

## HOW WE SPOILED THE IRISH ACTORS

THE SUBTLEST and perhaps most delicious of all the elements that go to make up that bugaboo of the English mind called "America," is that harm which we unconsciously work to the actors they send over to us. The protest against this insidious danger was loudest of all when Mrs. Patriek Campbell was contemplating her first visit here. She was "so essentially English" that they didn't want her changed in any little degree; her voice was so low and musical that they dreaded the effect of our large playhouses on that delicate instrument; her methods were so refined and intimate that they couldn't bear the thought of their becoming hoidenish. She came and conquered us; but she has probably never been the same again to her kinsfolk beyond the sea. The Irish Players were the last to pass through our corroding fire, and we have it from several witnesses that they have not come through unscathed. Tho the actors are Irish, the English claim a certain proprietary right since these players were successes in London almost before they were thoroughly accepted in Dublin. At the present time they are playing their annual spring engagement in the English capital, and *The Times* thus views them as our latest victims:

"The question to which we all wanted an answer was, of course, what effect the recent visit to America would have had on the acting. Not the exciting events which got into the newspapers, which involved a sad misuse of the staple food of Ireland and drew Lady Gregory and her friends into a prolonged and fierce battle which the Abbey Theater Company triumphantly won. Such things have less effect on the art of acting than the mere fact of playing in America has often been observed to have on British companies. Whether it is the strange audiences or the large houses or something else, companies have often returned from America with an exaggerated style, a laborious way of making points, and a jerky, ostentatious action. And the Abbey Theater Company, tho it has escaped these evils for the most part, has not escaped them entirely. 'Kathleen Ni Houlihan' was played by Miss Sara Allgood and the others as beautifully as ever. In 'The Playboy of the Western World' we missed sometimes the liquid ripple of the language, and found overemphasis and overelaboration here and there. Mr. Fred O'Donovan, in particular, was much more heavy in hand and laborious over *Christy* than he used to be; and Mr. Arthur Sinclair has worked up the drunkenness of *Michael James* till he is slower than ever was Sir Henry Irving. These, we hope, are faults that will disappear in a few nights, when the company has grown used to the small theater and to an audience most of whom must be perfectly familiar with one of the most fascinating plays ever written. If we missed Miss Moire O'Neill as *Pegeen Mike* (and that we shall always do), we had a very good performance of the part from Miss Eithne Magee, who played it all through the American tour."

This critic, it will be seen, is not without his note of hope, but the critic of the London *Evening Standard*, assuming the inevitable, finds nothing to hope for. Can it be we have done all this?—

"The Abbey Theater Company have achieved great fame.

They have become an international feature in the dramatic history of our time.

"They appeared last night at the Court Theater in that strange and fascinating play of Synge, 'The Playboy of the Western World,' one of the most sparkling, one of the most fantastic in their repertoire. Yet the sparkle was not there; the freshness, the spontaneity, the innocence of their artistry had deserted them.

"They were palpably actors playing their parts.

"There may be any one of half a dozen causes to account for this. The absence of Miss Moire O'Neill from the part of *Pegeen*, overanxiety at the reappearance in London, lassitude after a long American tour—one may advance all these explanations and still be unconvinced that the true reason has been found. But the sad fact remains that the witchery that once held us all in willing bondage to these naive players of Irish peasant life no longer exerted its old spell. In only two of the players was there no sign of any change. Mr. Arthur Sinclair as *Michael James Flaherty* was as delicious as ever, and Miss Eileen O'Doherty in 'Kathleen Ni Houlihan,' which was played as a curtain-raiser, showed that she had lost none of her power to depict truthfully



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### THE WINDOW-SEAT.

From the Painting by Frank D. Millet.

An inspiration derived from the English country where he was a neighbor of Abbey, Sargent, Mary Anderson, and others, at Broadway in Worcestershire.

the strangely pathetic fatalistic old women that she has so finely depicted in the past. Perhaps the others will regain their sureness of touch as the season goes on.

