

charming bits of antique silver and other curios, are set out in tempting array. Lovers of the beautiful and antique should pay the show an early visit.

The German Empress has done a good deal of philanthropic work since her husband ascended the throne, and it is much to her credit that the Central Organisation of German Actresses owes its origin to her. The object of the society is to provide minor actresses with the cheapest possible clothes for stage use. The Empress herself makes a point of giving all her Court and evening gowns, once the perquisite of her maids, to the association, and has persuaded her friends to do likewise. In England it is the rule (although not quite a hard-and-fast one) that an actress should provide herself with dresses if the part she plays be a modern one, whilst fancy or historical gowns are usually purchased for her by her manager. An actress with a small salary is much to be pitied if her part be in an up-to-date play, for very often she has to put by the earnings of several weeks, even months, to meet her dressmaker's bill, or to get her frocks paid for in some nefarious manner. Such an association as the German one might be started here with advantage.

The *Novy Krai* contains a romantic story of a Russian woman, Haritena Korotkiewitch. Her husband was serving in Port Arthur, and, endeavouring to rejoin him, she was stopped at Harbin and not allowed to proceed, on the ground that she was a woman. She thereupon donned masculine attire, and reached Port Arthur shortly before the landing of the Japanese. She soon found her husband's regiment, and enlisted in it, participated in numerous sorties, and helped in the defence of Corner Hill. Although her sex was soon discovered, her record for bravery and tirelessness and attention to the wounded won her permission to remain in the ranks, where she had an excellent moral influence on the soldiers, who never swore in her presence. Her husband fell wounded while fighting by her side. She nursed him through the critical moments of his illness, and then returned to the front, where she became a messenger to Captain Gouzakofiky, of the 13th Regiment, riding fearlessly to and from the various positions, unaffected by the din and danger of battle. On October 16th, when visiting the trenches with despatches, a huge shell struck and destroyed the earthworks, killing her and eight others. They were buried in one grave with a flag around her body.

In the average Indian family the strictest domestic economy is the rule, and the household work is done by the women of the household, and not by paid servants. Servants there are, of course, in all Indian families, but they are, as a rule, on a totally different footing from the European domestic, being for the most part independent persons with a *clientèle*, for whom they perform certain customary services for a customary wage. The distribution of the daily work, down to that of the most menial kind, lies with the *materfamilias*, who may be best described as the oldest woman in the family proper under coverture, for widows can have no authority. The cooking, as the work of honour, she keeps to herself, but the house-cleaning, the washing, the care of the children, the drawing of the water, the making of the beds, and so on, is done by the less dignified members of the household, as she directs; and whatever is most menial, most disagreeable, and the hardest work is thrust upon the bride.

A Book of the Week.

THE ABBESS OF VLAYE.*

Again Mr. Weyman has turned to that France which he loves like a lover and knows like a son, to weave the materials of his new romance. It is, perhaps, not quite so absorbing in quality as his last—his tale of Geneva, its trials and its defenders—which was not only an interesting tale, but a worthy contribution to history, and history of a kind which English people do not know over well.

In "The Abbess of Vlaye" Mr. Weyman is still in the period with which he seems to have identified himself so completely—the times of Henri Quatre. The condition of provincial France, wasted in the long struggle between League and Huguenot, was truly pitiable; and the tale opens with a council held by the king at Lyons.

Mr. Weyman is a great believer in the good points of the son of Jeanne d'Albret; and perhaps he is right. He gives us here a glimpse of a ruler who is seriously anxious to do justice; who is treated by his great lords with hardly veiled insolence; who sees his peasantry starving, suffering, oppressed, the victims of brigandage of every description, and has neither men nor money to stop it in all directions at once.

There is a certain freebooter who calls himself the Captain of Vlaye, a man who captains 300 spears, whose stronghold at the junction of three provinces, defies the governors of them all. One of those provinces is Périgord, of which the King himself is governor, his lieutenant being one des Ageaux, a young soldier of bravery and ability but not of very great social weight or influence. Upon him the King turns ferociously; here is one upon whom he can vent his wrath. He made this man and can unmake him. There is no hand, since that of Walter Scott lay cold in death, but that of Mr. Weyman that could give us this picture of the King's Council table. We see the great men swaggering, the small ones cringing, the King in his wrath—righteous wrath for his people—turning naturally upon the man from whom he has nothing to fear. Des Ageaux is to reduce the stronghold of Vlaye in six weeks, or fall himself.

Des Ageaux has worked hard and well in his lieutenancy. He has loyally preserved the King's peace, but he has not a man to spare. He knows not where to turn for such a force as shall reduce the leader of 300 spears. The idea occurs to him—a wild idea, a forlorn hope—of using against the powerful brigand, a rabble of revolted peasantry known as the Crocans. And with this in view he starts, a day ahead of his faithful bodyguard, to spy out the lie of the land.

He comes, alone, with a foundered horse, to the chateau of Villeneuve l'Abbesse. This is the property of a poor old broken Vicomte who lost his prestige and his wealth and his importance in the great battle between Huguenot and Catholic at Coutras. Here again is a character which is worthy of the creation of Scott. The peevish old man, with his devoted daughter and brave deformed son, is a pitiful though ludicrous figure.

From the moment of his reaching the Vicomte's abode, adventures crowd thick and fast upon Mons. des Ageux; and, like many of Mr. Weyman's heroes, one is constrained to admit that it is more by good luck

* By Stanley Weyman. (Longmans & Co.)

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