

doorway—time for his eyes to produce their peculiar effect. And, by the way : if he be a wearer of glasses, he should certainly remove them before coming in. He can put them on again almost immediately. It is the first moment that matters.

As to how long an interval the hero should let elapse between the young man's arrival and his own entry, I cannot offer any very exact advice. I should say, roughly, that in ten minutes the young man would be strung up to the right pitch, and that more than twenty minutes would be too much. It is important that expectancy shall have worked on him to the full, but it is still more important that his mood shall not be chafed to impatience. The danger of over-long delay is well exemplified in the sad case of young Coventry Patmore. In his old age Patmore wrote to Mr. Gosse a description of a visit he had paid, at the age of eighteen, to Leigh Hunt ; and you will find the letter on page 32, Vol. I., of Mr. Basil Champneys' biography of him. The omens, clearly, had all been most propitious. The eager and sensitive spirit of the young man, his intense admiration for *The Story of Rimini*, the letter of introduction from his father to the venerable poet and friend of greater bygone poets, the long walk to Hammersmith, the small house in a Square there—all was classically in order. The poet was at home. The visitor was shown in. . . . "I had," he was destined to tell Mr. Gosse, "waited in the little parlour at least two hours, when the door was opened and a most picturesque gentleman, with hair flowing nearly or quite to his shoulders, a beautiful velvet coat and a Vandyck collar of lace about a foot deep, appeared, rubbing his hands and smiling ethereally, and saying, 'This is a beautiful world, Mr. Patmore !'" The young man was so taken aback by these words that they "eclipsed all memory of what occurred during the remainder of the visit."

Yet there was nothing wrong about the words themselves. Indeed, to anyone with any sense of character and any knowledge of Leigh Hunt, they must seem to have been exactly, exquisitely, inevitably the right words. But they should have been said sooner.

AN ADVENTURE IN A TRAIN

By DR. ETHEL SMYTH

IT seems to me that anything which purports to be a record of an event that really happened is spoiled by the very slightest admixture of fiction. I believe, too, that if a chronicler have but strength of mind to resist all temptations to improve on his text, integrity will be its own reward. In some occult manner the reader will know he is not being made a fool of.

The following adventure has not been worked up into literature ; everything took place exactly as will be related. I may add that I am incapable, unfortunately, of retaining with accuracy a single turn in the talk of persons not of my own class—whether the dialect of country folk or the latest jargon of the Smart. English, as spoken in Shoreditch, the region in which my heroine apparently resided—or, as she put it, "resigned"—is a language wholly unknown to me ; nor have I a notion whether the expressions she used were, or were not, peculiar to herself.

All I know is that circumstances enabled me to take down, then and there, each golden word that fell from her lips, without my indiscretion giving offence ; that for weeks afterwards my notebook, still a cherished possession, lived in my pocket ; and that its contents were inflicted on everyone I met.

No ; not everyone. Alas ! our generation does not practise what a French writer has called "la noble franchise" of the sixteenth century ; and for that reason, at certain points of the dialogue as given here, I have had to fall back upon dots and paraphrase. Otherwise not a word has been altered ; and if hyper-delicate readers are shocked at a certain revelling in ailments which is characteristic of the uneducated all the world over, I may perhaps remind them that better-bred people have been known to indulge the same weakness. But . . . in these it never makes one laugh.

One day, in the year 1902, I got into a third-class carriage at Waterloo, my destination being Woking, two stations beyond which is Aldershot.

The only other occupant of the carriage was an elderly lady, dressed in some black material that looked as if it had originally intended to be satin, but had changed its mind later on. From beneath a close-fitting black bonnet emerged, on either side, two little sausage-rolls of grey hair, and her expression was a mixture of severity, superiority, and self-assurance. I noticed that she had installed herself, with her face to the engine, in the exact centre of the empty row of seats opposite me—rather an original

and alarming proceeding, I thought. She carried a small patent-leather bag which looked as if it might contain tracts, and it occurred to me that possibly her line was philanthropy.

Presently one became aware that a touching scene was being enacted on the platform just outside our carriage. A pale, grey-bearded man of the respectable mechanic type, aged about sixty, clad in a seedy grey suit, was submitting, without enthusiasm, to the fervent hugs and resounding kisses of a middle-aged woman, whose appearance, without amounting to disreputability, suggested that once upon a time she might have been "gay." The brown, frizzy front bursting forth from beneath her beflowered head-gear, and the short bugle-fringed cape with crewel-work pinned in festoons round its neck, carried off and bade defiance to a shabby skirt and a remarkably easy pair of boots.

