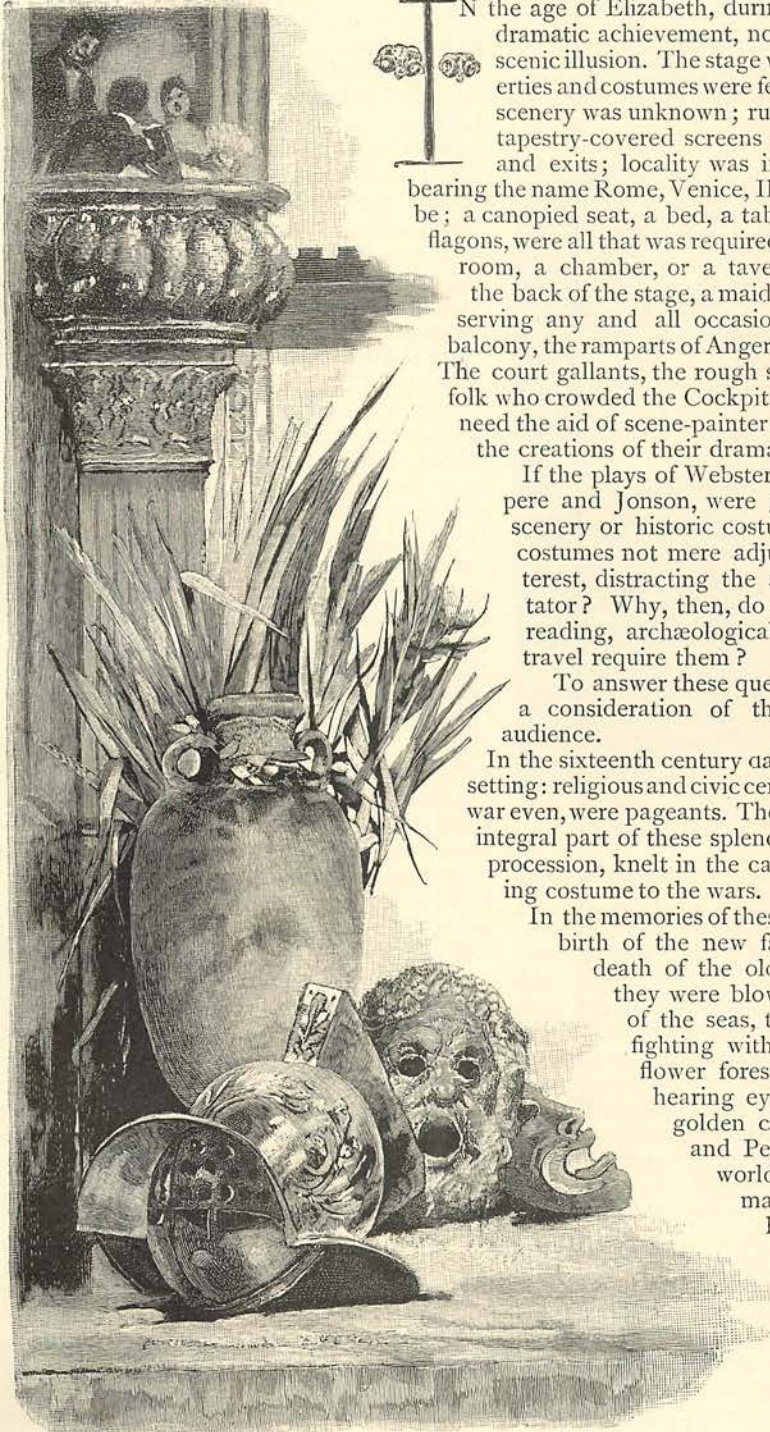


PICTORIAL ART ON THE STAGE



IN the age of Elizabeth, during the great epoch of dramatic achievement, no attempt was made at scenic illusion. The stage was almost bare; properties and costumes were few and simple; painted scenery was unknown; rushes strewed the floor; tapestry-covered screens marked the entrances and exits; locality was indicated by a placard bearing the name Rome, Venice, Illyria, as the case might be; a canopied seat, a bed, a table, with tankards and flagons, were all that was required to represent a throne-room, a chamber, or a tavern; the fixed wall at the back of the stage, a maid-of-all-work accessory, serving any and all occasions, stood for *Juliet's* balcony, the ramparts of Angers, or *Brabantio's* house. The court gallants, the rough sailors, and the town-folk who crowded the Cockpit and the Globe did not need the aid of scene-painter and costumer to make the creations of their dramatists real and living.

If the plays of Webster and Marlowe, Shakspeare and Jonson, were given without painted scenery or historic costumes, are scenery and costumes not mere adjuncts, dividing the interest, distracting the attention, of the spectator? Why, then, do we in this age of wide reading, archaeological studies, and foreign travel require them?

To answer these questions we must pass to a consideration of the conditions of the audience.

In the sixteenth century daily life had a splendid setting: religious and civic ceremonies, public sports, war even, were pageants. The citizen was himself an integral part of these splendors; he walked in the procession, knelt in the cathedral, wore a glittering costume to the wars.

