dimmed with the most artistic lack of business habit in having no banking account—the eye of the picture-seller suffused with a poet's glamour. On the 3rd of May :—

The Academy reviews are generally "much of a muchness" I fear. I suppose, as things go, the *Athenæum* is likely to be as tolerable as any. I have not yet seen the Exhibition myself. Sandys' picture is in one of the best places, and Whistler and Legros are well placed. Indeed, the hanging this year is, I believe, better than usual.

These be sayings for all time. The "I fear" and "as tolerable as any" are touches that will always come home to an artist. The only one that would now seem archaic is the choice of the *Athenæum*. Sandys's pictures this year were "Gentle Spring" and "Cassandra;" Legros's "Le Lutrin;" and Whistler's "The Golden Screen," "The Scarf," and "The Little White Girl." And the *Athenæum* was by no means unstinted in its praise. The last letter of the series is dated July 6th, 1865, and was written to my mother. It is of sufficient interest to give at length :—

To-day I am sending you the "Mary Magdalene" by passenger train, so I hope it will not be long on the road. I may as well describe it a little to help out my idea, though, indeed, I believe you would find it plain enough. The scene represents two houses opposite each other, one of which is that of Simon the Pharisee, where Christ and Simon, with other guests, are seated at table. At the opposite house a great banquet is held, and feasters are trooping to it dressed in cloth of gold and crowned with flowers. The musicians play at the doors, and each couple kiss as they enter. Mary Magdalene has been in this procession, but has suddenly turned aside at the sight of Christ, and is pressing forward up to the steps of Simon's house, and casting the roses from her hair. At her side is the alabaster box of ointment. Her lover and a woman have followed her out of the procession, and are laughingly trying to turn her back. The woman bars the door with her arm. Those nearest Magdalene in the group of feasters have stopped short in wonder, and are looking after her, while a beggar girl offers them flowers from her basket. A girl near the front of the procession has caught sight of Mary, and waves her garland to turn her back. Beyond this the narrow street abuts on the high road and river. The young girl seated on the steps is a little beggar who has had food given her from within the house, and is wondering to see Mary go in there, knowing her as a famous woman in the city. Simon looks disdainfully at her, and the servant, who is setting a dish on the table, smiles, knowing her too. Christ looks towards her from within, waiting till she shall reach Him. A fawn crops the vine on the wall below the window where Christ is seen; and some fowls gather to share the beggar girl's dinner, giving a kind of equivalent to Christ's words: "Yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." . . . .

Much of Rossetti's poetry was written before 1863, but the poet's pen has not forgotten its cunning in this letter—particularly as the apparent appreciation of the work is artificial. Turning to Mr. W. M. Rossetti's book, p. 82, I read :—

It seems that about this time a so-called Magdalene (which I infer to be an oil sketch of the frequently mentioned design, "Mary Magdalene at the door of Simon the Pharisee") was in the hands of Mr. Clabburn, a Norwich manufacturer and art collector, whom my brother had known for several years, and it was likely to be sold off by auction. In this, as in most other cases, my brother regarded the chances of an auction-room as likely to serve his interests amiss. He was therefore well pleased when Mr. Howell purchased the work from Mr. Clabburn, and sent it to Bradford to find another buyer. Messrs. Heaton and Brayshay became the purchasers at a price of £220, on the understanding that the painter would retouch the work. Mr. Rae was inclined to buy it in the autumn of 1874, but *Rossetti wrote of it in discouraging terms both as to its then actual value and as to the sum which would be needed for fully working it up, and the project was dropped.*

The italics are mine, and remind me that my father doubted if the "oil sketch" was all the work of Rossetti's hand. It is sadly strange to think that the painter and poet who could so enter into the beauty of his subject, and imagine detail in so fascinating a way, should never have completed the larger fulfilment of his conception; and that all the loveliness of the composition of the work should have been needed to redeem technique that was slovenly, and fated to be written of "in discouraging terms." One thinks of Rossetti as a dreamy idealist living amidst beautiful thoughts and their realizations. As a matter of fact he was a keen man of business, and would have made a capital Bond-street picture-dealer. No one can speak slightingly of the glorious delicacy of his verse or the ethereal charm of his painting, but the man was an extraordinary mixture of art and accounts, and it is to be feared that the latter occasionally overshadowed the former. The history of the picture's birth is typical of the maker of the picture; and the picture itself, lovely of design, incorrect in drawing, unpunctually finished, and almost haggled over, is typical too. A signed photograph of it is before me as I write, and the only thing requisite to make the understanding of it complete is Rossetti's own sonnet. Here it is :—

"Why wilt thou cast the roses from thine hair?
Nay, be thou all a rose—wreath, lips, and cheek.
Nay, not this house—that banquet-house we seek—
See how they kiss and enter; come thou there.
This delicate day of love we two will share
Till at our ear love's whispering night shall speak.
What, sweet one—holds't thou still the foolish freak?
Nay, when I kiss thy feet they'll leave the stair."
"Oh, loose me. See'st thou not my Bridegroom's face
That draws me to Him? For His feet my kiss,
My hair, my tears, He craves to-day; and oh!
What words can tell what other day and place
Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet of His?
He needs me, calls me, loves me: let me go."

