

from him, and wondering how he shall possibly bear the remaining years of his banishment, he takes up a letter, opens it, and finds himself elected a Cardinal!

Ouida evidently holds a brief for the Vatican, as against the Government of Italy. G. M. R.

Dramatic Notes.

MR. F. R. BENSON'S RICHARD II. AT THE LYCEUM.

Mr. F. R. Benson has recently been giving the London public his version of Shakespeare's Richard II., a drama which has not been seen on the Metropolitan stage since Charles Kean's memorable revival of it at "the Princesses" in 1857.

In the leading *role*, which, as a critic in the *Times* has truly affirmed, is admirably adapted to Mr. Benson's idiosyncracies, this energetic actor has fairly surpassed himself and has exhibited an ability only equalled by his striking impersonation of Timon of Athens at Stratford-on-Avon and subsequently at Manchester and elsewhere. Nothing could be better, either in style or execution, than his Richard II. throughout the entire piece, and, if any critical fault can be found in it, that fault can only be the perhaps somewhat excessive display of a real madness in the later acts and especially in the fourth and fifth. Of Mr. Benson's delivery of the justly famous speech—almost, I think, the finest that even Shakespeare ever wrote—in Act III beginning with the line "no matter where—of comfort no man speak," and containing the magnificent apostrophe to death as "keeping his court within the hollow crown that rounds the mortal temples of a king," I can scarcely speak too highly, and particularly of that part indicating the position for such delivery—viz., that following the lines "For God's sake let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of Kings." The mounting was in excellent taste and produced the most realistic effects, and the only objection to the version, which I can take upon Shakesperian grounds, is the occasional excision of some of the brilliant passages, in which the play abounds, and which, I believe, might have been left intact if some of the stage business had been expedited or curtailed. Mr. Benson was well supported, particularly by Mr. E. A. Warburton as John-o-Gaunt, whose death scene was excellent, by Mr. Alfred Brydone as the Duke of York, by Mr. Oscar Asche as the Duke of Norfolk, by Mr. A. Whitby as the Bishop of Carlisle, whose denunciation of Bolingbroke when presuming to ascend the throne was very spirited, by the ever welcome Mr. G. R. Weir as the first gardener, and by Miss Lily Brayton who was both pleasing and impressive as the Queen.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

This charming Shakesperian comedy has been very cleverly rendered by Mr. Benson and his company during the past week, Mr. Benson affording a quaint and original Malvolio, and Mrs. Benson a sweet as well as sprightly Viola. The famous humour of Sir Toby Belch and of Sir Andrew Ague-cheek was admirably portrayed by Mr. G. R. Weir and Mr. Lyall Swete—the latter being also excellently made up—but the scene in which they are supposed to retire to bed was somewhat exaggerated—the great Sir Tobies and Sir Andrews of

former days having generally managed to struggle upstairs together, instead of remaining prostrate on the floor. As Feste, the Countess Olivia's Jester, Mr. F. Rodney was at his best, and far outshone his Bolingbroke in Richard II., while Miss Lily Brayton, as Olivia, both looked and played the part splendidly. A special word of commendation must be reserved for the Maria of Miss Kitty Loftus, who afforded in her interpretation of the character, another example of Mr. Benson's discernment of her ability. "Anthony and Cleopatra" was put on by Mr. Benson on Thursday night, and continues on the Lyceum boards until next Thursday, but want of space compels us to defer any critical notice of the presentment.

E. GILBERT HIGHTON.

Poem.

SHAMROCKS.

By ROSA MULHOLLAND.

I wear a shamrock in my heart,
Three in one, one in three—
Truth and love and faith,
Tears and pain and death:
O sweet my shamrock is to me!

Lay me in my hollow bed,
Grow the shamrocks over me,
Three in one, one in three,
Faith and hope and charity.
Peace and rest and silence be
With me where you lay my head,
O dear the shamrocks are to me!

WHAT TO READ.

- "Imperial Federation: the Problem of National Unity." By George R. Parkin, M.A.
- "The Rise of the Russian Empire." By H. H. Munro.
- "In New South Africa." By H. Lincoln Tangye.
- "The Gentleman from Indiana." By Booth Tarkington.
- "Marie Antoinette and the Diamond Necklace." By Mr. F. de Albini.
- "The Love of Parson Lord, and other Stories." By Mary E. Wilkins.
- "Pink and Scarlet." By Lt. Lieut.-Colonel E. A. H. Alderson.
- "Hearts Importunate." By E. Dickinson.
- "My Father and I: A New Autobiography." By the Countess de Puliga.
- "Féo: A Romance." By Max Pemberton.

Coming Events.

April 4th.—Drawing Room Meeting. By invitation of Lady Roberts Austen, The Royal Mint. In support of the Bill to amend the London Government Act of 1899, by which women were disqualified from serving on the new Borough Councils. Lady Trevelyan in the Chair 3.30 p.m.

Concert by Dr. F. J. Campbell and Students of the Royal Normal College and Academy of Music for the Blind at Upper Norwood, in aid of the Funds for the American Hospital ship *Maine*, at the Crystal Palace.

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