

THE VANISHING ACTOR: AND AFTER

BY ANNIE NATHAN MEYER

[Since this article was written certain plays have been put upon the boards which would make it seem that the stage is certainly no longer 'curiously aloof from the spirit of its age.' But is this due to a real and sincere enfranchisement of the spirit of the drama? Is it entirely free from any desire to exploit for profit a momentary sensation? Certainly the sincerity of a dramatist is not put greatly to the test while the box-office receipts roll up cheerily. — THE AUTHOR.]

I

THERE were others besides Paul Delaroche, who, looking upon their first photograph in 1839, declared the art of painting to be dead. And many good souls to-day — after attending their first performance of the modern highly perfected moving pictures — pronounce the death of the art of acting.

Indeed, one hears it on every side: 'There are no more great actors'; 'Acting as an art is dead.' It is all quite easily disposed of, there is no contradiction. Some do not care, others pause to drop a tear, but hardy is he who ventures to dispute the fiat of the wise doctors. All sorts of reasons, or excuses for reasons, are given as the cause of the taking off of the late departed, — the disappearance of stock companies, the rise of commercialism, long runs,¹

¹ It is interesting to note that in the eighteenth century a run of twenty nights, such as Addison's *Cato* had, was considered very long, while the run of *The Beggar's Opera* of sixty-two nights was looked upon as phenomenal. — THE AUTHOR.

the ever-increasing emphasis on scenery, rivalry of managers, absence of rivalry; and even there are those who do not hesitate to lay the blame upon the race to which the majority of managers belong, the very race that has contributed more than its share to the histrionic talent of the world. All reasons and no reasons, but a marvelous agreement: the art of acting is dead.

Some day let us hope that the interrelation of the arts will be so understood that no critic may hope to be taken seriously who is familiar with the history — to keep up the analogy we might call it the bed-side record — of one art alone. When all goes smoothly with the progress of an art, this need of historical perspective may not be so apparent; but the instant it becomes involved in difficulties, no one can be of any real service in ministering to it who has not more than one art of which he may take counsel. One might as well hope to be cured by a physician who knows only one case. So I am going to ask the reader to look over with me the clinical records of that other patient whose untimely end was so confidently, and so mistakenly, predicted. It will be strange if we do not find a good deal that is of distinct therapeutic value to us of to-day.

Now for all the dire predictions three quarters of a century ago anent the art of painting, it did not die. Sufficiently eloquent is the fact that at the time Puvis de Chavannes, Manet, Dégas, Renoir, were still unknown, while even the men of 1830 had certainly by no

means come into their own. And when we realize further that in America the chief cause of discouragement was that no successors loomed in sight worthy the great names of Doughty, Kensett, and Durand, we may well ask ourselves, — is, then, the prognosis of this latest case quite so bad as some of our contemporaries would have it?

Perhaps it is difficult fully to understand the panic into which the followers of the art of painting were thrown on the discovery of photography, since to us the place of the two arts is so thoroughly assured and so assuredly separate. But we must remember that to an unphotographed age the art of painting necessarily meant something quite different from what it means to our own kodaked generation. 'Figure to yourself,' cries a writer in shrill excitement in the *Moniteur Universel*, January 14, 1839, 'figure to yourself a mirror which, after receiving your image, presents you your portrait, as indelible as a painting and much more faithful!' And in rendering the image of nature, how immensely significant becomes the language of the bill introduced before the French Chamber to pension M. Daguerre: 'To the traveler the apparatus of M. Daguerre would become a continual and indispensable necessity. It will enable them to fix their impressions without having recourse to the hand of a stranger.'

Perhaps to us who have come to associate those silvery ghosts of a day gone-by with the delicate grace of some ancestor, it is difficult to think of the daguerreotype as a rival to landscape painting. It is necessary to remember, however, that at first the daguerreotype was restricted to the photographing of nature. The exposures lasting for several hours, the inventor Daguerre himself was very skeptical of the process ever becoming of much service in portraiture. The first Amer-

ican daguerreotype was a view of a Broadway church, taken by S. F. B. Morse from a window of the New York University. Its application to life, though 'hoped for' in the report of the commission to the French government, was actually made first by Dr. Draper of the same university. The first published account appeared in the *Philosophical Magazine* for September, 1840.

