

*Stanislavsky*

ANYONE who is at all interested in theatrical matters will find this autobiography of the actor-director of the Moscow Art Theatre indispensable. It is honest, it is also entertaining. Filled with amusing anecdote as well as valuable artistic discussion and the details of his own life, it is one of the most illuminating books on the drama I have ever read. Take, for example, the chapter on "Tommaso Salvini the Elder". It describes Salvini's "Othello" with much power; Stanislavsky is as wise in his ability to analyze as he is in his descriptive passages. There is a good deal of Russian history told along the way in "My Life in Art" (Little, Brown). There is much advice to the actor, too, in this book, advice that American actors could well study. Many paragraphs like the following:

The actor must first of all believe in everything that takes place on the stage, and most of all he must believe in what he himself is doing. And one can believe only in the truth. Therefore it is necessary to feel this truth at all times, to know how to find it, and for this it is unescapable to develop one's artistic sensitivity to truth. It will be said, "But what kind of truth can this be, when all the stage is a lie, an imitation, scenery, cardboard, paint, make-up, properties, wooden goblets, swords and spears. Is all this truth?" But it is not of this truth I speak. I speak of the truth of emotions, of the truth of inner creative urges which strain forward to find expression of the truth of the memories of bodily and physical perceptions. I am not interested in a truth that is without myself; I am interested in the truth that is within myself, the truth of my relation to this or that event on the stage, to the properties, the scenery, the other actors who play parts in the drama with me, to their thoughts and emotions.