

owner and therefore a proper subject for spoliation. It is nothing to him that the life of the pioneer and the homesteader is one of suffering and privation scarcely conceivable even in a New York tenement-house. Eventually the pioneer and homesteader becomes a land-owner. Eventually his land yields rent or has rental value. This, according to the George philosophy, should be summarily confiscated, and the demand of the homesteader for compensation should be met by saying, "Sir, you robbed me yesterday and the day before and the day before that. Why should I allow you to rob me to-day and to-morrow also? Your rental value is sending children to early graves, and young girls to brothels, and grown men to grog-shops and prisons, and the human race to perdition. We will not trouble ourselves about your compensation any more than we troubled ourselves about compensating the slave-owners for the loss of their so-called property."

Mr. George does not employ concrete examples of this type to illustrate his principles. He prefers rather the grasping railway corporation, with its land grant, the foreign lord who buys out the homesteader after he has subdued his land and perfected his title, the dweller in cities who derives an income from rents of land either rural or urban—anything for illustration except the hardworking farmer or the pioneer facing a winter in Dakota, with no food but frozen potatoes, and no fuel but twisted hay. But he includes them by the necessity of his iron-bound doctrine. Rental value is rental value, whether the possessor is poor or rich, useful or useless, good, bad, or indifferent. His scheme admits no exceptions. The admission of exceptions would scatter it in ruins.

Now, there is not the slightest danger that Mr. George's land doctrines will make any headway in this country. It is only the tendency of them that calls for examination at this time. Mr. Hewitt was perfectly right in saying that this tendency is towards class distinctions. The Henry George movement has acquired such force as it possesses solely because Mr. George's writings tend to draw a deep line between the land-owning class and all other classes. The picture he draws is that of a particular portion of the community rolling in wealth at the expense of the laboring masses. This has captivated the eye of a large number of voters who make no distinctions between sources of wealth, and to whom Mr. George's notions respecting rent and interest are as unintelligible as Sanskrit, and who, in fact, care nothing about those things. To them Mr. George represents only the so-called "conflict between capital and labor," which Mr. Arthur rightly says does not exist, but is only a misnomer for the conflict between thrift and idleness.

THE CZAR AND HIS PEOPLE.

CZAR ALEXANDER III. is at this moment the man in Europe whose disposition, temper, and intentions are most speculated about. His shadowy movements and violent expressions of an autocratic will are scrutinized with more eager curiosity even than the doings and utterances of Prince Bismarck, who is uni-

versally looked upon as the arbiter of the destinies of the Continent. The German Chancellor is felt to be in an expectant mood, and firmly bent on keeping his purposes, in the present complicated state of European affairs, undisclosed, while the Czar is irritated to a degree of passion which betrays him to the eye of the world. His excited temper, which menaces the peace of Europe, is attributed to a morbid condition brought about by constant exasperation and the never-slumbering fear of assassins. Stories are told of murders committed by his guardians and by his own hands upon persons innocently approaching him. Hereditary insanity is supposed by some to be at the bottom of his strange dealings with Bulgaria, for his great-grandfather, the Emperor Paul, was strangled as a madman, and his grand-uncle, the Grand Duke Constantine, was deemed more or less insane when the crown which belonged to him on the demise of Alexander I. was taken, not without his consent, by his younger brother Nicholas.

All these speculations, however, are of only secondary interest in the light of Russian history, profoundly examined. Russian autocrats are in reality autocrats only in name. The Czar's power is a "despotism tempered by assassination" and also by the will of a controlling portion of the people. Such it has been at least since the death of Peter the Great. It is the Czar's surroundings, supported or swayed by the higher ranks in the army, or a strong popular current, that in the long run shape the policy of the Empire. The wars of Alexander I., of Nicholas, of Alexander II., were wars of the nation just as much as were those of parliamentary England under the lead of Pitt, of Castlereagh, or of Beaconsfield. It was the ambition of generals and the fanaticism of the people (in a limited sense) that decided the powerful attacks on the Ottoman Empire in 1828, in 1853, and in 1877. Russia has had no conqueror, no warlike monarch, on the throne during the present century, but the Russians are a conquering nation. Alexander I. was peace-loving, Nicholas a domestic tyrant, content with his vast dominions and indirect dictation abroad; Alexander II., a good-natured and timid ruler. But not one of them was strong enough to resist a war pressure emanating from the restlessness of the army and the people. Enough is known of Alexander III. to warrant the assertion that he is neither bellicose nor greedy of conquest; that he would like to live in peace if he could; that he is not inclined to risk defeat and bankruptcy for the slender chance of one day entering Constantinople in triumph. Nor are his nearest advisers, De Giers, Tolstoi, and Pobiedonostzeff, men of fighting propensities. But he is pushed along by an irresistible warlike and expansive current formed by the desire of his army officers for promotion, emoluments, and distinction, and by the fanaticism of Slavophiles, Panslavists, and revolutionary world-regenerators. His own passion is, in the main, a reflex one.

