

grade was generated by the attack of the electrons, although this intense heat was so rapidly diffused through the body of the crystal that it could not be noticed on the tube.

That an element of truth may exist even in an erroneous theory is an undoubted fact. An illustration of this is offered by the statement of Pliny that if the diamond were laid upon an anvil and struck with a hammer, both hammer and anvil would be fractured, but the diamond would remain unharmed. This story, offered on hearsay evidence by Pliny, and servilely copied from him by all mediæval writers, is, of course, quite incorrect; the facile cleavage of the diamond would cause it to break up into a number of pieces if treated in this way. And yet Pliny would have seen a proof of the essential truth of his account, could he have assisted at an experiment described by Sir William Crookes (p. 92):

The intense hardness of the diamond can be illustrated by the following experiment: On the flattened apex of a conical block of steel place a diamond, and upon it bring down a second cone of steel. On forcing together the two steel cones by hydraulic pressure the stone is squeezed into the steel blocks without injuring it in the slightest degree.

Of the questioned occurrence of diamonds in the meteorite of Cañon Diablo, in Arizona, the writer says (p. 139):

The mineral peridot is a constant extra-terrestrial visitor, present in most meteorites. And yet no one doubts that peridot is also a true constituent of rocks formed on this earth. The spectroscope reveals that the elementary composition of the stars and the earth are pretty much the same; and the spectroscope also shows that meteorites have as much of earth as of heaven in their composition. Indeed, not only are the selfsame elements present in meteorites, but they are combined in the same way to form the same minerals as in the crust of the earth.

These considerations, and the fact that iron at a high temperature and subjected to great pressure may be called "the long-sought solvent for carbon," leads the author to assert that the evidence afforded by the Cañon Diablo and other meteorites proves "that on more than one occasion a meteorite freighted with jewels has fallen as a star from the sky."

## Drama.

*Aristophanes and the Political Parties at Athens.* By Maurice Croiset. Translated by James Loeb. New York: The Macmillan Co. \$2 net.

When Hazlitt undertook to write on comedy in general, he had the singular honesty to say that, knowing little of Aristophanes, he would say little, and when he adds that, for the same reason,

he will pass over Lucian, one feels that this will never do. George Meredith was better equipped. After reading Croiset's careful and scholarly discussion of the political and social views of Aristophanes in which a thesis is maintained and illustrated by analyses of the eleven extant plays (he wrote forty), it is refreshing to turn to "The Idea of Comedy" and regain the Meredithian standpoint. "There is an Idea in his Comedies," says Meredith; "it is the Idea of good citizenship." Aristophanes's good citizen will, no doubt, be one who frowns on all novelties, partly because it is the nature of the comic spirit to be conservative, to praise the old, to fix the gaze on Marathon and Salamis, and make game of recent strategy at Sphacteria, partly because Aristophanes feared the excesses of the Ionian temperament. He saw these unstable Athenians demanding empire, but refusing to pay the price for it, except spasmodically; already too ingenious, they were being trained by the sophists into dangerous habits of analysis, while they were flattered by demagogues into keeping up a ruinous war. Like Plato, Aristophanes would have had them choose in education and literature the more austere and less fascinating, and in politics the less individualistic, the old and tried. But his first duty was to make them laugh. A playwright with his talent for mordant raillery was not likely to refrain from caricature, whether of a professor who was teaching the young to be too clever, like Socrates, or of Euripides, with his sentimental tragedy and his new music, or of the socialistic woman in politics, like Praxagora, carrying out in public life that feminine ideal of simply making everybody comfortable, which every man, in his heart, thinks should be limited to the home. There is always a ridiculous side to a new fashion, and it is a question beside the mark whether Aristophanes genuinely hated, as Browning thought, almost everything that makes the Young Athenian so interesting to us.

What is still less easy to decide is whether the tendency that he ridiculed was associated in his mind with the oligarchs or the democrats, or with neither party in particular. Did he desire to pull down democracy or to reform it, since we must admit that he aimed at something more than merely entertaining the Athenians at their own expense? Was he, as Couat thinks, the paid voice of the aristocracy; did he in all his plays carry on a campaign in its behalf, lament its fall, and prepare its revenge? Or was he throughout his career seriously devoted to the interests of the rural middle-class? The latter is the theory of Croiset, whose book has been translated by Mr. Loeb.