The photographic or topographical view of painting was brought home to me very clearly once, a dozen years ago, in visiting the collection of one of the typical art-patrons of the Hudson River School. The old gentleman, then within a few months of his death, led me from picture to picture, and I recall very distinctly his chuckling over this or that evidence of exact observation and scrupulous truthfulness on the part of the artist. With great glee, I remember, he pointed out to me in his favorite picture the very seat on the very porch from which he used to view that very bend in the river. It was more, a good deal more, than the reminiscent joy of the nonagenarian; it was perfectly clear that the pictures before him had always been prized above everything else as literal transcriptions of nature. This is quite in line with the remark of our pioneer landscape painter, Thomas Cole, that 'the cause of the American painter's love of nature is the necessity of saving and perpetuating the features of a wilderness which is passing away.'

It is far from commonly understood how largely even the grandiloquent, romantic pictures of Church and Bierstadt owed their character to the state-ly scenes they chose as their subjects, rather than, as one might at first fancy, to the tradition of the grand style of painting. It was Champney the artist, who, in his *Memoirs*, wrote of his frank amazement, on finding, on his travels,

how little Church had permitted himself to deviate from the nature before his palette. To be sure, the landscapes of the period were supposed to reveal 'that high sublimity which elevates, refines and warms the heart, and fills its chambers with proud imagery.' True, the painter was expected to look on Nature 'conscious of the Being who reigned there,' yet the contemporary enjoyment of landscape painting depended largely upon its power to visualize scenes for pleasant reminiscent musing, or to bring before the general public the scenic grandeur of inaccessible parts of the globe. That there were critics conscious that this was not the noblest service of the art of painting is evidenced by frequent exhortations in the magazines of the period, to 'cease painting nature for nature's sake,' and to return to 'the noble heights of historical painting.'

Even if painting never returned to those 'noble heights,' at least after the discovery of the photograph the artists did cease painting 'nature for nature's sake.' It was obvious that painting in that direction was hopelessly outclassed. But the main point that concerns us now is that painting did not die. On the contrary, with the discovery of the art of photography the art of painting took on a new lease of life. Indeed, we may say that this is what is certain to happen to any art which finds itself outstripped by a mechanical contrivance. It does not, as might be expected, betray itself by a hopeless competition; it does not seek to become a conscious rival to the mechanical; it at once sets about to do something which that mechanical contrivance could not possibly accomplish. Outdone in accuracy by the 'sun pencil,' the brush henceforth became the artist's personal instrument of expression in a sense impossible to the camera. As the world grew smaller

and smaller through the photograph and other inventions (the steamboat and the railroad), the particular spot chosen by the painter became of less and less importance, and the emphasis was placed upon his particular way of interpreting it. The topographical interest in the painted picture fell, and the personal emotion in the painter rose.

'Art,' cried Zola, 'is nature seen through an emotion.' Inness declared the aim of painting to be not to edify but to awaken an emotion. Think of the significant change in the whole point of view expressed in these two definitions! We see its beginning back in 1853, when the biographer of Thomas Cole earnestly deplores his hero's departure from painting 'pictures merely descriptive of wild nature to painting those poetically expressive of himself.' 'This was at once regarded,' he continues, 'as an unfortunate step—even the judicious among his friends feared that he was forsaking his only proper path.'

II

And now, before we attempt to make a prognosis of the effect of the photographic germ upon our present patient, let us inquire how its constitution became so debilitated that no one expects it to recover from the inroads of the moving-picture disease.