Ambition and the love of public activity find in Russia only one honorable field; that of war. Domestic activity is servitude under most degrading conditions. The highest offi-

cials in the civil service are mere tools. There is no parliamentary arena, no room for manly leadership through the press or the rostrum. Independence of view in the field of literature frequently leads to martyrdom in Siberia, insanity, or premature death in one form or other. Russian literary biography is full of evidences of this monstrous fatality. Honors, popularity, and real eminence, however, lie in the path of the brave soldier. The acts of the hero, of the commander, are his own; he is rewarded as a leader, not as a servile instrument. And Russia is not a decrepit country: myriads of her sons long for action, for fame, for manly excitement. Some look for gratification in the ranks of the army, others in those of conspiring fraternities, others enter the lists of masked journalism; all make for change, for expansion, for war. The followers of such loyal Slavophiles as Aksakoff and Katkoff, the turbulent Panslavists of the school of Fadeyeff and Tcherniayeff, the would-be Skobelevs and Gurkos, all meet on the same ground of aggressive hostility to the Turk, the Magyar, and the Austrian. The Nihilists help along in order to plunge the hated Government into perilous enterprises which might lead to a Russian Sedan, a republican overthrow, and a Moscow Commune. The Russian Government is at this moment, as it was in 1877, both honestly and treacherously goaded into war. Not a voice in the press is raised for peace, for the rights of Bulgaria, for moderation or caution. The heads of the army are anxious to fight. The Czar is maddened by the clamor. The more prudent counsellors must veil their advice. Fear of Germany alone keeps the sword in the scabbard—that is, keeps Alexander III. from speaking the fatal word of command. When France is ready to join in action, that word may be spoken—not because the Czar wills it from pride or madness, but because his nation's patriotism and chauvinism demand it.

THE LATEST ENGLISH MESSIAH.

MARLESFORD, ENG., September 30, 1886.

ON Saturday, the 18th instant, died, near Lymington, a woman who, as the foundress of a crazy superstition, reminds one immediately of Anne Lee. Like that fanatic, though probably without conscious imitation, she gave out that she was the second Christ, and, like her, announced that she should never die. Of both, likewise, the sectators, in consequence of the boisterous and gymnastic character of what passed (with them) for devotional exercises, acquired the designation of Shakers.

Mary Ann Girling was the eldest of the fourteen children of William Clouting, by his wife Emma, whose maiden surname was Gibbs; both of them belonging to the agricultural laboring class. Her birthplace was Tinker Brook, a hamlet of Little Glemham, about four miles from Wickham Market, in East Suffolk. The house in which she first saw the light was torn down a few years ago.

Her schooling was of the scantiest. In her girlhood, besides being an intrepid hoyden, she made herself somewhat notorious by her lawless freedom with young men. For several years, later on, she earned her living as a domestic servant in various places; and she also found employment as a dressmaker. In due course she married a man of the name of George Girling, a

sailor by calling, of Thebarton, near Saxmundham. Her middle age, quite in keeping with her youth, was by no means reputable. For a while she, at that time, supported herself by helping to smuggle and peddle spirits. The story is still told by those who, on their word, were directly cognizant of the circumstances, that on one occasion, when the officers of justice were in pursuit of her, she boldly walked out of a house where she had been in hiding, disguised in her husband's clothes, and, with a cigar in her mouth, passed close by a policeman who was lying in wait for her, and thus effected her escape.

No one was at all surprised when, by and by, she left her husband and took up with another man. After a season she returned, indeed, to her home, but only soon to leave it again, and then for good, in company with a male companion, as before. Her plea was that her husband was deficient in piety up to her own high standard. From the very outset, her ways, for a religious teacher, were certainly abnormal. For instance, she and her new mate, who were incessantly peregrinating together, regularly and avowedly occupied the same bed; an arrangement which, not unnaturally, struck the uninitiated as hardly consistent for those who inculcated, as well as faith, conversation of good report. To the censorious comments which their mutual confidence provoked she was satisfied, however, with replying that her disciple and herself invariably passed the night with the Bible between them. And here it is as well to note that the facts already detailed, and, for the most part, equally those to follow, have been derived from persons, including some of her nearest kinsfolk and former neighbors, who are perfectly acquainted with her history.

