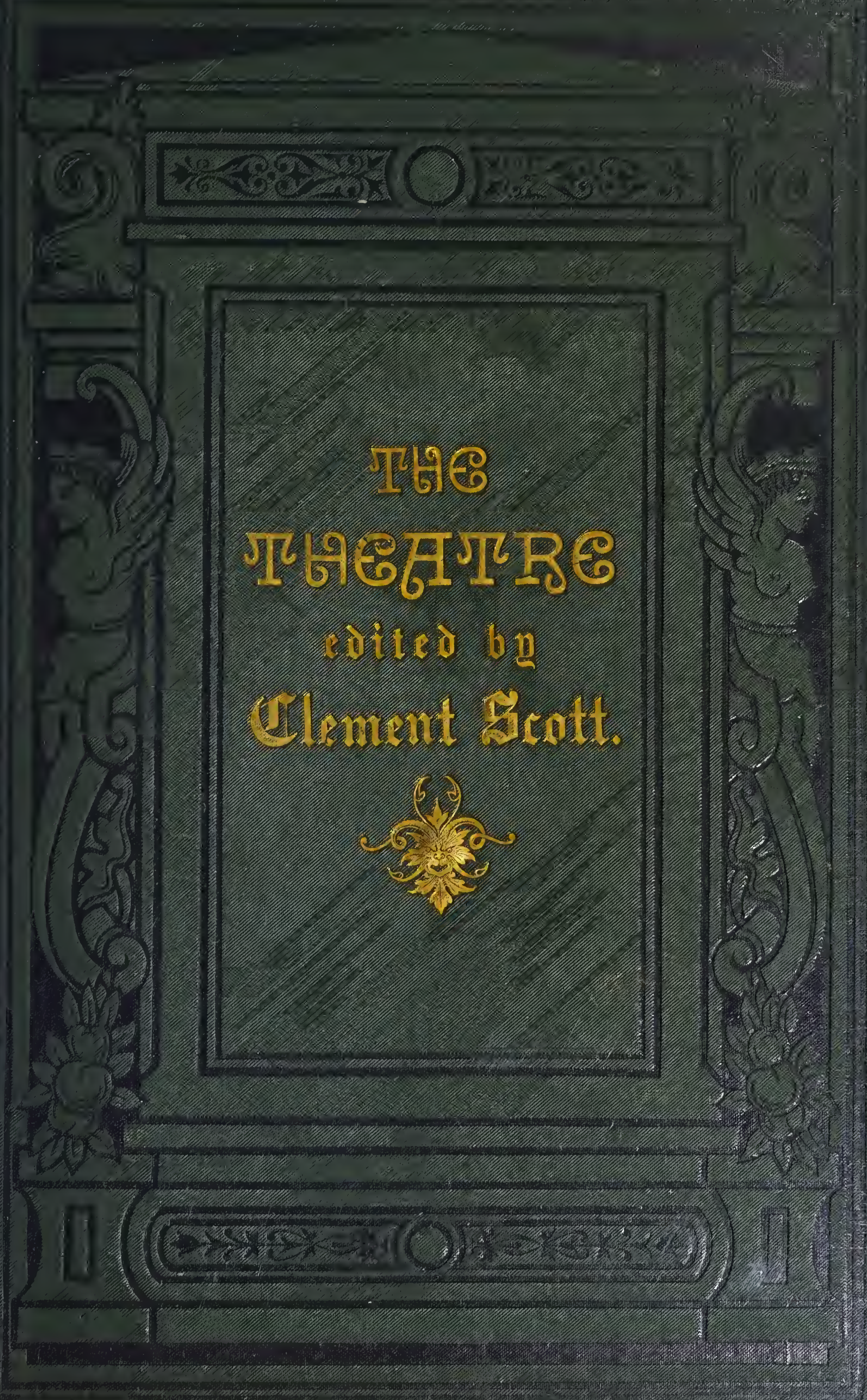
THE THEATRE

edited by

Clement Scott.



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THE THEATRE.

A Monthly Review
OF
THE DRAMA, MUSIC, AND THE FINE ARTS.

EDITED BY CLEMENT SCOTT.

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The Theatre.

JANUARY 1, 1880.

Our Symposium.

THE SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION FOR THE MONTH IS THIS:

THE DEARTH OF DRAMATISTS: IS IT A FACT?

IF I were to answer this question literally, I should say that dramatists were numberless. I have had pretty extensive experience of the fact, and other managers have no doubt been equally favoured. For some time I have enjoyed the confidence of I don't know how many ladies and gentlemen whose ambition takes the form of five-act dramas. With an absence of diffidence they overwhelm me with MSS., and are very often angry if these are not accepted by return of post. There are of course varying degrees of literary merit in such productions, but they possess one characteristic in common—they are wholly unadapted to the stage. The most curious part of it is, that their authors are often conscious of this defect, but do not think it is of much account. A gentleman writes to me that he has no knowledge of stage requirements, but has little doubt that, if I approve his play, the necessary alterations can be made. The assumption is that I am to spend my time and pains in trying to turn some quires of dialogue into an acting drama. I have sometimes thought of issuing a circular to the following effect: "My dear sir or madam—I cannot undertake to become joint-author of your play, and I venture to suggest that a manager should no more be expected to adapt a drama to the stage than a magazine editor to put interesting matter into a halting story. When you have not got the technical knowledge which alone can make your work acceptable, pardon my suggesting that it is your business to acquire it, and not mine to supply the deficiency." The reason, then, why there is a dearth of good dramatists—and I think that the fact is unquestionable—is, in my opinion, that although many people are anxious to write for the stage, few will take the trouble to study the *technique*, which is essential to an acting play. This indifference is not confined to the amateurs to whom I have alluded. A distinguished man, whose work is of surpassing literary merit, was asked whether a drama he had written had been modelled with a view to stage effect. The reply was, "Oh no! I make a point of never going to a theatre." Here was repudiation of the very element without which no play can possibly be successful. Why it should be considered dignified to write for the stage, if stage conditions are altogether beneath one's notice, I fail to comprehend. There is, however, some comfort in remembering that the greatest dramas our literature has produced were written by an actor. Shakespeare, at all events, did not, when writing his plays, think it necessary to abstract his mind from the stage. One of the most amusing heresies of our time is that which denies to Shakespeare the authorship which has made him famous; but, if any proof were needed, I have always thought the wonderful acting quality of these dramas a conclusive circumstance in his favour. Shakespeare knew the stage thoroughly; and this fact is stamped on all his works. Some of the most successful comedies of our own day were written by Mr. T. W. Robertson, an actor. The most popular of living playwrights is Mr. H. J. Byron, and he is an actor. I should like to hear Mr. Byron's reply to anyone who had the temerity to ask him, if he did not think it would have been better for his reputation as a dramatist, if he had "made a point of never going to a theatre." But we cannot all be actors, or it may be asked how those writers who are not connected with the profession are to acquire the necessary familiarity with stage details. Well, Mr. Tom Taylor is not professionally an actor, and yet there is no dramatic author who more thoroughly understands his business. They say they manage these things better in France; but here I could name several men who have acquired distinction as playwrights in proportion as they have applied themselves to the study of stage effect. People who will not undergo this training cannot expect a manager to face certain failure, because they do not choose to comply with the conditions of success.—Henry Irving.

That on the face of it there appears to be a dearth of dramatists needs, I think, no further proof than is supplied by the recent files of any daily newspaper. The names of the same playwrights appear again and again in connection with different theatres, and we can almost count on the fingers of one hand, certainly on those of two, the dramatic authors whom the chief managers of the day delight to honour. The question then is, whether this seeming dearth is deceptive, owing its origin to artificial devices, or whether it is real and traceable to purely natural causes; whether, as the unacted ones tell us, there are innumerable excellent playwrights denied a hearing, or whether we have fallen upon days when few Englishmen possessing the dramatic faculty, invent and write plays. The dearth of dramatists—is it a fact? To attempt to answer the question requires a certain amount of hardihood, especially if the inevitable answer seems, as it does to me, to be in the affirmative. The number of unsuccessful and untried writers of Plays admittedly far exceeds that of the more fortunate authors with whom they are anxious to compete. Hence, to affirm that there is actually a scarcity of the commodity which these would-be playwrights think themselves able to supply in abundance, is to condemn by implication the work of a large body of persevering toilers who might be conciliated by the suggestion that this apparent scarcity, in so far as it exists, is in no way their fault. I am, however, encouraged to a frankness which might otherwise seem needlessly offensive, by the outspoken candour, which, on the other side, blames managers for the misleading creation of a so-called "Dramatic Ring," supposed to bring about an apparent dearth of dramatists that has no existence in fact. If, on the one hand, it be permissible to accuse managers of being either fools or knaves, it may perhaps be allowable on the other to urge that, as a rule, unacted dramatists are incompetent, and to argue that it is their incompetence which limits the numbers of the playwrights now placed prominently before the public. This latter theory seems to me, I must confess, the more reasonable of the two. Managers are, we know, not more infallible in taste or in judgment than are the authors whose dramas are constantly submitted to them; but, with all their faults, they avoid the mistake of the suicidal unselfishness which, in order to enrich half-a-dozen producers, would deliberately limit its own market with the inevitable result of raising the prices which it has to pay. It is, of course, conceivable, that here and there an *entrepreneur* may allow considerations, other than those of business, to enter into his calculations; but it may, I think, be fairly assumed, that when he buys or orders a play of a particular author, it is, as a rule, because he fancies that author likely to best supply him with what he wants; whilst his rejection of a play is generally based upon the belief that it is unsuitable.

From a "Dramatic Ring" he has everything to fear and nothing to hope; and though he might feel inclined to vent his spite upon the whole of the plays submitted to him by outsiders, because of the absurd unfitness of ninety-nine hundredths of them, he would be sure to restrain such inclination for the sake of his own pocket. It is his interest to discourage anything approaching a monopoly of his stage or of the stage generally by a popular clique of dramatists; and whenever he can see his way to increase competition amongst those who write for him, he will do so with the double object of keeping up the quality, and keeping down the price of the literary wares on which he depends. It is his obvious interest, from every point of view, to bring forward new authors; and there seems no reason for supposing him to neglect his interest from a malicious desire to snub rising talent, or from an unaccountable anxiety to form a "Dramatic Ring." Occasionally he may doubtless be over-reluctant to make experiments with the works of untried men; but he is certainly not more shy of beginners than are publishers, editors of journals and magazines, or picture-dealers, none of whom run anything like his pecuniary risk in the encouragement of unknown novices. To bring forward a list of the young writers who, after long delay, have made hits with their early productions, is merely to give another instance of the difficulty of mounting the first rung of the ladder, and to disprove the theory that merit cannot find its way to the front, at the theatre just as it does elsewhere. The mere suggestion of some mysterious agency preventing would-be playwrights from coming to the fore, suggests a suspicion of their weakness; for the commonest symptom of mental debility is the delusion which creates an imaginary conspiracy against the victim. And I think that the experience of those whose duty calls them to the first productions of new as well as old playwrights, will confirm the deduction that no "Ring" is needed to account for the apparent dearth of dramatists—dearth, that is to say, of writers who have studied and grasped the requirements of the stage, and whose average work may in consequence be depended upon by those to whom it is offered.—ERNEST A. BENDALL.

It has pleased some people to call me the "Veteran Dramatist;" and I am not at all disinclined to accept the designation with a certain degree of complacency. But I wish to state at once that, "veteran" as I may be in the ranks of the dramatists of the time, I am by no means a *laudator temporis acti,* or inclined to depreciate the present in favour of the past. On the contrary, I believe in the steady progress of dramatic art, as well among its exponents in authorship as among its executants on the stage. Instead of there being a dearth of dramatic authors in the present day, it is my opinion there is a plethora. The desire to excel in dramatic literature has lately produced a mass of aspirants to the honours of stage authorship. Few, it is true, have been able to push their way forward to the very front ranks; but, at the same time, there have been excellent and notable examples of success in younger authors; and the number is daily, although slowly, increasing.

After all, it is a struggle of sharp competition on a limited field. The common cry, that "outsiders" are "shelved" and "shunted off the line" is, to my mind, utterly erroneous. But can it be a matter of surprise that managers should be more willing to accept the works of tried and approved authors, who have so often brought money to their treasury, than those of unknown aspirants, whose productions would be, more or less, matters of doubtful experiment? Generally speaking, as far as my own experience goes, the dramatic efforts of new men have their fair and reasonable chance, and eventually find their place.

If "Dearth of Dramatic Authors" there be—and I no way concede that point—the deficiency, I maintain, arises mainly from a misconception of the requirements of dramatic art. There is a prevalent complaint, that our clever and prolific novel-writers are not allowed to make their name as dramatists also; but the fact is overlooked, or rather unknown, that a work of fiction put into dialogue, however clever, is not necessarily a play. A play has requirements of construction, and demands neat arrangement of situation, and precise concentration—qualities which can only be acquired by a perfectly separate study of the art, and, indeed, a regular apprenticeship to the work. The uninitiated in these requirements can no more produce a play fitted for stage purposes, however fertile his imagination, however striking his incidents, than a lover of music can execute a sonata of Beethoven's on the piano, without having learned his scales, and mastered his fingering. It is thus, from the want of due and strict study of the dramatist's art, that the cleverest tale-writer may fail in works intended for the stage. It is not dramatists who are needed—their name is legion—but dramatists who, in plain terms, "know their business."

It is absurd for the false preachers on the degeneracy of the stage to clasp their hands and lament that we have no Shakespeare now; such a phenomenon as Shakespeare is not likely to appear more than once in a nation's history. Almost as absurd is it to cry, "Why have we no author to give us another 'School for Scandal?' Why have we not another 'Koh-i-noor?'" I maintain, however, that our present writers of comedy not only hold their own, but take precedence—at least as far as meets the requirements of the age—in all comparison with the dramatic authors of the much, but erroneously, vaunted period of the so-called "palmy days." With the exception of the great comedy above mentioned, and perhaps two or three others, such as "The Rivals" and "She Stoops to Conquer," the revivals of the comedies of the past have met only with signal failure. In the field of drama, also, authors are numerous—and young ones too—who have produced far better plays than "The Castle Spectre" or "The Foundling of the Forest," and *tutti quanti* of the regretted days. There is progress in all things on earth; and, to my mind, the productions of our modern dramatists are in advance of the past instead of retrograding.

So much of quality! As regards quantity, I can but reassert that the outcry as to the "Dearth of Dramatists" must be met by the answer that it is *not* a fact.—J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON.

As the production of a successful new play is likely to bring into the pockets of a manager 20,000*l*., or even a great deal more, and as it is not the custom with us to give authors a liberal share of profits, I do not see how it is possible to furnish managers with better motives than they already possess for keeping a sharp look-out for dramatic talent. But it is said that they have so unreasonable a preference for weak adaptations from the French that they persistently neglect to make fortunes that are within easy reach. I can see no sufficient evidence of the justice of this charge. Surely Mr. Hare, Mrs. Bancroft, Mr. Hollingshead, Messrs. James and Thorne, Mr. Irving, the late Mr. Montague, Mr. Neville, and many others have shown some enterprise in this way. They have given commissions often enough to writers of reputation; and certainly no examples are forthcoming of plays of superlative merit which they have rejected. What manuscripts are lying in managerial pigeon-holes at this moment I cannot of course say; but it seems fair to assume that if anything equal in merit—say to "Two Roses," "Our Boys," "Not such a Fool as he Looks," or "Caste"—were accustomed to go begging, the humiliating fact would ere now have made itself known. With regard to the supposed legion of authors who could if they would, but who as a fact do not, write plays, I should be sorry to cite the old maxim *de non apparentibus.* The avenues to the stage are, always have been, and probably always must be, somewhat difficult; on this score complaints are heard even more often in France than in England. I am far from wishing to say that there is as much encouragement for untried authors as is desirable in the interests of the public. Yet if any new hand—say among our most successful novelists—would but write a piece equal in interest and in acting capabilities to those I have mentioned, I think we might pretty confidently say that sooner or later he would find his reward. I cannot doubt, however, that many more would turn their attention in this direction, and earnestly study the not very recondite conditions of success on the stage, if the prospective gains were greater than they are. I am afraid I shall shock some people when I say, that the best stimulant to genius, after all, is substantial pecuniary reward. The old sharing system which existed in the best days of English dramatic literature should be restored, as it easily may be when our dramatic authors so will it. Instances have, I believe, occurred in recent times of 40,000*l.* being made by a single play. There seems no good reason why the most successful effort of dramatic authorship should be considered liberally paid with a fiftieth part of that sum.—MOY THOMAS.

An outcry has been raised amongst us of late, the burden of which is the dearth of dramatists in the present day. Most emphatically do I repudiate the assertion. Dramatists we have in plenty, and judging from the bales of manuscript plays which I have waded through, and which still continue to pour in on managers of theatres, I should certainly say there was no risk of the ranks of play-writers ever being without recruits. But recruits imply reinforcements of the rank and file, whereas at present we want leaders of the noble army of dramatic writers. There are a few worthy veteran commanders, and their tactics generally carry the day, whenever they are pleased to present anything to the public. But the public look for something new and fresh in the drama as in other things, and resent a slavish following of Boileau, Beaumont and Fletcher, or any of the old standards. With such an array of so-called dramatists around us, we wonder why so many essay, and why so many fail; must we admit there is in the present age a dearth of dramatic *genius,* of the divine afflatus which truly creates, invents, and represents dramatic situation and thrilling effect? Other nations have not been tied and bound by the chains of conventional tradition, and why should we be thus held in bondage? Tableau dramas and opera bouffe are the newest and most original things to be seen upon our boards; and they are plants, not of English, but of Gallic growth. Surely a country which has produced a Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, a Massinger, Congreve, Dryden, the Colemans, Bulwer Lytton, and a sister country which has given birth to a Goldsmith, a Sheridan, and a Knowles; and a drama at present represented by such authors as Charles Reade, Wills, Tom Taylor, Merivale, Wilkie Collins, Planché, Byron, Reece, and Albery—cannot remain thus phlegmatic, and view with indifference the overshadowing of brilliant laurels. Experience seems to point to despair when we see our clever authors willing to put foreign bricks together, instead of making the bricks for themselves, and raising up an edifice of purely native manufacture. I know it may be urged that the public do not sufficiently indicate what they want, and appear to be guided by fashion or curiosity. Sentiment and fine writing are at a discount, and the eye must be satiated with, perhaps, an excess of realism, and abuse of those externals which should only be used as the subordinate means of intellectual effects; but I maintain that genius would override these uncertainties, as the genius of Peg Woffington surmounted the disadvantage of appearing in tragedy and comedy always in a black velvet gown, because it was "her grandest gown"—her genius was sufficient, accessories were subordinate to it.

We all know that the true drama is indestructible, because it is based upon indestructible principles of human nature. Its elevating appeal, when properly made, must be successful, so long as the elements of humanity remain unchanged. Passion and imagination may require some change in the forms of their food, but its substance must remain the same or their existence be altogether compromised. True dramatic power on the stage can only cease to produce its effect where humanity ceases to feel; and if the clever actors of our day were furnished with adequate opportunity for the display of such power, it would always produce its natural effect in a theatre when appropriately represented. Progress of refinement, theories of philosophy, changes in taste, and caprices of fashion, must all succumb before the commanding spirit that searches and uplifts the great heart of humanity. Humanity, and the various passions which constitute the drama, being the same in all ages, it is only the indolence and lack of proper application of the present age which hinders dramatic literature from rising above its present level. Romantic drama is becoming a thing of the past; realism seems to be the basil-plant of the age, undermining chivalry, and the true purpose of the drama, which was to see humanity portrayed, in all its phases of vice and virtue, honour and heroism.

Thus the spirit of the age affects the dramatist, and to the depreciating influence of fashion, I fear, may be chiefly ascribed the dearth of dramatic genius which enshrouds our authors. I have no doubt a satisfactory remedy could be found in judicious collaboration. Take an average, or even a more than average drama, and you will seldom find that plot and language are alike worthy of each other. There are two great essentials needed by a dramatist, independent of the power of expressing the various passions he requires. He must first be able fully to comprehend his "idea" as a whole, and then be able to sit in judgment upon his work, and find that he has, in every particular, duly provided for the fitness of things. For this latter purpose an analytical mind is needed, and the analytical mind being rarely endowed with the power of expression and fancy, I would therefore earnestly impress upon dramatic writers the very great advantage to be reaped from judicious collaboration, if the drama is to be in our age what it has been in the past.—HENRY NEVILLE.

[*A knock at the door is heard. The* CHAIRMAN *rises.*

Chairman. Odd! I don't expect——

[*Servant announces* MR. F. C. BURNAND. CHAIRMAN *looks doubtfully at the symposiamists.*

Henry Irving. Burnand! [*Smiles quietly.*] I should like to hear what he would say.

Henry Neville [*cheerily*]. Yes, yes; by all means. [*Apologetically, to the others.*] He wrote "The Turn of the Tide," you know.

Palgrave Simpson. Yes; I never saw the merit of the piece myself, but—[*suddenly remembering its revival at the Olympic; turns to* MR. NEVILLE]—you were charming in it—charming.

[MR. NEVILLE *smiles deprecatingly.*

Henry Irving [*musingly*]. And "The Isle of St. Tropez." Fine death scene.

[*Puts on his pince-nez, and looks about to see if anyone is listening to him. Then drums no tune in particular on the table with his right hand, and relapses into musing, with a pleased expression of countenance.*

Chairman. Well, gentlemen, if you have no objection——

Mr. Moy Thomas. No, none whatever. Eh, Bendall?

Mr. Bendall [*not having quite made up his mind on the subject*]. Oh, no—certainly.

[*The necessary instructions having been given, enter* MR. F. C. BURNAND, *with a sort of Paul Pry, hope-I-don't-intrude air. After the usual greetings, the subject is explained to him. What does* he *say to it?*

Mr. Burnand. Well, gentlemen, really, I came in so late, I've hardly given the matter sufficient consideration. But, let's see. "Dearth of dramatic authors." Heavens! why, Mr. Palgrave Simpson, secretary to the Dramatic Authors' Society, can tell you how many there are on his list. There's no dearth of authors, but there's a deuce of a difficulty in getting them to write. Those who get their living by it—I'm not ashamed of using the expression—are all hard at work from year's end to year's end, not only at plays, mind you, but at half-a-hundred other things—essays, articles, magazines, books. The current literature of the day takes it out of them, so to speak, and leaves them small time for really important work. *I* know—no one better—that managers *do* say, "You bring me a play, and, if it's good, I'll take it and I'll pay you *your own terms.*"

But what does "if it's good" mean? It means, "if *he* likes it."

I don't disagree with him—I've been a manager myself, and have had two theatres—and, if anyone had brought me a play I thought likely to suit me, I would have produced it. But it didn't come. Yes, *one* did, and I had intended to try it. It was by two comparatively untried authors. However, my management came to an end, and I gracefully retired. The play I would have tried, has, I believe, succeeded in the provinces. On the other hand, a play that I wouldn't produce made a considerable hit in town. The star actress in it made the success, but no one has ever thought the play a good one. Well, gentlemen, after going through several MSS. of untried men, with every desire to bring out a new work by a new author, I was compelled to have recourse to my friend Mr. Byron. The negotiations never came to anything, because I, myself, managerially, went to nothing. But, where were the dramatic authors? Where were the members of the society of which Mr. Palgrave Simpson is the secretary? They won't come to *me*. Perhaps they were afraid of entrusting me with their plots, for Mr. Puff's reason, "writes himself," and again, I was not an established manager.

But is the dearth of dramatists a fact! Are there not just as many dramatists as there were a quarter of a century or fifty years ago?

I can't answer for the latter personally, but for the former I should say the number is about the same. Mr. Palgrave Simpson will have been your authority on both points. Is there more "taking from the French" now than then? Not a bit more—or less. About the same, I should say—only more carefully done, adaptation being the rule, and translation the exception. The adaptation, too, in four cases out of five, is so well done. and necessitates so much thoroughly original matter, as to constitute the adapter the English collaborator of the French dramatist.

But, gentlemen, what chance does the most original English dramatist—I mean a man whose "face is his fortune," whose work for the stage is his livelihood—what chance does such a one stand against the fact that managers in their own interests—and rightly too, I contend, for it is simply a matter of business—purchase successful French or German pieces, when produced, and then naturally look to a handsome return for their ready-money investment? Permit me an illustration.

Mr. X—— is in Paris (himself or his agent—himself in effect)—a new piece is produced on Thursday. It is successful. He buys it and pays (say) 200*l.* down. On Friday another is produced. Successful again. He buys that; 300*l.* down. He has paid 500*l.* ready cash. Back he comes with his investment. Suppose this operation repeated by three other managers, in Paris, in Brussels, in Vienna. I come to Mr. X—— with my original play. He likes it. "Excellent, my boy," he says; "*but*—I've got a piece of Darson's which I've paid 500*l.* for"—of course it has grown to 500*l.* between Paris and London—"and I must produce that first. *I'll do yours afterwards.*

I demur. If he won't do it, other managers will. But my piece, which has occupied me for a year, will only suit three theatres in London, so to those then I go. No, unfortunately, they have all three invested ready money in Messieurs Choses' pieces, and they will do mine *after these*. I return to Mr. X——; Mr. X—— refuses to bind himself to me, *because*, don't you see, something may turn up in the meantime. My piece is relegated to the shelves—or I turn it into a novel for a magazine.

In the meantime, as I must live, I naturally offer to adapt any one of these French pieces. That's a matter of arrangement; and there's an end of me and my purely original work.

Now it does not matter one straw whether I am a well-known or an untried author, if the managers to whom I go have already invested their money. The tried or untried author is in exactly the same position as regards an *original work*. Of course the untried author is nowhere when an adaptation has to be made, where practical knowledge and thorough acquaintance with the taste of the English public are absolutely necessary.

I could mention four managers who are perfectly ready to listen to scenarios from any authors known or unknown—and I don't see why I shouldn't say before his face that Mr. Neville, from my own experience, is one of them—and who, if they like the scenario, *or even the idea of a piece*, when suggested by an author in whom they have a confidence, will there and then give an order for a piece, of course taking care that the agreement between them is a thoroughly business-like one, with such stipulations as will be fair to both author and manager. Now, supposing the piece finished at the time agreed on, and supposing in the interim the manager (quite within his right) has purchased a French piece, with which he foresees a "big hit;" and supposing further, that on the author's piece being read to him, he likes it, and sees also another "big hit;" then such terms can be arranged between them as will reimburse the author for his labour, and secure the piece to the manager, should he not forfeit (in consequence of the French production) the right of playing it. All this is a matter of mutual accommodation.

For myself, I cannot work without an order. I can't do a piece simply "on spec," as some artists paint pictures. But artists appeal to the public at large—to the whole world, in fact. Dramatic authors do not. Authors differently constituted to myself, and in very different circumstances, can and do afford to write plays *to please themselves*—plays which their dinner-friends admire and rave about; plays which, if produced by some fashionably-deluded manager, who looks forward to making friends out of the minimum of society, lamentably fail. But this luxury of indifference to failure (as an *argumentum ad pocketum*) is not for me; a failure with *me* means loss of money, and loss, *pro tem.*, of dramatic literary reputation. No, there is no dearth of dramatic authors, but there are very few who live entirely by their work for the stage; and Mr. Irving and Mr. Neville, if you gentlemen continue writing for magazines, and if your example and that of your co-professionals is generally followed—as it appears is likely to be the case from the immense success of *your* "*Stage Door*," Mr. Clement Scott—why perhaps the dramatic authors may then be crowded out of the monthly publications, the weekly comic papers, the journals, and the annuals, and may actually devote themselves entirely to writing for the stage.

If, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I have not said very much to the purpose, excuse me—for I came in unexpectedly, and I quit you, having to do some work for Mr. John Hollingshead, gentlemen—a new burlesque which will occupy me till at least 4.30 to-morrow morning; when, after a few hours' rest, I shall attend a rehearsal, which, like a sort of dramatic Mr. Cook, I generally "personally conduct," only to return to do a portion of my usual work for "Mr. Punch," answer a few letters on business, and finish a magazine article. So you see I am well occupied—in fact I *must* be: not that I complain—no—I am never so happy as when I am full *jusqu'aux yeux*; only, as I just said, I must quit you, and, drinking your healths all round, and may you all live long and prosper, I leave my character in your hands, gentlemen—and exit F. C. BURNAND.

THE HIVE OF PANTOMIME.

"PERHAPS you would be good enough to come down to the rooms and see if you are satisfied with the ballets—Signor Bacolo has completed the first, and thinks the second is just what you would like."

"All right, I'll be there at eleven sharp."

We are getting near Christmas, and have only another fortnight to complete everything connected with the "Gorgeous Original Christmas Pantomime, entitled *Harlequin Ali Baba and the Wonderful Lamp, or the Wizard Bluebeard and the Little Fairy Cinderella*"—(I may say by way of parenthesis I detest this mixture of simple fairy stories, and should never think of muddling young heads with such a tissue of complicated incidents; but the title is only imaginary, and will do as well as any other)—a pantomime which is to eclipse, we hope, everything yet seen in fun, beauty, and all the rest of it.

People who take their children to pantomimes have little or no idea of the time, thought, and labour it takes to put on to the stage one of these elaborate entertainments. A manager who looks after the production of pieces he brings out in his own theatre must be everywhere and everything at once. He may have the best coadjutors, the cleverest master-carpenter, the most artistic scene-painter, a genius as a property-man, and an experienced author whose work is interpreted by the best available talent; but if he does not give an eye to all departments there will be hitches too evident, and mistakes too palpable, which only the good-humoured criticism of Christmas will overlook.

"Let me see, that ballet-master wants me at eleven. Send for Ossidew (the property-man) and Mr. Rowe Spink (the scenic artist). Oh, here is Mrs. Tarlatan, the wardrobe-mistress. Well, have all the costumes arrived?"

"Good-morning, sir. There's three cases arrived from Arisso's, which I've opened. All the principals' except the king's boots and the princess's hat and feathers. They say the twelve pages is there, but I only count eleven. They look splendid, sir, and I should like you to see 'em."

"I'll come up to the wardrobe at two without fail. How about the demon ballet?"

"There is only half of 'em come, and the tights ain't finished yet. But they've promised them by next Thursday."

"Dear, dear! that's very late! Any boots arrived?"

"Not likely, sir. Them's always the last. Cavis makes first-rate boots, but he do make one nervous at the end."

Here the master-carpenter enters, and Mrs. Tarlatan retires. The master-carpenter, who always looks like a general officer with a grievance, has come to say that the scene-rehearsal will be ready at midnight as soon as the usual night performance has been disposed of. Also:

"Mr. 'Appythort, the hauthor, wants a new trap for the demon queen's first entrance. We shall have to cut away a lot of joists, and might as well use the bridge in the third entrance."

I run up with Mortice at once and inspect the stage—the trap can easily be made, and two men are put on to it at once. The spirits of the demon queen and the author's will both rise on the opening night to their individual satisfaction.

"Ah, Mr. Rowe Spink, I hope I haven't taken you away from your work?"

"Not at all, sir. I was coming down to ask you if it would not be better to add another border in the palace scene. You'll see to-night. Mortice thinks we can do without it. By-the-way, Mr. Irons will be here to-morrow night to try the transformation."

"So much the better. Where's Haresfoote? Oh, Mr. Haresfoote (the stage-manager), mind all the ballet-ladies and the extras are here to-morrow night for the transformation scene.

"The extras are not all chosen yet, sir. I've got thirty or forty girls waiting now in the hall to be selected when you are at liberty."

"Very well, I'll come at once. I shall come up to the paint-room, Mr. Spink, this afternoon, and—ah, you're here, Ossidew. How are the properties getting on? Is the practicable cannon ready?"

"All right, sir; everything will be there by the opening-night."

Now there is no more fatal rock than this behind the scenes. "All right" on the opening-night generally means all wrong. If a man tells me a dress or a property, or, if it comes to that, a part will be all right on the opening-night, I say it will be all wrong, and must be specially provided for. Of course, when I get up to the property-room, the practicable cannon, out of which a whole regiment of small soldiers is going to be shot, apparently into space, is not commenced.

"What do you think of them heads, sir?" says Mr. Ossidew, when he has been sufficiently lectured on the necessity of being beforehand with all his productions. "They wants just a little bit of hartistic treatment to be first-rate." The heads are enormous *papier-mâché* (or "paper mash," as Ossidew calls it) effigies to be worn by the king's body-guard; and the supers who have been recruited for their particular regiments may be heard on the stage below stamping about under the drilling of the stage-manager, Mr. Haresfoote. I can hear coming up from beneath me like the ventriloquist's "man in the cellar," a voice shouting, "Confound it all! How many more times are we to do this over again? Didn't I say, after crossing the bridge and coming down the rake, you are to march two and two down to the centre of the footlights, where you see the conductor in the orchestra, and then, half turning right and half left, you will circle round into the places I showed you? Now then, pay attention! We can't stay all day at this!" But to return to the properties. The heads are waiting to be painted and varnished; the armour is being cleaned up; the comic halberds are being fixed; the banners are arriving at completion, and the property horses and wolves (there is a comic scene recalling the thrilling ride of Mazeppa) are being tried by some of the property-men to see if they will work their tails and roll their eyes with some semblance of reality. Everything seems tolerably forward, and after repressing Ossidew's desire to make all the hand-properties—that is, the accessories carried by ballet-girls, such as wreaths, torches, or assegais—twice as large and three times as heavy as is necessary, I again return to the stage, which I now find swarming with boys who are to be drilled into an attack on some ogre's castle, or who represent imps and tadpoles in the opening. I find one of the smallest of small boys weeping in a corner, and ask him "What's the matter?"

"Oh sir, you said I was to be the owl, and they've been and (*sob*) taken me out of the owl and put me into a tadpole" (*sobs hysterically*).

It does not take long to settle this. Tommy has a decided turn for pantomime, and instils a comic hop into the owl which is irresistible; but even he at his age is beginning to find out the jealousies which undermine his profession, the super master preferring to make an owl of his own thickheaded son, as the owl appears as a distinct personage in the bill. Tommy soon dries his tears and larks about as much as the other boys.

For all the School Board may advance, and serious families may oppose to the contrary, this engaging of children at the hardest season of the year helps many a father and mother over the winter, and without in any way doing harm to the child. They are fairly paid, look upon the whole thing, in spite of coercion and fatigue, as a game, and are taught their drill in addition to learning obedience and the pleasure of emulation. The boys are at present romping a little, but they soon learn where the stage-manager is kind to them, and are easier to manage than any supernumeraries who have arrived at years of discretion.

The boys are using their swords and guns to-day for the first time, and well they take to them. Meanwhile I must go and select the extras.

Some forty or fifty young women in various costumes, from the imitation sealskin coat and hat with a dyed feather in it, to the rusty black merino of some poor widow, are to be seen chatting and waiting in hope of being chosen to represent Peris of Paradise or Inhabitants of the Moon as the transformation scene may require.

Some few are eligible at a glance—smart, well-formed, tidy-looking girls; some are as equally certain to be "cast"—draggled, disreputable, and impossible. There is no doubt about these; but the unpleasant part of selecting is the elimination of some respectable women who are hoping, in spite of all, to add a weekly pittance to their homes, and yet possess nothing—neither height, charm, nor any personal qualification—fitting them to appear as a decorative item in the *Houris' Home of Eternal Happiness*, where the houris, too slightly clad, are passing a very unpleasant quarter of an hour, strapped to irons, and inhaling the fumes of magnesium and red fire.

However, it has to be done; and, after all, those not chosen will go to some minor theatre where the houris are happier and the gods not so difficult to please. Our thirty extras have been selected, and will appear on Boxing Night in all the glories of gold tissue, enhanced by the limelight's rays.

"Ten minutes to eleven! Call a hansom; I must be off to the dancing-rooms."

The ballets are being rehearsed in our Academy for Dancing, about a mile from the theatre; and I have promised to see Signor Bacolo and judge of his progress.

Here we are! Sixty young women, in practising dresses, are disposed in figures over a large bare floor, and are trying to work out the saltatory designs of Signor Bacolo—a little dirty-looking foreigner, with aggressive calves and a heavy stick, which is thumped down at every bar almost, to enforce a simultaneous movement from all the girls together.

"Von! two!—yah! Sanderson, again you mees that, you great 'eavy gal! You always wrong."

Miss Sanderson pouts, and takes the first opportunity of making a face at Bacolo; but if she does not improve he will put her into the back row, and then there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

After witnessing an attractive mazurka, danced to the one violin, which the *répétiteur* scrapes over and over again, and a grand ensemble, which at present looks more like a scramble of Shakers than the symmetrical dance the public will witness, I compliment little Bacolo, tell the girls to do their best, and return to the theatre. I am met, as I re-enter, by my *chef d'orchestre*, Mr. Carinsky, an excellent musician, clever composer, and most hard-working little man, whose only fault is an inclination to lose his temper and make satirical observations on the incapabilities of his pupils or musicians. He informs me that he is going through all the music of the pantomime with the principals and chorus at four o'clock; and that may go on till an indefinite period after. Will I come in and hear how it goes?

"Certainly. Oh, by-the-way, Carinsky, I've just got two excellent songs from Paris. You will find them in my room on the side-table. They must be introduced somewhere. They are far too good to lose." . . . . After visiting Mr. Rowe Spink's domains in the painting-room—where cloths, *i.e.* canvases, are hung on both sides of a long slice of a room, lighted by skylights and encumbered with long tables down the centre, covered with large jam-pots full of horribly-smelling colours—extolling the beautiful *Moonlight Caverns*, and looking at a model of the *Murky Mansions of Mandragora*, the last scene as yet unpainted—I wend my way across the flies, which, in a large theatre like this, look something between the deck of an old man-of-war under action and an *annexe* in some exhibition for the show of looms and spinning-machines. Carefully threading the drums and windlasses, and avoiding the counter-weights, I get to a small staircase, which takes me to the wardrobe. Here Mrs. Tarlatan is in her glory. Cupboards to right of her, cupboards to left of her, display some three hundred or more costly dresses, all glittering with spangles and foil. Baskets of chorus-dresses and tarlatan skirts stand about; while on a broad table are sundry parcels, tied up, of wings, head-dresses, and other accessories to the costume department. Some twenty women are here at work—some at sewing-machines, some with their needle, altering fits, adding fringes, or repairing dresses continually in use.

Every day, for three or four weeks, before a pantomime is brought out, some such personal supervision as has been sketched out here, has to be gone through. The work itself has been going on for months. The author has written his dialogue, but is still on the look-out for puns, topical allusions, and new or effective songs, for the latest improvement of his piece. The scenery has been modelled, and now only wants the rehearsal, which is to take place at night, to fit, set, and complete the beautiful pictures, which form such a feature in the entertainment. The properties have been all noted, old ones restored and made young, fresh ones invented and carried out. The wood and canvas has been stretched and hung, the profile and scroll work is now being finished, and in another week complete rehearsals will be the order of the day and night; for the work has to be completed by a certain time, and to ensure perfection, the only way is to stick to it and make the others follow your example.

Nothing, perhaps, is more tedious than a scene-rehearsal. You sit with the scenic artists in the stalls or the circles—sometimes in one, sometimes in the other—to judge of the artistic effect, and to dispose the lighting of the various sets or pictures. The fly-men (that is, the carpenters up aloft), the cellar-men (those below the stage), and the stage-carpenters have never yet worked together; and it appears almost marvellous, looking at the crowded cloths and borders, wings and ground-pieces, with the complicated ropes and pulleys above, and cuts and bridges in the stage, not to mention the traps and sliders, gas-battens and ladders, how a series of fifteen or sixteen scenes, besides the elaborate transformation scene, which, perhaps, demands the united skill of fifty or sixty men to work its marvels and develop its mysterious beauties, can even be worked with such systematic regularity and unerring correctness. A good master-carpenter is a general, and all his men depend on his head in time of action. Then there are the gas-men, who have to raise or subdue the floats or footlights, the ground-rows, the wing-ladders, the battens or border-lights, and the bunch-lights or portable suns, which are required to give one effect to a brilliant tropical landscape on a bewilderingly luxurious palace. The limelights also have their special guardians. Each head of a department makes his special list of effects and changes, and notes the alterations or indications made at rehearsals; in fact, a large theatre at Christmas-time, or whenever a spectacle of unusual splendour is to be produced, is a little world in itself, and no ant-hills, no bee-hive can be busier or more occupied. I may possibly give a sketch another time of a dress-rehearsal of a pantomime.

To judge really of the hive a theatre becomes during pantomime season, go to Covent Garden or Drury Lane, and when you watch the masses of actors, actresses, and figurants on the stage, think of the labourers you do *not* see, and the mouths that annually depend on these shows to make both ends meet before the spring comes again.

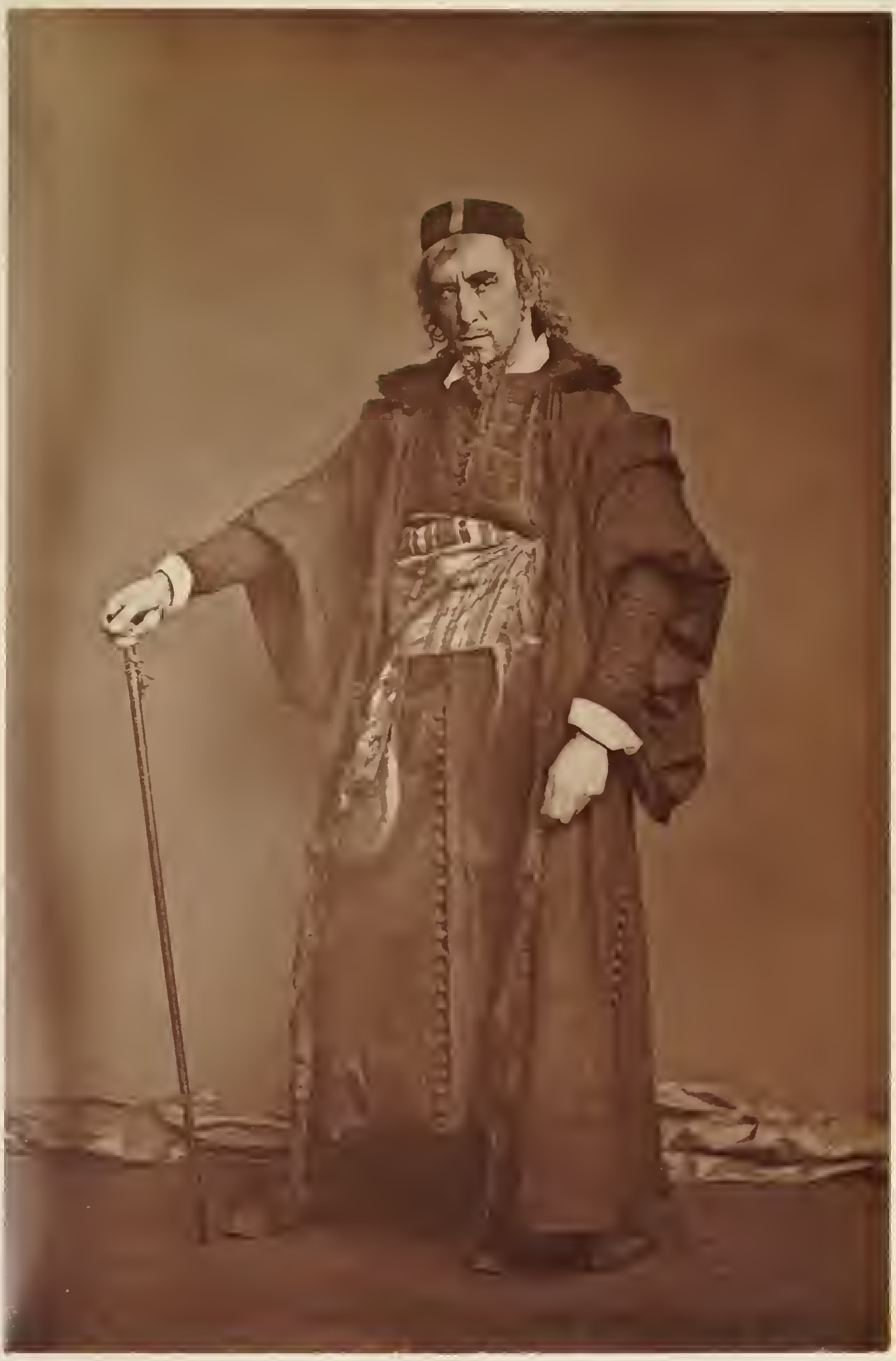
Feraldt.

A curious story comes from Paris as to the origin of Alfred de Musset's song, the "Andalouse." Duprez, Musset, and Monpeon were walking one day along the Boulevard with a strong appetite and no money. "What should you say," asked Monpeon suddenly, "if I offered you an excellent breakfast?" "We should say nothing; we should eat it." Monpeon took his friends to Richault, the music editor, and improvised to the words of the "Andalouse," just published, the music that everybody knows. Duprez sang it, and Richault gave three louis for it. The three friends had an excellent breakfast, and the "Andalouse" went round the world.

HENRY IRVING AS SHYLOCK.

WHATEVER doubt there may be as to the earliest forms of the story of the Merchant and the Jew, there can be none as to their main spirit and intention. The play of "The Jew," on which Shakespeare is thought to have founded "The Merchant of Venice," is said by Gosson to have represented the bloody minds of usurers. And the ballad of "The Jew of Venice," concludes with three stanzas, in which it is alleged that "Many a wretch as ill as hee doth live now at this day, that seeketh nothing but the spoyle of many a wealthey man, and for to trap the innocent, deviseth what they can." To us, informed by the gradual and, of late, triumphant development of Shakespeare's larger and more human conception, it seems almost incredible that Shylock should have been regarded for a long period as a mere type of cruel and tricky greed, enlivened for purposes of comedy, with a few peculiarities and locutions of the nation with which usury is popularly identified. So it was, however. Even Edmund Kean, though his genius in enacting poignant emotion gave great force to the sympathetic and domestic side of the character, probably retained strong traces of the traditions according to which Shylock was a sort of stage antic, not much unlike any old-clothes-man who might be the familiar object of street-boys' jests and jibes. In our own day Robson, in whom true tragic fire frequently sputtered and sometimes blazed, and who reminded Crabb Robinson very vividly of Edmund Kean, made it clear to us how it was possible to play the part somewhat in this spirit, even in burlesque, without sacrificing its tragic strength. But no such combination of comic usury and domestic passion, however skilful, however human, rises to the height of, or even meagrely expresses, Shakespeare's idea. As Shakespeare went below the surface of realistic comedy to inspire his Jew with fervent pride of race and meditative individuality of race, so Irving has gone below the moral stateliness of the modern and better Shylocks to impart to his impersonation, at its very heart, the ruling feelings of a Jew such as Shakespeare has drawn. These feelings are betrayed in his face, in his port, in his postures, and in his gait; all of which, when they are not under the dominating control of policy and enforced deference, reveal a lofty consciousness such as was once manifested to an English constituency by a candidate "descended from a line of Jewish merchants who had dwelt in the Home of the Ocean during the days when Venice remained, at least in name, the pride of the Adriatic," when he told the electors that his ancestors had been princes and statesmen when theirs were staining their bodies with woad. As in the writing, so in the acting of the play, the first and highest merit is the presentation of its tragical element, which in the scene with Tubal, and in the trial scene, is so grand, so moving, so impressive. But, after this, as in the play so in the acting, the greatest intellectual triumph lies in the ample grasp and powerful expression of Shylock's profound and consuming Hebraism. Shakespeare's composition abounds in the loftiest and the lowliest treatment of the subject. Irving's rendering has caught the motive and vivified the details of the theme, from the merest suggestion of a Jewish phrase to the most mystical soarings of Hebrew contemplation.

E. R. R.



THE THEATRE, NO. 1, THIRD SERIES. WOODBURYTYPE.

"How like a fawning
publican he looks"!

Shylock

Henry Irving: 1879:

SHYLOCK IN GERMANY.

By W. Beatty-Kingston.

In Two Parts.—Part I.

THE sort of masterful snubbing, to which every British sojourner in Germany is systematically subjected as long as his temper will stand the pressure steadfastly exercised upon it by Teutons desirous of correcting his errors, and indefatigable in their amiable endeavours to open his eyes to their own surpassing merits, is, I am bound to confess, not infrequently administered *ad nauseam* in unnecessarily large and loathsome doses. But it is sometimes very wholesome medicine, and would be swallowed by the patient with gratitude as well as benefit, were it not forced down his throat in a violent and offensive manner. German rebukes to British ignorance and indifference, anent matters essentially and even especially interesting to Englishmen, are only too often well-founded and amply deserved. One of the standing reproaches most vehemently addressed to us by German critics and Professors of Literature, is that which inculpates us of wilful and unnatural neglect of Shakespeare's dramatic works, as far as their production on the British stage is concerned. This reproach acquires additional poignancy from the circumstance, upon which German writers never fail to lay painful stress, that the great English poet's plays are more frequently performed in the Fatherland than in England, and therefore are more familiar to the German than to the British public. Such is unquestionably the fact. There is not a subventioned theatre throughout the length and breadth of Germany in which Shakespeare's principal tragedies and comedies, as well as his historical dramas, are not acted at least as frequently as the plays of Schiller and Lessing. Moreover, they draw crowded houses. Berlin possesses about twenty theatres, all told, as against London's forty. It has been my good fortune, more than once during eight years' sojourn in the German capital, to see Shakespeare's plays announced for performance, on one and the same evening, in *five* different Berlin theatres.

The aforesaid critics and professors, however, do not confine their reproaches with respect to our negligence of the Shakespearian drama, to reasonable and veracious limits. They denounce us, as a nation, for ignorance of the master's works, ignore the critical and analytical labours devoted by English authors to the consideration of his productions, and arrogate to Germany an almost exclusive acquaintance with the real meaning of every word he ever wrote. According to them no Shakespearian literature exists except that produced by erudite Germans. They claim to have discovered the origin of his plays, to have analysed their plots, interpreted their philosophy, accounted for their humour, and exhibited their characters in the only true light. It is fortunately needless that any Englishman should waste his time in refuting such absurd assumptions as these. Possibly the historical and critical treatises published in the English language upon Shakespeare's plays may be less numerous than those printed in German. Admitting that they be so, it by no means follows that they constitute a less valuable contribution to Shakespearian literature than the metaphysical vagaries, *alias* "criticisms from the objective standpoint" of Teufelsdreck, or the tedious straw-splitting, hight "criticism from the subjective standpoint" of Sauerteig. It is humiliating enough that we should be compelled to admit the greater popularity of Shakespeare's plays in Germany than in England without confessing that we know very little about them, and are utterly incapable of appreciating them. Rather let us, with all imaginable humility, point out to our stern Teutonic rebukers that the great British public is as keenly alive to the beauties and charms of these unrivalled dramatic works as the most learned and æsthetic German audiences can be—ay, and as eager to crowd theatres in order to revel in their performance—whenever an opportunity is afforded to them, as in the case of Mr. Henry Irving's recent Shakespearian revivals, of witnessing worthy renderings of our national poet's noblest inspirations.

The latest of these revivals has proved a theatrical event of such extraordinary moment and interest, that it has obtained copious and condescending mention in the columns of the German press. The London correspondents of leading German newspapers have dealt at considerable length with Mr. Irving's interpretation of Shylock, and our dogmatical kinsmen's faith in their monopoly of actors capable of performing that difficult part intelligently has been slightly shaken by the reports that have lately reached them from this metropolis. The "Merchant" has been an established favourite upon the German stage ever since its first performance at Berlin, nearly a century ago. All the great German tragedians, from the year 1788, down to the present day, have successively exhibited a strong predilection for the part of the much-injured Jew; all the leading Shakespearian critics and analysts of Germany have bestowed the utmost pains upon the exponence of their several views of Shylock's character, so replete with startling contrasts and strange incongruities. It was a German book-worm, as perhaps may be remembered, who first disclosed the curious fact that Shakespeare had borrowed the incident which leads up to the chief "situation" of the play from a quaint chronicle written by one of his Italian contemporaries, Gregorio Leti, and intituled "The Life of Pope Sixtus V.," in which that pontiff is stated to have pronounced sentence in a case of disputed wager between a wealthy Roman merchant, named Paolo Maria Secchi, and one Samson Ceneda, a "protected" Jew. Secchi had laid Ceneda a thousand scudi to a pound of the latter's flesh, that the town of San Dominico, in the island of Hispaniola, had been captured by Francesco Drago, which turned out to be the case; and, the Christian demanding payment of his uncanny bet as soon as proof arrived that he had won it, the Jew appealed to the clemency of Sixtus for exemption from the exacted forfeiture. The astute pontiff sate in judgment upon the case, and awarded Secchi his pound of flesh from the Jew's body, with the proviso that, should he cut off an inexact quantity, he should straightway be hanged; whereupon Secchi promptly forewent his right. Sixtus, however, sentenced them both to death for the frivolity they had manifested in contracting so unnatural a wager, and ultimately commuted their punishment to a fine of two thousand scudi apiece. Leti's chronicle was published six years before the first production of Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" (with Burbage as Shylock), and the German authorities hold that the "Swan of Avon," besides changing the scene of action from Rome to Venice, and altering the character of the contract entered into by his two chief personages, transferred the objectionable part of the transaction from the Christian to the Jew, in deference to the prejudices of the age he lived in, and to the vulgar superstition which then stigmatised Jews as systematic assassinators of Christians for the purpose of devouring their flesh at certain inhuman religious ceremonies prescribed for Israelitish observance by the statutes of their fierce and revengeful Law.

Eminent German writers, who, at different times, have promulgated dogmas, each according to the dictates of his judgment or fancy, anent the moral and psychical characteristics of Shakespeare's leading personages, have propounded several theories with respect to Shylock no less startlingly various than their views of Hamlet and Iago. As German actors have, in some measure, derived their several readings of the part in question from the *dicta* of these "Shakespeare Revealers," it may be well, before making any attempt to indicate the respective peculiarities of contemporary German Shylocks, to briefly summarise three or four of the solemn sentences passed upon the Jew by authors who enjoy the reputation throughout the Fatherland of being the chief authorities upon all questions arising from Shakespearian research and controversy. Gervinus appraises Shylock as the very refuse of mankind, absorbed in petty considerations, watchfully preoccupied, systematically self-restrained; always ready to avail himself of the meanest expedient in order to achieve the most insignificant end; profoundly cunning and replete with penny-wisdom. He has succeeded not only in indurating his character, but in petrifying his soul. Arrived at the apogee of vileness, he falls into the trap which he has laid for another. In order not to sink him utterly beneath human interest, Shakespeare has endowed him with a keen consciousness of the degradations afflicting his race. Rümelin, again, is of opinion that Shakespeare's conception of Shylock had its origin in the profound contempt generally entertained for Jews in the "good old days." He pronounces the Venetian Hebrew to be "a deceitful, dangerous creature—a wicked buffoon, bent upon robbing his fellow-man of goods and life, under the exterior seeming of probity, obligingness, and piety." Some highly pertinent observations upon Shylock's character and action in the play, evidently based upon a far more careful and introspective consideration of both than is embodied in the remarks of either Gervinus or Rümelin, occur in Professor Ihering's "Fight for Justice." The Professor says: "Shylock's bond is intrinsically null and void by reason of its immorality. Its validity, however, having been acknowledged by the tribunal, Portia's legal pronouncement upon it is simply a miserable quibble. The tragic element of the trial-scene lies in the circumstance that Shylock, a Jew of the Middle Ages, firmly believing in abstract justice, which he conceives himself as much entitled to as any Christian, discovers, when the catastrophe bursts upon his head, that he is, after all, nothing but a mediæval Jew, to whom society considers itself to be doing sufficient justice when it deliberately cheats him of his rights."

Enough, for the present at least, of the subtle analysis and learned disquisition which, if I may venture to say so, after much patient wading through unnumbered tomes, are somewhat superabundant in German Shakespearian literature. No less painstaking and conscientious than the learned German essayists have proved themselves in their endeavours to render the perplexing character of Shylock intelligible to their readers, have been the efforts of great German tragedians in modern times to present to audiences of exceptional intelligence complete and æsthetically satisfactory impersonations of the "many-sided" Jew. Adequately to describe even the differences between one and another of the interpretations to which the part has been subjected, within my own dramatic experiences in Germany, would occupy a far larger space than that actually at my disposal; wherefore I must restrict myself to a very few succinct word-sketches, which I will take leave to preface by the mention of two noteworthy circumstances, connected with German renderings of Shylock, and distinguishing those renderings, to the best of my belief, from the interpretations of that rôle which have achieved popularity during the present century in England, America, France, Italy, and Scandinavia. It has hitherto been the custom of German Shylocks to speak the part with a strong Jewish accent, such as Polish Jews impart to their pronunciation of the German tongue. This *modus loquendi* is described in familiar German by the utterly untranslatable verb "mauscheln"—a combination of "mouthing" and "mumbling," but with a sibilant significance of its own to boot. Again, the German tragedians, unacquainted with the noble Spanish type of Jew, of which the Venetian Jew was a scarcely deteriorated offshoot, have in their impersonations of Shylock copied the Polish Jew in his costume, bearing, and facial "make-up," much to the degradation of Shakespeare's probable idea. A third curious circumstance is that several of the most celebrated Shylocks who have ever trodden the German stage have been Israelites by birth.

GROWLS FROM A PLAYWRIGHT.

BY HENRY J. BYRON.

SOME few years ago the editor of *The Daily Telegraph* did me the honour to insert two letters of mine on the subject of first-night criticisms. He did more, he published a leading article in reply, and poor Watts Phillips wrote a letter all about the Théâtre Français, the members of which immaculate institution not having at that time afforded Londoners an opportunity of testing the truth of the roseate reports as to their overwhelming perfection.

Years have passed since the appearance of those letters, and I am more inclined than ever to adhere to my original opinion. Some experienced and, I may add, generous critics of those days have since died. In one or two instances their places are filled by men by no means so experienced, and certainly not so generous. Not that I would have a critic mealy-mouthed. Let him call a spade a spade by all means. But as he wields a power—for I am not one of those who talk about the "press having no influence"—he should, I venture to suggest, wield it with a certain gentleness in certain cases. For instance, surely he should, on the production of an original play, remember that the writer has done his work "out of his own head," and not simply translated or adapted his drama. I do not mean to argue that, because a play is not taken from a foreign source, it is of necessity to be treated tenderly. But I contend that, however cleverly a play may be adapted, it is, as an intellectual achievement, on a totally different and inferior footing to an original composition. The cheap argument that, so long as the public are pleased, it matters nothing how or why or from whence the entertainment came into existence, is altogether beside the question. It may suit the views of a manager, but it is unworthy the consideration of an artist. But above all, one would imagine those critics, who should lead public taste, would lend their powerful aid towards establishing or assisting the popularity of original work rather than grudgingly admitting the success with "the audience" whilst deploring the result; for with one or two critics anything short of a fiasco seems to be a personal grievance.

I write this after reading with great pleasure some remarks in *The Times* anent the withdrawal of "Duty" from the programme of the Prince of Wales's Theatre. The following is the sentence that I refer to: "We have never concealed our distaste for these illegitimate English-French pieces that are neither one thing nor the other, and when they fail to succeed under such conditions as they receive at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, there is some hope that they may come in time to disappear altogether from our stage." But what is the inducement held out to the playwright to try and equal these productions? As far as "Duty" is concerned, I must say I witnessed its performance with great pleasure, as I did that of "The Crisis," a piece of the same kind, admirably adapted by the same clever writer. Still, as the author of "The Two Roses" has given such evidence of original powers, I felt at the conclusion of each play a certain regret that "it was not his own." Each of these plays was received on the first night with enthusiasm. Had they been the original work of an English dramatist, I can conceive the amount of hypercritical comment—to use the mildest term—they would have received in certain quarters, and the satisfactory remarks which would have appeared on the termination of their anything but lengthened runs from the prophetic pens of their detractors. I shall be met here by a limited chorus—I say "limited," for I refer to a *very* small batch of critics—of "Wrinkles!" "Wrinkles," was a failure; it was "a poor thing, but mine own." Its condemnation by the press was pretty universal. It fell flat at its conclusion on the first night, and though it greatly improved afterwards, and "went" well, the public *didn't.* But if a play by the same writer pleases a general audience as much as "Wrinkles" failed to do, what is the reward, or I will say, recognition from those who are so anxious to see the English stage supported by English plays? A kindly pat or two on the back, a word or so acknowledging the fact that the play is of home manufacture, or even the bare acknowledgment that the public liked it, and laughed and cheered? No. The faults are dwelt upon, even gloated over, the merits—and there must be merits in a piece that amuses a miscellaneous crowd, not all fools, for two hours or so—are ignored, the dialogue is nothing but "puns," the characters are "impossible," the incidents "improbable," the piece has been written in a fortnight, and there is "no plot, the usual thing to be expected in this author's works." This kind of critic gets so into the habit of repeating all this after every piece by the same writer, that he eventually grows to ignore the fact that his (the critic's) predecessors—in some cases he himself—and his more experienced and less jaundiced fellow-judges, have on many, *very* many occasions, descanted at length, and with much praise, on the ingenious and original arrangement of several of said writer's comedies, dramas, and melodramas; that, indeed, plot and construction have been frequently said to be his strong points. When a play in which plot is a principal feature by the writer alluded to is revived—possibly for the third or fourth time—it is either passed over, or perhaps sneeringly referred to after its withdrawal as "a poor piece" by these severe persons, who have probably seen a third of the play or have not seen it at all. The dramatist having, we'll say, won his early reputation as a writer of rhymed absurdities, the fact of his having written a vast number of original plays, comedies, comic dramas, serio-comic dramas, domestic dramas, and others which have been played with success in most of the London theatres, in the American, Australian, and several continental cities, and been revived over and over again in town, is passed over, and he is "So-and-so, the 'burlesque writer,'" and nothing else.

Much of the slap-dash and sweeping element in dramatic criticism is, I am more convinced than ever, the result of "first-night notices." The gist of *The Daily Telegraph's* reply to me lay in the assertion that myself and brother-playwrights would feel aggrieved if a review did not appear on the morning after production. In those days it was the custom to give the public a criticism on a new play the next morning. For a considerable time, however, this rule has been departed from, and criticisms seldom appear the next day, but frequently several days after the first performance of a new piece.

There is no reason why a play should not receive the same amount of careful, thoughtful, analytical attention as a picture. Indeed, it should receive more, for the conditions under which it is presented to the public are such as demand close observation, uninterrupted by the chattering of neighbours, and minute and comprehensive consideration after the curtain has fallen and the composition, as presented by the voices and gestures of the actors, with its attendant effects of scenery, etc., has become a thing of the past. The critic then has to gather up the threads, to compare the component parts, and, whilst endeavouring to remember the many points of a "passing show," he really has, pictorially considered, to review a human panorama. The art-critics of the newspaper do not, I presume, write the exhaustive articles that annually appear on the pictures in the Academy after one view of the works exhibited. A criticism on an actor in some important character in a Shakespearian or other standard play, the words of which, together with the various styles in which those words have been delivered by many previous performers, are familiar, may be at once exhaustive and satisfactory; but when a new play is placed before the critic, with the motive, the details, and the dialogue of which he is totally unacquainted, I say it is unfair to take his necessarily hastily-formed opinion of its faults or merits as reliable or valuable, however conscientious and experienced the critic may be.

At a time when it was considered that a notice of a new play should appear in the morrow's paper as a piece of actual *news* which the reader had a right to expect, such notices were naturally written under great disadvantages, and, knowing this, the critics, as a rule, wielded their midnight pens with a certain air of kindly reservation. But recently theatrical matters have assumed a prominence altogether remarkable, and dramatic criticisms are looked for with eagerness, not only in the London papers, but in all the principal provincial ones, several of these latter receiving "criticisms" wired by telegraph "after the play." Valuable indeed must be these carefully-considered, thoughtful, and unbiassed communications!

I maintain that in most cases new plays, of any importance at all, should be seen a second time by the critic before he ventures to give any elaborate comment upon their merits, or upon the manner of their representation. The modern "first night" means a gathering of people, for the most part known, more or less, to each other. Handshaking, nodding, whispering, or loud chatter, *sotto voce* sneering, obtrusive partisanship, mute but expressive grimaces indicative of patient misery or inward glee—these, combined with occasional interruptions of a sarcastic and personal nature from overcrowded occupants of the galleries or dissatisfied denizens of the pit, form the "humours" of a "*première*" at a West-End playhouse. The more prominent of the critics are known to two-thirds of the audience, and their demeanour is watched by many. If Brown smiles, the *Daily Dragon* will be "all right," the friends of the author whisper with satisfaction: when Jones frowns and speaks aside to Smith with an upward jerk of the eyebrows, "a slate" in the *Weekly Drone* may be confidently anticipated by the dramatist's dearest acquaintances. On another occasion the critic might calmly exercise his analytical functions in peace and comfort; on a "first night" he may make believe to be absorbed, but too many distracting elements surround him for him to do himself or the object of his diluted attention the requisite justice or credit.

It may be argued that the critic is not as other men amongst the audience; that he is, as it were, an expert, and capable of seeing at a glance the imperfections that the less experienced pass over or uncritically accept. He *should* be able to do this; but when his mental winnowing-machine separates the husk from the seed, surely *some* notice should be taken of the latter article, even if the "yield" be but scanty. The critic should know and appreciate the difficulties of the dramatist; and, considering how frequently he has himself experienced without surmounting them, it is surprising he should persistently ignore them, when men more successful than himself overcome them. But there is no more severe and exacting auditor than your would-be dramatist. Those who have gone through the mill, have had their successes and their failures, know how thankless and how difficult a task it is to try and please the "many-headed," and when they sit in judgment on the works of their brother-writers their summing-up is generally in the prisoner's—I mean the author's—favour, supposing his defence—I mean his drama—to admit of kindly consideration. But the poor little disappointed geniuses, who have their drawers full of rejected manuscripts, and who write of "Kean" as if they'd known him, invariably form a little jury of their own, and refuse to listen to any "charge" which may interfere with their adverse and preconcerted verdict.

That the majority of the London critics are honest there can be no doubt. Most of them are men in every way capable of writing on the subject of the drama, whilst some are exceptionally so. All the more reason then that the opportunity should be given them (and accepted by them) for a second consideration of a work which has caused many clever people much thought and labour, and on the report of which, to the public, much, very much, depends. In the case of papers published at the end of the week, there is a double reason why this plan should be carried out, and no excuse for its not being so.

Let me conclude by anticipating the inevitable answer of any critic who may consider my remarks deserving a reply. I hear him say: "Whenever a play *worth* all this attention and consideration appears, I for one will gladly see it twice, and devote my best critical powers to it." My rejoinder is: "Commence by doing so with such pieces as are at present submitted for your judgment and that of the public, and that very fact will stimulate play-writers to work with even a firmer will, and certainly in a more hopeful spirit, believing that their productions may then receive a fairer, calmer, and more valuable critical opinion."

J. L. TOOLE.

BY JOSEPH KNIGHT.

ON J. L. TOOLE has descended the mantle of "low comedy." When first this phrase came to be used in application to a certain class of comedians is not easy to say, nor is the occasion favourable for tracing from Aristophanic burlesque, through the farces and *sotties* of the renascence of letters and mediæval times to to-day, the line of succession of those who have moved mankind to frankest and most inextinguishable laughter. It is enough to say that, from Nokes or Joe Haynes, the first comic actors after the disappearance of that Puritan rule which, besides suppressing stage-plays, appears to have destroyed all previous records of theatrical life, to Mr. Toole the line is unbroken, and that the men whom the world has regarded with most affection, and whose death has gone farthest to "eclipse the gaiety of nations," have been actors in low comedy. In dealing with these spoiled children of the stage, Criticism has always relaxed her bent brow and abated something of her severity. Colley Cibber, the first and best of critics, lingers over the descriptions of Nokes as though he could not quit the subject, affirming that the infection of laughter caused by his presence "nature could not resist," and proclaiming that "the ridiculous solemnity of his features was enough to have set a whole bench of bishops into a titter." Hazlitt the judicial, who carps at Kemble, is disappointed with Kean, and pronounces Macready respectable; is moved to say, concerning Liston, that "His face seems tumbling all in pieces with indescribable emotions, and a thousand odd twitches and unaccountable absurdities oozing out at every pore. His jaws seem to ache with laughter; his eyes look out of his head with wonder; his face is unctuous all over and bathed with jests; the tip of his nose is tickled with conceit of himself, and his teeth chatter in his head in the eager insinuation of a plot; his forehead speaks, and his wig (not every particular hair, but the whole bewildered bushy mass) stands on end as if life were in it." Lamb goes into such ecstasies over Dickey Suett and Jack Bannister, that the passages in which he sings their praises have grown classic, and rank among the tenderest and most brilliant things in literature; and Leigh Hunt, a veritable Tartar in his theatrical criticisms, after pretending through consecutive pages to scold Joe Munden, is obliged to throw off disguise, to speak of his fanciful contortions of face as throwing women into hysterics, and to own that his interlocutor was disconcerted and the very performance stopped by the laughter of the audience.