Now I am frankly of the opinion that it is not the art of acting that is in any danger, but that it is rather that a certain tradition of acting is indeed passing away. Its expected demise has been mistaken for the extinction of acting itself. There is a certain type of acting which bears a strong resemblance to the aims and tendencies of 'historical painting.' Is not the pride in the 'legitimate,' that pride which Pinero so tenderly takes off in Trelawny, akin to the eighteenth-century pride in 'the grand style'? When dear

Mr. William Winter grows enthusiastic over the art of Charlotte Cushman because 'she imparted to her audience a conception of noble individuality, and an incentive to noble behavior,' or because 'she did not fill their minds with images of decadence and promptings to degeneracy, recklessness, and failure,' is he not confusing the art of acting with its moral effect, much as Benjamin West found that 'the true use of painting resides in assisting the reason to arrive at certain moral influences, by furnishing a probable view of the effects of motives and passions'?¹ Is he not placing himself as a spiritual contemporary of that patron of the Arts who besought the same West not to waste his time painting portraits, but to devote himself to 'historical painting,' at the same time cheerfully undertaking to suggest 'subjects which would best illustrate the moral effect of painting'? Another adviser of West's, no less a personage than the Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, undertook to make the artist acquainted with the classical literature which would 'give him such a sketch of the taste and character of the spirit of antiquity as would have all the effect of the regular education requisite to a painter.'

The kind of education 'requisite to a painter' in those days, may be suggested by the lectures on mythology which our poet Bryant went on bravely delivering to the students of the Academy of Design long after it was plain that what Dr. Johnson called 'the machinery of the gods,' no longer had its

¹ It will be remembered that the 'earnest Republicans of the Salon' of 1793 conferred a prize upon an inferior painting by a nobody because it represented 'a free man who sacrificed himself for his country.' The prize for sculpture was not bestowed that year because 'none breathed the right patriotic spirit.' Thus can criticism run amuck when once it substitutes the principles of conduct for the principles of art. — THE AUTHOR.

place in the art of painting. I have an idea that 'the machinery of the gods' creaked its way through the history of the drama long after it had been discarded both in painting and in poetry. In some mysterious way, — mysterious at least to those who are not familiar with the history of the other arts, — the acting of plays far removed from the problems of contemporary life is still supposed to demand a higher order of talent than the interpretation of the life one sees about one at every turn.

Now this is not to fail in appreciation of the plays of the great master of the seventeenth century; nor in the nineteenth-century revolt of painting against tradition was there any question of the greatness of Titian and Veronese or of any other of the old masters. But it was recognized earlier in painting than in the drama that no one is great enough to impose himself with entire authority upon another age. As Professor Butcher has himself so authoritatively and so delightfully hinted, one age can never give another '*enough to live by.*' No serious art critic to-day would hold that it takes less technical skill or less bigness of feeling to paint the life about us than to delve into the distant past. The battle of the contemporaneous has been fought and won in the Fine Arts. When in the face of Sir Joshua Reynolds's wrath, Benjamin West, with true American temerity (though in other respects, as we have seen, complacently of his own period) insisted upon clothing his Indians in blankets and feathers instead of the conventional Roman toga, he unconsciously struck a fatal blow at that 'grand style of painting' which up to that moment had been serenely entrenched above all disturbing manifestations of the contemporaneous. The last shattering of the defenses was accomplished when Constable dared to

paint his grass green and his trees in the brightness of a summer day, refusing longer to key his palette to the golden brown tones of 'the old brown fiddle.'

But that 'old brown fiddle' still possesses authority in the drama. Life, with all its conflicting, brilliant colors is not yet fully permitted. There still clings about the drama more than a mere remnant of the grand style, — more than a suggestion of that eighteenth century which delighted in embroiling itself over such controversies as 'whether in order to play tragedy, the actor should or should not have the interior qualification of an elevated soul?' It would seem as if the drama, dealing as it does with human ideas and volitions, would have been the very first of the arts to feel that wave of democracy that has for some time been buffeting (I am tempted to say engulfing) all the arts.

