

Urbinate! A gentle wind sweeps tenderly across the canvas, inflates the delicate drapery of Mary's head-gear, and seems to upbear her, and to float her forwards, forwards, towards the crowd of worshippers who were wont to kneel at her shrine in the chapel of Pope Sixtus. And this soft, quickening gale is instinct with life,—all the air through which she moves is a melting mist of angel heads, not to be seen but by a deep and penetrating gaze. In her arms sinks gently the soft weight of her child's rounded limbs. All the tenderness of earthly motherhood is there, for, by a divine inspiration, the painter makes the Christ so to resemble his mother in feature that the relationship is obvious.

In her eyes, and in his, is the deep, inward gaze which rests on nothing in the outward creation, but is lost in a dream of glory unspeakable; yet in some subtle way, the expression is different: for the babe's eyes are full of prescience, full of a majesty which cannot be described, but which is there; while in Mary, the keynote is a tender wistfulness, a dignity, a bowing with proud humility to a Will too high to be fully comprehended; a look best described by Wordsworth's magnificent line—

“We feel that we are greater than we know.”

Symbolically, as artistically, the picture is perfect. San Sisto himself casts the crown of his Popedom at the feet of the Incarnate God. In his strong face, furrowed with deep lines, is the record of a man's struggle against the temptations of flesh and spirit; lust, the world, were left behind long ago; and now pride itself, the last assailant of devout souls, is vanquished too. Facing him, S. Barbara, with down-drooping lids, kneels, the very type of the girlhood that gives all to God, and knows not what is renounced.

Next week I will endeavour to show a few of the points of difference between Raphael's and Holbein's treatment of the same subject.

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### Dramatic Notes.

“ALABAMA,” as now being presented at the Garrick Theatre by Mr. E. S. Willard and his able company, is an American idyll in the guise of a drama. A domestic tale of love and war is told in four Acts upon the stage, which is redolent throughout of soft southern air, gay with the flowers and fair with the foliage of a southern spring, and lighted by such a sun, moon and stars as are only seen in a southern sky. The picture of life and manners drawn by the author, Mr. Augustus Thomas, who is, we understand, a young American writer, is one which to the modern English eye wears a peculiarly quaint and simple aspect. It seems almost, if we may so speak, like an incident taken from the end of our own seventeenth century life, and set in the midst of a Plantation in the Southern States. America, however, “wears her rue with a difference.” In “Alabama” we have the sad spectacle of a ruined society gradually falling into decay, and well-nigh doomed to perish. Whether for good or evil “old things are passing away,” and a new order steppeth in. The screech of the railway whistle and the roar of traffic threaten to disturb the serenity of the hitherto tranquil and sluggish bayou; and the rustic Squire-Justice, who does not deem it

*infra dig.* to make a morning call in his shirt sleeves, and to carry a bucket of prawns which he has just captured in his hand, utters a grievous lament over the prospect of the railway dam interrupting the slow current which brings food to his beloved edible frogs. Of the story itself we will not attempt to give any *résumé*, because it is far better that those who wish to know it should go and hear it as charmingly related by its author and interpreted by the Garrick cast.

Mr. E. S. Willard has made a most judicious distribution of the parts, reserving to himself the very appropriate one of Harry Preston, the hero indeed of the piece, but otherwise by no means an unduly prominent character. Miss Marion Terry, as the heroine, impersonates with her usual exquisite spontaneity Mrs. Page, a widow, restored to the object of her first love, the aforesaid Harry Preston, who is also her cousin, and their interview and mutual recognition after a separation of twenty years, is one of the most touching scenes in the play. As the aged father and grandfather, Colonel Preston, Mr. James Fernandez is quite at his best, and is most striking and natural both in his indignation and pathos. Mr. Bassett Roe plays the villain, Raymond Page, in a vein which evokes sufficient but not superfluous repugnance, and Mr. John Mason and Mr. F. H. Tyler respectively gave admirable types of the attorney and newspaper proprietor, and of the rustic Justice of the Peace. Mr. Cecil Crofton does what he can as Lathrop Page, who seems rather young to be the editor of even *The Talladega Sentinel*, and Mr. W. T. Lovell makes a fair hero of the Under Plot as Mr. Armstrong. The younger ladies in the piece are adequately presented by Miss Agnes Miller, Miss Nannie Craddock, and Miss Keith Wakeman, and a fine specimen of character-acting, as the old negro servant Decatur, is given by Mr. H. Cane.

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### A Book of the Week.

“JOAN HASTE.”\*

MR. RIDER HAGGARD'S new book will prove somewhat of a surprise to his admirers, as it is a departure from his usual stories of adventure and warfare. The character of Joan Haste, herself, is nevertheless a powerful creation. Her personality, her impulsiveness and her faults are all vividly portrayed, and the part she bears in the story is the natural outcome of her character as delineated by the author. Mr. Henry Graves is by no means as successful a study. To my mind he is weak and inconsistent, and fails, from the first moment that he appears in the pages of the book to interest the reader *because* he is not a vital creation. I think the same fault may be found with the minor women's characters of the story, and Joan's mad lover, Samuel Rock, is too melodramatic in his speech and action to be entirely convincing. He is too obviously created for the purposes of the story.

On the other hand, Joan's landlady and her deaf husband and child, though doubtless slightly caricatured, are almost worthy of Dickens himself. The story is, truth to tell, a most irritating one from begin-

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\* “Joan Haste,” by Rider Haggard. 6s. (Longmans.) 1895.

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