The indulgence he extorts from those, part of whose mission it is to rebuke extravagance and inculcate moderation, is not the only respect in which the low-comedy actor stands apart from his fellows. Art itself is indulgent to him; the cap and bells carry with them now, as in all ages, a warrant of immunity, and the rising protest or the swelling rebuke is stifled in a laugh. In spite of Shakespeare's self, and his famous counsel delivered through the mouth of Hamlet, to "let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them," the chartered libertine "gags" on, offends again, again transgresses, and is again forgiven and rewarded.

The fact is that the art of the low-comedy actor is seldom purely histrionic, and is sometimes not art at all. Instead of assuming the personality of another man, and fitting his soul as it were and his whole being into another individuality, he obtains ordinarily his most triumphant effects from the obtrusion, through a fictitious character, of his own triumphantly comic self. While the ordinary stage artist is successful in proportion as he hides himself behind the assumed garb, the low-comedy actor is successful as he reveals himself. The flimsier his disguise, the more enchanted is the public. Not seldom his voice from behind the scenes comes forth a laughter-moving herald of his approach; and if ever he stays for awhile, travestied and hidden, it is that the recognition may be the warmer when the disguise is pierced.

So far as historical records can be trusted, every low-comedy actor has had this intensely comic individuality that has made him as amusing off the stage as upon it, with ordinarily the animal spirits that keep the ball of mirth for ever rolling. In these things is found a source of the popularity which clings to the actor while living, and not seldom survives him when dead.

There is no gift of the actor of low comedy which Mr. Toole does not possess in a high degree. His individuality is as comic as that of the best of his predecessors; his vitality is as unflagging as theirs; his method as irregular and as effective. Like them, he is exuberant, untiring, irrepressible; an actor off the stage as much as upon it; drawing from a species of imagination rules fitted only for guidance upon an occasion, and wholly unsuited for codification in any manual of art; holding of a part, as lawyers maintain of a case, that each carries its own law. Like them, too, he has won a purely personal affection and regard that extends far beyond the range of those to whom he is known, and embraces most lovers of laughter and innocent enjoyment.

That Mr. Toole should be different from all his predecessors is of course necessary to his originality. There is a curious trait in human nature with which observers are familiar. The world is slow in accepting novelty, but when once it accepts it, is loyal to its new faith. The man whom it treated at first as a pretender and a rebel is then elevated into kingship, and is himself fenced round and protected by the very guards which at one time barred his progress. To obtain the recognition now awarded him was a slow process for Mr. Toole. It is now obtained, and it will never be withdrawn. Precisely the same difficulties attend the writer or the painter who dares to depart from recognised models. In the case of the actor, however, the difficulties, if not greater, are more conspicuous; and in proportion as the triumph, when obtained, is more brilliant, defeat and discouragement, where they have to be borne, are more depressing.

Mr. Toole's first hold upon the public was obtained in farce. It is indeed curious to see that one of the earliest pieces in which he established his position as a "droll" has maintained so completely its popularity: it was chosen for representation when, a few weeks ago, he made his first experiment as a manager. This is of course "Ici on Parle Français." In other pieces earlier in date—such as "In the Pigskin," of Madison Morton: a farce in which he played at the Adelphi fifteen years ago—he was not at first less comic. Such opportunities, however, of accentuating those portions of a character which the audience fancies most, as the frequent repetition of Spriggins in "Ici on Parle Français" supplies, have rarely been afforded an actor; and this character, so far as regards old-fashioned farce, remains paramount. With it, however, as showing the range of Mr. Toole's powers, may conveniently be associated Chawles, in "A Fool and his Money," in which Mr. Toole has recently appeared; Paul Pry, in Poole's celebrated farcical comedy of the same name; "The Spitalfields Weaver;" with possibly Michael Garner in "Dearer than Life," Richard Dolland in "Uncle Dick's Darling," and Titscrap in Mr. Albery's scarcely remembered but clever drama, "The Man in Possession." The pieces last named illustrate the more pathetic side of Mr. Toole's acting, a side in favour of which much may be advanced. It is, however, as a broadly comic actor his chief reputation has been made, and it is in connection with low comedy his name will descend to future generations. Mr. Toole is unequalled in the expression of comic bewilderment. Unlike some of the best remembered of his predecessors who assumed, in face of difficulty, a stolidity against which fate itself seemed powerless, he contrives to add to his comic perplexities by his own apparent quickness of invention. He is always ready with an explanation which is invariably wrong, and thus, like Chaos in "Paradise Lost," he

> By decision more embroils the fray.

His vulgarity upon the stage is like his perplexity in the total absence of stupidity. In Chawles he presents a footman who has inherited wealth and made a bid for position. No type of vulgarity can be more familiar than this. In watching, however, the difficulties and entanglements brought upon the would-be aristocrat by his ignorance of the manners and modes of speech of those with and among whom he seeks to live, we are more impressed by the ingenuity of the interpretation he fixes upon what is unfamiliar, than tickled by its absurdity. A certain element of manliness, so to speak, enters into his farce. Paul Pry even, the most contemptible of busybodies, and the most incurable of sneaks, is not in his hands wholly despicable. If nobody else believes in him, he believes in himself, and he acts up to his own code, such as it is. In Chawles, in Spriggins, and in the Spitalfields Weaver, the manliness forms a distinct feature. A conscience is preserved through the wildest extravagances, and in the exposition of a preposterous vanity, and in the pursuit of an unsanctified gain, he still retains a measure of our respect. This kind of reticence—we are speaking here of character and not of means in art—affords a reason why Mr. Toole is decidedly better in farce than in burlesque. Unlike his great predecessor Robson, some of whose burlesque performances will never be forgotten, Mr. Toole has not stamped his individuality upon a single part belonging to this class of composition. We think of him at the Adelphi, at the outset of his career, in the old-fashioned farce in which he appeared with Mr. Billington, Paul Bedford, and Mrs. Mellon. We recognise his highest accomplishment in Serjeant Buzfuz in "Bardell *v.* Pickwick," and in Chawles. We retain, however, scarcely a recollection of a single performance in burlesque. Mr. Toole's comic effects come readily and without straining, the result of straining, when it is employed, being disappointment. In burlesque Mr. Toole goes out of himself—out of that comic manly self which, through all its Protean disguises, is always welcome; the check imposed by character is removed, and the extravagance of method is but moderately amusing.

To enjoy the full measure of humour with which this actor is endowed, it is necessary to see him at issue with what he conceives to be the stupidity of others. His air of injury, his remonstrances, his appeals, are all intensely comic, and his statement of his grievances would provoke a smile "under the ribs of death." This phase of his humour was never seen to more advantage than in the sketch, "Trying a Magistrate," which Mr. Toole gave at the Globe Theatre without the aid of dress or disguise. In the presentation of the stupefaction produced by the replies of the various witnesses, no one of whom seemed capable of speaking two words with a consecutive meaning, Mr. Toole was absolutely inimitable. Not less remarkable, moreover, than the visible effects produced was their illustration of the means to which they were attributable.

Another highest instance of Mr. Toole's comic powers is afforded in Tottles, a character in a drama of Mr. Burnand's, played at the Gaiety. In this Tottles changes clothes with a waiter, and attends upon the participators in a wedding-breakfast, given, as he believes, on the occasion of the nuptials of his own false love. His tragic menace, the dark promptings of passion, and the rapid change to enforced servility and obsequiousness, were as droll as anything the present generation has seen.

That Mr. Toole is able to charge with pathos the reckless drollery of his comic impersonations has been abundantly proven. He is a true humorist; and there is no humour into which some trait of sadness does not intrude. Falstaff himself, the immortal type of recklessness, joviality, and dissipation, has an undercurrent of sadness. In Michael Garner, and more than one other character, we have a distinct vein of pathos. This was never, perhaps, more visible than in Titscrap in "The Man in Possession." Titscrap—a rough, vulgar sheriff's officer—is self-appointed guardian to one of the most fairy-like heroines that the modern stage has seen. His clumsy guardianship, and his rough efforts at consolation, belong to the highest walks of humour.

Mr. Toole's position as an actor of low comedy and as a humorist is now secure. He is not free from the faults of his craft; and the means he adopts to force a laugh are not always artistic. There is, however, behind these things, a rich, ripe, overflowing nature, which is sure to tell in the end, and the memory of extravagance in method is blotted out as soon as the "touch of nature" is felt. Geniality, joyousness, emotion, are Mr. Toole's own in an enviable degree. His heart is in his work, and he is badly fitted indeed with a part if the note of sympathy is not struck in the audience.

At the moment while these words are falling from the pen, the most familiar, the most joyous, and the most popular of London actors is absent from the stage, driven away by such terrible calamity as for a time at least robs life of its aim and leaves existence a blank. At such a time the kind of personal attachment which clings to the actor finds strongest manifestation. One burst of sympathy from palace to cottage goes forth to the man on whom so heavy a share of the world's burden now presses. Through what aims at being judicial estimate this feeling of sympathy forces itself, and our last words concerning Mr. Toole shape themselves, in our own despite, into an expression of sympathy for him in his bereavement and of prayer for his welfare.

Our Play-Box.

"OURS."

Prince of Wales's Theatre, Saturday, November 22nd, 1879,
"OURS,"
An original Comedy, written by T. W. ROBERTSON, the Author of "Society," "Caste," "Play," "School," and "M.P."

Prince Perovsky	MR. ARTHUR CECIL.	Hugh Chalcot	MR. BANCROFT.
Sir Alexander Shendryn	MR. KEMBLE.	Sergeant Jones	MR. FORBES-ROBERTSON.
Captain Samprey	MR. DEANE.	Lady Shendryn	MISS LE THIERE.
Angus Mac Alister	MR. H. B. CONWAY.	Blanche Haye	MISS MARION TERRY.
Mary Netley	MRS. BANCROFT.		

THE farewell revival of "Ours" in the home of Robertson at once recalls our most pleasant recollections, and unavoidably brings to our minds the poignancy of regret. It seems like the last day in the old house, the separation of long and well-tried friends, the severing of the most precious associations, a change that, however necessary, is still in a certain sense unwelcome. When men get on in the world and prosper and thrive, when they emerge from a humble and insignificant position to take their places in a more ostentatious society, there is generally a corner in the heart for the discarded home where life's struggles began—the well-remembered house in the little street where the first children were born; and I have known prosperous and wealthy men turn back somewhat regretfully to the past, and own that they were never happier than in the days of ambitious enterprise and true friendship. All this is sentiment, no doubt, but a not unnatural sentiment. As for myself, knowing the author of these pure English plays, as I did through the days of his weary struggle and the brief hour of his success, having had the good fortune to be present at every first representation of Robertson's plays, and to have witnessed each successive revival, I may be pardoned perhaps for indulging in a regret that is inseparable from the Bancrofts' departure from their hospitable little theatre in the Tottenham Court Road. The plays will be revived and live as long as English audiences care to see the human and sensitive work of a brave and courageous gentleman, so long as the heart is quickly touched with the record of all that is noblest in man's character and purest in woman's, so long as laughter and tears are permitted to strive for the mastery through an evening of refreshing pleasure; but all of us who knew the man and understood his character, who heard him discuss his work, and listened to his flow of talk, so amiable and so witty, who remember that first night when "Society" conquered an audience too ready to condemn, and charmed in spite of criticism, who saw how this early triumph ripened the style and formulated the school that has had but one master, must inevitably hang round his dramatic birthplace "the immortelles of our love," and without prejudice believe that, though his influence may be carried elsewhere, his plays must for ever be associated with the place in which he worked and the friends who caught his inspiration.

But one thing has been decided by the verdict of time. It was no chance success, no trivial happy thought, no temporary triumph that belonged to Robertson and his influence. Those who sneered at the "teacup-and-saucer school" have lived to see what it has done for art—not art at this theatre alone, but for art universal. There have gone out from this little playhouse the pioneers of a new and true dramatic faith, for do not let it be imagined that an actor like Mr. Hare would fail to acknowledge the debt he owed to his old master. The once-abused school of Robertson has sown good seed, and the playgoers of the present time are gathering in the harvest. The theatres based upon the Prince of Wales's system are increasing and multiplying, stage-management is recognised as an art, rehearsals are attended to with scrupulous regularity, and the result of good training may be observed in a hundred different directions. I can see it well enough, for I was well familiar with the stage before the name of Robertson was heard of except by his intimate friends. I know what it was then, and I know what it is now. But if it were necessary to prove so clear a case, I would say, "Have you seen, then, the farewell revival of 'Ours'?" There are certain characters in that play that could not have been better played than in its original state. I will mention, as an illustration, the Mary Netley of Mrs. Bancroft, the Prince Perovsky of Mr. Hare, and the Sergeant of Frederick Younge. To act them better than the originals would in my humble opinion be impossible, and if we followed the reasoning of the old playgoer we should on that account bluster and fluster and pooh-pooh the whole thing. There is no necessity for doing anything of the kind. Mrs. Bancroft remains true to her post, the very echo of Mr. Robertson's individuality. He wrote for her, and she understood him. Their work is absolute harmony, their brains beat together as if with one impulse, and, so long as Mrs. Bancroft acts, the old Robertsonian spirit will remain, not only in her own character, but in those about her. There is a magnetism in Mrs. Bancroft's Robertsonian acting that attracts everything towards it. She knows every turn and twist of the author's fancy and in these plays she stands sponsor for him. The Mary Netley, therefore, remains as it was, except that in art it is, if anything, riper and richer. But though circumstances and fate have removed Mr. Hare and Mr. Younge, I don't see why the most exacting public should not be satisfied with Mr. Arthur Cecil and Mr. Forbes-Robertson. To us, who attended the childhood of the play, neither the Prince nor the Sergeant will be quite the same; but if people are dissatisfied with the acting of Mr. Cecil and Mr. Robertson, they must be exceedingly difficult to please.

In other characters, after mature consideration, I take the latest acting to be better than the first. Mr. John Clarke did not understand the subtlety of Hugh Chalcot as does Mr. Bancroft. He gave one side very clearly, but did not get under it. The part does not alone consist of its words, but teems with suggestiveness. In that scene under the tree with Sergeant Jones, the whole character, sensitiveness, and natural pride of the wealthy brewer are sketched by ideas, signs, and business. It is a master-stroke of the author; but Mr. Bancroft does more than repeat what he wrote: he interprets what he thought. Throughout this is a most excellent performance, finished like a Dutch picture; and Mr. Bancroft, who began with being a rather awkward lover in this very play, ends with being declared a thoroughly finished comedian. Here is the result of hard work and loyal appreciation. I will take two other couples: Miss Le Thiere and Mr. Kemble as Lady Shendryn and Sir Alexander. I have watched the play from first to last, but never seen the characters so well done. Lady Shendryn is a part of great difficulty, for there is little opportunity of expressing clearly what the author intended. I am sure he never meant her to be a snappy, cantankerous, vulgar old woman. She is irritable, but a lady; pained, but never ill-bred. All this Miss Le Thiere brings out with great skill, and certainly heightens the pathos of the last act by her dignified determination and nervous restraint. I do not think that sufficient credit has been given to this clever lady for taking up successfully the mothers of Robertsonian comedy. The staccato conversation under the trees might be made intolerably vulgar by those who had less respect for their art. It would make the "unskilful laugh," but it would certainly make "the judicious grieve." It seemed to me also that the young Angus Mac Alister of Mr. Conway and the Blanche Haye of Miss Marion Terry was quite as Mr. Robertson would have wished them to be, and do not suffer at all by comparison with the originals. There was a nature and impulse in the parting scene that I never before noticed—a mixture of manliness and affection on the part of Mr. Conway, and a winning tenderness from Miss Terry, that gave colour to the picture when he left, in the triumph of his acquisition, and she fell, a broken lily mowed down by the scythe of fate; and surely, in the Crimean scene, no Blanche Haye has ever "acted up" so well to Mrs. Bancroft, or with so sly and seductive a humour. We part, then, from the Prince of Wales's theatre and all its associations with very natural regret; but it is softened with the reflection that the Bancrofts are taking their influence and experience to a wider and more expansive field. Of such art I trust it may be said, "*Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo.*"—C. S.

"JUST LIKE A WOMAN."

Gaiety Theatre, Saturday Afternoon, November 22nd, 1879.

Topham Lyster, Esq., M.P.	MR. J. MACLEAN.
Hon. Digby Delamere, M.P.	MR. F. H. MACKLIN.
Charles Westby	MR. CHAS. KELLY.
Francis Latimer ..	MR. W. AKHURST.
Sowerby Sweetapple ..	MR. KEMBLE.
Jonas Sweetapple ..	MR. BINDLOSS.
Potbury	MR. ARTHUR WOOD.
Benson	MR. COWLRICK.
Mrs. Topham Lyster ..	MRS. CHIPPENDALE.
Aurora Lyster	MISS LOUISE WILLES.
Ethel Lyster	MISS MEASOR.

THE harp on which the late Mr. Robertson played was a delicate instrument, not capable of producing very deep or very startling tones, but what it lacked in force was in some measure compensated by exceeding sweetness and precision. It was attuned to the social pitch of its period, and discoursed, under the hands of its master, most eloquent music. Crises of the dominant passions were rather indicated than actually portrayed, and the dainty air bore as much relation to genuine dramatic music as a water-colour sketch to a solid painting in oils. The peculiar elegance of the Robertsonian tone is therefore difficult to imitate, and the authors who strive to follow in the same key run every imaginable risk of failure.

Mr. A. W. Dubourg, whose share in "New Men and Old Acres" brought him well-deserved reputation, has in "Just like a Woman" produced a by no means unpleasing work. A fairly intelligent human being who had never seen the Robertsonian comedy, and had, by some accident, missed Mr. Albery's "Two Roses," would probably find Mr. Dubourg's comedy delightful. To such a one there would be a sense of freshness in the attempt at accurate portraiture of the men, women, and events of real life. He would, perhaps, hesitate to believe that our legislators run about with teapots at rural gatherings at the instance of gushing young ladies, or that such persons as Mr. Sowerby Sweetapple could by any accident make their way into a lady's drawing-room; but the rich humour of Potbury and the demure love-making of Aurora Lyster, would reconcile him to many inconsistencies, and he would go away satisfied that "certain concessions must be made to art," and that he had seen a very pleasant and touching play. On the other hand, the practised playgoer would be oppressed by the consciousness of having seen something like it before, if not in sequence, yet in incident and character, just as the skilled musician, who, while ignorant crowds yelled with delight at "Le Sabre de mon Père," and the conspirators' trio in "La Grande Duchesse," recollected that the March in "Norma" and "Stride la vampa" were written many years earlier. It is this suggestion of a mere rearrangement of well-known bits of mosaic which takes much of the life out of Mr. Dubourg's play—by no means improved, it may be added, by a species of superfine air of depreciation in dealing with intelligent persons. The heroine, a wayward young woman, not without a certain charm of her own, is actually in love with a man twice her own age, but who is, albeit spoken of as an intellectual giant, very stupid on the stage. The intellectual giant is too dull to see that the girl is in love with him; her sister, an intellectual young woman, is over head and ears in love with a downright fool; the mother of the girls, being a woman of character, gets into the vulgar company of Mr. Sweetapple, whose son, being a successful "competition-wallah," is depicted as a scoundrel. A foreign visitor, looking upon "Just like a Woman" as a brief abstract of the time, would be apt to ask whether all English gentlemen were men of honour but fools, and all clever and successful people necessarily vulgar? It has apparently suited Mr. Dubourg's humour to laugh at intelligent women and local politicians, and it must be owned that he has obtained the desired amount of hilarity. His greatest success, however, is Potbury, the silversmith's man, whose faith in committees is dead, and who refuses to leave the testimonial to Sweetapple, even in the squire's house, without being paid for it. Potbury is a highly-humorous creation, and helps greatly in carrying out a scene strongly recalling things generally known.

Ethel Lyster, whose hopeless love for Charles Westby, the supposed intellectual giant, is made the excuse for general flirtation, was impersonated at the Gaiety Theatre by Miss Measor, a *débutante*, at least so far as London is concerned. This young lady is likely to prove a valuable accession to comedy. With her agreeable presence, sympathetic voice, and peculiar brightness of style, she may achieve distinction, if only she can divest herself of a strange restlessness, which she may recollect with advantage does not "mark the caste of Vere de Vere." Mr. Maclean was an excellent Topham Lyster, M.P., Miss Louise Willes an able representation of the intellectual and sentimental Aurora Lyster, and Mr. Arthur Wood played Potbury to perfection.—Bernard Henry Becker.

"BALLOONACY."

Royalty Theatre, December 1*st*, 1879.

A new and original Extravaganza, in Five Scenes, entitled
"BALLOONACY; or, A FLIGHT OF FANCY."
By F. C. Burnand and Henry P. Stephens.
Music composed and arranged by Mr. Edward Solomon.

Celebrities at Home.

Augustus Smith	Mr. Chas. Groves.	Tom Pott	Mr. Seddon.
Mrs. Smith	Miss Amalia.	Dick Kettle	Mr. Harding.
Signor Sproutzo Cabbagi	Mr. Philip Day.	Knab	Mr. Stansfield.
		Grab	Mr. Barri.
A Waiter	Mr. Cooper.		

Celebrities Abroad.

Fogle V.	Mr. H. Saker.	Doris	Miss Vane.
Carabino	Miss Marie Williams.	Boris	Miss Jessie Braham.
Curricombo	Mr. Desmond.	Bygun	Miss Harrington.
Wilyou	Miss Elise Ward.	Lyttleun	Miss Brookes.
Wontchou	Miss Carlin.	Tomiork	Miss Lillie Compton.
Dooyu	Miss Mona Seymour.	Princess Parasol	Miss Edith Blande.
Dontchu	Miss Kate Leeson.	Melissa	Miss Hodges.
Hopliton	Miss Edith Gower.	Euchrisma	Miss Lizzie Wilson.

This is the kind of entertainment that a certain class of managers would call a "touch and go" little thing, framed to suit a strongly defined phase of popular taste, and obviously put forward to please the patrons who have somehow or other come back to the Royalty and rescued the little theatre once more from dreariness and decay. Why they have come back in such numbers I am unable to say, for when the comedy by Mr. G. R. Sims was being played, the patrons had not put in an appearance. Had they been there during the representation of "Crutch and Toothpick," during the days of its decadence, they might have seen a cleverly written play founded on French lines, and only disappointing when the third act by its vexatious extravagance puts the entire subject out of drawing. Up to a certain point it is feasible and natural enough, but when Mr. Edgar Bruce comes on with a co-operative store on his back, the judicious amongst the audience cannot fail to grieve at the mistake of taking hollow laughter for genuine merriment. There is very little value in the hackneyed criticism, "it is all pantomime." What does that matter? Many farces I could mention are all pantomime, and very amusing they are; and why indeed should pantomime, which is in itself an art, be permissible at one theatre and intolerable at another? No; the fault is that the play is natural up to a certain point, and then becomes wilfully and unnecessarily extravagant. No one can sympathise with a natural Dolly Devereux when her husband is a species of tame lunatic, whose success in trade has turned his brain, and who acts as no human being ever could act. The fun of modern farce is to do an unnatural thing in a natural way; but here unnatural things are done in an unnatural way. Had the Royalty patrons really valued good acting they would have come to see Miss Rose Cullen in this play. She played two scenes very excellently indeed, and I for one do not wish to see woman's ruffled indignation attempting to conceal a pure and affectionate heart expressed more truthfully to nature. I remember being very agreeably surprised at Miss Cullen's advance in the art of comedy when she appeared at the Folly some months back in a simple and pathetic domestic story, but now she has made a further step forward, and should be encouraged for her sincerity and promise. But I am forgetting all about "Balloonacy," for the very simple reason that I cannot find much to say in its favour. Doubtless there was something wrong when I saw it—it was a bitter cold night; the scenery would not act; all the artists seemed nervous or depressed; the music did not strike me as being particularly exhilarating; the band might certainly have been improved—and the consequence was that the Royalty patrons left the theatre before the entertainment was over. I cannot say that they were unjustified in taking such a course, for as I closed my eyes and recalled in this very playhouse the first night of "Ixion," with David James, Felix Rogers, Jenny Wilmore, Ada Cavendish, Lydia Maitland, Joe Robins, etc.; and later on, "Black-Eyed Susan," with Miss Oliver, F. Dewar, Danvers, and a well-trained company, I wondered if it was my taste that had become more fastidious or the modern audiences less exacting. Mr. Burnand is certainly quite as amusing as he used to be; but are burlesque artists capable of the old spirit and vivacity, I wonder? I think not in this instance. At any rate I felt inclined, when they alluded to some of these young ladies as artists of the first class and as the idols of the hour, to say: "Ah my dear friend, but you should have seen the days at the Royalty when, etc. etc." But that would have been talking like the old playgoer, who is persistently obstinate and usually wrong. I hope that I am eclectic enough and able to praise a good thing when I see it in any class of dramatic representation, but there was clearly something wrong with "Balloonacy" when I saw it, and I am not tempted to go again and risk the same kind of melancholy in order to see if it has been "worked up," as they call it. It did not strike me that the company was capable of working up any extravaganza that could be pleasing to a mixed audience.—C. S.

"AFTER LONG YEARS."

Folly Theatre, December 6th, 1879.

Gervais	Mr. Shelton.	Robert	Mr. Carne.
Raymond	Mr. H. Elmore.	Isidore	Mr. Garden.
Estelle	Miss F. Delaval.		

Mr. Sidney Grundy's one-act drama is the translation of a pretty little French play, by MM. Scribe and Camille, entitled, we believe, "Le Mauvais Sujet." If there is not very much dramatic backbone in the trifle, it might well have seemed to possess a considerable amount of graceful and tender feeling, had it been more artistically played by its representatives. It is simply the sketch of an unselfish deed of reparation performed by a scapegrace, who comes back to his home after long years, to find that, by a great sacrifice of self, he can make amends for the sins of his youth. The lad, who broke his father's heart and deeply injured his brother in days gone by, returns from a prosperous naval career to give up sweetheart and fortune, in order that he may, without being recognised, bring sweetness and light into the house which he embittered and darkened long ago. The scheme of the miniature drama is thus quite unexceptionable, and with its chief characters played in each case sympathetically, "After Long Years" would win the popularity deserved by it, as an attempt to provide a *lever-de-rideau* of more literary finish and of higher quality than is generally found in such productions.—Ernest A. Bendall.

"WILLIAM BELFORD BENEFIT."

Lyceum Theatre, Wednesday Afternoon, December 10th, 1879.

"TWO ROSES."

By James Albery.

Mr. Digby Grant ..	Mr. Henry Irving.	Policeman	Mr. W. Elton.
Caleb Deecie ..	Mr. C. W. Garthorne.	Servant..	Mr. R. Markby.
Jack Wyatt.. ..	Mr. Charles Warner.	Lottie	Miss Amy Roselle.
Mr. Furnival ..	Mr. E. Righton.	Ida	Miss Kate Bishop.
Our Mr. Jenkins ..	Mr. J. W. Bradbury.	Mrs. Jenkins	Miss Sophie Larkin.

Mrs. Cupps .. .. Miss Cicely Richards.

After the Comedy,

Miss Ellen Terry will deliver an Address written by Mr. Clement Scott.

THE TRIAL FROM "PICKWICK."

Arranged from Charles Dickens's Novel specially for this occasion by John Hollingshead and Charles Dickens.

Serjeant Buzfuz ..	Mr. J. Fernandez.	Mr. Perker	Mr. F. W. Irish.
Mr. Skimpin ..	Mr. H. F. Macklin.	Mr. Dodson	Mr. A. W. Pinero.
Mr. Phunkey ..	Mr. Horace Wigan.	Mr. Fogg	Mr. J. Maclean.
Justice Stareleigh..	Mr. Arthur Cecil.	Lowten	Mr. R. Soutar.
Mr. Pickwick ..	Mr. Clifford Cooper.	Ushers	Mr. A. Maltby and
Mr. Winkle	Mr. G. Grossmith, Jun.		Mr. H. Westland.
Mr. Tupman ..	Mr. G. W. Anson.	Master Bardell ..	Master Grattan.
Mr. Snodgrass ..	Mr. Kendal.	Mrs. Cluppins ..	Mrs. Bancroft.
Sam Weller.. ..	Mr. J. G. Taylor.	Mrs. Bardell	Miss Everard.
Old Weller	Mr. W. J. Hill.	Mrs. Saunders ..	Mrs. Leigh.

The Jury: Messrs. Bancroft, H. J. Byron, Hermann Vezin, George Honey, Lytton Sothern, H. B. Conway, J. H. Barnes, Charles Harcourt, Wilson Barrett, Barton McGuckin, Rutland Barrington, J. Billington.

Stage Manager .. .. .. Mr. H. J. Loveday.

Apart from the pleasure of printing at the head of these remarks, for permanent preservation and record, a programme eloquent with the good works and kind-hearted feeling of the entire dramatic profession, never "weary in well-doing," I cannot resist the fascinating duty of endorsing the enthusiasm of the audience that was bestowed upon several individual performances on what is likely to be a memorable afternoon. Once more, with characteristic generosity, these brothers and sisters in art placed themselves without a murmur at the disposition of those who were organising a fund for William Belford; and it must be a satisfaction to them to know that a man whose hand was first in his pockets to help others, and who has been the support and comfort of helpless relatives for many years, finds himself possessed of a sum which will make him and his live happily for the rest of their days. But it was a success in an art as well as in a charitable sense. Once more Henry Irving has played Digby Grant, and I am heartily glad of it, for it has shown incontestably what an actor he has become, how his style has ripened, how his energies have been braced up, and how his intelligence has been quickened since he abandoned the limited sphere of finished character pictures, and plunged into the wide and endless sea of tragedy, history, poetry, and psychological romance. There are some very well meaning persons who will not allow any actor or actress to improve, ripen, and fructify. When Edmund Kean electrified London with Shylock, they probably said: "Ah, but you should have seen him play Harlequin." It is the same with our own comedians. If Mrs. Bancroft delights her audience with some insinuating power and bright intelligence as displayed in modern comedy, they say: "No doubt, but you should have seen her dance jigs at the Strand." And so with Henry Irving. When he kept growing and growing upon us as Hamlet, as Louis, as Macbeth, as Richard, as Shylock, back went the thoughts, in a curiously uncomplimentary manner, to past days, and again came the same hesitation: "Very well, no doubt; but you should have seen him play Digby Grant in 'The Two Roses.'" Well, he has played it, and I am certain that never before in those palmy days did he ever act the part so well, or anything like as well. Why indeed should he? He is a better actor in every way; his brain has developed, and his practice has tended towards perfection. Before, as it seems to me, there was the idea of the man Digby Grant—a caricature, and an extremely clever one of a type—but here was the man himself. We saw his mind, his smallness, his meanness, his testiness, his wondrously cold-blooded nature. The tricky catch-words, "A little cheque," and "You annoy me very much," and, best of all, "Hang the fellow, he has forgotten the cork-screw!" were not in the hands of the comedian so many happy catch-words, but they sprang out of the man's manner and irritability just as if he were standing before us in the flesh. The effect of all this upon the company was marvellous. Instead of being a weak and flabby performance, every-one was braced up, and the audience at the close of each act seemed to sink back in the stalls with a contented sigh, saying: "Ah, this is acting." And so it was, and I really don't know where the pessimists will find anything better.

In a different line, but equally clever as contributions to art, were the Mrs. Cluppins of Mrs. Bancroft, the Judge of Mr. Arthur Cecil, and the Winkle of George Grossmith the younger. Mrs. Bancroft might have stepped out of the book, and in a short five minutes she had the whole house at her command. The sense of true humour is never lost upon an audience, and every eager eye watched and appreciated the intricate business condensed in so small a space. The comic power of the actress was infectious, and from first to last the Mrs. Cluppins was one of the successes of the pleasant afternoon. Nor will the acting of Mr. Grossmith be forgotten. To begin with, he is Winkle, if indeed the favourite of our youth can be reproduced in the flesh—and here let it be noted how fame can be obtained without exaggeration. No more difficult task falls to an actor, because the stronger the exaggeration the louder the applause; but here all the nervous business, the comic trepidation, the voice gradually ascending into a semi-pathetic squeak, were all disciplined by a sincere adherence to the confining limits of art. At this point I must stop, although there is much more to say, particularly with regard to Charles Warner's scene with Digby Grant in Act II. of "The Roses;" Mr. Righton's Mr. Furnival—a most difficult little bit admirably executed—and the graceful and insinuating charm of both Miss Amy Roselle and Miss Kate Bishop as the pure honest girls of this manly play, that I for one have never ceased to admire. Let me conclude with a word of personal thanks to Miss Ellen Terry for her sympathetic and tender appreciation of the lines that attempted to sketch the entrance and the exit upon the stage of a public favourite and an old friend of the writer.—C. S.

"THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW."

Written by Bronson Howard. Adapted to the English Stage by James Albery.

Court Theatre, December 15th, 1879.

John Stratton	Charles Coghlan.	Dr. Beaumarchais ..	J. Bean.
Le Comte de Carojac ..	Edmund Leathes.	Barnes	Earle Douglas.
Harold Kenyon	Arthur Dacre.	Morton	J. W. Phipps.
Mr. Charles Westbrook..	David Fisher.	Lilian Westbrook.. ..	Amy Roselle.
Geo. Washington Phipps	G. W. Anson.	Florence	Winifred Emery.
Mr. Babbage	Edward Price.	Aunt Fanny	M. A. Gifford.
Mont Villais	W. Holman.	Natalie	Georgie White.
Lisette	Julia Roselle.		

The previous dramatic work of Mr. Bronson Howard, so far as it is known in this country, had scarcely prepared us for a play of the order of "The

Banker's Daughter," which, under the borrowed title of "The Old Love and the New," and adapted by Mr. Albery, has been produced by Mr. Wilson Barrett. The interest of "The Old Love and the New" is seriously sentimental, and each of its five acts is devoted to the development either of a strong, albeit familiar, situation, or of a tender domestic episode. Except in a humorous by-plot, of marked extravagance, and of more than doubtful taste, there is little in Mr. Howard's latest work to recall those of its predecessors, which have been seen upon our stage; and the author now stands before us in a light completely different from that in which he has hitherto appeared. The main subject of the play is the evil result of a marriage in which, at a father's instigation, a true lover is discarded for a wealthy suitor, and it is significant that any process of adaptation for the English stage should have been found necessary when an American playwright deals with material so trite and so frequently employed in novel and drama all the world over. That the necessity existed need not be doubted, and indeed, if certain elements of the play belonged to it in its original form, it can only be regretted that Mr. Albery, as adapter, did not think fit to remove or modify them out of respect to the prejudices of English playgoers. The jokes of an ingenious girl of eighteen who, when marrying an old man of seventy, openly speculates upon early widowhood, and indecently rejoices over the prospects of her time-bargain, sound to our ears painful rather than amusing, and are typical of a young ladyhood with which we are happily not familiar in this country. A similar mistake of tone is surely made, or perhaps in the circumstances I should rather say left uncorrected, in the comic dialogue of *double entendre*, which accompanies a wholly preposterous scene of courtship, in which this same repulsive damsel is wooed and won after her aspirations of widowhood have been gratified.

Perhaps it is to no small extent due to the exceptional purity of motive which animates the hero and heroine in their attitude one towards another during the trying crisis of their lives, that this callous heartlessness of a prominent minor character has so jarring an effect. Mr. Howard has indeed succeeded with rare ingenuity in illustrating the misery of a union in which the bride's old love lives for years before her new love is born. Lilian Westbrook, daughter of a pleasure-loving merchant, gives her hand to John Stratton, a rich middle-aged banker, who is to save her father from impending ruin, but is far too worthy a fellow to wish his prompt advance of the 40,000*l.* customarily forthcoming at such moments in the commercial circles of the stage, to buy for him his fair young wife. Deceived by Mr. Westbrook, both parties to the engagement are under a misconception, Lilian believing Stratton to have been told the state of her heart, and he thinking that she gives herself to him of her own free will. The girl's agony of mind at dismissing her lover, Harold Kenyon, might well have been displayed more naturally than in the course of a message sent to him verbally by a footman; but the close of the first act, with Lilian's heart-broken avowal of her betrothal to Stratton, opens the story with a promise of sympathetic interest which is not destined to disappointment. A lapse of four years makes Lilian Mrs. Stratton, but gives her, in spite of her husband's devotion, an expression of abiding sadness, which he unaccountably enough fails either to realise or to understand. Then follows a chance meeting with the "old love," and a passionate avowal from him, cut short by the appearance on the scene of a rejected and somewhat incomprehensible French admirer of Lilian, named De Carojac, who, under pretence of defending Stratton's honour, challenges his supposed rival to a duel. This duel occupies a spirited third act, in which Stratton at last discovers the secret so oddly kept from him during four years of happy intimacy with his wife. Her cry, as she throws herself on Kenyon's prostrate body, reveals all; and when Kenyon dies, Stratton perceives in sorrow and not in anger, that his beloved wife will henceforth be a widow with a husband, whilst he will be a husband without a wife. The nobility of his conduct at this juncture, and the refinement of his attitude towards his wife, who will commit involuntary mental adultery, should he continue to live with her, give much beauty to the fourth act, in which Stratton leaves his wife, grieving for her as deeply as for himself. The reconciliation of the last act, pretty as it is in the ingenuity with which new love is substituted for old, seems to drag; but the sympathetic power of the central acts of the drama is more than sufficient to cause the comparative weakness and prolixity of its beginning and end to be forgotten. "The Old Love and the New" is a singularly unequal production; but where it is at its best it is full of merit, both of conception and of execution, and well deserves its decided success. To this the general representation contributes not a little in the manly and simple sincerity of Mr. Coghlan's sketch of the husband; the rich fun of Mr. Anson's incidental portrayal of a conventional Yankee, and the earnest, if somewhat artificial pathos of Miss Roselle's Lilian. The comedy, such as it is, of Florence, the wife and would-be widow of old Brown, would have been far safer in other hands than in the inexperienced ones of Miss Emery, whose bearing emphasises the more unpleasing phases of the character. Mr. Leathes' fencing, as De Carojac, is a great deal better than his imitation of a Frenchman's broken English. Mr. David Fisher appears scarcely at ease as Westbrook, but the assistance given by Messrs. Dacre and Price, and by Miss M. A. Gifford is well-considered and valuable. The set scenes of the play are ambitious; but it seems to have been forgotten that an apartment, to which a wide staircase leads without an intervening door, is generally used as a hall and not as a sitting-room, for which latter purpose it has too many draughts and too little privacy to be available.—Ernest A. Bendall.

"THE CHILDREN'S PINAFORE."

Being a Representation of the entirely Original Nautical Opera, in Two Acts,
"H.M.S. PINAFORE; or, THE LASS THAT LOVED A SAILOR."
Written by W. S. Gilbert. Composed by Arthur Sullivan. The Characters impersonated entirely by Children.

Opera Comique Theatre, December 16*th*, 1879.

The Right Hon. Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B.	Master E. Pickering.
Captain Corcoran ..	Master H. Grattan.
Ralph Rackstraw ..	Master H. Eversfield.
Dick Deadeye ..	Master W. Phillips.
Bill Bobstay ..	Master E. Walsh.
Bob Becket ..	Master Chas. Becker.
Tom Tucker ..	Master A. Fitzclarence.
Josephine ..	Miss Emilie Grattan.
Hebe	Miss Louisa Gilbert.
Little Buttercup	Miss Effie Mason.

Christmas treats to the little ones take various forms, and range from a Punch-and-Judy show in the back drawing-room to a visit to the far-famed and irresistible Polytechnic. But if anyone asked me how best I could delight a private box full of children of all ages and sizes, I should decidedly say by expending a little judicious capital at the Opera Comique, where some exceedingly clever youngsters act "H.M.S. Pinafore" in admirable style and without a tinge of juvenile precocity. There is nothing that children like better than to see children act. The Lilliputian scenes in the pantomime are always the most popular; and a manager has only to introduce a baby columbine, a youthful clown, and a boy pantaloon, to set the whole house in laughter. Recently, in the days of Mr. F. B. Chatterton, a capital pantomime was acted at the Adelphi entirely by masters and misses in their teens; and only last year we were all astonished with the sly fun and boundless vivacity of some Italian children, who played "La Fille de Madame Angot." But I don't believe that London has ever seen anything better than the baby "Pinafore." The humour is fresh and spontaneous, there is no parrot-like prating or tedious conceit, and, best of all, the children from first to last sing in tune. Where all are so good, thanks to clever Mr. Barker and Mr. Cellier, the instructor and conductor, it seems invidious to mention names; but the distinct enunciation and admirable clearness of Little Buttercup (Miss Effie Mason), who has a woman's voice with a child's face; the taste and modesty of the love-lorn Josephine (Miss Emilie Grattan); the quaint rollicking fun of Dick Deadeye (Master William Phillips), a most mischievous young rascal; and the clever imitations of the original Sir Joseph Porter and Captain Corcoran by Master Edward Pickering and Master Harry Grattan, deserve to be recognised. As for the Midshipmite, he creates a roar whenever he struts across the deck. But the thing that pleased me most was the singing and the sentimental acting of Master Harry Eversfield as Ralph Rackstraw. This boy has one of those pure and delicious cathedral voices that pierces the listener through and through; and he has acquired a wonderful style of singing for one so young. What a pity it seems that such a voice should ever break, possibly never to be recovered, haply to change into an uncertain baritone or a deep bass! The rest of the children treat the whole thing as a joke, but the heart of this lad is in his work; and it is a pleasure to watch his earnest and intelligent young face. It is worth all the money on the part of lovers of music to hear this boy sing Sullivan's music.—C. S.

"SUCH A GOOD MAN."

New and original Comedy-Drama, in Three Acts. Written by Walter Besant and James Rice.

Olympic Theatre, December 18th, 1879.

Sir Jacob Escombe, Bart.	Mr. John Maclean.	Henry Theophilus Bodkin	Mr. Edward Righton.
Julian Cartaret	Mr. F. H. Macklin.	Servant	Mr. Alwin.
John Gower	Mr. J. D. Beveridge.	Rose Escombe	Miss Fanny Josephs.
Mrs. Sampson	Mrs. Leigh.		

Now here is an excellent example, if one were needed, of a play that reads much better than it acts, and in making such a statement as this, I fear that I am doing an injustice to the clever authors who are responsible for the work. The result is so curiously different from what I expected, and the authors are, from the position in which they have been placed, credited somewhat unfairly with a dramatic failure, that I have no hesitation in giving my own personal experience, which may or may not be interesting at a moment when we are deploring the lack of competent dramatists. When I heard that such well-known authors as Mr. Walter Besant and Mr. Rice were writing for the stage, to me it was a matter of great pleasure and interest. I had followed their novels—who has not?—and detected in them just that vigour, brightness, cynicism, humour, power of character-painting, and keen knowledge of dramatic effect so requisite on the stage. I rejoiced at their determination, for here was collaboration in its best and most practical sense. They were just the men, as I have often thought, who ought to be tempted and coaxed to write for the stage, and knowing, as I do, from personal experience and observation, how ridiculous is the idea that managers create "a ring" to cut their own throats, and stop the flow of money into their treasury, it struck me that here was an instance of Mr. John Hollingshead's sagacity and independence. This was all before I knew anything about "Such a Good Man." Circumstances occurred by which I was favoured with a reading of the play before it was produced, and after studying it very carefully my mind was made up that it was both clever and serviceable. Its cleverness was contained in the written text; its serviceability depended on certain conditions. In order to ensure the success or even the recognition of such a play, I felt confident that a very strong and important actor ought to be engaged for the working man, John Gower. Without this actor were secured, a certain risk was no doubt incurred. The part points to Mr. Hermann Vezin. He would have given a tone, a character, and an impetus to the play. He would not have been a man horrible to look at and jarring against the sentiment of the audience; but just the other way—one of nature's gentlemen, a working man with a fresh and fascinating presence, and an actor who could have secured a bit of tragedy in a comedy-drama. What Mr. Vezin did in "The Man o' Airlie" and in "Dan'l Druce," he might have done here; and if anything was to be made out of such a dramatic scheme, an actor of Mr. Vezin's influence and persuasion was required. I don't select Mr. Vezin for any other reason than that instinctively the part suited him, and these unreasoning fancies must be considered in casting any play. An actor may be splendid in one part and comparatively indifferent in another; but I am convinced that John Gower would have fitted Mr. Vezin like a glove. This was the main point. But then there was another—the part of Theophilus Bodkin. This is, I know not why, a "Jingle" sort of character. It wants a thin, lean, hungry, half-shabby, half-distinguished adventurer. It wants a shabby-genteel character—a man with seedy clothes that are well cut—something like the character part that Mr. Irving would have succeeded in years ago. The actor who had such a character to interpret, and understood its value, would have made just such a hit as Irving did in "Bob Gassett," or in the seedy villain in "Hunted Down; or, the two Lives of Mary Leigh." I can remember well the impression these characters made on me, and when I read this play in the manuscript I said to myself: "What a part this could be made by an actor!" For the rest, I could not in my mind have selected a much safer actor for Sir Jacob Escombe than Mr. John Maclean, although the character is capable of more finesse and subtlety. Thus convinced, and to a certain extent influenced, I went to see the play. Now no one can say that it was badly acted, and yet it did not receive at all the kind of treatment that the subject required. It did not act itself, but wanted lifting. It required something very startling, but it got something very conventional. Mr. Beveridge acted very well, no one can deny it. His make-up was bad, but his heart was in his work, and he did his very utmost. Mr. Righton again was very funny. The people laughed in a vacant sort of way, but it was nothing like the Theophilus Bodkin as I understood him from the text. I daresay I am wrong. Theophilus Bodkin may be a little bantam-like, jovial, perky creature, and not a lean, polished, master of affected compliments. He may be Joskin Tubbs, and not Jingle; but I regard him as Jingle, and cannot see him in any other clothes. Theophilus Bodkin is surely not a round well-favoured curé of a French village! At any rate the lack of interest in these two strong and decided characters decided the fate of the play. There is no doubt about it. Mr. Maclean, Mr. Macklin, and Mrs. Leigh worked manfully and loyally as they always do; and as for

Miss Fanny Josephs, she convinced the audience, as she has often done before, that in good taste, refinement, and a certain well-bred air, she has no rivals. It was a small, powerless, and colourless part, with no charm whatever for the actress; but the spectator rose influenced by the pure tone and the true womanly ways of the representative of Rose Escombe. Such a character would have been snubbed as insignificant and unworthy by a dozen actresses not half so talented as Miss Josephs; and yet she came back to play such a part and to persuade all who saw her that she possesses that fine air of genuine womanliness in which she is unrivalled. Rose Escombe, through the assistance of her interpreter, is made to be a pure-minded woman with a charming nature. She is the one fresh thing amidst much that is shallow and insincere. The curious fate of this play and the empty effect that it produced again illustrates what a lottery is dramatic writing. How many hundreds of plays there are that would succeed in one place and fail in another, and *vice versâ*, according to treatment. As most people know, Robertson's first comedy, "Society," was offered to the Haymarket and refused. I fully believe that, had it been accepted and played by the then Haymarket company, it would have failed. But perhaps I am in a minority. The theatre looks extremely pretty, and it is a sad matter if such good intentions cannot be made to succeed.—C. S.

"THE FALCON."

An Original Play, in One Act, by Alfred Tennyson. Founded on a Story in the "Decameron" of Boccaccio.

St. James's Theatre, Thursday, December 18*th*, 1879.

The Count Federigo degli Alberighi	Mr. Kendal.
Filippo	Mr. Denny.
The Lady Giovanna.. ..	Mrs. Kendal.
Elisabetta	Mrs. Gaston Murray.

The Poet Laureate's interpretation of Boccaccio's simple old-world story has, in some measure, falsified the forecasts of the numerous prophets who felt called upon to proclaim the impossibility of extracting genuine dramatic matter from the love of Messer Federigo Alberighi for Monna Giovanna. So plain and even naïve is the tale told by the Queen of the fifth day of the "Decameron," that the most hardened playwright might well look helplessly at the manager who demanded of him a dramatic work built on such slender foundation; but what is denied to the dramatist may sometimes be almost granted to the poet, who, without sacrificing the original theme, can yet so strengthen and adorn it as to fit it for stage representation. According to the original *novella* heard by Fiammetta from that grave and reverend signior, Coppo di Borghese Domenichi Messer Federigo, an accomplished *donzel di Toscana* is simply the *cavalier servente* of Monna Giovanna, who has ruined himself in the hope of securing the affection of a noble and virtuous dame, and retires to his *piccola casetta*, which, with its accompanying patch of land, is his sole possession, except the falcon, who finds him his dinner. Monna Giovanna's husband has died in the meanwhile, and left his great fortune to his son, and in the event of the child's death, to his wife. It is under these circumstances that the widow comes for the summer season to her country house, which happens to be near the cottage of Federigo. Her son *già grandicello* meets Federigo when the latter is hawking, falls in love with his falcon, and falls sick for want of it. The child's mother, naturally averse to asking any favour from Federigo, is sorely distressed when entreated to beg the falcon from him. To put off the awkward moment as long as possible, she asks Federigo to let her break bread with him, and he, having nothing else to eat, kills his falcon and puts him on the spit. The repast over, Monna Giovanna throws herself upon her adorer's generosity, who, driven to despair, confesses the manner of his bird's death, and to prove his words produces the feathers, talons, and beak of the unfortunate creature. Monna Giovanna blames him for killing such a falcon *per dar mangiare a una femmina,* but is really vanquished by his generosity. The child dies, and the lady being *ricchissima e ancora giovane,* marries Federigo after overcoming the resistance of her family.

The first notable point in this curious old narrative, and in many of the French and English versions of it, is the indifference of Boccaccio and his followers to the falcon herself. This apathy is quite natural to the Italian mind. It will be recollected that Macaulay pointed out that Shakespeare's "Othello" was looked upon very differently by Italian and English audiences, and from another point of view altogether by the slaveholders of the Southern United States, who naturally regarded the tragic incidents of the drama as the inevitable result of the mischievous practice of miscegenation. In Italy, it has undoubtedly been the custom to look upon the sufferings of the so-called lower animals with indifference. *Non é Christiano* is considered, even now, by the lower orders of mankind, as a sufficient answer to any protest against the cruel treatment of bird or beast. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that Boccaccio bestows no sentiment on the falcon, who is dear to his master, simply by reason of his faculty of providing dinner, and is bewailed by the lady mainly on account of her son's disappointment and its own great value in money. Now this mood of mind is utterly repugnant to the thorough Englishman, who is apt to look upon the minor figures of the falcon story very much as he does upon that part of the drama of "Flying Scud," which succeeds that noble animal's victory in the Derby. It is not the least merit of Mr. Tennyson's version that he has respected the English love of animals, and not inculcated the doctrine that a falcon is well slain, if thereby a spendthrift may marry an heiress and retrieve his fortunes.

In all seriousness, Mr. Tennyson's version of the Falcon story, which appears to have been an old one in Boccaccio's time, is incomparably superior to any hitherto produced. A violent and extravagant affection is raised to the higher poetic region, and the unconscious suggestions of the *novella* are clothed with the rich fancy of the poet's mind. It is quite exact to describe "The Falcon," as it is on the play-bill of the St. James's Theatre, as an original play, in one act, by Alfred Tennyson, founded on a story in the "Decameron" of Boccaccio: for it fortunately contains but little of Boccaccio and a great deal of Mr. Tennyson's best work. Federigo is seen in his *piccola casetta,* amid the Tuscan hills, and in the distance looks down the stately dwelling of Monna Giovanna. It would savour of presumption to offer detailed criticism of Mr. Tennyson's verses without having them before the writer, but the opinion may nevertheless be ventured that more forcible and musical lines have rarely been written by his accomplished pen. Federigo, in well-worn hawking costume, with falcon on wrist, addresses his only friend in some charming verses, remarkable for felicity of epithet. The noble bird is a "wing'd sky-hound," a "hook-nosed king o' the air," and is playfully bantered by his master for having missed his quarry the day before, and thus left the cottage without food. Federigo, according to Mr. Tennyson, has two persons to find food for beside himself and his falcon. His old nurse and his foster-brother keep house and wait upon him, and moreover aid much in developing the story. His foster-brother has accompanied him to the wars, and his nurse bewails the unhappy issue of his love affairs, which have brought him nothing but ruin. It must be confessed that Filippo, the foster-brother soldier-servant, is not altogether a pleasing personage. For some reason, doubtless sun-clear to Mr. Tennyson, he has chosen to create another species of that detestable genus the Shakespearean clown. To many lovers of Shakespeare, the Gobbi and other clowns are altogether insufferable. They were almost confessedly thrown in for the sake of the groundlings for whom alone the silly verbal quibbles in which they indulge could have any real savour. It is, however, quite conceivable that in an age which produced "Euphues" and "Arcadia," with their queer *concetti*, the trash of Elizabethan clowndom might have been endurable; but modern ears are far too keen for the stilted and blundering attempts at humour which take the mind back to Elizabethan breakfasts of beef and ale. Filippo is the sole blot on Mr. Tennyson's beautiful work. While this personage is on the stage, a crushing weight of dulness descends upon the spectator, and sinks him far below the pure poetical level of Federigo and Giovanna, into the clumsy reality of the Middle Ages. In looking upon the ruined gentleman who sacrifices his last valuable, and, according to Mr Tennyson, most dearly cherished possession, for the stately dame whose raiment is as that of a queen, the mind is raised to the region of pure poetry, only to be cruelly outraged by the rough realism of Filippo and his mother, the ancient nurse. Great poets have not unfrequently failed to represent popular humour, and Mr. Tennyson is no exception to the rule. His clown is as detestable as his Monna Giovanna and Federigo are charming.

In the beautiful and magnificently written scene between these two, with what keen poetic insight does the poet devulgarise the love of the man! Federigo is no longer the silly dangler after another man's wife, but the soldier who, in his youth, wove at a *festa* a wreath of wild flowers, and placed it on the head of the proud young girl who cast it thoughtlessly aside, to be found and treasured by him as the diadem which had once sat upon her smooth low brow. The soldier while at the wars hears of the loved one's marriage, but cannot tear his love out of his heart, and even when ruined utterly, loves hopelessly on. Monna Giovanna, too, appears in a softer light than that thrown upon her by Boccaccio, as she listens to the story of the soldier not yet fully recovered of his wounds, and treasuring the chaplet stained with his best blood. Both are elevated by the breath of the poet into a more rarefied atmosphere than the plain, earthy matter-of-fact of the Middle Ages; and when Giovanna yields to the last proof of her lover's generosity, it is felt that if all the conditions of thoroughly dramatic work are not realised, and that the greatly-adorned story of "The Falcon" is rather told than depicted, yet the work is cast in a noble mould, and cannot be listened to without interest of the keenest kind by any cultivated audience.

Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, who impersonated the chief characters, distinguished themselves by their rendering of parts which, except at the last moment, are rather recited than acted. Mr. Kendal appeared to me to best advantage while speaking the fine lines addressed to the falcon; his subsequent love-making appearing somewhat "aibstract," as the Scottish young lady put it, and tame. Mrs. Kendal achieved a great triumph in the despairing speech which follows Federigo's refusal of the falcon—who, unhappy bird, has been eaten—and precedes his explanation of his position. Tenderly and sweetly rendered, the wail of the mother over her doomed child is a thing to remember. "The Falcon" was admirably put upon the stage.

Mr. Marcus Stone, A.R.A., who suggested the costumes, must have experienced some difficulty in finding authority for the costumes of the "end of the thirteenth century;" but the result of his studies is eminently satisfactory. Anything more perfect in richness and grace than the costume worn by Mrs. Kendal has rarely been seen; and the raiment of Monna Giovanna affords valuable suggestions to fashionable persons concerning the effect to be produced by a costume combining decency and grandeur.—Bernard Henry Becker.

THE GAY CITY.

I AM a *flâneur*, a lazy cosmopolitan idler. I am cynical and selfish, a lover of old books, new plays, *bric-à-brac*, pictures, good cigars and wines, fine linen, new clothes, patent-leather boots, and glossy hats. The best of everything is good enough for me. I fancy that I am a judge of whatever you may mention, and there is no appeal from my decision in the matter of things artistic. At sketching out the *menu* of a dinner, or designing a lady's costume, I am credited with having no rival. And being, as I am, concentrated in myself and my own pleasures, it stands to reason that, after a fair experience of continental cities and English life, I should settle down in Paris, the paradise of bachelors. For I am not married, and after the above *profession de foi*, which possesses the merit of unblushing frankness, you will not be surprised to hear me say so. What woman, let her be the most angelic, enduring, placid specimen of the sex to whom you owe your mothers-in-law, would care to link her fate with mine? I require the choicest *cuisine*, and obedient servants; I must have quiet and smiling faces around me. I hate money troubles, and what wife would let me smoke Villar y Villar cigars, *Regalia Britannicas*, at eight guineas the hundred, or expend twenty golden sovereigns in the purchase of the "Tales of Lafontaine," edition of the *fermiers généraux?* I think nothing of giving one hundred francs for a *fauteuil d'orchestre*, on one of Sardou's or Augier's first nights. I like the excitement of baccarat and horse-racing, and all my other tastes are just as ruinous. In England, my wife's duty would be to spirit me away by virtue of a certificate signed by two doctors; and in this country, to have me interdicted, deprived of civil rights, and my signature to all bills and cheques declared null and of no effect. No one would blame her, so I remain single.

Good-bye, my cosy fire of crackling little logs, adieu, my two-branched reading-lamp! I am ordered to give up idling and take to unaccustomed work. I obey. I tenderly put into its case my half-smoked meerschaum, and, calling for my furred pelisse, bravely hie me forth through "snow and ice," braving all the dangers of insolent *cochers* and draughty corridors, to see the revival of Emile Augier's masterpiece, the comedy called "Les Lionnes Pauvres," and which is now being played at the Vaudeville. This is the piece that was, if I remember rightly, tabooed in London under the title of "A False Step," and my excellent editor wrote certain brave words in defence of one Arthur Matthison, and in ridicule of your English prudery. For the Lord Chamberlain's moral objections I care not one jot; but this I bravely say—the story is of all countries, of all times, and of all nations. A wife betrays her husband for love of *falbalas* and gewgaws, for lace and diamonds, show and glitter.

Faust tempts Marguerite with a necklace. Nowadays a brougham and villa work the same evil, be the daughter of Eve married or single; but these dreadful dramas do not take place in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, India, or Cyprus. The Lord Chamberlain says so, and he is an honourable man. The title alone of this vigorous play has grown stale; the word *lionne* holds no place in our modern vernacular; but the work remains young and grand as on the first night *sub consule Planco*, when the shivering exile of Chislehurst smoked his cigarettes at the Tuileries, for loud above the mud it stirs up, rings out the glorification of male honour, which is of all time. The British censor saw not the profoundly moral idea that is exemplified in "Les Lionnes Pauvres." He only caught sight of the fearful dissection of a well-known vice—that of the married woman trafficking like a courtesan in order to be as the whitened sepulchre which is called in every great city "a lady of fashion." Such is the ideal of many a little woman of the middle classes, brought up to think of nought but a rich marriage, where the husband shall be a courteous cashier, a money-making machine to feed smirking jewellers and bland half-bred German Jewesses with French names, who trade in millinery and women's souls. But let me cease moralising, and conclude upon this head by praising Mdlle. Réjane, as the guilty wife; Blanche Pierson, as the virtuous spouse who acts as a foil to the vicious heroine; Dieudonné and Dupuis in the principal male characters.

I should think that these two gentlemen are the only actors who feel any degree of comfort at present, for they have played for years in St. Petersburg, and our temperature as I write, if not quite Russian, is sufficiently like it to be eminently disagreeable. Snow is very suitable for poetical metaphor or novelists' descriptions, but in real modern town life it is very inconvenient. My clean linen has not come home from the village just beyond the fortifications; my grocer, Felix Potin, sends me a printed circular, courteously informing me that his carts will remain in their stables till the weather breaks, thus depriving me of the well-known midnight oil for my lamp; my coal merchant acts in the same manner. Vegetables are at a premium, and cabs are scarce. Some of the *fiacres* have put aside their wheels, and, mounted upon stout pieces of wood or iron, are transformed into rude sledges, and bump slowly over the frozen ground. The Champs Elysées are full of sledges, some real, and others formed from victorias or phaetons, by the simple method I have just mentioned. The theatres put out their daily bills, but now and again shut up slyly at night, if spectators are rare. This is what happened at the Renaissance, where Lecocq's opera-bouffe, "La Jolie Persane," or, as some of the Anglo-Parisians called it, "The Jolly Person," was dragging its slow length sadly along—a failure, in spite of quaint costume and handsome scenery; in spite of artful notes inserted in friendly columns, cunningly drawn up by the diplomatic little manager himself. I pity the foreign director who, cajoled by honey-tongued agent, should buy this work, which failed to succeed for a simple reason. Victor Koning, the clever *impresario* I have just mentioned, had Mdlle. Granier at the head of his company, but he preferred to shelve her, and push forward a very talented lady from the Palais Royal, Mdlle. Hading. Now, the Parisian public are very fond of certain actresses, whom they take a fancy to. They adore Théo and Judic, and yet the first-named lady sings like a cat. She knows it, and confesses it, but everybody likes her, and loves to see her pottering about the stage, pouting and smiling, and kissing her hand when she breaks down, like a spoilt child with a cold. But the audiences will not have Hading at any price; and no amount of advertising, no distribution of her photographs all over the town, "will ever force her down their throats." Indeed, opera-bouffe has dropped down lately, for we could count nothing but failures since "Madame Favart," till Offenbach lifted his fairy wand at the Folies Dramatiques and gave us the "Fille du Tambour Major," by the veteran *collaborateurs*, Duru and Chivot. This forms the hundredth score to add to the total of the works of the author of the "Grande Duchesse," and really its twenty numbers are all as neat, clear, and melodious as ever. The story is far from being disagreeable in any way, turning as it does upon the adventures of a lieutenant, a drum-major, and forty soldiers or thereabouts, all under the orders of the First Napoleon, who occupy a convent in Italy, whence every nun has fled save Stella, daughter of a duchess. Then the lieutenant falls in love with her, and her mother recognises the drum-major from whom she was divorced when he was a dyer, before the war began. Stella is their offspring. The voice of nature speaks as it only can speak in a French libretto, and the young patrician damsel speeds away and becomes a *vivandière* under the protection of the bold drum-major, who gives her permission to marry the tenor, the young officer in question. Stella's indignant family pursue the father, the daughter, and the sweetheart, and this version of the "Daughter of the Regiment" turned upside down, concludes with the entry of the French army into the town of Milan, with a bird's-eye view of the Piazzo del Duomo in Milan. Madame Girard is the duchess, her daughter in the play is her daughter in real life, and her son-in-law off the stage becomes her son-in-law in the play. And very well do the Girard family act and sing. The military *chanson*, with its "ra-fla-fla," or "ra-ta-ta-ta," is a sure trump in the French theatrical hand, and so Madame Judic gets a triple encore for one at the Variétés, where a three-act vaudeville by Hennequin, music by Hervé, entitled "La Femme à Papa" is attracting crowds, who really pay for admission. The piece is bad and would be insupportable, but for dark-eyed, laughing Anna Judic, playing the part of a young bride. She falls into the society of fast females, sups, drinks too much champagne and gets tipsy, exactly like a woman would, and finishes up with a good maudlin shower of tears and an obstinate inclination to go to bed at once. Dupuis plays his own father, as Dundreary would say; and although he changes his clothes quickly, and dashes round behind the scenes in Woodin's dear old style, appearing as a young edition of himself, after the performers on the stage have laboriously "gagged" to fill up the "wait," does not succeed in doing much with his bad dual part.

And now, theatrical managers, I defy ye! Mysterious decayed grandmothers of actresses, who act as box-keepers in Paris, and look like pew-openers in London—shake not your fiery ribbons at me, goffer not your caps, if ye will, nay even burn your *petits bancs*. I say farewell to ye all! I follow the Parisians who flee the snow, the gay world that thinks of nothing but amusement, and my next letter will be dated from the rock of Monte Carlo, amid gamblers of all nationalities and ages. Don't scold me, but let me explain to you that fashionable Paris always goes to Nice in the winter, and I am but doing my duty as a *chroniqueur* when I follow these gay glittering swallows. Besides, there is a grand theatre at Monaco, a marvellous *bijou* too, perched on the cliff that overhangs the turquoise waves of the Mediterranean, and many a play-house at Nice. So I can talk about art in some form or other even away in the sunny south.

THE BALD-HEADED MAN.

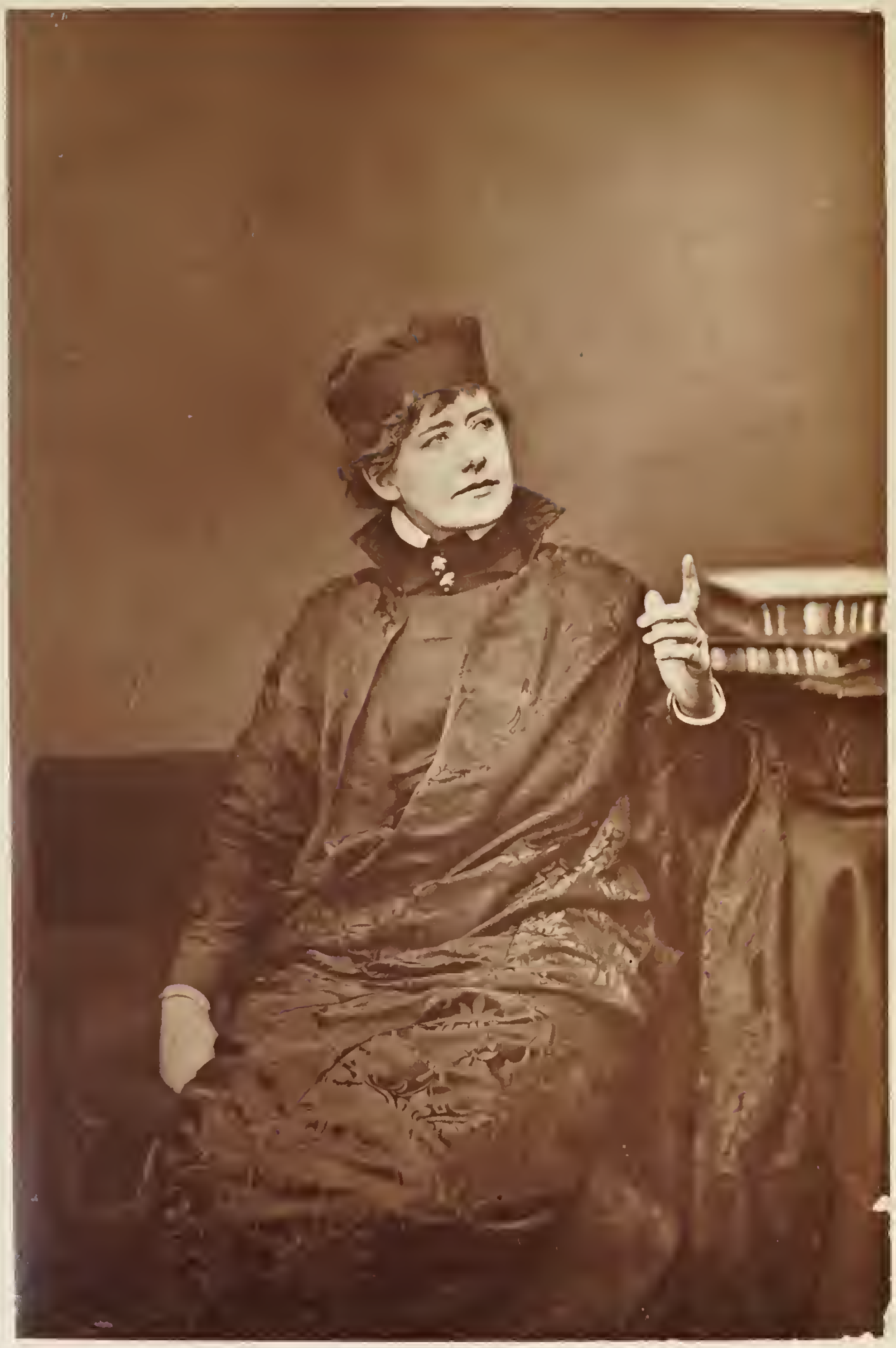
THEATRICAL NOTES FROM BERLIN.

By Hofrath Schneider's Ghost.