In the memories of these men were the bloody birth of the new faith and the bloodier death of the old; in their middle age they were blown to the four quarters of the seas, trading with Hawkins, fighting with Drake, roaming the flower forests of South America, hearing eye-witness tales of the golden civilizations of Mexico and Peru,—scattered to the world's end, until the Armada loomed upon the horizon and called them together again.

Drunk and dazzled between these enchantresses of the East and the West, Italy and the southern seas, such

were the imaginations to which Shakspeare appealed.

The world was young for the second time, and to these men a few words of description were as fire to tow.

If these were their powers of imagination, their possibilities for expression in scene-setting were very different: the splendors could not be realistically represented upon small stages and with imperfect machinery. Costume could not be impressive, because upon the very



BACCHUS POURING A LIBATION BEFORE THE PLAY.

stage itself sat, as spectators, the ruffling gallants of the time, the noblest and richest among the auditors, clad in the costliest fashions that have ever been worn. Chaffing the pit, criticising aloud the action of the piece, they divided with the players the attention of the audience, and by their blaze of color made dramatic concentration impossible. The play in those days was costumed contemporaneously, and the poor actor could not vie with these birds of paradise — he would have been a ridiculous anticlimax. In the past, simplicity was natural to the stage; beauty, pageantry were parts of daily life — the theater needed but to suggest them. To these men their drama was not an exotic or an antiquity so much as ours is. It was a natural growth of the soil, a product of the artistic needs of the age, reflecting its manners, ethics, and ideals. This is far from being the case with us. In seeing any play of the past we have to put ourselves in a certain mental attitude, shift our ordinary point of

view, acclimatize ourselves to the foreign atmosphere. Therefore, historic costumes and settings are indispensable to create the illusion for which the actor strives: the direct appeal to the eye puts the audience unconsciously in sympathy with the spirit of a remote era. Let us take an example: In Delavigne's "Louis XI." we change from our age of freedom to that of an absolute king, an age of jealousy and insecurity. Our minds are brought into immediate recognition of this by the castle, the drawbridge, the thick walls, and the heavily armed attendants, without obliging us to go through any mental process in order to realize these changed conditions. Man has in every age a craving for beauty of architecture, color, and grouping. To-day, "no longer able to be an actor, he desires to be a spectator" of the picturesque, for in our time pageantry has been shifted from daily life to the stage. The man of the sixteenth century, having it in his city, his dress, and his home, did not need it at the theater. We have reversed these conditions. With our civilization of mechanics and the exact sciences, life has grown dull and civil-suited: the Puritans themselves would wonder at the plainness of our daily attire. Processions have all but disappeared; court ceremonial has been simplified; color abandoned even by the peasant and the soldier, and at present the armies of Europe are being uniformed in dull blues and grays, and only gala days see the people of Spain and Italy in their old-time brilliancy.

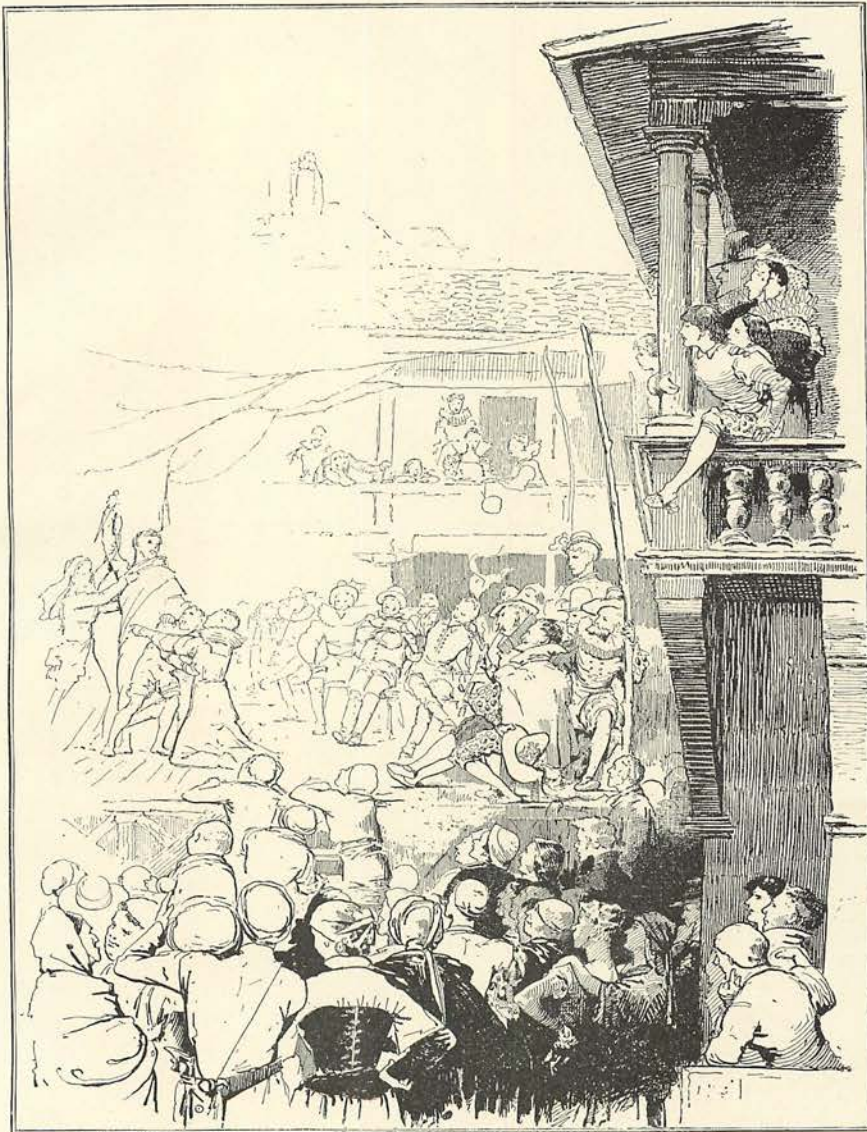
Let us not then drive picturesqueness from its last stronghold, the theater. *There* much can be done for us with slight means: behind the footlights everything is relative, and relatively the largest frames are small, be they even the prosceniums of San Carlo and La Scala; in them much may be represented by little, a few seem many, an hundred be an army. To the man of the Renaissance, who had perhaps during the day seen a thousand knights ride by against the splendid background of a mediæval city, the twelve horsemen of "La Juive" at the Paris Grand Opera would not be impressive; to us they help the spectacle greatly. Those who object to elaborate settings, holding that high thought is incompatible with the sensuous gratification of the eye, have a too flexible standard. They do not logically define their position. Their theories, pushed to their legitimate sequence, would give the stage its Elizabethan simplicity, or indeed find their most direct expression in Coquelin's monologues recited in evening-dress in a drawing-room.

