

Drama.

Life and Art of Richard Mansfield, with Selections from His Letters. By William Winter. Two volumes. New York: Moffatt, Yard & Co. \$6.

The most obvious comment, perhaps, upon this book is that it is a memorial worthy of a far greater man, and far greater actor, than Richard Mansfield. Into it Mr. Winter, one of the most eloquent and learned of dramatic commentators, has put some of his best analytical and descriptive work, rich in insight, apposite quotation, and felicitous epithet. It is the most notable addition to contemporaneous theatrical literature that has been made for a long time, fascinating as a bit of illuminative biography, complete and manifestly authoritative in its statements of fact, masterly in its criticism of plays and exposition of Shakespearean characters, sane and vigorous in its attitude toward modern stage tendencies, and continuously interesting as reminiscent narrative. Many readers will be unable to concede to Mansfield the intellectual and histrionic preëminence which Mr. Winter would confer upon him, but few will dispute the positive value of his achievements or the rare quality of the intelligence, the endurance, and the ambition that enabled him to triumph over the most formidable obstacles.

He was an uncommon personality and a striking example of hereditary influences and the effects of early training. Into the minor details of his childhood, of which not much is certainly known, it is not necessary to go. His mother, Erminia Rudersdorff, one of the noblest singers of her day, was a woman of eccentric character, imperious temper, and unaccountable moods. Her husband, Maurice Mansfield, who died young, was an accomplished violinist and musical critic, and her father was a conductor of eminence. From the first, therefore, Richard existed in a musical and artistic environment; but his family was migratory, and his life one of vicissitude. According to his own account he was subjected to negligent and sometimes cruel treatment by which his nature was warped and embittered. Referring in later life to these experiences he declared that there were times when he felt the world so antagonistic that if he could have overthrown the pillars of the universe he would have done it. His education was acquired in the intervals of European travel and at school in Derby, England, a place of which he always cherished tender recollections. He learned to speak French and German, to paint and draw a little, and to play the piano and sing excellently well. In the early seventies his mother brought him to this country and for four or five years he lived in the neighborhood of Boston, then an important

theatrical centre, where he formed associations and developed tastes which led him irresistibly toward the stage. With his mother he was constantly at odds, and in 1877 he left her to seek his fortune in London. There he was often put to strange shifts to keep body and soul together, but his confidence in his star never wavered. His pluck and tenacity of purpose were admirable, and, at last, he established a reputation in operettas, for which he had special qualifications. His career, indeed, then seemed to lie in that direction, but, returning to New York, he ultimately joined the Union Square Theatre Company, and by a lucky chance obtained the part of Baron Chevrial, in "A Parisian Romance" (1883), which enabled him to put his foot upon the first rung of that dramatic ladder which he was to climb so successfully.

That night of victory still lives in the memory of all old playgoers. His performance, considering his youth and comparative inexperience, can only be called extraordinary. Diabolical egotism, remorseless cynicism, and loathsome senile depravity have rarely been depicted upon the stage more vividly, or with more consummate finish. In later years, this impersonation was much weakened by elaborated and exaggerated artifice, but it was always powerful, and no student of his career can fail to note that in tragedy or semi-tragedy all his later successes were won in the portrayal of passions proceeding from a malign or cankered will rather than the ruder, primary impulses of nature. His acting always suggested the calculation of intellectual design—not always realized—rather than the promptings of spontaneous feeling, and this is why, in deeply emotional characters, he seldom created illusion, though he often compelled admiration. He never mastered the language of the primeval emotions which are the foundation of all great tragedy. It may have been some dim perception of this fact, or instinct, that led him to select for his most serious efforts such characters as Hyde (a hideous perversion of Stevenson's ideal), Shylock, Richard III, Rodion, Humphrey Logan, Ivan the Terrible, Nero, and Napoleon. Intellectually, doubtless—for he was an exceedingly clever man—he could have comprehended Lear, Hamlet, Othello, or Macbeth, but he could never have expressed the essential humanity in them. Romeo, Orlando, or Hotspur would have been sealed books to him. The sympathetic human side of Henry V eluded him utterly, while of Brutus he discerned only the brains and the purpose, not the man.