DESPITE the excessive cold and the general hardness of the times, all our theatres are open and doing a fair business; but we have been unusually short of dramatic "events" ever since the Marchionesses de Caux and del Grillo departed from among us. Two new plays have been produced within the last fortnight—the "Gräfin Kozierowska," a sensational drama of but little moment, at the Ostend Theatre, and "Die Hexe" ("The Witch"), a powerful politico-religious tragedy, at the National Theatre. The author of the latter piece is a young *genre* painter named Arthur Fitger, who has already earned a fair reputation with his brush, and now storms the "imminent deadly breach" of public favour with his pen. Everybody who is anybody is flocking to the "National" to listen to his stirring lines, and contemplate the admirable historical tableaux arranged under his direction, although that fane of the dramatic muses is distant an hour's drive from the fashionable Stadttheile, and is, moreover, the most dismal-looking and chilly edifice of its class, inside and out, within the precincts of modern Athens. The plot of "The Witch," though slender, is ingenious and novel—the situations very striking, and the dialogue far above the average of modern German plays. Scene, East Friesland. Time, conclusion of Thirty Years' War. A Frisian officer, who has been absent from his native place for several years and "reported killed" during the great civil conflict that half depopulated Germany, returns home to claim his bride, who meanwhile, to distract her mind from the sorrow caused to her by his alleged death, has devoted herself to the study of the natural sciences, and earned a fearsome reputation amongst her ignorant and bigoted neighbours for the possession of extra-natural powers. Really a blue-stocking, she is generally stigmatised as a sorceress. The return of her *fiancé*, however, rouses her from her recondite pursuits, and her old love surges up in her breast "as good as new;" but she has lost her good looks and her pretty figure, and her disillusionised betrothed falls desperately in love with her younger sister. Resolved to keep his plighted troth, he conceals his passion, which is fully reciprocated by the innocent and lovely girl, who has grown up from babyhood to adolescence during his long absence; and with this complication the tragic action of the play commences, ultimately terminating in the death of both sisters. The younger wastes away, broken-hearted, believing her affection unrequited; the elder is murdered, at the instigation of a fanatic Jesuit, by a superstitious soldier, acting as the officer's orderly, who allows himself to be persuaded that she is a witch, and, as such, deserves to be put to death. The catastrophe, and much of the dialogue, have been furiously attacked by the leading clerical papers here, and stoutly defended by the press in general. Even the *Official Gazette* broke a lance in their favour a few days ago. Myself a disembodied spirit, I sympathise with "The Witch," and prognosticate that she will "run" to at least a hundred nights with crowded houses.

Adelaide Ristori electrified the public here, although she played in a language of which I may safely assert that not one in five hundred of those composing her audiences understood a single syllable. Our great Police Panjandrum, Madai, committed an unparalleled piece of folly in solemnly prohibiting the performance of "Marie Antoinette" (a drama the leading rôle of which is one of her best parts, played with overwhelming success by her in every other European capital), on the absurd pretext that "it was calculated to familiarise the public with the loathsome and unnatural idea of regicide." The portly Mandarin, however, got a nasty rap on the knuckles for his dunderheaded zeal on behalf of outraged royalty; for Prince George, himself a dramatic author of no mean merit—his *nom de plume* is Conrad, and two of his plays have established themselves solidly enough in popular favour—took up the great tragedian's cause with laudable warmth, went straight to his venerable cousin the Emperor, who, next to a review, likes a play better than any other sort of entertainment, and denounced Madai's mediæval stupidity in such energetic terms, that the good old gentleman sent off an aide-de-camp to the Molken-Markt to order the President of Police to recall his interdict without an hour's delay. That very night Madame del Grillo played the part of the martyred queen to a house so closely packed that even an impalpable entity like myself could hardly squeeze in between two of the thinnest and most angular enthusiasts in the dress circle.

Of Adelina Patti's triumphs "on the Spree" you will have heard from some of my fellow-ghosts who hover round the Albion o' Saturday nights. She roused the Berlinese to such enthusiasm that they cast thrift and pococurantism alike to the winds, disbursed fabulous sums to the ticket-jobbers for places in the Opera House, and shouted themselves hoarse in unnumbered "calls." I haunt a commercial councillor who does not know one note from another, but who paid 9*l.* for a front-row stall to see and hear her in "Gretchen." Even higher prices were paid at Dresden; but, strange to say, at Munich she sang to a half-empty house. The Emperor William personally conferred upon her the golden medal for art and science, which she will wear in a brooch richly adorned with diamonds. Pauline Lucca had hers set in a bracelet, which she only wears on high-days and holidays. Adelina—or rather poor patient Franchi, her *homme d'affaires*, the most long-suffering of factotums—was besieged during her sojourn in Berlin by wily and audacious mendicants of all classes, from high-born countesses to the pauper wives of drunken supers. Wherever she goes she is assailed by similar persecutions. I borrowed the shape of an old schoolfellow of Franchi, formerly a *primo baritono*, now "one of us" in the Elysian fields, in order to call upon him and draw him out upon the begging-letter topic. He told me that these applications to the Diva averaged about twenty per diem in the German capital, but added that this was a mere nothing in comparison to the floods of written appeals under which he had been well-nigh swamped in Florence and Vienna. Amongst the *curiosa* of this class that reached her own hands, by private agency, whilst she was fulfilling her last engagement in the Kaiserstadt, was a formal demand from an Austrian nobleman of illustrious race for the loan of 2000*l.*, at five per cent. interest, "to save the honour of an ancient name." Franchi kept a book last year, in which he enregistered all the begging letters addressed to his beauteous *padrona* from the 1st of January to the 30th of December, as well as the sums demanded by their inditers. These latter, when he totted them up, amounted to over twenty-four millions of francs, or nearly a million sterling. As her earnings during that period were barely 30,000*l.*, had she complied with the petitions urged upon her she would have been about 830,000*l.* worse off than the sum total of her professional income.



THE THEATRE, NO. 1, THIRD SERIES. WOODBURYTYPE.

Come Merchant have you anything to say"?

Portia Ellen Terry:

ELLEN TERRY AS PORTIA.

SWEET PORTIA, standing Counsel of Humanity, never wore fairer, wittier, sprightlier, or gentler semblance than in the person of Ellen Terry. Most delightful is it to be reminded, as she reminds us, of the essential youth of the character. We all know the great names of principal Shakespearian actresses. We remember their lineaments, their powers, their voices, their elocution. We cannot remember their youth. There has been an interval of unproductiveness. The stage did not for some years yield great Shakespearian actresses. The memories of the latest who have figured nobly on the scene are becoming almost venerable, and when we recall the finished perfectness of their achievements, they lack, at any rate in recollection, the charm of spontaneity and the grace of lightsome, winsome, early womanhood. Moreover, the antique style and the intellectual opulence of Shakespeare tend to produce an impression of ripeness which only the most unmistakable gaiety and elasticity can obviate, besides calling for a degree of technical skill which, as a rule, only ripeness possesses. Ellen Terry, who must be an ardent and arduous student, has the art of thinking and planning and contriving without aging herself or her performances in the process. One need but see her Portia to be convinced that she has expended on the character a world of pains, a whole cornucopia of fertile thought; but the labour has left no traces, and its pleasant fruits teem forth lightly and gaily as if they had just sprung unbidden into volatile existence. A great gift this, and never more exquisitely exemplified than in Portia. The part is too often played with the rounded grace of beauty and sentiment in their maturity. This may seem indeed to be required by its exigences. But such elder charms are well dispensed with when a Portia of bright intelligence and swift susceptibilities irradiates the stage, as in the early bloom of life. To some the revelation may give a shock, but it is a revelation, and a true one; its truth being a truth only rarely attainable, to which art greatly contributes, but which no art, without rare gifts to begin with, could be certain of illustrating.

As the Lady of Belmont, Miss Terry is buoyant, enthusiastic, playful, and full of *esprit*, exhibiting one of those happy natures which keep heart-whole without difficulty, but whose tenderest springs of thought and action can be touched only by love, and by a love at once frank, single, and constant. Note the variety of almost girlish habitude and character which she expends in order to realise this fresh and charming personality; the absolute and significant consistency of its thoughtful working out; the delightful fitness, for instance, of Portia's reception of Jessica, and the dumb-show following, so exactly indicating the lively yet restrained interest of a lady, herself at the summit of bridal ecstasy, about to entertain the pretty heroine of a runaway love-match; and, in contrast, the beautiful traits of sensibility during the reading of Antonio's letter. What is most notable of all is that in the trial scene, where it is usual to pose too absolutely as leading Counsel, Ellen Terry carries into the difficult region of duplex assumption the transparent expressiveness of Portia's own nature. How archly, in self-preservation, she shields her face from her husband! How tenderly friendly is her address to his friend! How quaint the side-lights of meaning wherever the underlying situation becomes visible by a glimpse! How touching and how hopeful, with an enthusiastic belief in the attractiveness of mercy, the appeal to the Jew! And how inimitably coquettish—with secret touches of wifely delight—the interview with Bassanio after all has ended happily! The whole performance is fine, and the trial scene is so full of its spirit that it seems, though occupied with such different matters, to embody, so far as Portia is concerned, all the charm and loveliness of which Belmont is the half magical home.

E. R. R.

Our Musical-Box.

THE concerts in town have begun in real earnest. The Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts, as usual, draw crowds of enthusiastic listeners, and this indeed may be regarded as a proof of the solid taste for music that has developed in England. The special characteristic of these concerts is the masterly rendering of Haydn's lovely string quartets and trios, which Madame Norman-Neruda leads with that wonderful spirit of hers which makes everything "go." The audience is composed of *habitués* who are sure to be satisfied (and more than that) with every programme prepared for them by the director. I take up a *book of the words* at random (it is one of 1875), and read: "Quartet, Haydn (twenty-first time at these concerts);" and while I appreciate the love and reverence which have caused these masterpieces to be heard so often, my mind involuntarily turns to certain lovely works of our own time which cannot even get a *first* performance at these concerts, and which, to hear, we must cross the Channel *or* the Atlantic.

All those who were present when Rheinberger's E flat Quartet was introduced by Dr. von Bülow must remember with what genuine delight it was received; but how seldom has it been heard since, not to speak of the chamber-music by Saint-Saëns, Svendsen, V. Bronsart, Kiel, Scharwenka, Bargiel, Raff, Grieg, Dvorak, etc. etc. To judge from the enthusiasm which greets the performance of Liszt's works at Mr. Walter Bache's concerts, and the occasional novelties at the Crystal Palace, it would seem likely that a few more modern works at the Popular Concerts would prove interesting and acceptable. One noticeable departure from the general rule must be recorded. A work by a modern *English* composer was produced at one of the Monday Concerts—a selection from a set of short pieces for piano and violoncello by F. Davenport. They were received with evident pleasure, and it is to be hoped this will lead to the performance of other works by the same composer.

The Ballad Concerts do not call for any special remark as regards their artistic worth, though, as a financial success, they seem to be perfectly satisfactory.

The clever playing of Miss Hopekirk and Miss Ockleston must not pass unnoticed. The chief characteristic of their Recital was the capital performance of several works for two pianos, including Weber's Moto Perpetuo in unison, which certainly was a *tour de force*, though perhaps not very interesting, except to pianists.

Wilhelmj has been making a tour in California, accompanied by a pianist named Wogritsch. Nowhere has the great violinist been more admired and appreciated than in America.

The concert season in Strasburg could not have opened in a more brilliant manner. Madame Essipoff and Señor Sarasate were the soloists. The former shone as interpreter of Chopin's F minor Concerto, and the latter was greatly and justly applauded for his performance of Max Bruch's second Violin Concerto.

Dr. von Bülow's resignation of his post as Director of the opera in Hanover is greatly to be regretted. A numerously signed petition, begging for his recall, has been sent to high quarters, but it will not induce him to take up the bâton again in Hanover, though it is expected that he will continue to reside in that town.

Madame Sembrich appeared lately in Dresden, as Rosina in the "Barber of Seville," with this deviation from the ordinary routine, that she turned the singing lesson into a violin lesson, and displayed considerable dexterity as a violinist. It is not likely that she will find many imitators, although the violin has, of late years, become such a popular instrument.

According to an Italian paper (*The Trovatore*), six hundred and twenty-five new operas have been produced in Italy during the last twenty years.

What a boon it would be for Londoners, and especially the busy half of the population, if the Crystal Palace orchestra had their head-quarters in town, and if the Saturday afternoon treat could be had without undertaking a railway journey. The scarcity of good orchestral concerts in London is inexplicable, and certainly most reprehensible.

A select audience assembled in St. James's Hall, at Herr Henschel's concert, on the evening of the 2nd, attracted not only by the good end for which the concert was given, but by the interesting programme prepared for them. The event of the evening was certainly the appearance of Herr Henschel as composer, conductor, and singer. He led a fine performance of Brahms' C minor Symphony, which has been heard before in London, and which was followed by a duet for two basses, with orchestral accompaniment, composed by Herr Henschel; the words being from Byron's Hebrew Melodies. This work, though of a sombre character, is very striking and full of interesting features. It was finely sung by the composer and Mr. F. King. Herr Henschel's setting of the 130th Psalm, which was now heard for the first time in England, is likely to prove popular with choral societies. It is full of melodious subjects, some of which seemed to call up reminiscences of Mendelssohn, especially the theme of the chorus, "Lord, hearken to my calling." The trio, sung by Miss Lilian Bailey, Mr. Frank Boyle, and Herr Henschel, is spoiled by being too long. The unaccompanied chorus, "I wait for the Lord," contains some fine contrapuntal work, and was capitally sung by the chorus. This was followed by a bass solo (again a reminiscence of Mendelssohn), finely sung by Herr Henschel. The psalm was brought to a conclusion by a spirited chorus, the whole performance meeting with well-merited applause.

The second part of the concert consisted of Brahms' "Triumphlied," performed for the first time in England. It would be impossible to give any account of the subject-matter of this work without copious quotations. The colossal difficulties contained in this elaborate composition are almost insurmountable, and an intimate knowledge of the score is necessary to enable one to follow the work with any sort of understanding. In fact, the details and combinations in its construction are immensely interesting to *read*, but seem dry and unpoetical when *heard*; for, owing to the intricate style of writing, the details cannot possibly stand out clearly in *sound*, as they do in *black and white*. This Triumphal Hymn was written to celebrate the German victories of 1870-71, but for the reasons given above, it is not likely that this composition can ever become popular.

The recent invention of a pocket metronome by a German engineer is worthy of notice. This miniature instrument does not only take the place of Maelzel's metronome, but really surpasses it in practical usefulness. It has the advantage of being extremely cheap (4 marks = 4s.), is perfectly simple in construction, and compact in shape. In its case it may be comfortably carried in the pocket. This handy little instrument can be ordered through any music dealer, or may be had direct from Jos. Aibl, in Münich.

Among the many advantages of this highly civilised age may be mentioned that of the really splendid new editions of standard works. Too much cannot be said in praise of a most perfect edition of Chopin's pianoforte works, which has lately appeared at Messrs. Stanley Lucas, Weber, and Co.'s. It is revised and edited in a masterly manner by C. Klindworth; the fingering, phrasing, and all minor details being carefully considered and clearly set forth. Dr. von Bülow, whose intimate knowledge of the instrument exceeds that of any living pianist (as his own editorial work is sufficient to prove), says, in speaking of Klindworth's Chopin, that though for the last twenty-five years he has possessed Chopin's works in heart and head, and, for the most part, in his fingers too; he always consults Klindworth's edition before preparing any piece of Chopin's for performance in public.

Six Duets for Violoncello and Pianoforte (Op. 4). Composed and dedicated to Alfred Piatti, by F. W. Davenport. (Stanley Lucas, Weber, and Co.)

This young composer may congratulate himself that his Op. 4 has had a hearing at a Monday Popular Concert. Seldom, if ever, has this honour been conferred on any Englishman. The numbers played were 2, 5, and 6, the order of the two latter being reversed. No. 2 is a melody in E flat for the violoncello, with a flowing accompaniment for the piano. No. 6, "Melody with Changes" (by far the cleverest and most interesting of the set), consists of a theme in D minor, with a distinct Russian character about it, which is first given out by both instruments in unison, then constantly repeated by the violoncello, while the "changes" are left to the piano.

No. 5, an Allegro energico in B flat, made a suitable finale to the selection on the occasion of their performance at the concert; it is fresh and bright, and decidedly well written.

"Innocence." Albumblatt, composed for the Pianoforte by Hans von Bülow. (Stanley Lucas, Weber, & Co.)

Dr. von Bülow is not much known in this country as a composer; he has specially distinguished himself among us as pianist, conductor, and editor. But all amateurs ought to make themselves acquainted with his charming little Albumblatt, which contains no great technical difficulties, and will be sure to please, as the principal theme is simple and melodious. Of more interest to the musician is the Poco rubato Introduction, one subjec of which also occurs again in the Molto più lento episode. Here the harmonies and modulations are uncommon, and contrast most happily with the Innocence-motive, which of course prevails throughout the rest of the piece.

"Kitty's Sunbonnet." A Country Ditty by T. Marzials. (Stanley Lucas, Weber, & Co.)

The writer of this song, who is also the composer of "Twickenham Ferry," "Three Sailor Boys," &c., seems to have a happy facility for producing English popular songs (the pervading feeling of the above is decidedly *English* in the best sense of the word). This song is so very slight, that the eight bars, apparently the first part of the tune, are actually repeated, with very little variation, to form the second part and make up the necessary sixteen bars. But the melody is happily conceived, and there is a fresh ring about it suggestive of a pretty scene in English country life. It is an unpretending little song, and cannot be better described than by the composer's own words, "A Country Ditty."

S. Carmichael.

THE TRIAL SCENE.

"DON'T talk to me, sir, about modern plays and modern players, the only drama worth acting is the classic drama, and there is nobody to act it now. Ah, *I* remember Edmund Kean! Where will you find his like to-day? No, sir, there are no more actors, none at all."

"But have you been much to the theatre lately?" I ventured to inquire.

"Not I, sir. I haven't been to a theatre for years."

"Then how do you know——" I was going to say, but I stopped; for I had no wish to argue with my Uncle Timothy, who was a wealthy bachelor, much less to offend him, and the one thing would be pretty sure to involve the other. He could ill brook contradiction, and besides there was a third person in the room, a diminutive urchin of eight, who had to be considered, for he was my youngest son and Uncle Timothy's favourite godchild, and when at home for the holidays was accustomed to look, and seldom looked in vain, to his elderly relative for "tips."

At this moment the little lad was flattening his nose against the window of the room in which we sat, in my uncle's comfortable home in Russell Square, whither I had brought him to spend the day. Various schemes for his amusement had, from one cause or another, fallen through, and as the prospect of a blank day for him appeared more and more likely to become a certainty, the poor little fellow began to feel very much bored and more than half-inclined to cry.

"Of course," continued Uncle Timothy, reassured at finding that I had no intention of arguing with him, "of course you may be right about Mr. What's-his-name—Irving; he may have some talent, and Miss Terry too; but, Lord bless you, the genius of Edmund Kean was something overwhelming to me, even as a boy, and when I first saw him, and he made his greatest impression on me, I doubt if I was much older than Teddy there."

Again I felt strongly inclined to interrupt my good uncle, and to question the value of his judgment at the mature age of eight, but again I thought of Teddy, and refrained.

"Now I should like—I really *should* like," continued my uncle, "to test the effect of Mr. What's-his-name's——"

"Irving's," I suggested.

"Irving's, thank you—of Mr. Irving's acting upon a boy like Teddy there, just to see if it makes anything like the same impression upon him that Kean's did upon me. What did you say they were playing at Mr. Irving's theatre—'The Merchant of Venice?' Ah, now if there were a morning performance to-day (I have heard of such new-fangled things as morning performances taking place at all the theatres) I'd treat Teddy, that I would!"

At the sound of the word "treat" coupled with his name, Teddy pricked up his ears, left the window, and walked straight up to his great uncle, and stared him full in the face, waiting to hear more.

"What theatre did you say it was at which Mr. Irving performed?"

"The Lyceum," I replied.

"Ah, well, if there was a morning performance to-day at the Lyceum, I would treat Teddy."

"There *is* one, Uncle Timothy," chimed in Teddy.

"Hullo, sir! How do you know?" I inquired.

"Didn't you tell me that was the Lyceum Theatre that we passed coming in a cab from Waterloo Station, papa—that place where all the carriages were stopping."

"Why, of course," I replied. "The boy's right."

Uncle Timothy rang the bell. "Teddy shall go," he said, "and Burton shall take him."

Burton was the butler and a great ally of Teddy's. They had frequently been companions on similar occasions, when Teddy always preferred the society of Burton to that of anyone else, as that gentleman had no narrow-minded prejudices on the subject of behaviour in a theatre, nor ever raised objections to the discussion by his young charge of oranges, buns, and even ginger-beer, in the pit. Indeed, he had himself been known to unbend so far as to keep Teddy company in the matter of liquid refreshment, which he would imbibe from a mysterious-looking soda-water bottle that reposed in the back pocket of his coat.

On this occasion he received with his master's instructions a liberal supply of silver, and the expedition was quickly arranged. He was to take Teddy into the pit; the performance would have begun certainly, but, as Uncle Timothy said, they would be in plenty of time for the Trial Scene, and that was, after all, the scene most likely to impress the boy.

With many expressions of delight Teddy went off, very uncertain indeed as to what he was about to see and hear; but he was going to the play with Burton, and that was enough for him.

"Ah!" said Uncle Timothy, drawing a long breath, "in an hour or two we shall have the impression on a fresh young mind of the performance of one of the most interesting of Shakespeare's plays. Nothing like the old plays, sir; and for the matter of that, the old novels. Don't talk to me of Dickens, I know my Fielding by heart, and my Smollett too. Tom Jones and Humphrey Clinker are good enough for me."

An hour passed—an hour and a half—and Teddy returned radiant with pleasure, and with sides still aching from superabundant laughter. What could it mean?

Uncle Timothy immediately commenced a series of questions.

"Well, my boy, have you enjoyed yourself?"

"Haven't I, just?"

He had picked up this schoolboy's expression of satisfaction from his elder brothers.

"Did you see the 'Trial Scene?'"

"Rather."

"And what did you think of Mr. Irving?"

"I don't think I saw him; which was he?"

"Why, the Jew of course."

"I don't remember anything about a Jew. Oh yes, there was a lady who kept on saying 'My Lord and Jew'—something."

"A lady! That must have been Portia."

"I don't think that was her name. They called her 'Elizabeth' Something."

My uncle gasped. "Surely," said he, "it cannot be possible that these modern innovators have dared to alter the names of Shakespeare's heroines!"

"How was she dressed," he asked Teddy; "in a gown?"

"Of course. All women wear gowns."

"But I mean a black gown—like a lawyer's?"

"Oh no; a smart gown like a lady's."

"Good gracious—more innovations! What next, I should like to know?"

"I should think, uncle," said I, "it might have been some handsome Venetian robe of stamped velvet, or something of that sort. I hear the dresses are very costly?"

"Well, well; go on, boy. Tell us anything else you remember about it."

"Well," resumed Teddy, "there was something about a man called Daniel."

"Oh, ah! of course, 'a Daniel come to judgment.' Well, my boy, what about him?"

"Why, he couldn't tell whether his name was Daniel Nathaniel or Nathaniel Daniel."

"Good heavens! Is the boy out of his senses? Was there nothing about a Jew and a pound of flesh? Come now, think."

"Flesh! Do you mean meat, uncle? There *was* something about meat; but I don't know if it was a pound—they didn't weigh it."

"Meat! What *can* the boy be thinking of? A gaping pig, was it?"

"No, I don't think it was pork. I think it was mutton."

"Why?"

"Because they said 'chops and tomato-sauce!'"

"Teddy," said I, as I began to recall the details of certain prospective arrangements I had heard of in theatrical circles, "let me look at your programme; you received one, I suppose."

"Yes, papa, here it is."

"Ah," said I, "I thought so!"

The bill announced a benefit for Mr. William Belford, and I read it aloud to my uncle. It stated that Mr. Irving would appear in "The Two Roses," resuming, after a lapse of some years, a part he had originally played at another theatre.

"Ah!" said my uncle, "'The Two Roses!' I suppose that is a play which Mr. Irving elevated from the mire of modern mediocrity before he mounted his present honourable Shakespearian pedestal."

The play was to be followed by an address, spoken by Miss Ellen Terry; but what about the Trial Scene, which Teddy declared he had witnessed?

I turned over the page and found the last item on the programme was not the Trial Scene from the "Merchant of Venice," but the *Trial from "Pickwick!"*

Looking down the cast, the mystery of the names was soon explained.

The Daniel come to judgment was *Nathaniel Winkle*, and the lady in the smart gown, *Elizabeth Cluppins!*

"And that's 'Pickwick,' is it?" said my uncle. "Ah, I never read it. Give me 'Tom Jones' and 'Humphrey Clinker.'"

Arthur Cecil.

The new drama accepted by Mr. W. G. Wills for the Adelphi, is called "Ninon," and is said to be a spirited and dramatic tale of the French Revolution. Miss Wallis, a young actress of far more than average merit, and who will be remembered in many blank-verse plays at the Queen's and Drury Lane Theatres, notably "Cromwell" and "Amos Clarke," will be the heroine; and good parts are written for Mr. Henry Neville and Mr. Fernandez.

The children are always asking me where they can find some very easy and amusing plays for the back drawing-room in the present holiday season. Let them send for "Uncle Grumpy" and other pretty little dramas by Robert St. John Corbet (Samuel Tinsley & Co.).

Our Book-Shelf.

THE CAMBRIDGE A. D. C.

MR. BURNAND'S lively and interesting volume, called "Personal Reminiscences of the A. D. C., Cambridge" (London: Chapman and Hall), will have given new and pleasant information to many readers, and recalled to many others enjoyable memories of occasions when they have either figured in or "assisted at" performances got up at what, in the days of Mr. Roget's clever "Cambridge Scrap-Book," was known as "The Little Theatre at the Hoop," and is now a comfortable and well-organised club with a stage complete in all the accessories that a stage for such a purpose can want, except a cellarage. Mr. Burnand was practically the founder of the A. D. C., and has every reason to be gratified at the success which, not without some vicissitudes, his invention has attained. He relates how, when the idea of getting up theatricals at Cambridge first struck him, he went with the courage of ignorance to beard the Vice-Chancellor in his den, and obtain from him the permission necessary for organising a dramatic performance. A dialogue, related with infinite humour by Mr. Burnand, took place between the V.-C. and the undergraduate, who, having "Box and Cox" in his mind, was at length driven to confess that the play he proposed to give, being neither Greek nor Latin, was in fact "a little piece by Mr. Maddison Morton." The V.-C. jumped at the notion that Mr. Maddison Morton might be a fellow of Trinity, and finding that this was not so, closed the interview with the ominous statement that he would lay the matter before the Heads. The decision of the Heads (who in Mr. Burnand's imagination naturally assumed the form of pantomime heads) was unfavourable; and oddly enough, it was partly in consequence of a theatrical performance, given without leave being asked from the Heads, by the Athenæum at The Red Lion, that the A. D. C. first assumed a definite and practical shape. It had difficulties of various kinds to contend with at its beginning, but the energy of its promoters carried it successfully on until it became a recognised and important institution; and in 1864, the eighth year of the club, the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Cambridge gave occasion for a special performance, which of course brought the A. D. C. into wider notice than it had before received.

Since that time the club has had few difficulties in its way, but it will be in the memory of many Cambridge men that some years ago a certain section of the Dons, which had never interfered with billiard-rooms, attendance at Newmarket, noisy and senseless suppers, and other amusements of a like kind, suddenly felt its virtue offended by the existence in the midst of the University of a club devoted to the presentment of vain stage plays. Their apparent objection to the club was founded on its encouraging late hours, idleness, and so on; and the action which they took, or attempted to take, in the matter was ridiculous and fanatical enough; but led to some good results. The violent movement made against the A. D. C. by some Dons was opposed by others of a more temperate mind, and a set of rules was agreed upon between the club and the Tutors for the future management of its performances. These were restricted to one term—the Michaelmas Term—and three nights only, of which Saturday was not to be one, were allowed to the club. The representations are not to take place during the time of certain specified University Examinations; then it is to be no town night, only one ladies' night; burlesque is excluded altogether; the plays are to be submitted to a censorship of the Tutors; certain regulations as to the time of the performances are to be enforced; and only resident members of the University are to take part in them. It is obvious that such a club in a university must sooner or later be subjected to tutorial supervision, and it is no doubt well that a complete code of laws should be recognised and adhered to. But no code is likely to be perfect, and on this one Mr. Burnand makes some pertinent criticisms. His first remark is singularly pleasing by reason of its perfectly grave irony. The Tutors lay down a law that there shall be only one set of performances in the year, in October. Mr. Burnand heartily approves of this rule, because the club "could be carefully preparing its work from the beginning of the year." It is needless to say that this was not the Tutors' view of the matter. He says also that it is a mistake to exclude burlesque altogether; and, with regard to the kind of piece which he argues should be admissible, there can be little doubt that he is right. He might further have observed that any difficulty as to drawing a hard and fast line is covered by the subsequent rule, which leaves the power of approving or rejecting any piece proposed in the hands of a Committee of Tutors. With regard to the regulations as to late hours and the discouragement of suppers after the play, it is more than possible that the Tutors may have done well in insisting on them: the meetings which Mr. Burnand looks back on with delight took place when the club was much smaller and much less an important element in the social life of the University than it now is. All undergraduates are not wise or prudent, and even a dramatic supper after the A. D. C. may possibly degenerate into something like an orgy.

With the general principles laid down in Mr. Burnand's volume, which ought to do good service, not only to the A. D. C., but to dramatic art generally, it would be difficult to disagree. He condemns, and rightly, the practice of employing second-rate actors to coach the club; which, although first-rate actors have on occasion undertaken the task, has for the most part prevailed. "Let pupils," says Mr. Burnand, commenting on this, "in the dramatic school note the general principles of the art, and then apply them to particular instances. Let them study the character they have to portray, master it thoroughly, and then decide to the best of their ability how such a character would behave in certain given circumstances; dramatic cause and effect would then be reasoned out and fixed on a sure basis." This is surely the true key to the proper method of interpreting any part, great or small; and if all actors would, and could, take what Mr. Burnand has said to heart, public and private stages would be in a far better condition than that which now belongs to them. The same truth is of course to be found expressed elsewhere, and particularly in the "Paradoxe sur le Comédien" of Diderot; but Mr. Burnand has put it with admirable terseness.

Readers of Mr. Burnand's volume will judge, and judge rightly, that the A. D. C. is an institution of which the success is well deserved, and which merits every encouragement. It is practically the only school of elocution existing in the University, and one might think that even fanatical opposers of the drama could not fail to recognise that it affords a recreation which is at its worst harmless compared with those which it displaces. Experience unhappily shows that fanaticism has no limits.

Whether the A. D. C. can or will ever become the ideal school of dramatic art which its founder would like to see it become is of course open to doubt, but it has numbered among its members several people distinguished in connection with the stage, and there can be little doubt that Mr. Burnand did well when he founded the club.

Walter Herries Pollock.

RICHARD WAGNER'S "MISSION."

If it be not now, yet it will come:
The readiness is all.
Hamlet, Act V. Sc. 2.

It is at once the penalty as it is the privilege of genius to awaken human antipathies and human sympathies in a very intense degree. In no instance has this aphorism been more completely exemplified than in the career of Richard Wagner. The more important epochs of his life have invariably been accompanied by the contending elements of hostile and friendly criticism; but no storm has ever raged with greater vehemence against the great master than that which has been provoked by a recent article from his pen in "The North American Review," entitled, "The Work and Mission of my Life."

It is of this title that numerous critics have fallen foul with an unreasoning and unreasonable vehemence. For any man to assert a belief that he has a mission in life, argues to many minds a degree of assumption and egotism which must at all hazards be crushed and trodden down by the iron heel of cynical depreciation. How many years will yet elapse ere men can recognise the oft-repeated lesson of history, that every founder of a new school, in thought, in art, and in science, of necessity forced into a position of self-assertion, has been impelled by that spirit of righteous enthusiasm, whose power is irresistible in its onward progress, and which in the present instance has supplied our musical Archimedes with a mighty leverage which shall in the inevitable future raise the world?

Every student of musical history knows but too well with what painful frequency the oft-told tale recurs in the lives of the great composers, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, Schumann, and others; the early, nay, in some instances, the life-long struggle with non-recognition, disappointment, and failure, too often aggravated by physical want and painful though proudly-endured penury. Through this fiery crucible did Wagner pass with the abatement of not one iota in the tale of suffering. We find him at a very early age halting between the rival claims of poetry and music, the study of Beethoven's symphonies finally determining his choice in favour of the latter. Having made his selection, he commenced to study the theory of music, and enriched his mind by a constant worship at the shrine of the great masters. After a few youthful efforts he composed the opera of "Rienzi," inaugurating the plan, which he has since consistently followed, of writing his own libretto. We then find him in Paris, poor and unrecognised, earning a scanty pittance by copying music, and occupying the intervals of this laborious life by composing the beautiful "Faust" overture, and that opera, which may be described as essentially *sui generis*, "The Flying Dutchman."

"When night is darkest, dawn is nearest," and the struggling composer was suddenly summoned to Dresden, where "Rienzi" had been produced with unequivocal success. This led to his appointment as kapellmeister at the theatre, and enabled him to bring forward "The Flying Dutchman."

The result of this step, however, was to produce a revulsion of feeling on the part of his critics, and, through them, in the public mind. As Wagner himself graphically expresses the situation, "a school of criticism which dominated taste and judgment in the public press, seized upon my performances, and began the conflict which for a score of years since then has been kept up against my work and efforts, with all the bitterness and recklessness which still distinguish it. Through the influence of this criticism, often guided by the pettiest and most doubtful motives, the public has been almost entirely prevented from exercising anything like a spontaneous judgment; the good results which the individual secured could not amid such trammels have their effect upon the mass."

Now occurred the crucial test, when men of ordinary calibre must certainly have succumbed. Wagner, however, at once rose superior to the situation, and, in spite of the failure of "Tannhäuser," which followed next upon "The Flying Dutchman," he elected to pursue the straight but thorny path which led towards his ideal, rather than to regain the meretricious popularity which a recurrence to the style of "Rienzi" would undoubtedly have produced. Actuated by these lofty motives, he commenced the composition of that which must always be recognised as one of his most poetic inspirations, "Lohengrin." This opera, however, when completed, seemed doomed to linger in obscurity. Its composer was now an exile from his country, discredited and unpopular, a man whose artistic career seemed irrevocably closed. In this dark hour, when hope itself was waning, the spark of Genius kindled a flame within one kindred breast. Franz Liszt, whose great and poetic compositions must set upon his name the seal of immortality, had recognised the aim of the despised composer, and generously accomplished his re-entry into the musical arena by the production of "Lohengrin" at Weimar.

The success of this opera laid, as Wagner expresses it, "the foundation for a future," and with renewed courage he commenced the greatest undertaking of his life, "The Nibelungen Trilogy." During the progress of this work he heard that his earlier operas were steadily winning their way to public favour amongst the German people, despite the factious opposition of illiberal opponents. The next notable incidents in Wagner's career were the composition and production of "The Meistersinger von Nürnberg" and "Tristam und Isolde"—two operas singularly distinct in their characteristic individuality. The realisation of his life-long ambition was attained at the Bayreuth Festival in 1876. Those who were privileged to witness it can never forget that remarkable performance, so impressive in its grandeur, so perfect in its accomplishment of the great master's ideal that even the coldly-critical could not but acknowledge his genius, while they failed to appreciate the striking and varied beauties of "The Nibelungen Trilogy." This tardiness of recognition is, however, no new experience in the world of music. The treatment meted out to Wagner now is identical in form and expression to that which first greeted the once despised and now universally acknowledged Beethoven.

Before we close this paper we cannot but point to Wagner's grand career and example as encouraging to those who, like him, may be ready to endure similar trials rather than lower or betray the art they love and revere. This end is not to be accomplished by the production of vapid ballads and weak imitations of Offenbach, of which England, alas! presents some sad examples. The meretricious glitter of such works as these is dangerous alike to audience and to author, appealing as it does to the uncultivated taste of the one, and resulting in the art degradation of the other. As regards Wagner and his mission, we may say, in the words of a great living statesman, "time is on our side." Those who can read the history of the future from the lessons of the past, and who have carefully and lovingly watched the gradual but sure progress of music since the influence of Wagner has made itself felt, must be convinced that time alone is required to obtain a universal triumph for the principles he has laboured with so much energy and self-denial to establish. Already we have the chosen band of cultivated musicians devoted to the cause, together with a vast substratum of those "whom no man can number," with uncultivated but natural appreciation of music, who may be seen listening with rapt attention whenever Wagner's music is performed. By the laws of mental progress must ere long be realised for music the glorious future of which we now only dream. Then will be accomplished its great mission of elevating, purifying, and ennobling mankind; then will other and kindred geniuses carry on and perfect what our great master has begun. So shall his life-long work receive the crown of immortality.

Piercing the murky night, thine eye can see
Beyond the disc of mere mortality,
And, pointing upward, leads the awakened soul
To brighter destinies, a higher goal.

AMY BOURSOT.

Our Actors and Actresses: "The Dramatic List," and "Dramatic Notes." Edited by Charles E. Pascoe. London: David Bogue, 3, St. Martin's Place, S.W.

Mr. Charles Pascoe has increased in interest, added to, and considerably improved the important and very necessary book published for the first time last year. In its cheap and attractive form, crammed as it is with facts, criticisms, and useful memoranda, the "Dramatic List" ought to be in the library of everyone who takes the slightest interest in our players or the history of the stage. For a long time the theatre has been without a history. Between the finish of Geneste and now there is a wide and heart-rending gap, which can only be supplied by hunting through files of newspapers. Mr. Pascoe has now laid the foundation-stone of a new "Biographia Dramatica," or at least the first division of it, and he may now well turn his attention to the reverse side of the picture, namely, the authors and their plays, of which, for the last twenty odd years, there is no record whatever, except in unindexed journals. By-the-way, Mr. Pascoe, in the interests of all writers and critics, may be earnestly asked to amplify his index to the "Dramatic List." As the memoirs are arranged in alphabetical order, the present form of index is quite unnecessary. But the facts brimming over in the volume might well be indexed minutely and with good effect. In the little shilling volume called "Dramatic Notes," the index is far better, but the exposition of the dramatic year is not arranged with very much skill; nor are the criticisms of any particular value. But indeed no intention is expressed of making this little book more than a light reminiscence rather than a record. The pictures by Mr. J. Walter Wilson are no doubt attractive and interesting, but they do not always fall in the right place, and the effect is confusing. For very many years the playgoer has been indebted to an old friend called "The Era Almanack" for the theatrical history of each year, and as yet, save in the matter of pictures, Mr. Pascoe has not succeeded in putting its nose out of joint.

C. S.

I have received a most welcome packet of books from Mr. Samuel French, the well-known theatrical publisher of 89, Strand, who takes such a serious and hearty interest in the stage of England and America, and has a great deal to do with arranging the dramatic destinies of two great nations. Mr. French's Christmas and New Year's Budget ought to be attentively and eagerly studied by all who are fond of private theatricals and at their wits' end what to play in the parlour or how to set about this favourite amusement. At this home of theatrical amusement in the Strand will be found practical guides to amateurs as to costume, adornment, and make-up; hints for *tableaux vivants*, drawing-room plays, children's charades, and every imaginable assistance for the long winter evenings. Children of a larger growth will be glad to hear that Mr. French has published three of Mr. H. J. Byron's best plays, namely, the famous "Our Boys," "Daisy Farm," and "Old Sailors," and that Mr. F. W. Broughton's admired dramatic romances, "Withered Leaves" and "Ruth's Romance," can be obtained for the small cost of sixpence. By-the-bye, if anyone wants some capital recitations let him send off at once for Arthur Matthison's "Little Hero and other Stories." In fact Mr. French's theatrical establishment, with all its books, hints, and suggestions, is the place to spend a happy hour when journeying down the Strand. C. S.

"CALLED TO THE BAR."

In Memoriam, F. L. T. Died December 7th, 1879. *Aged* 23.

OVER the life of our friend we may linger,
  Free of the tears that we gave him of late,
Touched as it was with the resolute finger
  I say of Providence—some say of Fate.
Youth as he was, still a sadness crept o'er him,
  Silent he looked to the future afar,
Acting the cynic with fortune before him,
  Buoyed up with hope to be "called to the bar."

Why was he weary when love had caressed him,
  Born unto happiness, sprung from the best?
Only the edge of the "madding crowd" press'd him,
  Why was life sadder to him than the rest?
Still with eyes kindled to fire he'd remember
  Visions of destiny mirror'd afar,
Saying, "Forget not your friend in December;
  Then—if I've luck—I'll be 'called to the bar.'"

Slowly December crept nearer and nearer,
  Snowed up with sorrow, grief-stricken with rain;
Out of the multitude, who was there dearer,
  Waiting his terrible trial in pain?
Sadly the hope of our heart was arrested,
  None heard our cries though the "gates were ajar;"
He was by God the Examiner tested,
  Found out the best—and was *Called to the Bar!*

C. S.

Our Omnibus-Box.

AN essay in last month's "Blackwood" upon Dramatic Reform has incurred, on account of the mingled narrowness and absurdity of its views, and the manner in which it deals with the private lives of individuals, general condemnation. It is but fitting that THE THEATRE should join in the protest that has been raised. The views on criticism which find expression in "Blackwood," the personal attack upon favourite actresses, and, worst of all, the references to matters of private history, merit in themselves nothing more than contempt. They obtain, however, from the highly respectable organ in which they appear, a value not intrinsically theirs. There is one other circumstance in connection with them which should be mentioned with reprobation. The name of Miss Helen Faucit is used for purposes of contrast in a way that should be most painful to that actress, who, so far as we know, has evinced no inclination to assume a position apart from her fellows. Everything, indeed, in the paper is in the worst taste, and the whole is not less unmanly than offensive.

I have been favoured also with further able remarks upon this ungenerous "Blackwood" article, which I have much pleasure in printing, the more so, as my correspondent touches upon the sneer offered to the dramatic reviewing contained in the public press. Looking back over the past twenty years, it strikes me that, had it not been for some "practical guidance" on the part of the press, the drama would not have been in so flourishing a condition as it is now. It suits the men who have the brains and the ability to guide public opinion to sit in their studies sulking and fuming over the degeneracy of the drama until such time as a Salvini, a Deselée, a Bernhardt, or an Irving, appear upon the scene, when they condescend to revisit the theatre and to record their impressions. George Henry Lewes, for instance, who was once a press dramatic critic, and one of the first of his time, left the stage to starve until Salvini reappeared, when it was the fashion for literary men of the first class to attend the theatre and to record their opinions. Where, may I ask, has the "Blackwood" critic been hiding his intellectual head during the throbs and agonies of the art revival which is now showing such excellent fruit? and what right has he to sneer, when, according to his own showing, he shirked the responsibility which others undertook? This is what my correspondent says:

An ingenious writer in "Blackwood's Magazine," while discoursing on theatrical reform, makes a violent attack upon two actresses whom admirers of the present, rather than of the past time have agreed to honour. A long tirade concerning the much-talked-of National Theatre, and an enumeration of the qualities necessary to an ideal manager, are brought to a close with the common clap-traps concerning beds of roses and thorns as contrasted with "couches of down." After this somewhat bewildering introduction the critic of "Blackwood" gets rid, in summary fashion, of his brethren who have the misfortune to write for less influential journals. "The public of the present day," exclaims this would-be Christopher North, "is only too ready to second any effort of this kind; for, *having no practical guidance from the press,* and having all but lost its own critical faculty from want of standards to direct its judgment, it gives to talent of but moderate proportions the admiration and applause which should be reserved to genius. It was no less than pitiable, for example, to see how people who profess to be learned in matters of art went mad over the feeble performances of Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt last summer." All this would be very grand and magisterial did not the critic reveal his own weakness in the next line by intimating that "it was surely not necessary to have seen great actresses to make one indisposed to recognise in that lady the qualities which go to make them." The whole of which seems to signify that the critic, not being able to compare Mdlle. Bernhardt with Rachel, is compelled to dash into generalities. When he wanders from these into particular objections to Mdlle. Bernhardt, he takes occasion to complain that the private life of that lady incapacitates her from rendering the "ethereal qualities that touch the heart." Does he mean to tell the readers of "Blackwood" that heroines of tragedy can only be fittingly represented by those fortunate women whose lives have been devoid of dramatic incidents? Is Phèdre, for instance, likely to be well represented by a boarding-school miss? Is Adrienne Lecouvreur likely to find a better exponent in a quiet *Hausfrau* than in a woman who has a history of her own? Even by this strange and novel test the critic of "Blackwood" fails to make out his case; for Rachel, by far the greatest actress of modern times, was by no means a model of the domestic virtues.

"The Merchant of Venice," as produced at the Lyceum Theatre, fares little better at the hands of the "Blackwood" critic than the performances of Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt. Portia is, *crede* "Blackwood," one of Shakespeare's creations hardly within the grasp of ordinary mortals. Miss Ellen Terry, by her charming rendering—at once intelligent and tender—of this highly complex character, has pleased the southern critics and the most critical of London audiences; but this is not enough to satisfy this northern censor, who appears to accept the "pretty sophisms" of the sham doctor *pour tout de bon*. He is evidently the last believer in the possibility of such a ridiculous judgment as that snatched by the pretty pleader, and asks that the scheme of the play shall be removed from the rosy atmosphere of pure poetry into the cold gray light of matter of fact. The pretty coquetry of Miss Terry's Portia only suggests to him that she exhibits overmuch of what, in Rosalind's language, is "a coming-on disposition." Miss Terry's Portia is too much in love with her lover to suit his reading of the part. It is admired, he believes, by "uncritical people," who are doing their best to "spoil" Miss Terry. The foolishly-belauded "Noctes Ambrosianæ" contained, probably, as much wild wandering talk as could be safely transferred to paper, but "never aught like this." Can it be that the spirit of those alcoholic conversations, somewhat softened and weakened by age, still haunts the cavern of Maga?

Mr. Ruskin lately saw "The Merchant of Venice" at the Lyceum, and after the performance had some conversation with Shylock. "Noble, tender, and true," the impersonation was, he said.

Mr. Stedman has resigned his position as Director of the Music at St. Andrew's Church, Tavistock Place, and henceforth neither Mr. Henry Parker, Mr. King Hall, Mr. Stedman's choir-boys, or the gentlemen of his choir and orchestra, will take any part in the rendering of the oratorios there.

There was some doubt, on the occasion of the first representation of "The Falcon" by the Poet Laureate, whether certain jokes were intentional or accidental. Notably a servant in the thirteenth century, finding his master making love to a lady, enters with the exclamation "Spoons!" which I am given to understand is a modern vulgarism affected by juvenile society when young people are in love. There were various other jests which had a similar anachronistic flavour that puzzled the critical mind.

I have since ascertained that they *were* considered as jokes by the gifted author, and caused him considerable amusement whilst discussing the play. So there was no need so religiously to keep back all laughter on the part of the extremely courteous audience—an audience that behaved remarkably well, and, for a wonder, did not behave rudely when, most unfortunately, the head-dress of Mrs. Kendal fell over her eyes at the most touching and important situation in the play.

Mr. Charles Harcourt, accompanied by Mrs. Bernard-Beere, have made a great success with certain costume recitals from Shakespeare and various classical comedies. At the Brighton Aquarium they received a generous welcome, and will probably be induced to repeat an experiment that is positively tolerated by the goody-goody people who would see Mr. Charles Harcourt as Macbeth and Mrs. Bernard-Beere as Lady Teazle, but would not go into a theatre to save their existence.

A presentation copy of Mr. Burnand's "A. D. C. Reminiscences," magnificently bound, has been presented to and accepted by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, to whom the volume is by permission dedicated. The book has already reached a second edition.

It seems only the other day that Mr. J. L. Toole was laying the first stone of Mr. Knapp's theatre in Glasgow, and now the building is finished and opened with a performance of Madame Favart by a London company. They do not allow the grass to grow under their feet in Glasgow.

Mr. Odell has been engaged for the permanent company at the Haymarket, under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft. On the revival of "Money" it has been assumed that Mr. Odell will take the part of Graves; but that is not the case. Mr. Arthur Cecil, who has played Graves with considerable distinction in the provinces, will resume that character, and Mr. Odell will be entrusted with Sir John Vesey, which has not hitherto been regarded as an eccentric character. Mrs. Bancroft will of course reappear as Lady Franklin, and Mr. Bancroft as Sir Frederick Blount. Alfred Evelyn, the declaimer of mock heroics and flowery bombast, will fall to Mr. H. B. Conway. Mr. Archer has been re-engaged for Dudley Smooth, and no one can play the part better. Mr. Forbes Robertson will be Glossmore, and Mr. Kemble, Stout. A charming Clara Douglas—the very ideal of sweet simplicity—is promised in Miss Marion Terry; and Miss Linda Dietz, a clever and very promising actress, will once more be attached to this company.

I am delighted to hear that Mr. W. G. Wills has been hard at work, and will be amongst the prominent dramatists of the new year. In addition to the promised revised version of Douglas Jerrold's "Black-Eyed Susan," for the St. James's Theatre, plays by Mr. Wills have been accepted both at the Adelphi and Duke's Theatres.

Amongst all the Christmas and New Year's novelties I can find none better than those invented by the ingenious and tasteful M. Eugene Rimmel, to whom children of all ages are indebted, and without whom no party or merry-making would be complete. This versatile gentleman, in his bon-bons, crackers, and Christmas-tree toys, has ever an eye to dramatic effect; he remembers the stage, and fills the air with sweet odours. One of the happiest ideas in the way of fancy this year is the "Aromatic Ozonizer," a simple plan of scattering some fragrant powder on a plate, and the imagination is instantly filled with memories of pine-forests at Arcachon and other happy spots. With the aid of the Ozonizer the dullest room is filled with perfumes, and the mind wanders to delicious climates.

The Theatre.

FEBRUARY 1880.

Our Symposium.

THE CONVERSATION TURNS THIS MONTH UPON

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE HAYMARKET THEATRE.

THE Chairman first proceeded to read out the following letter, from a popular and well-known actor, who was in the original cast of "Money," as performed at the Haymarket Theatre, on Tuesday, December 8th, 1840:

THE OLD SHIP, Twelfth-Night, 1880.

MY DEAR EDITOR,—Your note calling for a couple of pages of recollections of the original production of "Money," at the Haymarket, found me in the company of "merry Doctor Brighton," as Thackeray calls my old and familiar friend, doing the *dolce far niente.* This occupation Macready's stanch friend Forster seemed to consider my special *métier*, for in his criticism on "Money," speaking of my Sir Frederick Blount, of which more anon, he says: "Mr. Walter Lacy had nothing to do, and he did it to perfection;" and now, forty years after that critique was written, I am sitting serenely in the well-known bay-window, where, figuratively speaking, you may catch the spray of the sea among your prawns. You are right, my dear friend, when you say that a question of great moment to the classic ground of comedy lies in the changing hands of the Prince of Wales's and the Haymarket, both famous—one from the *début* in England of the prince of French comedians Frédéric Lemaître, and the other, from the days of Foote, the home of English comedy, and both peculiarly interesting to an old stager like myself, who first appeared as a Poor Player in the Tottenham Street Theatre, called at that time the Queen's, as the stage-lover of the gazelle-eyed Celeste when she fascinated the town as the French Spy, and after some years of severe provincial practice, making a *début* at the Haymarket as Charles Surface to the Lady Teazle who brightened my professional career and shed a radiance round my domestic hearth. Consequently I imagine that any incident or detail connected with either theatre that may come to memory, although unassisted by such books and playbills as repose out of my present reach in my modest library in London, might possibly prove of some slight interest before the witchery of Marie Wilton withdraws its light from the neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square, and the golden wand of her spouse, Squire Bancroft, transforms the faded stage of the Old Haymarket into a temple full of modern appliances and means to boot. Some half a century ago the Tottenham Street Theatre, let me tell you, was fashionably upholstered, and the act-drop painted by Clarkson Stanfield, a copy of which, or one very similar, enriches the walls of the Garrick Club. The stage was adorned by Mrs. Nesbitt, Mrs. Waylett, gentleman Green, and handsome Forrester; and I remember Madame Vestris and her Olympic company playing there, and others of great note. "The Wandering Minstrel" was produced there, with Mitchell as the hero, under the Mayhew management, when it was called the Fitzroy; after which it fell into the hands of Mr. James, who kept it open many years at low prices, until the magic name of Marie Wilton restored it to more than its pristine glory, and made it the most fashionable theatre in London.

My acquaintance with the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, commenced when Thalia reigned there in all her glory, and the comedies of Shakespeare, Goldsmith, and Sheridan were performed by a matchless company, with due regard to costume and scenery. The ladies in "The Rivals" were brought into the Kingsmead Fields in Sedan-chairs, the comedian of unrivalled sparkle, Tyrone Power, playing Sir Lucius. We were no longer in the Haymarket, but in Bath, at its most fashionable period; Brindal, the best impudent valet as Fag, meeting Mrs. Humby, the peerless lady's-maid as Lucy, on the North Parade. "The School for Scandal" was played in 1839, in the costume of the period, cast thus: Sir Peter, Farren; Sir Oliver, Strickland; Sir Benjamin, Wrench; Crabtree, Buckstone; Joseph, John Cooper; Charles, Walter Lacy; Moses, Webster; Snake, O'Smith; and Trip, Brindal; Lady Teazle, Mrs. Walter Lacy; Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Clifford; Mrs. Malaprop, Mrs. Glover; and Maria, Mrs. Fitzwilliam. In 1840 the modern comedy of "Money" was produced, in which I played for the first thirty nights, being the last five weeks of my three years' engagement at the Haymarket. The piece was got up regardless of cost, Count D'Orsay suggesting the costumes; and, as Charles Mathews, with his elegant spider figure, had educated the public in the matter of perfect dressing, we were naturally anxious to show to the best possible advantage. The count's tailor made my clothes, which comprised a complete change for each of the five acts, absorbing as many weeks of my salary. The cast was nervously considered; and James Wallack, having declined Dudley Smooth, it was given to Wrench, whose *sang-froid* and society air suited the part admirably. At the first rehearsal Macready evidently thought I was too slow; but I saw that the best chance for the author and myself lay in opposing a *laisser-aller* manner in Blount to the irrepressible temper of Macready in Evelyn. However, after an ominous consultation with his friend

Forster, the part was taken from me, and John Webster sent for; but it was immediately brought back to me by Welmot with, "Macready says John Webster's too fat," and I was left to deal with it after my own fashion, which was fortunate for myself and Sir Edward, who came to me on the stage the morning after the comedy had been submitted to the public, and thanked me "for a creation." At the same time, from Mr. Frederick Yates, the Lemaître of the English stage, I received an offer of Mr. Wrench's enviable position couched thus: "Dear Sir,—If you will come to the Adelphi, I promise that for every sentimental hero you shall have a regular rattling Wrencher as a set-off." But Mr. Charles Mathews, who witnessed the performance with Mr. Yates, gave such a favourable account of it to Madame Vestris, that I was invited to the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, where my wife was then playing Titania in Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream." So I opened there the following season as Captain Absolute; meanwhile I was not sorry to be out of harness in order to enjoy a spell of my *dolce far niente*, and, after a comfortable domestic dinner with my dear wife before she attired her delicate form for the fairy queen, I was able to enjoy the comedy of "Money," which is always made so much fuss about from the auditorium of the Real people. The ladies, God bless them, played enchantingly. The poetic grace and melodious rhythm of Helen Faucit contrasted charmingly with the piquant naturalness of Priscilla Horton. The queenly Mrs. Glover, a marvellous specimen of the *ars est celare artem*, was delightful as Lady Franklin, and bewitching in the dancing duologue with Webster, whose Graves was brimful of quaint drollery and sharp appreciation of the humorous situation, the actress subjecting him to her quivering eyelids, and winning him with the softness of a summer wave, to the wish that mutually gleamed in their expressive faces, until the audience, sympathising, heartily applauded the fun. Macready's Alfred Evelyn was amazingly bright and telling, the forced gaiety being as natural to the man as appropriate to the character. The actor who made the heartiest impression was David Rees, who combined a Listonian gravity with the raciness of John Reeve. He burst on the stage with an avalanche of cravat, shirt front, and white waistcoat covering his capacious chest, forcibly reminding me of Beau Brummell's fine linen, plenty of it, and country washing. There was a breezy freshness about the man, his great round red face luminous, full of breath and explosive power; he rushed in like an express engine, puffing with electioneering excitement, and seeming to expand until he filled the whole atmosphere. He shot out the words, "Popkins for Groginhole!" over the crowded pit, as from a hustings, in a way that electrified the audience. With this my connection ceased with the old comedy theatre; but Bulwer's comedy of "Money" was played every night until Saturday, March 13, 1841, when eighty representations were completed. I played there four parts afterwards on special occasions, viz. Benedict and Don Felix to the Beatrice and Violante of charming Miss Reynolds, Lord Tinsel to my dear wife's Helen, and Alfred Highflyer to Mrs. John

Wood's Maria, at the command of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Mr. Buckstone, on assuming the management, sent me a laconic note: "Dear Walter Lacy, are you in the market? If so, you shall not be long out of the Haymarket." I was engaged probably at the Princess's. My last reminiscence of "Money" was one of my most agreeable successes as Dudley Smooth at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane—"The Man about Town" being well within my *métier* on and off the stage.

By-the-way, no doubt you are aware that candles were used to light the Haymarket Theatre so late as the year 1842, the terms of the then lease forbidding the use of gas. What a change in the Haymarket of to-day, with its brilliant appearance and Italian mosaics! *Tempora mutantur.*—Walter Lacy.

Your request to me, Mr. Chairman, to lay before your circle any interesting reminiscences of the "little theatre in the Haymarket" which I may find in my memory's wallet is, to my mind, a flattering privilege. But unfortunately, rummage my wallet as I may, I can drag forth from its corners nothing which can be considered worthy of your attention in an historical point of view—nothing, certainly, which has not been better told by others, and, in every sense, far more deserving of important consideration.

Although I was on several occasions connected with the Haymarket Theatre—I may mention three: the production of "Ranelagh," that of "Second Love," and that of "World and Stage," the first a much altered adaptation of a French play, "Un Mari qui se dérange," the others two original comedies—my recollections are almost entirely personal, and, even as such, anecdotical. Of my principal exponents, Buckstone, Mrs. Fitzwilliam, and Compton are no more; William Farren and Howe have drifted into other lines in other theatres; Jane Reynolds and Amy Sedgwick have long since retired from the stage; and the younger Mrs. Fitzwilliam (Ellen Chaplin) has sought new fortunes in Australia. Not one of the old company has remained to appear in the new temple of comedy.

As regards the performance of "Ranelagh," one reminiscence of a trait of humour in poor old Buckstone flashes up. The play was given on alternate nights, during an engagement of Miss Charlotte Cushman, I believe—during the performances of some "star," at all events—and these nights, three times a week, were looked on as "off-nights." A leading daily paper had attacked the piece as "bristling with improprieties"—we were more prudish then, if possible, than now—and I complained to Buckstone of what I considered a piece of gross injustice. "I didn't see the paragraph," said the manager, with a merry twinkle in his eye. "But the accusation will account for the long string of carriages on the off-nights. Carriage-people are sure to come in shoals when they think they can see anything naughty."

My reminiscence as connected with "Second Love" (an ill-advised title, forced on me by Buckstone, I never quite knew why) is of a far different description, and not lacking a certain degree of interest. I had been suffering from a bad rheumatic fever. For many days I was delirious; and how I dreaded closing my eyes in sleep, to suffer from those terrible dreams! A more pleasant vision came early one morning. I dreamed that Buckstone sat by my bedside and said, "Cheer up, my boy, you are getting better. And I'll tell you what you shall do for me. You shall write me a comedy, in which I can play the devoted cousin of a blind girl. She shall treat me like a faithful dog, name me 'Fido,' and wear a whistle for me round her neck. Before I come on she shall call 'Fido! Fido!' and whistle; I shall say 'Bow-wow' behind the scenes, and everybody will laugh." The memory of the dream remained strong on me as I woke. As soon as I could get to work I wrote my drama, starting from this little basis. Buckstone played the faithful doggie; Miss Reynolds called "Fido," and whistled for him; Buckstone barked "Bow-wow" behind the scenes; the audience laughed (as it was sure to do); and all turned out as prophesied to me in my dream of fever. The piece was a great success; and for a long time it remained a favourite stock-piece in America. It is still played frequently in the country as "The Blind Girl's Fortune."

As regards "World and Stage," it may be noticed as affording Miss Ellen Terry her first appearance in a part of any considerable importance—that of Lady Castlecrag. I, at least, cannot forget the sweet promise she gave, as a very young girl, of future excellence in a performance full of sympathy and *finesse.*

Now, has all this been worth telling you, as connected with the old Haymarket—the defunct Haymarket of so many historical theatrical recollections? It is dead, and a new Haymarket is rising, phœnix-like, from its ashes. *Le Roi est mort! Vive le Roi!*—J. Palgrave Simpson.

The "Court," as it was called, of the Haymarket Theatre was an institution both peculiar and original. It was founded during Mr. Webster's management; the oldest member cannot determine the precise date, but there exists the printed record of a trial which fixes a period—it runs thus:

"Saturday, May 4th, 1844.

"The Court of No Conscience. Sittings during the Easter Piece. Before Sir Robert Strickland, the Lord Chief Justice of Un-Common Pleas; the Lord Chief Baron Buckstone. Martin *v.* Brindal. Sergeant Tilbury for the plaintiff; Sergeant Holt for the defendant; Mr. Howe, foreman of the jury; Mr. Planché attending as the representative of the press."

On this occasion the judges were robed, and sat in due state. This farce, or extravaganza, was being acted simultaneously with the performance on the stage, and it would appear that fun, good-humour, conviviality, and good-fellowship were the coins placed beneath the foundation-stone of the institution which flourished through so many years.

The Court was composed of the members of the Haymarket company—in fact it was a club, and, like all clubs, ladies were not admitted to membership. It was held in the dressing-room over the green-room. A list of the members, neatly written, framed and glazed, hung on the wall; and the names were arranged in the order of the respective birthday of each member. It was the duty of each member to provide a jug of punch on a Saturday night, as his turn came round, as also on his birthday. Marriages, or other happy events occurring to a member, were also causes for celebration among the brotherhood, and were invariably taxed by the Court with relentless severity.

The Court opened generally about half-past eight, or at the most convenient time to suit the Lord Chief Justice—that is to say, when he should have his first long wait in the comedy then being acted. An arm-chair was placed in the centre of the room, other chairs around a table, on which stood the smoking aromatic jug of punch. The members would assemble according to their opportunities. On the entrance of the Lord Chief Justice all rose and bowed to him, a glass of toddy was then handed to his lordship, and if the occasion was special, the health of the member was proposed and drunk; if it was only the usual Saturday night sitting, the toast consisted of "Our noble selves."

The only fines in the Haymarket Theatre seem to have been those awarded by the Court. It would sometimes happen that a good-humoured report of some trifling matter would be laid before the judge, whereupon the delinquent would be put on trial, and always condemned—costs or damages, four shillings. This paid for whisky, lemon, and sugar. There was no court of appeal against the sentence.

There is one instance of a fine so comic in its nature that it may be worth recording. Mr. Buckstone had acted in the comedy. Mr. Compton was to act in the farce, "Shocking Events." The two comedians met at the door of the café in the Haymarket, the one having finished his work, the other on his way to commence it. They entered into conversation as well as into the café, and Mr. Compton forgot that Time would not wait for him. In the theatre the farce had commenced; all went merrily enough until the call-boy went to summon Mr. Compton. Oh, horror! it was discovered that he was not in the theatre. What was to be done? Mr. Chippendale, acting in the farce, apologised to the audience, when in came Mr. Compton, and almost immediately he rushed upon the stage, and the piece went on to its end. Of course this formed the subject of a trial, and Mr. Compton was found guilty. However, the matter did not end here. Mr. Compton brought a counter-charge, accusing Mr. Buckstone with having detained him; and that as manager Mr. Buckstone ought to have been aware that Mr. Compton was wanted. The plea was admitted, and the Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Un-Common Pleas *fined himself.*

When a comedy was running, and all the actors were busy in their parts, no birthday or special occasion happening during the week, the clerk of the court, little Clark, would propose a "whip;" this being collected, the punch was brewed, and Mr. Buckstone invited as a guest, an invitation he never refused, and at the same time he never forgot to return the compliment. The leading topics of the day were freely discussed—politics, theatricals; anecdotes and experiences of early life were told, sometimes re-told; but the humour of the telling was always a set-off against the antiquity of the story or joke. There were a few honorary members, personal friends of Mr. Buckstone; they had notice from the clerk when their turn came to hold a Court, and they invariably attended. Latterly the Court was held in the sitting-room of Mr. Buckstone's private house, adjoining the theatre, and communicating with the stage. Whether the Court of No Conscience will be re-opened with all its old formality and fun at the New Haymarket Theatre, I of course cannot possibly say; but I for one can look back with pleasure to the recollections, kindly faces, and genial companionship associated with this convivial institution.—Walter Gordon.

The Chairman, at the earnest request of the company assembled, communicated a few Haymarket recollections, compiled at his request by Mr. Henry Howe, who acted in the old house for forty years and four months:

January 12th.

Dear Editor,—I hardly know how to comply with your request, except by way of a little chat on the subject of the old theatre. When I first joined the Haymarket Company, the house was lighted with oil behind the curtain, and in front with wax candles; that plan continued for six or seven years in my time before gas was introduced. The performance commenced at seven o'clock, and for years half-price to pit and boxes was at nine o'clock, an arrangement strictly adhered to as to time, the public being admitted often in the middle of a scene; afterwards half price was altered to the end of the act nearest to the hour of nine, the performances lasting always up to twelve o'clock. On occasions I have been acting at one in the morning; and frequently in July I have seen day breaking before I could get to my lodgings. Osbaldiston made his first appearance at the Haymarket in "Clari," a three-act piece, at ten minutes to twelve o'clock. I well remember once playing the farce of "John Jones" in a boxing-night bill of 1846, finishing the following morning at past one o'clock, and getting through the piece in twelve minutes. It was on the first night of the production of "The Invisible Prince," one of the most charming of Mr. Planché's burlesques, which had been preceded by the two-act piece of "The Round of Wrong," by Bayle Bernard, and the two-act piece of "The Queensboro' Fête," by Planché. We have often played two five-act comedies on one night, "The School for Scandal" and "Wild Oats," "Clandestine Marriage" and "The School of Reform," etc. It was the custom to change the bill every night, and it was the office of the walking gentleman of the theatre to announce to the audience the programme of the following night, which sometimes, from illness or unforeseen circumstances, could not be carried out. I remember once having myself announced "The Way of the World" for the next night, there being no rehearsals at the time, and on my coming up to the theatre at night from Isleworth, where I lived then, to play in the announced piece, I found "The Clandestine Marriage" in the bill; but the actors were always expected to be perfect in a certain number of comedies, and ready to play them. I had a list of some ten or a dozen given me when I first went to the Haymarket to be ready in case of being wanted. Rehearsals were always called early, frequently at ten o'clock—never later than eleven—but seldom prolonged over two o'clock. The system of rehearsals was entirely different then to now. The stage-manager never drilled individuals as to the positive action of a part. He would explain the purport of the character or scene, and then you were left. As my first stage-manager, Mr. James Wallack, then expressed it, "You must paint your own picture." This is perhaps to be explained by the assumption that every artist engaged at the Haymarket was thoroughly proficient in his profession, proved by his antecedents elsewhere.

It was the etiquette of the time, if any artist, not acting on that night, paid a visit to the green-room of his theatre, to come in full dress, as he would to any friend's drawing-room. There was also a distinct understanding that no newspaper criticism should be brought into the green-room.

When I reflect and dot down the names of the artists engaged at the commencement of Mr. Webster's management, I can scarcely credit my own recollections, for I mention the names with whom I joined an already very full company playing there at the time. You will understand this when I state that Mr. Macready, Mr. Phelps, Miss Helen Faucit, Mrs. Warner, Miss P. Horton, and Mr. Howe appeared on the Monday following the closing of Covent Garden Theatre, under Mr. Macready's management, so that these additions made a company which could cast out four, and in some instances five, artists in every line of business, for each artist's line was so defined that at the reading of a new piece each individual could tell what part was allotted to him before the characters were given out. These underwritten names belonged to the company at the same time. Leading men: Mr. Macready, Mr. Phelps, Mr. Elton, Mr. James, Mr. Wallack. Leading ladies: Miss Helen Faucit, Mrs. Nisbet, Miss Fortescue, Mrs. Warner. Old men: Mr. Farren, sen., Mr. Strickland, Mr. Tilbury, Mr. E. F. Mathews. Old women: Mrs. Glover, Mrs. W. Clifford, Mrs. Stanley. Comedians: Mr. Fred Vining, Mr. Lacy, Mr. Brindal, Mr. Holl, Mr. Howe, Mr. Hemming, and the great Tyrone Power, Irish comedian, Mr. W. Lacy, Mr. Webster himself, Mr. Wrench, Mrs. Humby, Miss P. Horton, Mrs. Stirling, Miss Julia Bennet, Madame Celeste; with a host of lesser celebrities. So distinctly has the Haymarket been the home of comedy, that even with such aid in tragedy as the names I have given, the comedy-nights had the greatest houses. I remember, in the case of Mr. Macready, whose salary was 25*l.* per night for four nights a week, that Mr. Webster only played him two nights although paying for four, devoting the others to the representation of comedy. In the summer we have played five pieces a night, two-act comedies and farces; this has gone on for weeks, generally when Power was with us. A very successful piece scarcely ever ran more than thirty nights. The first play that had a run longer than that under Webster's management was "The Love Chase," and I have heard him say that it did not pay expenses till the twenty-third night. The next great success was Shakespeare's "Taming the Shrew," got up as when originally produced, that is without scenery. The whole proscenium was a rich crimson velvet hanging, with velvet curtains opening in the centre, on which, as the different scenes progressed, a card was pinned on to the inner curtain, which opened in the centre, through which all the entrances and exits were made, "This is a street in Padua," "This is Petruchio's house," etc. etc. The novelty was great, and drew good houses.