A fine setting can not belittle good poetry — it may be too gorgeous, it can not be too good; and the fact that elaborate costumes and scenery may carry a poor piece does not prove that

they may hurt a good one; just as the occasional success of great personal beauty in an indifferent actress is no argument against the possession of a handsome person by an actress of genius.

Most important of all is the fact that it is the quality of *novelty* which makes fine stage-set-

shall be leafy and beautiful; *Rosalind* is not less so: we are familiar with the loveliness of a forest. *Theodora's* palace is rich and striking, and we say that it is scenic and distracts us from Bernhardt's acting: we are unaccustomed to Byzantine architecture. *Tony Lump-*



THE THEATER OF THE ELIZABETHAN STROLLERS — THE INN YARD.

tings distracting to many persons. Once thoroughly accustomed to good and correct scenery and costume, we shall cease to be unduly occupied by them: when Garrick and Talma made a few innovations, it is probable that even such simple alterations as discarding the bag-wig disturbed old play-goers. To-day we are willing enough that the painted Arden

kin, *Lady Teazle* must be well costumed; the eighteenth century is about us still in our old country homes. *Cæsar* must be togged; the veriest primer thus shows him to us. In Shakspeare's time *Brutus* conspired, slew, and died in ruff and feathered hat and Spanish rapier.

We live in an eclectic age and can not dress our players contemporaneously as did the Ve-



IN A MIRACLE PLAY.

netians; we would not accept a *Hamlet* in high hat and ulster. Since, therefore, we must costume our actors, let us learn to apply the laws of beauty in form and color guided by æsthetics rather than by archæology: the latter, pure and simple, we do not want; it would hamper us, but decent fitness always helps. Anything *outré* is bad; unfamiliar archæological ugliness should, of course, be let alone, but unfamiliar archæological beauty by usage soon becomes familiar.*

The possibilities of scenic expression have made great strides within a few years. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but little attempt at realistic setting, historical accuracy, or local color was made upon the French or English stage. In the last quarter of the last century Voltaire had warmly advocated studies in that direction, and in the first quarter of ours Walter Scott began to write his tales, and the love of the picturesque as embodied in the quaint and the remote grew apace. In France a hard struggle ensued between the old conventional and the new romantic schools, during which the red waistcoat of Théophile Gautier was the oriflamme of the innovator, and the young Victor Hugo faced a tempest of howls and hisses, to triumph utterly at last. For the first time approximately correct costumes, local color, and realistic scenery were presented with the drama. Hugo's plays were examples of minute setting; each scene was preceded by an elaborate description of the requisite scenery, costumes, and properties. Finally even that abode of conventionality, the opera, was affected, so irresistible was the new movement.

Meyerbeer, with Scribe as librettist, began to mount his pompous "machines." The cathedral scene of the "Prophet," the ship in "L'Africaine," where the whole stage swings around as *Nelusko* puts the vessel about, had a European reputation. Progress continued, but until very recently, while form and line were good, color was still violent and inharmonious; and at the opera the maids of honor filed along