The general effect was a severe struggle for life, combined with determination to keep up appearances. One caught many an exhortation to "keep his heart up" and "look after himself," addressed to the grey-bearded man, the extreme melancholy of whose visage, and the mechanical "Ay-ay" with which he punctuated these exhortations, made me think he must surely be a Scotchman.

Eventually, not without a stumble or two, and with many apologies for treading on my feet, the lady hoisted herself into the carriage and sat down—partly beside me, partly upon me—all the time firing off volley after volley of affectionate counsel in the direction of the door. They were obviously man and wife. The husband did not strike me as unfriendly; it was merely that she was so effusive, he so depressed. And as I made myself small in my corner it was impossible to avoid noticing that the new-comer had fortified herself against the pangs of parting by a recent visit to the refreshment-room.

Finally, but not before we were well under way, she subsided into her seat, and instantly succumbed to drowsiness.

In those days trains ran into Waterloo on single lines, and there was a platform on either side of us. Just as we were clearing the station, the door on the wrong side of the carriage opened, and with cat-like deftness a young man slipped in and gently closed the door behind him—a tall young man in a bowler hat and red woollen comforter, whose manner of lowering himself into a seat and at once averting his eyes was curiously discreet and self-effacing.

By this time my neighbour, unconscious of the disapproval with which her *vis-à-vis*, the philanthropic lady, was eyeing her, had fallen asleep, her head reposing on my shoulder; and I was just thinking of taking steps when the next incident happened.

As the train slowed down going through Vauxhall, once more the wrong door opened, and in stepped two men. . . . There was a slight scuffle, and in less time than it takes to relate, handcuffs were snapped on to the young man's wrists. After which his captors sat down, one

opposite him, one between him and the philanthropic lady—the whole thing having taken place in complete silence.

The banging of the door had roused my neighbour, who was now sitting up, paralysed, as were we all, with astonishment. But not for long.

Lurching heavily against me, she suddenly said, in a hoarse whisper: "Did you see that?"

I nodded.

"Ain't you afraid?" she asked, with wide, staring eyes.

We were five to one, and the philanthropic lady would certainly give a good account of herself. It was not, therefore, in a spirit of *braggadocio* that I smiled and shook my head.

"Lor', what a nerve!" she exclaimed, in high admiration. . . . "You're a courageous one!" . . . Then, pointing dramatically in the direction of the prisoner: "What's that in 'is 'and?" she demanded. Her bloodcurdling voice would have frightened a child into fits, but it was easy to see that she was not in the least alarmed. It was merely a concession to drama.

I transferred my gaze from her large and fascinating countenance to the young man's hand, and gave it as my opinion that the object in question was a pipe.

"Pipe indeed!" said she, pitying my simplicity. . . . "Why, they 'as 'em arranged as revolvers and runs up and down this line as bold as brass, disguised in policeman's trousers! . . . I've often made the mistake myself!"

I now perceived that I was in for a remarkable interview; and, reflecting that my friend's condition was one in which people are not very observant, also that she seemed disposed to fall asleep on the slightest provocation, I took out a notebook I had just bought in town. After having jotted down all her remarks up to that point, I gently nudged her into wakefulness and asked if she thought the young man was a thief.

She at once assumed the manner of one who knows more than she is at liberty to communicate. And I may say here that I never met an individual who commanded a greater variety of moods, or whose facility in passing from one to the other was more bewildering.

"I'm not going to say anything," she remarked, with studied deliberation. . . . "You don't know as much as I do. . . . But if the men had asked *me* it would have been very awkward . . . for I live near the place he resigns. . . . Ah," she added, sighing heavily, ". . . it's very cruel and very hard to accuse . . . but . . ." (with emphasis) "*that man got in here to rob!*"

The philanthropic lady had been sitting bolt upright, withdrawing herself in a marked manner from our proceedings; but at this point aloofness yielded to curiosity.

"You know him, madam?" she asked, bending forward.

