

been spent. True, it was chiefly his own doing that this isolation had been the case, since his brother—a bachelor of quite another type—very ably depicted by Mr. Frederick Kerr, appears to have led a free and easy life, generally mixing with society, and, like one of its many butterflies, gaily flying from flower to flower. His sister—Mrs. Le Grand—in which rôle no one could look better than does Miss May Harvey—is an unaccountably young widow considering the age of her brothers, and she, as having been in the possession of a splendid home, might have brought her elder brother into a little more fashionable shape. But we must not look for absolute consistency of construction nor of development in a plot evidently designed only to please. The consummate art of the great dramatist is not one to be lightly acquired, nor is it ever acquired at all, except by those who possess talent, experience, and industry in almost equal proportions. We must be content nowadays on the stage—at least, in the case of newly-written pieces—with comparatively “small mercies,” and be only too glad if we find a Manager like Mr. John Hare, who has the courage and the wisdom to give us something wholesome as well as entertaining. In these respects “A Bachelor’s Romance” is all that could be desired. The old Bachelor is impersonated with all that delicacy of touch for which Mr. John Hare is so deservedly famous, and his rejuvenescence under the softening influence of his youthful Ward, Sylvia, the heroine—most naturally portrayed by Miss Nellie Thorne—is a triumph of histrionic ability. The complexity of all the relations is very ingeniously worked out. One does not quite see how it is, that, being her legal guardian, David Holmes cannot retain Sylvia under his own charge, when she is returned to him by the lady who has, at his request, brought her up, viz., Miss Clementina—an old maid, most truthfully embodied by Miss Susie Vaughan—nor is it perfectly clear, in the Second Act, why she remains in the house of his fashionable widowed sister, Mrs. Le Grand, when she herself has resolutely refused to leave her guardian’s care, nor does it appear quite natural that she should, even reluctantly, accept the offer of a young man she evidently does not care about, viz., Harold Reynolds—a young gentleman who has just gained a magazine literary prize for £1000—played to the life by Mr. Charles Cherry. But all these, I conclude, are the supposed necessities of the Authoress, and must be accepted as such! Suffice it to say that she gets herself and her characters out of all their difficulties in an idyllic concluding Scene, which most charmingly presents Miss Clementina’s rural abode, and which is half a farmhouse and half a cottage *ornée*. There they all finally meet, and are made happy. Harold Reynolds is voluntarily, though ignominiously dismissed from the running through his conceit and his confession of indifference to Sylvia. Gerald Holmes, the hitherto butterfly brother, settles down with his old flame, Harriet Leicester, a middle-aged spinster, touchingly delineated by Miss Mona K. Oram. Mr. Savage, a *protégé* of David Holmes, and the ultimately triumphant literary rival of the conceited Harold, gains the affections and the hand of the wealthy widow, Mrs. Le Grand. Martin, an elderly clerk of David Holmes, a subordinate but conspicuous part most cleverly filled by Mr. Gilbert Hare, is rewarded for a life of toil and disappointment, by finding what he had long thought to be a hope-

less affection returned at last by Miss Clementina. David Holmes, himself, discovers to his delight and curiously intense surprise—as his brother Gerald amusingly tells him that the selected suitor of Sylvia is blind—that he is really the object of his young, but very sensible, ward’s love. Thus an interesting plot is brought to a satisfactory *dénouement*, and it simply remains for me to add that one character, viz., that of Mr. Mulberry, a ruined book collector, warmly befriended by David Holmes, and strikingly embodied by Mr. James Leigh, is skilfully introduced into Act III., and in a pretty parody of the celebrated revel scene in Shakespeare’s “Twelfth Night,” joins in a dance and catch, round Miss Clementina, who is made, for the nonce, a female Malvolio. E. G. H.

WHAT TO READ.

- “Poems,” with which is incorporated “Christ in Hades.” By Stephen Phillips.
 “Shadows and Fireflies”: a Book of Verse. By Louis Barsac.
 “The History of Greece, from its commencement to the Close of the Independence of the Greek Nation.” By Adolf Holm. Fourth and last volume. Translated from the German by Frederick Clarke.
 “The Descendant.”
 “Cleo the Magnificent; or, the Muse of the Real.” A Novel. By Z. Z.
 “A Daughter of Astrea.” By E. Phillips Oppenheim.
 “God’s Foundling.” By A. J. Dawson.
 “The Evolution of a Wife.” By Elizabeth Holland

Coming Events.

- February 17th.*—Lord Spencer presides at a meeting of the Indian Section of the Society of Arts, when Mr. H. M. Birdwood reads a paper on “The Plague in Bombay.” 4.30 p.m.
February 17th.—The Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society: Dinner at the Whitehall Rooms, Hotel Métropole.
February 17th.—Ball in aid of the New Hospital for Women, Euston Road, at Queen’s Hall, Langham Place. 9.30.
February 21st.—Sanitary Institute. Introductory Lecture. “Blots in our Sanitary Administration—Why Epidemics occur?” (Admission Free.) By Louis Parkes, M.D., M.R.C.S., D.P.H. Lond., Lecturer on Public Health, St. George’s Hospital, Medical Officer of Health, Chelsea. 8 p.m.
February 22nd.—Fancy-dress Ball in aid of the Great Northern Central Hospital, at the Highbury Athenæum.
February 25th.—Royal British Nurses’ Association. Sessional Lecture. “The Nursing of Europeans on the West Coast of Africa.” By Miss Mary Kingsley.
February 25th.—Royal Hospital for Children and Women: Annual Court of Governors at the Mansion House.
February 26th.—Princess Christian opens Diamond Jubilee Beds at Hampstead Hospital.
March 11th.—The Lord Mayor presides at the annual meeting of the East London Nursing Society, at the Mansion House.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)