I have heard Webster say, a Mr. David Rees from Dublin Theatre Royal drew him as much money personally as anyone he ever engaged—an admirable actor of old men and low comedy, the original Stout in "Money;" but he was not long in the theatre, his death being a great loss to Mr. Webster. The elder Farren's Grandfather Whitehead was another monetary success. I went into the house to witness it on several occasions, but so great was the effect upon me by Mr. Farren's extraordinary pathos, I could not see it without the fear of making my emotion the subject of observation, so that I never did see the piece to the conclusion. The first entire London company that ever went the round of the provinces was the Haymarket company; they went out at their own risk, and Webster was so pleased with the effort of his company to fill up their vacation, the Haymarket being closed for decoration, etc., that he played with us the first night in all the towns we went to without charge, not even accepting his railway fare, as he said, to show the people they are really the Haymarket company; it was a very profitable and remunerative undertaking, and was continued every vacation during Webster's management. When Mr. Buckstone became manager of the Haymarket, he took the company on speculation and realised large profits. To show how certainly it was a great success, on one occasion, Mr. Buckstone having given up his tour one week before we opened in London, we stayed on our own responsibility for five nights at Bradford in Yorkshire, and the receipts of those five nights paid every soul engaged at the rate of nineteen nights—that is, paid the same amount of money each would have received for three weeks and one extra night at the rate of our regular salaries. At the termination of the management of Mr. Webster, who seceded to the Adelphi, a supper and ball were given at the theatre, including both companies. Mr. Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris, after their Covent Garden management, brought great houses to see the original production of "Used Up," etc. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, on their return from America after their marriage, found a second engagement was not a success, until the Palace plays were done at Windsor Castle; that restored their attraction for a time, as Charles Kean had the management of them; but I have heard Webster say the worst receipt he ever had at the Haymarket was from "Much Ado about Nothing," in which Mr. and Mrs. Kean acted.

Mr. Buckstone's first great success was little Blanche Fane, who drew large houses for months in "Little Treasure," etc.; next "The Spanish Dancers," to great houses; "Unequal Match," and "Contested Election," by Tom Taylor, and of course in your own recollection, Sothern in "Dundreary," Gilbert's "Palace of Truth" and "Pygmalion and Galatea" were attractions, and brought a great deal of money. I remember seeing at the Haymarket, before I was on the stage, the elder Farren play Shylock for his benefit; it was a failure, and the next night Mrs. Glover as Falstaff, also a great failure, for although the most unctuous of feminine comedians, she seemed like a weakly youth playing the part. Mr. Buckstone made a large sum of money during the run of "Dundreary" at the time of the second Exhibition, but the long vacations while we were in the country greatly injured the theatre, and the great increase of theatres, some of which paid much more attention as to the getting up of the old comedies than we did, added to its decay. Webster was the lessee for eighteen years, Buckstone for twenty-three, who was an actor in the Haymarket some six or seven years before Webster's management. Mr. and Mrs. Kean, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, Mr. and Mrs. Wigan, and, as you know, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Mr. and Mrs. Chippendale, Mrs. Fitzwilliam the elder, and Miss Reynolds, were great Haymarket favourites.

Now I think I have run over the principal incidents I can recall; I have written as I remembered.

Believe me, always yours faithfully, Henry H. Howe.

The Chairman, in conclusion, read to the company a very interesting memorandum, prepared for him by Mr. E.G. Lowne, containing authentic copies of original letters which form part of that enthusiastic gentleman's "Macreadiana," a collection of material illustrative of the theatrical career of that tragedian.

The following letters were written by W. C. Macready, to Morris, the proprietor of the Haymarket Theatre in 1817, this being Macready's second year in London, when he was apparently seeking an engagement at the *Summer* Theatre—the big houses being then closed for the season. Note that he writes his name then as McCready, which he subsequently altered to Macready:

"Sir,—I was honoured with your note yesterday morning, in reply to which I beg to offer the following proposals to the consideration of the proprietors of the Haymarket Theatre. I am ignorant of Mr. Jones's terms, but I should have no objection to accept them at a hazard, or a salary of fifteen pounds per week. If these are acceptable I shall be most happy to conclude an engagement.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant, W. McCready.

"58, Frith Street, Soho. Wednesday morning."

The above letter bears a pencil endorsement: "Propose at 14*l.*"

To this Macready replies:

"Sir,—Business which it was not in my power to defer, will, I trust, apologise for my seeming inattention to your favour.

"The terms which the proprietors of the Haymarket Theatre have done me the honour to propose are so unequal to the remuneration which the country holds out to me, that I am compelled to decline them. I cannot avoid adding, most reluctantly, since with them I resign the prospect of that improvement in my profession which I should have hoped for under the auspices of Mr. Colman.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant, W. McCready.

"58, Frith Street, April 2nd, '17."

The earliest Haymarket bills I can find amongst the few I have left are 1797–99; in the former I find: "April 8th, 1797. 'The School for Scandal,' with King as Sir Peter Teazle; Miss Farren, Lady Teazle; John Palmer, Joseph Surface; Robert Palmer, Sir Benjamin Backbite; Charles Kemble, Careless; Miss Pope, Mrs. Candour;" and underlined, "by particular desire." On Easter Monday, the Tragedy of "George Barnwell," the part of Millwood by Mrs. Siddons (being her last appearance in that character).

"On Wednesday" (never acted) "a new Comedy, in which Mrs. Jordan will make her appearance." Later on I find Charles Kemble playing Count Almaviva (his first appearance in that character), with Palmer as Figaro, and "Dickey Suett" as Antonio. Chippendale (the father of our old Chip') is also in the cast, which is in August, 1799.

I thought I could have laid my hand on the bill of Charles Kemble's first appearance as Vapour in "My Grandmother," a part in which Oxberry says that he was not only hissed but remonstrated with by a gentleman in the pit upon the impropriety of his attempting a part so completely beyond his powers. In July, 1806, I find "Five Miles Off, or The Fingerpost," a comedy in three acts, being played with Rae in the principal character and Edmund Kean as a "super" in the same piece.

A wealthy English parvenu, who began life with a lapstone on his knee, invited Kulak, the great pianist, to dinner, and immediately after the meal insisted on his playing for the company. Kulak complied, and invited the snob to a dinner at his residence on the following Sunday. After the meal Kulak astonished his guests by placing a pair of old shoes before his rich parvenu friend. "What are these for?" queried the latter. Kulak replied: "Last Sunday you did me the honour to invite me to dinner and insisted upon my paying with music. I have returned the compliment, and require my shoes to be mended. Every man to his trade."

A DRAMATIC INSTITUTE.

By Professor Henry Morley.

AN unskilled person may set machinery in motion, but when he has done so he should keep his hand out of the works, and leave their management and use to the skilled engineer. If I obey the wish of the Editor of The Theatre and write a few lines in explanation of a plan put forward by me in a lecture lately given at the London Institution on "The Future of the Stage," let me be understood as doing so with no purpose of further meddling. I have set machinery in motion, it is now in charge of the right men, and so far as I am concerned in this matter, my part is played out and I make my bow.

There was really nothing in my lecture to attract public attention except a suggestion for carrying out an old wish by some definite plan that might be good or bad, but could, at any rate, be taken as a basis of discussion. No man who has worked in committees of any kind can be without experience of the fact that nothing is done towards a final resolution until somebody, no matter who, formulates his notion of what the resolution ought to be. Then work begins, each point is discussed, here a clause is struck out, there one is added, here one is transformed; over such discussion the real extent of differences in opinion becomes clearly defined, and a conclusion satisfactory to almost all is thus attainable. There is no other way. I had, and I have, no particular affection for any one of the small details of my scheme. It is enough that its main object, the incorporation of actors so that they shall show a firm front to the public as a liberal profession, and have power in themselves to strengthen its efficiency, has met with full assent, and that my suggestion of details has served to call forth definite action. The meeting of managers and actors at 307, Regent Street, which I ventured to take part in calling, left the future safe when it appointed a committee of actors who have the confidence of their fellows to devise the scheme of an Academy which should hereafter be submitted to a meeting of the whole profession.

Meanwhile here is the plan that I suggested by way of a beginning of definite discussion. It is the scheme just as it was written down for use in the lecture, and I will add only a word or two of comment:

Sketch of a proposed Society which might be called

THE DRAMATIC INSTITUTE,

For aid to the liberal training of young Actors, and for furtherance of the higher interests of the Stage in England.

It is suggested:

That, after some first costs of establishment and furnishing have been met, all Donations to the Institute of money, in aid of its work, be placed to the credit of an Endowment Fund; and that this Fund be regarded as capital of which only the interest is income that can be used to meet current expenses.

That the main income of the Institute be derived from the payments of its Fellows, Members, and Annual Subscribers.

That the Subscription of a Fellow be £4 4s. a year, or a life composition of £21; and of a Member £2 2s. a year, or a life composition of £10 10s.; and that Fellowship and Membership be open to none but Actors and Authors. That friends of the Drama who become annual subscribers to the Institute, if subscribing £4 4s. or more, be entitled to all the privileges of a Fellow, and if subscribing £2 2s., be entitled to the privileges of a Member, except the right of voting or otherwise taking part in the management of the Institute; and that Annual Subscribers of one guinea be entitled to attend the half-yearly public entertainments given by the students of the Academy, which it will be the chief work of the Institute to maintain.

That any eight of the chief English actors, any eight well-known dramatic authors, and any eight known men of letters who are interested in the welfare of the English stage, and who are the first to agree to work together for the founding of the Institute, be the first Fellows, with power to add to their number, and that they act as a Provisional Committee; but that afterwards election to the Fellowship be only by ballot, at half-yearly general meetings of the Fellows and Members, the Fellows electing annually from their own body a President and a Managing Committee.

That, without waiting for all that is necessary to secure the working out of the whole scheme, as soon as the donations and subscriptions justify a modest beginning, the work should begin with the renting of a house large enough to allow the gradual development of the Institute according to some such plan as the following:

The first and chief work should be the formation of an Academy for the training of young actors and actresses, upon a plan similar to that adopted for the training of young painters by the Royal Academy. Study in this Art School should be free to all young actors and actresses who have shown skill enough to obtain a first engagement at a London Theatre, and to others upon two conditions: (1) that they are really looking to the stage as a profession; and (2) that they satisfy the Managing Committee with fair evidence of an aptitude for it.

The students in the Academy of this Institute should be first thoroughly trained in all technical details of their chosen profession, under a Manager who should be a retired actor of some mark, receiving his salary from the Institute and provided with rooms in the House. This technical instruction would correspond to the more elementary training—the drawing from the antique—in a Fine Art School. The advance to higher training in the development of original power, instruction in the subtleties of stage interpretation applied to the highest forms of dramatic literature, should be given by the great masters of the actor's profession; so that apt learners would be taught by the great actors, as apt learners at the Royal Academy are taught by the great painters who go in turn to give their unpaid help. Several rooms would be needed for this work of teaching, one of them must needs be a large room fitted with a stage. On this stage, used daily in teaching, there should be once in each month a morning performance by the students, open to all Fellows and Members, and twice a year there might be a public performance in some theatre lent for the occasion, by students of the Academy, to which Fellows, Members, and annual subscribers of one guinea should be admitted free, and the public generally upon payment.

Associated with the Art School there should be a Library, which it should be the object of the Institute to make, in course of time, a complete collection of English Dramatic Literature, and of books that treat of it or of any of its accessories, as costume, etc. As soon as possible the care of this collection should be entrusted to a Librarian, who should also be a paid resident officer, and who should also be a retired actor or actress. In the first year of the Institute it might be necessary to unite this office with that of Secretary, but as soon as the funds sufficed, the two offices should be separated, and the Institute made to continue the means of earning to three retired members of the profession, who may be as glad to receive help as they are able to give it. If the Institute should become prosperous, it may find more occupation for retired actors and actresses, who, as paid officers, give value for their salaries, and thus obtain some necessary help without the slightest loss of independence.

The general culture of the students in the Academy of the Institute should be encouraged to the utmost, and advanced when necessary, as far as the funds allow, by grants in aid. Scholarships might be founded, tenable at either of the chief London Colleges, for the study of language, literature, and fine art. There might also be travelling studentships for some who were most qualified to profit by the observation of great actors in France, Germany, or Italy.

More than this might be done with means sufficient; but it must not be forgotten that assurance of a very modest income would enable the work to be really begun.

Once well begun and steadily worked at, all those developments which time and experience may find to be the best will surely follow.

That was all I wrote, but there was more said in explanation and comment. The plan, it will be seen, is in two parts: (1) Embodiment of the Profession by an Institute. (2) Formation under the Institute of a Dramatic Academy. Whether the coming arrangements take the name of Institute, or Academy, or any other name, is of no consequence if these two purposes be fulfilled. If only one end be attainable I would prefer the first. An Institute really embodying the profession can develop in due time whatever the profession may believe desirable, Academy or anything else; but a new Academy has hardly power to develop into such an Institute as the profession wants.

My scheme does not say whence the donations are to come. I certainly had in mind the liberality that might be shown by many friends of the drama, together with that of the prosperous chiefs of the profession. But when, at the meeting, Mr. Hare took independent ground, and indicated an unwillingness to receive help from the public in doing what the profession was quite able to do for itself, and others evidently were of like opinion, I own that my heart went with him and with them. Here let me be permitted to say, by-the-bye, that if I had not by some accident missed Mr. Hare's letter to *The Times* I should have paid all honour to it in my lecture. At the time of lecturing I had not heard of it, and was unconsciously his fellow-worker. Certainly I could not wish to sail under a better captain. In his manly and earnest speech at the meeting there was not a point at which I felt difference of opinion, except when he seemed unwilling to allow that a large design may have a small beginning and yet grow to full proportion, if it be fashioned with a right capacity for growth, and with the largest attainable aim kept from the very first in view.

As to the Fellows, Members, and Subscribers of the Academy or Institute—whose rates of subscription are, of course, only put down as definite suggestions to discuss—in these I followed the plan to which experience has brought the Institution of Civil Engineers, one of the most successful and serviceable of recent professional incorporations. They had originally Members and Associates—Membership was an honour of the profession, the Associates were professional men and outside friends who took interest in this profession. The Institution has lately, by a Resolution of December, 1878, divided its Associates into two classes—Associate-Members who belong to the profession (and of whom there are now 1080), and Associates (590) who do not. The Institution of Civil Engineers has also 584 students on its list. In my plan Fellows and Members correspond to those Members and Associate-Members, and my Subscribers correspond to the Associates. But I am disposed to lay much stress upon the advantage to be obtained by including among Fellows and Members of the Dramatic Institute some representatives of the highest literature of the day. The President should be always an actor, holding office for, say, three or five years, and receiving with that office the highest honour that his brethren can confer upon him.

The rest of the proposal needs no comment. Its details were only given as a formula that would express some definite notion.

In what manner of house the work can be begun, when it has been shaped by the skill of men who really know what should be done, is of small consequence, so that the scheme be sound and aim high enough. It may be possible, though I should think not, to begin without a house, by use of the *foyers* of our chief theatres. Clearly, however, first there must be a plan agreed upon by the profession, and then it will be time to consider when and how such a plan will best be carried out. The premises at 307, Regent Street, which I first saw, and joined in asking others to look at during the half-hour of waiting till the meeting was assembled, could be very well adapted to the needs of an Academy, but would barely be made to suffice for all needs of such an Institution as I had in mind. There would be no room for meetings of the Fellows but the theatre; no rooms for resident officers; and the Dramatic Library, which ought to become in time the best in Europe, would have to make its beginning on the walls of one of the rooms used for the teaching of students. There are good possibilities in the rooms if nothing better can be found; but there is no reason why they should be jumped at before the scheme of the proposed Institute or Academy has been fully discussed, carefully drawn up, and submitted to a meeting of the whole profession. The constitution of the new representative Institute will be, of course, thoroughly popular. It will include no close body of twenty, thirty, or forty self-elected men; but if it have any resemblance at all to my design as I endeavoured to explain that in the lecture, it will be an embodiment of the profession as a whole, so managed that its honours represent, for those who win them, the common voice of the profession. At the meeting to which I have referred there was not a word spoken in any other sense than this.

Down at Sandringham they have been play-acting in private for the amusement of H.R.H. the Prince and Princess of Wales and their family circle. The entertainment was given in the first instance in the Coach House at Sandringham, before the Princess of Wales and her daughters. The performers were all members of the royal household with the exception of Mrs. Greville, the sister of Lady Probyn, who took a very prominent part in the successful amusements, and Miss Scholcfield, daughter of a neighbouring clergyman. The programme consisted of recitations by Mrs. Greville and a clever selection from the immortal "Pinafore," on which Mr. and Mrs. Baskcomb, Mr. A. H. Cross, Miss Florence Scholcfield, and Mr. C. Penny specially distinguished themselves, assisted by an excellently-trained chorus. In fact the performance was so eminently successful that it was ordered to be repeated before H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, who was not present on the first occasion. It will thus be seen that the present mania for amateur acting has a very distinguished precedent. Nothing is better for the stage, for it keeps alive a taste for dramatic art, and in H.R.H. the Prince of Wales the drama has a most earnest, experienced, and critical patron.

Signor Salvini has added two more dramas to his last, "Il Mulatto" and "Sofoale."

MR. KENDAL.

With Eurydice on his fist, Mr. Kendal is a manly representative of the falconer of the Middle Ages—not of Philip the professional falconer, "with his merlin on his arm," as a song of the last generation inaccurately stated the position, but of Messer Federigo degli Alberighi with his matchless peregrine. Picturesque in his appearance as Federigo, Mr. Kendal has rarely undertaken a part less calculated to display his especial ability. The Italian gentleman, gorgeous without, is inwardly too like a monochrome to afford the actor any scope for display. His love and his woes take the form of narrative, and narrative, however beautifully written, is hard work on the stage, and must be excessively awkward to Mr. Kendal, whose prime faculty is the expression of varying emotion. It is true that he made his mark in London in Mr. Gilbert's quaintly-imagined and successful plays, and as Prince Philamir, Pygmalion, and Ethais, acted well and in perfect good taste. Neither in "Peril" nor in "London Assurance" did he appear so thoroughly at home. Still he always played conscientiously, and like a sound artist waited for his opportunity to come to him. It came at last, as it does to them who know how to wait without leaving off work. In "Diplomacy" it was necessary to represent a not very clever, not very strong young man, loving and foolish, eager and nervous, a personage as unlike an English attaché as could well be imagined, but absolutely necessary to the reproduction in English of M. Victorien Sardou's "Dora." The hysterically emotional young man is frequent in French novels and dramas, and perhaps exists in real life, but whether real or not, the excitable Captain Beauclerk is indispensable. It was not an easy part for an English actor to play, especially if he had been accustomed to the reposeful school. Nevertheless Mr. Kendal made a great hit as the emotional young man, who is overwhelmed by the supposed discovery that the woman to whom he has given his name and entrusted his honour, is an adventuress and a spy. If Captain Beauclerk behaved himself more like the *héros de roman* than an Englishman, it was no fault of English translator or actor, and the violent emotion of the young man was delineated with very great power. In passionate feeling Mr. Kendal left nothing to be desired, and the famous "scene of the three men" was as great a success in London as in Paris, if not greater. As played by Mr. Kendal, Mr. Clayton, and Mr. Bancroft, this celebrated scene inspired no unfavourable comparisons between the English actors and MM. Berton, Train, and Dieudonné. Mr. Kendal fairly astonished his audience, and stirred them into an enthusiasm entirely foreign to their ordinary condition. The display of genuine power in an actor whose style had up to that time been characterised rather by graceful ease than by force, was a revelation to London playgoers who had never seen Mr. Kendal play William in "Black-Eyed Susan." His wonderful acting in the latter part of Douglas Jerrold's play amply confirms the opinion formed on the first night of "Diplomacy," that in Mr. Kendal England possesses an emotional actor of the first rank.

Bernard Henry Becker.

THE ATTITUDE OF AUDIENCES.

By Lady Pollock.

IT is a pity that Shakespeare, when he wrote the most perfect directions to the player that any teacher could devise, should not also have suggested regulations for the playgoers. He does indeed glance at their faults, he does enjoy a contemptuous fling at the "barren spectators," but he ventures no farther against them. Nor in all the efforts proposed for the amelioration of actors and dramas has any hint been offered for the improvement of audiences. It is unkind to neglect them so much, their need being perhaps the greater. Will anyone deny that their existence is no less necessary to the play than that of the players themselves? And such being the case, is it not evident that their condition and behaviour must be of importance to the whole theatrical enterprise? Yet they are left to drift without any manner of pilotage.

For long years I have been grieved with their vagaries, and I here propose to hold out warnings as to the courses they are most bound to avoid. It is intended that audiences should be receptive; the object of their existence within the theatre is to hear what the players have to tell them; therefore they should listen. Each should be resolved upon the composure of demeanour which induces attention, otherwise neither he nor his neighbours will derive interest or amusement from the representation. All depends upon sympathy between actor and spectator; and while it is the player's business to throw himself into the part he performs, it is that of the audience to penetrate his meaning and to go along with him, showing approbation, when the performance is good, by attention during its continuance, or applause at its conclusion. If the performance is bad, the spectator can manifest disapprobation at the end; if it is intolerable, he can depart at the close of the first act; but if he doesn't listen, he is clearly not qualified to know whether it is bad or good.

The division of plays into acts gives an audience ample opportunity for the expression of impatience if they feel it, for change of posture, for movement, and for conversation. But though all this is well known, and it is not disputed that to be an audience is to be a congregation of listeners, the behaviour of some among them is frequently such as to suggest a doubt on this matter, for they seem to think that they come to be heard. Merely glancing at the actors as the curtain rises, they proceed to the discussion of their own affairs: it may be the changing moods of the Stock Exchange, or the whims of a well-known beauty. Perhaps one of the speakers is deaf, in which case the talk of the other is shrieked into his ear. If ever they interrupt themselves for a moment, you may be sure it is to censure the players; if for half a second it occurs to them that they took their places to see the play, they direct a rapid look at the stage and pass sentence: "Very bad this! These fellows can't speak!" or, "What a shocking lot!" They are possibly not ill-natured, but they feel more knowing when they find fault, besides affording themselves a reason for their inattention. Meanwhile they are torturing some honest neighbour, with no wish to hear them and a strong one to hear the play, and who finds every effort to fix his attention upon the scene useless. Their voices jar upon his nerves, frustrate his hopes, and destroy the repose of mind and privacy of imagination necessary to his enjoyment. I don't know how such annoyances can be effectually checked, but it has sometimes occurred to me that the actors should have fair play, and be allowed to admonish their audiences.

Less offensive, but almost as tiresome as the babbling playgoer, is the pedantic one, who knows every syllable of the text, and audibly checks the performers; he appears to doubt the existence of the prompter. Then there is the lady who can't forget her own dress; who makes, at short intervals, fresh adjustments of her skirts, drops her cloak from her shoulders, lifts it on again, has frequent recourse to a scent-bottle, and flutters with a fan. Fans, by-the-bye, are formidable weapons in unskilful hands; they can strike the air with an irritating sharpness, especially when made of paper. It happened once at a gentleman's house, where Macready had undertaken to read, that in the midst of one of his great scenes he halted suddenly, and, pleading indisposition, took his leave. The tragedian afterwards confessed to a friend that it was the sound of a lady's fan perpetually in agitation which made it impossible for him to continue.

There is a troublesome playgoer who does not belong to the class of the wicked; he is simply ignorant, and, having no faith in the players, has continual recourse to his book. He neither hears nor sees, he does nothing but hunt. His leaves are always rustling, and he is always exclaiming: "Is it scene four? no, scene five. Well then, where's the Gaoler? The Gaoler's in the book: 'Scene five, enter Gaoler.' Oh no it isn't; the leaves have stuck somehow! Ah! here we are: 'Scene five—old man's house.' (Glancing at stage): So it is—old man's house."

Then there is a chilly playgoer, who, when Macbeth is about to do his murder, will complain of a current of air from the stage; or when Lear falls over the body of his child, will rise with a loud shiver to put on his great-coat; and there is a once-a-year playgoer, who is nervous, suspicious, and in a constant state of agitation. To begin, he can't believe in the number of his stall, and summons half-a-dozen officials round him during the opening scene to give him full assurance; the slightest stir in the pit suggests to him a riot, and if there is a whistle in the gaspipes he is certain the house is on fire. A very annoying class of playgoers comes from the suburbs in large parties; they are good people at home, and are more occupied with each other than with the stage. In their friendliness they keep up a constant whisper or buzz: "How are *you*, Bobby—well seated? Do you like it? Are you enjoying it? And you, Carry—are you comfortable? Is it what you expected? Oh! Have you got your watch, Harry? What's o'clock? Remember we must be at the station punctually. Keep looking at your watch." Hereabouts the family party is hushed by an irritated neighbour, and now the whispering begins, to which the buzzing may be preferred, for nothing so penetrates and excites the ear as an eager whisper. Finally, they get up to go just as the last scene begins, and then the searching for things dropped, the adjusting of little shawls, and repeated consultations of poor Harry's watch to make sure of the hour, rob the rest of the house of their due portion of entertainment. In the Ladies' Gallery at the House of Commons there is an inscription to be seen by all upon their entrance: "Silence is requested;" and it is rarely disregarded. Why should not similar inscriptions appear within the walls of our theatres?

Alfred de Vigny, the distinguished author of "Cinq Mars" and other well-known works, told Macready that he attributed the general superiority of the audiences at the Français to the exclusion of ladies from the stalls: "You will never have a thoroughly attentive, devoted audience," he said, "while you admit family parties to the stalls with their tittle-tattle and their flirtations." However this may be, it is certain that the mass of men who fill the stalls and pit of the Français exercise a considerable influence over the whole house. If the *balcon* is too eloquent, or if it makes any kind of stir, the stalls call it to order. On one occasion I remember a child of four years old in a private box pointing to the chandelier with wonderment, and exclaiming in shrill tones: "*Voyez, maman, comme c'est beau, ça doit être très couteux.*" Five gentlemen rose in the stalls, and, directing their glasses upon the box, uttered in chorus the word "*Chut!*" The mother then coaxed the child, muffled its mouth, and succeeded in silencing it for five minutes. But longer repression was impossible, its amazement broke out anew, and was reiterated in the same sentence, which lasted a long time because breath was taken between each syllable: "*Voy—ez—ma—man—comme—c'est—beau—ça—doit*"—etc. The five rose again, and this time they said, "*Sortez!*" upon which the mother took the child in her arms and left the theatre.

There is a description of playgoer, both dignified and instructed, who would not on any account disturb the business of the scene, or substitute his own dialogue for that of the dramatist, and who commands respect by his decorum, but who frets you by his aspect. He is the prejudiced playgoer. He cannot free his mind from old fetters; it is stubborn against new impressions. However great the actor, or however enchanting the actress, he closes his sympathies against them. He goes to the play from curiosity, and he sits through it in disgust. At the end of each act he enters his protest: "This won't do; this is not like the old days—no, no. I see no Kean here, nor Macready; the great ones are dead. Well, well; let those like it who can, but I can't forget." And why should he forget? Why should not the appreciation of what was noble in one artist open your mind to a further appreciation of fine qualities in another? If we reverence Michael Angelo, must we therefore shut our eyes to the greatness of Titian and Raffaelle—must we reject the whole domain of art in order to remain the devotee of one artist? This cramping of our faculties is surely the worst compliment that we can pay to the genius which first awakened them. Poetry and art claim homage wherever and in whomsoever they appear; and the best tribute we can pay to the influence of our first teacher is to maintain our sensibilities ever alive to the impress of truth and beauty.

DRAMATIC INCIDENTS.

[Note.—Thinking that it will be useful to print from time to time certain dramatic exercises, derived from history or popular romance, which can be used either for purposes of elocution or for acting in private, I am happy to commence the series with "The Bruce's Crisis," by Mr. Martin Tupper.—C. S.]

"THE BRUCE'S CRISIS."

By Martin F. Tupper.

Scene—Night, and a storm: two warriors asleep at the foot of a tree. Enter, slowly in the dark, several armed men.

One speaks. Hush, you there, hush!—they're asleep, and little wonder; hunted about by old John Lorn and his bloodhounds, this King o' Scots, as they call him, along with the follower he's so fond of—some say his foster-brother; look, here they lie, the pair o' them, at our wills; and a mint o' blood-money along with 'em:—hist! hush you there—not a whisper, nor a footfall: 'tis but the thrust of a sword, and there's a thousand pounds English to each one of us: hist!—curse him—he wakes!

Bruce. What ho! the Philistines are upon us, Donald!
Up!—Ha! you wretch, to hew a sleeping man!
What?—killed at once outright, with cloven skull?
But I'll avenge thee! Down, ye murderous villains!
Ha! what, another? and another—another?
How many more to cleave and hack i' the dark?
They dint and batter my good battle-axe!
[*He fights; and kills some, driving the rest away. Then, after an interval—*
But—woe to me, for dear true Donald dead!
Yet must I leave thee weltering here, my kith;
For that staunch bloodhound's bay is in mine ears
Nearing me, and I may not risk the life
Of Scotia's rightful king: away then—whither?
Yea, God Himself shall be my guide and guard;
And thus, once more into the driving rain
For some safe refuge: surely, nigh to this
The Douglas should have met me with his escort?
I trust in Heaven, and wander darkling on,
Assured that He, Who rescued me at Dalry,
Who by a spider taught me hope at Rackrin,
Who brought me help at Carrick, and Whose hand
Saved me from those three traitors in the way,
Will still defend the king's anointed head.
What's here?—a handy hovel? in the blaze
Of that last flash a moment visible;
And haply full of murderers, like those last,—
Well, anywise, 'twere shelter from this storm,

And—should the royal Bruce confess a fear?
Open, for charity, good folk? [*He knocks at the door.*
A traveller
Craves room beneath your rooftree, in Christ's name!

A Woman looks out at a side window and says:
Who be ye thus at midnight? All true men
And all poor travellers be welcome here
For sake of one poor one, too poor withal—
As hunted and despoiled of all his rights!

Bruce. Mean you the king, good dame?

Woman. Ay, blessings on him,
Our own dear lawful king, Robert the Bruce!
O but I pray to live to see the hour
When, harried though he be with hounds and horns,
He yet shall reign the chosen king of Scotland;
I pray thus, night and day.

Bruce. Since you so love him,
Know, dame, the Bruce is here! I am the king!

Woman. God save him! But why thus alone, afoot,
With none to guard and wait on majesty?
Where are thy loyal followers, O king?
Yet,—art thou verily my king?

Bruce. Behold!
Twined round my casque, the narrow rim of gold
Wherewith at Scone they bound this feverish brow;
Look on me, dame! the Bruce thou knowest now?
Is this not he?

Woman. O glad and glorious sight!
Yea, yea—come in! we'll shelter thee to-night—
Ay, and for ever—O, the happy hour!
We'll give thee all we are, and all we have;
I and my sons will serve thee to the death;
Thou shalt lack nothing now that we can yield,
Even to life. But hark! was that a horn?
I hear the tramp of soldiers—quick! come in,
Come in and bar the door. O, safe! O, happy!

[*Bruce goes in. Enter soldiers under* Edward Bruce *and* Lord James Douglas.

Douglas. Near this should be the tryste: a wild wet night;
Anyhow, we wait awhile; to wander further
Without a moon were perilous. Halt them, Edward!
I fear me that the king hath missed his track,
Or that the fiend, MacDougal, on the way,
Hath caught him with his sleuth-hounds. Open to us!
We'll break the door else: ho, there! Who's within?

Woman [*at the window*]. A poor old widow, and her honest sons.
What would your worships?

Edward Bruce. Only a rest, good woman,
And well-paid shelter.
Bruce [*rushing out*]. Ha! my brother's voice—
Edward! and good Lord James! and all these friends!
O happiness! so many true men left;
For much I've dreaded traitorous Galloway
Had killed my last of loyal followers:
Yea, for they melted from my side like snow,
Dropped one by one, till I am here alone—
Alone? O, not alone! Friends, soldiers, subjects,
So many left, and so well armed and hearted?
On! let us now surprise the treacherous Lorn,
Or ever Clifford or Sir Aymer wot it.
And then, and then, down upon each by turns,
Breaking their forces piecemeal, one by one,
Ev'n as they melted up my faithful few!—
Now, let the minion-led young English Edward
Look to his crown, nor dream of touching mine!
His Gascon Gavaston and Hugh De Spenser,
Mean parasites and panderers, bloat him out
With the black hope that, like his guilty father,
He, too, shall win a bad historic name
As "Hammer of the Scots:"—go to! his noblest
Is but to be a sponge, a leech, to drain
Our national life-blood through tax-torturing:
But from to-day no longer shall the foe
Trample us down and lay our honours low.
My James of Douglas, hearken: from this hour,
Dwindles to naught usurping England's power,
And I, the king, to Scotland's heart most dear,
Shall reign supreme in peaceful glory here!

SHYLOCK IN GERMANY.

By W. Beatty-Kingston.

In Two Parts.—Part II.

"THE Merchant of Venice" was performed for the first time in Berlin on the 16th of August, 1788, the part of Shylock being sustained by Herr Fleck, the leading German tragedian of the Royal Theatre. In the "Theatrical Annals" of that year I find an elaborate criticism of Fleck's impersonation; his rendering of Shylock's character appears to have been at once dignified and passionate, mainly based upon a loftier conception of the rôle than that hitherto generally adopted by German Shakespearian students. Tubal, as a contrast to Fleck's haughty and refined Hebrew, was played as a low-caste, peddling Jew; and the critic calls particular attention to a trait of subtle realism exhibited by Fleck in vulgarising his tone and manner down to Tubal's level during his scene with that abased and cringing broker.

Seydelmann, who played the part, before my time, in Germany, is stated by the chief critical authorities upon modern Shakespearian impersonations, to have been the greatest Shylock of the nineteenth century. His make-up was that of a vigorous man, between fifty and sixty years of age, of upright bearing, firm step, carrying his head high, and speaking his words in deep and sonorous tones. Shylock, as rendered by Seydelmann, was the incorporation of a persecuted nation's accumulated wrath. Even in his outbursts of fiendish rejoicing over Antonio's ruin, in his sanguinary yearnings to take the life of his arch-enemy, in his tremulous exultation whilst anticipating his revenge, he compelled his audience to feel that there was some justification for all those manifestations of extravagant excitement. All the sorrows and angers of his oppressed race seemed to simmer in his breast until at last they moved him to unreasoning rage and blotted out all human sympathies from his overwrought nature. When his servant deserted him for a Christian master and his only daughter fled with a Christian lover, he turned like a wounded lion upon Antonio, grimly resolved to make that detested foe pay, in his own person, for all the wrongs inflicted upon Shylock by Christendom. Although he horrified the public by the malignant intensity with which he emphasised his savage lust for Antonio's blood, he contrived to enlist their sympathies on his behalf when Portia's sentence shattered all his hopes of vengeance. His physical collapse under the decree ordaining his conversion to Christianity is alleged to have been painfully realistic; and the dominant impression prevalent amongst his audience upon his final exit was that he had been hardly dealt with

Bogumil Dawison, himself the scion of a distinguished Jewish family, represented Shylock as a religious martyr. Whilst playing the part as a shifty, thrifty Jew, he never allowed the public to waver from his own settled conviction that Shylock had suffered moral degradation through the vileness of the Christians with whom he had had to do, in one way or another. He made it only too clear, to crowded houses without number, that Shylock, in suffering a terrible penalty for an unfulfilled criminal project, the motive for which, however, grew out of the persecutions inflicted upon him by his Christian tormentors, was most unjustly punished. His Shylock, as well as Dessoir's and Devrient's (both of whom followed Dawison's lines in almost every respect), was conspicuously Jewish, in gait, demeanour, accent, and gesticulation. It was, on the whole, more Robsonian than Irvingite—extraordinarily powerful in the pathetic and tragical episodes, all but overstepping the frontier of the comic in the irate scenes with Antonio and Tubal. But Dawison—poor fellow, he died a lingering death some few years ago—was a remarkable and highly memorable Shylock, overflowing with a vigour of delineation that sometimes smacked of the burlesque, but always riveted your attention upon the deeply-exercised Jew, who, though encompassed round about by a host of merciless foes, fought one and all to the bitter end with indomitable courage. Dawison's personal conceit was inordinate; and, as he was a "star" of the first magnitude, before whom abashed managers hung their diminished heads, he used to clip and prune the pieces he played in, so that the interest of his audience might be concentrated exclusively upon himself. Whenever he consented, therefore, to act the part of Shylock, he insisted that the entire fifth act of the "Merchant" should be omitted from the performance, maintaining that the dramatic climax of the play was fully attained at the close of the trial-scene, and that when the curtain had dropped upon his final exit, there could be no reasonable occasion for raising it again. No other German actor of any eminence, so far as I am aware, has ever taken so outrageous a liberty with Shakespeare or the theatre-going public!

By far the most psychologically interesting impersonation of Shylock that I have ever witnessed in Germany was that of Theodore Doering, the *enfant gâté* of the Berlinese, who died the other day at a ripe old age, only a few weeks after he had completed his fiftieth year of service to the Prussian King as a Koeniglicher Hofschauspieler, or Royal Court-Actor. On the celebration of his Jubilee, William I. decorated him with the Order of the Red Eagle, a distinction never theretofore conferred by a Hohenzollern-Brandenburg upon a stage-player. Doering's line was essentially comic; indeed, he was the first comedian in Germany for at least twenty-five years of his brilliant career—but, having obtained permission upon I forget what occasion to play Shylock at the Schauspielhaus, he made such a tremendous hit with his entirely "new and original" rendering of the part, that no other actor was cast for it at the Royal Theatre during my eight years' continuous residence in the Prussian capital. His Shylock was one of splendid contrasts and artistic blendings—neither distinctly tragical nor pronouncedly comical, but so deft a dovetailing of both "lines" that the intellectual joinery defied detection. He delineated the character as that of a man terribly in earnest about everything he says and does, and feverishly anxious that everybody, friend and foe alike, should take him *au grand sérieux*, but whose utterances and actions constantly assume a ludicrous aspect because his notions and views differ so essentially from those of mankind at large. He did not attempt to shine as the vindicator of Jewish wrongs or as the champion of an oppressed race, but took up an absolutely vacant stand amongst German Shylocks as a sort of moral hybrid—a cross between the heroic and the degraded. This marvellous by-play, and the electrifying effects he produced by certain grisly chuckles, heartrending cries, and ferocious gestures, entirely his own, are altogether indescribable. Nobody who has seen him in the part is likely to ever forget him. His exit from the judgment-chamber was the most masterly achievement in dumb-show recorded in the annals of the Schauspielhaus. After having exhibited so exuberant a vigour and vivacity all through the trial that he apparently experienced no small difficulty in keeping his sheer *vis vitæ* under decent control, he broke down under the iniquitous sentence of the "wise young judge" into an utter helplessness and infirmity extremely pitiful to contemplate. Staggering feebly to the door, his eyes fixed in a glassy stare painfully suggestive of his having been stricken by blindness, he lurched up against the frame of the doorway, and, after clinging convulsively to it for a few agonised seconds, dropped heavily to the ground in an inert heap, uttering a groan of infinite despair that thrilled every heart in the house. Strong men's faces used to turn deadly white as that dreadful groan resounded through the theatre, hushed to an unnatural and almost oppressive stillness. Doering—peace to his manes!—was indeed a Shylock *haud obliviscari.* His mastery over his audience was unbroken from his first entrance to his final exit; and this, I may unhesitatingly assert, was the only dramatic characteristic common to himself and Henry Irving. Their conception and rendering of the part differed in almost every conceivable aspect; but I am bound to confess, having been a wanderer in many lands for more than two decades, during which I have heard "The Merchant of Venice" in well-nigh every European language, that their two Shylocks have impressed me more deeply and pleasurably than all the other impersonations of that character that have hitherto come under my personal cognizance.

Vienna has only produced two remarkable Shylocks within the last half century, La Roche and Lewinsky, both of whom invested the character with all the more repulsive features it is so eminently susceptible of assuming when interpreted in conformity with Rümelin's definition. It would, perhaps, be more strictly correct to say that Lewinsky inherited La Roche's rendering of Shylock from that truly great actor, when the latter retired, in 1852, from the Burg upon a pension, which he still lives to enjoy, after having played the Jew and several other leading Shakespearian parts on the imperial stage for sixteen consecutive years. Lewinsky, *facilis princeps* amongst contemporary Austrian tragedians, has sustained the part ever since La Roche's retirement, unrelieved by any "double" or substitute until within the last two years or so. In the autumn of 1877 a young actor of good provincial repute, named Mittelwurzer, obtained an engagement for leading business at the Burg, under the special stipulation that he should alternate with Lewinsky in Shakespearian *premiers rôles*, such as Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Lear, and Shylock; and I remember seeing him in the last-named part just two years ago, as I passed through Vienna on my homeward route from the seat of war in the East. To my apprehensions he appeared to be a vulgar mouthing ranter; and I must do the cultivated audience of the Burg the justice to record the circumstance that he scarcely "got a hand" throughout the whole evening's performance. "The Merchant of Venice," however, has been but seldom played of late years in the Kaiserstadt. Shylock is neither a favourite with the Viennese public, nor with Lewinsky himself, whose special "line" is heroic tragedy; whilst Mittelwurzer's blatant declamation and frenzied gesticulations in the part have drawn down upon him such severe reprehension from the dramatic critics of the Austrian Residenz, that he regards Shylock with the same aversion that is alleged to be entertained towards holy-water by His Satanic Majesty.

Before concluding this necessarily incomplete notice of the Latter-Day German Shylocks whose names are identified, throughout the length and breadth of Fatherland, with the immortal Shakespearian Jew, I will take leave to set down a few facts and statistics connected with the performances of the "Merchant" in Germany, some of which may perhaps not prove altogether uninteresting to the professional readers of this magazine. The most eminent of the Berlin and Vienna Shylocks I have already enumerated; and I should be guilty of manifest injustice to several highly-gifted artists, were I to forego all mention of the excellent actors who have successfully played that part upon the boards of celebrated German theatres, now become provincial, but formerly—in the good old ante-imperial days, when literature and the arts flourished in a dozen little royal, princely, and grand-ducal German capitals—centres of attraction to which first-class talent, dramatic and musical, was remuneratively attracted. The great Shylocks of Munich, within the memory of man, have been Jost, Grunert, and Wohlbrueck. Leipsic still boasts of her "glorious Klaeger;" Hanover, of Carl Devrient; and Weimar, of Lehfeld. About half-a-dozen various adaptations of the "Merchant" have been performed at different times upon the German stage, Öhlenschlaeger's being the version most generally adopted. At the Royal Theatre in Berlin, exactly one hundred and ninety-five representations of Shylock have been given between the 16th August, 1788, the date of Fleck's first appearance in the part, and the 31st December, 1879.

THE GAY CITY.

Monte Carlo, January 25th, 1880.

NEVER has indolent writer been placed in the position of the luckless individual who signs this rambling article. Driven from his wadded and quilted stronghold in Paris by stress of weather, failing health, and general breakdown, he sought refuge on this Rock of Joy, the world forgetting, but alas! *not* by his editor forgot. An urgent telegram from my indefatigable editor informs me that the British public are anxious anent the fate of Sardou's new theological comedy at the Théâtre Français (plays go for nothing in France unless they are "psycheological," like those of Dumas, or "scientific," as the "Tour du Monde"), and that my post is in Paris, where I ought to be now, endeavouring to bribe the box book-keeper, or overawing the manager by representing to him the enormous influence of this bright little magazine, so as to obtain admission to the first performance of the latest theatrical sensation. Fortunately for me, I can answer that the play is not due till long after this month's number has gone to press, and that I will attempt to justify the heading to my prose by the broad assertion that the Gay City is now encamping on the borders of the lapis-lazuli waves of the Mediterranean. So send me no more telegrams, bring me no more reports, but leave me beneath the palms, seated in the sleepy gardens of high-cliffed Monaco, where the prickly pear fights for supremacy with the bold cactus. I will turn away from banks of blossoming geraniums, and looking lazily out to sea, shade my eyes from the genial sun, and talk in my own idle desultory fashion, trying to prove the truth of the following paradoxical utterance, namely, Paris for the nonce is not in Paris, but here, basking in the noontide heat, shooting at pigeons, watching the French and English horses jump the brook at the steeplechases of Nice, flirting everywhere—at lawn-tennis, and on the Promenade des Anglais—or trying a system to break the bank at roulette or trente-et-quarante. There are several orders of Parisians, but I, at present, need only split them into two broad camps, and call them Parisians who work, and Parisians who have been born under such lucky constellations that they have never had to think of aught save their own amusement, and never mean to do anything else. I have to speak of this latter stratum only, for my readers can easily guess that the Parisians who traffic, keep shops, barter, bank, and otherwise try to appropriate and keep for the longest possible time a small portion of that floating capital which is known by the generic term "other people's money," have little to do with that laughing-gas called Parisian gaiety. They dig and delve, scrape and save, endow their daughters, and pay their sons' debts just as you do, who live in the dainty suburbs of London, and travel down to Throgmorton Street daily, easily accumulating a large fortune by the simple process of carrying backwards and forwards with you a mysterious but natty little black leather bag. Would you believe, lively Londoner, who I meet on the boulevards, with red guide-book and gravel-coloured jacket, that there are thousands of people in the naughty capital of France who never visit a theatre; and many more thousands of brave hardworking women who pass their entire lives behind a butcher's counter, in the windowed *caisse* of a grocer's shop, or enthroned with *carafons* of brandy and lumps of sugar at a café; living in the strictest economy and thriftily putting by, sou by sou, for the child that is down in the country with sturdy nurse or poor relation, and that is adored with all the blind enthusiasm of which a real Frenchwoman is capable, when she takes to loving?

The seamy side of Paris has never been properly shown to English eyes; the reverse of the medal that bears upon its surface cafés, balls, and haunts of vice and amusement is still waiting for a patient veracious pen to astonish some of my prudish countrymen, and to prove to a few hypocritical Germans that there is plenty of virtue, and not a few examples of abnegation, sacrifice, and self-help, to be found in the town which is the world's great inn—the gigantic international and universal rendezvous for all who seek pleasure, variety, holiday, and excitement. Those are the people who paid out the Prussians so quickly; the miniature capitalists who pop their savings into the State coffers. For them cheap tailors have no attraction, they ape no gentility in shoddy garments, but put by for a rainy day and patch and repatch their cerulean blouse, laughing slyly at the butterflies of fashion, the haunters of club and *coulisse*, who form the gay part of the population. And, strange to say, these last folk are mostly not Parisians at all, but English residents, North and South Americans, Jews of all nations, and slightly damaged electro-plated counts and barons from Italy, the land of lemonade. Add to these the members of the Jockey Club, of the Cercle de la Rue Royale, the pick of the Stock Exchange basket, a few artists, journalists, and critics, and you have done with Paris that laughs, dances, gambles, goes the pace generally, and lives the big life—*la grande vie, la vie à grandes guides*. At the head of this strange herd I must place the band of the Houseless Rich, the visitors and dwellers on the threshold, who, although brimming over with pocket-money, have positively no home, no family, no friends, and are received nowhere, except in those shady retreats where money is the only passport needed. These martyrs you see yawning at every first-night, visiting and revisiting every entertainment, every little hall that can boast a proscenium and footlights. They are *parvenus* from every clime; men who are under slight clouds in other lands, and ladies whose lives are written in the records of Hannen's decrees. These incongruous elements—which my friend from the North of England is prone to take for the population of Paris—are in town in November, in the south in January, in Italy a little later, back again in June. Then comes Deauville in August, and the hygienic visit to springs of evil-smelling waters in September. They all know each other, more or less, and I have met them all here this winter at Nice, Cannes, Mentone, and Monaco, as I expected, lodging in hotel or furnished villa, startling our dear unpretending English girl-visitors, with their cloth dresses and comfortable flat-heeled boots—a motley troop—the Houseless Rich!

Said I not aright, when I declared that the Gay City was displaced for a time, and how could I help following my *pupazzi*, my amusing marionnettes? Do you not know that on this rock, facing the sparkling sea, stands one of the most handsome theatres of the world, coming only second in beauty to the Grand Opera in Paris, built by the same architect, and opened last year? Beneath the same roof stand the never-tiring roulette wheels, around which cluster the worshippers of the golden calf; so that after listening to a glorious orchestra discoursing sweet music, or between the acts of an opera, with Faure as principal singer, one can enjoy the strange feeling of suddenly coming upon a crowd who are playing for dear life, soothed by the accents of mellifluous croupier, and the sound of the rattling wooden rakes that gather up the money lost, or put into position the proffered stake. What a grand opportunity for the moralist! Theatre and play, Thespis and Mammon, under one roof, *panem et circenses*, money and pleasure—the whole of life; the be-all and end-all of existence, compressed into one brilliant temple, glistening with gold, proud pillars of marble and patient mosaics, standing as firm as the Colosseum, on that most splendid foundation—human folly!

Here have I seen the old year out, and swearing like a Frenchman by my sacred word of honour, I regret not the defunct three hundred and sixty-five days of 1879, that deserve no complimentary funeral oration. In artistic dramatic history the past twelve months will hold no place—alas, poor year! Thou hast lived of failures and revivals; scarce a success floats on the surface of an ocean of mediocrity to mark thy place in man's memory. Thou hast not resolved the knotty problem concerning the establishment of a second and popular opera; a cheap lyric theatre for native talent—problem that was pending when thy predecessor 1878 faded away. Truly, thou didst rid us of a bad director at the Odéon (M. Duquesnel), who sent his troupe to Lyons, and laughed at the obligations of his *cahier de charges*, and gave us in May a good manager at the opera, M. Vaucosbeil, who has had no time to get up anything new, but who came into an inheritance—the revival of "Masaniello." One great triumph only, "L'Assommoir," and that not a success of literature, but merely of curiosity and realistic stage effect. The subsidised houses have vegetated upon very little. The company of the Théâtre Français has been away in London, and only gave us three novelties of one act apiece, "Le Petit Hôtel," "L'Etincelle," and "Anne de Kerirlier"—the last a dismal failure—with a revival of the "Mariage de Figaro," that gave rise to much adverse criticism. 'Tis true that Molière's house has got a new ceiling, but that is barely sufficient. The Opéra Comique has been closed for repairs, and reopened with the strongest *claque* that has been known for many a year in Paris—a strange fact, especially when it must be remembered that the Knights of the Horny Palms have already been eternally banished from the Opera and the Français. Plenty of revivals here, among which a meritorious one of that incomprehensible "Flute Enchantée," with four short operas that blossomed forth only to wither away again in the back parlours of rash music publishers.

The drama proper has not been in a precisely flourishing condition. Two of our biggest theatres seem to have decidedly voted for fairy plays and purposeless show-pieces. "Cendrillon" still rages at the Porte Saint-Martin, to the delight of very young people, who go to see the tricks and changes, and of very old children, who rush to admire the fairies. "The Black Venus" triumphs at the Châtelet, and turns the stage into a zoological garden, with its caravan of real camels and grotesque animals. At the Théâtre des Nations, "Notre Dame de Paris" was a praiseworthy effort, and things seemed looking up there, till the revolutionary play, "Les Mirabeau," dropped upon us like a wet blanket. With the decline of the romantic style must be noticed the gradual increase of that legacy of the empire, opera bouffe, which shines out resplendent at several points. The Nouveautés, with "Fatinitza," revealed to Parisian playgoers the serious qualities of Suppé, the Austrian composer. At the Renaissance, "La Petite Mademoiselle" and "La Jolie Persane" only just paid their way. "Pâques Fleuries" was but too soon forgotten at the Folies Dramatiques, where the recent success of Offenbach's "La Fille du Tambour Major" will atone for many errors. A new director, M. Cantin, started at the Bouffes Parisiens with "Panurge," and then came "Les Noces d'Olivette." These were only tolerable, but the old house will take a deal of "working up."

Serious comedy has met with many ups and downs. "L'Aventure de Ladislas Bolski" was only half a success at the Vaudeville; but then the revival of "Les Lionnes Pauvres" showed us the growing taste of the public for plays that turn upon incidents of our daily life. We want authors here who will work for us and consult our tastes. Céline Chaumont acted at this theatre for a short time, but was frigidly received. She is so clever that it would be a pity if audiences who once adored her were to tire of her sweet mincing ways and agreeable mannerisms. We wanted to laugh in '79, and broad farce had a fair innings with the antics of the Hanlon-Lees at the Variétés, where the year began with "Le Grand Casimir"—a story of life in a circus—and finished with Hennequin's "La Femme à Papa." But how wonder at success with Dupuis and Baron, Judic and Chaumont to cater for us? The Palais Royal gave two editions of the same play, "Le Mari de la Débutante;" then came "Les Locataires de M. Blondeau," which, as "French Flats," has crossed the Atlantic to delight the New Yorkers; and three failures of no importance. Of all the baggage of the Gymnase only one piece survives, and that is Gondinet's "Jonathan"—with Saint Germain's creation of a devoted Yankee—the last production of the veteran manager, Montigny, who retires shortly, after a reign of twenty years and more. The Nouveau Lyrique, at the old Gaîté, after annoying us with such dreary stuff as "Guido et Ginevra," closed its doors, as the unlucky year died out. But we must not forget that 1879 granted us the divine Patti at the Trocadero for a day, and gave us Mdlle. Heilbronn at the Opera.

And now, 1879, bring out thy dead and let me hastily count thy victims. Clairville, one of the last representative French authors, who revelled in the old vaudeville with saucy couplets and the long review of past events. Baron Taylor, the philanthropist, the founder of a flourishing dramatic fund; Roger, the one-armed tenor, and deep-voiced Belval—two ancient glories of the opera; Fechter, long since forgotten here; Varney, author of the celebrated song, "Mourir pour la Patrie," and Georges Petit, a courageous author who died just before his play, "Papa," came out at the Palais Royal. Ah! bad year that has gone, thou hast liberally done thy sexton's work, and yet upon thy barely-closed tomb I would fain speak a few good words for thee. If I can find but little praise 'tis not my fault. How can I thank thee in the name of dramatic art for the rigorous winter that caused half of our playhouses to close their portals, thereby effacing all the profits of the manager's *summum bonum*, a rainy summer? The dramatic and musical harvest has been but a meagre one in France, and I am ashamed to say that there seems to be little or no improvement in the style of intellectual amusement in England, Germany, or Italy. With this—to a Parisian mind—consoling thought, rest in peace, old Eighteen Hundred and Seventy Nine! Alas, poor year!—The Bald-Headed Man.

THEATRICAL NOTES FROM BERLIN.

By Hofrath Schneider's Ghost.

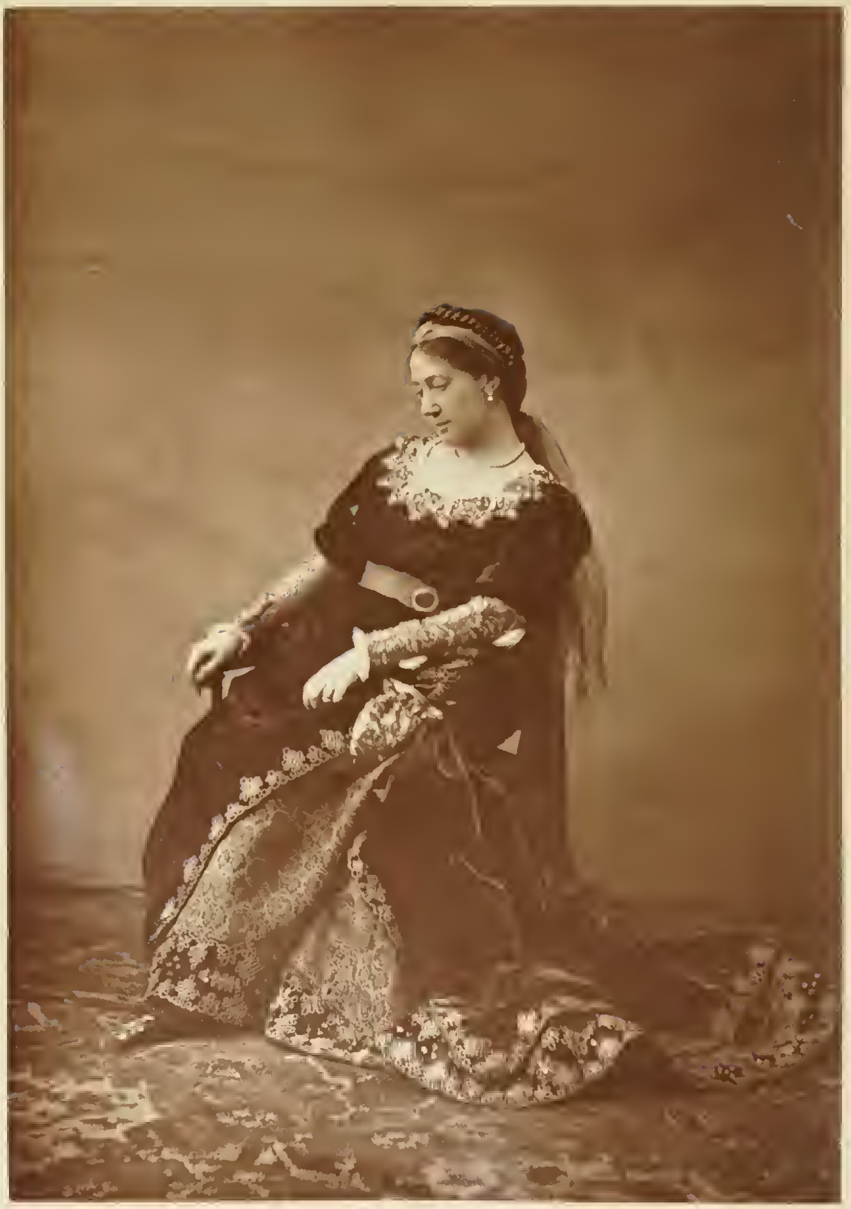
We can only boast of two dramatic novelties worthy of mention this month, although our play-writers — play-adapters would be their more appropriate denomination—have been uncommonly busy and prolific of late. And a vast amount of rubbish they have produced, at once so heavy and so mawkish that even the mighty theatrical appetite of my much-enduring compatriots has proved unequal to tackling it. In the flesh, I wrote a good many successful plays, and, even in my present disembodied condition, I am vain enough to believe that there was more good solid stuff, in the way of telling situations and lively dialogue, in one of my pieces than is to be found in half-a-dozen of the boneless and nerveless "society dramas" it is my doom to listen to as I wander, night after night, from one of my old haunts to another. But we old ghosts, like a good many ancient bores amongst the living, are inveterate *laudatores temporis acti*; and the dramatic productions to which I take exception are, doubtless, eminently suitable to the taste of the present generation. Your famous Alexander Pope—whom I, by-the-way, only know personally as a confirmed railer against modern literary style—is my authority for endeavouring to believe that "whatever is, is right;" and if my faith in that comfortable axiom be ever shaken by spasms of hypercritical doubt, it is promptly steadied again by my knowledge of the fact that Moser, Lindau, Anzengruber, and others *ejusdem generis* too numerous to recapitulate, are chronically in the receipt of lucrative *tantièmes* from managers all over Germany.

Ernest Wichert's four-act comedy, "The Prince's Friend," was brought out with an extraordinarily strong cast at the Schauspielhaus the other night; and whatever may be my opinion of the play's intrinsic merits, I am free to admit that it could not have been better acted, even in the palmiest days of that Royal Institution to which I belonged nearly half a century ago. Its plot is a complicated one, bristling with improbabilities and anachronisms, and culminating in an anti-climax. The hero, reigning duke of a petty German state, has been transferred abruptly from the university to the throne. By nature an idealist, he has steeped himself during his student-life in democratic theories, and, Diogenes-like, despising the accessories of wealth and rank, yearns to discover a Man. At Marienbad, whilst taking the inconceivably noisome waters of that Bohemian Bad-Ort, he lights upon the object of his search in the person of a Dr. Malthus, who displays a fine thoroughgoing indifference to his exalted station, and is oppressively *bürgerlich*, to all appearances, in his thoughts, habits, and manners. With some difficulty the duke persuades the doctor to grant him his friendship; having acquired which, he proceeds incontinently to fall in love with Malthus's pretty niece, and becomes an ardent suitor for her hand. The doctor, however, will not hear of such a *mésalliance*, and dismisses his highness with a curt refusal. Consequently he falls into disgrace with his sovereign, who causes him to be placed under strict police surveillance, and soon discovers that the pretended Malthus is in reality his own kinsman, Prince Oscar, the representative of the elder line of his ducal house, with whom his deceased father, in order to avoid the risk of a war of succession in the duchy, had entered into a secret compact for the ultimate union of the two branches of the family by the marriage of his son, the future reigning duke, to Prince Oscar's niece and sole heiress. The prince has adopted an alias in order to make the acquaintance of his son-in-law *in posse*, under circumstances enabling him to study the young gentleman's true character, and has kept Princess Cecilia in absolute ignorance of her illustrious birth. But the overwrought duke, when he finds out his "friend's" real rank, conceives himself to be the victim of an intrigue, and rejects indignantly the Serene hand which he had so eagerly craved when he believed it to be that of a democratic physician's poor relation. His suspicions and susceptibilities are, however, eventually allayed, and all parties, even those concerned in the underplot, which constitutes the comic element in the play, are made happy.

Julius Böhm's "A Waltz of Chopin," in one act, was originally produced at Munich, where it fell through, despite the ingenuity of its plot and humour of its principal situation, chiefly by reason of the silly puerility and hideous dulness of its comic "business," which turns upon a sausage and a box of toys, respectively intended by a tiresome schoolmaster and his objectionable wife as presents, secretly to be despatched to their juvenile son, an absentee from home, who, if he resemble his parents, must indeed be a painfully stupid person. Apropos of Munich, I have just heard that Count von Moy, King Ludwig's first master of the ceremonies, has lost his office and been permanently shelved *en rétraite*, on account of a play recently written by him and brought out at the Stadttheater. This play, intituled "A German Nobleman," incurred His Majesty's high displeasure, because its hero is made by the author, first, to refuse compliance with a royal "command" to dinner; and, secondly, to bestow his high-born daughter upon a plebeian portrait-painter. These heinous offences would in themselves have sufficed to render Count Moy's position at the Bavarian Court all but untenable; His Excellency, however, gave the finishing-stroke to his career as an official by committing the surprising turpitude of appearing on the stage in answer to the enthusiastic call for "author," vociferated by the audience when the curtain fell on the first performance of his brilliantly successful play! Next morning he received a royal intimation of his suspension from office for a year; and he has since then been definitively pensioned.

Brockmann's "Monkey Theatre" is an old-established institution of this capital, and its dumb performers draw crowded houses every night. I was much touched by a delicate attention paid to "the likes of me" by the manager of the four-footed company the other day on the *Dimanche des Morts*, when he appended the following notice to the programme of his evening's entertainment: "This being the Day of the Dead, the monkeys will not appear, but only the trained horses, dogs, etc." There is in this announcement a subtle and courteous recognition of the generic connection between dead men and living apes, of which we spirits of the departed are keenly sensible. One or two frivolous live critics here have poked fun at worthy Brockmann's conscientious Darwinism; but I can assure you that in *our* best circles it has been gratefully appreciated.

My young friend, Max Nordau, has just published an amusing account of his wanderings "From the Kremlin to the Alhambra," in the course of which it would seem that he has visited well-nigh all the theatres in Christendom. He is an excellent *raconteur*, and two of his dramatic experiences in northern and southern Europe have so delectably tickled me that I cannot forbear reproducing them for the especial benefit of "old stagers." The Stockholmers, he says, are inveterate theatre-goers; but they entertain an unconquerable aversion to harrowing *dénouements*, and, in deference to this amiable antipathy, their dramatic purveyors modify the grisliest tragedies in such sort that virtue is invariably rewarded, vice punished, and true love crowned with matrimonial bliss. At the Royal Opera House in the Swedish capital, he witnessed a winding-up of "Don Juan," contrived upon the above plan, which fairly took him by surprise. When, during the rollicking debauch in the last act, the dread statue of the slaughtered Commendatore should have appeared in Juan's banqueting-hall, Donna Elvira entered in its stead, and lectured her dissolute husband soundly upon the impropriety of his conduct, whereupon Don Juan, penetrated with a sense of his moral turpitude, accompanied her to the churchyard, prostrated himself before the pedestal of the Commander's marble presentment, and, after uttering a few elaborate passages expressive of heartfelt repentance, died in a state of grace, fully prepared for transfer to the regions of the blessed, instead of to the fiery sojourn prescribed by Mozart for his eternal occupation. A still quainter turn to the catastrophe achieved in the fifth act of "Hamlet" was witnessed by Nordau at Naples years ago, under the oppressively pious *régime* of the Bourbons. Francis the Second's dramatic censors considered that the killing of a king, however justifiable from Hamlet's personal and family point of view, was the sort of achievement with which it would be highly undesirable to familiarise the Neapolitan public; so they modified Shakespeare's sanguinary *dénouement* in the following ingenious manner: Hamlet, having accidentally discovered his royal uncle's resolve to poison him, addresses a moving discourse to Claudius upon the criminality of the latter's unnatural purpose. After some painful self-introspection, the King not only abandons his toxicological design but undertakes a pilgrimage to Rome in order to obtain Papal absolution for his previous misdeeds. The Queen retires to a convent, and Hamlet, having solemnly espoused Ophelia, who is miraculously cured of her melancholy madness, dedicates a church to his father's memory, and orders a splendid monument to be built at Elsinore in honour of the good old gentleman's military feats against the enemies of Denmark.



THE THEATRE, NO. 2, THIRD SERIES. WOODBURYTYPE.

"My daily-fading flower, it is thou
Must set me this hard task,"

The Lady Giovanna

Madge Kendal 1879.

MRS. KENDAL.

WHETHER Mr. Tennyson's "Falcon," which resembles an ordinary drama as a bas-relief resembles a boldly-sculptured group, keep the stage or not, it has at least been the occasion of displaying with singular clearness the delicate as well as forcible talent of Mrs. Madge Robertson Kendal. There was the more need for an actress skilled in rendering the softer emotions, since Monna Giovanna, magnificent in her queenly robes, is an all too stately dame to move ordinary human hearts to their innermost depth. It is very doubtful whether in less skilful hands the Italian lady would inspire sympathy. She is too remote in her icy grandeur for common folk to care for, were it not that Mrs. Kendal invests the anxious mother with a tenderness peculiarly her own. Not for the first time has this admirable artist delineated a womanly woman; for it is her special faculty to give sweetness to her impersonations. It is perhaps not altogether surprising that a nature so highly gifted with sensibility should at the same time be keenly appreciative of every shade of humour. As great wit is said to be the near ally of madness, so is the soul accessible to pathos equally perceptive of fun. Much of the charm of Mrs. Kendal's acting in characters more suited to her talent than Monna Giovanna is due to the archness with which she contrives to invest them. Without sacrificing for an instant the serious interest of the situation, she contrives to indicate by a sparkle of the eye or the slightest movement of the lip that she sees what fools Colonel Daunt and Dora's unspeakable mother are making of themselves. This power of subtle indication, one of the most valuable of histrionic gifts, is in the case of Mrs. Kendal strengthened by a perfect expression of simplicity. The faculty of delineating that simplicity which reveals itself in tones, looks, and gestures indicating surprise, is one of the highest accomplishments of an actress. Mrs. Kendal has both of these powers in perfection—the archness arising from a sort of astonished amusement at what is going on, and the equally telling air of absolute unconsciousness which characterises such a personation as Galatea. It is true that an actress who makes her first appearance at the age of four has an advantage over those who commence their art at the mature age of eighteen or twenty, but neither critics nor public care for means. They look only at results, and see in Mrs. Kendal an actress who can make the pathetic and humorous chords vibrate in many keys. Her rendering of Lilian Vavasour is an excellent instance of this variable faculty of interweaving the serious fabric with bright threads of genuine comedy. In a minor degree her acting in "The Queen's Shilling" exhibits her large emotional compass, but yet without betraying the fund of real dramatic power hidden behind the conventional quiet manner now in vogue. In Dora she is, however, quite another person, the *ingénue* of sad experience. Few will forget the exquisite *naïveté* of her astonishment when a legitimate proposal is made by the man she loves, or the sustained force of her acting in the later scenes. By no means so well known as her Lilian Vavasour, Dora, Galatea, and Selene, is Mrs. Kendal's surprising performance in "Black-Eyed Susan." As Susan she has no reason for toning down emotion to tameness; but seizing the attention of her audience, holds them spell-bound, until with moist eyes and husky throats they own the power of a perfect artist.

Bernard Henry Becker.

AMUSEMENTS IN AMERICA.

New York, January, 1880.