"I do, madam," replied the other with unction—"and the woman

who co-habits with him . . . and often I hear 'em murdering each other o' nights. . . . A place called The Warring it is—'alf a yard . . . well! . . ." (with a little laugh) "I won't exaggerate . . . 'alf a *mile* from where I live."

Here a colloquy took place between the philanthropic lady and the plain-clothes man who sat next her. I could not catch what passed, but as she took out her purse, and made some proposition which he met with the superior smile policemen reserve for a sentimental public, I gathered that the young man was in the habit of travelling without a ticket, and that an offer to pay his fare had been rejected.

All this time the benevolent intervener had, of course, been holding the attention of the house—a state of things that did not suit my neighbour.

"Pay his fare, indeed!" she remarked sarcastically to the lamp overhead. . . . "Yes! . . . *Very kind!* . . . But it's only encouraging him to do worse! . . . Now, if he was a *little boy*," she went on (and the thought of juvenile delinquents seemed to affect her deeply), ". . . a boy . . . a young lad . . . I don't say . . . I'd 'a' given 'im credit!"

The philanthropic lady did not admit criticism.

"I'm a Christian," she said stiffly, "and I have great sympathy with anyone that goes wrong."

My friend's enthusiasm over this sentiment knew no bounds. Hurling herself forward in a fervour of acquiescence that all but landed her in the speaker's lap, "God bless you, dear!" she cried in a broken voice. "So do I! . . . And what *I* say is . . . you *must* have 'em . . . good . . . and . . . bad!"

The philanthropic lady sat well back and gazed ostentatiously out of the window.

It now occurred to me, as my friend dozed off again, that I could take her down with impunity under her very nose, as though she were addressing a public meeting (and my impression is that at times she believed herself to be so doing). Next time I righted her in her seat I waited, therefore, with pencil ready poised for the next remark. It came as pat as though there had been no break.

"Ah!" she murmured, promptly but vaguely, ". . . what I say is . . . if those people who are bad . . ." (a long pause) ". . . *they ought to be shut up!*"

This unexpectedly severe sentiment, delivered with great decision, again lured the philanthropic lady from her fastness. Here was an occasion which it beseems the initiated to improve. With a pomposity that the written word cannot hope to convey, she remarked, to my great astonishment and admiration:

"We must take into consideration *hereditary law!*"

My friend was not at all impressed.

"Decidedly such, dear!" she agreed airily. . . . "*But what are you*

going to do? . . . It's a Phase of Society! . . ." And now, for the first time, she struck the note that dominated most of her subsequent utterances—the unmistakable diction and cadence of the informal prayer-meeting. "Ah," she moaned, "there's nothing like living in the Lord! . . . *He's* the personal. . . . *He's* the personal. . . ."

Her voice died away gradually, and, much as I longed to hear the end of that sentence, there was so much to write down, that she was allowed to slumber in peace for the time being.

When next roused, refreshing sleep had done its work; her voice was loud and clear, her manner forensic and slightly aggressive.

"And *why* do I say they should be shut up?" she asked, addressing the meeting. "So as they couldn't get into trouble!" (After all, the philanthropic lady's remark had stung her.) "There are seven Jews in my house," she went on. ". . . *They* never get into trouble! . . . That's what they turn round and tell me! . . . *But they do!* . . . Only they get the money like dirt . . ." (a sniff) ". . . and landlord says the Jews are damned good fellers to pay . . . and at the finish this'll be a Jew's island!"

I expressed a hope that it would not come to that.

"Ah," said she in tragic tones, "isn't it dreadful to see our dear English people thrown out? . . . Why, look at *my* house; there's a family o' Jews pays 13s. for four rooms, and *me*, an English person, has to pay 7s. for two rooms!"

I made a rapid calculation.

"Thirteen shillings for four rooms," I said, "and 7s. for two . . . That's all right, surely?"

"All right?" she echoed. . . . "Of course it's *all right* . . . but *ain't it 'ard?* . . . Why, look at the ways of 'em! You'll hardly believe it, but . . ."

Here I find myself obliged to paraphrase, for it now became a question of technical procedure in Israelitish communities at an interesting and critical moment in the lives of married ladies. I may add that the information given where I have broken off, though obviously meant to startle and horrify, conveyed nothing whatever to me; but I saw that the philanthropic lady was listening in spite of herself.