* The Greek drama has been purposely left unconsidered in this question. Human, universal, eternal as are the great plays, should we see them acted and set as they were in the days of Pericles, they would seem to us local, strange, and remote. The Greek scene was of masonry, a fixture, part of the theater itself, and usually represented the façade of a palace; to its three doors were respectively assigned the entrances of the principal actor, the strangers or guests, and the common people of the play. The players wore huge conventional masks, set wigs, high-soled buskins, and were stuffed and padded under their formal draperies. Ev-

in sequence of chromes, vermilions, magentas, like the dearly remembered but gaudy Noah family of the arks of our childhood. Towards 1873, Offenbach, as manager of the Théâtre de la Gaité, gave his "Orphée aux Enfers" enlarged to the proportions of a five-act spectacle. With this relatively trivial work, delicate color made one of its first successes. In Paris, Grévin, the designer superintending the costumes, put gods and goddesses, mermen and mermaidens, mortals, satyrs, Pegasus, and all into the lightest and most delicate colors, using only a few dark or dull tones for contrast. Almost banishing



THE AUDIENCE OF A MIRACLE PLAY IN AN ABBEY.

the usual gold and silver, he obtained the most brilliant effect of color that had been seen up to that time upon the French stage. "Orphée" was successful, and Paris cried out that tinsel must go—"plus de clinquant!" Good color was now expected at the theater, and in England Mr. Irving added the dignity, sobriety, and nobility of color which befitted the more serious drama. South Kensington and the new art movement of course aided. In France, M. Sardou and others followed. Careful stage-setting was now in full progress on both sides of the Channel, and American audiences could judge of its results during the western tours of the Lyceum Company.

Let us pass to the consideration of the applying everything about the Greek drama, from the plot of the play to the costume of the actor, had a character of immutability and fixity quite opposed to our ideal of the most subtle, emotional, and evanescent of all the arts.

The Greek play is therefore so foreign to our life, so seldom represented on our stage, that it is not necessary to consider it in reference to modern needs; its conditions differ as utterly from our dramatic requirements as the antique theater, hewn out of the hillside, open to the sky, lighted by the southern sunshine, differs from our play-houses.

cation of pictorial law to the theater. The pictorial part in the production of a play may be continued in the painting of the scenery, the construction of the costumes and the properties, and the combination of all into stage pictures.

ground, and that an intricate foreground needs simplicity behind it. In a few words, the relief which is given to the principal rôles, by their inherent importance and the superiority of the actors filling them, may be greatly



A BATTLE.

Theatrical settings are to a considerable extent governed by the same laws which control the execution of easel pictures,—harmony of color, agreeable distribution of the masses, groups, and lighting, as in a composition upon canvas; recognition of the pictorial principle that simple central objects will bear an elaborate back-

enhanced by purely pictorial means of color and lighting.

Let us, for the sake of illustration, suppose a case from "Julius Cæsar," as given by Mr. Barrett at the Star Theater winter before last. The leading actors were in the foreground in white togas, while behind, at the back of the

stage, were the plebeians, represented by the pupils of the Lyceum School, dressed, as they really were at the rehearsal, some in brilliant red, many in white, or bright yellow, each pupil trying sincerely though mistakenly to add to the general effect by being as conspicuous as possible. Against this rainbow the principal actors showed but poorly. With the ready consent of Mr. Barrett, Mr. Millet, who had volunteered his assistance in the arrangement of the costumes, ordered thirty or forty dresses of neutral colors,—light and dark ochers, dull reds, olives, and mauves. Once upon the scene, these yielded not only a delightful harmony of colors among themselves, but a fine relief to the white figures of the senators. Thus by good judgment the desired effects were focused and made to tell. *Antony* in black, upon the tribune, had for a complement the hurry and confusion of the mob; in the senate-house the foreground of senators struggling with *Cæsar* gave the detail; the neutral costumes of the Lyceum massed upon the benches furnished the simple background. For, observe that a massing or multiplication of parts either upon canvas, bas-relief, or scene yields simplicity, when the same spaced or scattered would confuse. These are a few instances of pictorial laws applied to grouping. Special cases have to be met as they come up at rehearsals. Other instances are more directly personal: for example, rouging and making-up are largely dependent upon the size of the house. It is again a question of the painter's canvas and its distance from the spectator. Rouge, if too violent, by a natural law of color causes the planes of the cheeks to recede from the planes of the other and whiter portions of the face, thus producing a look of age and of gauntness. The sparing use of rouge is good. The Greeks, those most logical of artists, touched the cheeks of their canephoræ with it for the Panathenaic procession, but in their use of color, whether upon the faces of their girls or upon the triglyphs and metopes of their temples, they estimated at its full value the glazing and harmonizing power of sunlight.

When considering costumes and scenery, emphasis must be placed upon the fact that good effects in many cases do not or should not cost more than poor ones. A single illustration will be better than much explanation. In the fine rendering of the "Valkyr" by the German Opera Company last winter, the furs, characteristic helmets, lances, and big shields of the warrior-maidens—costly things—were constructed with taste and skill, but the fine effect that should have been produced by this care and cost was spoiled by so simple a matter as the cloaks of the Valkyrs. Such

dyes were used as had, we fondly hoped, perished off the face of the earth, or been imprisoned in the glass jars of druggists' windows. Paris green, magenta, chrome,—what names can be found for such crudities! The same expenditure with a feeling for color would have made all perfect: many in the audience would have been hurt by false notes in the music, many were by the bad color, the laws of which exist somewhere, though infinitely subtle and not yet formulated. *Pure* color should be used with the greatest care, and in the smallest quantities. White is the noblest of all, and for brilliant effects incomparable; while for general use and masses we must rely on the secondaries and tertiaries. It was the good fortune of the art epochs—antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Orient of the past—that their imperfect chemistry did not know how to create pure color; tones which were perforce free from sharpness, employed for centuries, educated the eyes of men, and in spite of Western dyes the modern Japanese continues to be a colorist, though not in his full measure.