It was in the lighter eccentric characters of his repertory, in which his natural manner (of which he could never divest himself), his airy, insolent, or mordant humor, his observation and his

mimetic power came into play, that he was at his best as an actor. Among them may be mentioned his Prince Karl, Beaucaire, Brummell, Don Juan, Captain Bluntschli, and Dick Dudgeon. His Cyrano de Bergerac was chivalrous, authoritative, vivacious, devoted, and, at the last, pathetic, but lacking in variety of mood and romantic flavor. Here, too, he failed to strike the deepest note. But Cyrano could only be acted perfectly by an actor possessing the combined faculties of Fechter and Coquelin. In his skeletonized version of "Peer Gynt" he did little more, as Mr. Winter suggests, than illustrate his own moods, vagaries, egotism, cynicism, and unconventionality. Doubtless that particular performance derived its chief interest from his dominant individuality, but this ever obtrusive "self" of his proved a sad stumbling-block in other impersonations. Mr. Winter argues that the potent individuality and brain of a great actor must inevitably reveal themselves in certain peculiarities of method and manner, and this is doubtless true of all actors, but not at all times. The mannerisms of Irving, for instance, were many and distressful, but he was a threefold personality in Matthias, Louis XI, and Malvolio. The late W. J. Florence could, on occasion, merge himself utterly in the assumed character. Phelps in versatility was almost a Proteus. There was nothing in the Conrad of Salvini—not even the stature—to recall that player's Othello. But certain peculiarities of gait, gesture, and facial and vocal expression were constant in Mansfield and became, indeed, the rigid and immovable boundaries of his artistic expression.

Whatever diversity of opinion there may be concerning his true rank as an actor, there can be no doubt that he was an extraordinary man, and it is the rare merit of this book, as biography, that by its full and affectionate revelation of his character it explains at once the failures and the triumphs of his career. The copious correspondence printed proves that, throughout his professional life, Mr. Winter was the actor's most intimate guide, mentor, and friend, advising and helping him in his choice and construction of plays (though the advice was not always taken), sympathizing with and encouraging him in his difficulties, and backing him with cordial critical appreciation. The service which he rendered was inestimable, and Mansfield's letters teem with fervent protestations of esteem and gratitude. They often show him in a new and very pleasing light and also reflect, as in a mirror, the strange complexities of his nature and disposition. His ambition was boundless, his self-esteem enormous, his temper alternately jovial and arrogant, his jealousy of a professional rival—Irving, for instance—fierce and unreasonable. Yet he could be capable of most generous appreciation. Sanguine in re-

verses, indefatigable in enterprise, reckless in expenditure, he could be as infirm of purpose and as childishy querulous as the veriest weakling. Exclusive, imperious, and irritable, he wondered at his unpopularity and went through life with the conviction that he was the victim of hostile conspiracies. A law to himself, he could profit little by the experience or example of others.

The intention of the management of the New Theatre to remodel the interior of the theatre and to discontinue the production of opera is on every account to be welcomed. In making the auditorium better adapted for dramatic purposes a much-needed improvement will be effected; but aside from this the devotion of the building, and of the enterprise, exclusively to the drama is in itself calculated to yield better results than the combination plan. The mission of the New Theatre should be, and should be known by everybody to be, the serious cultivation of dramatic merit. As yet, nothing more than a tentative and very imperfect beginning has been made by it in the carrying out of such a purpose. Opera in New York is cultivated on a grand scale and is amply appreciated; the dramatic stage, on the other hand, is in a very bad way, and the public taste for the drama is in an extremely backward condition. To make the New Theatre a real theatrical centre, a place where plays worth seeing are given by competent and highly-trained actors every night in the week, would be to do New York and the country an invaluable service.

Music.

American Primitive Music. By Frederick R. Burton. New York: Moffat, Yard & Co. \$5 net.

Many readers of this valuable book will be surprised to hear that the first serious effort to learn and state the truth with regard to Indian music was made by a German student, not more than thirty years ago. Theodore Baker chose this subject as the thesis for his doctor's degree at Leipzig. He spent some time in the Seneca reservation and at the Carlisle government school, and his conclusions, published in a small German volume, gave evidence of skilful observation and ability to draw sound conclusions; but they attracted little attention. Some years later Miss Alice C. Fletcher of the Peabody Museum at Harvard began to publish the results of her studies of Omaha and other Indian music, aided, in part, by John C. Fillmore. Among others who provided material were Miss Natalie Curtis, Arthur Farwell, Benjamin Ives Gilman, and Franz Boas.