I enjoy this sonnet, but I should like to see the correspondence with the publishers.

H. J. CLABBURN.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

Sir William Harcourt's outspoken letter will serve a useful purpose in reminding the Irish members and the Irish people of their full responsibility in this crisis. Home Rule as a matter of immediately practical politics is only possible "if Mr. Parnell and his (present) policy are finally rejected by the Irish people. It is in their hands that the issue as between Home Rule and Coercion rests." The sooner this final decision is made apparent, the better for everybody. The harm which Mr. O'Brien has done by his Boulogne negotiations is to prolong the period of uncertainty. We are invited, indeed, to count confidently on Mr. Parnell's retirement as the result of these negotiations; but if the retirement be a real one, and not merely a temporary sham, what will Mr. Parnell have gained? And Mr. Parnell is not exactly the man to give up everything for nothing.

The United Unionists :—

1. Mr. Chamberlain: "Home Rule is as dead as Queen Anne."
2. Lord Derby: "Home Rule is not dead; don't you believe that!"

Who will say that malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness are not valuable qualities in a politician? The art of suggesting the lowest possible motives for every action of every opponent is a most useful part of the political stock-in-trade, and it is one in which Lord Derby must be congratulated as a past master. He suggested yesterday in reference to Mr. Parnell's opponents :—

(1) Of the Roman Catholic hierarchy: that their real motive was to get rid of a Protestant.

(2) Of the Liberal leaders: that their real motive was fear and jealousy of a strong leader.

(3) As to the morals of Irish members: though Mr. Parnell is not a saint, he is quite good enough for the lot he has to do with.

None of these suggestions are things which can be brought to the test one way or another, but that is the beauty of them; and they serve their turn.

Lord Derby said last night quite truly that he was generally accused of throwing cold water. On this occasion, however, it was mud rather than water that he threw. Here are the terms in which he referred to the "Patriot" majority of the Irish Parliamentary Party :—

They have grovelled before him [Mr. Parnell], they have taken his money, and accepted from him seats in Parliament, and they are only following the natural instincts of men of that sort in jumping upon him when he is down.

Now this is not only cruelly uncharitable, but it is demonstrably false. As long as the Irish members followed their "natural instincts" they loyally supported Mr. Parnell. It was only when they were brought under the sway of reason and necessity that they threw him over. This is a free country, and Lord Derby is of course at liberty to think as meanly of the Irish members as he pleases; but, as a responsible politician, he ought to make his judgments correspond in some sort with notorious facts. And why "*his* money?" It can't be that and "American gold" at the same time, you know.

The reports from Chili are vague, contradictory, and alarming. Mr. Patrick Egan telegraphs to Mr. Blaine that the disturbances are of a local and partial character, but that is not consistent with the report that the navy have blockaded the coast, and are even threatening to bombard ports. The interpretation put upon their action is this—that the fleet, with the leaders of the revolutionary party on board, have left the President and the army in possession of the capital, and have proceeded to take possession of the province of Tarapaca, which, with its nitrates, is the great source of Chilian revenue. As President Balmaceda has only a few months of his tenure of office to run he may find it discreet to come to terms; otherwise civil war in dead earnest may be the result.

A case at the Worship-street police-court is worth filing, for it is a sample of hundreds. A boy, who, in Mr. Montagu Williams's words, looked half-starved, was charged with begging. The policeman who took him up looked up the address in Spitalfields which he gave, and found the father, mother, and two other children also half-starved :—

The boy's father was called, and stated that he had not sent his son out, but they were all wanting food. Mr. Williams asked him why he did not go into the workhouse. The man said he did not like to, as he could not get out to look for work and might miss a day. Mr. Williams: But surely that "looking for work" is a forlorn hope. The man: But if we don't look for it it will not come.

There (for, as Mr. Williams said, there are thousands of such cases in London), you have the need for General Booth's "City Colony" writ large. Already the labour yard in Thames-street does something for such cases as this; but though the man can work his meal and bed there, and still be free to go looking for employment, he cannot take his family with him.