At the beginning of her predicator career she so little deviated, notwithstanding sundry startling eccentricities, from religionists of the humbler sort with whom she came in contact, that she was allowed for some months to hold her services in the Wesleyan Chapel at Stratford St. Andrew, a parish contiguous to Little Glemham. But it very shortly transpired that her doctrine, and no less her experiences and her expectations, had a complexion all their own. Yet for these the Methodist body is in no wise accountable; she having never belonged to it, though it has been erroneously stated that in her early days she was a member of that communion. She was not brought up a dissenter of any kind, but in the doctrines of the English Church.

Her fantastic flights becoming by degrees more and more audacious, she declared before long that she enjoyed visions of Christ. But her strange doings must be referred to very briefly. It must have been in 1870 that the writer remembers her collecting, near Wickham Market, a crowd of several hundred persons, in whose presence, as she had previously given notice, she promised to disappear heavenward in a chariot of fire. In 1871 she made an attempt to expound her views in the Lecture Hall at Woodbridge, and in the end excited a riot, as she had before excited one at Stratford St. Andrew. To say truth, Suffolk very little relished its new light. A period of propagandism in South London next ensued, its theatre being a railway arch in Walworth. If her vagaries were extravagant in the vicinity of her home, they there became ten-fold more so. In the meantime her followers, or at least such of them as were willing to cast in their lot with hers, hardly increased at all in numbers. Except for a seasonable windfall, it is probable that her sect would, thus early, have been dissolved. But it happened that she was enabled to realize her ambition of abandoning her vagrant life and of establishing a communistic settlement for herself and her dupes. How this was brought about admits of being told in a short space.

Among her first converts was Mr. Leonard Benham, a small farmer of Stratford St. Andrew, who, in his infatuation, gave up his holding, sold his all, and made over the proceeds, some £250, to Mrs. Girling, whom he thenceforward cleaved to, for better and for worse, in all her vicissitudes of fortune. There were with her, besides, husbands who had forsaken their wives, wives who had forsaken their husbands, and daughters who had forsaken their parents; such was the persuasiveness of her oratory. But, though her flock for two years or thereabouts consisted of only five men, seconded by eight female rustics, mainly ignorant girls, who had followed her out of Suffolk, and who, like herself, did nothing as yet towards earning a livelihood, Mr. Benham's little fund was inadequate to keep the wolf from the door indefinitely. Just when they were most pressing in need of aid a maiden lady of the name of Wood, who possessed rather handsome means, was induced to adopt Mrs. Girling's notions, and came to their relief with a liberality which seemed to promise them a comfortable future.

The estate of New Forest Lodge, comprising a farm-house, the usual appurtenances, and thirty-one acres of land, situated in the Southern Division of Hampshire, was bought in 1873; and the whole of the purchase-money, except a thousand pounds, was paid down. When in its most thriving condition, the Community consisted of about a hundred and seventy-five members. If they had been left to themselves, they would, in all likelihood, considering their indefatigable industry, have promptly liquidated their debt and been sufficiently prosperous. But speedy ruin was before them, destined to be wrought by that spirit of wanton mischief and malice which entitles the baser population of rural England to an unenviable reputation for "general cussedness." Though they interfered with no one, others were perpetually interfering with them. Every Sunday they were besieged by intruders, who came solely to vex and to insult. Their crops were pillaged, their cattle were turned astray, their fences were destroyed, and they were molested, persecuted, and injured with relentless perseverance. This state of things continuing for a year and a half, to their progressive impoverishment, they were eventually evicted, and were obliged to seek new quarters.

After a prolonged experience of sharp suffering, the particulars of which must, for shortness, be omitted, they once more settled down, not far from the farm which they had lost, at Hordle. There, reduced to a patch of two acres and a group of miserable wooden huts roofed with canvas, they barely contrived, until they mostly dispersed, a few days ago, to stave off actual destitution. The colony, when broken up by reason of Mrs. Girling's death, had dwindled to seven men and thirteen women. Among the men were Mr. Benham, spoken of above, and a man of the name of Osborn, known as the "Elder," who was originally a farm laborer at Easton, in Suffolk. A master-shoemaker of Benthall, Suffolk, one Bathar, who, like them, joined Mrs. Girling when she first took to the business of prophesying, was less constant to his seductress, having long previously parted company with her.