Yet the truth is that the playwright, if his theme is plebeian to-day, must assume as apologetic an air as George Eliot did in her *Amos Barton*, away back in 1856. It seems as if the gallery gods have had enough of wash-tubs and linoleum in real life, and pant for bric-à-brac and mahogany on the stage. And as to that handmaiden of democracy, realism, surely what we have on the stage to-day is rather a realism of setting than of sentiment. The stage in many ways has held curiously aloof from the spirit of its age. It is, alas! still considered more difficult to act Shakespeare than Pinero, to portray Lady Macbeth than Mrs. Ebbsmith. Neither have we entirely emancipated ourselves from the Boswellian attitude which allows that a player of light comedy is 'not entitled to respect; but he who can represent exalted character, and touch the noblest passions has very respectable powers.'

Realism on the stage to-day is so

little understood and appreciated that, incredible as it seems, there were plenty of critics and, more discouraging, plenty of actors, who declared that the Irish players did not act but 'simply walked through their parts.' Such commentators of course place themselves alongside those who in painting saw no art in putting 'Nature unadorned' upon the canvas. Heaven's blue, the luscious green of the trees, the racy red of the soil, these were not fit to hang upon the walls of castle or palace. Those who cannot see the essential greatness of the art of the Irish Players are as those who at this late day would calmly ask for a restitution of the old brown fiddle. For them Nature must still be put into wig and small clothes.

So little was the realistic art of Rodin understood, that on showing his superbly modeled nude, *L'Age d'Airain*, he was bitterly accused by critics and *confrères* alike of not creating a work of art at all but of casting direct from life. The clamor was so great that the Secretary of Fine Arts, who had purchased the statue for the government, was discredited. But this was nearly forty years ago, and since then the critics have had the grace to be ashamed of themselves. It only goes to prove my point that the drama is lagging behind the other arts, inasmuch as in this year of grace, 1913, this same kind of criticism is voiced against the most truthful, and at the same time the most exquisite art the stage has ever seen. It is too truthful to be considered art by those who think Nature should always be 'adorned.' It is astonishing to hear people of fair intelligence — at least in other matters — assuring us that these players from Dublin do not act at all. It would seem as if the test of repetition, of creating the same effect night after night, week after week, were sufficient to prove, not only the art but its high quality. It only goes to

show that concerning the art of acting very little clear thinking goes on at all. As Mr. Walter Prichard Eaton puts it with an acerbity which may be forgiven him, 'Men and women expend their breath upon more foolish chatter about the stage than about any other subject.' And thus Colley Cibber: 'Consider how many more people there are that can see and hear than think and judge.'

The truth is that the freedom of the theatre, its right to mirror life untrammelled and unquestioned, has not been won in the sense that such freedom has been won in the other arts. Progress has undoubtedly been made. Actors and playwrights have fought the good fight together, but very little is known of this most fascinating struggle; little compared to the struggle of the novel to interpret the whole of life, of sculpture to express emotion and mobility, of poetry to sing of the lowly, or painting to portray the characteristic and impermanent.

We know of Sir Joshua's horror at the first approach of the contemporaneous, — that arch-enemy of the Universal or Grand Style, — but we know little of the ridicule and opprobrium that assailed Macklin, the successor of Garrick, when for the first time he appeared as Macbeth, attired in a kilt. The ordinary costume and wig of the day, merely richer or poorer in style according to the station of the character presented, was the only theatrical dress of the eighteenth-century actors; and it may be that this had a certain grim advantage, inasmuch as the only illusion possible was of necessity to be created solely by the illusion of the actor's art. But any hard and fast rule, any powerfully entrenched tradition, necessarily hampers the growth of an art. A purely conventionalized garb as a necessary part of the theatre would have hampered the growth of the drama

in the same way that painting would have been injured had the Roman toga wound itself forever about the painter's model. It is only necessary to look at a portrait by Raeburn to see how a free and great spirit individually escaped from the conventions of his age — the landscape background, and a 'universalized or generalized' style of costuming.