The *Times* remarks this morning that "controversy is impossible" on the subject of Parnellism-cum-Pigottism. This is perfectly true. *Litera scripta manet.* Lord Salisbury, Sir Edward Clarke, and the *Times* have committed themselves in black and white to backing Mr. Parnell; and there is no more room for controversy on the Parnellism, in the sense we have alleged it, of the *Times* than there is on its Pigottism.

Here are two stories from the East-end, which show the futility of generalizing about the poor :—

No. 1. A clergyman notices a small boy haranguing an admiring crowd of school children. On inquiry he finds that the boy is relating, with an exuberance of ghastly detail, how on the previous evening his father had battered out the grandmother's brains with a heavy saucepan, because the dinner was spoiled. The evident feeling of the narrator is pride; of the audience, admiration mixed with envy.

No. 2. A district visitor discovers a woman in a condition of utter and unmistakable destitution. The visitor at once promises to send round some soup. The woman thanks her, and says she would indeed be glad of it. But "I ought to tell you that the woman upstairs is worse off than I am. She has two little children, and they have none of them had a mouthful of food for two days."

The medical inspection of twenty-four of the "Gymnasien" and "Realschulen" in Prussia has brought out the disagreeable fact that out of 9,244 scholars no fewer than 37 per cent. suffer from shortsightedness. In the sixth class (the lowest) the average was 22 per cent; in the fifth, 27 per cent.; in the fourth, 36 per cent.; in the third, 46 per cent.; in the second, 55 per cent.; while in the first class it was 58 per cent. These figures prove that there is a regular and uninterrupted development of shortsightedness going forward step by step with the process of secondary education. The statistical inquiry ought to be extended to the universities. Something must be wrong when the price to be paid for intellectual light is physical darkness.

The wiseacres who have been "talking tall" of late as to the tremendous reaction which has followed the enthusiasm excited by Dr. Koch's discovery of a consumption cure should read the doctor's article on the subject which came out yesterday in the *Deutsche Medisinische Wochenschrift.* It is all very well for those who know little or nothing about it to say that more people have been killed than cured by the remedy, but if they would take the trouble to look at Dr. Koch's first statement as to the curative properties of his lymph they would see that he made a special point of warning the public over and over again in the most emphatic manner that he could not guarantee a cure of tuberculosis in any but the initial stages of the disease. This statement Dr. Koch now repeats :—

During the past six weeks (he says) I myself have had the opportunity to bring together further experiences touching the curative effects and diagnostic application of the remedy in the cases of about 150 sufferers from tuberculosis of the most varied types in this city and the Moabit hospitals, and I can only say that everything that I have latterly seen accords with my previous observations, and that there is nothing to modify in what I before reported.

But drowning men clutch at straws, and it was only natural that poor consumptives, though their lungs were as perforated as sponges, should insist upon trying the cure, with the result that, owing to the strong effect of the lymph, against which their weakened system was unable to battle, they hasten their own doom, which was as inevitable as the fall of the leaf in October.

The Theatres.

"THE DANCING GIRL" AT THE HAYMARKET THEATRE.

MR. HENRY ARTHUR JONES'S new play is, without doubt, a work of singular power and originality. It is long, indeed, since so thought-compelling a drama has been seen on our stage. In largeness of conception and boldness of design the author may certainly be said to have left his previous efforts far behind. "The Dancing Girl" is essentially a play founded on new ideas, and these new ideas have a remarkable fascination about them. They may not appeal to all. Perhaps it is in the play's favour that it is bound to excite keen controversy. Especially will it be a feast for the psychologists, who will find in its characters abundant material for close analysis. And yet the primary effects are straightforward and intelligible enough. It is only when one endeavours to trace accurately the innermost details of the mental workings which are so incessant throughout the piece that any difficulty or doubt arises. Beyond all question this slight obscurity may be easily accounted for by the many stumbling-blocks which lie across the path of so intricate a production at its initial performance. A word missed here and a gesture forgotten there would naturally account for much in a play like "The Dancing Girl." But on future occasions there need be nothing of this kind. We shall look forward to seeing this most novel and enthralling drama again in a few days. By that time the inevitable rough corners will have been smoothed down, and much that was possibly unaccountable to those who watched the play last night will be rendered perfectly clear and transparent.