Of Mrs. Girling's creed it is needless, in the interest of common sense and sane reason, to say more than a few words. In her "Last Message to the Church and the World," subscribed "Jesus, First and Last, Mary Ann Girling," she declares: "I am the second appearing and reincarnation of Jesus, the Christ of God, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, the God-mother and Saviour, life from Heaven," and so on. This sample of her theology, or rather mateology, will amply suffice. There being, in the west of England, a reverend gentleman who professes to be a repro-

duction of the Holy Ghost, one cannot but wish that the two had been brought to conference, with a view to their coming to terms touching their hypostatic relationship. Like many an enthusiast before her, she claimed to be indented with the stigmata of the Crucifixion. Immunity from death was, she asserted, to be her portion; and the same immunity, she taught, would be participated by all whose faith was as firm as her own. When, therefore, her followers were gathered to the dust, one after another, she made as if she held herself warranted in regretfully denouncing them as devoid of faith in full measure. Equally with the "Peculiar People," she maintained that medical appliances are superfluous for the godly; and it may be that her acting in conformity with this whimsey hastened her end. That she was to die, her silly adherents brought themselves to account incredible. This conviction was the keystone of their fatuous scheme of credulity; and when she was carried off by cancer, there was no alternative available to them but to acknowledge that they had been wretchedly misguided.

On the morning of the next Wednesday succeeding her death she was interred in the churchyard at Hordle; the burial service being read by two clergymen of the Church of England. The chief mourner was her son and disciple, William, now of the age of twenty-seven or twenty-eight. Her only other child, Jane, a few years older, who married a man of the name of Bailey, and is now a widow with two children, lives at Ipswich with her father, who keeps a small miscellaneous shop. Mrs. Girling, at the time of her decease, was in her sixtieth year. Of her thirteen brothers and sisters, eleven of whom lived to be adults, she is survived by ten.

The tone in which the English newspaper press has spoken of this woman is noticeable. Even the London *Times*, in its columns devoted to obituary memoirs, is very respectful regarding her "sad and peculiar history"; and other journals, both metropolitan and provincial, commemorate her largely as they would commemorate any highly meritorious exponent of sanctitude. Yet the conductors of those journals, and the contributors to them, are well aware, or ought to be, that, for example, "the limpid purity of her soul" was a thing of which there was not a tittle of trustworthy evidence, and that she differed in nothing, for the better, from a thousand and one bygone deluders of the vulgar and subverters of social order. As no one has suggested, or is likely to suggest, that she was mad, how, to keep to a single point, can those who treat her memory deferentially disclaim for her, as they emphatically do, the appellation of impostor, when confronted with her profession that she bore on her body the nail-marks of Christ's passion? Can they suppose that she really believed herself to do so?

In plain fact, hers, in all the fulness of their repulsive perfection, were the most salient characteristics of that half-savage, the uncultured East Anglian, in whom a combination of unabashable self-conceit, traitless impudence, and sullen obtuseness renders all but impossible the task of convincing him that he is ignorant. Utterly impervious to reason, she was at all times ready with an endless rignmarole of incoherent nonsense, which she discharged with an impetuous and unrelenting volubility that speedily put almost any gainsayer to flight as his sole resource, if he would escape being ignominiously deafened. More than once, when remonstrated with in public, by a competently learned and acute clergyman, for her bedlamitish pretensions to personal divinity and to immortality on earth, the brazen assurance and the torrent fluency with which she instantaneously replied to his objections, by stringing together a host of wholly irrelevant

passages of disjointed Scripture, were accepted by her gaping gulls as perfectly conclusive of her lunatic positions. Her mere ability to chatter and clamor shamelessly was taken by the simple creatures as the equivalent of sound argument, it being the only substitute for it that had any weight with them. And hence it was that her illiterate partisans were persuaded that her frantic balderdash was incapable of answer. In apology for her it is weakly urged that she was in sober earnest; as if the sincerity of the wilfully and responsibly wrong-headed were not much on the same plane with hypocritical pretence, as to meriting explicit condemnation.

F. H.

A FRENCH HAMLET.

PARIS, October 7.