Here, then, are two French scholars of about equal distinction, totally at

variance as to the political meaning of the plays of Aristophanes. The fact is that to search for consistency in the utterances of the comic spirit, except perhaps the consistency of common-sense, will always end in this deadlock; and in the exuberant abundance of an Aristophanes you are pretty likely to find the personal creed for which you are looking. To give one or two examples: There are good critics who see Alcibiades under the mask of Peisthetærus in the "Birds"; Croiset and Couat agree that the play is pure fantasy. Busolt can see in the "Thesmophoriazusaë" the "signs of coming storm at Athens"; Croiset cannot imagine to what Busolt refers. For Couat, the "Knights," in which Demos appears as an imbecile, is a sort of political manifesto, like "The Englishman's Home," and the picture of his sudden conversion in the *dénouement* is merely the poet, like Rosebery, safeguarding his retreat. For Croiset, that conversion is the real point of the play, and its meaning is that nothing can save Athens but a return to the agricultural life. At this rate one might say he was in favor of female suffrage because it is a woman in politics, Lysistrata, whom he chooses to utter his most sensible and most appealing message to Sparta and Athens in the name of Hellenic brotherhood. This sort of treatment reminds one of a recent writer who sees everywhere in the story of fourth-century Athens the growing influence of malaria, even in the improvement in the position of women, whom their husbands now began to love because they nursed them so well. Croiset marshals his arguments better than Couat, and is therefore more convincing to read. But the strength of French criticism lies in this: that a Frenchman seldom suppresses what is against his theory, and in their summing up both Couat and Croiset rise above their theses and silence your misgivings by their generous allowances to the comic spirit. Both books may be read with profit as intelligent studies of Athenian life.

Mr. Loeb's translation is well done, and, like his translation of Decharme's "Euripides," should be of use to many English readers. There are a few misprints, such as *Archarnians* (p. 54), "Hyponicus" (p. 117), and *Greichen* (p. 172). One is grateful for the exhaustive index, which was lacking in the original, and for the introduction by Prof. John Williams White.

John Galsworthy's latest play, "Justice," the first production in Charles Frohman's new Repertory Theatre in London, is a modern, realistic tragedy of the most uncompromising sort. In effect, it is a powerful protest against the application of identical methods of punitive justice to offenders of every degree. The story is the simplest imaginable. A lawyer's clerk,

hitherto innocent and harmless, in sheer desperation, at the appeal of a woman whom he loves, to save her from the brutality of a drunken husband, forges a small check. He is promptly arrested and tried, the scene in court—very grim and exact—being intended to show how utterly indifferent, in the presence of hard facts, a British court may be to comparatively valid pleas in extenuation. The clerk is sent to prison and the third act shows a victim of melancholia—in the verge of actual insanity—in his solitary cell. In the final act he is free only to find that the woman, for whom he had suffered, has been driven by poverty into the arms of her employer. In the vain effort to get work he writes a false reference for character, and, being arrested, commits suicide rather than go to prison again.

The first series of John S. Farmer's Tudor Facsimile Texts is now completed, and consists of thirty-eight volumes at 17s. 6d. each, one double volume at 42s. net, and four double volumes at 35s. net each; total forty-three volumes at £42 7s. net. These have been noticed in the *Nation* as they appeared. Mr. Farmer now announces that he has severed his connection with the publishers, the Messrs. Jack, and will, as his own publisher bring out a second series of volumes similar to the first, beginning with "Sir Thomas More" (Harl. MS. 7368, c. 1590), "Gammer Gurton's Needle" (c. 1551), "Edward III" (1596), and "The Yorkshire Tragedy" (1608), which are now, or soon will be, ready. As in the earlier series, 125 copies only of each volume are printed. We need scarcely emphasize again the value of these handsome photographic reproductions for minute students of the English drama. Subscriptions can be sent through any regular book agency, or directly to the editor at Little Missenden, Bucks, England.

Sarah Bernhardt presented in Paris on March 2 Jean Richepin's French rendering of a four-act tragedy, "La Beffa," by Sembenelli, a young Italian dramatist. Mme. Bernhardt acted, very effectively, it is said, the male rôle of Giannetto Malespina, a cruel and treacherous Florentine nobleman, combining the characteristics of Tiago and Lorenzaccio.

Louis James, the American actor, died on March 5, in his dressing room in a theatre in Helena, Mont. He was born in Illinois in 1842, and in 1863 made his first appearance on the stage under the management of McAuley in Louisville. Then for six years he played with the stock company of the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, under the direction of Mrs. John Drew. In 1871 he joined Augustin Daly, with whose companies he played in many characters, among them Doricourt, Joseph Surface, Young Marlow, and Bill Sykes. In Joseph Surface he was particularly successful, giving the character a blend of cynical humor, external polish, and bland hypocrisy which was exactly appropriate to it. For five years he acted with Lawrence Barrett, which whom he was especially effective in the rôle of Beppo the jester, in "Francesca da Rimini." In 1893, he appeared as a star in "The Lion's Mouth," and then joined Frederick Warde, with whom he played for several seasons in Shakesperian and other legitimate

drama, acting both tragic and comic parts with considerable success. When this partnership was dissolved, he took the field alone. He won popular favor in such famous and diverse parts as Virginius, Falstaff, Richelieu, Ingomar, and Shylock. His latest impersonation was that of Peer Gynt. James was competent in comedy, and, at his best, a fine actor, but he never quite fulfilled the promise of his early youth.

