

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, AUGUST 31, 190.

Actresses and Religion.

Nothing in my autobiography seems to have aroused so much comment, so much surprise, as my admission that I prayed in moments of great distress or anxiety even when in the theatre.

One man writes that he never knew before that their was such a thing as a praying actress. Poor fellow, one feels there are lots of other things he doesn't know; and, though I wish to break the news as gently as possible, I have to inform him that I am not a *rara avis*—that many actresses pray. Indeed, the words are full of them, so to speak.

One very old gentleman finds this habit of prayer 'commendable and sweet,' but generally there seems to be a feeling of amazement that I should dare, as it were to bring the profession of acting to the attention of our Lord, and yet we are authorized to pray:

'Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings, and further us with Thy continual help, that in all our work we may glorify Thy holy name.'

It is not the work, but the motive, the spirit, that actuates the work, whether embroidering stoles, sawing wood, washing dishes, or acting, if it is done honestly for the glory of the Holy name. Why may one not pray for Divine help? One lady who, poor soul! should have been born two or three hundred years ago, when her narrowness would have been more natural, is shocked, almost indignant, and though she is good enough to say that she does not excuse me of 'intentional sacrilege,' still, addressing a prayer to God from a theatre, is nothing less in her eyes than profanation. 'For,' she says, 'you know we must only seek God in his sanctuary, the church!'

Some thousands of us would become beathen, if we never found God, save inside of a church. Does this poor lady not read her Bible then? Has she not heard the Psalmist say: 'If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there! If I make my bed in hell, behold! Thou art there also! Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?' Surely there are a great many places besides the church between heaven and hell, and even in a theatre we may not flee from His presence.

Lest the young girl writers should feel abashed over their expressions of surprise at my conduct, I will show them what good company they have had. A good many years ago, a certain famous scholar and preacher of New York city, called upon me when I was absent attending rehearsal. The creed of his denomination was particularly objectionable to me, but having wandered into the big stone edifice on Fourth avenue one Sunday, I was so charmed by his clear reasoning, his eloquence and above all by his evident sincerity that I continued to go there Sunday after Sunday.

In my absence he held converse with my mother, as to his regret at missing me, as to the condition of the weather, as to the age and attainments and breed of my small dog, who had apparently been sized with a burning desire to get into his lap. We afterward found that she only wished to rescue her sweet cracker which he sat upon.

In his absent-minded way he then fell into a long silence, his handsome, scholarly head drooping forward. Finally, he sighed and remarked:

'She is an actress—your daughter?'

My mother with lifted brows made surprised ascent.

'Yes—y—yes, he went on gently, an actress, surely, for I see my paper commends her work. I have noted her presence in our congregation, and her intelligence. (I never sleep in the daytime). Our ladies like her too—An actress and yet takes an interest in her souls salvation! No! I don't understand! a speech which did little to endear its maker to the actress's mother, I'm afraid.

This reverend gentleman was personally gentle, kind, considerate, and naturally just, yet knowing no actor's life, never having seen the inside of a playhouse, he without hesitation, denounced the theatre and declared it the Gate of Hell!

In the amusing correspondence which

followed that call the great preacher was on the defensive from the first, and in reading over two or three letters, which because of blots or errors, had to be recopied, I am fairly amazed at the temerity of some of my remarks. In one place I charge him with standing upon his closed bible to lift himself above sinners, instead of going to them with the open volume and teaching them to read its precious message.

Perhaps he forgave much to my youth and passionate sincerity; at all events we were friends. I had the benefit of his advice when needed, and in spite of our being different creeds, he it was, who performed the marriage service for my husband and myself.

The question then that has been put so many times is, 'Can there be any compatibility between religion and the stage?'

Now had it been a question of church and the stage, I should have been forced to admit that the exclusive spirit of the first and the unending occupation of the second kept them uncomfortable apart. But the question has invariably been as to a compatibility between religion and the stage. Now, I take it that religion means a belief in God and the desire and effort to do His will. Therefore, I see nothing incompatible between religion and acting.

I am a church woman now, but for many years circumstances prevented my entering the great army of Christians, who have made public confession of their faith and received baptism as an outward and visible sign of a spiritual change. Yet during these long years without a church I was not without religion. I knew naught of justification, of predestination, of transubstantiation. I only knew I must obey the will of God. Here was the Bible; it was the word of God! There was Christ, beautiful, tender, adorable! And He said: 'Thou shalt love the lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind! This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; on these two commandments hangs all the law and the prophets.'

Add to these the old Mosaic Ten, and you have my religious creed complete. And though it is simple enough for a child to comprehend, it is difficult for the wisest to give perfect obedience, because it is not always easy to love that tormenting neighbor, even a little bit, let alone as one's self.

