

The fact is that the American courts have uniformly held that prohibition has a social basis. The fact is that the dry states have accepted prohibition because they came to believe it had a social basis. At first a mere majority opinion favored the law. Experience under the law, as often happens, crystallized public opinion. The fact is that commercialized amusement is a social problem because the school population is brought under its influence.

Admittedly there is a social interest in the traffic in intoxicants and in commercialized amusements. It may be that law particularly with respect to the latter is not a practical means to attain the social end. But to discuss it as repression confuses thinking and adds to the difficulties. Let us at least get our thinking clear.

CHARLES S. ALLEN.

San Jose, California.

"Newspaper Morals"

SIR: I have been much interested in Bruce Bliven's article on Newspaper Morals. In general I agree with his views; but I am confident that the trend of the newspapers, taken as a whole, is toward betterment and higher standards. The Canons of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, which are the basis of his article, are in themselves evidence of this trend, being indeed a result of the trend. Too much attention is given by critics to a class of newspapers that is both conspicuous and vociferous, and too little to the great body of journalism, in which is to be found the real expression of professional principles.

CASPER S. YOST.

St. Louis, Missouri.

France and Germany in 1541

SIR: In 1541 a great council met at Ratisbon at the behest of Emperor Charles V and Pope Paul III for the purpose of closing the schism in the Church and bringing the Protestants back to the Catholic fold. Under the leadership of the papal legate, the admirable Cardinal Contarini, who himself had Lutheran leanings, the Catholic party made a number of important concessions, subject however to the final decision of the Pope.

On the other side, the Protestant theologians and some of the Protestant princes were not unwilling to submit to papal supremacy, provided certain of their doctrines and practices would be tolerated by the Church.

The reconciliation, could it have been brought about, would have given an unaccustomed unity to all Germany, and would have greatly extended the power of the emperor. Such German unity was, however, most unwelcome to France, and the French king, Francis I, set about to impede it in every way possible. He remonstrated earnestly against the concessions made by Contarini, declaring that his conduct discouraged the good, and emboldened the wicked; that from extreme compliance to the emperor, he was permitting things to get to such extremities as would soon be irremediable; the advice of other princes also ought surely to have been taken.

While inciting Rome to make demands to which the Protestants would not accede, he secretly gave different instructions to his agent, Granvelle. "He declared to me," says Contarini in a letter to Farnese, "on oath, that he had letters in hand written by the most Christian king to the Protestant princes, exhorting them by no means to make agreement with the Catholics, and avowing himself desirous to learn their opinions, which were not displeasing to him."

The Council of Ratisbon failed of its purpose, a failure that eventually led to the Thirty Years War and to the destruction of Germany as a power and as a nation. It took nearly three hundred years, until 1871, for the broken pieces of Germany to be again welded together into a single whole. Is the same thing going to happen now?

D. R.

Philadelphia.

Duse Now

DUSE, closer to seventy now than sixty, preserves still her old art of featuring nothing, but only of conveying the necessary truth. If you see one of the occasional performances that she is giving now in Italian theatres, you get the impression neither of a woman remarkably young-looking for her age nor of a woman on whom age has set an absorbingly interesting record. What you get is the impression of a slender woman with an extraordinary, interesting mask, with beautiful hands, gray hair and a low poignant voice.

All through the performance that I saw, Duse did not suggest age so much as she suggested a diminished endurance. There was no question of quality but only one of quantity. That is to say you could see clearly that the actress might not be able to go on for so long or so many performances or for prolonged, violent scenes; but it was also equally clear that for what she does do her body lacks nothing and is entirely adequate in the most exact meaning of the word: Duse's body keeps it old coordination, the flow of lines is still perfect and continuous; there is no sense of stiffness or angularity, or, as happens with age, of that lessening in the capacity of the muscles to carry out the immediate intention of the thought and will. The voice is something less clear and vibrant than once but no less dramatic and poignant. Looking at Duse's figure there on the stage you get pretty much what you always got, the sense of a body that has no existence apart from its idea and that is inseparable from what she means to express. Now as always Duse's art is connected with the external, the visible and audible aspect of her, as music is connected with sound. And the ideas and qualities that Duse expresses show still no sign of fatigue, of grayness, of doting egotism, of drouth, but only that old, quivering, subtle, profound passion of absorption with life and response to it that occurs in human living in its most complete moments whether in art or in other manifestations.

Così Sia, the play by Scotti that Duse is presenting, is at best a single, simple line, the story of a mother and her son. It is without D'Annunzio's genius, without the astonishing fecundity of image and color and those almost physical subtleties by which he penetrates and reveals such details of life and character as interest him, and without the defect of this excellence also; but it aims at D'Annunzio's kind of glowing analysis and D'Annunzio's ardent and often false allusion and imagery. And it follows D'Annunzio in its singleness of interest and mood.

In the first act a mother sits beside the cradle of her dying child. The doctor, seeing that no more can be done, leaves. The father, a bull merchant, comes in; he is sorry to lose his son but tells the woman bluntly that such things must happen, no need to go mad over it. If she loves the child more than she does him, there are plenty of other women. He is off to the market. She is to remember to order a suitable funeral for his son, such as suits his father's position. The neighbor woman advises the mother to pray, to ask God to save the boy; and, if God seems too far, to ask Mary the mother of Jesus. Left alone, the mother, who has almost forgotten how to pray, offers the Virgin all her money, her silk dress, her jewelry. That is not enough. She will go in sack cloth to the shrine on the mountain, every year till she dies, creeping there on her knees. That is not enough. Very well then, she will give up the one, secret, dearest thing, her lover. She will never speak to him again, never go to meet him in

the lanes, never wait to see his smile and his white teeth. Presently the child awakes and calls out to her.