As to material, woolens, crêpes, and cheese-cloth, good in color, well cut and draped, are better than satin and velvet ill applied. The costliness of the latter should insure them good treatment, but often does not.

Fine costume is the result of a lavish expenditure, but it is the expenditure of thought and training; money plays only a secondary part. Some artists are almost sure to be well costumed, the public hardly realizing what care and study have been given to apparently unimportant detail. For exquisite scales of color we have had Mr. Irving's *Benedick* dress and Mr. Norman Forbes's *Claudio* costume in the first act of "Much Ado," Miss Terry's gowns as *Beatrice*, Madame Modjeska's beautifully draped *Juliet* costume in the garden scene with the *Nurse*,—indeed, the names of these artists suggest a whole series of pictures.

The meticulous care of Mr. Irving's personal make-ups has been criticised. Signor Salvini, on the other hand, makes but few changes; we always see the same high, bald forehead, full, drooping mustache, and handsome face. He is a great genius, but his performance is not greater because of his slight make-up; if so, it would be greater still in modern dress. Mr. Irving studies the pictures and prints of the time until he walks on to the stage the very man Charles Stuart and no other, so that the audience almost look for the Vandyke frame out of which he has stepped. As *Louis XI.* sits in his chair of state, his sharp knees almost meet his chin in the pose so familiar to us; the chair is cunningly contrived for this very effect, and helps to give the bent

and drawn look. Is this trickery? Not at all; it is good art, excellent art. The inner passions and struggles which the actor is to express surely carve the outer shell which he is also to present. The handsome soldier who rushes on to the stage, armor clattering, one tasse torn half away, hair flying, bears in his outward presence the courtliness and bravery that history yields to Charles I. in spite of his weak-

effect, stands reconstructed, even to its minutest buckle, upon the eighty military figures of the Paris Museum of Artillery. There may be found the clattering Burgundians of Louis XI., King Harry's men of Harfleur and Agincourt, the Crusaders of Tasso, the Gauls of the Arch of Orange,—they who feared nothing save that the sky might fall,—the Athenian "Knights" of Aristophanes, Cæsar's



IN THE WINGS—WAITING TO GO ON THE STAGE.

ness and treachery; the crouching ugliness of the French king is wicked ugliness, and the man *Louis* in the throne-room above infers the iron cage in the dungeon below. So to the audience the make-up is a part of the man, and the pictorial becomes the psychological.

Data are abundant. Viollet-le-Duc has given us the Middle Ages, even to the patterns of its dresses. Armor, so splendid in its scenic

legionaries and gladiators, the "Miles Gloriosus" of Plautus, the Northmen of the Nibelungen cycle, the men of all the ancient dramas,—for then every man was a soldier, even the fur-clad pre-historic human animal whom circumstances of time and space prevent us from following in any drama save that of beast slaying and eating, or being beast slain and devoured. Excellent costume books abound, the



THE MURDER OF JULIUS CÆSAR—FROM BEHIND THE SCENES.

results of a harvest gleaned from the pictures and sculptures of Italy and the North, and in part already presented in some theaters.

The buckramed and gilded Byzantines have come from the solemn mosaics of St. Vitalius to the light and glitter of the Porte St. Martin; Bernhardt's "Daughter of Roland" has stepped down from her canopied niche in Chartres's porch; Carpaccio's many-colored youths of the Company of the Calza have left the walls of Venice; the pages of the Brera walk the boards; the forester lads of the Flem-

ish tapestries are seen in the doublet and long hose of Modjeska's *Rosalind*; while the glorious donzella of Veronese, pearled, ruffed, and brocaded, bears herself as radiantly in Miss Terry's *Portia* as even upon the canvas of the great old master. Archæology *per se* we do not want, any more than we want it in our pictures, but where relative faithfulness adds beauty and picturesqueness — and it generally does — we most emphatically do wish it. Rigid adherence to archæology may produce constraint, stiffness, and ugliness; reckless depart-