How I wish there was some other word to take the place of 'religion.' It has been so abused, so misconstrued. Thousands of people shrink from the very sound of it, believing that to be religious means the solemn, sour faced setting of one foot before the other in a hard and narrow way, the shutting out of all beauty, the cutting off of all enjoyment. Oh, the pity! the pity! Can't they read: 'Let all those that seek Thee be joyful and glad in Thee and let such as love Thee and Thy salvation, say always: The Lord be praised!' Again: 'The Lord loveth a cheerful giver! But it is not in giving alone that He loves cheerfulness. Real love and trust in God, which is religion, mind you, opens the eye to beauty, the heart to sympathy, the ear to harmony; and all the merriment and joy of life is but the sweeter for the reverent gratitude one returns to the Divine Giver.'

One evening in a green room chatter, the word 'religious' had in some way been applied to me, and a certain actress of small parts, whose life had been of the bitterness of gall, suddenly broke out with:

'What—what's that? religious—you? Well, I guess not! Why, you've more spirit in a minute than the rest of us have in a week, and are as full of capers as a puppy! I guess I know religion when I see it! It makes children loath the Bible by forcing them to learn a hundred of its verses for punishment! It pull down the shades on Sundays—eats cold meat and pickles. Locks up bookcase and piano and discharges the girl for walking with her beau! Oh, no, my dear, you're not religious!'

Poor, abused word! No wonder it terrifies people. How many thousand women,

I wonder, are kept from church by their inability to dress up to the standard of extravagance raised by those who are more wealthy and thoughtful? Even if the poor women pluck up her courage and enters the church, the magnificence of her fortunate sisters distracts her attention from the service and fills her with longing, too often with envy, and surely with humiliation.

Some years ago a party of ultra-high church women decided to wear only black during Lent. One of these ladies condescended to know me, and in speaking of the matter she said:

'Oh, I think this black grab is more than a fad; it is really operates for good. It is so appropriate, you know, and—a constant reminder of that first great fast, the origin of Lent; and as I walk about in trailing black I know I look devout, and that makes me feel devout, and so I pray often, and are you're always the better for praying, even if your dress was at the bottom of it. And—oh, well! I feel that I am in the picture when I wear black during Lent.'

But the important thing is that before the Lenten season was half over, female New York walking the streets in gaudy black—robed dignity, and evidently enjoying the keeping Lent because, to use a theatrical expression, 'it knew it looked the part.'

So much influence do these petted, beloved daughters of the rich exercise over the many that I have often wished that for the sake of the poorer women, the wealthy ones would set a fashion of extreme simplicity of costume for church going. Every feminine creature has an inalienable right to make herself as lovely as possible, and these graceful, clever how to make simplicity charming as does the grand dame of France, who is never more grande dame than when in plain little bonnet, simple gown and a bit of fichu she attends her church.

These bright butterflies have all the long week to flutter in their magnificence. Their lunches, dinners, teas, dances, games, yachts, links, raccourses, give occasion for glorious display. Will they not then be sweetly demure on Sunday for the sake of the picture; and spare their sisters the agony of craving for richly beautiful apparel, since God has made them so and they can't help wanting to be lovely, too!

Perhaps some day a woman of fashion, simply clad, will turn up her pretty nose contemptuously at splendor of dress at church service and whisper: 'What bad form!'

Then, indeed, as the tide sets her way she will realize her power. The Church will have many more attendants. The very poor woman will not be so cruelly humiliated and the wage-earning girl, who puts so much of her money into finery, will have a more artistic and more suitable model to follow.

To those two little maids who so anxiously inquire if I believe prayer is of any real service, and why, since my own could not always have been answered, I can only say, they are in a minority and I have no authority to answer their question here. Perhaps, however, they may recall the fact that their loving mother tenderly refused some of their most passionate demands in babyhood, and that we are yet but children, who often pray to our Father for those things we may not have.

CLARA MORRIS.

How Singers are Paid.

Although very great singers get immense sums for single appearances, the musical profession is neither so lucrative nor so easy as many possibly imagine. Competition rules there as severely as in ordinary trade, and occasionally well-known artists are compelled to accept a very ordinary fee for really severe work.

Fifteen guineas is a sum which only a singer of some rank may hope to earn, and ten guineas is regarded as a very satisfactory fee. But the amounts earned on the many tours which agents arrange for through the provinces are remarkably small. It is not at all difficult to secure very capable vocalists at six or eight guineas a week, excluding their expenses, and for this they are prepared to sing each of the six nights.

Nor is this all, for the artist has to pay his agent a commission of 10 per cent. for securing the engagement.

A few singers can command really good fees. Madame Albani, for instance, asks 175 guineas at the Albert Hall, and Mr.

Edward Lloyd can always obtain sixty. Tenors rule higher than baritones, of whom there is not one probably who receives half this sum. At some of the finest concerts in London singers who are ambitious are frequently expected to pay for an appearance, and there are many cases on record where an impresario has received sums varying from forty to seventy guineas for including a young vocalist in a touring company. If a singer of average talent makes £300 a year, it is a very good sum.

Society is the most generous patron of music. During the London season fabulous sums are spent upon artists. In each case they receive their full fee. It is quite ordinary for a hostess to expend £100 on after-dinner music for her guests, and there are some society leaders whose programme costs them £500 a night. On one occasion during the past season, so it is confidently stated, an American millionaire, eager to engage Madame Melba, who was to sing the same night at the opera, had to indulge his caprice at the expense of £1,000!