THE past month has witnessed the production of several novelties at the various theatres of this metropolis, decidedly the most important of which has been Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's new opera comique "Pirates of Penzance." It was first presented on Wednesday, December 31st, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, before an exceedingly brilliant audience. A great success. If you compare it with "Pinafore," you will discover that, as far as plot goes, it is vastly its superior, and that its language and humour are of a higher and more subtle order. The music, too, is much more elaborate and better orchestraed, but then it is not so catching and mirthful. The humour of the piece consists in the gravity of the music, applied to the most ridiculous situations imaginable. The acting and singing were capital. I cannot say I admired Mr. Ryley's Major-General as much as I did Tom Whiffen's Admiral Porter, one of the very funniest and most intelligent performances I ever beheld. But still, Mr. Ryley's acting and singing were excellent. Capital also was Mr. Broccolini as Richard, the Pirate Chief. Mr. Hugh Talbot was clever as the Apprentice; and Mr. Furneaux Cook made us roar as the Lieutenant Samuel. The ladies were charming. Miss Blanche Roosevelt availed herself of every opportunity to achieve success, and succeeded in obtaining it; and Miss Alice Barnett was so excellent as Ruth, "the pirating maid of all work," that she may be fairly pronounced to have "created" a part as distinct as any seen on the stage here in some time. It was an original and delightful performance. Need I add that everything went, as it always does at the Fifth Avenue, on "oiled wheels," and that the applause was boisterous, and that the *encores* prolonged the entertainment at least an hour beyond the limit originally fixed for it? Of course, Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan had to appear again and again before the curtain, and bow their thanks to the amused and delighted audience. Although, for my part, I prefer the "Pinafore," I think there will be found many in England who will willingly give the palm to the "Pirates."

Mr. Bartley Campbell has given us a new play, brought out at the Park last week, the subject of which is supposed to afford us a fair idea of a certain phase of American social life. As usual, when this is the object, it is a failure. The temptation either to exaggerate or burlesque the peculiarities of social life in the United States is too strong even for dramatists of culture and experience like Mr. B. Campbell. In the present instance he has endeavoured to depict life in a Mississippi plantation, and has chosen a very elaborate but improbable story of the Captain Mayne Reade order for his purpose; but as it is not likely to "run" for any considerable time here, and certainly will never be taken across the Atlantic, all I will say concerning it is, that beyond displaying the remarkable talents of Mrs. Booth as Mrs. Marygold, the heroine, it is not worthy of further notice. There is a Mr. Ferguson who acts the part of a tramp with considerable power and realism, and Mr. T. W. Owens as Uncle Ben, the old coloured butler, is very clever in creating a pendant to that other stage favourite, Uncle Tom.

At Wallack's they have revived "She Stoops to Conquer," with Lester Wallack in his graceful and finished impersonation of Charles Marlowe, one of the best in this accomplished actor's *répertoire*. But the gem of this production is Mr. John Gilbert's Mr. Hardcastle, verily remarkable and true to nature, whilst remaining always true to the dignity of classical comedy. I have ever considered Mr. Gilbert as the finest exponent of high-class comedy old men upon the boards. Rich and racy is the Tony Lumpkin of Mr. Beckett. Your old London acquaintance, Miss Ada Dyas, is the Miss Hardcastle, and in that part gives evidence in every scene of her fine talents as a *grande comédienne.* A little hard, it is true, but thoroughly artistic, and never for a moment commonplace or ungraceful. The lines are spoken by her "trippingly," with infinite skill and variety. There are several other old comedy revivals in preparation at this house, amongst them "The Liar" and "London Assurance." In the meantime active rehearsals are taking place of the old comedy "Old Heads and Young Hearts."

A very clever and spirited little farce has been made out of the famous "Widow Bedotte Papers," by Petroleum B. Nasby, with Neale Burgess as the Widow. I daresay this piece of fun will come over your side the water soon.

"French Flats," at the Union Square, has already reached its eightieth night, but it will be withdrawn in a week to make room for Edgar Fawcett's play, "The False Friend." At Daly's Theatre the "Arabian Nights" still proves attractive, and at the Aquarium, the ever green, or, better, ever black, "Uncle Tom," delights that particular and miscellaneous audience for which it was intended.

The class of plays now playing in New York is, as you see, of the most ephemeral kind, for, with the sole exception of Wallack's, there is not a single theatre now open devoted to the legitimate drama. Tragedy. especially classical tragedy, is voted "played out," and Janauschek, Dargon, and E. Booth keep at a safe distance from the capital of Manhattan Island. The emotional drama even is no longer in favour and we hear little or nothing of Clara Morris and her imitators.

By-the-way, let me assure you of something calculated greatly to please many of his friends in England. Mr. E. A. Sothern, who has been acting at the Grand Opera House to large audiences—for so large a house—is looking in better health than I have seen him appear for some years. He really seems younger and brighter than ever, and his tour has, I am glad to say, been very successful throughout. He will be with you again late in June. Apropos of Sothern, whose "Crushed Tragedian" has always been a great attraction here, the supposed original of that funny impersonation, Jones (the Count Johannes), is dead. He died quietly on the night of Tuesday, at the Westside Hotel. In some respects he was a remarkable man. He was a scholar of no mean distinction, and one of the best Shakespearian readers I have ever heard. His acting was another thing altogether, for, of all the marvellous burlesques, his Hamlet, Othello, and Romeo were the funniest ever seen in any part of the world. He was born, I am told, at Ramsgate, in 1810. Little is known of his early career, but it is certain that he appeared upon the stage in Boston in 1831, and in Philadelphia, at the Chesunt Street Theatre, a year later, as Pierre, in "Venice Preserved." He is described at this period of his life as "a handsome and graceful young man," and, to say true, he retained marked traces of good looks until the end. One night, years ago, he played Richmond to the Richard III. of the elder Booth, who, being slightly drunk, and quite carried away by his acting, actually believed himself indeed to be old Dick of Glo'ster, and rushing after Harry Richmond, would have killed him but for the fine swordsmanship of Mr. Jones, who, watching his opportunity, disarmed his half-crazed antagonist, and thus doubtless saved his own life, for Booth was so excited that he jumped, after his defeat, from the stage, and chased the policeman up Broadway, until he was finally captured and locked up in safety for the night. In 1866, whilst in Europe, travelling upon his earnings, Jones received—so he always declared—the title of Count Palatine from the Emperor of Austria. It may indeed have been given him in fun, but he took it in very earnest, and always signed himself with a flourish, "Jones, the Count Johannes." He also usually wore a huge silver star and a broad striped ribbon of an extraordinary and fabulous order of chivalry, the rules of which existed, I believe, in his disordered imagination alone. A few years since he reappeared upon the stage, at the Academy of Music, as Hamlet, and never before, nor since, was a droller performance witnessed. It was about this time that Sothern first played the "Crushed," and an accidental likeness—for it was purely the result of a certain similarity of features—provoked a comparison between the Count and Lord Dundreary, which caused the noble Roscius, who had enacted Hamlet, to prosecute Sothern for an attempt to turn him into ridicule. It so happened, however, that Sothern could prove an alibi; he had never seen Jones act at all, nor indeed had he ever seen him even off the stage. The likeness between the "Crushed" of Sothern and the Hamlet of Jones was extraordinary, and you can well imagine how odd was the latter's impersonation of Shakespeare's greatest hero. He subsequently went round the provinces with his "classical répertoire," which included Hamlet, Romeo, Claud Melnotte, and Othello, and supported by another oddity, "his pupil," named Avonia Fairbanks, he contrived to make a good deal of money, and to exercise his patience to the verge of martyrdom, for I have seen potatoes, carrots, and turnips fall in showers at his feet. This eccentric old man was the father of an actress who will be remembered in London, Avonia Jones, the wife of G. V. Brooke.

Another New York celebrity is also now no more, John Keteltas Hackett, Recorder for the city, died on December 26th, aged fifty-nine. He was the son of the noted comedian James H. Hackett, perhaps the finest Falstaff ever seen in this country, and the original Rip Van Winkle, Unlike his parents, however, he cared little for the stage, and was simply distinguished as a remarkable lawyer and politician. His father claimed the ancient title of Baron Hackett in the peerage of Ireland. His second wife, the Recorder's stepmother, is an actress, somewhat after the style of Count Johannes. She aims at high tragedy, and aims too high.

The Mapleson troupe at the Academy of Music has done tolerably well, but has proved nothing like so popular as it did last year. The absence of Madame Gerster, Minnie Hauk, Kellogg, and Marie Roze, is not compensated for by the presence of Mdlle. Ambre and Valleriat Marie Marimon, however, has been eminently successful, especially as Marie in "La Figlia del Reggimento." They are having much fun over P. S. Gilmore's new anthem "Columbia," a bombastic performance, unredeemed even by the singing of certain verses of it by so fine an artiste as Miss Emma Thursby.

This is all the musical budget I can send you from this great metropolis, which I cannot say is yet a "musical centre" in the true sense of the term. We have no fixed series of concerts like your Old and New Philharmonic "Monday Pop" or "Ballad," and the oratorios when given are not very well attended, unless some star of the first magnitude appears as the principal singer. I was surprised to notice how very small, compared with the size of the city and its boasted "culture," was the audience at the last performance of the "Messiah" at Steinway Hall, although Miss Thursby and Miss Drasdil sang, and both are really unrivalled in this particular class of music.

Our Portfolio.

THE Muses were sisters, and Music, Painting, and the Drama are, like the Three Graces, seldom seen separate. It may be that many musicians have lacked a knowledge of form or a conception of colour, though it is quite probable that there is some hidden link between the scales of musical and chromatic (by which we mean colour) gradation, but there is no known example of an artist, painter, or sculptor who has not been bred with an innate love of music, even where the instinct of that musical nature has never been developed. So the actor must combine with his own muse a sense of the other two; for he must have an ear for the music of intonation and an eye for the art of form and situation. He may not be gifted with a voice to sing with; he may not be endowed with a hand to figure what he imagines; but he must have a sense of and a longing for both. Michael Angelo wrote sonnets; Leonardo da Vinci invented a cithara out of a horse's skull; Benvenuto Cellini was horn-player to a Pope; there is nothing at all astonishing therefore in Mademoiselle Sara Bernhardt dabbling in sculpture, or Charles Mathews having used his oils to some purpose.

But we have not yet heard that among our present dramatic artists some "mute inglorious Milton" is to be found, or some veiled Raphael lies concealed. We see that an exhibition is announced to open in the season, composed of pictures and contributions by actors and actresses of the London stage. If there exist behind our footlights painters or sculptors whose works will bear exhibition, there are many galleries, large or small, public or proprietary, where their productions could be received and shown. If such a collection is formed simply to draw the curious together, and with a charitable end in view, there may be an excuse, if not a reason, for thus assembling what probably will prove less interesting in actual artistic worth than the ordinary amateur fiascos sold by ladies at charity bazaars to the few who have more money than discernment. But if it has simply been called into existence by the small collection of the gifted Sara's amusing sketches, then we doubt its necessity, and are certain of its worthlessness. Sara, after all, has been grounded in the *chic* and clever contrasts of the French school, and though really not by any means a great artist, her works are telling at a distance, and clever enough not to be passed over. Where neither Charity is aided nor Art advanced, such an exhibition is a mistake.

The French have always had good battle-painters among them. This is not to be wondered at, as France is nothing if not military. Géricault and Horace Vernet, and later, Yvon and Pils, make way at the present day for Détaille and De Neuville. These two grand artists are working on English subjects, and we may look forward before long to seeing two pictures of British soldiers which will eclipse probably any military pictures we have ever seen on the walls of the Royal Academy. Mrs. Butler (*née* Elizabeth Thompson) is also at work on a kindred subject, but we are not doing her an injustice in alluding thus to the two great Frenchmen mentioned. As an English artist, and more especially as a woman, she is sure of applause from English hands, and she deserves every credit for the really good work she has done, but she is still hard in colouring, and there is a lack of freedom and expression in most of her work. No one probably works harder, or gets more encouragement; so there is every reason to expect that her picture will be worthy of her well-merited reputation. But for *fougue* and *morbidesse* she will learn much from the French pictures when they come to be exhibited.—A. T.

In the "Black and White" movement, it may be observed—so far, at least, as regards the revival of etching—France has taken the lead, and has been closely followed by England. Bavarian art, quick as are its impulses, and deep as lie the roots of its sympathy in the old form and spirit, has not been so prompt in this awakening to the expressive manifestations of the past. Throughout Germany the advance of modern etching has generally been slow, but where it has found congenial welcome it has flourished bravely. A painter of some note (Charles Wildberg), moved simply by the example of such English disciples of the new school as Seymour Haden, has applied himself with such vigour to the etching-needle that, in a short space of time, he has produced a set of very successful *Radirungen*, fifteen in number, representing as many scenes of an art-pilgrimage, under the suggestive title, "Nah und Fern." The work is unequal; but some of the plates, such as a Venetian scene, and a view of the Rathhaus at Bamberg, taking in the old bridge and the timbered houses on either side, are excellent. A small plate, the Villa Borghese at Rome, is likewise noteworthy as a quiet and gem-like bit of work, worthy a master-hand. —G. T.

Our Book-Shelf.

Old English Drama. Marlowe's "Edward the Second." Edited by Osborne William Tancock, Assistant Master of Sherborne School. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

THE handy, well-printed, and most useful Clarendon Press series of text-books has just been enriched by an addition that will be welcomed by all who make a study of the drama. "'Edward the Second,'" says the editor, in a clear and exhaustive introduction, "the best and most finished of all Marlowe's plays, was acted about the year 1590, before Shakespeare, who was born in the same year as Marlowe, had produced any play worthy of his name or of comparison with the masterpiece of his contemporary;" and no one who makes acquaintance, for the first time, with this English classic will feel inclined to quarrel with Charles Lamb for saying that "The death-scene of Marlowe's 'King' moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern, with which I am acquainted." To attempt to put Marlowe's "Edward" on the stage as it is written would no doubt be a work of somewhat sublime faith on the part of the most sanguine manager; but students of plays, and students of verse, will be extremely interested in the evergreen contribution to dramatic history by the "earliest writer who used the new blank verse for a drama to be performed on the public stage and before a general audience." It is just the convenient book to put into the pocket or portmanteau when starting off on a dull journey.—C. S.

“Amateur Theatricals.” By Walter Herries Pollock and Lady Pollock.
“Art at Home” Series. London: Macmillan and Co. 1880.

The fascinating series of handy volumes that brings art and artistic taste home to everybody, at the smallest possible cost, would obviously be incomplete without a guide to the ever-popular amusement of amateur theatricals. Every room in the house having been discussed in turn, dress and needlework having been duly attended to, the next step is naturally to the amusement of the household. Music, by Mr. John Hullah, is accordingly quickly followed by some finished and charmingly written essays on play-acting at home. The pretty little book, in its neat cover of gray and black, is at once practical and interesting; for Lady Pollock and her son do far more than interest amateurs in getting up a play, adorning their persons, arranging the furniture, and providing the properties. They contrive to write most pleasantly on the history of amateur acting, and impart a considerable amount of knowledge of various kinds in a fresh and delightful manner. The book therefore is instructive as well as useful; and just at this moment no chapter will be read with more interest than the one that touches upon the Paris Conservatoire and the School for French Acting, and describes Delaunay “coaching” his young pupils. This bright and chatty compilation of good advice, facts, and criticism comes most opportunely when every country house is turned topsy-turvy for private theatricals and some form of amateur acting. It is the greatest mistake possible to believe that such essays do harm to the stage; they deliberately encourage a love for it that, once firmly established, is never shaken off. The volume is charmingly illustrated by Kate Greenaway—whose nursery-book illustrations are so prized by the young people—and may be very cordially recommended.—C. S.

Our Play-Box.

“THE ROAD TO RUIN.”

Comedy by Thomas Holcroft.

Vaudeville Theatre. Revived December 26th, 1879.

Old Dornton	Mr. Henry Howe.	Goldfinch	Mr. David James.
Harry Dornton	Mr. W. Herbert.	Milford	Mr. C. W. Garthorne.
Sulky	Mr. W. Hargreaves.	Widow Warren	Miss Sophie Larkin.
Silky	Mr. T. Thorne.	Sophia	Miss M. Illington.
Jenny	Miss Cicely Richards.		

THOMAS HOLCROFT'S five-act comedy of “The Road to Ruin,” originally produced in 1792, has shown, by its second revival at this theatre, that its characters, scenes, and dialogue, illustrative of society at the close of the last century, retain a firm hold of the playgoer's attention at the present period. The elder Dornton still remains an admirable representative of that class of English merchants who to plain manners, and an unassuming demeanour, add high principles of conduct, and show that, as they have enlarged their fortunes, they have expanded their minds. Munden, Terry, and Dowton have supplied the most conspicuous names associated with the embodiment of this carefully-drawn character; but the force and feeling displayed by Mr. Howe, an actor thoroughly trained in what may be called the school of old comedy, fairly challenges comparison with the energy and pathos displayed by his predecessors.

Mr. David James, as Goldfinch, the selfish sporting rake of the last century, so obtuse in intellect, and so obtrusive in his voluble chatter, skilfully portrays a personage who has, since his original introduction on the stage, figured in farces under a variety of forms. It will be remembered that in September, 1859, Mr. Charles Mathews played Goldfinch for his benefit at the Haymarket Theatre, thus repeating an assumption he had undertaken at Drury Lane Theatre under the Macready management of 1842; but that excellent comedian, with his restless vivacity, reflected the volatility of a period having little affinity with the time when Goldfinch existed as a possible personage, rubbing shoulders with the bucks of Bond Street in the days of the Regency. Mr. David James gives the true significance to his familiar rejoinder of "I'm a deep one—that's your sort," and infuses a characteristic vulgarity into his humour that is at once recognised as appropriate to the day in which the action is supposed to take place, while the very coarseness of the expletives occasionally used serves at least to mark the advance made in modern refinement. As the careless Harry Dornton, Mr. W. Herbert, whose rapid advance in the department of light comedy must be noted with congratulation, appears to great advantage, and his important scenes are sustained with more energy and earnestness than might have been anticipated. The crafty old usurer, Silky, is so far out of Mr. Thomas Thorne's usual range of impersonations, that the actor merits special praise for the success which has accompanied his assumption. He has contrived to let the character absorb as much as possible of his personal identity, and the expression of the roguish money-lender's superstitious fears is most artistically conveyed.

The vain Widow Warren and the grizzling Sophia are very characteristically portrayed by Miss Sophie Larkin and Miss Marie Illington; while among the more subordinate parts, all satisfactorily filled, the stolidity of the sarcastic Mr. Sulky, and the shrewdness of the smart servant Jenny, as exemplified by Mr. W. Hargreaves and Miss Cicely Richards, come into notable prominence. The revived comedy, which enjoyed a long run at the Vaudeville six years ago, has drawn good houses since Christmas, and has kept its renewed hold of public favour perhaps more firmly than was anticipated when it was announced in the bills for Boxing Night. In 1825, when the rival houses of Drury Lane and Covent Garden both revived the comedy with competing casts, peculiar interest was attached to the distribution of the principal characters. At Drury Lane (October 6th, 1825) Mr. Williams, from the Worthing Theatre, made his metropolitan *début* as Old Dornton; James Wallack for the first time played Harry Dornton; Harley was Goldfinch; William Bennett first appeared on Drury Lane stage as Sulky; Mrs. Davison represented Widow Warren for the first time; and Fanny Kelly, the Sophia, was announced as making her first appearance at that theatre for three years. At Covent Garden (November 25th, 1825) Mrs. Glover first trod the Covent Garden boards as the Widow Warren; William Farren was the elder Dornton; John Cooper, Harry Dornton; Jones, Goldfinch; and Sophia was admirably acted by Miss Goward, afterwards to become still more renowned as Mrs. Keeley.

E. L. B.

"CLOWNING."

Drury Lane Theatre.—"Blue Beard" Pantomime, produced Boxing Day, 1879. "The Brothers Grinn." Clowns: Messrs. Fred Evans and W. Simpson.

Covent Garden Theatre.—"Sindbad the Sailor" Pantomime, produced Boxing Day, 1879. F. W. Green. Clown: Mr. Harry Payne.

Imperial Theatre.—"Red Riding Hood" Pantomime, produced Boxing Day, 1879. W. Younge. Clown: Mr. Paulo.

Surrey Theatre.—"Aladdin" Pantomime, produced Christmas Eve, 1879. J. F. McArdle. Clown: Mr. Wattie Hildyard.

Aquarium.—Produced Boxing Day, 1879. The Martinetti Troupe.

Whatever opinions may exist with regard to the decline of the drama in England, it appears to me that there can only be one as to the deterioration in the art of "clowning." That it is an art there can be no question, and the terrible dearth of its exponents seems to point unmistakably to the fact that it is a difficult one. I don't believe there is any more lack of appreciation of really good clowning at the present time than existed in old days, when the comic scenes of the harlequinade were the real attraction in a pantomime, instead of being, as is the case now, of altogether minor interest and importance. That the boys of to-day do not appreciate clowning as did the boys of twenty years ago and more may be a fact; if it be so, it is their misfortune rather than their fault, and may be accounted for by another fact, which is, that they seldom, if ever, have the chance of seeing any clowning to appreciate. Consequently, when they do see that *rara avis* of these days, a good clown, their want of education with regard to good clowning prevents the majority of them, if not all, from being able to recognise it when they do see it. But the boys of twenty years ago and more, who are boys no longer in age and appearance, but are boys still in spirit, can and do recognise good clowning when they see it, and enjoy it as keenly as they did when they were in jackets. I myself am one of those "old boys," and I know scores of others, most of them older than myself, who look forward to the doings of the clown with the keenest interest and the most sanguine expectations. The keenness is, as a rule, all too quickly blunted, and the expectations too cruelly dispelled in these days of glaring innovations, which are as astounding as they are meaningless.

I don't propose to enter into anything approaching a research into the pedigree of pantomime, if I may be allowed the expression, but simply venture to ventilate a few opinions that I entertain on clowning as it now is. I am one of a little party of some half-dozen pantomime lovers who meet annually to dine together as guests of one of the coterie on Boxing Night, and afterwards proceed to the home of pantomime, Drury Lane. We are all tremendous sticklers for the traditions of our youth with regard to clowning, one of the party in particular seeming to resent a meaningless innovation as if it were a personal affront. We had all for some years, and he in particular, been excessively annoyed by the malpractice of one of the pantaloons at Drury Lane. (Fancy having to write of *one* of the pantaloons, as if a pantomime were not properly dressed without a pair! These double companies are an innovation I protest against for one.) This pantaloon had appeared for some years, greatly to our annoyance, in an irregular and illegitimate dress, which I can only describe as a sort of Sir Peter Teazle costume. We were full of speculation as to whether this offence would be again committed this year, and the "one in particular" was breathless with excitement when the moment arrived for pantaloon to appear. A gleam of unfeigned joy illuminated his face, and a sigh of intense relief escaped him when (both) pantaloons appeared in regulation attire. Mark what followed. The next moment he rose from his stall with a face of absolute horror, and gave audible vent to his feelings in the laconic but expressive ejaculation "*Dis-gusting!*" The cause of this ebullition of feeling was only too apparent in the shape of a veritable unblushing, black, defiant moustache which disgraced the face of one of the clowns, and one who ought to have known better. The fact that he was not hissed off the stage is a proof of the ignorance of the general public. I sympathised with my injured friend. I hear he has never smiled since. If my information on that point is correct, I can only come to the conclusion that he has not been to Covent Garden, where ample consolation awaits him in the shape of Mr. Harry Payne, who is *par excellence* the only clown of the present time. His clowning is like a dream of one's youth; every action, every grimace means something, and what is more, conveys its meaning. Almost every word he speaks is funny (what a rare quality in a clown nowadays!), and he would be funnier still if he talked less. I don't think clowns ought to talk more than is absolutely necessary. Cut out some of the "cackle" and all the advertising (another abominable innovation), and combine the Vokes's opening at Drury Lane with Harry Payne's harlequinade at Covent Garden, and the result would be the best thing in the way of a pantomime, as a whole, that has been seen for long enough.

The harlequinade at Drury Lane, *quâ* "clowning," is of a very second-rate character. At the Imperial Theatre I saw a Mr. Paulo, who, I regret to hear, has since sustained very serious injuries through the carelessness of those who ought to have looked after him in his leaps at the Victoria. He offended my old-fashioned prejudices by appearing as clown in one scene dressed as a policeman, and inflicting on the audience an intensely dull and very bad music-hall song, quite out of place and character. I must do him the justice to say that the last scene in the harlequinade flavoured somewhat of the legitimate old-fashioned style. I must say a word in praise of the harlequin and columbine at the Imperial, who went through a dance full of grace and meaning, essentials rarely to be met with among the capers indulged in by the ordinary run of harlequins and columbines of the present day. I had heard very much of Mr. Wattie Hildyard at the Surrey Theatre, of whom I can only say that personally I fail to recognise the merits of a clown whose claims to wit are based solely upon what to my mind savours very much of vulgarity.

There is one other whose clowning is as good, if not better, though in a different style, than that of Mr. Harry Payne—I mean Mr. Paul Martinetti. He is one of the ablest, if not *the* ablest exponent of the art of pantomime that exists, and although he is not at present actually playing clown anywhere, his performance in the *ballet d'action*, entitled "The Duel," at the Aquarium, is undoubtedly clowning, and clowning of the highest order.

One of the greatest treats I ever had in the way of "clowning" was his performance in the Italian harlequinade performed by the Martinetti troupe at the Adelphi some two or three years ago. A friend of mine took a boy of fifteen to see Paul Martinetti at the Aquarium the other day, and after the performance the young gentleman remarked that he never knew what was meant by pantomime before, but now he understood. He was evidently one of the minority of those I mentioned above with regard to the appreciation of good clowning. There is nothing that I can see to prevent clowning from becoming as good, and consequently as popular, as of yore. Why shouldn't harlequinades be regularly invented, and written by tried and known authors in the same way in which the openings of pantomimes are written and invented, instead of being left, as I understand is universally the case, to the clowns, who are, as a rule, men whose inventive faculties and literary powers are not of the highest order? Something could and should be done to revive good "clowning," and I believe all pantomime lovers would gladly welcome the day when they would be able to recognise some semblance of truth in the familiar old expression, "Here we are again!"—William Yardley.

"THE PIRATES of PENZANCE; or, LOVE and DUTY."

By One who has Seen the Opera.

[Note.—The original play-bill of this opera as first performed in any country at the Royal Bijou Theatre, Paignton, is likely to be a curiosity. Through the courtesy of Mr. R. D'Oyley Carte, I am able to print it *in extenso*.—C. S.]

Royal Bijou Theatre, Paignton, Tuesday, December 30th, 1879.

For One Day only, at Two o'clock, an entirely new and original Opera, by Messrs. W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, entitled

"THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE; or, LOVE AND DUTY."

Being its first production in any country.

Major-General	Mr. R. Mansfield.	Sergeant of Police	Mr. Billington.
The Pirate King	Mr. Federici.	Mabel	Miss Petrelli.
Frederick (a Pirate)	Mr. Cadwalader.	Edith	Miss May.
Samuel } Pirates	Mr. Lackner.	Isabel	Miss K. Neville.
James } Pirates	Mr. Lehay.	Kate	Miss Monmouth.
Ruth (Frederick's Nurse)	Miss Fanny Harrison.		

Scene.—Act 1. A Cavern by the Sea Shore. Act 2. A Ruined Chapel by Moonlight.

Doors open at Half-past One. Commence at Two. Sofa Stalls, 3s.; Second Seats, 2s.; Area, 1s.; Gallery, 6d. Tickets to be had at The Gerston Hotel. Conductor, Mr. Ralph Horner; Acting Manager, Mr. Herbert Brook.

If a hero who prefers duty to love can ever become popular, Mr. Sullivan's charming music in his new opera-comedy will make the exemplary Frederick a rival of dear reckless Ralph Rackstraw. We all know that we ought to admire our hero when he abandons his love, and bids her only think of him as her enemy, from an overpowering sense of duty. Thanks to Mr. Arnold, most of us are Wordsworth worshippers, and believe that duty "calms the sad strife of frail humanity," and is "victory and law;" but on the boards we rather expect to find humanity frail, and, let us confess it honestly, we go to the theatre on purpose to see how *ces autres*, who haven't got their Wordsworth by heart yet, face the problems of life, unaided by the great master's philosophy, or Mr. Arnold's interpretation of it. When this new opera becomes a great success, as it is sure to do by-and-by, it will be in spite of the hero being called Frederick, and actuated by a mainspring of duty. But after all this is captious! When Mr. Gilbert fools it is very excellent fooling; and who could resist the contagious gaiety of Mr. Sullivan's music? For the moment we forget our cares and worries, and are possessed by the feeling that to be merry is the great object of life. Let us take hands and dance, neighbours! The fairy boon of a light heart is ours so long as the music jigs.

The story of the opera is full of opportunities for picturesque situations and telling hits. Frederick, the hero, has been left as a child to the care of a nurse (Ruth), with instructions to bind him as apprentice to a pilot. She makes a trifling mistake, and apprentices our poor Frederick to the Pirate King. Although he abhors his calling, still, from a high sense of duty, he remains with the pirates, and serves his apprenticeship faithfully. Then, when the last day of his servitude comes, he informs his chief that he means to leave the band the moment he is free, and that henceforward he will devote himself to the hunting down of the pirates. Ruth, when she hears of this resolution, reveals the passion she has long cherished for her former nurseling; but Frederick is not like the young man, who, kissing his grandmother, observed that he "liked 'em mellow," and, as he is but twenty-one while Ruth is forty-seven, he not unnaturally declines her advances. Shortly after this the pirates leave their cave, and start upon one of their mysterious expeditions. Frederick stays behind alone, and presently the cave is invaded by several charming girls, the daughters of a Major-General. Mabel, the eldest, at once falls in love with the young pirate, and he is equally fascinated by her. While some very pretty love-making is going on between them, the rest of the band return, and declare their intention of marrying the other sisters; but the Major-General appears just in the nick of time, and saves his daughters by declaring himself to be an orphan, it being a strict rule of the pirates never to molest *orphans.* So touching a story does the old Major-General tell of his orphanhood, that the fierce pirates are moved to tears, and allow him to depart with his daughters.

The opening of the second act displays the ruins of an oratory, with the sea and the cave for a background. Here nightly comes the Major-General, whose conscience will not let him rest, to bewail his falsehood over the graves of his ancestors (by purchase). In vain do his pretty daughters entreat him not to give way to empty terrors; he is not to be soothed until Frederick tells him of his resolve to exterminate the pirate band, and that, having got some men together, he is going to set out at once. The Major-General feels more cheerful at this; and after inspecting the men, retires with his daughters from the ruins. No sooner is our hero alone than the Pirate King and Nurse Ruth confront him, and Ruth confesses that in resentment at his rejection of her love she has betrayed the secret of his birth. This is no less than that he was born on the 29th day of February, in a leap year. This is terrible news! Frederick sees plainly that, instead of being twenty-one, he is only a little over five, and his apprenticeship therefore will not be over until the year 1940. In an effective scene he tells Mabel that his duty calls him to return to his lawless life, and that henceforth she must only remember him as her enemy. In vain she tries to move him from his resolution, and sings the most charming song in the opera, "Oh leave me not to pine alone!" Frederick leaves her and returns to his companions. On resuming his pirate life his sense of duty moves him to disclose the fact that the Major-General is not an orphan, as he had so touchingly narrated, and the indignant king swears that he will have that old man's life, and with his trusty men returns to the ruins to carry out his oath. There, sure enough, they find the conscience-driven Major-General, but as they are about to seize him they are confronted by a body of police whom they easily put to flight. The police-sergeant, however, conquers them by calling upon them to surrender in the name of Queen Victoria. To this the Pirates respond by singing the song, "Queen Victoria:"

"To Queen Victoria's name we bow,
As free-born Britons should;
We can resist no longer now,
And would not if we could," etc.

Very satisfactory explanations follow, and the Pirates after all turn out to be all, or nearly all, noblemen gone wrong.

Impossible as it is to judge of the opera from its hasty and imperfect performance at Paignton, and premature as it would be to pronounce any opinion on its merits or demerits, anyone acquainted with Mr. Gilbert's dry and peculiar humour, which laughs at his characters, laughs at the British public who think they are sitting in judgment, and, not least or last, laughs at himself, as if he were saying, "A noble fool! oh worthy fool!—motley's the only wear!"—anyone familiar with his odd twists and turns, will see that such a plot as this gives him plenty of scope for jesting, and we may prepare ourselves for a vast deal of amusement next season. If we add to this that Mr. Sullivan's music trips and sparkles as irresistibly as the pipe of the Pied Piper in its devil-may-care gaiety, there can be no doubt that, in spite of Frederick and duty, "The Pirates of Penzance" will worthily succeed that most absurd, most fascinating "Pinafore."—A. L. L.

"THE LORD OF THE MANOR."

A new and original play by Herman Merivale, in Three Acts, founded on Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister."

Imperial Theatre, Saturday, January 3rd, 1880.

Wilfred Lisle	Mr. W. Farren.	Mallow	Mr. E. F. Edgar.
Horatio	Mr. Kyrle Bellew.	Sybill	Miss Lydia Cowell.
Sir Harry Widgeon ..	Mr. J. Bannister.	Aurora	Miss Ellen Meyrick.
Crazy Dick	Mr. F. Everill.	Bridget	Miss L. Paton.

Mr. Herman Merivale fell into a pardonable error when he conceived or adopted the idea that the Mignon episode of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship" would be likely to prove successful as an ordinary stage-play for representation before commonplace English audiences. It may be assumed that only a limited number of playgoers are acquainted with the metaphysical romance of the German poet, either in the original or through the characteristic translation of Thomas Carlyle; and only a certain proportion among the initiated are gifted to see the psychological suggestiveness hid beneath the surface of the story. For the benefit of this fit but few audience there could have been no necessity to turn and twist the fable to suit what are called British stage requirements. What is improper in the narrative would not have shocked an eclectic minority, what is depressing need not have been enlivened to tickle them. The general public, on the other hand, either totally oblivious of, or but partially acquainted with Goethe's work, must necessarily miss the points of difference between the model and the transcript, and will see the play only as a play, not allowing for the difficulties of the author, and forming a judgment independently of the thousand and one inferences sure to be present behind the eyes of the student. The contention that "Mignon" is successful among all classes as an opera does not touch the point of argument. There is probably no art more unreal than that of the lyric stage. Music itself lends mystery to fact, and while it delights the ear holds the judgment spellbound. Mr. Herman Merivale is a dramatist of tried capacities. At least the outer courts of stage construction are open to his craft. His dialogue is brisk, often witty, and almost always to the purpose; and it may be conceded there is much good writing in "The Lord of the Manor." Two characters stand out from the rest, Aurora and Horatio, formed more or less on the Philina and Laertes of the original.

These two persons are work-fellows in art. Both are frolicsome, both fickle, but beneath their lightness each entertains a sincere attachment to the other; and the manner in which Mr. Herman Merivale steers them through numerous risky situations, to bring them together in love at last, seems to me to display uncommon dramatic cleverness. Though they assume but a secondary part in the business of the play, the difficult nature of the dramatist's task gives them an undue importance upon the stage. Our author transforms the introspective Wilhelm Meister into a hearty but withal studious English country squire of the eighteenth century. With the minor characters, such as Crazy Dick and the refined Tony Lumpkin, Sir Harry Widgeon, it is not necessary to deal in this place, because the story could have been told almost equally well without them. To the acting even of the minor parts I shall, however, allude presently. And now last, but of first importance, we come to Mignon herself. How is this intangible child of fancy to be represented on the stage? Transient as a blush, quick to pass away as the instant answer of love in a lady's eyes, light as thistledown, Mignon is a fugitive impression, not a concrete fact. The initiated look for a revelation, the outer world see only a love-sick young person; and through all the play may never-catch sight of the meaning of the story. Goethe's fragile human aerolite is only a woman at last, and is but once seen in a woman's gown, and then only when in the shadow of imminent death. Her love for Wilhelm is an exhalation of the soul. How.then is it possible for a grown lady in brown stockings to represent such a trick of fancy upon the stage? Mr. Herman Merivale's Sybill has a temper, a genuine womanly attribute; but Goethe's complainless creature, sexless as the angels, although possible to Ary Scheffer's canvas seems almost impossible to the theatre.

I cannot call to mind any other actress whom Mr. Herman Merivale might have supposed better suited to the part of Sybill than Miss Lydia Cowell. *Petite*, pretty, intelligent, and well able to simulate the fleeting graces of youth, Miss Cowell seemed a promising Mignon. Her entrance and dance made a favourable impression. Her body moved to the music. Alas! the very thing that Sybill will not do Miss Cowell does to perfection. In all the lighter parts her performance is agreeable; but Mignon it is not; and the fault lies in the task, not in the lady. No artificial flower could persuade us of its reality, if set beside the nameless delicacy of the garden lily. Of the Wilfred Lisle, the anglicised Wilhelm Meister of the play, enacted by Mr. William Farren, it is not a grateful occupation to write. The thoughtful gaiety, the buoyancy, the sparkle of the original, are not here. This gentleman is worthy and too respectable to "carry on" as he is made to do. Wilhelm Meister never gave me the idea of a Lord Chesterfield, flavoured with clergyman. It seems quite out of place for Mr. Farren's Wilfred Lisle to attempt a *liaison* with a pretty actress, and end by making a match with a gipsy-girl, discovered in the nick of time to be the daughter of a marquis. Mr. William Farren is an admirable actor in his own line. No man upon the stage is his master in "the nice fashion of a clouded cane." He is at home as the middle-aged beau of powder-pieces; but as the ingenuous, impulsive Wilfred Lisle, he must not be offended with me for recording the common verdict, that he is not at home. Mr. Bannister's satin-coated addle-pated fop is an amusing performance. The Crazy Dick and Showman Mallow of Messrs. Everill and Edgar are both excellent in their way. Miss L. Paton plays Bridget. Miss Meyrick has evidently been at immense pains to assume the character of a pleasure-loving woman of the world, with the instincts of coquetry developed into a science, and withal the custodian of an affectionate and faithful heart. Her kindly flirt, though somewhat resembling the false style of the modern French school of figure-painting in water-colours, is nevertheless imagined in the right direction.

And the lady is well supported by Mr. Kyrle Bellew, as the strolling comedian Horatio, a very butterfly of the boards, but inspired with a man's love for Aurora. Mr. Bellew looks handsome, speaks his lines with vivacity, and altogether suggests the part he has to play. It seems, however, to many persons in front of the house that this picturesque young actor has a habit of swaying too much from side to side. If "The Lord of the Manor" can be said to have missed its mark, we shall find the causes of non-success in the unsuitableness of the subject for the stage, and in the inappropriateness of the cast, more than in any want of technical skill on the part of the author.—David Anderson.

"MARRIED IN HASTE."

Comedy by Henry J. Byron.

Revived at Folly Theatre, January 3rd, 1880.

Originally produced at Haymarket, October 2nd, 1875.

Mr. Gibson Greene ..	Mr. H. J. Byron.	Mr. Buffler	Mr. T. Sidney.
Mr. Percy Pendragon ..	Mr. E. W. Garden.	Rackstraw	Mr. H. Elmore.
Mr. Josiah Grainger ..	Mr. J. Billington.	Padstow	Mr. W. Brunton.
Augustus	Mr. E. D. Ward.	Ethel Grainger	Miss L. Cavalier.
Mr. Mumchance ..	Mr. G. Shelton.	Mrs. Grainger	Miss E. Thorne.
	Pritchard	Miss M. Santon.	

A very excellent and useful revival, containing, as the play does, a light but interesting story, some strong character painting, and as good pointed and natural dialogue as Mr. Byron ever wrote. Into a simple romance of hasty and imprudent marriage with all its sunshine, clouds, tears of rain, and storms of separation, just the kind of daily drama in fact that is enacted in the age in which the author writes, there are intermingled those chances for humorous expression and genial caricature without which comedy would be a dull, flat, and unprofitable entertainment. If it be objected that the story Mr. Byron has to tell is simple, and possibly not new to the beholder, all the answer to that will be that it is true to life—true to our nature, and true to our time. The dramatist can only be influenced by the sound atmosphere that he breathes, and in this light, well-balanced, and amusing play, Mr. Byron is faithful at any rate to his country and its characters. But there is something more than this in "Married in Haste," that breaks again on our recollections, and perhaps pleases more than on its original production. We do not see such a fine and sharp study of character, keen, clear, and incisive as that of Hermann Vezin as Percy Pendragon, but there is something in the general interpretation that brings out with emphasised force the tender tone and the good-hearted sympathy with life and its trials that underlie the whole composition. I really do believe that men, and women too, rise up better people after the contemplation of such a little drama of real life as this, and that insidiously are sowed the seeds of greater toleration and charity. This is what the irreconcileable clergymen ought to consider when they preach against the stage. Remember, there is no ostentation on the part of the dramatist; he does not pose for a moralist or a preacher; but he tells his story in such a winning manner, he moves his puppets with such facility, that throughout the evening, by clever and true touches, tears and laughter are chasing one another throughout the evening's amusement.

Mr. H. J. Byron himself is one of the drollest actors we possess. The fun that he pokes at the audience is infinitely sly, and suits the modern appetite for fun. Naturally no one speaks Byronisms better than Byron; and though he is throughout as grave as a judge, and apparently utterly unconcerned in his own conceits, there is an odd undefined twinkle that shows how he relishes the humour of the whole thing. It is a positive treat to hear him drawl out, with a mixture of sweet and acid, "I'm always afraid of a woman who don't cry;" and the house roars with one voice when, it having been destined that the young couple should live in Camden Town, the irrepressible Gibson Greene adds, "You can call it the Regent's Park on your notepaper!" Never were fun and satire so complete. If Mr. Byron errs at all, it is in over-slowness of delivery. He pauses, perhaps, a trifle too much, and accidentally makes his companions to "drag the time," as musicians say; but a quainter style of acting it would be difficult to find, and it was healthy to hear a crowded pit and gallery given up to such convulsive laughter. I am glad to congratulate Miss Cavalier on her marked improvement and her decided promise. It is a faint compliment to tell a young lady she is getting on when she gives to the character of Ethel Grainger so original and natural a charm. Here there are evident traces of a most careful study and an evident appreciation of the inner life of the girl-wife who loves only to be neglected and understood, and I am the more pleased to see it because there seemed to be in Miss Cavalier's acting in "A Fool and his Money" something that looked like indifference. No part is unworthy a young actress who loves her art, and the praises she has recently received should be an incentive to increased ambition. I am sometimes told that it is unwise to heap praise upon actor or actress when we see some exceptionally good work, but with this doctrine I cannot agree. In this play the scene between husband and wife is so good and true, the scene with Gibson Greene is so thorough, and the general interpretation so charged with sympathy, that Miss Cavalier may be urged to go on and prosper. She does more than play this part—she thinks it; and she is in the character when she is listening as well as when she is talking. The difference of art and walking through a part is very marked to the spectator. Mr. E. D. Ward made an excellent first appearance. He has a fine frank presence and a rich and telling voice, and has only to tone down a little roughness in order to succeed and be valued. At first sight it looks as if his style would be suited by a larger stage, and a more robust manner of acting. He has breadth, and it is a pity to cramp any style. However, we shall see. At present he has made a mark to begin with.—C. S.

"MIDGE."

By R. J. Martin and J. P. Burnett.

Royalty Theatre, January 12th, 1880.

John Gastern	Mr. J. P. Burnett.	Mr. Malony	Mr. R. Mansell.
Lawrence Linton ..	Mr. S. Charteris.	Servant	Mr. Price.
Hon. Tom Carew ..	Mr. Gerald Moore.	Marjorie Preston (Midge)	Miss Jennie Lee.
Colonel Preston ..	Mr. Charles Groves.	Lady Caroline Wynstay	Miss F. Bennett.
Lord Carntowers ..	Mr. Henry Crisp.	Mrs. Elsworth	Miss F. Robertson.
Lord Annerslie ..	Mr. J. Y. Stephens.	Miss Elsworth	Miss J. Clifford.
Babbington Fledgeley	Mr. S. Wilkinson.	Louise	Mdlle. Hébert.

The authors of the new comedy with which Mrs. Burnett has commenced her occupation of the Royalty Theatre are to be congratulated upon having provided that clever little lady with an effective new part—not before it was wanted—and upon having written a good deal of very amusing dialogue. Here congratulation upon their work in "Midge" must, I fear, come to an end; and yet it is by no means impossible that their play, having so far fulfilled its presumable *raison d'être*, may achieve a practical success which is missed by many a less faulty work. Critics have often been taunted with their supposed inability to determine how much of the merit or demerit of a new drama, as it appears on its first representation, is due to the author, and how much to the performance of the actors and actresses in the "creation" of the several rôles. They have at any rate an easy task in apportioning the praise deserved by the entertainment at the Royalty, provided by Messrs. Martin and Burnett as authors, and Miss Jennie Lee as principal player. It is no doubt something to have constructed a character which exhibits a new phase of the ability of a popular actress, hitherto known chiefly, if not entirely, by a single impersonation of a limited scope; and it is also something to keep an audience amused by repartees, however outrageous, and to touch it by pathos, however strained. But this is not necessarily to produce a satisfactory play, or indeed a play which could be tolerated, except for the skill with which the actress, for whom it was written, treats the subject placed in her hands.

The story of "Midge" deals with the introduction of a free-and-easy but perfectly virtuous young lady into aristocratic society, more conventional than that to which she has been accustomed, and it reminds one in its motive of the sketches of Bohemian existence given in the novels of clever ladies such as Mrs. Edwards and Miss Broughton. That it is all very unreal, judged by any ordinary experience of life beyond the pale of society, need not be minded if it were dramatically true and consistent with itself. As a matter of fact the honourable friends of Colonel Preston, the familiar retired officer who lives on his wits at Boulogne, attracted though they are to his lodgings by his vivacious little daughter Marjorie, would scarcely endure the society there of a man whom they openly accuse of being a cardsharper, whilst the sharper, Mr. Lawrence Linton, engaged as he is in plucking a new pigeon, Mr. Babbington Fledgeley, could certainly not afford to treat as airy jokes the gross attacks of the artist, John Gastern, of Lord Annerslie, and of his friend the Hon. Tom Carew. There is honour amongst thieves, and surely its code is outraged again and again in the brilliant sallies of insult which enliven conversation in the Colonel's apartments at Boulogne. More experienced dramatists could have suggested much more briefly, and much more to the point, the *entourage* which has made Midge what she is, a sunny, reckless, independent creature, flitting hither and thither as she will, without regard to social regulations, with a saucy manner, a cheery laugh, a sharp tongue, and a good heart. They would, moreover, have guarded against the mistake of allowing the girl to understand so well as she does what is going on around her in the little room, where a troop of young men assemble to chaff each other and be chaffed by her, to play cards for heavy stakes in the morning, and to be openly charged with cheating in their untimely dissipation. On the other hand they would have made Midge's manners and views sufficiently unlike those of a well-bred lady to jar upon her lover Lord Annerslie, without compelling her to dig young men in the ribs, to sing comic songs, and dance breakdowns for their edification, and to boast of her fondness for smoking cigarettes. When, again, Midge finds herself, on the invitation of Lady Caroline Wynstay, Annerslie's aunt, staying at a house like Carntowers, her incongruous Bohemianism should surely crop out incidentally, and almost against her will, instead of being proclaimed and illustrated by her on all possible and impossible occasions. So far as I have observed, the woman who is raised to a social position for which her past disqualifies her—at any rate until she has corrected her more glaring solecisms—is by no means anxious to demonstrate that she is not as other women; and her inevitable mistakes might still be safely relied upon to provide the necessary dramatic point for the situation. In spite, however, of the crudity of the treatment here of a motive which is happily chosen for effective illustration in comedy, Miss Jennie Lee does much towards realising for us the character apparently intended by the playwrights. There is a merry twinkle in her eye as she discomfits one after another of her antagonists, which more than condones for the needless wink with which she too often takes the audience into her confidence; her sense of sly humour, half pert and half demure, recalls, in many respects, the comedy of Mrs. Bancroft, though it is as yet lacking in the suggestion of light and shade which would be afforded by a little more reticence.

Miss Lee, however, does most for the new play in a scene where she asks not for laughter but for tears. By a false charge brought against Colonel Preston by Linton, whom Midge rejects for Lord Annerslie, the girl is alleged to be a bastard, and her father to be a forger; and as, for some not very lucid reason, these unproved accusations carry weight, the Prestons are turned out of Carntowers with ignominy. The climax is not very ingeniously brought about; the springs which set the action at work are obviously insufficient; and the attitude assumed by some, at least, of the principal personages scarcely admits of explanation. Yet Midge's touching appeal to her disreputable father to clear his character, her agony at the slur cast upon her dead mother's good name, and her humiliation before her lover and his friends are, by Miss Lee, rendered so touchingly—there are such genuine tears in her voice, her pathos is so unstrained, so natural, and so convincing—that all else is forgotten in the sympathy given in answer to an irresistible demand. It is the triumph of art over inartistic surroundings, and it proves that the full measure of the actress's capabilities is not gauged, except in scenes where she is allowed and asked to completely win the hearts of her audience.

In the third act the insufficiency of the plot becomes manifest. The introduction of a crowd of characters has in no way helped matters by bringing about either complication or suspense, and in the case of one or two of the *dramatis personæ*, such as the semi-idiotic Fledgeley, it has rendered preposterous not a few of the episodes. "Midge" can have but one end, but this is brought about with a sad lack of dramatic resource. The villain of the piece turns out to be so foolish as to produce the missing marriage certificate of Midge's mother, and with barefaced opportuneness all the characters assemble on the lawn of a country cottage situated in Lambeth to see Linton unmasked, the Colonel reinstated in his doubtful position, and the heroine restored to the arms of her not very loyal lover. The fabric of the comedy is thus very slight from first to last, and its manipulation lacks the cunning touch by which an experienced playwright has concealed the weakness of many a play less brightly written, less definite in its intention, and less entertaining in its execution.

On the whole, "Midge" derives full advantage from the manner in which it is played, though Mr. Groves seems to me out of place as the *soi-disant* Colonel, and some of the actresses help the authors to caricature the "society" of Carntowers. In Mr. J. Y. Stephens, Lord Annerslie finds a representative who has the characteristics generally deficient in our young frock-coated lovers; both he and Mr. Moore bear themselves as well-bred young fellows who have repose without being lifeless or clumsy. Mr. Sydney Charteris, who reminds me in many ways of poor Prest, or Peveril as he called himself on the stage, Mr. J. P. Burnett as Midge's good-natured friend and adviser, and Mr. R. Mansell, all act so well and with such spontaneous ease that the pity is increased whenever they are compelled to do or say things out of keeping with their characters. After all, however, it is not "Midge," but Miss Jenny Lee in "Midge" that people will go to see; and, inasmuch as the actress fully sustains her reputation, the play will, I daresay, be forgiven for the sake of the player.—Ernest A. Bendall.

"MY ENEMY."

Written by R. Reece.

A Farcical Comedy, in Two Acts, founded on an old French Vaudeville.

Olympic Theatre, Thursday, January 15th, 1880.

Miserrimus Omen..	Mr. E. Righton.	Naylor	Mr. Murray.
Prosper Luxmore ..	Mr. J. D. Beveridge.	Grabb	Mr. Thornton.
John Langford ..	Mr. J. Maclean.	Sybil Langford	Miss G. Williams.
Joseph	Mr. Alwyn.	Sarah	Miss Howard.

It matters very little to any human being to what original idea Mr. Reece is indebted for this whimsical notion, for he has so thoroughly given it an English flavour in all its scenes, characters, and suggestions, that it must surely be the merest carpentry that he has borrowed, and that, to tell the truth, was scarcely worth taking. The hero of this luckless adventure is one Miserrimus Omen, who is vowed to ill luck and ruins everything he touches. He is as ill-starred as the wretched creature so wittily described in Mr. Henry S. Leigh's ballad of the "Twins," for when his friend was ordered to take a wife the girl he chose was Omen's destined bride. Nothing succeeds with him in life. He is plucked for a competitive examination, is jilted by the woman he adores, comes to grief when he is neatly dressed, smashes the china, and resigns himself helplessly and idiotically to fate until he is rescued from his misery by the fall of the curtain. The fun of the farce consists in laughing at the misfortunes of Miserrimus Omen, but the laughter would have been more spontaneous if Mr. Reece had told this dolorous story in one act instead of two, and if Mr. Righton could have contrived to vary the saddened monotony of his tones. The necessities of the play required that a simple tune should be played on one string, but the melody was capable of variation. However, the trifle served its purpose, and though Mr. John Maclean and Mr. J. D. Beveridge had very little to do, there was a relief of prettiness and pertness in Miss Gwynne Williams and Miss Howard. The fundamental idea of "My Enemy" is so whimsical that I should be inclined to call it a good farce unnecessarily spun out into two acts.—C. S.

"CYRIL'S SUCCESS."

Comedy in Five Acts, by Henry J. Byron.

Revived Folly Theatre, January 17th, 1880.

Originally produced Globe Theatre, November 28th, 1868.

Viscount Glycerine ..	Mr. Joseph Carne.	Jonas Grimley	Mr. E. W. Garden.
Cyril Cuthbert	Mr. E. D. Ward.	Colonel Rawker.. ..	Mr. H. Westland.
Major Treherne.. ..	Mr. J. Billington.	Paul Bingo, R.A. ..	Mr. T. Sydney.
The Hon. Frederick Titeboy.. ..	Miss R. Phillips.	Pepper	Mr. H. Elmore.
		Mrs. Cuthbert	Miss L. Cavalier.
Matthew Pincher ..	Mr. H. J. Byron.	Miss Grannett	Miss E. Thorne.
Mr. Fitz-Pelham ..	Mr. G. Shelton.	Mrs. Singleton Bliss ..	Miss Effie Liston.
Perkins	Miss Madeline Santon.		

How time flies! Who would believe that twelve years have passed away since Mr. Sefton Parry opened the Globe Theatre with the very clever comedy which was voted then as the best play Mr. Byron had ever written, the only exception being that there was supposed to be something wrong with the last act. This opinion has never been altogether shaken; but having very recently had occasion to see them both together, like two pictures, as it were, one in one hand and one in the other, I think I should cordially give the preference to "Married in Haste." But to tell the truth, the test is not precisely fair towards the older play. In nature they are very similar; the young husband behaves badly, neglects the wife he really loves, and is left to repent her absence in bitterness and tears. When, therefore, I see two such domestic disturbances—two young husbands, two young wives, two separations, two scandals, two sets of tears, and a double repentance, with the same actors in the relative parts, and with only an interval for my own mental recovery of a few days—perhaps the repetition is apt to prejudice the critic in favour of the earliest impression. The first pull at a tankard when you are thirsty is extremely refreshing, but it requires another walk and another thirst before you can experience precisely the same sensation as before. It struck me, however, that the departure of the young wife in "Married in Haste" with her parents was more natural and real than that sudden exodus of wife and old schoolmistress at midnight after a ball, and I certainly preferred the mortal agony of the husband alone with his friend to the public declaration of Cyril's sorrows to all his Bohemian friends. A man suddenly confronted with such a shock as meets Cyril Cuthbert when a letter tells him that his wife has left him, would do one of two things, either keep it to himself or summon the confidence of his best friend. I don't think he would have made a scene before Titeboy and the manager of the theatre, who are merely boon companions for the moment. The difficulty was clearly appreciated by Mr. E. D. Ward, who was not at home in the scene, though he attacked it vigorously. His heart, I don't think, was in his work. He felt out of place and awkward, and such success as he obtained was purely theatrical. He played it well in a conventional manner, but he never altogether got under the scene or into the situation. Mr. Ward has everything in his favour—voice, presence, youth, and manly appearance—but he has much to learn yet, and will, no doubt, work hard and profit by the encouragement he has received. Let him avoid playing every part in the same manner and getting his effects precisely in the same fashion. Miss Lilian Cavalier again showed unmistakable signs of thought and high intelligence. The charm of this young lady's acting is that she is attentive through every conversation and dialogue. Her face is an index to her mind. She shows her mental process. When someone is talking to her, her countenance indicates the effect upon her without a word in reply, and this considerably assists and emphasises the reply when it comes. How few actresses think it necessary to do much more than to learn their lines and repeat them. But this is not nearly all that is requisite. I did not care very much for Mr. Byron's make-up as Matthew Pincher, but I defy anyone to help laughing at this most amusing and quaint performance. Nothing could have been better than the appearance of Mr. John Billington as Major Treherne, and he played the part capitally, as also did Miss Emily Thorne that of Miss Grannett. Miss Effie Liston is a handsome young lady, and promises to be an actress. She comes of a good stock. To my mind, women in frock-coats and trousers are very unpleasing, and under such conditions nothing could reconcile me to the Hon. Frederick Titeboy. Miss Roland Phillips looked nothing like the character, but it was not her fault. How could she?—C. S.

"BRIGHTON."

By Bronson Howard and Frank Marshall.

Revived at Olympic Theatre, Saturday, January 18th, 1880.

Originally produced Court Theatre, May 25th, 1874.

Robert Sackett	Mr. C. Wyndham.	Waiter	Mr. Alwin.
Jack Benedict	Mr. J. G. Grahame.	Miss Effie Remington ..	Miss Rose Saker.
Mr. Vanderpump ..	Mr. E. Righton.	Miss Virginia Vanderpump..	Miss G. Williams.
Sir Louis Park	Mr. D. Fisher, jun.	Mrs. Alston	Miss Edith Bruce.
Columbus Drake ...	Mr. F. Charles.	Mrs. William Carter ..	Miss Amalia.
Mr. William Carter ..	Mr. J. Maclean.	Mrs. Vanderpump ..	Mrs. Leigh.
Frederick Carter, jun...	Mr. W. S. Penley.		
Mary	Miss Hobson.		

The success of such a light, sparkling, touch-and-go bit of comedy chaff as this depends entirely upon the humour in which it is taken. If the audience has dined well and is in a good temper it will be received with unbounded pleasure; but if the weather is cold, the wind is in the east, the snow is on the ground, or there happen to be a few vacant stalls, then very serious depression may set in. And not alone does it depend upon the temperament of the audience: the spirit of the actors has a great deal to do with such praise or blame as may be awarded. It is the same with what is known as a good story. Sometimes when the listeners are in good cue it is received with enthusiasm; but at other times, told just as well, it goes for nothing. Upon sheer animal spirits and nothing else does the success of "Brighton" depend. It is one rattle the whole way through, and without such a voluble, excited, and impulsive actor as Mr. Wyndham, "Brighton" would be useless. Once he refuses to keep the merriment up to fever-heat down goes the play. The comedy flags when he even pauses for breath. It is a dazzle and a flash, and Mr. Wyndham is the rocket. The audience groans, "Oh, oh!" like children at fireworks, when the actor hisses into the air and bounds off in a shower of sparks. How he can keep up to this pitch of fever-heat and be ever on the boil and splutter, I for one don't know; but though the process must be as fatiguing to him as it is occasionally to his audience, it is a form of entertainment that has been made popular by dint of sheer physical strength and highly-strained nervous irritability. To show how valuable an actor like Mr. Wyndham is to these pieces, I need only cite the case of "Betsy," which continually flags and wants whipping up by someone as trained and experienced in flutter as the manager of the theatre, and the devoted admirer of these plays. It is not the highest form of acting, but it is amusing enough, and quite innocuous so far as I can see. Mr. Frank Marshall appears to be a little distressed because his text, which is always admirable, careful, and unexceptional, is not rigorously preserved; but Mr. Wyndham has had great experience in the direction of this comedy, and if he succeeds in his object in making the people laugh he can scarcely be blamed. For my own part I listened very attentively, and did not discover any dialogue more frivolous than was requisite for such a scene, and if the public likes to see an actor like Mr. Wyndham, who is capable of such far better things, with his legs in the air, or fishing his dripping hat out of a fish tank, or scampering like a wild schoolboy up and down stairs, and if, as it appears, such practical jokes really pay, then I can only trust that Mr. Marshall has preserved his royalty, and can console himself as Mr. Gilbert does, that the plays that cost him the least trouble pay him the best. Mr. J. G. Grahame, Mr. Edward Righton, and Miss Amalia gave admirable assistance each in their different lines, never once exaggerating, or forcing the farce beyond its legitimate limits; but I wish some kind friend would inform Miss Edith Bruce that an ordinary audience is not deaf, and that it does not increase their comfort or tend to their amusement to hear Mrs. Alston screaming at the top of a very shrill voice throughout a farcical comedy. I saw the play at Brighton, and I honestly think it went better there than it did at the Olympic. At anyrate it amused me more, for I was full of ozone, and had the prospect of a walk on the morrow over the downs. But I daresay if I saw it again at the Olympic without the recollection of an east wind, I might like it better than at Brighton.—C. S.

Our Musical-Box.

HER MAJESTY'S OPERA.

(Carl Rosa Opera Company.)

"RIENZI,"
Wagner's Grand Opera,
Saturday, January 10th.

Cola Rienzi	Herr A. Schott.	Paolo Orsini	Mr. Walter Bolton.
Irene	Mdlle. Marie Lido.	Raimondo	Mr. George Conly.
Stefano Colonna ..	Mr. Leslie Crotty.	Baroncelli	Mr. Dudley Thomas.
Adriano	Miss J. Yorke.	Cecco del Vecchio ..	Mr. G. H. Snazelle.
A Messenger of Peace	Miss Annetta Albu.		

Conductor .. .. Mr. Randegger.

THOSE who have the interests of music at heart, and I trust that their name is legion, must hail with satisfaction the return of the Carl Rosa Opera Company to London, after a most successful provincial tour. It has been objected that the English Opera Company does not limit itself either to English music or to native artists. That, however, which has been deemed a reproach, is surely eminently to its credit. It is worthy of note that wherever music attains a higher development it loses those characteristic peculiarities by which its nationality can be recognised, and belongs not to any individual country but to the entire musical world. It was pleasant to see that the opening night brought a crowded and appreciative audience to witness the performance of Wagner's early, and somewhat immature, opera "Rienzi," which was mounted with all the accuracy of detail and brilliancy of scenic effect that characterised its production last year. The chief interest of the evening centred in the first appearance on the English stage of the well-known Hanoverian tenor, Herr A. Schott. In addition to an admirable stage presence this gentleman possesses a fine and ponderous voice, which he is sometimes able to control but never really to subdue. His intonation was, throughout the opera, extremely faulty, this defect being chiefly due to the unnecessary strain to which he subjected his voice on all occasions. Herr Schott was evidently labouring unsuccessfully with our insular tongue, and I shall look forward with interest to seeing him in some other important part before pronouncing a decided opinion of his capabilities. He displayed histrionic power of no mean order.

Mademoiselle Lido sang well and tunefully as Irene, but it was evident that her vocal resources were overtaxed in this part in all the concerted music, especially in the grand finale to the second act. As Adriano Miss Josephine Yorke looked and sang admirably, winning an encore for her scena.

The other characters were creditably filled, and the unaccompanied chorus of the Messengers of Peace, with the solo fairly sung by Miss Annetta Albu, a *débutante*, must be singled out for special praise. The orchestra reflected much credit upon its able conductor.

"CARMEN,"

Bizet's Popular Opera,

Monday, January 12th.

Carmen ..	.. Mdme. Selina Dolaro.	Zuniga ..	.. Mr. W. E. Gregory.
Don Josè ..	.. Signor Leli.	Morales ..	.. Mr. Dudley Thomas.
Escamillo ..	.. Mr. Walter Bolton.	Paquita ..	.. Miss Annetta Albu.
Il Remendado	.. Mr. Charles Lyall.	Mercedes ..	.. Miss Josephine Yorke.
Il Dancairo ..	.. Mr. G. H. Snazelle.	Michaela ..	.. Miss Julia Gaylord.

This opera has steadily, and deservedly, grown in popular favour since its first production in England at Her Majesty's Theatre in the summer of 1878. It must always be a matter of regret that the composer, who in this work gave evidence of so much promise should not at least have lived to complete his opera "Patrie," of which the overture is all that remains to us. Few operatic heroines seem to possess such distinct individuality of character as Carmen; yet it is interesting to note that each interpreter of this part has differed in a marked degree in her conception and realisation. First on the list, in my opinion, comes Madame Galli-Marié, who originally created the part in Paris. This versatile singer and finished actress succeeded in portraying all the waywardness of the gipsy, while she at the same time brought into prominence the dominating passion of the southern race. At the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, Mademoiselle Derivis, whose fresh voice gave her a musical advantage, followed to some extent the view of the character indicated above, but played with greater dignity, and like Madame Galli-Marié, entirely avoided the pitfall of vulgarity. At Her Majesty's Theatre we have now seen four representatives of this part. Miss Minnie Hauk, clever and artistic in all that she undertakes, gives us a mischievous but somewhat unrefined reading of Carmen, in strong contrast to the sweet womanly character presented by Madame Marie Roze. I must confess that although Madame Trebelli looks well as the gipsy heroine, the part by no means shows this gifted artist to advantage, and it can never take rank amongst her numerous and well-deserved vocal triumphs. It is, however, with the claims of Madame Selina Dolaro that I have at this moment especially to deal. Let it in the first place be noted to this lady's credit that she invariably sings in tune, though her voice is not sufficient in volume for so large a theatre. She is evidently an intelligent and experienced actress, but she plays Carmen, to my thinking, too much from a light-comedy point of view, and fails curiously enough to realise that depth of passionate intensity which the author has brought into such marked prominence in the novel from which the opera is taken.

In the matter of costume Madame Dolaro is more original than happy, and her floral dress, in the last act, would have been appropriate rather to Covent Garden than to Her Majesty's Theatre. I may point out with pleasure the Michaela of Miss Julia Gaylord, who sang with much taste, and acted with great intelligence. Signor Leli as Don Josè was seen to greater advantage from a histrionic than from a vocal point of view; and Mr. Walter Bolton resumed the part of Escamillo, which he filled last season with this company. Mr. Gregory sang carefully, and was always in tune, as Zuniga. Messrs. Charles Lyall and Snazelle supplied the element of comedy as Il Remendado and Dancairo, while Miss Yorke and Miss Albu lent efficient aid as Mercedes and Paquita.

"MIGNON,"

Ambroise Thomas's Opera,

Tuesday, January 13th.

Wilhelm Meister ..	Mr. Joseph Maas.
Filina	Miss Georgina Burns.
Frederic	Mdme. Selina Dolaro.
Laertes	Mr. Charles Lyall.
Lothario	Mr. Leslie Crotty.
Giarno	Mr. G. H. Betjemann.
Antonio	Mr. Brooklyn.
Mignon	Miss Julia Gaylord.

Much interest was felt in musical circles at the announcement that an English version of this opera was to be produced, and a crowded audience assembled at the first performance. Mr. Arthur Matthison, who has had large experience in work of this description, supplies an admirable libretto, overcoming, with considerable skill and poetic feeling, the difficulties which the music of this opera presents for adaptation to English words. Goethe's story of Wilhelm Meister, modified though it be in the operatic version, presents great opportunities for musical effect. Various opinions will doubtless be held as to how far Monsieur Thomas has used these to advantage. The music, with the exception of two or three numbers, is essentially light and trivial in character, and is inferior in poetic conception to many parts of the composer's "Hamlet." The orchestration is thin and deficient in volume.

The part of Mignon was sustained by Miss Julia Gaylord, and as this character forms the centre point of interest throughout the opera, I could not but feel that this promising young artist was placed at a disadvantage, from the comparison which must unavoidably be made between her and the distinguished singers who have already appeared with success in this part. Miss Gaylord consistently and ably carried out her view of the character, which, in her hands, wore a uniform aspect of timid melancholy. I believe that further acquaintance with the part will enable this clever young lady to develop the deep undercurrent of passionate love and intense jealousy which form so large a share of Mignon's nature. I seemed to miss the light and childlike waywardness which contrasts so happily with this deeper feeling. Throughout the second act, for instance, the actress fails to recognise the playful elements of the situation, and is clearly unable to escape from a despondency which has by this period become chronic. Gifted by nature with a sympathetic voice and correct intonation, Miss Gaylord at present lacks the required finish of vocalisation and intensity of expression necessary for the adequate interpretation of this music. As Filina Miss Georgina Burns, while giving evidence of marked improvement, both as a singer and actress, has still much to learn in the *technique* of her art. With a naturally flexible voice, her execution is unfinished, as evidenced, *inter alia,* in the prolonged shakes at the end of her scena, which she takes on the under instead of the upper note. Mr. Maas sang well as Wilhelm Meister, obtaining an encore for the song in the last act; but it is to be regretted that he does not infuse more earnestness into his acting. The Lothario of Mr. Leslie Crotty, though played with intelligence, was occasionally wanting in vigour, this being especially noticeable in the scene where he acts as the avenging incendiary. Madame Dolaro looked well as Frederic, and fenced admirably. I must be permitted to protest against the tendency which was evinced by one performer to insert gag in the shape of theatrical slang; and I decidedly demur to the wholesale manner in which atteniton to strict time was disregarded throughout the opera.

"THE TAMING OF THE SHREW,"

Goetz's Masterpiece,

Tuesday, January 20th.

Baptista	Mr. G. H. Snazelle.	Petruchio	Mr. Walter Bolton.
Katharine	Miss Minnie Hauk.	Grumio	Mr. T. Law.
Bianca	Miss G. Burns.	A Tailor	Mr. Charles Lyall.
Hortensio	Mr. Leslie Crotty.	Steward	Mr. D. Thomas.
Lucentio	Mr. F. C. Packard.	Housekeeper	Miss Ella Collins.