ure from it may be ridiculous. The plays of the eighteenth century stand near to us; in the old homes of New England, New Jersey, and the South are heirlooms that familiarize us with the accessories of the times of Garrick and Cibber. Family portraits teach us to demand good costume upon our *Peter Teazles* and *Anthony Absolutes*. Great-grandmother's quilted petticoat, which, dragged from some garret, had been curiously handled by us, seems right and proper upon *Miss Hardcastle* or *Dorinda*; but when the piece goes farther back, what a terra incognita we find; for the Middle Ages or antiquity, what amalgamations are accepted and applauded! How well New York knows the Paris-green tights and tin-pot helmets of "Trovatore"! In the dress of these mediæval Spanish freebooters we follow the assurance of Solomon Lucas to Mr. Snodgrass that a Grecian helmet is, and always has been, the real and only head-gear for a troubadour. Perhaps some opera librettos are too preposterous to deserve serious consideration, but Shakspeare is almost as ill treated. A few years ago we saw *Desdemona* arrive at Cyprus in a New York hat of the latest fashion, so big and white, one wondered that anything so like a sail had outlived the "wrack and sufferance" met by the ships. When a famous foreign artist played to us in "Macbeth" it was surprising to see in the banquet scene two red-velvet and gilt arm-chairs for the grim Scotchmen of the time of the Norman conquest. In the same play, when one of the ghostly descendants of *Banquo* wore his too succinct white gown over a pair of modern trousers, the audience laughed aloud. There was about it a suggestion of nocturnal conflagration and of royalty properly anxious to save the crown even in the minimum of clothing. Our ancestors differed from us in their requirements. We should not to-day, as did the sixteenth-century playwright, furnish our Carthaginian senators with watches; nor give Abraham a gun wherewith to shoot Isaac, as in the old ivory, nor like the Dutch artist send the Jews up to Jerusalem on skates. Such were the delightful anachronisms of the naïve old times. To-day we are a little more learned; and though we eschew the strait-jacket of absolute archæology, we may nevertheless be tolerably correct, for the average theater-goer travels far more than he did fifty years ago, sees the relics of the past, and is not averse to meeting them again upon the stage.

To the untraveled, the theater, especially in a country which, like ours, has few historic monuments, is a pictorial educator. A French savant has proposed that archæological correctness in appointments shall just keep pace with the knowledge of the audience; that

the already familiar shall be given with fair accuracy, and that the unfamiliar shall be but slightly sketched. Thus, ancient Romans, being well known, shall wear their togas correctly; but if so unusual a thing as a Persian interior occur, baggy trousers, black beards, and a pipe or two will sufficiently suggest what is needed without distracting the audience by archæological detail. His theory was certainly carried out in an American play at one of the French theaters, where the scene represented the cabin of a steamboat on its way from Chicago to New York, and where the manners and customs of the natives were as unusual as the route of the boat. In all seriousness, it seems impossible to justify such a theory; the knowledge of an audience is never homogeneous. The Englishman whose helmeted ancestors hang in portrait upon his walls will know one thing, the Yankee who contemplates his grandfather in continentals above the chimney-piece will know another, the street urchin in the gallery will know neither.

Though it may not at first be appreciated, the most careful setting is not too good for the teaching of any audience. Of course, in the search after scenic correctness, there is a golden mean, and that mean is such correctness as is consistent with beauty and unity. On the other hand, at one of the extremes is the captious criticism which condemned the cedar walk of "Much Ado about Nothing" with the tremendous indictment that "cedars did not exist in Messina for fifty years after the action of the piece"; at the other extreme is the disappointed yet credulous surprise of Du Maurier's old lady in "Punch" who, seeing the sandwich-man placarded with "Irving as *Hamlet*," says, "Dear me! I had no idea he was at all such a looking person as that!"

As certain costumes serve to set off and emphasize other and more prominent ones, so scenery backs and completes all: its primary function is to be a background and a frame. Therefore, whatever else it is, it should never be obtrusive; and keeping this in mind, we have but to make a wise selection—good scenic artists are at hand and photography has levied tribute upon the world. Have you "Romeo" or "Othello"? Views of Verona and Venice are frequent. "La Haine" or "Theodora"? Siena, Ravenna, and Constantinople are available to give such strength and character as no painter could invent. Have you a modern society play? Apply exactly the same laws that you would to a historical one—namely, those of color, line, and, above all, sobriety. The overloading which is vulgar in our homes is vulgar upon the stage: a cohort of little jars bespangling everything, a butterfly assortment of ribbon-bows, a long array of plump chairs

and sofas, upholstered with bright tufted satins, are bad in our parlors, and upon the stage distract the eye from what should be prominent. Where both furniture and scenery are overloaded and brilliant in color, the costume of the performer is nowhere; there is no subordination to effect; all is on one level plane of gorgeousness, like the company of soldiers, raised by Artemus Ward, to be exclusively composed of brigadier-generals. On the con-

jumble of approximation made up from imperfect memory and more imperfect knowledge! In a tragedy where the action is supposed to pass in Britain of the eleventh century, we have seen a flat representing the interior of a royal palace, apparently the epoch placed the piece *in nubibus*—anything would do. This scene contained some Romanesque arches, pseudo-Corinthian columns, Gothic colonnettes, a kind of frieze of Assyrian honey-



MAKING-UP.

trary, unity as well as character is given by good choice of scene. All who have visited them, and who have any art feeling, know what an impression is made by the gloom and stained-glass splendor of a Gothic cathedral, the frowning mass of a northern castle, the glitter of an Italian hill-town in the sun. Each is the outcome of a time, a part of it, an epitome of it—indeed, seeming almost an organic growth. What a poor substitute would be some evolution from inner consciousness, some

suckle, a sort of huge cenotaph with Egyptian cornice, and what might have been Etruscan polygonal masonry. The architecture defied gravitation, fragments of arches hanging like Mohammed's coffin in mid-air. Surely such antics in scene-painting are "but a gallimaufry of gambols."

