

TALK OF EUROPE

A BRITISH firm once contracted to deliver a piece of machinery in Tokio, but because of some unavoidable delay, was unable to live up to its contract. Fearing lest the Japanese consignees should make efforts to collect the money indemnity due them for non-delivery, the Japanese agent of the British firm, sent to the home office a suggestion for avoiding payment. Mr. E—— is the English agent of the same firm also stationed in Japan.

'Regarding the matter of escaping penalty for non-delivery of machine, there is a way to creep round same by diplomat. We must make a statement of big strike occur in our factory (of course big untrue). Please address my firm in enclosed form of letter and believe this will avoid penalty of case. As Mr. E—— is a most religious and competent man and also heavily upright and godly it fears me that useless apply for his signature. Please attach name by Yokohama office making forge, but no cause to fear prison happening as this is often operated by other merchants of highest integrity.

'It is highest unfortunate Mr. E—— so godlike and excessive awkward for business purpose. I think much better add little serpentlike wisdom to upright manhood and so found a good business edifice.'

In these few sentences lies all the wisdom of the East applied to all the wisdom of the West.

O LITTLE boy who threw a stone
At Socrates, and hit Euphron;
Who, wounded in the lower calf,
Went home and beat his better half;

Who ran into the street and cried,
While, passing on the other side,
A poet made a couplet, bright
But cynical, upon the sight;

Which tiniest of pleasantries
Came safely down the centuries,
Almost undamaged by the way
(Though Tragedies have gone astray),

And exercises brains that loom
In the Museum Reading Room;
Or poses as an epigram
For purposes of an exam.

And that it was that floored me, sure
(And really it is most obscure):
Ploughed! And, observe, from far B.C.
That furrow pointed straight for Me!

So, while I vainly try to guess
Why the twin portals of Success
(As all authorities insist)
Are Particle and Aorist;

And note in all my kinsmen's eyes
Every emotion but surprise,
I write, lest you should censure me,
This devious apostrophe:

O boy (as I remarked before),
Had you but stayed within the door,
Or had you been a better shot,
Or chosen another sage to pot,

I'd not been in this horrid fix;
And, therefore, from beyond the Styx,
Consider well the curious chain
Of circumstance that links us twain:

And how that stone you can't replace
Careers in Time as once in Space —
A devastating Comet: who
Will be the next it bangs into?

And all you boys of later days,
So rash in various sorts of ways,
Remember trouble's on the wing
Whenever you do anything.

R. B.

HAS an artist ever existed who has seen his ideal turned into a commercial success without its being in some way debased? It is hard to think of one, and hardest of all to imagine a pure artistic ideal surviving in the atmosphere of the modern theatre. But this is what Reinhardt's admirers and

coöperators appear to claim for him in a book compiled by them and recently published in Berlin.

The book consists of a series of chapters dealing with the different aspects of Reinhardt's work at the Deutsches Theatre, giving descriptions of a number of productions and concluding with a chapter on the 'workshop,' in which the mechanical construction of the stage and the lighting are outlined.

The illustrations recall many a short-lived attempt at artistic stage production in England, but, most inevitably and most vividly, they recall the ideals of Gordon Craig — that exhibition of his masks and models at the Leicester Galleries in September, 1912; his book *On the Art of the Theatre*; those attractive numbers of the *Mask*.

Reinhardt's work cannot fail to remind us of Gordon Craig, but, and this is significant, Gordon Craig's designs never suggest the productions of Reinhardt. How much the German producer owes to the English artist it is difficult to determine, but there can be no doubt that the debt is there. And yet the name of Gordon Craig is not once mentioned in this appreciation of Reinhardt. Indeed, Heinz Herald, in the first chapter on the *Conception of a Scenario*, goes so far as to say, 'Nature has endowed him (Reinhardt) with the talent, the power, and the courage to take the development of the theatre of our period on his shoulders.' Such a claim is hardly justified by facts.

Many of the illustrations are delightful, as, for instance, the designs for the ballot, *Die Grüne Flöte* and for the fantasy *Rappelkopf*, but a glance at the photographic reproduction of other scenarios sets one speculating as to the extent to which these suggestions were vulgarized when they were presented on the stage of the Deutsches Theatre. These photographs explain many things: they make comprehensible Gordon Craig's desire that actors should wear masks; they also throw light on a remark in *A Living Theatre*, to the effect that Gordon Craig had to abandon the idea of producing *King Lear* and *Ædipus* in Berlin because he 'would make no compromise.'

No, Craig cannot compromise, but Reinhardt *can*, and that, broadly speaking, is the gulf which divides them. Craig is an artist first and always, Reinhardt is a clever man with artistic perceptions and a *flair* for the popular taste. He can tickle the public fancy and the public vanity at one and the same time; his audiences can enjoy his productions with the added satisfaction of feeling that they are showing their artistic appreciation in so doing.

Gordon Craig, in a recent letter to the *Observer*, pointed out that Reinhardt is not a man, but a firm, and this is amply borne out by the present volume; he is a firm, and a very successful firm, the members of which have certain artistic standards to which they prefer to adhere, but who are not prepared to deny their public that 'riot' of color and elaboration of design which they have led it to expect from them.

THE following résumé of Schnitzler's latest comes from the columns of the *London Times*.

Casanova's Heimfahrt is not a comedy; there is nothing satirical or farcical about it. It is an episode from the life of the famous adventurer, criminal, and writer, entirely invented by Schnitzler, but obviously written after a careful study and absorption of Casanova's autobiography — that faithful reflection of the scholarly, blackguardly, utterly immoral, witty, unscrupulous man that he was — and age that he lived in. The title of the 'nouvelle' comes from the fact that the time of the action is chosen at the moment when Casanova is returning to Venice from Mantua, after years of enforced exile. At the latter city he falls in with an old friend, Olivo, whose wife had been Casanova's lover. He has, however, lost all love for her. His fierce affection has fallen on a young girl, Marcolina, who is staying with Olivo. She is reputed a bluestocking, and does, indeed, surprise Casanova by the erudition she displays in discussing with him his proposed reply to Voltaire. Her learning does not diminish his passion, and he watches to see whether her reputation is sustained. He soon finds that Marcolina is in the habit of receiving a young soldier, Lorenzi, who escapes from her room at dawn. With him