I WITNESSED a few days ago, not without a feeling of melancholy, a representation at the French Theatre. I had not entered the place for months. It seemed like another theatre, and, if it had not been for Shakspeare and "Hamlet," I should probably not have made the effort. I was surrounded by the public of the first representations, and this public seemed new to me—journalists, critics, political men, men of the clubs. Having a passion for "Hamlet," I felt alarmed at once by the cold, pointed, cynical remarks I heard on all sides; this was not the proper mood for the occasion. After the first scenes one of my neighbors said to a friend: "I like it better in English"; and the friend retorted, "And I like it better in music."

That anybody should like it better in English is only natural. I had seen "Hamlet" played, a few months before, at the Porte St.-Martin, with Sarah Bernhardt as *Ophelia*, in a new translation by Kichepin, I believe, very literal, in prose; and though the translator had kept as much of the original as he could, I received but little pleasure, except from Sarah herself, who is always surrounded by such a poetic halo, and who can never be very disappointing. The *Hamlet* who played with her made one think that "Hamlet" without *Hamlet* could, after all, be better than "Hamlet" with *Hamlet*. I recognized in him the *Emperor Justinian* of "Theodora," and he brought to the part of the Prince of Denmark a sort of Roman brutality and Byzantine stupidity. I cannot say that I have ever seen "Hamlet" played in English to my satisfaction (though I have seen it many times) except in America. Booth approached somewhat the ideal which I had formed, and which every reader of Shakspeare must form for himself.

"I like it better in music," said one of my neighbors at the French Theatre; and, on reflection, I found that there was more in this sentence than appeared at first—more, probably, than my neighbor thought himself. An admirer of Shakspeare (I speak of a real admirer) will always procure for himself more enjoyment in reading "Hamlet" quietly at his fireside, in perfect solitude, than by witnessing the representation of the drama. The words of the poet become for his mind a sort of air for variations, a foundation for many thoughts and dreams. The "Hamlet" of the mind will always do better than any "Hamlet" in flesh and blood. The reader is not carried away by the necessities of action; he can follow the Shakspearian thought as a butterfly follows a light; he has an infinite world before himself—he can see a thousand *Hamlets* and a thousand *Ophelias*; he goes down into the abyss of the human soul; he wanders at ease, though he always feels tied as with a cord. It is with music as it is with poetry. Music has this peculiar advantage, that it gives the mind a sort of mould in which you can pour anything you like. I do not much care if Nilsson, when she sings the

part of *Ophelia*, exactly translates Shakspeare in words; I know the words, and can repeat them to myself. Nilsson becomes at the time a delightful representation of what Shakspeare himself contemplated when he thought of *Ophelia*; she is an ideal *Ophelia*.

I remember very well how horrified I was when Gounod set "Faust" to music; I thought it almost a sacrilege. "Faust," the greatest poem of our age—was it possible? I have not much changed my mind about the translator who attempted to translate "Faust" into short French metres: but I was soon reconciled to the music. I am not at all sure that "Faust" played textually in German could ever give complete satisfaction to a good judge. There is, so to speak, too much in it; no common actors could even approach Goethe. Music does not pretend to be an exact translation; it is only an interpretation. The musical drama gives us only the great lines, over which our fancy can play at liberty. I really believe that the most enthusiastic admirer of Goethe can derive some pleasure from Gounod's opera; that he can enjoy the quatuor in the garden of *Marguerite*, the great scene in the church. The French opera of "Hamlet" is not equal to the "Faust" of Gounod, but I have heard it sometimes with pleasure. The two characters of *Hamlet* and *Ophelia* are placed in it in their true light.

Let us return now to the "Hamlet" of the French Theatre. The translation is not a new one; it is the work of Alexandre Dumas, the father. On the 20th of February, 1847, Alexandre Dumas opened a theatre under the name of Historical Theatre. He produced first his own play, "La Reine Margot," and in December of the same year the "Hamlet" of Shakspeare, adapted by himself and by M. Paul Meurice. The piece had already been tried by him in his private theatre at St. Germain. The principal part was played by an actor called Rouvière; he was, it seems, a good *Hamlet*, but he has never been anything since; this shooting-star disappeared a very long time ago. He had seen and studied Macready, and followed his example. Those who saw him at the time say that Rouvière was a problem in himself, like *Hamlet*. Was he an intelligent actor? or was he totally unconscious? Nobody could ever tell.