"Only last week," continued my neighbour, "I was called in to a young woman. . . . It was Dr. Swyers, of Shoreditch, called me in—you know 'im, I dessay?" (I said that I had never met Dr. Swyers.) "Well," she went on, "that same young Jewish person—and a sweet young thing she was, too—she kept on crying out, 'Give me an *ENGLISH* woman! It's an *ENGLISH* woman I want!'" . . . (her rendering of this impassioned request must have been audible in the next compartment) "and I said to her . . ."

What my friend said to her must be omitted; it was a persuasively-worded appeal to submit to the methods employed on such occasions in Christian sick-rooms.

At this point the philanthropic lady incredibly interjected :

"But you must remember the Mosaic Law!"

The other glanced at her, a world of withering rectitude and propriety in her eye.

"Ah," she said . . . "but consider the doctor and a room full of people . . .!!" Then, addressing herself to me, as the more sympathetic listener, she described how Israel had fought for its own beside that bed, to be routed, single-handed, by Christendom in the end. "And bless you," she wound up cheerfully, "while they were talking I got her out of her trouble in no time!"

The philanthropic lady refused to leave it at that.

"One can't blame people for wishing to abide by their own customs," she remarked, with finality.

"Customs indeed!" jeered my friend. ". . . Why, look what their customs are! . . . Look at 'em when they go to death! . . . Just think of us . . . so sympathising, so beautiful to our little dead children! . . . Why, them Jews'll lay out their little ones on a trestle and brush 'em!"

This time I was adequately startled.

". . . Brush them!" I exclaimed, aghast.

"Brush 'em all over!" said she, nodding violently. . . . "With an Ambrush."

I imagined that this must be another item in the Mosaic Law—perhaps the equivalent of the Catholic ceremony, *Asperges*.

"What is an Ambrush?" I asked.

"What they remove the bristles out o' pork with!" she replied smartly. "That's the Jews! . . . I know 'em! . . . No one better!"

By now I had, of course, come to the conclusion that my interlocutor must be a monthly nurse, but, not liking to put a direct question, felt my way.

"What is your profession?" I asked.

She stared at me. . . . "Profession!" she ejaculated, and I saw that I had given offence. Then, with immense and ponderous dignity, she said: "I dessay you wondered at me, madam, but it was my 'usband I was a-kissing of on the platform!" . . .

What terrible misunderstanding was this? . . . When my scattered wits were recovered, I assured her that anyone could see that at a glance, and also that the parting caused her distress. Instantly mollified, she accepted my apologies in the spirit in which they were offered.

"Yes," she said coyly, even bridling a little, "I dessay you remarked us . . . the very first time it is I left him since his accident, things being so slack."

"Did he have an accident?" I enquired.

"Accident . . .!" cried she. "The doctor says he never see anything like it. . . . Why, the beam come down right atop of 'im . . .

compound fracture of the skull, it was, . . ." (the next detail of the devastation wrought by the beam is here omitted) . . . "and 'is poor legs was something dreadful!" Overcome at the recollection, she now became maudlin. "Yes! . . . it was my 'usband I was a-kissin' of . . . my dear, dear 'usband . . . my own flesh and blood . . .!"

I saw the philanthropic lady glance in a terrified manner at the speaker, then at my notebook, and finally resume her fixed study of the landscape. I think she was calculating how soon the train would arrive at her own station. . . .

After writing for dear life, I asked my friend if she had any other family.

"I have, dear," she replied; ". . . two sons I have . . . two good sons; . . . one in the plumbing and gas-fitting line . . . a beautiful, lovely, handsome boy! . . . And one a soldier as I am going down this day to Aldershot to see . . .!" (A long-drawn sigh.) "Ah . . . it was only the slackness that drove my son away from me . . . my own, brave, sailor boy! . . ."

This was too much of a good thing for a chronicler bent on accuracy.

"I thought you said he was a soldier?" I remarked.

"I did, dear," she allowed; "but he was invalidated out with fits when the old Queen died. . . . 'But, lor', mother,' 'e said, 'I'll have no fits on dry land!' . . . *Nor he ain't!* And so 'e went for a soldier . . . my dear, lovely boy! . . . Now, wasn't that a . . . wasn't that a . . .?"

Her eyes were rapidly closing, but I thought of a good rousing question.

"Is he a good son to you?" I asked.