Although this opera has frequently been performed at some of the smaller continental towns, and once in London, it has hitherto failed to attract much public attention. The announcement, however, of its production by Mr. Carl Rosa at Her Majesty's Theatre has excited great interest in musical circles; and various circumstances have combined to render it an operatic event of considerable importance. The comparative youth of the composer, his painful struggle to surmount poverty and neglect, and the fact that, like Bizet, he was overtaken by death before his works had obtained general recognition, unite in no small degree to enlist our sympathies. Notwithstanding the present dearth of original modern operas, "The Taming of the Shrew" remained unsought and unrecognised, not only during the composer's life, but for some time subsequently, till the success of his symphony drew public attention to this more important but hitherto forgotten work. It must be admitted that the story possesses but a limited amount of human interest, and does not readily lend itself to successful musical treatment; and I cannot but feel that the English translation of the German libretto fails to soften these defects in any material degree. It cannot therefore be denied that any success which may be obtained by the music is enhanced by a knowledge of these technical difficulties with which the composer had to contend. The overture does not call for any special remark, and was somewhat coldly received by the large and expectant audience.

The first act commences with a graceful tenor serenade for Lucentio, and as this air is thrice repeated I conclude that it was a favourite with the composer. This is followed by a spirited chorus of domestics, which, like all the choruses throughout this opera, is cleverly constructed and skilfully worked. Upon this comes the entrance of Baptista, who proceeds to address the assembled multitude in weak recitative, accompanied only by the ancient, conventional, and occasional chord, a custom which would be "more honoured in the breach than in the observance." This form of recitative is given in great abundance throughout, and consistently maintains its monotonous character. An unaccompanied chorus follows, leading up to a pretty but unimportant duet for tenor and soprano. This is interrupted by Hortensio's arrival, with a band of Paduan "Waits," who proceed to make the night as hideous as their more modern successors are wont to do. I sympathised with Baptista's subsequent speech: "This very night is every demon loose; shall we never be quiet?" Lucentio's Mendelssohnian air, "Oh give me thy charming thy beautiful child," is not devoid of merit, whilst a large share of praise must be given to Petruchio's forcible song, which is brought in again with excellent effect, in conjunction with other voices, at the end of the act. Nothing of importance occurs after the next rise of the curtain till Katharine's song, written for guitar accompaniment, "I'll give myself to no one." This expressive melody obtained an encore.

The second act is chiefly occupied with a long duet between Katharine and Petruchio, which does not call for any special comment. A chorus of retainers in D with solo for Baptista, comes early in the third act, and is afterwards repeated in F with a varied and effective accompaniment. The scene between Bianca and her disguised lovers is rendered amusing by a light tenor solo, repeated by the soprano, with interruptions by Hortensio, who then sings an extremely clever and ingeniously worked alphabetical solo, in which each letter mentioned is represented by its identical musical note through the entire scale. The act concludes with a chorus, during which occurs the short adagio duet between Katharine and Petruchio, which happily expresses the dramatic situation, and is perhaps the most charming melody in the opera. The last act is painfully overburdened with pantomimic action, the first relief coming in the form of a scena for Katharine, which is fairly descriptive, and leads on to the final duet for soprano and baritone. This reaches and sustains a higher level than any other portion of the opera, and confirms the impression that had Goetz been so fortunate as to have obtained a more serious and dramatic libretto, his undoubted talent would have shown to greater advantage. Miss Minnie Hauk as Katharine sang and acted with much energy, and was frequently applauded. The Bianca of Miss Burns was meritorious, and Mr. Packard, who was evidently still suffering from his recent indiposition, acquitted himself fairly well as Lucentio. Mr. Walter Bolton appeared to greater advantage as Petruchio than in any character which he has yet sustained, while Mr. Leslie Crotty's sympathetic voice did good service on all occasions. Mr. Snazelle was a highly efficient Baptista, and the chorus and band deserve favourable mention. Throughout I was unable to trace any individuality or dramatic connection between the music and the characters. Thus the same theme in some of the concerted music is fitted to words of different import, and serves to express most varied and conflicting emotions. It has been stated that the scoring of this opera is symphonic, such however is not the case, since it is worked upon the polyphonic and not upon the symphonic principle. Symphonic working does not consist only in placing the motives in different keys and in various instruments without either extension, inversion, or harmonic alteration of the themes. That the composer was an organist is evident from the prelude style which prevails in his orchestral elaboration, and also from his habit of placing the violins too low, thus sacrificing much brilliancy of effect. The wind instruments are most frequently used in closed harmonics and in three parts, without any fundamental bass, which is supplied by the celli and contra bassi, and lacks consistence by reason of its too constant movement. The brass instruments are almost entirely unemployed, and the orchestration is always wanting in fulness. Great credit is due to Mr. Carl Rosa for giving us a new work, but I fear that this music must fail to charm the ear of the general public, while it certainly does not satisfy the higher tastes of cultivated musicians.—Damon.

A great musical festival is announced to take place in Rome, at Easter, to celebrate the unveiling of the Palestrina Monument. Wagner and Liszt have been invited as representatives of German music. The question presents itself to one's mind: Who—if anyone—will be asked to represent English music?

The German papers state that Professor Joachim of Berlin is at present making a six weeks' tour in Austria and Italy. During the first part of his journey he is accompanied by Herr Bonawitz, who will, however, be succeeded by Johannes Brahms.

The public in America is being gradually prepared for the hearing of

Wagner's later works. Theodore Thomas gave selections from the "Ring des Nibelungen" at the first Philharmonic Concert in New York, at which Campanini is said to have sung an excerpt from the "Walküre" with great success. Perhaps a similar educational process will soon be commenced in England, though it will probably take longer to work in this country than among the more liberal-musical Americans.

Herr Ernst Frank, from Frankfurt, has been appointed to fill the place of Herr von Bülow in Hanover. This is announced as a temporary arrangement only, but it is expected, by those who know Herr Frank's efficiency as a conductor, that it will become a permanent appointment.

It is interesting to learn that Liszt's "Faust Symphony" was performed lately, for the first time, in Dresden, and was well received by the public. We, in London, are to have our first hearing of this work at Mr. Walter Bache's concert, early in the year.

Rubinstein's operas are rapidly gaining ground abroad. At the present moment (1st January, 1880) the "Maccabees" is in the *répertoire* of the opera-houses in Berlin, Prague, Breslau, and St. Petersburg; "Feramors" is being performed in Berlin, Königsberg, and Danzig; "Der Dämon" has been given more than eight times in Moscow; and in Hamburg "Nero" has been played more than twelve times. This opera is also announced for the coming season in London.

Dr. von Bülow is untiring in his noble exertions to increase the Bayreuth fund. He has been giving Recitals in many parts of Germany for this purpose, and was bold enough to make the attempt, some time ago, in the city of Cologne, where, somehow, one hardly seems to expect many supporters of the cause, though, of course, all would be attracted by the talents of the performer.

Mr. Lockwood, the harpist, has been appointed to the Münich Orchestra, and made a most successful *début* as a soloist at the second subscription concert last year.

The winter concerts in Copenhagen, under the direction of Niels Gade, are so popular this season that the committee are forced to give a double series of concerts, in order to admit all the subscribers. At the first concert a capital performance of the late P. Heise's "Dornröschen" was given. This work, which is in the form of a ballad of considerable length, met with a favourable reception, the solos being finely sung by Frau Keller and Herr Simonsen of the Royal Opera.

M. Pasdeloup's popular concerts in Paris are working wonders in improving the taste of the general public. At the fourth concert, besides well-known classical works, Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique" was performed, and M. Breitner played Tschaikowsky's "Pianoforte Concerto." At the sixth concert, among the popular standard works, the programme contained also the First Act of Berlioz's "Prise de Troie," and "Marche Slave," by Joncières. At the eighth concert Berlioz's Opera was given in its entirety, the eighth Chatelet concert also being devoted to a performance of the same work.

From Brussels, too, come most encouraging accounts of the popular concerts, under the direction of M. Joseph Dupont. The first of the season took place on the 14th December, and opened with Schumann's D minor Symphony, which was followed by the "Rhapsodie Norvégienne," by Svendsen, the "Euryanthe" Overture, and a Suite for Orchestra, from Leo Delibes's "Ballet of Sylvia." This latter work roused the public to great enthusiasm. M. Breitner was the soloist, and delighted the audience with his performance of Schubert's Fantasia, orchestraed by Liszt, some smaller pieces by Rubinstein and Chopin, and a marvellous arrangement by Tansig of one of Strauss's waltzes.

The following is taken from the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt,* of December 5th: "A really sensational success was gained by Miss Dora Schirmacher, in an evening concert at the Conservatorium of Leipzig. She played the Scherzo from Scharwenka's B minor Concerto, and the E Major Polonaise (Weber-Liszt), and her exquisite performance of both works called forth never-ending storms of applause." This young lady roused even greater enthusiasm at the fifth Euterpe concert in the same place. The German papers welcome a pianist whose *technik* has been so highly trained and cultivated, and who at the same time gives such unmistakable proofs of individuality in her musical talent.

So much is said by ignorant people about Wagner's contempt for the old masters that perhaps they will be surprised to learn that some time ago he brought out an edition of Palestrina's Stabat Mater for double chorus, *à capella.* It is most perfectly prepared for the use of church and concert choirs, and the master's cultivated mind and perfect understanding are shown everywhere in the appropriate and intelligent marks of phrasing and expression, without which but a poor performance would be obtained.

The Mozarteum in Salzburg has become possessed of a valuable Mozart relic. It was presented by Madame Erard, and consists of a ring containing an opal surrounded by twelve diamonds, given by the Empress Maria Theresa to Mozart in the year 1762. Madame Erard succeeded Madame Spontini in the possession of this interesting jewel.

Madame Héritte-Viardot, a daughter of the celebrated Madame Viardot-Garcia, has come before the public in Stockholm as composer of a Piano Quartette, which seems to have been well received.—S. Carmichael.

"Chant sans paroles pour le Piano," par P. Tschaikowsky. (Stanley Lucas, Weber, and Co.)

This graceful little song without words deserves a place in the *répertoire* of all amateurs. No special difficulty will be encountered, with the exception of some short passages of sixths for the left hand, which, in these days of technical development, will be easily conquered. Musicians will do well to make themselves acquainted with this composer's more important works. His overture to "Romeo and Juliet" has been given once at the Crystal Palace, and a Pianoforte Concerto was introduced to the public at the same place by Mr. Dannreuther.

"Album Espagnol." Spanish Dances. Pianoforte Duet by Maurice Moszkowski, Op. 21. (Augener and Co.)

This Spanish Album contains four charming duets, which are certainly not beyond the powers of most amateurs, and yet are brilliant and effective as *society-pieces.* They are all written in 3-4 time, though the last partakes more of the character of a polonaise. No. 1 (Allegro moderato) is in G major, and is perhaps the easiest of the set. The second part, in E major and E minor, contains some delightful accompaniment effects in the long-sustained notes in the bass part. No. 2, in D major (Vivace assai), is bright and sparkling, and the second subject, in F sharp minor, is eminently Spanish in character. In fact, throughout the set, M. Moszkowski has shown himself to be imbued with the Spanish national feeling. No. 3, in F sharp minor (con moto), is very brilliant, the dash and vigour of the first part being most happily contrasted with a graceful melody in F sharp major. This number will very likely be the most popular of the set. No. 4, in D major (moderato e grazioso), is more pompous in character, somewhat in the style of a polonaise. There is more elaborate writing in this number, but it is hardly so graceful and effective as the other three.

S. C.

Our Omnibus-Box.

THE Editor, indebted to countless friends for kind appreciation and generous sympathy, is anxious to take this opportunity of thanking the numerous correspondents who have written to express their approval of the new series of THE THEATRE. Those who remain unanswered, not from inclination but from the necessity of arduous and incessant work, must now, one and all, receive hearty and sincere thanks. The reason of introducing a new series without a preface was that the fresh scheme might speak for itself; and though the idea of a magazine of popular art and criticism is not yet perfected, subscribers and friends may be assured that no energy will be neglected in an endeavour to make THE THEATRE both interesting to the reader and useful as a record to the theatrical student. Every six months a complete and exhaustive index will be issued, which it is hoped will prove a record of theatrical events and the basis of a collected dramatic history now scattered over innumerable uncodified journals and periodicals, and unpreserved for many years. In answer to many correspondents who have preserved THE THEATRE from the commencement, it is notified that an index and title-page to the last volume (consisting of five numbers, and ending with December, 1879) have been prepared, and will be supplied as notified in the advertising columns. The new series and fresh volume started with the new year, at the publishing office of Messrs. Dickens and Evans, of 26, Wellington Street, Strand, to whom all business communications should be henceforth addressed; and it now only remains for the Editor to perfect his plans and to demand the assistance, co-operation, and support of all who are interested in the drama, music, and universal art. Any notes, memoranda, or curious facts connected with the stage will be welcomed by the Editor with sincere appreciation, and they cannot fail to interest a rapidly increasing list of subscribers and purchasers. The pictures, which are in themselves a record of our best actors and actresses, will be continued, and it is hoped shortly will be introduced on a perfectly novel plan, in order that they may supply the place of the old illustrations to the play-books of the past. When the sun returns again to London, the photographic illustrations will improve, and no doubt come up to the requisite standard; but an unfortunate stress of winter, dark days, and interminable fogs, must be pleaded as an excuse for the defects against which the best form of art has striven in vain.

The dramatic year of 1879 will be memorable on account of its disastrous history of failures at almost every theatre in the metropolis. The successes may be easily counted on two hands. They consist of "The Queen's Shilling," originally produced at the Court on April 19th, and subsequently transferred to the St. James's; "Courtship," at the Court (October 16th); "Truth," at the Criterion (February 8th); and "Betsy," at the same theatre; "New Babylon," at the Duke's (February 13th); "Drink," at the Princess's (June 2nd); "Crutch and Toothpick," at the Royalty

(April 14th); and "Madame Favart," at the Strand (April 12th). Of these plays five are from the French, and two from America.

An amusing list of unrehearsed effects has been compiled by Mr. Edward Spencer. To these may be added one during the last run of "The Two Orphans," at the Olympic, under the management of Henry Neville. A young lady of very prepossessing appearance was so carried away by the reality of the scene, when Mrs. Huntley as Frochard drags about and illtreats Miss Marion Terry as the blind orphan girl, that the young and indignant spectator got up in her place in the stalls and deliberately hurled her opera-glasses at Mrs. Huntley's head. Luckily she missed her mark, but there lay the opera-glasses on the stage. Not knowing to whom they belonged, Mr. Neville was compelled to advertise for the owner.

The programme for the St. James's Theatre is complete for the year. The next comedy to be played after the withdrawal of "The Queen's Shilling," will be one by Mr. A. W. Dubourg, and will include in the cast Mr. Hare, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Mr. Wenman, Mr. Denny, Mrs. Gaston Murray, and Miss Grahame. The new version of "Black-Eyed Susan," by Mr. W. G. Wills, will be produced at a morning performance during the season. Mr. W. H. Kendal will be William; Mrs. Kendal, Susan; Mr. Hare, the Admiral—what a splendid chance for a make-up as Lord Nelson—Mr. Terriss, Crosstree; and Mr. Wenman, the villain. A revival of "Still Waters Run Deep," the very popular comedy by Tom Taylor, is meditated, with Mrs. Kendal as Mrs. Sternhold; Mr. Kendal as John Mildmay; Mr. Hare as Old Potter; and Mr. Terriss as Hawksley.

A new dramatic duologue by Mr. Theyre Smith, called "The Castaways," to be acted by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, has been accepted by the management at the St. James's; and also a one-act dramatic incident on the late war by an anonymous author.

Miss Mary Anderson, the American actress, has been the subject of a good deal of adulation in the press; but the following extract from a criticism upon her may be said to go beyond all. "Can you imagine," says the writer, "some drifting cloud of evening crystallised in mystic limpidness into that image of the Maker which we call humanity—pellucid, lit within with azure fire! It may suggest a dream of that vision of loveliness which I have seen, and which shattered one's soul to pieces. Tall, slender—but slender like one of those threads of steel that carry trains across Niagara—a step as graceful as the wild cat's; and that neck! aspiring as the Alexandrian shaft that lifted Pharos to light up the sea—commanding as the tower of ivory that looketh towards Damascus." If anyone cares to see an admirable likeness of this enchanting lady, it will be found at French's, in the Strand.

In "Romeo and Juliet," it will be remembered, Miss Neilson tears up her veil, kisses it, and drops it to her stage-lover. The manager of a theatre at which she played a few weeks ago had the pieces carefully preserved for sale by auction, and ardent was the competition among the love-lorn youths of the place for one of the fragments.

Madame Patti has favoured a friend with an account of the emotions she experiences in singing. The appearance of her name in the bills makes her nervous and agitated. The fever of the footlights gains upon her more and more as the hour approaches. On leaving her drawing-room to go on the stage she is subject to terrible fright. And throughout the performance she feels strongly agitated.

M. Victor Hugo is as gallant as ever. He deferentially bestows upon the hand of every lady to whom he is introduced what Mr. Oliver Wendell Holmes calls a "lisping consonant," in plainer language, a kiss. In M. Hugo's case the "consonant" does not precede a-vowal.

Everyone will rejoice to hear that Mr. John S. Clarke will soon be acting again at the Olympic. The new play is said to be excellent, and will collect in one company Mr. John Ryder, Mr. Charles Harcourt, Mr. Maclean, and Miss Fanny Josephs.

Mr. H. Howe, of the Vaudeville Theatre, has forwarded to me a bill of the Haymarket Theatre, dated Friday, April 28th, 1843, which settles two important questions as to the use of "gas," and the other modern innovation of "orchestra stalls," an improvement that was cordially detested by the late Charles Mathews, who never ceased to inveigh against the clattering and ogling that they encouraged. This is what the bill says: "During the recess the Theatre has undergone extensive alterations, the proscenium has been entirely remodelled, and the whole of the interior redecorated in the most costly and elegant style. By a curtailment of the useless portion of the stage, or front of the curtain, and advancing the orchestra and lights nearer the actors and scenic effects, the lessee (Mr. Benjamin Webster) has been enabled to appropriate the portion so obtained to form a certain number of *Orchestra Stalls*, which can be retained for the parties taking them the whole of the evening. For the comfort of those visiting the pit, backs have been placed to all the seats. Among the most important improvements is the introduction (for the first time) of gas as the medium of light. A brilliant centre chandelier has been erected, and no expense spared to render this establishment deserving its high character and the support of the patrons of the drama." On that evening "The School for Scandal" was played, with old Farren, Strickland, Brindel, Stuart, Charles Mathews, Madame Vestris, and Mrs. Glover; "Patter v. Clatter," in which Charles Mathews appeared, and "The Bashful Irishman," with Mr. Howe as Captain Pester, the part of Mr. Terence O'Gallagher falling to Mr. Leonard, the substitute for Tyrone Power, who had left for America.

There is nothing new under the sun. I am happy, however, so entirely to have pleased our subscribers and friends by reviving the old magazine plan of printing the entire cast and acts of performance over the criticism, in order to make a handy and convenient record of facts. It is needless to point out to any but such as are professedly ignorant or unpardonably obstinate that the course was generally adopted in the theatrical magazines of the last century, and only ceased when newspapers were preferred to magazines as a vehicle for criticism. Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, and though the printed cast is more suitable to a magazine that has a permanent value than to a newspaper of ephemeral worth, still it is pleasant to suggest an idea so simple even to old-fashioned and intolerant people.

The force, the lightness of touch, and the persuasive power, that enable a writer to review a play, and to review it well, on the same evening that it is produced, are so rare, that I am sure many will regret that Mr. David Anderson has severed his connection with *The Sportsman*, whose dramatic criticism obtained such notoriety through the writer's industry and influence. His criticisms were admirably clear, and he wrote with style.

Photographs can at last be taken in colour. Nature has at last undertaken to do that in which art has failed; for there is a vast difference between a photograph in colour and a coloured photograph. Every tint of the complexion and tone of the dress, every detail of fringe, scarf, and ribbon, every flower in the hair and jewel on the hand are reproduced in colour with faultless accuracy. As soon as the business arrangements are complete, The Theatre will have the earliest benefit of the new invention, that is likely to create a revolution in photography.

When editors and proprietors of papers are in such a desperate hurry to rush into print, in order to tell the public who is or is not the dramatic critic they employ, it might be well to ascertain, in the first instance, whether the slightest doubt existed in the public mind as to the impossibility of connecting what is generally accepted as criticism with the useful and highly meritorious interests of an old-established trade journal.

The Grand Hall and adjacent buildings on the Scarborough Spa are almost ready. They are erected from plans prepared by Messrs. Verity and Hunt, and that fact speaks volumes in their favour; and when all is done 60,000*l.* will have been expended. Everyone who knows anything about Scarborough will wish Mr. Francis Goodricke good luck, no rain, and a prosperous season.

M. Comte Émile de Najac, author of "Bébé" and "Nounou," has temporarily given up play-writing, in order to prepare a catalogue of the seventeenth-century drawings and engravings collected by the late M. Mahérault, the friend and dramatic adviser of Scribe.

Madame Nilsson lately paid a visit to Gottenburg, where she was well known as a child. She arrived, with a large retinue of attendants and travelling companions, early in the morning, and, before removing her hat or wraps, ran out for a little walk through the old familiar streets, thinking to escape recognition. However she was followed by an enthusiastic crowd of several hundreds of her countrymen and women, who cheered her and pelted her with flowers. Madame Nilsson is a great favourite among the Swedes on account of her deeds of benevolence. She never seems to forget the days when she was poor and unknown.

Mr. Sothern opened an engagement at Philadelphia on the 29th December.

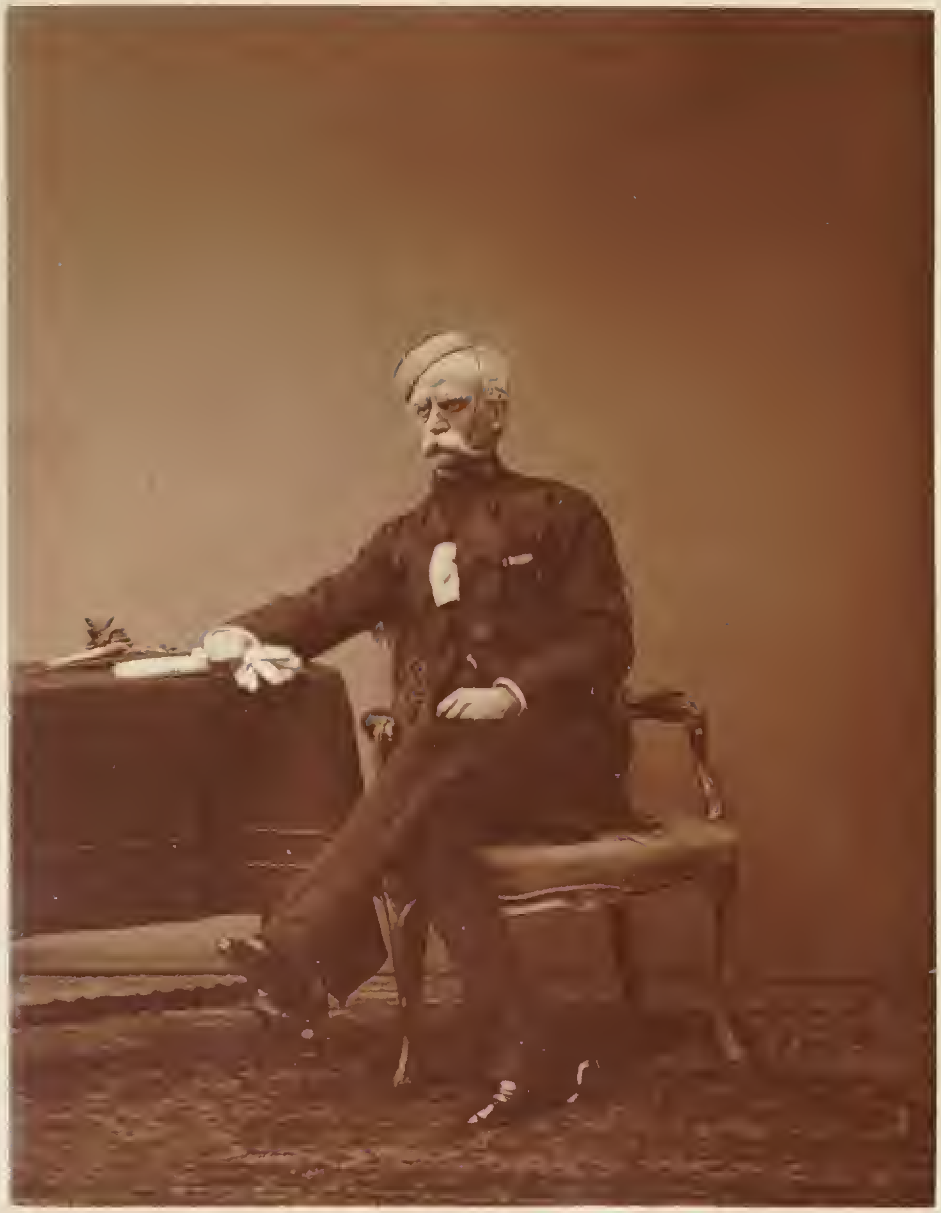
Contralto voices, according to a German critic, will soon become things of the past. He says that the tendency of our age is to make the voice sharper and thinner.

Signor Verdi, I understand, is setting music to an Otello.

The London correspondent of *The New York Tribune,* I observe, states that Mdlle. Bernhardt has resumed negotiations for a tour in America. Her present intention is to go there for two months next December, playing in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, and return in the following autumn.

Some weeks ago a piece called "Les Vipères," was brought out at the Troisième Théâtre Français. The author, M. Fernand Poirot, was a mere youth, and had been introduced to the manager by M. Proust. The piece having been accepted, he was sent for. The *pauvre garçon* had been dead some months, perhaps forgotten; the piece did not please, indeed the spectators began to disperse before it was half over. Not so a gray-haired lady, in a box which, from its position, protected her from observation; dressed in deep mourning, she followed the performanec with eager interest, with both smiles and tears. She was the author's mother.

Let us not rashly assume that butchers are without taste and gallantry Madame Hassoua, playing Desdemona in Rossini's "Othello," at Moscow, made a deep impression on the audience, especially in the romance, "Assisa al Pié d'un Salice." At this point a butcher who had a long bill against her, rose from his seat, and, frantically waving his handkerchief, exclaimed: "I forgive you what you owe me!"



THE THEATRE, NO. 8, THIRD SERIES. WOODBURYTYPE.

"You're drunk Sir"

Queens Shilling - "Col Daunt"

John Hare

The Theatre.

MARCH 1, 1880.

Our Symposium.

THE SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION THIS MONTH IS:

IS THE PIT AN INSTITUTION OR AN EXCRESCENCE?

I MIGHT begin by taking exception to the wording of the question, were I prepared to put it in a better form; for that the pit is "an institution," in the sense that it was instituted when modern theatres were first established, and has existed ever since, cannot be denied; while it can scarcely be maintained that it is "an excrescence," *i.e.* an abnormal growth; for it cannot be 'abnormal' that in a theatre, which is a place of entertainment for the public, a fair proportion of the accommodation should be allotted to the largest section of the public, even if the greater part of that allotment be on the ground-floor, which I never knew till the other day, was supposed to be the most remunerative or expensive part of a house. I always thought the first-floor was pre-eminently that part reserved for the richest lodgers; and, if we are to admit—which I decline to do—the analogy between a theatre and a lodging-house, the axiom that the higher you go the less you pay breaks down at the first landing. By-the-way, this same lodging-house simile is an unfortunate one, for when we take lodgings it is with the intention of sleeping there, an intention one never deliberately has in mind when one goes to a theatre; though circumstances, now and then, may prove too strong for one.

This by way of preface; but, with regard to the question before us, it seems to me that a theatre without a pit is scarcely a theatre at all; it might be an Italian Opera House—a place of fashionable durance, which has not done much to encourage the dramatic art. Compare the aspect of Her Majesty's Theatre, both before and behind the proscenium, when the floor of the house is tenanted by those who have paid a guinea or more for their stalls, and when the same area is filled by those who have paid half that sum; both in the demeanour of the audience and in that of the artists, the advantage will be found (*cæteris paribus*) to be on the side of the more popular arrangement. The proportion between the prices of opera stalls in the fashionable season and in the cheap season is not the same as that between the stalls and pit seats of a theatre; but the comparison is a sufficiently fair one, for, in both cases, the cheaper price is paid by those who come solely to enjoy the entertainment, and therefore devote their whole attention to what is being done or said on the stage, and not, as their more fashionable rivals, to what is being done or said by those around them. I hold it to be absolutely necessary for the actor's art that he should have in front of him an audience able and willing to express audibly their approbation or disapprobation. In this respect I think most persons, who have observed carefully the behaviour of those who occupy the ten-shilling stalls and those who occupy the two-shilling pit, will admit that the latter have the decided advantage. If those who fill the stalls in the new Haymarket Theatre will condescend to be as attentive to the play, and as open in the expression of their applause or censure, as their humble predecessors, they will do more to justify Mr. Bancroft's oligarchical revolution than any amount of argument founded on the basis of £ *s.* *d.*

But to the latter "complexion" all matters, in this professedly æsthetic age, must come; everything now is referred to a money standard, and brains are estimated by the pennyweight. Is it so certain that the abolition of the pit will add to the receipts? Suppose Mr. Bancroft had reserved for his more plutocratic patrons the balcony stalls the first circle and the private boxes only, converting the whole of the present orchestra stalls into pit seats, divided by plain iron arms, comfortable but not luxurious; how much money would the floor of the theatre have held? I believe now, if every stall be full, it can only hold 72*l.* 10*s.*; in the latter case, charging half-a-crown for, say, the first ten rows of the pit, it would have held surely quite as much, if not more. But then the plutocratic patrons "would have objected to sitting behind and above the pit." It may be so, but I do not believe it. They would still have the largest share of the best part of the house, and if they wanted to come and see the entertainment, or each other, they would soon have got reconciled to that arrangement. Of course Mr. Bancroft may say: "The public for which I cater consists almost entirely of persons willing to pay more than five shillings for their seats, and they would not like to come into contact with the vulgar herd who pay less; therefore, following the example of those East-End theatres which cater for a public the majority of whom will not pay more than a shilling for their seat, I devote the greater part of my house to the majority of my patrons." This is a perfectly sensible argument; and if results justify Mr. Bancroft's dependence on plutocratic patrons in the larger theatre he now manages, as they did in the small one which he has quitted, everybody will be glad for his sake. But when it is maintained that Mr. Bancroft's example should be followed by other theatres, I must protest against such a theory; for experience has proved that for any art to lean upon fashionable patronage only is to lean on a very brittle support; and were all the West-End theatres to abolish their pits in favour of expensive stalls, the art of acting would soon be as dead as the detractors of our modern stage could wish. Looking at the matter in the interests of art alone, there can be little doubt that the influence of such an audience as must fill the stalls at the new Haymarket Theatre is very injurious to the artists on the stage, unless that influence be tempered by the introduction of a more popular element. Granted that the ten-shilling audience will pay as much attention to the acting as they will to the dresses and stage decorations, their inability to express the enthusiasm which, doubtless, they feel at the artistic representation set before them, paralyses the artists' energies and inclines them insensibly to exaggeration when they wish to produce an extraordinary effect; for too little applause is just as hurtful as too much. An actor has studied a part carefully; on the first night the audience, which is always an exceptional one, applauds his efforts; he is conscious of having succeeded in carrying out his conception; he sees, perhaps, some points in which he can improve it. On the subsequent nights he presents the character as well, if not better, as on the first night; he does not expect the same warmth in the audience as there was on the first night, but he does expect some applause; he gets none or little; they like it very well, but they don't trouble themselves to express their liking; the actor thinks the fault must be his, and either gets flat in his style of playing, or seeks to obtain some sign of approval by exaggerated efforts; in either case his art deteriorates. Place an actor, who has played for many nights before a politely unemotional audience, in a more popular theatre, give him some part to play which requires real feeling both in actor and in spectator, and ten to one but he falls into over-accentuation of the passion, simply because he has lost the means of testing the effect which he is producing. Depend upon it, the absence of such intelligent and attentive spectators as the pit generally contains, of persons who are good practical critics of the play and players, and who do not scruple to express their feelings, is a great loss to the actors and scarcely a less one to the audience.

It seems to me that good may come out of this step which Mr. Bancroft has taken, in one way at least. Attention has been drawn to the great discomfort of the pit in many theatres. When managers consider what patience and perseverance their humble patrons display, who often wait hour after hour for the opening of the doors in order to secure good places in the pit, they will not be long before they make some effort to secure for these earnest admirers of the drama quarters more worthy of their untiring devotion.—Frank A. Marshall.

The reconstruction of the Haymarket Theatre by Mr. Bancroft, which has resulted in the destruction of a certain number of seats on the ground-floor, usually called the pit, and the substitution of certain more or less luxurious chairs, commonly called stalls, has given rise to a discussion of a somewhat peculiar character. It has been assumed in many quarters that a theatrical manager—the most heavily taxed, rated, and rented tradesman in the world—is bound to carry on his business on sentimental principles, thinking more of some mysterious duty which he is supposed to owe to the public, and of another mysterious duty which he is supposed to owe to art, than of a certain less mysterious duty which he undoubtedly owes to his creditors and his breeches' pocket. Of course no manager takes any heed of these discussions, but carries on his business on the divine and everlasting principle of self-interest—a principle which probably governs the universe. The director of the Comédie Française—the director of the first theatre in the world, M. E. Perrin—has set an example to his brother-managers, of working steadily for the highest receipts which his theatre will hold, caring very little, to all appearance, whether those receipts were made by continually running an electro-plated piece like "L'Etrangère," or by representing the fine old crusted works of the ancient masters. The late Mr. Bateman, after boxing the theatrical compass for some years in search of the magnetic play, at last discovered it in "Hamlet," and held on to it day and night like grim death as long as the public would have it, without paying much attention to the health of the principal performer, or those interests of art which are thought to be best served by giving as much variety as possible. My friend, Mr. Irving, followed with a policy which some of the journals were good enough to say he had copied from me, of changing his programme very frequently, and playing different pieces on alternate nights. If ever I conducted my theatre on such a policy, it was forced upon me by hard necessity—by the non-attractiveness of my pieces or the company representing them. I do not say that Mr. Irving was ever in this unenviable position; but I do say that the moment he found his gold-mine in "The Merchant of Venice," away went "The Bells," "The Iron Chest," "The Lady of Lyons," and even "Hamlet," as so much lumber; the "run" was nursed, as it ought to be; and the public were told to book their seats six weeks in advance.

My friend, Mr. Bancroft, takes the Haymarket Theatre at a very heavy rental, on a not very long lease, and thoroughly rebuilds it at a "cost which will probably represent a charge of ten pounds a night as long as he remains in possession." He finds that the levels will not allow him to excavate a pit under the dress circle, and his space outside his dress circle on the floor of the house is only sufficient for his stalls. He makes his house like the Opéra Comique has always been (with the exception of a very brief period), like the Gaiety Theatre was during the French plays last season, and like Covent Garden is on a great Patti-night—that is, a house with no pit. For this he was exposed to something like a riot on the first night by a number of people in a very comfortable "upper circle," who were assumed to be the old and discontented pit frequenters of the Haymarket Theatre, who resented the alteration as an attack upon their vested interests. The only shadow of an excuse for this outbreak of theatrical protectionism was the comfortable character of the lost pit. In one of the worst-constructed houses ever built, it was the one place where all those who were fortunate enough to get seats could sit, see, hear, and breathe. As I said years ago in *The Athenæum* (the journal, not the club):

> I have been there and still would go,
> 'Twas quite a little heaven below.

The pit visitors enjoyed this place for fifty years at a too moderate price, while their wretched superiors were ricking their necks in the dress circle, or cramping their legs in the private boxes. Now the turn of the superiors has come; but who has any right to grumble? No doubt the stage loafers in Shakespeare's time, who lined the wings on each side, who smoked and spat upon the stage, and interrupted the performers, were much hurt when their room was wanted by Davenant and others for scenic display, and they were sent into the front of the house to find their level. Their position, however, was different from that of the pit claimants at the Haymarket. When they were turned out—or, rather, moved to another place—no doubt the move was general, but the abolition of the pit at the Haymarket is only an experiment on the part of one manager out of fifty. The days of theatrical monopoly are over. Anyone can get a theatrical license by applying at St. James's Palace, paying the necessary fees, and getting the usual two householders to become nominal securities. Any music-hall defying or offending the magistrates, can become a theatre; and the peculiarity of this license is that it gives an equal privilege to every speculator and every building. The man who spends a fortune in constructing a splendid theatre, is in no better position than the man who runs up a shed in which the sanitary and dressing arrangements may violate every rule of health and decency. This fact appears to be so little known, that the philosophical and usually well-informed *Spectator* appears to side with the pit claimants in Mr. Bancroft's case, and talks about lessees being in the enjoyment of a protected monopoly and valuable privileges. The only privilege a lessee possesses is the privilege of paying heavy rates and taxes, and of paying fees to the licenser of plays for reading pieces which may not be licensed. Mr. Bancroft, in some quarters, has been accused of flunkyism, for turning the pit into stalls; but those who accused him could not have known that he is the first manager of the Haymarket Theatre who has had the courage to ask the proper market-price for the royal box—a box which, though nominally royal, is generally used by the royal household.—John Hollingshead.

Whether or no it is wise from a pecuniary point of view to abolish a pit is a question which can only be answered by results; at present it can only be a matter of surmise. The longer one lives and the more one sees of the utter uncertainty of all theatrical forecasts, the more convinced must one be of the complete absurdity of prophesying one way or the other as to the ultimate effect of the transformation at the Haymarket Theatre. I for one imagine it will prove a mistake. The Haymarket has always been a theatre where laughter has held its sway, and whilst to the ears of younger playgoers the rich droll voice of Buckstone comes back again when passing the portals of "the little theatre," the older "pittite" thinks of the elder Farren's courtly and artistic finish, of Mrs. Glover's genuine art, of Mrs. Nisbet's delightful laugh, of Webster's subtle powers, of pretty Julia Bennett, grand old Bland, and of the varied gifts of hosts of other brilliant artists, linked with the pleasant memories of the popular old playhouse. As a rule, the occupants of the stalls—where the stalls greatly predominate—do *not* laugh. I was once, most unfortunately for myself, the manager of a theatre without a pit; the floor was arranged precisely as is that of the new Haymarket, and the pit audience were relegated to what was somewhat ludicrously termed the "pit circle." This was before the construction of the Opera Comique or the Charing Cross Theatre, both of which houses were some time ago without a pit—the former one is so still. The theatre was built to accommodate "fashionable" patrons, and the arrangement was universally pronounced a failure, the wealthy proprietors eventually being only too glad to reconstruct their house. and replace "the pit."

Though it may be perfectly true that whenever everybody is out of town and London said to be empty, there are, notwithstanding, a few million nobodies compelled to remain in or about the metropolis, still the actual "stall audience" is, for the most part, away during the hot months of the year.

For this period, if the theatre is to be let, it seems to me that with the whole floor given up to ten-shilling stalls the temporary lessee is not very likely to turn up. This is no business of mine or anybody else's, but in looking at the "commercial" side of the matter, it is worth pointing out to anyone who simply takes an outsider's view of the building as a speculation. That the absence of a pit is depressing to an actor, no artist who has had the opportunity of practically judging of the fact can deny. When the pit "rose" at Kean, there can be no doubt that it did him good. As the pit at that time was the haunt of the critical, no doubt the applause was judicious. *And there was plenty of it.* A languid collection of fashionable stall-occupiers would have probably sent him back broken-hearted into the provinces.

But whatever opinion one may entertain of the alteration Mr. Bancroft has effected—and he is not in the habit of doing anything without deliberation, whilst his judgment and discretion have been, as a rule, remarkable—there can be no doubt that the malcontents, on the opening night, forgot or ignored two facts. The one was, that Mr. Bancroft had provided the ousted pittites with comfortable places in a portion of the house always more expensive than the pit, whilst other managers have been gradually encroaching upon their old rights, by shoving them farther and farther back under a low stuffy roof, in order to devote the best portion of the area to the swells, and this without remonstrance. Whilst the *other* was, that a theatrical manager has a perfect right to do exactly as he pleases with his own property. There would have been as little excuse for the outbreak, had the loungers of Regent Street raised a riot on the removal of the covering in the Quadrant.—H. J. Byron.

The step taken at the Haymarket Theatre by its new management in doing away with the pit has hitherto naturally been discussed chiefly with reference to the attitude towards it assumed by those who considered themselves aggrieved by the change. The opposition encountered by Mr. Bancroft in his unwise alteration, or his judicious reform, whichever it may be, is now as much matter of theatrical history as are the characteristics and the influence of the old Haymarket pit itself. Apart, however, from the consideration of the presumed "rights" of the translated pittites, or of the excellent accommodation provided for them in the new seats which they had knowingly paid to occupy, there is suggested the question whether the unpopular alteration is to be regarded as an isolated freak of management, or as a measure based on reason, likely to be adopted in other theatres of similar scope, and calculated to produce good results. It is perhaps possible, without sympathy for individuals who having paid for one thing complain at not getting another, to admit that they have what is called a sentimental grievance akin to that of the man who for any cause has reason to bewail his inability to keep up the pleasant associations of the past. Seriously to urge that these people had a right to interrupt a performance because the *auditorium* is not arranged as they like it, would, to my mind, be dangerous, if it were not manifestly absurd. The theatrical manager is nowadays no monopolist, and if he choose to abolish his pit, the obvious and only defensible protest to be raised by those who consider a pit-seat a *sine quâ non* for their evening's enjoyment, is to stop away. To demonstrate this by the analogy of all other private enterprises in which —either as a primary or secondary object—money is made out of art, would be very easy, but is surely quite unnecessary.

But although the disappointed pittites used the strongest possible argument against themselves and their supposed *raison d'être* when they deliberately sacrificed the interests of art to their own selfish and illogical demands, and although they had no moral or legal justification for raising their voice as they did, it is of course possible that they may have been right in believing that their existence and their presence in their former *locale* are of vital importance. It may be that they represent the intellect, the critical power, the substantial judgment of the audience. It may be that they are the true lovers of the drama for itself alone, that in them throbs the pulse of the theatre, that theirs are the sound common sense, the true instinct, the quick warm sympathy, the generous appreciation, without which no audience can call into life the best work of stage-players. If this be so, the Haymarket manager has, of course, made a fatal mistake in abolishing a valuable institution ; and in securing whatever gain is derived from turning pit-seats into stalls, he is penny-wise and pound-foolish.

But is it anything more than mere superstition to talk nowadays of the "critical pit?" Tradition tells some of us, and memory tells others, of days when a large proportion of educated playgoers gravitated naturally to this part of the house, partly because their choice of seats was limited, partly because the general demand for personal comfort was not then so great as it is now, both in the theatre and out of it, and partly because the relatively higher rate charged for admission thither kept away the less desirable associates of the more refined pittite. But it is of no use to shut our eyes to the change of external conditions which has affected playgoing as well as other social occupations. If Hazlitt and Charles Lamb were going to the play now, they would, I am convinced, not be found in the pit; and although here and there playgoers of taste, of culture, of judgment, of what good qualities you will, are, doubtless, still to be found amongst the *habitués* of this part of the theatre, the vast majority of them are, I take it, in every way distinctly lower in grade than their predecessors. Whether it is for good or for evil that this should be so is a question beyond the mark. The fact has to be recognised in the distribution of his seats by a manager, who finds simultaneously a necessary increase of cost in his undertaking, and a set of patrons desirous of increased personal comfort and willing to pay proportionately for it. As it stands, the arrangement by which an important share of the best part of the auditorium is given up to some of the cheapest seats, is, it is true, an institution; but it is one which must sooner or later be abolished, as has been done at the Haymarket, or be modified by what I should have thought the better plan of raising its prices nearly to those of the average dress-circle. This latter change would have the advantage of meeting the requirements of the ordinary middle-class playgoers for whom, especially in the case of ladies, the pit is now, for many obvious reasons, impracticable, and to whom the cost of seats in other intrinsically good parts of the house is prohibitive. In view of facilities for seeing and hearing, the present large difference of price between stalls and pit is an anomaly, one consequence of which is that the manager is comparatively ill-remunerated from this part of his theatre, whilst another is that its frequenters, as a class, have relatively deteriorated.

To believe that the drama can be advantageously influenced through the correctives administered by playgoers such as raised and tolerated the riot at the Haymarket on the 31st January, 1880, is to consider the drama in a very much worse way than I, for one, am prepared to admit. If it be desirable to retain, as a factor of dramatic art, the influence formerly wielded by the pit, the way to accomplish this end is to attract to this prominent part of the house denizens of the old stamp. The mere fact that people are able and anxious to pay for stalls there, need not, I should think, disqualify them for the exercise of the discrimination and sympathy required. They can understand as much and feel as much, though they may not make so much noise in the indication of their intelligence and the expression of their emotion. But even if the special characteristics of the old pit are really requisite, I contend that they cannot be secured by the retention of a pit which has not altered its conditions with those of social habit, and prejudice, and expenditure. To abolish the pit entirely may be premature, and if it be so the Haymarket management will pay the customary penalty of those who are in advance of their age. But the step is taken in a direction which is inevitable, and which, for my part, I see no valid reason to regret. Times change, and it is generally to our advantage that we, too, change with them.—Ernest A. Bendall.

The chairman having been asked whether in the year 1874 he had not published, under his own signature, "A Plea for the Pit," answered in the affirmative, and read out several passages of the article as curiously illustrative of the present discussion that has arisen, after an interval of half-a-dozen years :

> There is no more orthodox and courteous assemblage than the pit of an English theatre. It is possible to meet there men of the highest dramatic intelligence and the keenest artistic feeling. People who go to the pit, who fight for the first row, and who linger affectionately at the doors long before they are open, show by their own conduct what extreme interest they take in the play. They are the true playgoers. They sacrifice some comfort occasionally and some time for their love of dramatic art. I believe that they are far happier when they have come in here and paid their money like men, than if they had come in by an order or been passed in by a friend. There is a story told of an old frequenter of the pit who, on one occasion, quite against his inclination and principle, accepted a pit order from a friendly tobacconist. The performance was wretchedly bad, and our friend felt a strong inclination to hiss. But he remembered he had accepted an order, and was in honour bound not to express his disapprobation. He was not one of the public. He had come here under false pretences. At last the entertainment became so scandalous that he could stand it no longer. "This will not do," said he: "hang it! I must pay." So he went out, paid his two shillings, and, returning, took it out in strong and earnest condemnation. May it not, without exaggeration, be granted that the pit audience is at once the most attentive, most discriminative, most truly critical, and most constant of any part of the house? Without any claque, or any attempt whatever to institute so childish and offensive a system, the pit is actuated and instigated by a strong current or wave of good sense. The pit—consistently charitable—is, when its indignation is aroused, perfectly merciless. The pit will not be insulted. In all my experience I have never known one of those frequent charges of cabals sufficiently, or indeed approximately proved. It is the custom, where a play has been very properly damned by a miscellaneous audience, for the manager to come forward and declare, without a tittle of evidence, there has been a clique, a conspiracy, or an organised system of hissing. The manager knows all about it! he has been told! he has got proof! he intends to take steps! he is not slow in actually mentioning some poor individual unjustly suspected. But such charges invariably come to nothing: they are never proved: they are as inevitable after the failure of a play as is the threat to appeal when a man has lost a lawsuit. It is in the common order of things. It must happen. In the first place I believe that the organisation of such a dastardly conspiracy would be almost impossible; and, in the next, unless the whole pit and gallery had been engaged, to the exclusion of the outside public, it would be entirely nugatory. Such a conspiracy would be at once detected by those sitting near the members of it, and one determined voice would ruin the whole thing. The time-honoured honesty and dignified demeanour of the pit is perfectly safe in the hands of the pit; and I would go farther and say that had not the privileges of the pit been seriously interfered with, had not the position of the pit been sadly altered, had not the conditions of pit criticism been changed, had not the voice of the pit been stifled, we should not have found, as now, a kind of civil war being waged in all matters of theatrical interest—on the one side those who love the art, on the other those who view it merely as a commercial speculation. Had the pit been left in its old form and strength, had this large and generous assemblage, with no piques or pre-

judices, been permitted to remain and watch with eager eyes over the interests of art, the difficulties of the critic would in a great measure have been removed. Let us see, however, what has been done with the poor old pit, what treatment has been extended to the honest gentlemen who, in fair weather and foul, have remained at the helm of the dramatic ship. They have been driven back, back, back by these ten-shilling stalls, until the place of the pit is a pen, and the pit's protection is no longer a power. Back they thrust the pit, under the suffocating roof of the dress-circle. They are huddled away anywhere out of sight. If a play be popular more rows of stalls are added—the pit is more and more reduced. In many theatres it has become the fashion to remove the pit from the ground-floor altogether, and to send its faithful members upstairs to the upper boxes and galleries. The pit once removed or curtailed, the pit once banished upstairs, the pulse of interest which once vibrated through the theatre ceases to beat. The hum is hushed. The applause is deadened. The entertainments cease to fizz. They are like flat champagne—uncorked and *fadasse.* To look at the matter from another point of view, how, may we ask, do the artists like the changed position of affairs in the matter of the pit? Punctuality is at an end. Interest is threatened or broken. In the opening farces the stalls are all but empty. When the play begins the company has not half arrived. All through the first act there are interruptions, moving about, chattering and whispering. The patrons come in full of good wine, and talkative after a good dinner; they are foggy about the plot, and they attempt to get at it by cross questions, leading no doubt to very crooked answers. The men are too indolent to appreciate, and the women too grand to applaud. How little they care for the drama or dramatic art! They come to the stalls in order to lounge away a few hours, to meet their friends, to be tickled with a gentle excitement. In the summer, when there is no opera, the play is on the way to the ball. In the winter it is a relief from the boredom of home. If this uninteresting and uninterested people make a noise and a drawling chatter, there is no corrective pit to keep them in order. They create a listlessness, and this no doubt is communicated indirectly to the artists. Actors will tell you that the difference of the atmosphere of audiences is wonderful. On some occasions a delightful sympathy exists between actors and audiences. A communicative electric chord runs between one and the other. At such times the acting is at its best. But then there come evenings when no efforts on the part of the artists can create excitement, or waken the stalls from a dead and stupid lethargy. Many actors tell you more. One sympathetic voice, one exhilarating laugh acts like quicksilver, and is instantly appreciated. A certain painful expression of countenance shown by a spectator will unnerve an actor at times, and the other day a celebrated actor stopped in the middle of his part, and plainly told a gentleman that he (the actor) could not go on unless the gentleman stopped coughing. It is believed by many artists that acting was never such a pleasure as when the curtain drew up to an audience crammed up to the very orchestra and footlights. It is impossible to believe that actors and actresses (but more so actors) are only occasionally sensitive. Who that is reading aloud likes the disturbance of a servant entering the room? What singer or player can endure persistent talking? The answer to all this will be, "Ah, it's all very well, but it pays. If I can get ten shillings for my stalls I really cannot afford to refuse it. The artists may be put out, the entertainment may run flatly, the good old pit may be very shabbily treated, interest in dramatic art may in a measure suffer, enthusiasm possibly is stifled—but, my dear friend, here are the libraries, and the agents, and the theatre offices, and who knows who knocking at my doors and begging me for seats. I must buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest, and I have political economy to back me up." I believe firmly and earnestly that the ten-shilling stalls are the falsest of all false economies. They look as if they pay, but they cannot pay in the long run. When this astounding sum is paid for a seat in a theatre, the purchaser expects very much. His evening's entertainment has probably cost him a sovereign at the lowest possible figure, what with cabs, fees, refreshments, and supper. And if such a playgoer is not amused, he is the worst advertisement in the world. He thinks he has been "taken in," and he goes about London ridiculing the entertainment, and dissuading his friends and acquaintance from "wasting" their money. A contented playgoer is the manager's blessing. He does good by stealth, and would certainly blush to find it fame. A discontented playgoer, without meaning to do any harm, deprives the managerial till of many a pound. Better than all the advertisements and complimentary criticism in the world is a contented and enthusiastic audience. The advertisement may be the wood and the criticism the coals, but the distinct approval of the public is the match which puts the whole thing into a blaze. It is a pity no doubt that artistic and commercial considerations are so hopelessly interwoven on the stage. We have arrived now at an important time in the history of our stage. Theatres are multiplying, playgoers are increasing, theatrical speculators are, as a rule, thriving. Some are shouting for the republic of frivolity, and others are fighting for the old constitution of art. Which is it to be, the dictatorship of the French Can-can, the sceptre of poetry, or the empire of human interest? If the old constitutional party is beaten—a party which is not illiberal or bigoted, which would not insist upon their opinions to the exclusion of others, which would have a place for everything and everything in its place, but which strongly and earnestly protests against the deposition of the constituted authorities of the drama in favour of excited, half-dressed, bacchante revellers; if the old upholders of the stage are routed and compelled to cry quarter to a victorious band of relentless Amazons; if for commercial considerations the dawdlers about dressing-rooms and chewers of toothpicks are preferred to pittites as patrons of the drama; if the stage ceases to be an amusement for educated people, and but few play-books are added to the literature of our country; if it be true, as it has been asserted, that the playgoers of this mighty metropolis prefer spectacle to drama, and processions to poetry; if those who have fought so long and so nobly (and they will not yield, you may be sure, without a desperate struggle) are compelled to place down their arms in despair—let it not be forgotten how early in the day the vanguard was routed, the pioneers were outnumbered, the pit was put to flight. Let it be remembered there was a Plea for the Pit!

Postscript.—I am glad of this opportunity of reviving an opinion formed many years ago, and one which I have had no occasion to alter in the slightest degree. It will be seen that long before the Haymarket alteration was ever dreamed of or contemplated, the pit question was discussed both from the commercial and artistic point of view, but little did I dream in 1874 that the pioneers of the new faith and the creators of a formidable precedent would be found in those who have done as much, if not more, for the elevation of the drama than anyone in our time. The fear was in 1874 that the toothpick patrons of the play—(the very term was already foreshadowed)—would secure the abolition of the pit; the fact is in 1880 that the revolution has been headed by the avowed representatives of art. If this were only a commercial question and nothing else, as some people imagine it is, there would be really nothing more to say about it. The management at the Haymarket can do what it likes with its own property, can paint its walls sky-blue or pea-green, or turn it topsy-turvy if it chooses—no one doubts it; but I must protest against the assertion that it is only to be argued by those who loll in the new stalls and not by those who are excluded from the old pit. As to Mr. Bancroft's figures, I have nothing to do with them except to doubt them. "When has the theatre ever paid?" he asked. I am informed by the very best authority that it has paid over and over again with a pit, when the plays and the acting have been of the first class. To say that the performances of Mr. Sothern, Miss Neilson, and Mr. John S. Clarke have not paid, is to doubt the evidence of one's eyes and senses. But to my mind, as a lover of art, the commercial part of the question is of secondary consideration. I know that theatres with pits do, have, and will pay, and I cannot see why the Haymarket of all theatres in the world should not be true to its old tradition and steadfast in its old influence. Business and art have been combined before now, and I do not see why the Haymarket should not do for English comedy what the Lyceum has done for English poetical drama. Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft ought to be at the head of the first company of comedians in the country, and by that I mean a company acceptable to the public at large and not only to the upholders of a fashionable and fastidious exclusiveness. It is natural, is it not, that those who have spent the happiest days of play-going in the pit, and who there inherited their first and earliest love for the drama, should strive their utmost to procure the same privilege for those who follow them? If this is what my friend Mr. Hollingshead calls "protectionism," then it is a very admirable and laudable feeling. It would be mere selfishness not to do so. In the pit, I, for my part, have enjoyed the drama as I have seldom enjoyed it since, for the surroundings were sympathetic, earnest, and honest. Here at the Lyceum I saw the Planché extravaganzas in the days of Madame Vestris—"King Charming," "The Island of Jewels," and all the rest of them; here I saw my first pantomime at Drury Lane when under the management of Mr. James Anderson in 1851; here, at Sadler's Wells, I saw my first Shakespeare play—it was "Hamlet"—and Phelps played the Prince of Denmark; here, at the Strand, I saw the first successes of Mr. Henry J. Byron, and, as I still think, the best burlesque company London has ever seen; here, at the Olympic, I worshipped Robson, and night after night could, for half-price in one of the best pits in London, see the best part of a drama or comedy, and the whole of a screaming farce, "Boots at the Swan," or, "Retained for the Defence;" here, at the Haymarket, I first saw Sothern in Lord Dundreary, and scores of classical comedies, and I believe that from no other part of the house is it possible so attentively and closely to study art. In the gallery the perspective is altered altogether. You seem to look down on the heads of the artists, the picture is dwarfed, and a great part of the pleasure of the spectator is taken away. But so much has been said of an irrational and absurd cry, of the comfort of the seats in the new "second circle," and of the advantage that the old pittites have gained, that I was determined to go and look for myself, and give my evidence for what it is worth. On the first night I honestly believed, from what I heard, that the pit had only been transferred to what we call the "upper boxes"—that is to say, the seats above the "dress circle," as we used to call it, before it was turned into a "Grand Circle." But that is not the case. The half-crown seats are those in what is—bereft of all euphony—simply and solely the gallery. The second circle is the gallery, there is no doubt about it, call it what you will. When I took my seat the place was crammed, and I was pointed out a corner in the second row from the front on the prompt side. Perhaps I was unfortunate, but I can only record my experience. In front of me, next to the gold capital of an Ionic pillar, was a lady with an enormous hat and a stupendous feather, about the largest hat and feather that fashion could possibly permit, and it succeeded in entirely blocking up the small peep-hole I had managed with difficulty to secure between the hat and the capital, for whenever I saw a foot space of the stage, the hat waggled in front of me.

Positively I could see nothing of the first act of "Money," except by standing up, and then I was howled down. But no one compelled the lady to take off her hat, which would have improved matters so far as I was concerned. I can quite believe that many of these second-circle seats are admirable, but I secured one that was not. I represented my case to the attendant, who was extremely courteous, in fact the pink of politeness, and as it was palpable that what between the Gainsborough hat and the gold crocketing of the capital I could not see, I was politely transferred to the "side slips," as they are called in the gallery at the opera. It was better here, for I could see exactly one half of the stage, but no more. All the action on the prompt side was lost to me entirely, and much to my regret, for I wanted to see what was going on by the splendid fireplace in the last act, and I lost much of Mrs. Bancroft's excellent byplay. Now is it extravagant to declare that all this—save the Gainsborough hat—would have been impossible in the pit? There was no seat in the old Haymarket pit where the whole of the stage was not seen. There were no half-views or side-views.

Of far higher moment, however, than these personal details, which may be due to the crowding on an exceptional success, is the effect of the abolition of the pit on contemporary art. Here Mr. Marshall and Mr. H. J. Byron have hit the right nail on the head. This is the thing that concerns us most. In proportion as applause has diminished in theatres, the art has become weaker and flabbier. When artists play to restless, talkative, and unpunctual stalls, unsupported by an attentive pit, they lose heart and confidence, and we find depression and flatness on the stage. Nervous and impulsive acting, a bright and enthusiastic style, plays of passion and interest, exciting plots and ideal touches become impossible, when everything is reduced to a drawing-room level, and the tone of the acting of the day is turned to the bored listlessness and polished coldness of the time in which we live. Fifteen years ago most assuredly some change was wanted from the dirty, untidy theatres, and the carelessly-appointed scenes that were presented us; but it is a question if managers are not going a little bit too far in the opposite direction. Are not these gorgeously-decorated playhouses, these frescoes, this furniture, and these domestic comforts threatening the art that should be of primary importance and the first consideration? Are not the eyes and the attention distracted from the stage on which they should be centred? When these delicate-nerved and weary occupiers of the modern stalls turn round upon anyone who applauds as if he were some escaped lunatic, and hush down every expression of opinion as if it were an example of ill-breeding—when artists of renown come on and go off without a hand—when there is only a feeble encouragement of what is earnest, and every sympathy with all that is faded, washed out, and (I cannot help the word) amateurish—when the once busy, beating, and impassioned theatre has the appearance of a scientific conversazione, and the artists are supposed to be perfect when they have studied the social deportment requisite at a five-o'clock tea—then I believe that this aiming after refinement does more harm than good and defeats its very object.

No one can possibly believe that Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft had any other object than the advancement of art and the comfort of their patrons in instituting a reform that is of far deeper moment than is generally believed to be the case. That they were perfectly correct in their commercial estimate is shown by the crowded houses that have been seen at the Haymarket ever since the doors were opened. But for all that I look upon the pit as an institution to be valued and respected, and not as an excrescence to be cut off, and it will eventually be a bad thing for dramatic art if the new policy is made into a precedent.—C. S.

JOURNALISM AND CRITICISM.

By Dutton Cook.

THERE prevails a disposition to arraign and attack our modern system of dramatic reviewing. Not long since, Mr. Robert Buchanan boldly described the dramatic critics of the times, as "for the most part, small authors of Cockaigne, as nameless as they are incompetent; who, for a pittance, undertake work which few authors of position could be persuaded to do for an income." Upon a later occasion an uxorious writer in "Blackwood's Magazine" followed suit, in deploring the fact that the public cannot properly bestow its admiration and applause at the theatre for lack of "practical guidance from the press." And now Mr. Byron, in his "Growls from a Playwright," published in a recent number of The Theatre, adds a strong protest upon the subject, with especial reference to the treatment his own works have encountered at the hands of the reviewers.

Now it does not devolve upon me to defend the dramatic criticism of the day; to my thinking, indeed, no defence or apology is required in the matter. It occurs to me, however, to make one or two observations, not at all acrimoniously, but in the way of mild reply, to objections which assuredly have been urged with courtesy and good humour. For Mr. Buchanan's abusive sentiments have not been adopted by Mr. Byron. He is fully prepared to admit that his critics, or at any rate the majority of them, are both honest and competent; and the admission might be reasonably held to dispose of his complaint, that he is the victim of unjust reviews. But, as I understand him, he contends that systematically the critics form their opinions upon an inconvenient occasion; that they insufficiently consider the subject upon which they pronounce; and that they express themselves both too promptly and too uncompromisingly.

Mr. Byron has been many years before the public in the capacity of playwright and of player; apparently, however, he does not impugn the judgment passed upon his histrionic exertions; he simply deprecates the manner in which his dramas have been criticised. His long experience has not taught him endurance in this respect, nor relieved him to any extent of the sufferings consequent upon an excess of sensitiveness. He is especially vexed that his plays should be judged upon their first representation, and should not be seen by the critics upon a second occasion. It matters not to him that, time out of mind, dramatic exhibitions have thus been estimated. He maintains that upon "first nights" the dramatic critic is so surrounded by distracting elements, that he cannot do justice or credit either to himself or to "the object of his diluted attention." In his eyes a "first night" is as a meeting in the market-place: friends and acquaintances congregate and converse. He writes, that "hand-shaking, nodding, whispering, or loud chatter, *sotto voce* sneering, obtrusive partisanship, mute but expressive grimaces, indicative of patient misery or inward glee—these, combined with occasional interruptions of a sarcastic and personal nature from overcrowded occupants of the galleries or dissatisfied denizens of the pit, form the 'humours' of a *première* at a West-End playhouse." Now it is fair to admit that this description, however overcharged, is not absolutely baseless. The first performance, say of one of Mr. Byron's plays, is an occasion of some excitement. Expectation is astir; there assembles a crowded and interested house. The professional critics form but a very small contingent; but the author's friends are there in great force, and the friends of the management. But what is the most probable result? Surely the kindly reception of the play. Applause becomes boisterous, enthusiasm abounds until a first-night's success, as evidence of a drama's prosperity, has come to be most suspiciously regarded. According to my experience, the audience of a first performance are predisposed to appreciate and eager to applaud; their sympathies are with the author; they relish his wit as it were by anticipation, and laugh at his humour almost before it has been disclosed. At the fall of the curtain they summon him upon the stage, that he may personally receive their homage and congratulations. Upon the whole, I think a play is never submitted to more favourable auditors than those who welcome it upon its first performance. And it is in relation to this performance that the critics form and express their opinion of the work in question.

As a consequence the dramatic critics have frequently been accused of excessive leniency, of appraising too highly the value of a new production. Mr. Byron, however, charges them with being unduly inclined to severity, and pronounces "the slap-dash and sweeping element" he detects in modern criticism to be the result of "first-night notices." He maintains that new plays of any importance—and naturally and properly he ascribes importance to his own productions—should be seen a second time by the critic before he ventures to comment upon them or upon the manner of their representation. But in regard to the criticisms of the daily newspapers, Mr. Byron omits to take note of the conditions under which journalism exists. The newspapers are required not merely to chronicle news but also to supply opinion. Every event must bear its comment, and as speedily as may be. The fact must be instantly followed by reflections upon it, let it be never so important.

The leader must be forthcoming immediately, let the topic be the fall of a dynasty, the convulsions of an empire, a late division in the House, or a matter of battle, murder, or sudden death. As much consideration as possible is given; there is no time for reconsideration. The press can do everything but pause.

But after all the main question to determine just now is whether justice has or not been substantially done to the plays of Mr. Byron and his contemporaries. It should be remembered that the modern drama must be classed amongst literature of the lightest class. Its aim is simply to amuse. It really makes no demand upon profundity of criticism; the situation does not require "a Daniel come to judgment" to pronounce upon Mr. Byron's writings. A playgoer of some experience, an informed writer, able to set before the public an intelligible account of the performance, to express his opinion clearly and concisely, with some statement of the reasons justifying it—is more than this necessary? I cannot think so. And would a second visit to the theatre really help the critic in the production of his criticism? Is there not great risk of the critic's liking a modern comedy less on the second occasion of his seeing it than on the first? There is an old story of an advocate's submission to his client's approval of an address about to be delivered on his behalf. The client read the written speech carefully and admired it greatly. Reading it again, however, he thought it faulty and open to many objections. "You forget," said the advocate, "that the jury will only hear it once." Seeing Mr. Byron's plays a second time the critics may discover merits they did not at first perceive; but, without doubt, they will detect blemishes also, and perhaps to a corresponding extent; whereupon the balance of criticism, the proportions of praise and censure, will be left undisturbed.

Altogether, it seems to me, that of all authors the playwright is the least entitled to complain of modern criticism. He is the object of the prompt attention of the whole press. Within a few hours of the production of his play the readers of the public journals are fully informed of the fact. His merits are discussed, and he receives, perhaps too often, a liberal measure of applause. And what boisterous enthusiasm has resounded through the theatre! A book may languish unnoticed; a picture, unless it be the work of a Royal Academician, or placed "upon the line" at Burlington House, may wholly escape attention; but upon the advertisement of a new play the press at once stirs itself. Only the other day Mr. Sala, in a speech publicly delivered, stated that he had been a producer of books, a writer upon a variety of subjects, for twenty years before *The Times* newspaper awoke to a consciousness of his existence and made a work of his the subject of a review! If he had been a purveyor of farces his fate would have been far happier in that respect; the critics would have been on the alert to attend to him; he would have had to wait but a day or two for ample notices in all the newspapers.

Is Mr. Byron, then, of playwrights most unfortunate? Has he been treated with exceptional severity by the critics? Surely not. He must be aware that, as a dramatist, he is the observed of all observers; that the young beginner and the aspirant regard with a sort of amazed envy his prodigious prosperity. He is the author of, I suppose, some fifty or more successful plays. His works have been produced and reproduced in England, America, Australia, and the Colonies, and in several continental cities. Wherever the English tongue is spoken, there, it may be safely said, a play by Mr. Byron is certain to be sooner or later presented. The phenomenally fortunate "Our Boys," I learn from Mr. Pascoe's "Dramatic List," has been adapted or translated and played in Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Holland, Bavaria, and France—"a career unparalleled in the history of the stage." Mr. Byron's comedies are more frequently revived than are the comedies of any other author. His name draws a crowded house; the requirements of the managers make incessant demands upon his powers of production. His objections to the manner in which he is criticised really apply to criticism of every kind. Will nothing but applause content Mr. Byron? Would he abolish the critical office altogether? His forte lies in the composition of facetious dialogue; in that, I think, consists his great hold upon popular favour. But his wit and humour have not been more heartily relished and admired than by his critics. True, they have censured his puns; but the canons of literary taste have immemorially forbidden puns and playing upon words in all works of pretence. The probability or the improbability of his plots, the possibility or the impossibility of his characters—these are subjects upon which the critic is strictly entitled to pronounce; and it is not to be supposed that his opinion will always correspond with the author's. Mr. Byron's inventiveness, and the ingenuity he exerts in the construction of his plots, may be viewed as proved by the extraordinary number and success of his plays; and I think that his merits in this regard have been over and over again admitted by his critics. It is true that Mr. Byron has written burlesques. I do not know that the fact has ever been employed in the way of taunt, but it may have been; in any case, I can see little hardship in the matter. An author must bear to be reminded of what he has written, be it good, bad, or indifferent. Mr. Byron has the consolation of knowing that his burlesques have pleased very many, and have been generally regarded as reputable specimens of their class. The comedy of "Wrinkles," to which Mr. Byron refers, failed, as he confesses. The incident is not now of much consequence. As I remember, the failure was rather with the public than with the critics. I have an impression that "Wrinkles" contained some of its author's best writing, but that the audience resented certain inconveniences in its plot.