But let us indicate the course of Mr. Jones's strange story. The Isle of St. Endellion, off the rugged coast of Cornwall, is mainly peopled by a little community of Quakers. Among these are honest young John Christison, David Ives, a more elderly "Friend," and his daughter Faith. At the opening of the play the neighbourhood happens to be honoured by the presence of the Duke of Guisebury, the lord of the manor, who has not visited his tenants for many years. An elder sister of Faith's, Drusilla Ives, is also in the island, whither she has come from her permanent abiding-place in London. This soft-eyed Quakeress is beautiful to look upon, and, at first sight, modest and demure. But we soon learn her secret. She lives a double life. When she visits her Cornish relatives she wears the grey garb and sober aspect of her society. But in London she is the witching, wanton mistress of the Duke, whom we now see strolling over the rocks. Her history has been simple enough. There is no deadly evil in her disposition. She has fallen a victim to the careless admiration of her protector as a kind of revolt against the fetters which have bound her to a strict existence from her earliest years. She has a mere fragment of a heart, and that is sought by John Christison, who, in ignorance of the truth, worships her as a goddess of purity and virtue. She refuses him with careless scorn, but immediately afterwards chance reveals to him what she really is. The discovery of the fact that the girl he adores is vile and worthless does not cure Christison's passion. He follows her to London, becomes her willing slave, and deceives her father as to her whereabouts. But the end of his bondage comes in a scene of really tremendous force. The siren finds her powers over the man are waning, and yet in her fitful way she has begun to love him. She tells him of that love and he is nearly conquered, when, rallying all his strength, he spurns her and, refusing to sacrifice his soul for her, flies madly from her presence. So telling is this episode, and so magnificently is it played by Mr. Fred Terry and Miss Julia Neilson, that the effect of the subsequent scene, in which Drusilla, hearing of the Duke's impending ruin, announces her intention of leaving him, is somewhat diminished. Still, it is very beautiful, this quiet despair of the man who at length learns how bitter is the burden of adversity. Admirably does Mr. Tree realize the situation, and once again a storm of applause echoes through the theatre. But it is in the next act that the story reaches its climax, "The Last Feast!" What a striking *crescendo* movement! First, the careless parting conversation between the Duke and his mistress; then the soliloquy in which the broken aristocrat makes his last preparations for the suicide on which he has set his mind; then the strains of music and the arrival of the guests all ignorant of the coming catastrophe; and then the denouement brought about by David Ives, who bursts into the gorgeous hall to launch curses at the head of his fallen daughter. But it is the final moment of the act which sets a crown on all that has gone before by reason of its supreme impressiveness. The manner in which the Duke is saved from his last mad crime by the crippled daughter of his Cornish agent must be seen to be properly appreciated. Sybil Crake, as this good genius is named, is perhaps the most cleverly drawn character in the play. It is she who is the guiding light of the wayward aristocrat's life, even before he is aware of it, and it is she who leads him finally to "the desired haven" of true love and true godliness. The hapless dancing-girl dies in a far country; but her old adorer John Christison finds a wife in her sister Faith, whose heart has been his from the first.

It is impossible, within the brief space of this notice, to call attention to one tithe of the details and inner working of this remarkable play. It has faults, of course. After the storm and stress of his earlier acts, the dramatist has found it difficult to bring his story to a conclusion in any other than a somewhat conventional and haphazard manner. But it seems to us that on the splendid foundation furnished by his theme a very little careful emendation would prevent the "pitch" of the piece falling to any marked extent. In any case, additional familiarity with the text on the part of one or two members of the cast will make all the difference in the world to a play which must be unhesitatingly set down as one of the most striking dramatic works of the present epoch.

"The Dancing Girl" is excellently acted throughout. Mr. Tree, to his honour be it said, has not been attracted by the play for the sake of a "star" part. The Duke of Guisebury is only one of many fine characters. The actor, however, misses none of the opportunities to which we have already referred, and his whole performance is as full of careful detail as one would have expected. A few days must necessarily pass before familiarity brings absolute ease, but that is generally the case when an actor-manager assumes a new part. Mr. Fred Terry plays admirably as John Christison, especially in the second act, where his chance occurs; and Mr. James Fernandez draws an excellent portrait of the unhappy heroine's rigid father. Mr. Fred Kerr has been furnished with an irresistible light comedy part, which he treats in an absolutely faultless manner; Mr. Allan is of no little service as the Cornish agent Crake; while capital work is also done by Miss Rose Leclercq, Miss Blanche Horlock, Mrs. E. H. Brooke, and Miss Adelaide Gunn. The character of Mrs. Christison strikes us as altogether redundant. Miss Julia Neilson has attempted nothing more ambitious than the excessively difficult part of Drusilla Ives. Her reading of the character is wonderfully clever throughout, and were it not for her occasional lapses into exaggeration it would be entitled to unqualified praise. As it is, she may be most heartily congratulated on her exquisitely natural acting at the climax of the second act, and in a lesser degree for the tragic intensity which preceded her final exit. We cannot imagine the part of Sybil Crake being played better than Miss Norreys plays it.