Garrick on his part overthrew countless conventions and traditions. The actor Quin, the great representative of the older school, on witnessing a performance of Garrick's Richard the Third, cried out, 'If this young fellow is right, we have all been wrong!' The critics were astounded to find that Garrick so completely identified himself with his parts, that he gave up the customary 'demi-chant,' with which the actors before him enunciated the author's words. 'He neither struts nor minces, is neither stiff nor slouching,' cries one. The players who were on the stage with him remarked with astonishment, that he was 'attentive to whatever is spoke, and never drops his character by either looking contemptuously on an inferior performer, *unnecessary spitting*,¹ or suffering his eyes to wander through the whole circle of spectators.' This roaming of the actor's eyes must have been a common failing, for Goldsmith thought it worthy of great praise that a popular young French actress of the day did not 'come upon the stage glancing around as though reckoning the receipts.'

We certainly have made progress. George Henry Lewes, were he seated in a modern theatre, might complain of many things, but at least there would be no need to lift his voice in protest against those actors 'who fail to see the absurdity of not looking at the person addressed, as they would look in real life.' 'Why is it?' he goes on to ask,

¹ The italics are mine. — THE AUTHOR.

indignantly, 'Why is it an impassioned lover, instead of fixing his eyes on the eyes of his mistress, fixes them on the upper boxes, or the side scenes?'

We have certainly progressed, and although we may feel, as wise old Dr. Johnson felt, that not near enough progress has been made,¹ nevertheless it is pleasant to reflect that certain conventions of the theatre have passed, never again, let us hope, to be recalled. Gone are the monologues and soliloquies; gone the asides and stage whispers; gone the actor's evident consciousness of the audience; gone 'that solemn unreality of speech and action' which, according to Mr. H. B. Irving, was 'considered the appropriate expression of tragic sentiment.' Gone the tradition that Portia should imitate some leading popular member of the local bar; gone those highly illuminating dialogues between servants setting a table or dusting a room — those 'first aids to ignorant audiences,' as they have wittily been called.

III

But there remains plenty to be done. We are well aware that a certain kind of realism has progressed very far indeed, — the realism of the stage setting, the *mise-en-scène*, — but that is a realism which, after all, has not penetrated very deep, if indeed it may be said to have penetrated at all. The most fantastic deeds take place in these wonderfully real rooms. Any impossible action is accepted if the electrolier is lighted by a real switch turned on by the trembling fingers of an unreal heroine. I am not concerned with the realism of setting, but with the realism of sentiment. What we really have

¹ He protested that for all the reform Garrick brought about there was still entirely too much of artificial tone and measured cadence in the declamation of the theatre. — THE AUTHOR.

been enjoying is a drama of sincere doers and insincere doers — or real tea-cups and conventional feelings. It is beginning to be brought home to us that we have perhaps been guilty of selling our birthright of imaginative drama for a mess of mission furniture. What at first was suspected only by a few is now beginning to be seen by many, that the imaginative drama has become stifled in the commonplace atmosphere of minute detail. A writer on the drama complained as far back as 1883, that the stage accessories had become so substantial that the actors began to wear a shadowy look! But it is easier to see all this than to see that it is but a natural, an almost inevitable stage in the process of obtaining absolute freedom. However, we may have become too absorbed in our plaything — the realism of the setting; nevertheless, it was an inevitable accompaniment to the drama of real thought and action. Even before the photograph with its absolute, faultless realism entered the realm of the stage, mutterings of revolt had already been heard. There is a longing for the opening of windows, for the breaking down of barriers, that the imagination may soar whither it will.² There is no doubt of it, the day of the extravagant spectacle is over, or rather the extravagance will be addressed to the spirit, not the eye.