Mr. Byron's complaints may be due to a sort of mental dyspepsia, following upon a surfeit of success; they are not otherwise explicable. He admits the influence of the press, but insists it has been applied to his detriment; I think the influence of the press has most certainly helped him to mount to the prosperous position he now enjoys. The place he may by-and-by be allotted among dramatists it is not for me to determine; the distribution of enduring fame forms one of the pursuits of posterity. Comparisons are always unadvisable; moreover, I gather that Mr. Byron does not pretend to be classed with the masters of English comedy-writing, it being understood that comedies have always to be judged in relation to the times in which they were produced. But I think that Mr. Byron's comedies are unquestionably to be accounted, in these days, as excellent and laudable as were the comedies of Reynolds, O'Keeffe, Morton, and Holcroft in the last century. And this, I suppose, would be a general opinion. Further, it will be always remembered, when Mr. Byron's claims to applause are under consideration, that although he has produced a long list of plays, he has very rarely borrowed from a foreign source, or dealt with a plot not of his own devising; that his works have been irreproachable as to their moral character, as his jests have been free from every suspicion of coarseness or indecorum; that he has long enjoyed the repute of being one of the wittiest men of his age, if his wit has been thought to be often rather nonsensical than wise; and finally that as an actor, within a somewhat narrow range of impersonation, he has invariably proved himself of real distinction, and afforded the completest satisfaction to his audiences.

MR. E. A. SOTHERN.

By Walter Herries Pollock.

AMONGST modern developments of the theatre, we may probably class what is now termed character-acting—a false term, since all playing is, or should be, acting of character, but a convenient one. There are, of course, plenty of "character-parts" in Shakespeare, and in the works of dramatists of and since his time; and Bobadil might be mentioned as a striking example of such a part. But the association of a particular actor with a few particular parts, included under the name of character-parts, would seem to be comparatively novel. Such things as the career of the actor who succeeded in the part of Monsieur Jacques, and in that part alone; and as the never-ending attraction in later days of Mr. Jefferson's Rip Van Winkle and Mr. Sothern's Dundreary do not appear to have been known to, or contemplated by, the critics of the so-called "palmy days." It would not, however, be fair to say either of Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Sothern that they are merely "character-actors." It is said that Mr. Jefferson's range is, or was, unusually wide; and Mr. Sothern has frequently appeared with more or less success in the part of young, lively, and even romantic heroes. But finished and clever as was Mr. Jefferson's playing in the farces which he presented to London audiences, one could not help hearing the intonations and catching the expressions of Rip under the mask of Hugh de Brass; and Mr. Sothern's immense reputation rests practically upon his rendering of two parts, Lord Dundreary and David Garrick. It might not be amiss to consider this fact in its bearing on the question discussed in the first number of the new series of The Theatre, concerning the alleged dearth of dramatists, but this consideration would be out of place in such an article as the present one.

It is a trite saying that fine actors of comedy have often begun their careers with a conviction that their strength lay in the direction of tragedy, or of the poetic drama; and the attitude of mind which produces this result is not confined to the profession of the stage. Numberless cases could be cited of young men, with a decided turn for the literary calling, whose first efforts have been in the shape of pretty verses, whose first notion has been that the making of such verses will and must be their life-long occupation, and who have afterwards settled down into being excellent writers of prose, whether in the shape of plays, novels, leading articles, or essays. The earliest ambition of every artistic temperament is to shine in what is considered the highest branch of the calling to which it devotes itself. Circumstances or natural gifts afterwards assert themselves, and give it a turn different from that dreamt of by its possessor in his first consciousness of having a certain gift. If report is to be trusted, Mr. Sothern's earliest ambition was to play the great tragic parts; and probably his career closely resembled that of many actors of his generation until he made his mark for the first time in America. His talent was first recognised when he played, at short notice, the part of Armand, in a version of Dumas fils's wretched but then popular piece, "La Dame aux Camélias." It was, however, in a part of his own invention that Mr. Sothern may be said to have begun his unusually successful career. Out of the part of Lord Dundreary, a very subordinate part of some forty lines in Mr. Tom Taylor's "Our American Cousin," he made what it is not too much to describe as a new creation. He conceived an idea of what such a part might be, and this idea he worked at and elaborated until he was able to bring the play to London with Dundreary, instead of Asa Trenchard, as its chief character. Since his first successful appearance here, much, perhaps too much, of Mr. Sothern's time and energy have been spent in devising and introducing variations upon this strange invention of his. Much of the business which he presented at first is now omitted, and much new business and dialogue has been added; but the conception of the indolent, half-educated, half-idiotic swell, with a strange vein of shrewdness and humorous perception in his character, remains the same. In this part Mr. Sothern excels, as Lamb says Dodd did, in "expressing slowness of apprehension;" and yet there is such a quaint and unexpected mixture of cleverness and readiness with his tardy perceptions, and his simple surprise at anything new to him, that his audience never tire of contemplating his whimsicalities. He is half-conscious of his own folly, and keenly alive to that of others. When his valet, with brutal frankness, presuming on and overrating his master's want of wits, confesses to his shameless insolence and thieving, Dundreary is more amused than indignant at the fellow's impudence, and, putting all question of his own supineness aside, wonders whether he had not better retain such a "magnificent idiot" in his service. He is throughout half-foolish and half-clever; thoroughly selfish, and without the vestige of a high aim in life. Yet he is not unattractive, nor is it merely as a butt that he pleases. There is an indefinable quality in his character, imported into it by Mr. Sothern, which produces at least what is called "a sneaking kindness" for Dundreary.

In "David Garrick," his other best-known part, Mr. Sothern takes a higher flight, and ventures into the regions of pathos. His scene of affected drunkenness is admirable both in stage *technique* and in indicating the under-current of deep emotion in a man who, moved by a noble impulse, assumes a part in reality grossly repugnant to him, and the few lines of Shakespeare which he delivers under these conditions carry with them the suggestion at least of an undeveloped power. In the purely pathetic passages the actor has, it seems to me, steadily improved with increasing experience.

It is perhaps Mr. Sothern's misfortune and the public's that his attraction in these two parts, presented at varying intervals, seems never to diminish. Of his performances in the parts of young heroes it may be briefly said that to such parts he has always brought the qualities of earnestness, gracefulness, and that complete and perfect appearance of ease which is the result of art and study. But it is not very long since the actor presented a new creature of his invention to London playgoers. As in the case of Dundreary, the invention was founded on something already existing; but in other respects the two were widely different. Dundreary was built up on what was practically a nonentity. Fitzaltamont, in "The Crushed Tragedian," was a variant upon a part written and already played with marked success by an actor who himself has much originality and force, Mr. H. J. Byron. Therein probably lay the secret of the comparatively small success of Mr. Sothern in this part. The public knew and liked the former version, which was entirely unlike the latter one, of the character. It is difficult to believe that if Mr. Sothern had put his idea into a new framework it would not have commanded success by the truth and novelty of the presentment, by the humour which seldom tended to extravagance, by the infinite variety of little touches which went to make up a character, entirely unlike anything before attempted by the actor, and by, in a word, the invention displayed in the conception and execution of the part. Fitzaltamont was a strange, but an obviously real being. His history could be read in the old-fashioned tragic walk, in the impressive stare, which, when it aimed at an impossible intensity, became a squint, and in the habit of not only giving dramatic expression to his own ideas, but also of acting as a kind of pantomimic chorus to those of other people, which belonged to Mr. Sothern's "Crushed Tragedian." The man was absurd, but the absurdity of his complete belief in himself had something semi-pathetic in it; and in the green-room scene Mr. Sothern's fine piece of dumb acting enlisted one's sympathies altogether for the odd personage that he represented. That these things did not obtain recognition enough to induce Mr. Sothern to keep the play for long on the boards, may possibly be referred to the influence of "character-acting" spoken of above. The public will accept and applaud two different and reasonable versions by two skilful actors of any well-known part in the old *répertoire*, but when a character-actor has for some time made a new part distinctly his own, they will not readily accept a new version of it by another character-actor. If it were possible for some established public favourite to devise and present a new and admirably worked-out Dundreary, his efforts might meet with very slight reward.

Thus far, then, Mr. Sothern's remarkable powers have found expression in a singularly limited field. He has, in a marked degree, qualities which other gifted and practised actors have combined—ease, perception, vivacity, a certain power of pathos, and a gentle bearing. But he has besides the rarer quality of invention; and it must be matter for regret and surprise that this has found so little development.

AN OLD PLAYGOER ON THE MODERN THEATRE.

Forest Paddock, *February* 2, 1880.

MY dear F——,—You may remember that I told you a few days ago of my intention of going to see "The Merchant of Venice" at the Lyceum To me this was more of an event than I suppose it would be to many people. When I lived in the Temple, and belonged to the Garrick Club, in its snug old quarters in King Street, thirty years ago, I was frequently at the play, and used to see all that was worth seeing—and a great deal besides. Since I have married, and lived in the country, as you know, I have hardly ever been inside a theatre; in fact, I believe the only occasion of my seeing any acting in public, was when I once went to be amused by the humours of Lord Dundreary some five or six years ago.

Well, I went with my boys to the Lyceum, and I have seen "The Merchant of Venice," as there presented, and you may perhaps be interested to have a slight account of some of the impressions made upon an old playgoer, by a visit to the theatre after so long an interval of abstinence.

I may first tell you how much I was struck by the extreme beauty of the scenery, which altogether surpassed anything I can remember in the old days. But I must confess to you that I found my attention to the business of the play was distracted by it. Habitual and constant playgoers of modern times would not, I suppose, feel this. The luxury of stage decoration and appointments has grown gradually upon them, and they would probably miss the accustomed surroundings as much as I was put out by them. Everything seems to have advanced—improved, if you please—in the same way. We dined at The Rainbow, an old haunt of mine, before going to the theatre, and there I was altogether pleased to find how much better the dinner was served, and how much cleaner the table-cloth and glasses and the knives and forks were, than they used to be thirty years ago.

But to return to my play. I have to remark upon the small amount of light which appears now to be allowed in the theatre during the performance, and when night was to be indicated on the stage, I think it used to be done by the exclusion of less light than was the case the other night, when I thought enough was not left to enable us to see the performers as well as we ought. This again, however, must be a matter of convention; and I suppose that modern spectators prefer the greater contrast afforded by it.

The acting, I thought, improved all round; I cannot remember that the lesser parts ever used to be better given, and I saw the play many times, when Macready acted Shylock in his own theatre. Irving I much admired, as a gentleman, a finished actor, and as evidently capable of rendering on the stage the intentions of his study for a part. His version of the character is new, and his excellence culminates in the trial-scene of the fourth act.

What I thoroughly disliked on the stage is the practice of the ladies, which seems to have grown up, of resorting so largely to the use of paint for the face and arms. It was not the same with all; but I cannot think that the quantity of red and white artificially laid on over the natural complexion—and especially the elaborate disfigurement of the eyebrows and eyes—can be really necessary for scenic effect. I thought all this was carried a great deal too far; and I know that it must be injurious to the usual looks and health of those who paint and powder so much. I wish more of the actresses would try to do without it, and I fancy they would find themselves rewarded for their pains. Nobody who has seen a dress rehearsal can deny that some amount of artificial colour in the cheeks is a decided improvement, and one of the reasons formerly given for the use of rouge was that it so much adds to the lustre of the eyes. Madame Vestris in her later years painted much more than any other actress whom I can remember, and was especially free in the use of "pearl white." She was old and wrinkled, and needed all that could be done in the way of rejuvenescence; and yet nobody used to think she looked the better for such an excessive use of paint. The method of converting the eyes into two black streaks was then unknown, and Madame Vestris herself did not paint more than some actresses whom I saw the other evening.

In "the front"—I believe that is the proper word; at least, it used to be so—I was much delighted with the general improvement in the way in which things were done—the attendants were civil, and there was perfect order; it was very pleasant, too, to have a neat programme placed in one's hand *gratis*, instead of having to buy a great damp bill outside the theatre. I surveyed the crowded house, and looked with especial regard, for the sake of old days, at the pit; only regretting, for the sake of its occupants, that the front row was not nearer to the stage. In my time stalls were not, or had only just begun to exist; and I daresay the actors miss the hearty applause and laughter that used to come from the nearest part of the audience, when the pit seats came close up to the orchestra. Now I hear that at the Haymarket the pit is altogether abolished. I only hope it may answer.

I always dislike a crowd, so we were among the last to leave the theatre. On arriving at the top of the staircase I was much struck with the manner of a young lady whom I had noticed standing at one of the open box-doors; she suddenly rushed forward to her two sisters—as I suppose they were—and with joyful emotion, not unmixed with something of awe and reverence, "He's there, he's really there *himself*," she said. I then looked through the open box-door. The green curtain had risen, and I once more beheld that most wonderful of transformation scenes which takes place every night at every theatre in London at the conclusion of the performance—there, amidst that latter-end chaos, stood Mr. Irving, *in propriâ personâ*, surrounded by two or three persons with whom he appeared to be in conversation. My eyes then rested on the three girls, who stood entranced, in the full enjoyment of the wonderful opportunity which fortune had thrown in their way. No one spoke; but each one seemed to have attained the deepest wish of her heart.

This little incident was of great value to me in explaining much that I have suffered when trying to learn from young ladies some particulars about the actor they so much admire. They have indicated an unwillingness to talk with me upon a subject which they preferred to all others among themselves. I now see how deficient was my sympathy; how I lacked a certain feeling—shall I say of reverence—with which they regarded their hero; for such I now discover him to be. I think Mr. Irving is much to be congratulated on having so entirely gained the approbation and sympathy of the best portion of creation, and his fair admirers that they have concentrated their interest on a not less worthy hero.

My interest has been more than sufficiently excited to induce me to take any opportunity I may find to see the great actor in another part, and I should prefer "Hamlet."—Yours ever truly, M. S. C.

A FIRST NIGHT IN 1602.

By Frédéric O'Keene.

THE vanity of conjecture is amusingly illustrated in the conclusions arrived at by eighteenth-century commentators on Shakespeare as to the date of the first production of "Twelfth Night." Having regard to its beauties or style, but more especially to its supposed allusions to contemporary events, they confidently gave the comedy a place among the works of the dramatist's "third period," the period of his highest intellectual development. Theobald, indeed, assigns it to the year 1603, but only on the hypothesis that the line, "If thou thou'st some thrice it shall not be amiss," was suggested by Coke's insolent speech to Raleigh in his adversity. The other commentators were for a much later date. Malone, noticing the expression "Westward Ho!" fixed upon 1607, though for no better reason than that Dekker's "Westward Ho!" appeared in that year. Steevens perceived in the characters of Viola and Sir Andrew Aguecheek an imitation of Ben Jonson's "Silent Woman," produced in 1609. Chalmers, on the strength of the words of Sir Toby, "If you be an undertaker, I am for you," assigned the play to 1613, when a small party "undertook" to colonise Ulster. Be that as it might, he thought, the piece could not have been known before 1611, as in that year an ambassador from the Sophy of Persia arrived in London, and to the said potentate a sufficiently plain allusion is made. Tyrwhitt believed that "undertaker" carried the date to 1614, when, in consequence of a small but influential party "undertaking" that the king's wishes should be respected, the term became a byword of ridicule. These comfortable theories have all been scattered to the winds. The "allusions" just pointed out were possibly suggested by the events with which they are associated, but in that case they must have been added to the play long after its production. "Twelfth Night," as we now know, was played in Middle Temple Hall—assumably for the first time in public—at Candlemas, 1601-2. In a diary kept by John Manningham, a barrister of the time, we find the following entry: "February 2, 1601-2. At our feast we had a play called 'Twelfth Night, or What you Will.' Much like the 'Comedy of Errors,' or 'Menechmi' in Plautus, but most like and neere to that in Italian called 'Inganni.' A good practice in it to make the steward believe his lady widdowe was in love with him by counterfeiting a letter as from his lady, in generall termes, telling him what she liked best in him, and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparaille, etc., and then when he came to practise, making him believe they took him to be mad." The authenticity of this diary is beyond question; and accordingly, if the resemblance between "Twelfth Night" and "The Silent Woman" is otherwise than accidental, Ben Jonson, not Shakespeare, must be held responsible for the circumstance.

Let us in imagination pay a visit to the stately hall on the banks of the Thames on the occasion spoken of by Master Manningham. In the afternoon we witness a performance at the Blackfriars Theatre of "The Merchant of Venice," then spend an hour at the Mermaid, and finally make our way through Fleet Street—a matter of some difficulty, seeing that here, as in other parts of the city, the shopkeepers are at the doors of their quaint overhanging houses to importune passers-by—to the portal of the Middle Temple, built by Sir Amias Paulet while a prisoner in the gate-house near at hand, and garnished by him with cardinals' hats and arms in the hope of appeasing Wolsey's "old, unkind displeasure." The din which assails our ears is replaced as we go in by a grateful stillness, broken only by the rumbling in the street of a few gaily-painted coaches. But as we approach the Hall the sounds of revelry break upon the ear. Surely, you ask, the Yuletide festivities have not been carried on to Candlemas? "Has not the Lord of Misrule resigned his sceptre? Have not the Fox and the Cat been hunted round the building? Have not the Masters of the Revels sung their songs? Have not the drums which lent their noisy chorus to the Marshal's proclamation been put away? Have not Sir Francis Flatterer and Sir Randle Rackabite passed into the ranks of ordinary men?" Yes; but this evening, doubtless in order to bring the festivities to an effective termination, a feast is going on, to be followed by a new play from the pen of Master Shakespeare. The scene which meets our eyes as we enter the hall is lively enough. Many members and students of the Inn, presenting an imposing appearance in their doublets and ruffs, are busily engaged with the contents of the wooden trenchers and green earthen pots on the long oaken tables; and the fine open timber roof—which, like the walls, has not yet been stripped of its Christmas decorations—is echoing the chatter and the shouts of laughter raised by the company. At the end of the building, see, a stage has been erected. Well-known faces arrest our attention as we look about us: that tall, handsome, superbly-dressed man, with the somewhat haughty and defiant air, is Raleigh, now in league with Cecil against Essex; the courtly youth sitting near him is a bencher's son, by name Thomas Overbury, just returned from a tour in France and Italy; the choleric-looking man on his right is the author of "Nosce Teipsum," Sir John Davys, who was once expelled from the society for having struck Richard Martin, another member, at a dinner here, but was reinstated on apologising; while in Master John Ford, the stripling in the corner, may be recognised the most inveterate playgoer of the day. Eventually the dinner comes to an end; the tables are cleared as though by magic, and the company ranges itself on either side of the hall with an expectant air. The meaning of this change is not long withheld from us. A flourish of trumpets is heard without; and the Queen, attired in the usual farthingale and ruff, with her train borne up by a lady of high rank, and followed by many courtiers, passes up the building to a seat prepared for her near the stage. Elizabeth the lion-hearted is now far advanced in years, but her carriage has lost nothing of its old stateliness and grace, and as she acknowledges the silent homage of the members and students her small dark eyes are lighted up by the pleasant expression observed the other day by Hentzner. It is easy to perceive that her vanity has not diminished with lapse of time; her bosom is exposed, the reddish hair on her head is false, and she is obviously solicitous that the beauty of her hands shall not escape notice. No sooner is Her Majesty seated, and the courtiers grouped about her in a semicircle, than the comedy begins. The players are those we have seen at Blackfriars in the afternoon, the representative of Sir Andrew, if I am not mistaken, being no less a person than the author himself. The piece deserves the best attention of the audience, inasmuch as the things already done by Master Shakespeare have made his name great in mouths of wisest censure. The story of Viola, I think, has been suggested to him by that of Apolonius and Silla, included in the collection of "pleasant discourses" which Master Barnaby Rich "gathered together" a few years ago "for the only delight of the courteous gentlewomen of England and Ireland." This Apolonius, on his return from a campaign against the malignant and turbaned Turk, is "driven by force of weather to Cyprus, where he is well received by Pontius, the governor. Silla, daughter of Pontius, falls so strangely in love with the stranger that, after he departs to Constantinople she follows him thither, serving him in the habit of a man. After many pretty accidents falling out, she becomes known to Apolonius, who, in requital of her love, marries her." Master Rich's story, in its turn, was derived from one by Bandello: "Nicuola innamorata di Lattantio, và à servirlo vestita da paggio; e dopo molti casi seco si marita: e ciò che ad un suo fratello avvenne." The Italian story, a condensation of which is to be found in Belleforest, has been twice dramatised on the other side of the Alps; one of the plays, as Master Manningham, one of the barristers present, could tell you, being called the "Inganni." It is not improbable, too, that in writing "Twelfth Night" Master Shakespeare has also borne in mind the "Menechmi" of Plautus, already turned to account in "The Comedy of Errors." But the story of the piece, if not so new as could be wished, is treated with a grace of fancy and a depth of humour peculiar to the author, and is now free from the indelicacy which has hitherto disfigured it. The comic scenes and characters, moreover, are entirely original. The audience, from the Queen down to the humblest student, are interested in and charmed by the play. The fall of the curtain is a signal for warm applause; "Twelfth Night" is declared on all hands to be an exquisite composition; Master Shakespeare, coming from behind the scenes in his usual grave and self-possessed manner, makes a profound obeisance in reply to royal congratulations; the Queen passes down and leaves the hall amidst a shower of *vivats*; the company disperse, the lights are extinguished, and Master Manningham, in the solitude of his chamber, unconsciously immortalises his name by entering in his diary a brief record of what he has seen that evening.

Nearly three centuries pass away, and on Candlemas Night in 1880 we are listening in the same place to the same play. The Elizabethan theatres—yea, even the great Globe itself—have disappeared without leaving a trace of their existence; Middle Temple Hall, as we well know, is still with us. The fire of 1666 threatened at one time to swallow it up, but, as though to spare us at least one building in which a Shakespearean play was first produced, did not go farther westward than the eastern side of the Inner Temple. About two years ago, apropos of the revival at the Haymarket of "Twelfth Night," I directed the attention of the readers of The Theatre to the performance in 1602, and Mr. Clement Milward, Q.C., the treasurer of the Inn, soon afterwards conceived the happy idea of having the comedy read in the Hall on a Candlemas Night. This idea was duly carried out on the 2nd February last, the reader being Mr. Brandram. The guests numbered seven hundred, as many as accommodation could be found for. The royal family, the senate, the church, the bar, the profession of arms, literature—all were well represented. The aspect of the Hall has changed a little since Queen Bess sat there; the screen is decorated with sixteenth-century weapons, the arms of famous members are displayed in the side-windows, and portraits of many English sovereigns grace the walls. The attractive Elizabethan features of the building, it should be said, were not obscured by any superfluous decorations. The entertainment was described as a reading, but in point of fact was a recitation. Mr. Brandram went through his task without the aid of book or note, at the same time imparting a more or less pronounced individuality to the characters. The songs incidental to the comedy were sung by Miss de Fonblanque and Mr. Coates, and the choir of the Temple Church afterwards rendered good service in one or two glees. The recitation over, a vote of thanks, at the instance of Mr. Milward, was passed by acclamation to Mr. Brandram, who gracefully said in reply that the memory of the occasion which had brought them together was enough to drive from his mind many of the words of the play.

SARDOU'S "DANIEL ROCHAT."

By an Englishman.

WHATEVER may be the ultimate fate of "Daniel Rochat," the courage of a man who dared to make dramatic capital out of the most virulent passions of his compatriots cannot but command attention. For my own part, and looking at his work especially from an English point of view, I cannot resist the conclusion that he has failed in producing a work of art. It is only fair, however, to consider his work in the first instance in relation to the audience which it was the author's intention to impress. M. Sardou, perceiving that the religious question was that in the discussion of which the minds of his compatriots were for the moment chiefly exercised, resolved to turn the excitement to account. He thought to repeat the experiment which in "Rabagas" proved to be a triumphant success. At the moment when this piece was produced there was a violent conservative reaction against the revolutionists who had upset the Government of the country in the face of the enemy, and whose action was supposed at the time to have led by a natural sequence of events in the horrors of the

Commune. The feelings of the majority of the theatre-going class were at that moment strongly reactionary, and they took delight in pointing at certain famous personages the witty diatribes launched at the imaginary characters of "Rabagas." If M. Sardou had had the courage to follow out, in the present instance, a similar procedure to its logical conclusion, he might possibly have achieved a like success in the case of "Daniel Rochat." Had he represented his free-thinking hero as utterly subjugated by the believing heroine—had he in fact put upon the stage a modern version of "Polyeucte," he would certainly have enlisted the strong sympathies of many successive conservative audiences. To speak plainly, there is no doubt that the immense majority of educated and respectable Frenchmen are violently opposed to the crusade which is now being carried on against clericalism in France. It is the respectable and well-to-do classes who furnish the aggregate of theatre-goers, while almost all the women in France (and in no country in the world are women so powerful as here) have taken up arms in the service of the Church. It happens that the powers that be have thought it expedient to wage war on clericalism, and as universal suffrage tends to increase the influence of noisy agitators, the Government is supported by the lower classes in all the big towns; but these people are by no means the most important patrons of the theatre, and their public opposition would only have the effect of keeping up the support of the better classes, and of ensuring the author's success. But M. Sardou had not the full courage of his opinions. Leaving his audience to draw the moral of his play themselves, he placed before them the arguments in favour of each of the conflicting theses, and did not venture upon a *dénouement*, which would have shown the victory of the right and the defeat of the wrong. The inevitable consequence was that he hurt the convictions of almost all his hearers, and that they took their revenge by allying themselves against him. Neither his hero nor his heroine commands the complete sympathy of the audience, while the circumstances which bring their opinions into collision are so utterly improbable, not to say impossible, as to make the story too unreal even for theatrical *vraisemblance*. A dramatist who, like Sardou, goes in for ultra-reality, is bound to take care that the main incident on which his story is based is not such as to shock the common sense of his audience. Now it is not possible that a sensible English family who have lived long in Switzerland should be so ignorant of the usages of the country as never to have heard that every religious union must be preceded by a civil ceremony; nor is it conceivable that a punctilious old lady like Mrs. Powers would arrange all the details of a marriage between her niece and a foreigner without settling those of the wedding-day. Nor is it possible that an apostle of free thought, such as "Daniel Rochat," would omit to stipulate that his marriage should not be solemnised in a place of worship. The device employed by the author in hurrying on the ceremony is ingenious enough, but it is by no means sufficient to account for the inherent inconsistencies of the plot. If it was the intention of M. Sardou to put the case fairly before the audience, it was a gross error in art to deprive the hero of all sympathy by making him drive a miserable cowardly bargain with the girl he loves at the very moment when his senses are most inflamed, and when any man of ordinary flesh and blood would have consented to any sacrifice in order to obtain the fulfilment of his desires. I have taken it for granted that your readers have been made familiar with the plot through the medium of the daily papers, but it may be as well to explain that Daniel Rochat, the atheist-hero of the piece, having married Léa, the

Anglo-American heroine, by means of a civil ceremony performed in her own house by a deputy-mayor, a young gentleman whom she has hitherto only known as her partner in a ball-room, refuses at the last moment to accompany her to the adjoining church. He is desired to leave the house, but at night he returns to find Léa alone in a room communicating with her bedchamber, and here he uses all his eloquence in order to induce her to be his wife in reality as well as in name. She promises her consent on condition that he will even at that unseasonable hour accompany her to the house of the neighbouring clergyman. Daniel submits to the condition, but even while she lies folded in his arms he is mean enough to suggest to her that she should keep the religious marriage a secret. No wonder that the girl indignantly rushes away from him, no wonder that the audience indulge in a howl of disgust. Englishmen would be less patient than are other *habitués* of the Théâtre Français; and I doubt if a London audience would as complacently accept the speech then made by the heroine. Rushing to the other end of the room, she declares, pointing to her bed in the adjoining chamber, that the only way to it is through the church door. Need I say that there is something very hurtful to our insular prejudices in such a speech uttered under such circumstances by an English girl? But there is something still more unsatisfactory from an English point of view in the perpetually implied suggestion that a Protestant service is no service at all, and that all who are not Catholics must necessarily sympathise with atheism. It is inconceivable to me how an author can have flattered himself that such a piece, simply because it deals with Anglo-American society, can be fitted for presentation on the English stage. M. Sardou, in fact, betrays as complete an ignorance of English feeling as of English manners, customs, usages, and forms of thought. He represents an Englishwoman introducing Daniel as "Sir Daniel Rochat," for no better reason than that he is a member of the Chamber of Deputies; and he makes Léa say that she knows it is usual in England for a marriage before the registrar to precede the religious ceremony. The *dénouement* is unsatisfactory, because, although the bride and bridegroom both offer to give way, neither convinces the other, and, as each is free, there is no reason why the long tedious history should not be renewed again and again. It would have been wiser in the author to make the modern Pauline convert her Polyeucte. Had M. Sardou done so, he would not have been more abused by the radicals, and would have enlisted the unreserved suffrages of the conservative spectators. But it is not for me to attempt to rewrite the play, or to suggest to M. Sardou what he should have done. His piece as it stands is unquestionably a failure, although it is more than likely that the interest of the question he has raised will attract attention for some time to come, while everything produced by the Comédie Française cannot fail to be highly interesting from an artistic point of view. The female characters are one and all most admirably represented. Mdlle. Bartet is throughout charming, and if in the principal scene an actress with greater physical power might have produced more effect, it is hard to find fault on this account with a lady who never oversteps the modesty which is the heroine's safeguard. The part of Daniel Rochat is, for the reasons I have lightly alluded to, utterly unsympathetic, and not all M. Delaunay's talent, nor his long experience of the stage, enables him to invest the character with interest; in fact I am not sure that an inferior actor, possessing more earnestness of manner, might not have produced far more effect. Where the unquestionable talent of M. Sardou, backed up as it has been by the liberality and artistic sense of M. Perrin, comes out to the greatest advantage, is in the *mise en scène.* The manner in which even the smallest characters are sustained, and the success with which the sometimes difficult groupings are effected, are alone worth a journey to Paris to see.

It would be impossible to imagine greater divergence of opinion on the same subject, than that contained in the judgment rendered by the representative organs of French views on "Daniel Rochat." What cannot fail to strike the observer as most significant in this critical record is the consistency with which the Paris papers, with very few exceptions, condemn or admire M. Sardou's work, according to the extent that they believe their professed opinions on certain political questions flattered or ridiculed by the speeches put into the mouths of the author's characters. It being admitted by common consent that the motive underlying M. Sardou's play, was to point a moral in favour of religious institutions as compared with civil ones, in relation to acts which have long been regarded as falling by right within the province and authority of religion, the dramatic critics of the clerical papers place "Daniel Rochat" in the front rank of merit, while those representing the radical and free-thinking prints declare its failure, which they say is assured to have been richly deserved. A few very brief extracts from critiques published by some of the most important journals here may be of interest.

The *Gaulois* observes that the dramatic *dénouement* which always finds most favour with the routine-loving majority is thus expressed: "They were happy and they had several children." But the writer who pays no heed to the allurements of commonplace success, and who, like his heroine, stands by his conscience against all temptations, has a just claim to be held in still higher esteem. The *Gazette de France* says: "The Daniel Rochat of M. Sardou, with his persistent refusal, lasting over three acts, to be married in church—that is to say, in the *temple,* for his wife is Anglican—refusal suddenly withdrawn in the last act when too late—this Daniel Rochat, who at first would have nothing to do with a church, but is afterwards perfectly willing to concede the point on the condition that no one shall be informed of it—neither his own nor wife's family, nor his secretary, his friends, and electors—is more than odious, he is ridiculous." The *Ordre* is delighted with the play, but admits its failure on the first night. The tumult, according to the Bonapartist paper, cast no reproach upon the author, but rather upon the French stage, which thus showed itself incapable of being raised above its ordinary level. Honour to him who has attempted such a task! adds the *Ordre.* Honour to the vanquished of yesterday who, we hope, will be the victor of to-day! Honour to the brave exponents of this courageous work! The *National* tells M. Sardou not to be discouraged by a failure "so well merited," but to take up the pen again and write a *spirituelle,* and, above all, a passionate play. "Don't, however, re-present 'Polyeucte,'" the critic continues, which, after having been written in verse (and what verse!) by Corneille, was not a whit the more amusing for that. M. Albert Wolff, in the *Evènement,* advises the public not to allow itself to be carried away by the passions which M. Sardou has unchained, to the point of being unjust to the fine talent of the author. The *Défense* sneers at M. Sardou for having chosen, as the advocate of the "Bon Dieu," an Anglican, occasionally vulgar and even *maladroite.* The *Estafette* says: "M. Victorien Sardou's new play raises so burning a question, and one for which we are so little prepared, that it must necessarily chafe inner convictions and just susceptibilities."

The *Union* declares "that the attacks which have been made on M. Sardou will in nowise prejudice his piece, for it is quite capable of defending itself, and has a form that can safely challenge the struggle."

THEATRICAL NOTES FROM BERLIN.

By Hofrath Schneider's Ghost.

THERE is really so little of importance in the way of theatrical events in Berlin to record for the past month that my February budget will have to be recruited from other sources than those exclusively afforded to me by my native city. It is the proud privilege of disembodied spirits to be ubiquitous. We can outdo the miraculous achievement of Boyle Roche's immortal bird; for he could only be in two places at once, whilst we, by a mere effort of volition, can be simultaneously here, there, and everywhere. Theatrical business having been uncommonly slack here ever since the Carnival set in with unusual severity, I have made one or two trifling excursions to St. Petersburg and Vienna in the hope of gleaning a few items of current interest for your March number. I found the kindly Kaiserstaedter up to their necks in every description of seasonable dissipation, turning night into day at redoutes, masquerades, and *bals costumés*, for all which winter entertainments the Austrian Residency is justly renowned. But even the artistic glories and quaint humours of the "Gschnas-Ball," which took place on a Patti-evening, availed not to deter the elect of Vienna society from crowding the Ring-Theatre at sextupled prices in order to submit themselves to the spells of that paramount enchantress—although, by-the-bye, Vienna is angry with the fascinating Adelina by reason of her steadfast reluctance to contribute, either vocally or pecuniarily, to any of the charitable undertakings daily recommended to her patronage and aid. The Viennese, themselves congenitally freehanded to the verge of improvidence, resent the circumstance that the Diva's bright eyes are chronically fixed in contemplation of the main chance, and that she appears unable to divert them from that engrossing object to the wants and sorrows of her fellow-creatures. It is of no use to remind them that her Welsh castle is costing her untold gold in *frais d'installation*, and that her domestic lawsuits have swallowed up huge slices of her professional earnings. They will have it that she is hard-hearted; and the comic periodicals teem with sardonic paragraphs, in which her prudent frugality is held up to public scorn with all that bitter animosity which is invariably excited by any conspicuous virtue in breasts to which that virtue is an utter stranger. As it happened, an impulse of generosity moved the gifted Marchioness on the very night when I, hovering over the third row of the stalls in the over-thronged Ring-Theatre, last listened enraptured to her inimitable vocalisation; and the naughty wags of the "Kikeriki," "Bombe," and "Floh," have, I regret to say, been so unmannerly as to turn her spontaneous outburst of liberality into bitter jest. During her engagement at the Ring, the orchestra had been put to extraordinary pains in the matter of rehearsals, undergone at her especial request. On the night in question the accompaniments "went" so entirely to her satisfaction that, at the close of the second act, she sent down a flattering message to the orchestra, accompanied by a gift of six camellias, culled by her own fair hands from a magnificent bouquet with which the manager had just presented her! It will scarcely be credited that the cynics above alluded to have ventured to dispute the appropriateness to overworked instrumentalists of this graceful and touching floral tribute to their arduous services by the High Priestess of Song. Such a gift is prompted by an innate poetry of feeling which stirs no sympathetic chord in mere prosaic natures. The fortunate possessors of those inestimable camellias will doubtless devise them to their descendants as inalienable heirlooms; and future generations of meritorious fiddlers will gaze with reverent emotion upon the withered blossoms with which the executive triumphs of their forefathers were rewarded by the greatest singer of the nineteenth century.

In Vienna I found my old friend and countryman Charles La Roche, the patriarch of the European stage, preparing for the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of his *début* as a professional actor. He made his first appearance on the boards at Dresden in the spring of 1810, and after a few years' apprenticeship to his craft in various provincial theatres of the Fatherland settled in Weimar, where he rose so rapidly in the favour of the public, at that time the most critical audience in Germany, that by the time Hofrath von Goethe assumed the direction of the Court Theatre in the æsthetic city on the Ilm, La Roche was playing leading business, and was selected by the Jupiter of German literature to perform the part of Faust upon the first occasion of that immortal drama's production upon the Weimar stage. When only twenty-four years of age, he was acknowledged throughout Germany as the first actor of his day, and maintained his high reputation for more than half a century. Since the year 1832 he has belonged to the staff of the Hofburg; and when he retired, not so very long ago, from active service as an Imperial Royal Court Player, having amassed a comfortable competence in the course of his long career, the Emperor, who is sincerely attached to him, not only pensioned and decorated him, but conferred upon him hereditary nobility—a distinction never before or since granted by a Hapsburg monarch to an actor. The German theatre has only existed about a hundred and forty years in all, and for half that period Karl von La Roche has been one of its brightest ornaments. He was a middle-aged man, looking back upon a quarter of a century's theatrical experiences and triumphs, when I came out in light-comedy parts "with a song" nearly forty years ago, and is still present upon the world's stage in the flesh, whilst I, alas! am but the phantom of my former self. All his youthful contemporaries have gone before him on the long journey; and it is pretty generally opined, in Elysian dramatic circles, that "La Roche has forgotten the way to die."

At Petersburg the only novelty of any interest that attracted my attention was the so-called "Little Theatre," on the Fontanka, which has been opened upon cosmopolitan principles, and promises to become one of the favourite resorts of the Russian *beau monde.* It has been luxuriously fitted up; the decorations are in dead pink, white and gold, and no expense has been spared in providing for the comfort of the audience. As this dainty little house enjoys the special patronage of the Imperial family, it was thronged on the opening evening by the *fine fleur* of court society, half-a-dozen Grand Dukes setting the example of punctuality—a virtue seldom practised in Russia—to all the military magnates and exalted *tchinovniks,* who take their cue in manners and morals from the scions of the Romanoff house. Everybody who is anybody was in his or her place by eight o'clock, an achievement almost unprecedented in the Russian capital, and the performances, preluded by the national hymn, commenced with a one-act drawing-room piece, in Russian, followed by a French comedy and a German farce. Between the pieces, members of both opera companies and of the imperial *corps de ballet* contributed songs and dances to the evening's entertainment, which lasted till past midnight. Even with my theatrical experience, I cannot venture to conjecture what must be the expenses of a management that keeps up three distinct and several companies for the execution of its nightly programme, and hires the leading artists of the Opera House to boot for the performance of vocal *soli* during the "waits." Of course the prices are high—stalls, nominally five roubles, which in St. Petersburg means any sum that people please to pay for the privilege of being present at a fashionable gathering—but it is obvious that the outlay must be far greater than the receipts. However, the imperial purse is always available to *impresarii* who stand well with certain august personages in the Czar's immediate *entourage*, and who know how to conciliate the Grand Dukes and the chief of the Third Section. There is no question of formal and recognised subvention to a cheery little establishment like the "Brick House on the Fontanka." All that its director has to do is to secure the services of some illustrious official hand privileged to dip itself at any time into the Imperial exchequer (never closed to the Czar's confidential friends), and to make things comfortable behind the scenes for the Grand Dukes, who are excellent judges of female beauty, and generous supporters of any dramatic institution in which they can feel themselves "thoroughly at home."

Returning to Berlin, I found "His Majesty's Servants" busied with the preparation and production of sundry dramatic novelties, scarcely deserving any further mention than the bare record of their titles. Hackenthal's "Marriage of To-Day" was withdrawn after its second performance, having been heartily hissed, and even whistled down, by the usually decorous and impassive audience of the Schauspielhaus. The "Countess Lea," Paul Lindau's latest *comédie de salon*, obtained a *succès d'estime*, chiefly due to the smartness of its dialogue, but has been terribly cut up by the outspoken Berlin critics. Of the remaining novelties the less said the better. Herr Jacobsohn, a favourite writer of popular dramas and farces, brought out, at the Wallner Theatre the other day, a comic piece called "The Youngest Lieutenant," and written up to the two chief members of the Wallner company—Ernestine Wegner, at present the first "singing" *soubrette* in Germany, if not in Europe; and Engels, a side-splitting low comedian, whose popularity is so overwhelming that it has frequently outweighed the demerits of an essentially bad play, and draws crowded houses to performances in every respect but one—his irresistible acting—beneath criticism. Fräulein Wegner plays the *titel rolle* in "Der Jüngste Lieutenant" with extraordinary *verve* and spirit, and sings several series of punning couplets in "situations" quite unprecedented on the German stage; as, for instance, seated on a velocipede in full action! To one string of verses—or rather to their refrain—she plays a vigorous accompaniment on the drum, which carried the house by storm, and brought out Mr. Jacobsohn to the footlights, to acknowledge the plaudits accorded to his rhymes. I heard a sardonic old theatre-goer in the stalls muttering to his neighbour, whilst the smiling author was bowing his thanks to the audience: "Do you know why he is so grateful? It is because the drumming has taken place on the stage, instead of in the body of the house!"

I heard a good story the other day of Ferdinand Hiller's first adventure in Vienna, whither he came, in the early spring of 1827, with his master, Hummel, to complete his musical studies in the Austrian capital. One of the Saxon state ministers, a warm admirer of young Hiller's talent as a pianist, had given him a sealed letter of introduction to an exalted personage at the imperial court, and he had placed this momentous missive at the very top of all his worldly belongings in his travelling-chest, hoping that it might attract the attention of the examining custom-house officer, and inspire that functionary with such profound respect for the bearer of "diplomatic credentials" that he would forego the customary wearisome formalities. Hiller's discomfiture may be imagined when the letter was seized as contraband, and he himself, after some hours' detention in an icy-cold strong-room, was ordered to pay a fine of one ducat for audaciously contravening the imperial postal regulations!

AMERICAN NOTES.

SOME years ago—a good many, but not fifty, however—a young enthusiast, named Mr. James Steele Mackaye, brought out himself and a pupil at a theatre then known as the St. James's, and failed. It was certainly rather an audacious thing to do, to come before the public for the very first time, not only as an actor, but as a teacher; but then there towered over Mackaye a kind of phantom, about which the majority had never heard anything before, good, bad, or indifferent. The phantom, we were all told, was Steele Mackaye's own master, Delsarte. It was absolutely marvellous to note how Mr. Mackaye managed to make the papers talk about what they did not understand, and even invent a phrase for the purpose of illuminating their readers, "The Delsartian Theory." Unfortunately, either the public was not up to the mark or he himself was below it, for no one would accept him, either as Delsarte's prophet or as the greatest actor ever seen. He became, instead, the Don Quixote of the stage, and ridicule was plentifully heaped upon his devoted head. He had, however, very cleverly managed to raise quite a fog of æsthetic talk, which more or less has continued to this day, and in which his own name has always loomed forth conspicuously. Not successful on the stage, he determined to succeed off. He opened, in Union Square, "a school for the drama," and erected a stage in his back bedroom, which was very small, but very complete, and here he taught the young histrionic idea how to shoot. Several of his pupils soon manifested that his theories, when modified, carried into practice, made admirable actors. Possessed of a plucky spirit, which nothing could or can daunt, Mr. Mackaye—who, mind you, is a perfect gentleman in every sense of the word: cultivated, cultured, and honest as the days in July are long—made many valuable friends, and with their aid has at last succeeded in providing for New York a theatre which he advertises is to be "a wholesome place of wholesome amusement." The house occupies, by a strange coincidence, the site of the very theatre in which, fifteen years ago, Mr. Mackaye failed as an actor—the St. James's. Here also stood, but a short time since, Daly's "Fifth Avenue Theatre." The present house is really magnificent. It is, however, rather too small; still, everything that engineering skill and artistic taste can do has been done to make it most elegant and convenient. The exits are capitally contrived, so that in case of fire or panic this theatre can be cleared in a surprisingly short space of time. If the flames burst out on the stage, a cleverly-arranged iron curtain falls and cuts it off from the audience, and instantly a number of wide doors are opened as if by magic on to the street. The passages in the theatre are wide and straight, and each part of the house has its separate entrance. The stage is arranged in such a manner that entire scenes can be sent up from beneath it, for the cellarage or basement is exactly as deep as the proscenium is high, so deep indeed that, as it took many months to excavate, owing to the hardness of the rocky soil on which New York is built, the facetious began to declare that one of the entries to the house would be in China, the antipodes to our "Empire City." The orchestra is placed in a Moorish balcony over the stage. The lights are subdued and harmonious, and the ventilation leaves nothing to be desired. The decorations are solid and genuine—real mahogany doors, real marble, real velvet, real satin, everything is of the best and costliest. Even the Grand Opera House in Paris is not more artistically magnificent. Flowers bloom in every possible nook and corner, and the harmony of tints is most charming. Admirable also is the skill with which Mr. Mackaye has contrived to select rich and subdued colours, so that the spectators are not, as is too often the case, more occupied with the glitter of the house than with what is passing upon the stage. During the acts the lights are so well arranged that the splendid theatre seems to fade away, and the stage alone remains prominent, brilliantly illuminated with many various kinds of lights, from gas to electric. On the opening night, as you may well imagine, this sumptuous house was crowded with a very fashionable audience. The play produced, however, was not a very good one. It is by Mr. Steele Mackaye himself, and entitled "Hagel Kirke." As it is never likely to cross the Atlantic, all I will say of it is that it is domestic, romantic, and goody-goody. Mr. Tom Whiffin, who is fast becoming one of the very best actors on the stage, was greatly applauded, and, indeed, his chirpy good nature and eccentricity were deserving of the ovations he received. If ever this accomplished actor comes to London, mark me, he will produce a great sensation. He sings capitally, and plays the violin admirably. His sense of the humorous is simply wonderful, and, as I say, he is, in every sense of the word, a splendid artist. The scenery was exquisitely painted by Mr. Hawley, a young artist imported from England for the purpose, and whose taste and skill are worthy of all praise. There is money, ecclesiastical money too, behind the Maddison Square Theatre; for it seems certain generous clergymen have supplied the funds, in the hope of affording the public wholesome theatrical entertainments, and themselves a handsome percentage on their capital.

A number of new pieces have been produced here this week, but none of them have been of much account. At Daly's they brought out an extravaganza, entitled "The Royal Middy's," but it is not worth much; and "The False Friend," at the Union Square, were it not so very well acted, would soon fail to attract a single spectator. It happens, however, to be very well cast, and may "run" until something better is provided. Manager Palmer understands one part of his business, if he does not, as his numerous enemies say, the rest, and that is the importance of carefully rehearsing pieces, and casting them according to the appearance and talents of his various actors and actresses; and his troupe is of unrivalled excellence. You are thus always sure that, at least as far as the acting goes, a new play at the "Square" is certain to be more or less of a success

If it fails, it fails because the play itself is bad. By-the-way, a little lady has appeared at Daly's Theatre, this season, who is fast turning all heads and winning all hearts—the sister of that very sweet actress, Jeffreys Lewis, the pretty and charming opera-bouffe singer, Catherine Lewis. She has a lovely voice, and sings a certain class of music to utter perfection. I hear she is going over to England this season, so also, they assure me, are the clever Florences, J. T. Raymond, with the "Golden Age," and Mackee Rankin and his wife with the "Danites." Where you are to put all these good people I cannot imagine. Augusta Dargon, too, the Irish tragedienne, who has been picking up heaps of golden opinions and dollars in Australia, also meditates an excursion to London; and they do say that Clara Morris is likewise bent upon performing in England, somewhere or other, late in June. Clara Morris is to my mind by far the greatest actress of domestic tragedy I have ever seen, Desclée alone excepted. She is an extraordinary woman, of an exceedingly nervous temperament. By no means pretty, ill-figured, and with a slightly twangy voice, she nevertheless manages to electrify her audiences by her great intensity and passion. She is the Sarah Bernhardt, as far as self-advertising goes, of America. You cannot, even now, take up a file of papers without finding at least a dozen paragraphs concerning her and her doings. Now it is her horse which has run away with her, to-morrow her dog is ill, and next day she herself is having morphine infused into her unfortunate body. As an actress, however, she is very remarkable, and I hear is attracting large audiences in San Francisco. Some say she will fail in London on account of her strong American accent. I think, however, that she will hit, for genius always triumphs. The "gay season," as they call the Carnival here, is at its height just now. Balls and parties are so numerous that the theatres have suffered in consequence. The Liderkranz, or German masquerade ball, was unusually brilliant the other night. I often wonder that you do not contrive to have balls of this kind in London. Here they are perfectly respectable, and often brilliantly animated, and well worth seeing. They invariably take place at the Academy of Music. The Liderkranz opened with a grand procession of maskers, who, after promenading round the house, halted in order to witness the tableaux, which were very beautiful. The curtain rose at eleven and disclosed a charming scene from the "Midsummer Night's Dream," whilst the orchestra played Mendelssohn's music. Next we had a scene from Gounod's "Faust," then one from Meyerbeer's "Africaine." Finally the great curtain at the back of the stage opened, and then appeared, first a pedestal, then a pair of very thin black legs, and lastly, the face and well-known features of Maître Jacques Offenbach. His fiddle is in one hand, and a bow in the other. He stood out distinctly against a deep blue sky, upon which appeared the words, "Carnival, 1880." The multitude recognised him, and all shouted "Vive Offenbach!" Then the ball began in very earnest, and it was, I assure you, a most animated and joyous scene.

Miss Rachel Sanger, of London, has made quite a success at the Park as Jenny Northcott in "Sweethearts," and as the Marchioness of Market Harbro' in "The Wedding March." Miss Ada Cavendish is now at the Grand Opera House, but, for some reason which I cannot explain, for she is really a fine actress, does not succeed in attracting the public over here as she deserves. I think her selection of pieces is unfortunate. The "Lady of Lyons" and "Romeo and Juliet" are pretty well "played out," as they say over here. In the musical world there is absolutely nothing new. Strackosh and his company left us opera-less last week. He had been giving Italian opera at reduced prices at Booth's, to limited audiences. Mdlle. Belocca, by-the-way, plays and sings "Carmen" charmingly. The Mapleson troupe is still in the provinces, and returns to England almost immediately. Its success here was not equal even to *its* merits. Decidedly this poor city of New York, with all its boast about its culture, is not a musical centre. For that kind of thing you must obey Horace Greeley and "Go West, young man," to St. Louis, where everybody sings and plays and is more or less of a melomaniac.

Poem for Recitation.

FORGOTTEN—A LAST INTERVIEW.

By George R. Sims.

CHARLEY, I'm glad to see you! I thought you'd forgotten me quite;
It's rarely I see an actor, and it's always a welcome sight.
And how goes the show, this Christmas? You're making a name, I see;
Does anyone ever wonder and ask what's become of me?
There, don't nod your head to please me; why, it's years since I left the stage;
Five years, at the least, old fellow—I'm one of a bygone age.
And, lying here sick and weary, and worn with the ceaseless pain,
I wonder if folks remember my seasons at Drury Lane.

Whenever the Lane tried Shakespeare, I was one of the leading men;
You saw me as Hamlet, Charley, the night that I had my Ben.
I was reckoned a fairish actor, and the public liked me well,
Though, maybe, they'd call me stagey, now Shakespeare must suit the swell.
But then I had big receptions, and I wasn't afraid to shout;
'Twas before the fine French notion of "acting charades" came out.
I'd my name on the six-feet posters, and big in the Drury Bills;
I think of it often now, lad, and my poor old bosom thrills.

I can see the stage and the footlights, and the house and the crowded pit;
I can hear the shouts and the stamping that tell me I've made a hit;
I can see the sea of faces flash white as I cross the scene.
Ah me! but those triumphs, Charley, they were few and too far between.
I was always weak and ailing, and I hadn't the best of luck;
I got the fame that I worked for, but somehow it never stuck.
There wasn't a run on Shakespeare, or the management broke down,
And I had to take to the country, and work from town to town.

So I couldn't have saved much money—not with a wife to keep
And three young children, Charley—that's one of them there asleep.
The wife she died one winter—she died of a broken heart;
She'd to play in a play called "Troubles," and hers was a killing part.
And I was left with the children to do the best I could,
But I got in the bills in London, and that winter God was good.
I made a success, and was lucky, the play ran half a year,
So I paid up my back debts bravely—and then I was taken queer.

One day I was on the hoardings, in letters quite two feet high,
And the next I was lying here, lad, and they thought that I should die;
But I lingered and mended slowly, and here I am lying still—
With the last of my savings vanished, and a terrible doctor's bill.
Oh! it's hard when the black ox bellows, and comes with his cruel tread
To scatter our earthly treasures, and crush our ambition dead;
To know that the world we worked for has never a thought to spare,
But worships a brand-new hero who reigns in the footlights' glare.

Charley, I'm glad to see you, for there's something I want to say,
Now I know that the Lord has called me, and my life ebbs fast away.
It haunts me asleep and waking, and it fills me with nameless fear:
What will become of my darlings when I am no longer here?
An actor is soon forgotten—he reigns as a king awhile:
He's fêted, and cheered, and honoured, and he basks in the public's smile.
But the moment his work is over, and he's lost the power to please,
He has drained the cup of pleasure and come to the bitter lees.

Then he whom the thousands greeted with a tempest of hearty cheers,
Who passed as a conquering hero 'mid the homage of crowded tiers,
May lie in his bitter anguish, and moan with the ceaseless pain,
With never a word to soothe him, and he cries for help in vain.
Oh it's hard to be thus forgotten! to know, as the years roll by,
You are fading from all remembrance, you who had climbed so high;
It's hard, in the sad night watches, to think how you once could play,
And to know that the curtain's fallen which hides you, alas! for aye.

Oh for the fire that nerved me when I trod the busy scene,
In the glory of plume and helmet and my armour's silver sheen!
Oh for the mad wild rapture as I fought the mimic fight,
And the house rose nightly at me and yelled with a fierce delight!
I am watched by the eager thousands, and their hot flushed faces turn—
As I cry in a voice of thunder that the traitor's threat I spurn;
Then forth flies my white steel flashing, and I smite at the tyrant—so,
And he reels to the wings and staggers 'neath the weight of the ringing blow.

Hark at the people, Charley!—hark at the mighty roar!
It floats in my ears like music that shall come again no more.
Prop me a bit with the pillows, I'm faint, and my sight grows dim,
The thought of the past unnerves me, and I tremble in every limb.
I've lain here a helpless cripple, so long in this dull back room,
That I've grown half a corpse already; this is but a living tomb.
Oh it's cruel to lie and ponder, as the twilight slowly falls,
On the scene that lies out yonder and the crowd in Drury's walls.

I can hear the soft sweet music, I can see the dear old baize,
And I look in the morning paper through the list of the promised plays.
Then my eyes are closed in fancy, and right through the walls I see,
And the lamps in the Strand are lighted, and the folks come two and three,
Till a big crowd slowly gathers and stretches across the street;
Then the pit-door opens sharply, and I hear the tramping feet;
And the quiet pros pass onward to the stage-door up the court—
Ah! I feel like a dying schoolboy, who watches his comrades' sport.

I've done with the stage for ever, but I'll love it till I die.
Charley, one word, old fellow, before we say good-bye.
It's time for you to be going; let me look at your face once more;
You'll be on the boards directly, and you'll hear the welcome roar.
I've a secret, lad, to tell you—I've kept it up till now—
But I know whose hand is laying the chills on my aching brow;
I smother my pride to ask it: but, Charley, when I am dead,
Don't let me think my children may know the want of bread.

My poor little hoard of savings has melted long ago—
'Twas a secret I meant, God willing, the world should never know.
I've schemed and I've planned and worried, and parted with all we had,
And kept the poor home together with the help of my eldest lad.
When I'm gone you may tell my story: how, keeping the wolf at bay,
In torture of soul and body, the poor old actor lay,
Forgotten by all his fellows. But, let it go far and wide,
'Twas the thought of his starving children that conquered the father's pride.

Our Portfolio.

PICTURES FOR MAY.

OF all seasons, the winter, with its dull, cold, uncertain light, would seem least adapted to pictorial purposes; and yet, strange to say, the favourite time of year for real work with the majority of artists—whose speciality is not landscape—begins somewhere in October and terminates at the end of March. It is for this reason that few painters are able to give an account of such performances as are destined to be seen at Burlington House, the Grosvenor, and elsewhere, until the new year is far advanced, when it is usual to put on the pictorial spurt. Owing to the exceptionably bad weather we have lately experienced, artists have been more than ever in a fog—practically, as well as morally—concerning their productions; and it is therefore not very surprising that several are utterly unable, even at the present period, to say what they shall send, or where they shall send. The fortunate few, with important works began a year or two ago, are naturally more advanced than others who have provided neither for a foggy nor a rainy day.

Of the former, first mention should be made of Mr. W. P. Frith's "Serial Story," as it might be called, "complete in five parts" or tableaux, in which the career of a bubble speculator is told after the manner of the artist's "Road to Ruin." The first picture shows us the human spider surrounded by his equally human flies, all of whom have walked into the speculative parlour in response to the irresistible invitation to do so. Picture two introduces the spectator to the successful speculator's luxurious mansion, where valuable works of art are displayed upon the walls, and where the infatuated shareholders now share the rich man's hospitality. An artistic "interval" is supposed to elapse between the second and third of these pictorial acts, and during this the speculative bubble has burst; and with the breakage appear the brokers, to dispose of the rich man's belongings. Picture four shows how the fraudulent financier is brought to justice, and how his former associates, who, in picture one, were so eager to invest their money, and in picture two were equally disposed to visit the rich man, are now perfectly ready to denounce him. The fifth and last episode of this "drama of real life"—which they say has been founded upon, or suggested by, actual occurrences of the day, or the other day—is connected with the condemned man's experience of penal servitude. This interesting work has, I understand, been purchased by a well-known dealer for the sum of 8,000*l.*, and will be reproduced by the photo-printing process. It will probably not figure at the forthcoming Royal Academy, but will command separate shillings from an exhibition of its own. Another important work—which rising outsiders of the Academy hope will not occupy the valuable space at Burlington House, but will enjoy the distinction of an independent show—is a gigantic picture about thirty feet long, by Mr. Val Prinsep, A.R.A., of the Declaration of the Indian Empire, in which a hundred and seventy figures appear. The scene is an improvised amphitheatre somewhere on the plains of Delhi, and on a throne erected for the purpose sits the governor, Lord Lytton, in his flowing robes of office, the heralds, in their brilliant costumes, standing before him, and the Indian nabobs seated around.

Sir Frederick Leighton, who, during the past year, has been chiefly engaged upon his large fresco-paintings at South Kensington, has in hand six or seven small pictures of classic and oriental studies of female grace and beauty, very much unadorned and in various stages of deshabille. One of the most characteristic—representing the standing figure of a contemplative lady, attired in no garment in particular—will probably be named "Down in Cool Grot." Another of these studies of delicate flesh-painting displays the back view of a perfectly nude divinity seated on a sea-shore, after bathing. A third picture represents a mother with her babe, gracefully reclining against a low wall; while in a fourth we have a lady, scantily clad in oriental costume, who arranges her toilette before a mirror, which a young girl holds up for the purpose. Among Mr. Millais's contributions this year will be a seated half-length of Mr. Thomas Carlyle—his hands resting on a stick—and a narrow full-length portrait of Mrs. Louise Jopling, the well-known artist. "Cherry Ripe"—the original of the engraving which has appeared in *The Graphic*—and the "Princess Elizabeth in the Tower" will also be included in Mr. Millais's list of works to be sent either to the Academy or the Grosvenor, Mr. Luke Fildes, as is customary with this conscientious painter, rests on his laurels of last year, by confining himself this year to a half-length single-figure picture of a female, the title of which has not yet been decided upon. Mr. H. S. Marks has been almost wholly occupied upon a series of panel-pictures for the Duke of Westminster, upon each of which is depicted a bird, or group of birds, comprising parrots, pelicans, peacocks, cranes, storks, vultures, the sacred ibis, and other members of the feathered community, all treated with that irresistible sense of humour and expression peculiar to this painter's work of the kind. Mr. Frank Dicksee at present contemplates sending only a portrait-group of Sir William and Lady Welby-Gregory.

From Mr. Thomas Faed we shall have a most interesting picture, measuring seven feet by five feet, which is to be called, "From Hand to Mouth." The scene is the interior of a country dealer's shop, where everything, from rancid butter to a silk dress, is sold. The principal figure is that of an old clarinet-player, who, having piped his weary way all the week, now that Saturday night has come, he and his companions, a little girl and boy—his grandchildren perhaps—all equally footsore, bedraggled, dust begrimed, and exhausted, are making their small purchases for Sunday's dinner, tea, and supper. The little items have already been weighed, packed, and placed on the counter, but the old fellow has evidently run short of the needful, for he is diving deep into his pockets for the odd penny or two still wanting. It is easy to tell by the expression of his face, that he belongs to the "poor-but-honest" class who would rather starve than beg. The dealer, however, regards him with an air of mistrust, and until the full amount has been told, the half-ounce of tea, the quarter of a pound of sugar, the pat of butter, the farthing candle, and the rest of the purchases, must remain on the vendor's side of the counter. Twelve figures, all more or less connected with this delightful subject, are included in the composition. The subject of Mr. Phil Morris's principal work is, the "Band of Orphans of Soldiers" at the Royal Military Asylum, in all their mimic swagger, descending the steps of the portico of the building, while their mothers and friends crowd around the white columns on either side. The same painter has also a picture of huntsmen and horses in the act of crossing a rapid and deep brook under tall trees, together with another work representing some fishermen tramping along a hayfield on their way to a boat, in company with a mother and her baby. Mr. Frank Holl's leading picture will be "Summoned on Active Service," already known from the drawing which the artist made for *The Graphic* in December, 1878. Mr. Holl also contemplates exhibiting portraits of Mr. Rupert Kettle, a Worcester county-court judge; Mr. S. Adams Beck, clerk of Ironmongers' Hall; and Mr. H. J. Bushby, the magistrate at Worship Street. Mr. Frank W. W. Topham will send a good-sized work, which he proposes to name "Fortune's Favours." The scene is the famous Piazza at Venice, and at the foot of one of the tall columns which surround that locality are grouped a number of peasants and boatmen, all more or less interested in the lottery, prizes in which have just been drawn. The principal interest of the picture is centred in a young and handsome woman, who holds up triumphantly the lucky number which shows her to be the possessor of several thousand Italian *lire*. A good-looking soldier and an equally good-looking boatman are the first to congratulate the girl upon her unexpected stroke of fortune, and, no doubt, one or other of them contemplates making *love* while the *gold* shines!

An episode in the history of the first French Empire forms the theme of Mr. Marcus Stone's Academy picture. The scene is laid in a pretty garden, where a couple of lovers, belonging respectively to the Royalist and Republican parties, have quarrelled on political grounds, and for the same reason the young lady is returning her innamorata's love-letters. Mr. G. A. Storey has this year devoted his attention to classic subjects, taking "Apollo and Daphne," "Diana," and other well-known deities as motives. He has also on the easel one or two portraits. From Mr. C. Johnstone, two important landscapes, said to be of superior merit to those of last year, are expected; while Mr. Hubert Herkomer has also a couple of scenic views derived from Bavaria and Wales, besides an unusually large water-colour drawing. Mr. E. Armitage, who has been passing the winter at Algiers, may possibly contribute one or two of the studies he has made in that locality. Mr. Linton has in hand a large historical work, representing a royal audience of the period of Queen Elizabeth. Mr. E. Long has in progress a subject connected with the Christian Martyrs, but it is very doubtful whether it will be finished in time for the coming May. That rising young painter, Mr. Henry Woods, has again gone to Venice for his material, and will once more offer for our contemplation Venetian scenes and incidents treated in a novel manner. As a pendant to "Crossing the Sarda," exhibited last year, Mr. Herbert Johnson has in hand another Indian picture representing a tiger-hunt—a subject which, it is understood, was suggested by the Prince of Wales, who was so much gratified by the painter's last effort. It is, however, very doubtful whether the present work will be ready for the approaching exhibition, but in any case the painter will be represented by a large etching by himself from his picture of "Crossing the Sarda."—W. G.

MR. RUSKIN AND MR. IRVING'S SHYLOCK.

With reference to a paragraph which appeared in the January number of this magazine, reporting that at an interview which Mr. Ruskin had with Mr. Irving after the play, he described the impersonation of Shylock as "noble, tender and true," Mr. Ruskin writes to a London correspondent as follows :—

"*6th Feb.* 1880.

"I have no doubt that whatever Mr. Irving has stated that I said, I *did* say. But in personal address to an artist, to whom one is introduced for the first time, one does not usually say *all* that may be in one's mind. And if expressions limited, if not even somewhat exaggerated, by courtesy, be afterwards quoted as a total and carefully-expressed criticism, the general reader will be—or may be easily—much misled. I did and *do* much admire Mr. Irving's own acting of Shylock. But I entirely dissent (and indignantly as well as entirely) from his general reading and treatment of the play. And I think a modern audience will *invariably* be not only wrong, but diametrically and with polar accuracy opposite to, the real view of any great author in the moulding of his work.

"So far as I could in kindness venture, I expressed my feelings to that effect, in a letter which I wrote to Mr. Irving on the day after I saw the play; and I should be sincerely obliged to him, under the existing circumstances, if he would publish THE WHOLE of that letter."

For a fuller statement of his views regarding "The Merchant of Venice," Mr. Ruskin refers to his analysis at page 102 of "Munera Pulveris"—originally published in "Fraser's Magazine," 1862–3, and the substance of which our correspondent furnishes as follows :—"And this [the inhumanity of mercenary commerce] is the ultimate lesson which the leader of English intellect meant for us (a lesson, indeed, not all his own, but part of the old wisdom of humanity), in the tale of 'The Merchant of Venice;' in which the true and incorrupt merchant—*kind and free, beyond every Shakesperian conception of men*—is opposed to the corrupted merchant, or usurer ; the lesson being deepened by the expression of the strange hatred which the corrupted merchant bears to the pure one, mixed with intense scorn—'This is the fool that lent out money gratis; look to him, jailor' (as to lunatic no less than criminal), the enmity, observe, having its symbolism literally carried out by being aimed straight at the heart, and finally foiled by a literal appeal to the great moral law that flesh and blood cannot be weighed, enforced by Portia ('Portion'), the type of divine fortune, found, not in gold, not in silver, but in lead; that is to say, in endurance and patience, not in splendour."

[I cannot have the slightest objection to the publication of so courteous an explanation; but I must add that Mr. Irving was in no way whatever responsible for the words printed in THE THEATRE that were supposed to embody briefly Mr. Ruskin's verbal remarks. If I may be favoured with the written criticism of Mr. Ruskin on Mr. Irving's Shylock, the readers of THE THEATRE will gain another valuable opinion on a performance that has justly evoked the highest interest of men of intelligence and taste.—C. S.]

Our Play-Box.

"OURSELVES."

A New Comedy, in Three Acts, written by F. C. Burnand.

Vaudeville Theatre, Thursday, January 29th, 1880.

Albany Thorpe	Mr. Thomas Thorne.	John Peddington	Mr. David James.
Dr. Talbot	Mr. Henry Howe.	Evelyn Grey	Miss Marie Illington.
Robert Brownlow	Mr. W. Hargreaves.	Maud Cameron	Miss Kate Bishop.
Norman Fane	Mr. W. Herbert.	Mrs. Peddington	Miss Sophie Larkin.
Archie Brownlow	Mr. J. R. Crauford.	Mrs. Hugh Stapylton	Miss L. Telbin.
Hunt	Mr. J. W. Bradbury.	Jane	Miss Cicely Richards.

THREE or four years ago I came across "Moi," a comedy in three acts, by MM. Labiche and Martin, played in 1864 at the Théâtre Français, and drew Mr. Hare's attention to the character of Dutrécy, played originally by Regnier. After some deliberation, both Mr. Hare and myself came to the conclusion that not only the part of Dutrécy, but all the parts, with the exception of the elder lady and the two young men, were so essentially selfish as to make the piece, in its entirety, hopelessly repulsive. Mr. Hare pointed out to me that the more perfect the performance—especially as far as Dutrécy's part was concerned—the more evident would be the repulsiveness, and the more certain the failure of the piece to please the public. Not knowing what success it had met with originally at the Théâtre Français—where I imagined the consummate art of the actors engaged in it would have been thoroughly appreciated, no matter how repulsive the characters they portrayed—I dwelt on the fact of the piece itself having been thought worthy of the finest comedy company in the world, and that Regnier, Got, Coquelin, Lafontaine, and Worms had all been included in the cast. Agreeing with Mr. Hare as to the utter repulsiveness, the wretched sordidness of the chief characters, I had nothing further to urge on behalf of the piece; but I argued that this consistent selfishness was unnatural, and that the play, as holding the mirror up to nature, was, in this respect, faulty.* I showed, in a sketchy manner—most unsatisfactory to myself, as not conveying the full development of my ideas on the subject, which, on the spur of the moment, it was most difficult to do—how Dutrécy might be credited with certain good points which opportunity would bring out into strong relief, and so supply those genuine touches of nature, *without* which, no piece, whatever its merely artistic merits may be, can succeed, but *with* which, an ill-constructed piece, having nothing else to recommend it, may achieve a lasting success. The discussion came to an end; Mr. Hare was not convinced, nor could I expect him to be, but I was and still am.