Critics, like doctors, however, often disagree. Dramatic critics, we have often shown, are especially prone to this. But the question naturally arises, if we are to blame for what *The Times* and *Evening Standard* see amiss, are we also responsible for what *The Pall Mall Gazette* finds to praise? Thus:

"With the exception of Miss Eithne Magee, the new *Pegeen*, and in every way a very vivid figure, the performance was the same as that of last summer. Mr. O'Donovan was better than ever as *Christy Mahon*, for he spoke more slowly and let the splendor of the language sink more surely into the hearts and minds of the audience. Mr. Arthur Sinclair's *Michael James* has become nothing less than a comic masterpiece, particularly in the last act; and Miss Allgood as the *Widow Quin*, and Mr. Morgan as *Old Mahon* repeat perfect performances. Mr. J. M. Kerrigan was, we think, a new *Shawn Keogh*—a shade too virile, perhaps, for the part, but getting any amount of 'point' out of his lines. He is one of the best actors in the company. In a hundred matters of minor circumstance the whole performance was rich in significance and truth; and the audience sat fascinated."



## STRANGE GODS OF AMERICAN WOMEN

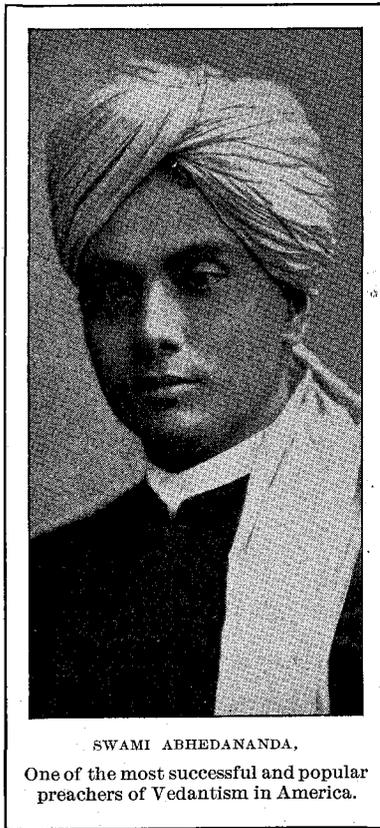
THE CHURCHES of America are spending annually more than \$20,000,000 for foreign missions; but from the very fields where all this money is garnered, the Eastern religions, against which these efforts are made, are gathering their harvest also. The East is sending its emissaries to us, "and to-day the tinkling temple-bells of heathendom ring out with a derisive jarring sound, not only in the Far East, but in many sections of Christian America." It is the women who are mainly infected, points out Mrs. Gross Alexander in *The Methodist Quarterly Review* (Nashville, July). "'Yoga' classes, which were first made fashionable by the society set, have become in many cities as popular as Browning and Shakespeare classes." "Placing the Hindu Scriptures above the Bible, many women to-day are studying these teachings who were formerly Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Catholics, and Jewesses." The present writer quotes from another woman, Mabel Potter Daggett, who has investigated certain centers of Eastern thought, particularly that one located at Green Acre, N. H., where are held annual summer meetings.

"Altho the Swamis' following includes some men of learning and college professors who wish to investigate a science brought from the roof of the world, most of its recruits are among women. A greater menace than that of image-worship lurks in the teachings of the Hindu Mystics. The casual observer would not discover it. Only those who reach the inner circles become acquainted with the mysteries revealed to the adepts. The descent from Christianity to heathenism is by such easy stages that the novice scarcely realizes she is led. But it is a dangerous study for luring any but the best-balanced minds. In the pursuit of it the listening devotee is offering sacrifices many times at the cost of her mind and soul. Miss Farmer was a familiar figure for years, attending the Green Acre School for which she gave her fortune. But living in the atmosphere of that strange and impenetrable cult unbalanced her mind, and she is now an inmate of the insane asylum in Waverly, Mass. In Chicago a few years ago, Miss Reuss, a Jewess of culture and refinement, was taken screaming and praying from the Mazdaznan Temple of the Sun, to be incarcerated as a raving maniac in an Illinois asylum. At the death of Mrs. Ole Bull, of Cambridge, Mass., widow of the world-renowned violinist, she bequeathed several hundred thousand dollars to the Vedantist Society. But it was set aside by the courts on the ground of mental incapacity and undue influence. Mrs. May Wright Sewell, the club-woman of national repute, is said to be a physical wreck through the practises of Yoga and the study of occultism. Many more examples could be cited of wrecked minds lost through the pursuit of this philosophy."