Obviously there will be no longer reason for importing a troupe of real Arabian actors from Arabia, or toredors from Spain, of copying stone by stone the castle of Elsinore, when a camera sent to the spot will give it to us so much more exactly. Why send to

² We may apply to the drama of to-day what some one has said of poetry, that the difference between the drama of yesterday and the drama of to-day is the difference that lies between an age that fights dragons and an age that fights microbes. But the microbe is essentially romantic, mysterious, magical. — THE AUTHOR.

farthest India for rare stuffs, when all the glory of the Durbar can be given us by the Kinemacolor? If *vraisemblance* is the aim of the stage picture, why endeavor to outdo the original itself? Therefore, I say, the expensive production gathered together from all the ends of the earth will soon be as impossible as it is to-day that a landscape painter should go to the wilds of Africa or the glaciers of Alaska in order, as Cole put it, 'to save and perpetuate the features of a wilderness that is passing away.' If the artist goes in order to give us a personal transcription that no photograph can give us, that is indeed a different matter; but the spectacle for the spectacle's sake, empty of imaginative art, empty of spiritual meat, is as doomed as was the topographical painting.

You will point to the stupendous productions of the past couple of years, but I shall answer that a movement rarely knows when it is defeated. A stricken tarantula victim dances round and round in *furious gayety*. There is no orderly succession in the advance of art movements; one does not succeed another, rather it resembles an interweaving of a pattern that is not easy to trace. There is a confused coming and going. Those who have but a moment to stay, try to impress us with their longevity. Those who are the future conquerors may come on in sorry guise. He who has become uncertain of his wares cries the loudest. So, seeing that extravagant spectacles fail, managers in their bewilderment advertise still more marvelous extravagances. It takes rare intelligence to recognize defeat. From the 'costliest spectacles,' we now read of the 'costliest ever given in the whole wide world.' And still the heart panteth for green fields, for heaven's blue! The wings of our imagination beat against prison bars. Gordon Craig, Reinhardt, the

Irish Players, children's plays, marionettes, miracles, and mysteries arise and come steadily marching on.

For, after all, realism might stultify other arts, but in a different sense than in the drama. The fight against a stifling, deadening realism in the drama is a fight for bare existence as an art — since art and nature are not interchangeable terms. In painting, sculpture, music, or poetry, fight as they did against realism, there was never any danger that it could utterly supplant art. In the very nature of the case there could not be any actual rivalry with nature. Some rearrangement, some restatement was always necessary. The actual hill, or river, for instance, obviously could not be brought within the frame of the picture, the actual frock coat or silk hat could not actually obtrude themselves upon the pedestal, however dreadful their representation might be. The actual cry of the baby at his ablutions could not enter the symphony, or the actual cackling of geese. But in the case of the stage, there was an actual rivalry with an actual object. Actual horses and cows did come on; actual doors and windows, actual cups and saucers, have been brought within the frame of the proscenium. Thus the idea of scenic representation ceased; it was no longer art or imitation, but the thing itself. But the aim of art is never to deceive. Coleridge explained apropos of this, 'You take a marble peach from the mantelpiece and put it down in pettish disgust. A fruit piece of Vanhuysen delights you.' And George Henry Lewes trenchantly puts it, 'We do not admire a man for *being old*, but we admire him for *miming old*.'

And now the movies are upon us — the last word of the actual. And yet is there any such thing as the last word? Clearly if there were, it would be the new 'talkies' rather than the 'movies';

but I understand that even Mr. Edison himself regards them as playthings for the moment, or at least until the duration of their performance can be greatly extended. Much hinged, it will be recalled, upon the length of the reels when the moving pictures were first being developed, and the same problem is now absorbing those who are concerned in the 'talkies.' One gasps to think of what may come in the future when to an improved phonograph there is added the trained speaking voice chosen as carefully as the voices of Caruso, Melba, and others for the singing records. The records of the Victor are reserved for the comparatively few great voices of the world. When the same care applies to the records for the 'talkies' there will be a chance for the revival of the exquisite art of clear and expressive diction. Is the drama, then, on coming into literal, direct competition with the photograph, doomed to die? Or will it, like the art of painting, cease trying to do the thing in which the photograph can so easily outdo it? Will the drama cease to concern itself with an eye-deep realism and concern itself with the soul-drama in which the cinematograph will scarcely attempt to rival it? For now am I buoyed up by my conviction expressed before, that when an art finds itself outstripped by a mechanical contrivance, it at once sets about doing something which that mechanical contrivance cannot possibly accomplish.