If London concerts are little lucrative—competition is keen and singers are many—the provincial festivals are bounteous sources of profit. Some idea of their magnitude will be derived from the fact that generally over £1,000 is spent on the band for four days only; whilst amongst the singers a sum of at least £1,500 is divided. Madame Albani gets £500 and Mr. Lloyd £300 for singing at a festival, and even then neither will sing more than four times. Some of the festivals, despite these heavy charges, are very profitable; and in the case of Leeds, local charity benefits to the extent of about £6,000 each time.

However, the usual fee for an ordinary singer is from six to ten guineas, and out of this he pays travelling and hotel expenses, not to mention the consideration that he has to dress well. What fees will become in the future with the enormous additions annually made to the strength of the profession it is difficult to foresee. At the Guildhall School alone there are 3,750 students, most of whom hope to make their livelihood by singing.

THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER

A Young Husband and His Typewriter Surprised by the Bride.

Mr. Arthur Tapes was showing Mrs. Arthur Tapes the wonders of the Stock Exchange at the close of business on the day following the end of their wedding tour.

'Who are all these young ladies I see on the street?' asked Mrs. Tapes.

'They are typists from the hundreds of offices around here,' answered her husband.

That was all that was said on that phase of business life until Mr. Tapes and his bride were enjoying dinner in their cozy flat.

'Have you a typist?' she asked.

'Yes,' he answered, and again the subject was dropped.

The next morning at a quarter past 10 o'clock Mrs. Arthur Tapes entered the office of Mr. Arthur Tapes and approached a bald-headed clerk.

'Is Mr. Tapes in?' she asked.

'Yes, ma'am. He is busy with his typist in the next room,' he answered, as he pointed with his left elbow to a partially open door. 'Shall I call him?'

'No! I will wait,' replied Mrs. Tapes, as she took a seat that gave the best possible view of the open door.

It was a most provoking view, for it gave Mrs. Tapes only a glimpse of Mr. Tapes's side elevation as he straightened in his chair from a frequent leaning position, apparently toward the typist. Then the distance was such that she could hear the sound of his low voice without catching the words.

In a few minutes she moved her chair nearer, which did not help her view, but made the voice more distinct. Mr. Tapes leaned so far forward that he was entirely out of sight, and Mrs. Tapes showed agitation by rapidly tapping the floor with her right foot. Then she rose and approached the busy smooth-pated clerk.

'What is the name of Mr. Tapes's typewriter?' she asked.

'Hannah.'

She returned to her chair and drew it a little nearer the door as she sat down. She saw her husband standing, and then disappear as he stepped behind the typist. She heard him laugh—a low laugh that she

had delighted in. Then she heard him speak with some emphasis.

'I have had my vacation,' he said, 'and now you must have yours. I hope you will have as fine a time as we had when we took our vacation together last summer.'

Mrs. Tapes sprang from her seat, thrust the door wide open and entered. Mr. Tapes stood with both hands affectionally on his typist's shoulders, and the two turned quickly toward her as she entered.

'Why, Mary, how you startled me,' he said. 'I didn't expect to see you here. What a pleasant surprise! Allow me to introduce my typist to you, Mr. Hannah, this is Mrs. Tapes. You see, my dear, Mr. Hannah has grown gray in the city. I had my training in his office, and, though he taught me well, like many others he has met with disappointment.'

Mrs. Tapes grasped the old man's extended hand and the sunshine of relief dispelled clouds of suspicion from her pretty face.

His Idea of Freedom.

Several years ago a young Englishman came on his first visit to America, and wherever he went he never ceased to express his enthusiasm over the perfect freedom enjoyed by the citizens of this favored republic, while the simplicity of rulers and the absence of guards amazed him beyond measure.

While in Washington he was particularly impressed by the lack of restraint around the White House, and the fact that he was permitted to roam at will all over the grounds without showing credentials or passes.

'I daresay,' he remarked, 'that in this wonderful country a fellow could go into the grounds and roll about on the grass without any objection from the authorities.'

His American friend assured him that it was quite possible, and smilingly advised him to try the experiment. The friend tells the sequel:

He looked at me for a moment and then he walked into the White House grounds. There was a crowd there, but no one paid the least attention to him. He went out on the lawn in front of the main entrance to the building and lay down flat on his back. Then he rolled over three times, slowly and deliberately, after which he got up and walked out of the grounds as happy as if he had found ten dollars.

'No one looked at him and no one spoke to him; to roll over on the White House lawn might have been the proper thing to do for aught that appeared. The Englishman said that if he had acted in that way in any of the capitals on the other side he would have been locked up as a dangerous character. He was very proud of his exploit, and I suppose he is still telling the story of it in England.'

First Gourmand—I suppose we all eat too much.

Second Gourmand—No doubt of it. If we'd eat less we'd have better appetites.—

Buctouche Bar Oysters.

Received this day, 10 Barrels No. 1 Buctouche Bar Oysters, the first of the Spring catch. At 19 and 23 King Square.

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