In a second she was sitting up, wide awake, and gazing at me defiantly, her liberal mouth closed like a rat-trap. Then, delivering the words with slow, portentous emphasis: "If . . . God . . . struck . . . me . . . dead," she declaimed, "m boy never said *shan't* to his mother!" She paused to let this sink in, and while I was murmuring congratulations, a fatuous smile gradually cancelled her expression of extreme sternness. . . . "And . . . so beautiful he is!" she added. "You'll know 'im by me . . . the very living image of me . . .!"

The family note being now firmly established, she went on without a pause:

"And a dear, loving old Christian mother I had. . . . 'Look, my Jessie child!' she said. . . . 'You may be a *wife* some day . . .!' And sure enough I am!" . . . (Here the prayer-meeting manner became very pronounced.) . . . "And she taught us . . . and she was true . . . and she is in Heaven now at eighty-three . . . and rejoicing I love her words. . . ." At this point, catching hold of my arm, she whispered confidentially, with a sort of triumph: "And my words worry my boys just the same!"

To keep pace with her now was not an easy task, and I was glad that a short interval of meditation occurred, before, putting her two hands

together, palm to palm, like a child saying its prayers, she gave me a powerful nudge with her elbow.

"Look!" she said. "This was my mother while she had her reason." And once more the roof was nearly lifted, as, with tightly-closed eyes, she intoned a mother's prayer: "'Please . . . God . . . bless . . . my . . . dear-darling-little-sweet Jessie. . . . *A . . . men!*'" She then added, in her ordinary tone: "At the finish she went off without her reason."

I was speechless, while she dragged forth a handkerchief from a very inside pocket and held it in readiness.

"I know I lost an angel of a mother," she continued, "and an angel of a father—God rest their souls! . . . And a dear angel of a brother I had . . . a p-p-preacher." (She mopped her eyes.) "They used to pelt 'im with eggs . . . but now 'e's gone they love 'im!"

"Didn't they like him before?" I asked.

"*Like* him? . . . They couldn't a-bear 'im! . . . And when he was took to the asylum . . ." (another little laugh) . . . "*asylum?* . . . *infirmary*, that is . . ."

"What was the matter with him?" I threw in quickly.

"Rheumatics—stone—in—the—bladder—and—erysipelas—in—'is—face," she answered in a breath. "And when I went to see him . . . 'Jessie,' 'e says, 'how is it with your soul?' I says, 'William, whatever do you mean?' 'Ah, Jessie,' 'e says, 'remember all our little mother taught us . . . and oughtn't we to gratulate our mother on that point?'"

I confess that I have never interpreted this dark saying wholly to my satisfaction, nor grasped the exact meaning of the verb to "gratulate," as used in such a connection. But as she now became rather grave—recalling, too, her remark concerning the "worrying" quality of a mother's words—I am inclined to think that, true to his vocation, William had been expostulating with her on some point of conduct, and also reminding her that their revered mother had often warned her on the same subject. Perhaps it was refreshment between meals.

The reflective mood, however, passed quickly, and was followed by a piece of dramatic presentment whose vigour eclipsed all previous efforts. With a roar, the effect of which on the philanthropic lady's nerves is my last impression of that now silenced moralist, she proceeded to give us further portions of the memorable interview with William:

"'*PULL UP THE WINDER-CORD!*' 'e said—and 'is dear mouth was full of thrush at the time—'pull it up,' 'e said, 'and let in some o' God's air, for 'e's a-callin' o' me . . .!' 'William,' I says, 'for any sake don't tell me that!' 'God . . . *is* . . . a-callin' o' me, Jessie,' 'e says. 'Why, *just look at my mouth!*' . . . Ah," she went on, with melancholy satisfaction, "he did die handsome . . . and so did my poor sister, singing:

'Jesus and the Brides are come,
Freely, freely, freely . . .'"

These lines, evidently part of a hymn the context of which one would like to hear, were chanted in a sort of loud sing-song; after which, with one of her sudden drops into the colloquial style, she added, as it were in parenthesis:

"Then the baby came and off she went."

I think there were further particulars concerning the poor sister's end, but my whole attention was concentrated on the task of faithfully entering the above. When next I was free to listen she was addressing the roof in her most lamentable voice:

"Ah! people go about in earthly things," she was saying, "and forget the Saviour." Down her cheek trickled a neglected tear . . . but not a distressful one. I was glad to see she was enjoying herself thoroughly.