Moses Horowitz, who wrote many Yiddish plays which had been produced in New York East Side theatres, died in this city on March 4, at the age of seventy-six. He was born in Bucharest, Rumania, and was well known as a theatrical manager in Austria before he came to this country, in 1882. "Ben Hador," produced six years ago, was the most successful of his plays. Five years ago a venture to produce grand opera in Yiddish at the Windsor Theatre consumed all of Horowitz's savings, and when he was stricken with paralysis following his misfortunes, his friends provided for his care in the Montefiore Home.

## Music.

### THE CHOPIN CENTENARY.

PARIS, February 25.

From the many notable voices that have been celebrating in France the hundredth anniversary of Chopin's birth, there have come a few words of lasting interest. Charles Widor gives an anecdote significant in nineteenth-century musical history, and an authentic observation of Chopin's keeping of time in playing his own pieces.

In 1832 Chopin came to Paris from Vienna and took lodgings. Next door there was a piano going, played by no mean hand. He learned that his neighbor, a tall, thin, long-haired Frenchman of about his own age, was a first-prize man of the Conservatoire. It was Ambroise Thomas; and the two were soon fast friends. Early one morning, Chopin rang at Thomas's door. "Get up! At eight o'clock the Société des Concerts is going to read a composition of a young German who has come to me with great recommendations." The young German was Mendelssohn, and his composition was the overture of the "Midsummer Night's Dream." The orchestra showed only too plainly its indifference to the new music. Chopin was aflame. "Think of the poetry of it, the sure technique, the invention—and those performers who understand nothing and feel nothing!" So the two friends did their best to comfort the unappreciated German and took him off to breakfast.

Ambroise Thomas had sixteen years of Chopin's intimacy, saw his work grow, and knew it by heart; and he gave this authentic direction about playing it. Chopin played rigorously in time. Whatever liberties his right hand might be taking, his left kept on scanning the time as exactly as a pendulum. Amateurs have come to believe

that Chopin's style was to play without measure, always more or less in *tempo rubato*, as if his fancy were having hysterics. Artists have stuck to the true, wholesome tradition. Francis Planté waged lately that he would play one of the last Barcarolles and not be caught in a single fault of isochronism in the bass, while keeping to his usual free execution. He seemed to pay no attention to the metronome, but his basses fell with the mathematical regularity of a chronometer. Planté is now past seventy; the younger musicians were glad to have lost their bet for the lesson. Ambroise Thomas also maintained that Chopin was not nearly so much interested in the effects as in the charm of sound and precision of the rhythm. He played clearly, bringing out the exact value of each detail in making up the whole. His *legato* and limpid polyphony have not been rivalled, while he was the soul of probity in the interpretation of the musical text.

Chopin's true place in the history of piano music is curiously appreciated on this occasion by well-known composers, particularly of the younger school. Théodore Dubois, who was a Grand Prix de Rome of the Conservatoire all but fifty years ago: "Chopin and Schumann entirely renewed the manner of writing music for the piano." Vincent D'Indy: "All I can say is that Chopin seems to me an improviser (unfortunately) of genius (fortunately)." Claude Debussy: "I almost loved Chopin when I began loving music—and I have continued." Alfred Bruneau: "Under the light arabesques with which Chopin the pianist adorned the grave melodies of Chopin the musician, we feel there is a free heart uttering itself as no other ever did before." Gaston Salayre bears witness that he heard Liszt play the chief works of Chopin—"and Liszt admired them profoundly. Is there any more valuable homage to Chopin's memory?" Camille Erlanger: "Chopin's influence is flagrant in ultra-modern music." And Fernand Le Borne: "Chopin for the piano was what the Colossus of Bayreuth was for the orchestra."

### A TCHAIKOVSKY OPERA.

Inasmuch as the most popular of all symphonic works during the last decade has been the "Pathétique" of Tchaikovsky, it seems odd that until last Saturday no attempt should have been made to produce one of his operas in this country. There are eight of them that are more or less familiar in Russia: "The Oprichnik," "Vakoula the Smith," "Eugene Onegin," "The Maid of Orleans," "Mazeppa," "The Enchantress," "Pique Dame," "Iolanthe." Two of these, "Eugene Onegin," and "Pique Dame," are also heard occasionally in Germany; but in this city we have never got a nearer glimpse of the operatic side of Russia's greatest composer than the production of "Eugene Onegin," in concert form, by Walter Damrosch, a few years ago. Altogether, apart from the intrinsic value of the