The same question may often be asked for actors and for actresses. It may, I am afraid, be asked for M. Mounet-Sully, the present *Hamlet* of the French Theatre. I must begin by saying that I have always had a great weakness for this actor. It is all one to me whether he be utterly conscious or unconscious, if art or nature have more to do with his talent; the talent is real, and, if it has a certain sort of naïveté, it is all the more delightful. Mounet-Sully is handsome; he has large, expressive eyes, good features, a very musical voice, full of tender, of grave, of thrilling notes, a voice which is a charm in itself, independently of all words. His person has a natural elegance, he never has a vulgar gesture; he may be affected, unnatural, even absurd, he is never common; he may walk, move, run, kneel, lie down, jump—there is always in all his movements the curious harmony we observe in a wild beast, in a lion or a tiger. I have seen him in many parts; the modern costume, so plain, so dark, so *étriqué*, does not suit him—he seems unhappy in it. He was born to play in the Romantic dramas or in the classic tragedy. He is a magnificent *Nero* in the "Andromaque" of Racine; he can wear the purple toga and move about like the master of the world. But he is chiefly to be admired in the parts which I must call the parts of madness, though the expression is only half correct. *Hernani*, for instance, is not quite a maniac, but he is half a maniac, he is almost outside of human nature; Mounet-Sully

is *Hernani* himself. He plays the part as if he were possessed by an inner force which he could not control: "Je suis une force qui va." It must have been one of the last pleasures of Victor Hugo to see the *Hernani* of his youth, of his feverish dreams, personified in this way. *Ruy-Blas* also is half a maniac, and *Ruy-Blas* is, after *Hernani*, one of the best parts of Mounet-Sully. I have found him truly admirable in a very different part, in *Œdipe* (a French translation of the sublime drama of Sophocles, by Lacroix); but *Œdipe* also has some of the characteristics of madness—he is not a free agent, he is the unconscious tool of a horrible fatality. I imagined to myself Mounet-Sully playing in Greek, before the Athenians; he really did appear like the victim of the gods, innocent and guilty at the same time, struggling in vain against destiny.

If I have gone into these details, it is in order to explain how Mounet-Sully seemed well prepared for the part of *Hamlet*. Without entering upon useless discussions about the character of the young Prince of Denmark, all the readers of Shakspeare will see at once that there was something in the part which would naturally tempt an actor who could play well the parts of *Hernani* and of *Œdipe*. The attempt was difficult, all the more that the translation of Alexandre Dumas and Paul Meurice is very unsatisfactory, as all translations of Shakspeare must ever be. When you have called it clever, you have said all you could say about it; but this cleverness is irritating. You have all along the impression of an effort, of a *tour de force*; you feel, nevertheless, cheated, and you cannot but suffer when you mentally compare the translation and the original. I felt at first very uncomfortable, and then I took the resolve to look upon the whole thing as I would on an opera, and to place myself in the frame of mind of a spectator of Gounod's "Faust." It was an opera without music, though the voices of Mounet-Sully and of Mlle. Reichemberg (who played *Ophelia*) are wonderfully musical. I derived, I must say, much pleasure from the experiment. I had before me a most interesting *Hamlet*. Mounet-Sully was especially admirable in the passages in which the madness of *Hamlet* becomes the most intense—the passages where you feel that the madness may have become real, and that the young Prince is on the verge of the precipice.

I must say something of the audience and of the critics. I am obliged to confess that the audience was often fatigued, and the critics often discontented. One of these critics, Francisque, Sarcey, who writes for the *Temps*, and who is considered now the greatest authority in theatrical matters, has had the boldness or sincerity to write in his *Feuilleton*:

"*Hamlet*! you see, it is stronger than myself; I cannot succeed in being pleased with it. I say it candidly as it is, at the risk of being stoned. When I read it, it goes well. I am not so devoid of all intelligence and of all literary taste that I should not feel, even through a translation, the extreme merit of some passages, that I should not be transported by the awful greatness of a few scenes. But in the playhouse I am nothing but the public. Well!

"The truth is I do not understand *Hamlet*; I don't know what he is nor what he wants. Is he mad or does he simulate madness? or, while he was simulating, has he fallen into his own trap, so that he is sometimes a comedian of madness and sometimes a true madman, without any possibility for us to know where the comedian or the madman begins? I do not know, and it seems to me that nobody knows. . . . Exegesis has only made the personages more problematical; volumes have been written on *Hamlet*, and the more people explain him the more unintelligible he becomes."

This is the verdict of the critic of the *Temps*, and it may also be the verdict of the commonplace, bourgeois public of the Rue St.-Denis, per-