* * * * *

The train was nearing Woking. I suddenly became aware that we were alone. Gone the philanthropic lady . . . gone the young man and his captors! Hypnotised by one fellow-traveller, I had not marked the passing of the others.

"I got out at the next station," I observed, "and I hope you'll have a pleasant day at Aldershot."

My friend was deeply moved.

"Thank you, dear, for those true words," she said, dabbing her eyes. . . . "The Lord sent us to be lively and pleasurable . . . but it ain't always easy! . . . specially if you're suffering from . . ." (and here she mentioned a complaint which I am told is a peculiarly depressing one).

By this time I was much in love with my companion, and longed to give some expression to my sentiments. Could I venture on the next step? She seemed such a thoroughly good soul that I thought the risk might be taken.

"You tell me times are bad," I said, "and your husband out of work. . . . I'm not a rich woman myself, but if you will not think it a liberty . . ." Here I pulled out half-a-crown.

The train had just come to a standstill. My friend struggled to her feet, extended both arms like twin semaphores, and burst into a loud fit of weeping.

"When I got into this carriage," she sobbed, her voice gradually rising in a sort of *crescendo* howl, "the word I said was . . . 'If ever I see a Heart o' *GOLD* . . . that's one!'" . . . And, flinging her arms round me, she squeezed what she had been good enough to describe as a Heart of Gold convulsively to her bosom.

There was barely time to get out before the train went on. As it rounded a curve I saw, among many signal-posts, the damp handkerchief that had

played such a prominent part in our interview still jerking frantically at a window.

The tragic thing is that in the excitement of the moment I omitted to ask my friend for her name and address ; nor did it occur to me later on to apply to Dr. Swyers, of Shoreditch, for information concerning one who doubtless was the best-known householder in his district.

When, only last month, a friend of mine, to whom I communicated the blurred contents of the famous notebook, remarked that this would have been the course to pursue, moved by a simultaneous impulse, we both rushed to the telephone book. . . .

Alas ! it was too late ! Seventeen years have elapsed since that memorable interview, and Dr. Swyers is probably dead. In any case, he is not on the telephone—which amounts to the same thing.

Paris, July 1920.

NOTES FROM A DIARY

By ARNOLD BENNETT

Biography

II

THE English craze for biography has been the subject of much irony and straight complaint during recent years, but it continues to flourish like golf. The reading public alone is to blame, for if it refused to buy biography by the ton, biography would not be written by the ton. The latest example, and one of the supreme examples of the wrong way to be biographical, is to be found in Sir George Arthur's life of Lord Kitchener. We used to resent two thick volumes for one man's brief span, but now we have three—super-thick. (We have even six—the Disraeli biography.) It seems seldom to occur to biographers that in the first place a biographer should know how to write. Sir George Arthur is an amateur writer ; probably he could paint just as well as he can write ; but if he painted a portrait of Kitchener and exhibited it there might be trouble. Not only he cannot write—he cannot compose, nor arrange, nor select, nor sift, nor discriminate, nor exercise impartiality. It may be that he knows more about his subject than any other man ; the qualification does not suffice. The great fact is that he simply does not know his job. He has done perhaps half his job—and the easier half—and has left his readers to do the other half. Very few readers could, or would if they could, do the other half. Nevertheless, Sir George Arthur has received very high praise, and the praise is worth less than nothing at all. He can at any rate take credit to himself that he has not written the worst and most misleading biography of a great man in the English language. I surmise that that distinction belongs to the author of the official life of Lord Tennyson, or possibly to the authoress of the official life of G. F. Watts (another trifle of three volumes).

The life of Kitchener, of course, had to be written, but many biographies are published the justification for which is undiscoverable. Continental nations seem to manage without an annual plague of some scores of biographies. Why does the British public continue to make incompetent and unnecessary biography so remunerative ? Conceivably the reason is that the British public is more interested than any Continental nation in politics and public life, and also—may one say ?—more interested in literature. Hence it is more interested in the figures of politics and literature. This interest is creditable, unless it becomes morbid ; there are those who assert that it has definitely become morbid.

Practically all our biographies are too ponderous ; most of them are amateurishly done. About half of them, and perhaps three-quarters, are quite unnecessary, being begotten by family conceit out of indiscriminating public taste. Now and then an unnecessary biography enters into the