The core of Hinduism that is studied in this country, says Mr. Robert E. Speer, as quoted by the author, "is the Vedanta philosophy, the old pantheism of India read full of new meaning through contact with Western thought and Christianity." "There is always generous room in its pantheon," he adds, "for any new god not already listed. . . . There have been so many interpolations and modifications to suit the peoples of all sections and countries that there is the widest range of thought possible, and no divinity objectionable to Western sensibilities is forced on one." One of the Hindu priests who came to America was Baba Bharati, "formerly a hill hermit from

Tibet." After the first five years of his stay in America he made preparations to return for a time to India, and a farewell meeting "was presided over by a former minister of the Gospel." At this meeting Baba Bharati said:

"It has been my privilege these five years past to preach to you your own Christ, even as much as my god Krishna. I came not here to thrust my religion upon you, but to help you to understand your own God and your own religion. If I have talked of Krishna and of the Vedas and Hindu philosophy, it was only to illuminate the teachings of your own Christ, to present him before you in the limelight of the Vedas, and the x-ray of our scientific philosophies."



SWAMI ABHEDANANDA,  
One of the most successful and popular  
preachers of Vedantism in America.

This article also deals with another form of Eastern worship practised in many cities of the United States—namely, "the teachings and practises of sun-worship, under the God Salaam Aleikum, the supreme lord of the Zend-Avesta, of whom Zoroaster was the great prophet." Mrs. Daggett is quoted to this effect:

"At least fourteen thousand Americans are joining daily in this worship of the Lord Mazda and the daily adoration of the Sun. There are Mazdaznan centers in thirty cities of the United States, as well as in Canada, South America, England, Germany, and Switzerland, and they are all the remarkable growth of the past ten years! It was about 1901 that 'His Humbleness, the Prince of Peace,' appeared in Chicago. His largest temple is located there on Lake Park Avenue, while his lesser one stands on the lawn of Dr. Hilton's residence, in Lowell; and ground has been consecrated for a third temple in Montreal. That the Sun may do its perfect work, the cult encourages the wearing of as little clothing as the law allows. 'Her

Blessedness,' Mrs. Hilton, is believed to have once been the Queen of Sheba, and hence her present high rank. She is said to be a cultured and handsome woman, with old mysteries slumbering in the depths of her beautiful eyes. . . . They offer, through their religion, to bring peace and beauty to those who seek it at their hands.

"Meat is rigidly eschewed. Fresh violets and sheep sorrel are served for breakfast, tea is brewed from rose-leaves. A pinch of brown sand is taken at intervals, to give tone to the stomach. Then there are classes in breathing and concentration. And when all dieting, bathing, and breathing fail to bring beauty, there are cosmetics sold on the side that supplement the results."

Other branches of Hinduism are being introduced, one of which, "the tautras," declares Mrs. Alexander, "represents the climax of Eastern abominations, and is Hindu idolatry in its vilest stage." For

"Its rites are much in common with the worship of Baal and Moloch by the ancient Assyrians. Thus it is the Hinduism that reaches, in its myriad ramifications and wide span, from the heights of the Bhagavad Gita to the lowest and most revolting heathen idolatry that has brought to America the Yoga philosophy, with its strange and unaccountable charms for a certain class of educated women. The devotees of this cult are by no means confined to the extreme East or West. Branch societies, with Swamis in charge, are maintained in Pittsburg, Washington, Chicago, St. Louis, Denver, and San Francisco, to say nothing of the many circles and clubs in smaller places. Is it any wonder that missionaries on the foreign field, hearing of these strange facts, are sending to their home offices in New York and Boston the peremptory inquiry, 'What do women of Christian America mean?'"