In the second act, twenty-three years later, the mother comes in on her way to the shrine at the top of the mountain. A neighbor tells her that her son has returned from America and is coming now from some nearby tavern with some girls and young fellows. It is two weeks since he came back. The son enters with his companions. He does not greet his mother. Finally when he starts away she calls to him. He sends the others off and turns to her. He recognized her at once, he says, but her rags disgrace him and the family. And he tells his mother that he knew of her lover, he has heard him beneath the window and had seen her weeping. Weeping, yes, his mother cries, but no more than that. He will not believe her and says that his dead father stands now between her and him. The son goes away.

The third act is in the sanctuary on the mountain. The old woman has crawled there to die. She stays when the door is shut for the night. She has nothing left now to offer, but she prays Mary to save her son's soul, whom she loves now more than ever. She seems to hear the image speak to her, and she smiles as she sinks to the floor and dies.

That is the single, simple story of the play, worth setting down only because it indicates the framework on which Duse rests her deep and universal conception of the whole idea of the maternal passion in woman and of all love in general penetrating all things, and around which she lives for those two hours on the stage so radiant and terrible a revelation of life.

Duse does not exemplify the art of acting so much as she illustrates the fundamentals of all art. All art, obviously, is concerned with the expression of life. To this purpose the artist is the first means, and after the artist the medium, color, words, sound, whatever it may be, that he works in. Duse's art illustrates first of all the principle in art of the necessity of the artist's own greatness, his sensitivity and power in feeling, in idea, in soul, in the education and fine culture of all these. Her art illustrates the necessity for a fierce and subtle and exact connection between the artist's meaning and his expression of it. It illustrates the universal problem of rhythm in art, of line, emphasis, mood, all rhythm. It illustrates supremely the nature of the poetic as it applies not only to poetry but to every art. And it illustrates the nature of realism in general, especially of that best Italian realism which, as it occurs most of all in sculpture, is so capable of rendering by means of only actual or possible external details the inmost idea.

And so it is that you cannot easily get from Duse's acting a pure acting delight. She is not the actor's actor, as Velasquez is the painter's painter, or Spenser the poet's poet. That is to say you cannot delight in her performance as supreme craft, something that delights whether it is deep or flitting, delights because of the perfection of its brush, its tone, its manner, because of its competency, because of its happy application of the art and the possibilities of pleasure in it by reason of its sheer technical purity and perfection, independent, so far as that is possible, of everything in life outside itself. And it is difficult to take any academic delight in Duse's acting. Something in you withholds you from saying what a beautiful gesture that was, what a tone, what a contrivance in that scene, what reading in this, what technical facility. All these things are good in themselves, of course; they too may be almost in themselves a kind of art. They are means of speaking, dialects for ideas; and, after all, art is art not life. Style, however, in the sense of an added elaboration

and distinction of method, of something in itself creative and separable, style in that separable aspect of technical felicity or skill or tact, Duse rarely has. Style in the sense of a medium which, like a glass over a laboratory experiment, disappears before the matter which it isolates and exhibits, Duse is never without. It is only slowly and almost unwillingly that Duse's art will allow you a stylistic or academic enjoyment. It will not allow that separation of the craft from the meaning; it will not yield itself to the mere choice judgments of a sophistication in taste. Duse will not grant you that kind of appreciation. It is as if she would accept no love but the love for all herself and the cost that follows.

It is only slowly that you see what labor and skill has gone to make up that creation of Duse's soul in the outer forms of an art. You see her bending over the child, you see her carry the pilgrim's staff, the lines of her long garment, the pity of her hands, the wandering of her hands among the lights on the altar. You see suddenly that dumbness, and then that flutter of life through the body. You see that the entire moment has revealed itself to you. You see what this woman knows; and you wonder whether such a knowledge of the human life and soul resolves itself in her finally into tears or into light. But it is only slowly that you perceive this artist's years of study of the lines of statuary—and especially of sculptors like Mino da Fiesole and Desiderio da Settignano and those more delicate realists of the earlier Renaissance, to discover the inevitable lines of grace and meaning, to learn how to study the rhythms of the form in order to free them of all but that last beauty of its own characteristics. And you gradually observe that Duse suggests perpetually a state of music which must have come from a long love and study of that art. And most of all you will see that such a gradation of emphasis throughout the play and so fine and so elusive but unforgettable a comprehension of the entire meaning of the character and theme could come only from a remarkable ability and association with culture and ideas, combined with a poetic and reflective nature, with a courage of mind, and, finally, with something throughout the personality, quiet and taken for granted, a kind of untouched and unstressed and constant spiritual audacity.

STARK YOUNG.

Crystals

Wax-heavy, snared in age-splintered linen, the king's daughter;

The shimmer of her eyeballs blue beneath the lids like thin rain water.

Small and sour the lemon blossoms banked at the breast-bone;

Her two breasts dark of death, and stained a dark tone.

Her lips flower-tarnished, her cheek-braids bulked in rust.

Her shoulders as hard as a wall-tree, frosted with dust.

Precise bone, clipped and grooved, and as sure as metal.

Leaf of flesh built high, like china roses, petal on petal.

Odor of apples rising from the death robes chinks and breaks.

Seeds of pepper falling down from brittle, spiced tomb-cakes.

Her swift cunning impaled on her brain's darkness. She died

Of her heart's sharp crystal spiral pricked in her side.

Six tomb-Gods in basalt make her one of these—

Who lie a million years, listening for thieves.

DJUNA BARNES.