Mr. Burton, who died soon after completing the manuscript of this book, gives in its first chapter a brief history of the various attempts to understand and reproduce the music of North American Indians, and adds to this nine chap-

ters giving the results of his own researches, chiefly among the Ojibways, in the region north of Lakes Huron and Superior. He was exceptionally well qualified for such work, being a musical scholar and a composer, as well as a student of science (for a time he was employed as musical expert in the ethnological departments of the American Museum of Natural History in New York). He displays critical acumen in combating the views of Mr. Gilman and others that the Indians use scales with quarter tones or even smaller intervals, for the registering of which Mr. Gilman constructed an ingenious device representing graphically deviations from diatonic intervals to the one-fourteenth part of a tone. In Mr. Burton's opinion, the Indians, instead of having scales of their own, are simply singing out of tune. There are plenty of white individuals and choruses of men and women whose singing shows deviations from the pitch that would keep busy that instrument for measuring deviations to the one-fourteenth of a tone. Among the Ojibways Mr. Burton found that those who missed the pitch were not a larger class than the palefaces who annoy chorus conductors by a tendency to flat; and their deviations from pitch were not consistent. He concluded, therefore, that the faulty intonation of the Ojibway is an individual error, and not a racial peculiarity.

With the same acumen the author demolishes the notions that the primitive red man has developed rhythm to a plane higher than that attained by civilization, and that he has a conception of rhythm wholly at variance with ours. On the contrary, Mr. Burton maintains that the puzzling phenomena of Indian rhythm indicate not the red man's superiority, but his inferiority; that his disturbing performances in so-called irregular and conflicting rhythms are but "manifestations of a helpless groping for the truth which, rhythmically speaking, is order and regularity, and simplicity." The twenty-three pages devoted to the proof of this assertion make an admirable chapter in musical æsthetics and give vivid glimpses of the red man's way of drumming and singing.

It was by no means easy to get at the facts in these cases. The Indians distrusted their visitor at first. The white man has taken away from us, they said, everything we possessed except our songs, "and now you come and would take away those, too." Finally, he persuaded them that even if he took them away, they would still have them; so they gave him their confidence. Observing their habits, he came to the conclusions that music enters more intimately into the lives of Indians than it does into the lives of any white nation, being to the red man a feature of daily, homely use and necessity; and that the Ojibways surpass all other In-

dians in their music. Personally he was particularly interested in this red music from the point of view of its availability by the white composers. MacDowell had written a suite based on Indian melodies, but had not repeated the experiment. If he was not satisfied with his venture, that may have been due to the fact that "the raw material available to him was far from being as suggestive and interesting as much that has been uncovered since."

Acknowledging what Farwell, Harvey Worthington Loomis, and others have done in the way of utilizing Indian themes, Mr. Burton urges American composers in general to follow this path; he believes that the foreign conductors who preside over our symphony orchestras would be more likely to accept compositions by Americans, if they had in them drops of the red man's blood—which may be doubted. He himself wrote half a dozen or more specimens of semi-Ojibway music for "Hiawatha," when that play was brought to our cities. One of the numbers, the finale, is printed in the present volume. It also includes the melodies of many Ojibway songs, together with the words and the story, or explanation of them. In addition to these, there are a number of songs here, as harmonized by Mr. Burton. He does not deny that, inasmuch as Indians have no harmony in their music, such a decking out of their melodies with the devices of civilization is a misrepresentation; but he argues that, since we whites cannot grasp the whole beauty of a melody unless we hear it with appropriate harmony, it is necessary to harmonize the Indian tunes to do them justice. Unless we do this, they will not be sung. "My Bark Canoe," for instance, simply as a melody would have interested a few students, whereas in its harmonized form it is now sung in thousands of homes and even in the public schools.

The American Music Society, founded last year under the presidency of Arthur Farwell, now numbers fourteen local centres, from New York to San Francisco. The New York centre, with 117 members, is at present the largest and most active.

Joseph Holbrooke is the English Richard Strauss. The orchestra he used at a recent London concert devoted to his own works included, beside the more usual instruments, five saxophones, oboe d'amore, cor no di bassetto, flügel horns, eight concertinas, four harps, bass flutes, saxhorns, bass trumpets, and tubaphones.

At a recent auction sale in Florence a number of things that had belonged to Paganini were sold, among them two violin concertos and more than a hundred unpublished pieces which no one had ever been permitted to see. These brought \$3,700. A Nicolò Amati violoncello of 1734, valued at \$5,000, was knocked down for \$1,160, and \$80 was paid for a diminutive fiddle on which Paganini had begun his lessons.