

This notice may well conclude with a reference to the Constables whom the catalogue credits with five works. Of these, we prefer No. 38, "A Scene on the River Stour." The river occupies the whole of the foreground; on the extreme left is a barge being punted out of a lock; in it is a white horse, which led to the picture being called "Constable's white horse," and it was painted in 1819. It undoubtedly had a great influence by inducing painters to turn their attention to simple and rural scenes instead of classical subjects, as he drew so vividly from Nature herself. We marked for special note No. 19 in the catalogue, "Deedham Vale," a view from a height of a valley where Constable was born and passed his early life. Here is the familiar mill where Constable worked, and behind it, rising to the stormy sky, the tower of the village church. Nothing could be better than this intensely English picture, with its perfect blending of cloud and trees. We prefer it to No. 4, the view of Salisbury Cathedral which Constable painted in 1826, or to No. 11, "West End Fields, Hampstead" with the cloudy sky which Constable loved. This treatment led a celebrated painter to say to his servant on leaving his studio, "Give me my umbrella, I am going to see Mr. Constable's pictures." We certainly advise our friends for whom we write, to go and see them, now that such satisfactory examples are gathered together.

### Dramatic Notes.

THERE is always a special charm about amateur theatricals. The actors certainly elicit a sympathy which the full fledged and labelled actor or actress has no right to expect. Anyhow, the audiences gathered together on two nights at the Queen's Gate Hall to witness the performance of "Alone," given on behalf of the funds of the Home of Rest for Nurses, Brighton, was both sympathetic and encouraging. But it is equally certain that their sympathies were not alienated by any demands upon their patience and goodwill.

Punctually at nine we are transported to a garden overlooking Torquay Bay; a small table is prepared for breakfast, and Stratton Strawless (Mr. W. T. Reed), a sort of gentleman hanger-on, is awaiting the appearance of Colonel Challice. Colonel Challice (Mr. Herbert James) is a most interesting old gentleman. He has had trouble—connubial trouble with his wife, and later with his only daughter, who had eloped from school; and he is now blind. As he gropes his way to the chair prepared for him, Strawless pays him effusive attention. But the old gentleman is 'cute, he knows which way the wind blows. So does Strawless. One relaxation of the Colonel's is to have Shakspeare read to him. Strawless elects himself reader in chief, but he abominates "the Immortal William," he finds him disgracefully full of quotations, and he can't see what he's driving at. But his hatred of Shakspeare is only equalled by his elocution. This is a thorn in the flesh to the Colonel, who knows what elocution is.

Thus matters stand when Mrs. Thornton (Miss Sydney Keith) pays a call, accompanied by her cousin Bertie Cameron (Mr. Walter H. Fenner), and tells of a protégée of hers, Maud Trevor (Miss Daisy Robins), whom she proposes as a reader and companion. She

turns up, looking very demure and sweet in a soft dove-like costume. This is her ruse to obtain admission to the Colonel, who we discover is her father. There are several affecting scenes, in which the sense of her present position and her father's blindness is altogether too much for her.

Of course it all comes right in the end; and it appears that in the supposed elopement she was merely the innocent dupe of a schoolfellow.

But though the plot is based on the pathetic, considerable fun is elicited by the actors from the parts of Strawless, Mrs. Thornton, and Dr. Micklethwaite. The lady suffers many an ache and pain, but the Doctor understands her complaint—fortunately!

With regard to the acting, Mr. Herbert James, Miss Sydney Keith, Mr. W. T. Reed, Miss—what are we doing? It is invidious to mention names. All acted excellently, and received well-earned applause. However, invidious or not, it is impossible for Nurses, and those interested in the Brighton Home of Rest, to withhold their heartiest thanks from Mr. Herbert James for his Stage Managership. Not only had he given very considerable time to preparation for this performance, but what is much more, he threw all his enthusiasm and energy into drilling the performers. Miss Daisy Robins undertook the heavy responsibility of every other arrangement, and with her usual thoroughness carried them through with complete success, and won sincere gratitude. The Tavistock Orchestra, under Mr. Basil Althaus, F.C.V., and Messrs. John Bale & Sons, for printing everything free of charge, also deserve very sincere thanks.

### A Book of the Week.

#### WHEN WE WERE STROLLING PLAYERS.\*

According to Mrs. Jordan Miln, the Burmese must be a delightful people. Since reading her book I have thought it would be as well if all persons interested in social and marriage problems would go out to Burmah and study the position accorded to the women there by their courteous and loving husbands. But then, doubtless, the climate has something to do with the matter, and it would be difficult for English people to be as even-tempered as the Burmese, as our insidious climate is for ever making such sudden demands upon our blood, circulation and digestion.

Mrs. Miln tells us that:—

"In Burmah marriage is not a failure—it is a stupendous success. . . . I know no other country in the world in which so overwhelming a proportion of marriages are extremely happy. . . . The Burmese women teach an invaluable lesson—if the women of America and the women of Europe would learn it. They are on as absolute an equality with men as nature will permit. All the equality that man can give woman he has given her in Burmah. . . . The marriage yoke rests as easily upon the Burmese necks as a wreath of roses, for the man and wife pull equally, pull together—each does his or her fair part. Each remembers always the rights of the other. Courtesy and justice are big ingredients in Burmese married life. Small wonder that in Burmah marriage is a big success."

\* "When we were Strolling Players in the East," by Louise Jordan Miln. (Osgood M'Ilvaine, London, 1894.)

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