This is, of course, an extreme case, and matters in our theaters are improving in this respect. Unfortunately, there is at present a tendency to estimate the value of a setting by



THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

the amount of money it costs. This is a vulgar error; in theatrical as in other matters the most lavish expenditure of money can not supply the lack of knowledge and training. It is of very little importance whether the velvet of *Romeo's* doublet costs five or fifty dollars a yard; it is of paramount importance that it should be correct in cut and good in color.*

Scene and setting go hand in hand in obedience to pictorial law. In an easel picture the main motive is the focal point; the other parts of the canvas will either be left comparatively simple, or made interesting by objects or color of a thoroughly secondary importance. In a play, the principle being invariable but the conditions somewhat changed, one portion sets off another, the pictorially dramatic coming to the front where the dialogue is least dramatic, the purely intellectual element representing the concentrated and the pictorially dramatic the diffused quality of interest. The balancing of such points is too nice to be ever successfully settled, and Mr. Irving, as a protagonist of artistic setting, has, of course, been much criticised. Such of

his arrangements as were seen in America appear singularly unattackable, and a happy medium between too much and too little; he does not smother his pieces with people, or overload them with pageantry. His "*Hamlet*" was quietly set: his most gorgeous scenes were given to the comedies, and he seemed to seek rather perfection than profusion, tonality than startling contrasts. An instance of his application of the purely pictorial to the weaker portion of a play is found in the first act of "*Louis XI.*" As we read it, this first act seems dull; it is a preface to the play, quite lacking in dramatic interest; its scenic arrangement made it a charming prologue. Plessis les Tours drew its crenelated line across the sky; then entered the little procession, the red-cowled children and garlanded girls; the clattering change of guard followed. *Nemours*, with his mailed knights, clanked across the stage; challenge and pass-word given, out filed the Scotch archers, down rattled the drawbridge, all disappeared within, and the audience without any conscious effort had pushed back the dial-hand of time four centuries, and was in feudal Touraine.

Another of his artistic effects is the church-scene in "*Much Ado*," where not only the realistic treatment of the setting, but also the separate entrance of each actor, the salutation of the altar, the reverent hush before the ceremony, form such a contrast to the exciting scenes which follow. So, too, in clever emotional antithesis — the heavy organ tones of the crypt-scene have not ceased to vibrate, when, like a sun-burst after storm-clouds, the rush of violins ushers in the lighted hall in which the charming comedy has its end. Indeed, it is perhaps the most of all in this wondrous fairy-land of Shakspeare's comedies, of "*As You Like It*" and "*Twelfth Night*," of "*Tempest*" and "*Winter's Tale*," these paradises of rewarded virtue and villainy reformed, that mind, heart, eye, and ear are alike gratified, and the true symphony of all the arts becomes possible.

M. Sardou is a born stage-setter, but with a leaning to "great machines," numbers of figurants, and magnificence. "*La Haine*," the earliest of his elaborate essays, was really spectacular: in the first act one saw the fortress-

* The more we have seen of the American stage since the visit of the Lyceum Company, the more we feel it necessary to insist upon sobriety, sobriety, and again sobriety. It was because Mr. Irving's settings were so harmonious, so artistic, — above all, so carefully and faithfully thought and reasoned out, — that they were so good. Vaunted expense in a mounting is nothing; it all may have been misapplied. There has been so much gilt and tinsel in some of our plays — bright colored processions do not necessarily make a fine spectacle. And it should be remembered, too, that bad

scenery spoils good costume; and that in England and France painters are convinced that a scene should not be a hard and crude piece of work, but should have atmosphere and grayness, precisely as in the case of landscape or architecture in an easel picture. Witness the fine scenery brought by Miss Anderson to America for "*Romeo and Juliet*," notably the lovely garden-scene, backed by the view of Verona. Some excellent landscape painting has been shown at some of our smaller theaters here, and some of Mr. Daly's revivals have been beautifully costumed.

like streets of mediæval Siena,— real, long-horned white oxen from Tuscany drew the block-wheeled carts across the stage; people strolled about until, the alarm-bell ringing, chains quickly barricaded the way; men caught up their children and ran for their houses; realism did what it could to make the audience feel that it was itself a part of the Middle Ages. Again, in another scene before the cathedral, the young men of adverse parties suddenly, in true Italian fashion, drew sword and attacked; all at once in the center of the stage the great church-doors swung open; upon the platform, in all the splendor of high canonicals, appeared the angry archbishop with his train—bishops, priests, choir-boys, and censer-bearers—advancing straight between the weapons; before the cross the combatants knelt; from the great book, opened upon the shoulders of two kneeling acolytes, the prelate rebuked the people, who, stacking their swords at the doors, in mediæval manner, entered the cathedral to the music of the organ and the bells. "La Patrie," at the Porte St. Martin, has been, perhaps, the most carefully and successfully set of any of his pieces.