This is my hope. For the eye-deep realism of the movies cannot be surpassed. I remember clearly my first performance, — even in those pioneer days which crackled and spluttered and flashed their way across my bewildered eyes, — how I enjoyed the shaking of the lazy, fat shoulders of a huge driver who was guiding a team of horses across the tracks. I cannot help how this confession sounds even if

by my frankness the reader no longer thinks me worthy of addressing him in this matter at all — for the truth will out, that I really found the literalness of the picture highly amusing. Already to-day we see that the first stage of the moving picture has passed. Having startled by an exact and incomparable realism, they have started on a career at once more serious and full of new and significant possibilities. The Famous Players Film Company, under the enthusiastic direction of Mr. Daniel Frohman, is preparing to give to the public in cheap and accessible form the greatest plays of the world. Already upon their list appear *Hamlet*, *Julius Cæsar*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

The movement really deserves an article to itself, for there is behind it a very real hope of service. And it is fascinating to discover, in reducing Shakespeare to the bare terms of action, how much remains. There is also the equally fascinating conjecture of its effect upon the *mise-en-scène* — the playwright of the future permitting his characters to wander wheresoever they choose in as jaunty an irresponsibility as the Elizabethan before the exigencies of the realistic scene.

What is going to be the end of it all? I hope I have suggested the answer in the foregoing pages. Hopelessly outclassed in realism, in the apotheosis of the commonplace, by the modern photographic invasion, the drama will — even as painting did before it at the oncoming of the photograph three quarters of a century ago — escape into the realms of a heightened personality and an enriched imagination. As Müther has summed it up for the art of sculpture, 'From the moment one cannot make a thing better, the time has come to make it differently or to make it something else . . . it is quite probable

that men will never come to create anything more beautiful in its kind than the Venus of Milo. The only means, then, to retain one's independence is to put the Venus of Milo out of one's head.'

The only thing for the modern playwrights to do is to put the movies out of their heads, and set about making the modern play something which the moving picture is not. The modern actor must likewise give us an art so personal, so elusive, that the camera cannot follow him into the new realm at all.¹

In the direction of communicating the thrill of a great personality, and of

¹ There is great encouragement for personality in the actor in the fact that both Bernhardt and Sothorn contract to have their photographic appearance the week before their arrival *in propria persona*. They claim that the result is a heightened interest. This to me is the more significant since I have long felt that one way of salvation lay through a greater familiarity on the part of the audience with the plays they go to see. — THE AUTHOR.

freeing the imaginative faculty, may not the drama enjoy a veritable new lease of life? Is it too fantastic to believe that its progress will be so far removed from the sway of the photographic that our descendants will be as amazed to learn that there was ever conflict between the camera and the art of the drama, as we are to-day over the one-time conflict between the daguerreotype and the art of painting?

As an impassioned admirer of Daguerre declaimed in 1883 on the occasion of the inauguration of a monument to him, —

Avant toi, sublime inventeur,
L'art, dédaigneux du prolétaire,
Accaparrant peintre et sculpteur,
Appartient aux grands de la terre.

May we not somewhat differently apostrophize Edison, and express the hope that through his sublime genius the art of the stage may escape from the proletariat, and again truly belong to those who in a larger, finer sense are 'the great ones of the earth'?

THE EMIGRATION OF MARY ANNE

BY AMANDA MATHEWS

THE very soul of Mary Anne clung to Ireland as if with fingers and toes. It was not that she saw any of Donegal's charms with a tourist's eye — on the contrary, she believed it to be merely a poor barren forsaken spot, and loved it all the more passionately for thus believing. She was one of those for whom emigration is not adventure but doom.

But the path to America had been

made easy before her halting feet to the point of slipperiness. A niece of her mother's had a situation waiting for her in the same house where she was herself employed.

The Duffy family had striven hard to accumulate Mary Anne's passage money, but some untoward necessity was always gobbling it. Now Cousin Maggie had most generously arranged to send the ticket. Mary Anne was to