If, then, the necessary data are and have been so abundant, whose fault is it that they have not been used? Not the managers' surely; they are always willing to give the public what it wants if they can only find out what that is. Not the dramatic critics'; they would gladly appreciate fine and well-ordered settings. Mr. Booth made a gallant initiative many years ago with "Julius Cæsar." Mr. Wallack and Mr. Daly have done well with old English comedy; much good scenery was painted, but in the main things were bad. The fact is that until the Centennial lent its art impulse to the great mass of the people which had not traveled abroad, there existed in this country no general public appreciation of fine setting. Three or four years ago Mr. Frank D. Millet, the painter, came forward as an innovator in antique costume. We had close at hand, as models, casts and photographs of the women of the Parthenon in the most beautiful draperies ever worn, perfectly fulfilling the æsthetic conditions of clothing, at once concealing and revealing the human body. As a realization of this, the modern American stage had adopted a formless low-necked gown, made of material neither heavy nor light, worn over various bunching articles of underwear, and festooned to suit the taste of the wearer. Mr. Millet thought that it was not enough to cut a piece of cloth after the pattern of some learned archæologist,—the cloth once upon the figure must *look* like an antique dress. He had carefully studied

the authorities upon costume and those best authorities, the sculptures of the museums of Athens, Italy, and London, and bringing to his work at once art feeling and a principle of strong common sense, he gave the stage in the person of Miss Anderson's *Galatea* a careful reproduction of the loveliest costume ever worn—that of the Athenian lady of the great epoch. He treated color with as much respect and taste as form and line, and somewhat later, the Harvard Greek play offering him an opportunity, he applied his costumes to groups and masses. An article by him upon the play appeared in the pages of *THE CENTURY*.* Mr. Barrett, Mr. Wallack, and Mr. Daly, in Shaksperian and other old English revivals, have given care and thought to the progress of stage-setting, and the public look to them as leaders in that direction.

To sum up: in this paper an attempt has been made to prove that in our sober time pageantry has been shifted from our outdoor life to the stage, and that illusion there is necessary; that a dignified and beautiful setting may be produced by the application of pictorial laws to the stage, and that the same laws are applicable to all the arts governing both the theater and the picture; that in our eclectic time we may demand accuracy heretofore unnecessary and impossible;—in short, to prove that the pictorial may help its sister, the dramatic art.

It is not necessary that the painter should turn stage-manager, nor vice versâ, only that



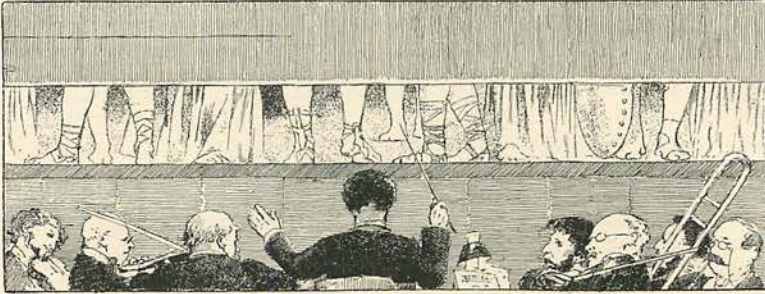
THE TRAP.

*See "Costumes in the Greek Play at Harvard," in this magazine for November, 1881.

the laws of form and color at the theater should be recognized as potent for good, their misconception as potent for obstruction and ridicule. Last of all, we do not forget that while the

accessory art transforms the audience into a receptive and well-attuned instrument, the actor's is the spirit that informs and breathes upon the strings.

Evangeline W. and Edwin H. Blashfield.



AT "THE LITERARY."

FOLKS in town, I reckon, thinks
They git all the fun they air
Runnin' loose 'round! — but, 'y jinks!
We got fun, and fun to spare,
Right out here amongst the ash
And oak timber ever'where!
Some folks else kin cut a dash
'Sides town-people, don't fergit! —
'Specially in winter-time,
When they 's snow, and roads is fit.
In them circumstances I 'm
Resigned to my lot —
Which puts me in mind o' what
'S called "The Literary."

Us folks in the country sees
Lots o' fun! — Take spellin'-school;
Er ole hoe-down jamborees;
Er revivals; er ef you 'll
Tackle taffy-pullin's you
Kin git fun, and quite a few! —
Same with huskin's. But all these
Kind o' frolics they hain't new
By a hundred year' er two,
Ciper on it as you please!
But I 'll tell you what I jest
Think walks over all the rest —
Anyway it suits *me* best, —
That 's "The Literary."



"I WAS 'P'INTED TO BE WHAT THEY CALL 'CRITIC.'"

First they started it — "'y gee!"
Thinks-says-I, "This settlement
'S gittin' too high-toned fer me!"
But when *all* begin to jine,
And I heerd *Izzy* went,
I jest kind o' drapped in line
Like you 've seen some sandy, thin,
Scrawny shoat put fer the crick
Down some pig-trail through the thick
Spice-bresh, where the whole drove 's been
'Bout six weeks 'fore he gits in!
"Can't tell nothin'," I-says-ee,
" 'Bout it tel you go and see
Their blame 'Literary!'"

Very first night I was there
I was 'p'inted to be what
They call "Critic" — so 's a fair
And square jdgment could be got
On the pieces 'at was read,
And on the debate, — "Which air