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* The historian of the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks (vol. ii. p. 119) says of one of its most eminent members: "This," generous action, "with a few other instances of similar benevolence, serves as a pleasing contrast to the general tenour of a character, which, if nicely inspected, will be found almost uniformly selfish and sensual." This is an exact illustration of the true theory of the inconsistency of human nature, either for good or bad.

Last year it occurred to me how well Messrs. James and Thorne might play two character-parts, representing two comparative types of selfishness; the former a warm-hearted man *au fond*, but warped by disappointment and failure, which he had attributed to everyone's self-seeking rather than to his own selfish obstinacy; and the latter a cold, calculating, cautious nature—cautious and calculating even in its earliest acts of gratitude and generosity—which had been gradually developed, in the most comfortable circumstances, into the cynical egotism of confirmed bachelorhood; the only remnant of any former generous spirit being a false sentimentalism, and a desire to be credited with such tenderness and sympathy as he does not possess. Here were two excellent characters. I was sure that Mr. Thorne had never had such a chance since he played in comedy; and I was equally sure that Mr. James would do justice to the part I had conceived for him—*i.e.* that of a city man, able to give at least the majority of his aspirates their proper places in his conversation; despising the sentimentalism of his companion, assuming a brusqueness which he thinks evidence of honesty of purpose, and cherishing an enmity which in his heart of hearts he would be only too ready to drop, were everything previously arranged according to *his own* plans, and entirely to his own satisfaction.

For the basis of Mr. Thorne's character I naturally reverted to the Dutrécy of "Moi;" but I had also a type within my own experience. For Mr. James's I had a model ready to hand, connected with an episode "in real life," which seemed to me exactly suited to this new character. The case was that of a widower who had allowed his brother-in-law to adopt his son, it being stipulated that the child should bear his adopted father's name, and that the real parent should not in any way interfere with his child's future.

This was exactly what I wanted for Peddington. For Thorpe—Mr. Thorne's part—I showed how he had undertaken the guardianship of the only daughter of the man who had saved his life, and of the orphan son of his favourite sister. Gradually becoming more and more engrossed in self, he had grown tired of his wards, and had sent the boy to sea and the girl to school.

These and two other characters I drew on the same theory—*i.e.* the good in all men, however much they may have been warped by the cares, troubles, and money-making business of life. Thus, in their degree, have I drawn the Doctor, and the banker—Peddington's brother-in-law. While for the ladies, Mrs. Cameron is as free from all selfishness as are the two young men; and Evelyn is merely an *ingénue*, only just so selfish as very young persons very much in love generally are.

With this new reading of the characters, and with the episode above-mentioned to be worked in as a "motive," a reconstructed plot was absolutely necessary. So I went to work with the greatest care, my object being to avoid everything forced or farcical, to steer clear of punning, rudeness in repartee—so often mistaken nowadays for true wit—and at the same time, to keep above the dead level of ordinary uninteresting discourse, aimed at evolving natural dialogue comedy from true comedy situations, by contrast of character without violating probability. The piece was read to the managers and the company, and finally put into rehearsal under my own superintendence, until an attack of bronchitis prevented me from attending the last four and most important rehearsals, and also from witnessing its production on one of the foggiest nights of this exceptionally foggy winter.

I have only read one criticism on "Ourselves." It was in *The Daily*

Telegraph. It pointed out to me that I had "put the cart before the horse," which I could only understand as implying that the horse, in such a position, could not be expected *to draw.* The criticism puzzled me not a little. There had evidently been so much in the comedy that was exceptionally good—notably the acting of Messrs. James and Thorne—the latter never having been seen to greater advantage, and the former being complimented on a masterly performance—while the true comedy merit and the ingenuity of certain situations were recognised—that it was not until I carefully re-read the article that I was able to account for its want of success—for I will *not* say its failure—on the first night. The critic says—and he evidently feels that something of the ill-success is due to what he faithfully records—"True it is that a kind of 'scare' disturbed the actors and actresses in the scene, making it difficult to believe that proper attention had been paid to preparation and rehearsals." As I have already explained, I was prevented by illness from seeing the last and most important rehearsals with scenery and properties; and the third act had only been carefully rehearsed, but was not by any means perfect when I last saw it. And I can quite imagine that when the managers and the stage-manager are themselves playing important parts in a piece, the burden of attending thoroughly to stage details is too heavy for them to bear, and prevents them from being thoroughly at home in their impersonations on a first night. There is a sympathy about nervousness which acts like an electric current passing through a chain of hands. The critic continues: "Parts were forgotten, the prompter's voice was continually heard, the stage was kept waiting more than once, and both nervous hesitation and halting slowness betrayed an inability to go through with an unsympathetic task."

The last words simply express a perfectly gratuitous hypothesis to account for evident facts.

What comedy, on a first night, could stand against forgetfulness of parts, the prompter's voice—like the Queen's proctor—"intervening," irritating "stage waits," and, as the critic says lower down, "waits between the acts unpardonably long"?

Could a comedy, even at Mr. Bancroft's or Mr. Hare's theatre, have had a chance against such defects? Again, the night was foggy; and, as was said in *Punch*, by one of my collaborateurs on that paper, there was fog before and behind the curtain; a fog, I make bold to say, not to be rashly attributed to the author, but probably, as the critic of *The Daily Telegraph* himself witnesses, due to the scare among the actors.

What followed? More foggy nights and very bad business. Did not all the theatres experience a falling off all round, or, as they express it, a drop—and a drop too much—during that fearfully foggy time, when neither carriage people, nor cab and omnibus people, nor pedestrians, could venture out of their own foggy homes? Did not the theatres with long-established successes feel the effect of that bad weather? Of course they did. *I know it.* And if an established success, in all the strength of its popularity, would suffer from the influence of the weather, how much more a poor infant only just born, which, through "a scare," could hardly fetch its breath in a first-night's atmosphere?

From "information received" as to the performance on the third night, I am confident that had the management, which is well able to risk something considerable at the commencement of a venture, chosen to keep "Ourselves" in the bills for three weeks, when adverse notices would have been forgotten, then the genuine public would have had a chance of judging for themselves. And as surely as there are in it those touches of nature, on which I rely, and as surely as the actors should become more and more at home in their parts, so "Ourselves" would have been recognised as a good comedy. Thoroughly well acted, Mr. Thorne's Albany Thorpe and Mr. James's Peddington would have been strong attractions—and deservedly, as far as I can gather from well-qualified judges—and the piece would have reimbursed them for their outlay, paid them well for their pluck, and crowned them with fresh laurels.

Lord Lytton's "Lady of Lyons" was a first-night failure, and, but for the stage-manager, Bartley, Macready would have withdrawn it. In what lies its popularity now? In its touches of human nature. I do not like the play myself; I think it tinsel sentiment, and its hero an unprincipled rascal—but the public like the play, and it is popular everywhere. "The Rivals" was a first-night failure; probably due to clique, not to fog. In Munden's "Memoirs" it is related of O'Keefe that "he never augured well of a piece unless it was nearly damned on the first night." And, to compare small things with great, "The Turn of the Tide" was, I am proud to say, condemned by the entire press, with one solitary exception; and both the finish of the last act but one, and of the last act, were received with disapprobation by the first-night audience. Our stage-manager, Mr. Ryder, said, in spite of this, that it "would be all right." The proprietor of the theatre kept it in the bill, and picture-posters of the sensation scene were soon all over the town. The piece was capitally acted, well put on the stage, and, in the third week of its existence, it triumphed; the public crowded in to see it, and it ran for nearly two hundred nights. It has been often played in the country and London, and has been revived at a West-End theatre. The first-night verdict was emphatically reversed, and the new critics have not confirmed the opinion of their predecessors.

"Ourselves" cannot be said to have been a failure with the public, for the public has never had a chance of seeing it; and that very small and very peculiar portion of the public which constitutes a first-night audience saw it to disadvantage. One might as well judge of a Beauty by a blurred photograph of her, or come to the conclusion that your forehead has come in two, or your mouth gone up towards your eye, and that you were gradually turning green, because you saw yourself thus distorted and misrepresented in a defective cheap mirror at a second-rate seaside lodging-house, as form a correct opinion of "Ourselves" from the first performance on the night of the "scare" and "fog," and the "prompter's voice" and the "hesitation," and "the unpardonable waits," at the Vaudeville on Thursday, January 29th.

If the comedy was so hopelessly bad, why did the management accept it? For my part I was quite willing to forego our agreement, and when Mr. James took exception to his part—while expressing himself satisfied with the piece—I offered there and then to withdraw it. Now I sincerely wish I had done so. Had Mr. James persisted in refusing to play Peddington, whether "written up" or not, I should not have consented to the production of the comedy at the Vaudeville; and, as I told the managers, I should release them from the agreement. But they chose to play it, which is sufficient evidence that they thought the odds were considerably in favour of its success with the public.

Now occurs, to my mind, a curious question: Where and when does the dramatic critic's function properly commence? Surely if the critics are to be the manager's guides, then their opinion should be given *before* the manager's choice is made. Before a sensible man purchases a house, he procures the services of an architect and a surveyor, who go over it and advise him accordingly. A new play should be read before a bench of critics, who must pronounce a verdict, unanimously, as to whether the play is a good one. The author has written a good play, the critics are agreed on *that,* now only the management and the actors can spoil it. The play, thus "highly recommended by the faculty," is produced. The critics accordingly come, not to judge of the *play*, but of the "mounting" and the acting. If it were a failure on the first night, they could then saddle the right horse; but, in support of their own judgment, they would be bound to tell the public, that, had it been properly represented, had there been no stage waits, had there been no "scare" among the actors, had the services of the prompter not been in frequent requisition, the play would have been greeted with shouts of approval, being, they could assure them, a very good one and exactly what the public ought to have liked.

Critics always blame the author for everything, as if he were a tyrant forcing managers to produce his pieces contrary to their better judgment. Should an actor or actress fail to interest the public in his or her part, it is the author's fault (in the critic's *written* opinion), for not having given Mr. or Miss Nonentity "employment more worthy of his or her talent." Alas! poor author! How hard he has striven at rehearsal to make Lord Burleigh shake his head, so as to convey to the audience the real purport of that important action. "Oh! if he be but perfect!"—but he isn't; and Sneer and Dangle blame poor Puff in their published criticisms, and the author rarely has the chance, which through the courtesy of the editor of this magazine I now have, of explaining what they ought to have understood [*But he is now, and Puff has it all his own way!*—Editor of Theatre], if the actor had only shaken his head, as Puff had carefully instructed him to do. Personally, when I wish to judge of a new piece, I wait for its third or fourth night. This should be the critics' night, and they should not be swayed by the fashionable mania for being present at a *première.* None of them will lose their literary reputation by being absent from a first-night, though they will deprive themselves of the pleasure of exchanging greetings with various celebrities, social, literary, and artistic, of whispering witticisms in the stalls, and in a state of cheery excitement telling one another "good things" in the lobby.

The name of the author of a new play should never be mdae known until it has achieved a *succès d'estime.* There should be no braying of trumpets beforehand. If the play possess certain qualities, the opinion of critics may delay, but cannot ultimately prevent its popularity. "Ourselves," in my opinion, is scotch'd, not killed; and in support of this I may mention having received letters from two of our most eminent dramatists, who sympathise with me and condemn the Vaudeville policy as shortsighted; one of them saying, that he is sure "the two characters would have drawn the town."

Should even Messrs. James and Thorne ever wish to revive this play, I should not of course consent; but considering them as out of it entirely, and the management in my own hands, so that I could reduce, or cut, or add, or develop certain scenes and parts in the free exercise of my own sweet will, then I would choose the Haymarket (with a pit) for my theatre, and cast it thus:

Thorpe	Mr. Hare or Mr. Arthur Cecil.	Archie	Mr. Forbes-Robertson.
Peddington	Mr. W. Farren or Mr. Charles Coghlan.	Norman	Mr. Herbert or Mr Conway.
Dr. Talbot	Mr. J. W. Hill.	Mrs. Cameron	Miss Kate Bishop.
Mr. Brownlow	Mr. Flockton or Mr. Bancroft.	Evelyn	Miss Marion Terry.
		Mrs. Burnley	Mrs. Gaston Murray.

That seems to me the sort of cast I should like, with no one among them objecting to anybody else having a better part, and myself not pressed for time, but at perfect liberty to alter and chop and change as much as I thought fit—the piece not to be taken till well shaken, and pronounced by me to be ready for the public palate. When such an opportunity is offered to an author, *that I may get it* is the devout wish of—F. C. Burnand.

"MONEY."

An original Comedy, written by Lord Lytton.

Originally produced, Haymarket Theatre, Tuesday, December 8th, 1840.

Revived at the opening of the new Haymarket Theatre, under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, Saturday, January 31st, 1880.

[The proceeds of the opening performance were given to the Widow of the late Mr. Buckstone.]

Characters.

Lord Glossmore ..	Mr. Forbes-Robertson.
Sir John Vesey, Bart.	Mr. Odell.
Sir Frederick Blount, Bart.	Mr. Bancroft.
Captain Dudley Smooth	Mr. Archer.
Mr. Graves	Mr. Arthur Cecil.
Alfred Evelyn ..	Mr. H. B. Conway.
Mr. Stout	Mr. Kemble.
Mr. Sharp	Mr. C. Brookfield.
An old Member of the Club	Mr. Vollaire.
Mr. Mac Stucco ..	Mr. Stewart Dawson.
Mr. Crimson ..	Mr. Brand.
Mr. Grab	Mr. Bathurst.
Mr. Frantz	Mr. Campbell.
Mr. Tabouret ..	Mr. Barré.
Mr. Mac Finch ..	Mr. Norman.
Mr. Kite	Mr. Strick.
Mr. Patent	Mr. Russell.
Toke	Mr. Dean.
Sir John Vesey's Servants	Mr. St. Quentin. Mr. Heneage.
Lady Franklin ..	Mrs. Bancroft.
Georgina Vesey ..	Miss Linda Dietz.
Clara Douglas ..	Miss Marion Terry.

Musical Conductor	Mr. Meredith Ball.
Stage Director	Mr. Hastings.
Secretary and Business Manager ..	Mr. C. Walter.

The New Curtain was suggested by the performance of "The School for Scandal" at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. The Figures designed and painted by Mr. Daniel White. The Interior by Mr. John O'Connor.

As a certain historical interest is sure to be attached to the opening of the Haymarket Theatre in 1880 without a pit, and as doubtless the playgoers of the future will be anxious to know what happened during the scene that was enacted on that memorable occasion, when a suddenly ominous storm changed to the calm of contentment and peace, I cannot do better than print the best account of the affair that I have seen, as recorded by an eye-witness noted for his accuracy and fair-dealing. The description was printed in *The Daily News* on Monday morning, February 2, 1880, and is from the pen of that very accomplished critic, Mr. Moy Thomas:

> The distinguished company assembled in stalls and balcony to witness the opening performances at the Haymarket Theatre on Saturday evening, were unfortunately enabled to form some faint notion of the spirit of the historical O. P. riots at Covent Garden, which still linger in the memory of patriarchal playgoers. Long before the commencement of the performance it had become manifest that the occupants of the second circle were not, in their own view of the case, so amply compensated for the conversion of the pit into stalls, as the sanguine hopes of the management had given cause to expect. The mere sight of the luxurious crimson velvet armchairs which now occupy the entire floor of the theatre appeared to arouse feelings of jealousy and illwill; and from the opening of the doors until the somewhat tardy rising of the curtain, murmurs and discordant noises, breaking at frequent intervals into manifestations of a stormy character, gave ominous token of impending trouble. When the curtain rose upon the scene in which Sir John Vesey explains the situation of affairs to his mercenary daughter, Georgina, the uproar became even greater. While Miss Dietz, sitting on the one couch, resigned herself to her pastime of knitting, and Mr. Odell, on the other, devoted an unusually absorbed attention on his newspaper, faint outbursts of cheering, alternating with deafening counter-blasts of a less friendly nature, seemed for a considerable time to render it doubtful whether the representation would be permitted to proceed.

At this juncture, Mr. Bancroft, making his appearance on the stage in the familiar light wig of Sir Frederick Blount, considerably in advance of his appointed entrance, addressed the audience, with many enforced pauses, as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen,—Allow me to express my regret at this disturbance, of which I fear I alone am the innocent cause. (A Voice: "Where is the pit?" Interruption.) If you will allow me one moment I will speak to you. (Renewed interruption. Cries of "Where are the police?") Gentlemen—(a Voice: "Order for the manager. Let us hear what he has got to say.")—let me, I say, frankly admit that I am the cause of this interruption. I am not going to ask you a favour. I have never asked a favour of the public. I have no right to do so. Gentlemen, I am going simply to ask you to pay me a debt, which, as a theatrical manager, I have been fifteen years earning. (A Voice: "We're not to be bullied.") I think I have a right, at least, to what I am going to ask—that is your respect. (Cheers, drowned in renewed uproar.) I am quite unprepared to address you. You must take the words from me in my agitated state as they come. You ask me, gentlemen, "Where is the pit?" I am a business man, talking I daresay to many other business men. I can only tell you, as I have already told you in the newspapers—(prolonged disturbance, which rendered the conclusion of the sentence inaudible). Remember, I don't take you by surprise. You have all known, since last July, that there would not be a pit in the reconstructed Haymarket Theatre. (A Voice: "That's what we didn't want to know." Applause.) I will tell you in three or four words why there is no pit. I cannot afford it. However desirous I may be of following the example of my predecessors, there is one result in which I am certainly not anxious to maintain the traditions of this house. (Cheers from stalls and balcony, this being understood to refer to the losses sustained by previous managers.) Has any money, I ask, been made in this theatre while the whole floor was given up to the pit? A theatre, gentlemen, is after all a place of business. However inadequately I may be expressing myself, I will give you common-sense reasons if you will only let me. Surely, if you take lodgings in this house—(prolonged interruption). I fear, gentlemen, it is quite useless——

At this point there was a call, apparently from the gallery, for "Three cheers for Mr. Bancroft," which were given with great applause; while a well-known actress, under the excitement of the occasion, rose in the stalls and called aloud to the more peaceful spectators in the immediate neighbourhood of the disturbers to "Turn them out." This friendly episode only provoked a counter-demonstration, and after waiting in vain for silence, Mr. Bancroft asked, by way of last appeal, "Will you listen to the play?" and finally retired. After this the tumult gradually subsided, though the disorderly scene, which had lasted for more than half an hour, had produced a visible effect upon the composure of the performers; and it was not until Mrs. Bancroft's appearance, with a countenance full of cheerful smiles and promise of pleasant mischief, that perfect tranquillity was restored. We are glad to be able to add that Mr. Bancroft's subsequent entrance procured for him a "reception" which could hardly have been more enthusiastic or more general.

In another part of the magazine will be found a discussion based upon the managerial alteration on which I personally happen to have very decided views, which are unfortunately opposed entirely to that of the management. I don't myself look upon the matter solely as one of financial policy, but of art interest, and I was rejoiced to find, painful as was the scene in many respects, that the pit had sufficient courage to protest against the sudden curtailment of what they considered a privilege, and enough courtesy and good taste to ridicule the preposterous idea that there was any disposition to riot or create an uncalled-for disturbance. Unless we are to accept and swallow the doctrine of Lord Chief Justice Lee (in consequence of the riot at Drury Lane in 1743), that "a continued hissing was a manifest breach of the peace, as it was the beginning of a riot," I do not really see how, under the circumstances, honest patrons of the playhouse—and they are this in a very important degree—could have behaved better than they did. Unless the public is to be elbowed out of the theatre because certain fastidious people don't like noise, and will not tolerate honest expressions of opinion, be they favourable or unfavourable, the voice of that public is a legitimate voice, particularly when the floor of the house is consecrated to fashion, and the people are sent up into the gallery—for the second circle is a gallery and nothing else, as I have shown elsewhere, from personal and, I may add, uncomfortable observation. All's well, however, that ends well. The alteration has been made, and so has the protest. The resentment was brief and respectful to such old friends as Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, and so far the new management has proved that it was right in every calculation, for the theatre has been crammed to suffocation every evening since the opening, and by as brilliant an audience as London has ever seen.

That such a disturbance, however slight and, indeed, however satisfactory its termination might be, should unnerve and distract the company was very reasonable; but I don't myself see how it could cause readings of characters that the text scarcely justifies, or such errors of stage-management as were seen on the first night, and have been repeated since in the club-scene. No preliminary disturbance could prevent Mr. Graves from showing a natural and not an artificial melancholy, or could rob the scenes between Alfred Evelyn and Clara Douglas of their force and expression, or could cause or suggest the hideous din and, occasionally, rough horse-play introduced into the club-scene. I fear that the whole act devoted to the club must be pronounced a distinct and vital error in art. In the endeavour to be realistic it is inartistic, and the whole scene glows with solecisms that are without excuse. I saw the play on the first night from the stalls, and I saw it a fortnight after from the second circle or pit-gallery, where I went to test the comfort of the audience; and I am bound to say that, though some of the intolerable racket is toned down, exaggeration is still so pronounced that the curtain fell upon the manifest disapprobation of the whole house. I never remember to have heard applause more general and spontaneous than at the close of the celebrated dancing-scene by Mr. Arthur Cecil and Mrs. Bancroft, as Graves and Lady Franklin; and I certainly never heard such universal disappointment as when the club-scene was over. Mr. Bancroft's idea is evidently to suggest the buzz and general conversation of a club-room, after the theatres are over; but in order to do this he must falsify the author's position even more than it was before. The object of the scene is *not* to show us a red-faced and red-nosed gentleman talking at the top of his voice and slapping people on the back, or to hear hoarse laughter over good stories, or to have the attention distracted by minor detail that has no bearing whatever on the dramatic position. We don't want to see Sir John Vesey tumbled about the room from a push by Alfred Evelyn, as if he were a tottering ninepin, or to have the eye wandering from one card-table to another, and one group to the next. The dramatic object of the scene is to have the attention fixed upon the card-table where Dudley Smooth and Evelyn are at play. Exactly the opposite result is obtained; minor frivolities are preferred to the major point, and the result—with all its confusion, bustle, and restlessness—is a distinct error in art. *Imprimis*, the stage-management is at fault; but the mistake is increased, amongst other things, by the thoughtless eccentricity of Mr. Odell as Sir John Vesey, and the loud-talking manner of the club-joker, with the brandy-and-water face. When nature is so steadily aimed at in every particular, it is astonishing that it should not have occurred to the stage-manager that cards are often played in the smoking-room of West-End clubs that attract the society of gentlemen; but that when cards are going on the members moderate their conversation and repress their exuberance.

When members gather round the card-table there is silence, and the interest of the game hushes the miscellaneous assembly; so it is realism, or nature as it is called, that is distinctly at fault. The scenes between Alfred Evelyn and Clara Douglas have seldom, to my thinking, appeared more tame and inanimate. They pass, but they make no impression. The artists are very pleasant; pretty on the one side and manly on the other, but they very rarely succeed in fixing the attention of the audience on the scene or eliciting the dramatic essence of the play. This is, I think, due to two causes. Miss Marion Terry, in her endeavour to feel the part very strongly, over-accentuates her nervous pathos, she is too constantly overwhelmed and sorrow-stricken, she is too naturally sensitive to hide her personal identity in the character; and Mr. Conway, though he has taken great pains with the character, may be advised speedily to correct his readings of the text in order that Lord Lytton's words may have their proper value. I am quite certain that Mr. Conway cannot possibly know how his strongest efforts are marred by so continually emphasising the unimportant word in a sentence and slurring over the important ones. Dozens of instances could be given, but one occurs to me particularly. He says, "Go, Clara! AND be happy if you can." Now why lay a stress upon the word "and" in this sentence? Of what value is it, and why should it be emphasised at all? I remember that in "Duty," in one important scene, Mr. Conway, who acted admirably enough, replied to a young lady's inquiry whether he had anything to say: "Only THAT I love you! only THAT I love you!" thus destroying the intensity of the sentence and losing its point. A very little thought would correct this strange desire to lay stress upon such words as "and," "but," "the," and "that," seeing that there is scarcely any force to be got out of them.

There is a wonderful alteration for the better between the Graves of Mr. Arthur Cecil as acted on the first night and now. Like everything that this very clever and perceptive actor undertakes, it is a study, it has been well considered, and bears upon every variety of facial expression and change of attitude, the marks of complete care and industrious finish. But on the whole it is the least spontaneous of Mr. Cecil's varied sketches of character. It is creditable rather as a bit of acting than as a revelation of nature. Many of Mr. Cecil's characters—such for instance as the old gentleman in "Duty"—are nature itself. I don't want ever to see anything better than the reading of a letter in "Duty." But "Graves," somehow to me, seems like a struggle on the part of the artist. It is clever, because everything that Mr. Cecil touches must be clever, but it is acting—always acting. His walk on entrance, the funny fidgety way of shaking hands, the turns and twists of the face, the struggle with the pocket-handkerchief in the great scene with Mrs. Bancroft, are all funny, but it is all what Graves would do, overdone. Watch Mr. Cecil through the glass, and you will see that he is acting for the first time. It is art, but the art of it has not been first concealed. Few can help laughing with Mr. Cecil as Graves, but the melancholy is to my mind far more like irritability, and it is only when the electric force of Mrs. Bancroft comes to his aid, that the effort is altogether subdued and spontaniety asserts itself.

In the whole performance the Lady Franklin of Mrs. Bancroft starts out clear, sharp, and defined, like a star of comedy that nothing can touch. It is exhilarating, refreshing, buoyant, and altogether captivating. Good as it was at the Prince of Wales's, it is a thousand times better now, and no stage or house is too large for the free and admirable style of this inimitable artist. Her laugh rings and echoes through the house, every look, every turn of the head, and every hesitation means something, and it is not too much to say, that no one more thoroughly comes up to and surpasses the best comedy tradition than does Mrs. Bancroft in this play. Her spirit enlivens the whole house, the presence of the actress refreshes the scene, and she is so good that occasionally one is apt to complain that such cleverness cannot be learned and imitated. Cleverness do I call it? no, it is something more than that, it is genius, and it never was more prominent than when Mrs. Bancroft stepped upon this beautiful stage, and forced her individuality on every one, from the idler in the stalls to the keenest observer in the topmost gallery. If anyone wants to know what we mean by comedy, let them study Mrs. Bancroft as Lady Franklin. We have seen nothing like it in our time, and as an undesigned contrast, nothing could be more emphatic or complete. In minor characterisation there was some very creditable work, notably by Mr. Archer as Dudley Smooth, as severe and imperturbable as ever; by Mr. Kemble as Stout, a most finished and true bit of character to the very shoe-strings and pocket-handkerchief; and by Mr. Forbes-Robertson, who, made up like the late Lord Lytton, showed once more in a small and unremunerative character what art can do. There is another name I should like to mention also, because the little sketch was quite perfect in its way. I mean the Lawyer Sharp of Mr. Brookfield, a gentleman I never saw on the stage before, but who is clearly an actor. He found his way to the appreciation of his audience at once. Mr. Bancroft, recovered from all his anxiety, now makes Sir Frederick Blount a very amusing figure, and pleases his audience thoroughly. The Sir Frederick is a modern young gentleman, who suits the allusions, and the newspapers scattered about the table, and much interpolated matter. For my own part, I should have preferred to see the play as it was written, and don't care to see it edited up to date, or improved upon by the various artists. The style of the old Alfred Evelyn does not harmonise with the toothpick tone of the modern Sir Frederick Blount. C. S.

"FORCED FROM HOME."

A Drama, in Four Acts, by W. G. Wills.

Duke's Theatre, February 2nd, 1880.

Thomas Smith	C. Holt.	Jessie	Nelly Jennings.
Joe Smith	C. Wilmot.	Carrie	Rose Sudley.
Stoltz	A. C. Calmour.	Servant	Lottie Grace.
The Hon. Edward Almont	G. L. Gordon.	Molly	Miss Hastings.
Sir Francis Henbane ..	W. H. Day.	First Lady	Miss Horncastle.
Old Sam	J. B. Johnstone.	Policeman	Mr. Ellerman.
Toll-Keeper	W. Payne.	Jinks	Mr. Brand.
Jacky	May Holt.	Tim	Mr. Walker.
Milly Smith	Fanny Brough.	Newsboy	Mr. Manning.
Mrs. Smith	Rose Dale.	Bill Skinner	Mr. Gordon.
Margaret	Eugenia Forbes.	Sniffins	Mr. Howard.
Mrs. Spring	Isabel Clifton.	Cabby	Mr. Lawton.

The very fact that the new play produced as the successor to "New Babylon" at the Duke's Theatre satisfactorily fulfils its object may be taken as proof that it is work scarcely worthy of its author. The characteristic dramatic achievements of the man who wrote "The Man o' Airlie," "Olivia," and "Charles I." would not be calculated to please those who were so delighted with an inferior "Flying Scud;" the palate accustomed to relish the strong meat provided by Messrs. Meritt and Pettitt would not be likely to appreciate, or indeed taste, the daintier dishes provided by Mr. Wills.

To employ another metaphor, dramatists must cut their coats not only according to their cloth, but according to the taste of those whom their garments are intended to impress; and it would be of no use for the most poetic playwright of the day to provide the audience at the Duke's with a piece conceived and executed in a manner calculated to do justice to his reputation. This, at any rate, is what Mr. Wills seems to have felt when setting to work over "Forced from Home," which is a melodrama purely conventional in conception, tawdry, if not actually false, in its gallery-sentiment, and composed of familiar dramatic materials strung together without any attempt at freshness of design or boldness of treatment.

In "Forced from Home" we have a meritorious heroine named Milly Smith, who is unfortunate in attracting the admiration of a vicious hero, the Hon. Edward Almont, and in taking refuge with him when she is driven from the modest roof of her father, a tailor, by the cruelty of her stepmother. Miss Smith has a singularly imbecile father, which perhaps accounts for her mistake in thinking that she could live in the St. John's Wood lodgings taken for her by her aristocratic lover, without compromising her reputation and wounding the tailor's susceptible heart. She does not, however, yield to temptation; and, to tell the truth, the Honourable Mr. Almont, who wears white kid gloves with his tweed suits, and has a fancy for sitting on tables, is not a very tempting youth to a tradesman's daughter of refinement. When she finds that she is not to be Mrs. Almont, and that she is regarded with unkind suspicion by the inhabitants of St. John's Wood, she suddenly leaves the house, without even getting ready for a walk, and without waiting to hear, as she would have heard, that Mr. Almont, having failed to make her his mistress, was ready to make her his wife. A subsequent quarrel between Messrs. Smith and Almont, ends in the former having a fit; whilst the overwrought tailor's daughter is left to wander about London, to meditate suicide on Waterloo Bridge, and finally to recognise her distraught parent in Regent Quadrant, whence she is rescued by her repentant lover in a real Hansom cab.

The rhetorical attacks made by the serious but silly tailor and his comic brother upon a bloated aristocracy, are almost too silly to go down, even with the gallery of the Duke's, and the occasional introduction into the dialogue of Mr. Wills's very genuine eloquence has almost the effect of deliberate burlesque. The cab horse and cab, and other realistic elements of the play, serve their purpose excellently, though it is a little difficult to understand the exact position of the roadway, which runs at right angles with Waterloo Bridge and immediately past its old toll-houses. The acting is not such as to call for comment, except in the case of Miss Fanny Brough's delineation of the heroine, whose suffering, both physical and mental, is graphically portrayed. It is sincerely to be trusted that no success which can possibly be gained by dramatic work of this description will induce Mr. Wills to repeat the experiment. The artist has now accomplished his *tour de force* in sign-painting, and may well confine himself to pictures for the future.

Ernest A. Bendall.

"NINON."

A New and Original Play, in Four Acts. Written by W. G. Wills.
New Scenery by Julian Hicks. Music composed and arranged by Mr. W. C. Levey.
Adelphi Theatre. Saturday, February 7th, 1880.

St. Cyr	Mr. Henry Neville.	The Dauphin ..	Miss Jenny Rogers.
Marat..	Mr. E. H. Brooke.	Jacques	Mr. M. Byrnes.
Baget..	Mr. James Fernandez.	Captain of Guard ..	Mr. A. Greville.
Simon	Mr. J. G. Taylor.	Ninon	Miss Wallis.
Beaugres	Mr. F. W. Irish.	Josephine	Miss Maria Harris.
Father Pierre ..	Mr. H. Cooper.	Nanette	Miss Harriet Coveney.
First Woman	Miss Emily Heffer.		

A dozen or more years ago, wandering home from one of those delightful symposia at Dr. Westland Marston's, of which unfortunately no record exists, I had for companion Mr. W. G. Wills, then known as the author of "The Three Watches," and one or two other novels in which the grim power and poetic insight characteristic of later and more familiar works were already shown. As the conversation had previously fallen upon dramatic subjects, these again arose, and we discussed the prospects of the poetic drama. I then learned that Mr. Wills had written a play in blank verse upon a subject connected with the French Revolution. A sufficient amount of pressure procured me a sight of the work, which I read with singular interest. Having at that time more opportunities of access to managers and artists than were possessed by the author, I undertook to stand sponsor for the dramatic bantling, and see it launched in life. Seldom did human promise prove more futile. No want was there of zeal on my part. Scarcely a manager was there in London to whom the play was not sent, and few there were who did not profess to have read it. Its first home was, curiously enough, the scene of its ultimate production, the Adelphi. It was read by a great artist, who soon after quitted the stage—I refer to Miss Kate Terry (Mrs. Arthur Lewis); and her opinion of it was so high, I received a promise, alas! unavailing, that if she returned to the stage the *rôle* of the heroine was the first she would attempt. Backed up by her support I sent it to my friend Mr. Webster, who kept it some months. Not sorry was I to get it back from the limbo of the Adelphi management. After this it wandered to Drury Lane, the Olympic, and every theatre in London to which a piece of this class could be offered. Miss Neilson saw it and wept over the sorrows of its heroine, and Miss Ellen Terry was half disposed to accept a part that had commended itself to her sister. Artists one and all were struck with its remarkable power, but managers were less sensible to its merits. They coquetted with it and talked about it, but none of them would purchase it. One held that a play in blank verse was a predestined failure. Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Wills, and Mr. Merivale had not then brought the world to a different opinion. Another would not look at a piece dealing with the French Revolution; a third had played before a piece too closely resembling it. The poor drama was, to suit varying tastes, turned inside out, and, once more, outside in; was broken up into prose, and then re-shapen into verse. All was alike futile. Mr. Wills, meanwhile, made a fine *début* in the drama with the "Man o' Airlie." Then followed the splendid series of historical plays which are now the property of dramatic history. Everything he had written found acceptance except the play I had taken in charge. With this, in utter discomfiture, I had ceased to concern myself. Its very existence was, in fact, slipping from my memory. Great indeed, then, was my astonishment, and scarcely less my pleasure, in finding in the play which warmed an Adelphi audience to such enthusiasm as is rare to see, the same work which had vainly been bandied from pillar to post. Its title had given me no hint, and its author had been silent. "St. Cyr," the drama was called when first I read it; "The Seamstress of Paris" it became when the masculine interest was subordinated to the feminine. As "Ninon" it at length saw the light.

I supply these particulars, first, because they show the kind of difficulty to which authors are subject, and next because they dispose of an idea which prevails among "aspirants after dramatic honours," that when a piece is introduced to a manager the chief difficulty is overcome. Half-a-dozen of the best actors in London interested themselves in "Ninon," and sought to push it on to the boards. In the end it found its way thither with no other aid than its merits and the reputation of its author.

Among Mr. Wills's plays, "Ninon" is entitled to a prominent place. Less tender in interest than "Charles the First," it is not less dramatic; and though less shapely than "Eugene Aram," it is superior as regards both originality and psychology. A dramatic notion, indeed, that may fairly be called great, underlies and animates the play. That the full value of this is not felt is ascribable to two causes; first, the absence of adequate exposition, and next, the concessions Mr. Wills has made with a view to obtain a hearing. In every essential respect "Ninon" is, if not a tragedy, a drama of the kind which, at the outbreak of romanticism in France, won over the public from the conventional frigidity of the classical school to what has since been admitted to be a higher development of art. Dumas himself might have acknowledged its plot, and it is easy to imagine, had it been produced in 1834, the young students, headed by Théophile Gautier in his immortal red waistcoat, flocking to support it. To have vindicated such zeal, however, on the part of the champions of romanticism, it would have been necessary for the play to have retained what has now been sacrificed—a *dénouement* in keeping with its story. Of St. Cyr it may be asked as of "Samson and Dalilah:"

> What pilot so expert but needs must wreck
> Embarked with such a steersmate at the helm?

Feminine treachery, whatever its motive, does not often fail in the revenge it attempts. An action like that of Ninon does not often lead up to nuptial favours and a carillon of wedding-bells. The end of these things is death.

A narrative, short as it can be made, will enable the reader to judge for himself in the matter. With a view, we may suppose, of mitigating the sufferings of his friends, and curbing the excesses of the revolutionaries, the Count of St. Cyr has dropped the prefix to his name, and has become a member of the Convention. Not without cause do his associates suspect him of insincerity. Marat, whose suspicions are sharpened by personal feud, sets agents to watch, and, if possible, to trap him. The keenest of these is found in a seamstress, whose sister St. Cyr, in the pre-revolutionary period, is supposed to have betrayed. To revenge the wrong which has cost her sister's life, and has impaired her brother's reason, Ninon determines to be a spy on the actions of the young deputy, Cyr. A trap is soon laid. Dressed in clothes such as an aristocrat may be supposed to have chosen for purposes of disguise, Ninon is assailed with mock violence by the Megæras of the Revolution, purposely set on her track. The hour chosen is one at which St. Cyr is sure to pass. To him Ninon appeals for protection, which is accorded, and the fugitive finds a permanent shelter in his house. Vainly do his sister and a friend, admirer, and would-be biographer, who dwells with St. Cyr, warn the young nobleman of his danger. From the first moment he sees her his subjection begins, and when he finds her kissing the white rosette of the Royalists it is complete. His full mind is opened out to her; and she is shown the Dauphin, whom, in sight of the audience, he has rescued from the custody of Simon the shoemaker, and for whose escape arrangements are at present being effected. The moment at which the avowal is made is that at which Marat and his guards are expected. They arrive, and the discovery of the Dauphin seems inevitable. One spot alone is there which is sacred in a house, every corner of which is subject to search—the spot on which Ninon stands. With her cloak she covers the young prince, and the searchers retire with no evidence. The momentary relenting, ascribable in part to a womanly instinct in favour of the fugitive prince, once passed, Ninon—whose purpose is steeled by the love she feels in her own despite invade her heart for her sister's seducer—sends for her father that he may slay her lover. While awaiting his arrival she leads the conversation with him on to the subject of her sister, and learns from him his innocence. His name had been used to lure away a girl who loved him, but another had employed it, and had since, for so doing, fallen by his sword. While this explanation is made and substantiated by proof, the murderers are at the gate. The few moments occupied by them in breaking open the door and forcing an entry are devoted by Ninon to avowing her fault, supplicating, and, in the end, receiving pardon, and—here is the blemish—contracting a civil marriage with St. Cyr. "He is innocent," so she reasons, "of the death of my sister, and my father has no cause for enmity; he has married a seamstress, and none can take him for an aristocrat." So, on the hurried procession of Hymen the curtain falls.

The objection that the passions of a revolutionary mob, once excited, are not thus easily appeased, may be dismissed. It is a part of a system of historical misrepresentation often employed by Mr. Wills, and always pardoned by the public. What is more important is that the dramatic interest exacts a sombre termination. One engaged like St. Cyr in a sacred mission, may not allow the love of woman to interfere with his purpose, and the only expiation possible for Ninon is to share the ruin and death she has caused. This is the kind of treatment the great dramatists have ever accorded. Those even whom the destinies choose for ministrants of celestial vengeance do not escape the penalties of blood-guiltiness. An attempt like that of Ninon, by means base in themselves, to avenge a private wrong, and take on herself the task the Deity has assumed as her own, finds its fitting termination when the baffled woman sees an heroical mission baffled, a noble gentleman betrayed to his enemies, her lover betrayed, and her heart emptied of love and hope.

Turning from the play as it might be to the play as it is, there is even now much strength. Few scenes in the modern drama are stronger than that in which the woman, plotting against a man's life, finds herself in her own despite subjugated by love, and yielding to the lures that have already proved fatal to her sister; or that in which she learns that one whose purpose she has defeated, and whose life she has sacrificed, is more than innocent with regard to her, has, indeed, strongest claims upon her esteem. Both these scenes are essentially dramatic. A good theatrical effect is that in which the heroine screens with her cloak the person she has come to betray. Behind all, meanwhile, the horrors of the Reign of Terror unfold themselves, and the sanguine pall of slaughter hangs over all. Powerful throughout, the language rises at times to high poetic elevation. The best passages are put into the mouth of Ninon. When first she commences to waver in her purpose she declares:

> I am as one
> Who, starting forth upon some fiery purpose
> Cools on the road, would reason and would ponder,
> Yet for hard pride still hurries blindly on.

When subsequently she is unable longer to conceal from herself the true state of her heart, she indulges in a fine figure:

> They praise me for my skill in feigning love—
> I fling them back their flattery with a groan.
> It is as if an actress, feigning death
> Amid her mimic woes, felt the true pang,
> And in a frightful earnest swooned and died,
> While rapturous applause arose and fainted
> To a dead silence in her senseless ears.

Not less powerful is the entreaty for forgiveness, which, in the play as originally written, Ninon speaks before placing her own heart between her lover's breast and the blow from her father's dagger which deprives her of life, and places the seal upon her expiation. In the modern version these are of necessity less effective. They are marred, moreover, by those short lines which Mr. Wills employs too frequently in verse repeatedly blank. A short line once and again in a blank-verse poem may, perhaps, be accepted as a relief. When, however, it becomes a trick, or seems an exercise of difficulty, it is no longer permissible in art. Two lines spoken by St. Cyr deserve also to be chronicled. They have the ring of the Elizabethan drama. To Ninon, when she asks him if he fears death, St. Cyr answers:

> Within this city Death holds daily drill,
> And I am not unsteady in the ranks.

Adequately to present a character cast in so heroic a mould as Ninon requires great natural powers and finished art. Miss Wallis brings to the task ability and intention, and a certain respectable amount of training. She fails, however, to grasp the part. With her, as with many modern actors, their virulence has to do duty for passion. Not only is there no breadth of style, no heat of electricity fusing into a whole the various emotions which torture and rend the frame, there is a, so to speak, procession of different feelings delivered *staccato*, and the framework which connects them is scorn. Miss Wallis seems at times to scorn herself, at others to scorn her lover. In the character of Ninon there is a place for scorn, but it is subordinate. She should be like Othello, "perplexed in the extreme." Defeat, despair, bewilderment are upon her, and madness is close at hand. Rightly to present the swift succeeding emotions and the burning passion of Ninon, is a task for a great tragic actress. Careful and sustained as was the effort of Miss Wallis, it came short of the occasion. As St. Cyr, Mr. Neville carried thoroughly with him the sympathies of the audience, acting with that quietude and manliness of style which have gained him his position in public esteem. Mr. Fernandez gave, as Baget, the father of the heroine, a specimen of quiet acting which deepened into intensity. Mr. F. W. Irish was admirably natural as an abbé, his walk and bearing being perfect. Miss Maria Harris was all that could be desired as the sister of St. Cyr. In the other characters there was much exaggeration. Mr. Taylor's presentation of the fright of Simon was a remarkable display of power. It was, however, extravagant, and it recalled the performance of Mr. Anson as Seum Goodman in "Clancarty."

"Ninon" has all the requirements of an Adelphi melodrama, and it has something more. In psychology and in dramatic grip it carries us back to old times, and it puts to open shame much puny workmanship of the day.

JOSEPH KNIGHT.

"IN THE ORCHARD."

Comedietta by G. R. WALKER.

Folly Theatre, February 14th, 1880.

Rody Reardon	E. D. WARD.	Lizzy Tait	ROLAND PHILLIPS.
Jack Spurt	J. CARNE.	Giles	H. ELMORE.
Patty Merlin	LILIAN CAVALIER.	Hodge	W. BRUNTON.

IF Mr. G. R. Walker had shown himself able to improve upon the average *lever de rideau,* his new play would have received a welcome altogether disproportionate to its intrinsic importance. It is much to put an audience in the right cue for the chief business of the evening's entertainment by the aid of a piece which is neither too frivolous nor too serious; neither too ambitious nor too devoid of any sort of purpose; which has some sort of story to tell or episode to illustrate, but is nevertheless as brief as it is lucid. With this order of miniature drama, however, which, in justice to Mr. Walker, must be admitted to be exceptional, "In the Orchard" certainly cannot be classed. It is a feeble little work, which suggests little of the pastoral prettiness promised by its title. Of its story enough is said when it is stated that its hero is a young farmer, who, on accession to his uncle's property, gets drunk, and whilst in a semi-intoxicated state is found "in the orchard" by his pretty cousin, a London milliner. This young lady, who has climbed the apple-tree under which her undesirable relation snoozes, readily persuades him that she is a witch, and exerts over him the influence ordinarily exercised by sober damsels over tipsy youths. The prospect of a union between these two is intended, doubtless, as a happy close to the comedietta, but only suggests pity for a girl who, in spite of her tree-climbing, deserves a better fate than flirtation with a sot. Both by Miss Lilian Cavalier and Mr. E. D. Ward, every chance was given to "In the Orchard;" but their capable delineations of its chief characters could not save it from seeming to lack dramatic point, taste, and *raison d'être.* It is, no doubt, difficult to compress the requisite amount of dramatic material into a trifle of these dimensions; but, on the other hand, it must be easy to refrain from writing comediettas like "In the Orchard."

ERNEST A. BENDALL.

PLAYS PRODUCED IN PARIS THIS YEAR.

NAME OF PLAY.	DATE OF PRODUCTION.	REMARKS.
Les Voltigeurs de la 32e	Jan. 8	Renaissance. (Success.)
Le Beau Solignac	Jan. 12	Châtelet. (Succès d'estime).
Le Fils de Coralie	Jan. 16	Gymnase. (Success).
Les Dettes de Cœur	Jan. 23	3e Théâtre Français. (Failure).
Turenne	Jan. 27	Ambigu. (Failure).
Le Nabab	Jan. 30	Vaudeville. (Success).
L'Inquisition	Jan. 30	Théâtre des Nations. (Failure).
Les Boursigneul	Feb. 5	Théâtre des Arts. (Success).
La Corbeille de Noce	Feb. 7	Palais Royal. (Success).
Pétrarque	Feb. 13	Opéra Populaire. (Failure).
Bric-à-Brac	Feb. 13	Athenée Comique. (Success).
Daniel Rochat	Feb. 16	Théâtre Français. (Failure).

Our Musical-Box.

CARL ROSA OPERA COMPANY.

Saturday, February 7th, 1880.
"LOHENGRIN,"
Romantic Opera, in Three Acts, by Richard Wagner.
English version by John P. Jackson.

Henry the Fowler, German Emperor..	Mr. George Conly.
Lohengrin, Knight of San Grail	Herr A. Schott.
Elsa of Brabant ..	Miss Julia Gaylord.
Frederick of Telramund, a Count of Brabant	Mr. Ludwig.
Ortrud, his Wife ..	Miss Josephine Yorke.
The King's Herald	Mr. Leslie Crotty.

Conductor .. .. Mr. Alberto Randegger.

AMONGST the numerous and varied creations of Wagner, none has hitherto enjoyed such universal popularity as this opera. The reason is not far to seek. The chivalrous and poetic character of the plot, teeming as it does with situations of great dramatic interest, enlists from first to last the better sympathies of the audience, while the perfection with which the music illustrates and amplifies every phase of the poet-composer's ideal, is instinct with the highest order of operatic development. The first performance brought a large audience to the more popular parts of the house, and at each succeeding representation of this opera there has been scarcely a seat vacant. It was impossible to witness the genuine and spontaneous enthusiasm evoked on every occasion without feeling that "Lohengrin" has already ceased to belong only to the future, and must be acknowledged as the music of the present. The beautiful introductory prelude was most carefully executed, and gave abundant promise of that which was to follow, though I regret that at the commencement of the figuration upon the theme, the motive taken by the horns was not sufficiently marked, owing to an undue prominence given to the strings. This performance of "Lohengrin" is altogether the best which I have yet heard in England, and evidences much careful study and attention to detail on the part of the band and chorus, while great credit is due to the able conductor, Mr. Randegger, who has shown much musicianly zeal in the accomplishment of his difficult task, and has moreover made fewer and more judicious cuts than occur in the Italian version of the opera. More than a passing word of praise must be given to the excellent stage-management, which was conspicuous throughout, and especially so during the chorus which immediately precedes the advent of the Champion Knight. The *mise en scène* here was most effective—the anxiety of the expectant courtiers, the gradually increasing ardour of the warriors, who hurry from side to side with the news of Lohengrin's approach, together with the kneeling figures of Elsa and her maidens, combine to form a stage picture which is excellent in its effective realism. The music of this chorus, so intricately worked, yet so broad and true in its effect, is remarkable as a marvel of dramatic and descriptive conception. It is to be regretted that the final to the first act was executed with a rapidity which made it impossible for many of the singers to maintain the tempo; and the same defect was apparent during the love duet in the third act, in the phrase commencing "Breathest thou not with me the zephyr's fleeting?"

As Lohengrin, Herr A. Schott has made an impression, both vocally and dramatically, which will ever be remembered by those who have witnessed his fine impersonation of the mystic hero. Gifted by nature with the necessary attributes of a splendid voice and commanding presence, Herr Schott has evidently given earnest study to every phase of the character, and is, from the first, dignified and majestic; while he sings the music with excellent declamation. It is as rare as it is refreshing to hear Wagner's music with German phrasing, correct in time, emphasis, and expression; and yet more so to find a tenor singing conscientiously, and never sacrificing the music in order to make a mere vocal effect, as evidenced in Herr Schott's exquisite delivery, in the first act, of the short phrase "Elsa, I love thee," which is given with tenderness and intensity, but without any straining after undue effect. Were it not for his occasional faultiness of intonation, far less apparent in this opera than in "Rienzi," I should be tempted to pronounce his interpretation of the character as almost perfect. Whether commanding and forcible with Telramund, courteous and dignified with the King, or loving and tender with Elsa, Herr Schott was always equal to the requirements of the situation. Space fails me to do full justice to the varied merits of this admirable impersonation; I must, however, allude with especial emphasis to the last scene, in which Lohengrin is pre-eminently the centre of interest. The profound impression created by Herr Schott's inspired description of the Holy Grail, and of his sacred mission, together with his subsequent pathetic farewell of Elsa, was a noble tribute to the dramatic intensity of this great artist. The Elsa of Miss Julia Gaylord must be accounted one of her best, as it is the most ambitious of her impersonations. She has evidently studied the part with the utmost diligence, and is successful from a vocal and histrionic point of view. At the first performance, arduous work during the week and repeated rehearsals had told disadvantageously upon her voice; but this subsequently became less evident, and she showed marked improvement at successive representations. This sympathetic artist has now proved herself one of the most promising amongst our English singers. Miss Yorke gave evidence of careful study as Ortrud, and sang the music of this exacting part with commendable correctness; but since the opening night her acting has degenerated into unnatural and occasionally ludicrous exaggeration. Mr. Ludwig sang in tune as Telramund, but was evidently overweighted by the character. Mr. Leslie Crotty gave the music of the Herald with great purity of tone and excellent emphasis. He is in my opinion the best, as he is the only tuneful, exponent of this part who has yet appeared in England. Mr. George Conly cannot be deemed satisfactory as Henry the Fowler. The production of such an opera as "Lohengrin" is a serious tax upon the resources of any operatic manager, but I trust that the success which has attended Mr. Carl Rosa's present praiseworthy undertaking will encourage him to similar efforts in the future.—Damon.

The opening Monday Popular Concert of the new year introduced a posthumous quartet by Mendelssohn, written at the early age of fourteen. This wonderfully precocious work, admirably played by Madame Norman-Neruda, Messrs. Ries, Zerbini, and Piatti, pleased so much that it was repeated at one of the succeeding concerts. Mdlle. Janotha was the pianist during the first half of January, but on the 17th inst., at a Saturday Concert, Dr. Hans von Bülow was welcomed by an unusually large and enthusiastic audience. He gave a masterly rendering of Bach's English Suite in D minor, and joined Madame Norman-Neruda in Schubert's spirited Rondo Brilliant in B minor. With this violinist and Signor Piatti he was associated in a performance of Beethoven's B-flat Trio which was simply *perfect.* At the Monday Concert, on the 26th, Dr. von Bülow played Beethoven's great Op. 111 (Sonata in C minor) as he alone can play it. The later works of Beethoven require for their interpretation an intellect of the highest order and a *technique* that knows no difficulties. These qualities Dr. von Bülow most undeniably possesses, and it would be impossible to imagine a more perfect rendering of the fiery allegro. The divine arietta was played with a thorough appreciation of the simplicity and poetry of that heaven-born theme, and nothing could exceed the marvellous interpretation of the variations that followed. It seemed a little misleading to read in the Analytical Programme or Book of the Words, which is intended to educate the public, that one of the most exquisite and delicate of the variations "might have been a page from the book of Mendelssohn's fairy music!" Dr. von Bülow and Signor Piatti played Beethoven's G-minor Sonata for Piano and Violoncello, and it was indeed a treat to hear the sparkle and fun of the rondo, which so many pianists fail to see, or, at least, to express.

Space will not permit of a detailed account of Dr. von Bülow's recital, which took place on Wednesday, the 28th January, and which was quite *the* event of the musical season. The programme was a varied one, beginning with Bach, and ending with Rubinstein. The first number was the D-minor Suite already heard at a Saturday Popular Concert, and which, of all Bach's suites, is perhaps the most difficult to make interesting to the public. The gem of the whole concert was the great pianist's interpretation of Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 31, No. 3, in E flat. And here mention may be made of the happy preludes and modulations with which Dr. von Bülow links together the different numbers of his programme. For instance, after the D-minor Suite, he played the opening phrase of the slow movement (in D minor) of Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 10, No. 3, thence passing through exquisite modulations into E flat. Dr. von Bülow introduced a new and interesting work by Brahms, eight pieces, Capricci ed Intermezzi, Op. 76. Chopin was represented by a Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 3; Scherzo, Op. 54, and the well-known Berceuse, Op. 57; Liszt, by the Canzone e Tarantella Venezia e Napoli; and Rubinstein by two Barcarolles, and the Galop from "Le Bal." S. C.

Our Omnibus-Box.

VALENTINE'S DAY in 1880 will ever be well remembered, and any allusion to it in the future must recall a dramatic event and an art gathering of great pith and moment. On that day Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" was for the first time in history played for a hundred nights in succession, and in order to commemorate the occasion at the Lyceum Theatre, Mr. Henry Irving gathered round him some three hundred representatives of every form of literature and art in the country, who were thus enabled to cheer his enterprise, to congratulate him on his success, and cordially to wish this great artist a happy future. Assisted by the eloquence of Lord Houghton, the most graceful geniality of the host, and the enthusiasm of the "good fellows" who gathered round, an evening was spent never to be forgotten. *Fortuna non mutat genus* may well be said of the founder of this feast.

The popular son of a popular father has written a play soon to be submitted for judgment. It is a dramatic version of the "Edwin Drood" of Charles Dickens, by his son Charles Dickens, who has been assisted by Mr. Joseph Hatton. The drama has been accepted at the Princess's Theatre, and will be the next work produced there, with Mr. Charles Warner in the leading character. Everyone will wish it success.

On the first night of "Ninon" there was a loud and general cry for "author;" and I am convinced that the majority of those present earnestly wished to see Mr. Wills in order to congratulate him on his success. But the author, doubtless for very good reasons of his own, declined to appear; whereupon there followed groans, cat-calls, hisses, and various other ungenerous sounds, and the subject was thought worthy of comment in some of the newspapers, who talked of discourtesy and what not, and positively recommended the public never to cheer or applaud Mr. Wills under any circumstances again.

Now I cannot help thinking that the attitude towards Mr. Wills is both unreasonable and unjust. The compliment of a call has ceased to be any compliment at all. Authors are called whether the play is bad or good, as a matter of senseless form; very rarely they are treated with that same courtesy that the audience appears to demand, for in nine cases out of ten they are hissed by one half of the audience and cheered by the other. Often and often, after a sad failure, authors have been rash enough to misjudge the mistaken compliment, and have been howled off the stage. Some authors appear to dress themselves up and live in the prompt-box, and the instant the curtain has fallen they jerk themselves on to the stage, and accept the compliment that is very often intended for the leading actors and actresses. The first call ought surely to be taken by the artists, strictly as a point of courtesy and good taste.

I have been favoured by Mr. H. C. Coape with the following interesting memorandum: "Buckstone has been charged with mannerism. For that matter, what purely comic actor has not? Mannerism is, after all, but the importation into his creations of a peculiarity of manner which is his own and no other's. To my mind, Buckstone the man and Buckstone the comedian were absolutely one; meaning that off the stage he was pretty much what he was on the stage. I knew him well, both off and on, and thought his mere 'manner' equally amusing under both conditions. I remember in particular a little scene which was one day enacted by him, though off the Haymarket stage yet very near it—to wit, in his private room situated, as many of your readers well know, in the house in Suffolk Street adjoining the theatre. I was engaged with him in searching for a certain 'pigeon-holed' MS., belonging to—never mind whom. By-the-way, the expression 'pigeon-hole,' as applied to a receptacle for dramatic works sent to managers for approval, is surely a misnomer; for verily, in order to stow away the MSS. submitted to any theatre of note, a dove-cote—after the fashion of an old manorial house—would be required. Sheridan, at Drury Lane, used for the purpose a room-like cupboard opening out of the present committee-room, wherein the MSS. were flung pell-mell one upon the other. Buckstone's 'pigeon-holes' consisted of one of the old-fashioned glass-enclosed bookcases—now rarely seen out of brokers' shops—upon the shelves of which the MSS. were packed in most admirable confusion. On the occasion I allude to, Buckstone, in his shirt-sleeves, stood aloft handing down piece after piece—comedy, farce, comedietta, and what not—with a running commentary on each, which, without being particularly humorous in itself, had positively much of the effect which might have been produced by a scene on the adjoining stage; the same spirit of comedy twinkled in his eyes and hovered about his mouth, there was the same semi-gravity of demeanour, and the same scarcely describable effect resulting from his infirmity of deafness, as we all remember—with sadness now—to have observed in his stage impersonations. Had a dozen indifferent spectators been present, I believe not one of them could have refrained from laughing at this little bit of improvised 'business.' Here was the 'manner' of Buckstone—no more. The exact epoch at which the above occurred is impressed on my mind by the fact that among the pieces Buckstone turned out was one, coated apparently with the dust of years, which proved to be entitled 'No Thoroughfare'—something in the comic line—by Robert Brough. This was at the precise time when Charles Dickens's famous drama of that name was running its prosperous career at the Adelphi, with Fechter, Webster, Mrs. Mellon, and others in the bills. 'Dear me,' says Buckstone, 'how very odd. I haven't the least recollection of this piece.' Then, on looking a little into it: 'And we seem to have meant bringing it out; here are my marks for alterations.' What has become of this MS. work—meritorious beyond all doubt—of one, by whose premature death dramatic and light literature in general sustained so severe a loss? And what has become of the scores of its hidden companions? Who will answer?"

There is a good story told, and a true one, of the disturbance on the first night of the Haymarket. A gentleman who was waiting for some friends detained by the fog, did not care to take his place, but looking through one of the peep-holes at the back of the boxes, saw Mr. Bancroft bowing and bowing, but he heard no sound of remonstrance or irritation. At the interval of every ten minutes or so he returned to his peep-hole, and there was Mr. Bancroft still bowing. Half an hour passed away and the friends arrived, when the gentleman, totally ignorant of the scene he had missed, observed: "Oh, I wish you could have come earlier, for Bancroft has had the most magnificent reception that any actor ever obtained. He has been bowing to the audience to my certain knowledge for half an hour. Now let us go in." And when they went in they discovered the truth.

Judge-Advocate-General Dunn, of Washington, has received from Mrs. Mary McHenry, of Philadelphia, the annexed note, enclosing an addition to his collection relative to the assassination of President Lincoln: "In August, 1864, Mr. J. Wilkes Booth was a guest at the McHenry House, Meadville, Pa. He was there on the 13th of that month. After his departure it was found that he had with a diamond inscribed upon a pane of a window of his bedroom these words:

Abe Lincoln,
Departed this
Life Aug. 13th, 1864,
By the effects of
Poison.

The glass remained in the window undisturbed until the country was shocked by the murder of Mr. Lincoln on the 14th April, 1865. A few days after that event Mr. R. M. N. Taylor, proprietor of the McHenry House, cut the pane from the window, framed it over a backing of black velvet, framed with it the autograph of Mr. Booth, which Mr. Taylor cut from the hotel register, and sent the whole to me, just as it now is. I received it towards the end of April, 1865, and have had it in my possession ever since. I believe the inscription is genuine, and the history as above given is true. Booth evidently knew of some attempt, premeditated if not actually made, to poison Mr. Lincoln, and supposed that it had been successful.

Mr. Dion Boucicault opens at the Adelphi in April, in "The Shaugraun," and promises to produce a new Irish drama at that theatre on the earliest opportunity. Everyone will be glad to welcome Mr. Boucicault back again, and to get the promise of a new play.

I mentioned last month that the management at the St. James's had accepted a new comedietta by Mr. Theyre Smith, called "The Castaways." An accurate correspondent justly points out that a comedietta called "The Castaways," by Mr. J. M. Chansom (a *nom de plume*), was played at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, on 2nd March, 1877, for the first and only time.

Messrs. Meilhac and Halévy are very busy superintending the rehearsals of "La Petite Mère," which will be produced at the Variétés about the 1st March. The piece has been specially written for Madame Chaumont. Mr. Bancroft has already paid a deposit of 200*l.* for the refusal of this play.

Messrs. Meilhac and Halévy had a contract with the managers of the Vaudeville for a comedy in five acts. The contract has been cancelled.

Mr. M. L. Mayer has contracted with the same authors for their next six comedies in three, four, or five acts. The two first, after "La Petite Mère," will be one comedy, in five acts, for the new management of the Gymnase, and another for the Variétés.

Messrs. Chivot and Duru have read, to the Palais Royal company, a comedy entitled "Le Siége de Grenade." This has also been secured by Mr. Mayer.

Sardou's next comedy is promised to the Vaudeville.

M. Paul Cléve, manager of the Porte St. Martin, asked the author of "Daniel Rochat" to produce, next winter, "Patrie," but the author has not yet given his consent. He wishes first to know who M. Cléve has in his present company to play Karloo, formerly played by Berton père, and also who could take Madame Fargeuil's part. The only man left who still possesses sufficient power to appear in his creation, is Dumaine as Gisor. Should M. Cléve be able to form a good dramatic company, Sardou will superintend the rehearsals of "Patrie," and also promise to the new manager a new drama to follow.

Mr. M. L. Mayer, the general manager of the French plays at the Gaiety, has secured the services of Mdlle. Jeanne Bernhardt, sister of the great Sarah. The two ladies will play the two boys' parts in "Les Enfants d'Edouard," by Casimir Delavigne, formerly produced at the Français. Jeanne Bernhardt has been a *pensionnaire* of the Odéon and Gymnase. Sarah Bernhardt has positively declined to play the part offered to her in Delere's drama entitled "Guerin."

The next bust which Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt will go to work upon will be that of her friend Mr. M. L. Mayer. It is most extraordinary to find that this gifted artist has no desire whatever to go to a theatre—she is never tempted to see any new comedy. Since last September she has played the most of any *sociétaire* at the Comédie Française four times weekly, Dona Sol, The Queen in "Ruy Blas," and "L'Etrangère." There are very few artists, ladies especially, who play, for seven or eight consecutive months, heavy tragic parts.

In "Daniel Rochat" are several small ladies' parts, which Sardou persisted upon being played by the best *sociétaires* or *pensionnaires* of that company. Mdlle. Samary was cast in one of them, which was so small for the young *sociétaire*, that Sardou made up his mind to re-write two parts into one. Another was left, and ten days before the production of the play, Sardou insisted that a dozen short lines should be said by one of the best *soubrettes*, Mdlle. Bianca. Perrin had not the courage to ask the lady to play the part, it being so small. The part had been rehearsed to the last, the dress ordered, which did not cost less than seventy or eighty pounds; but after the *répétition général*, the lines were cut out by Sardou.

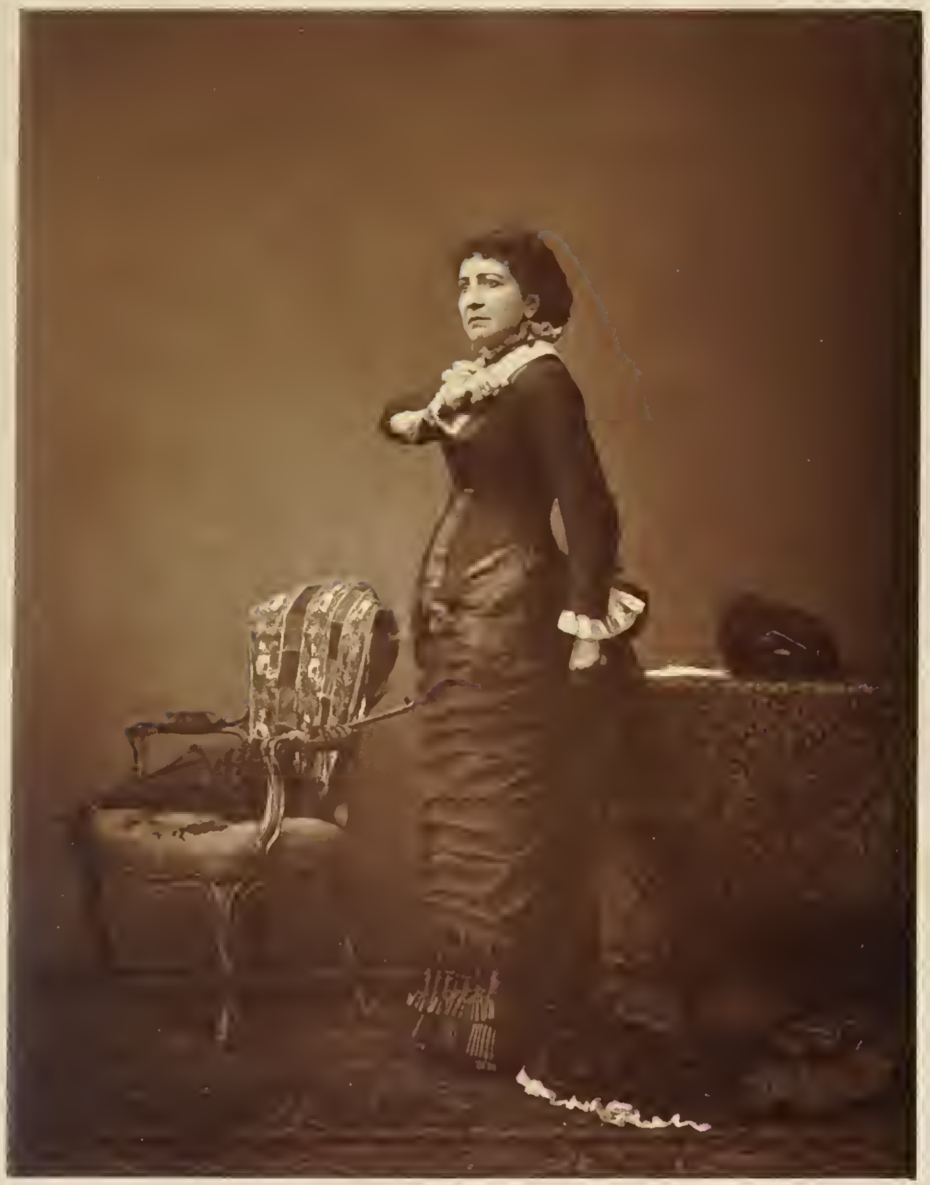
In spite of all rumours, Sarah Bernhardt is coming to London. If Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt does not appear in London on the 24th of May next she will have to pay to Mr. Mayer a sum of 2,000*l.* within three days from that date.

Mdlle. Sarah Bernhardt is hard at work studying "Frou Frou," "Adrienne Lecouvreur," etc. etc.

Delpit's comedy, "Le Fils de Coralie," draws immense houses at the Gymnase. The play is most cleverly written, and the *exposé* of the first act is very fine indeed. After "Le Fils de Coralie," M. Delpit will read a play at the Odéon; the author is Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur. Delpit's father is American, born in New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., but the son, who is dramatic critic of the *Liberté*, is a Parisian.

The first night of Patti at the Gaîté has been a great success; she made her *début* this season in "La Traviata." She had three calls after the first act. Such a tenor as appeared to support her would have been hissed at Covent Garden; her supporters in that opera were altogether unworthy of Patti. Stalls were sold at two hundred and fifty francs!

The most interesting operatic events of recent date have been the appearance of Madame Adelina Patti in a series of representations at the Gaîté Theatre, and the *début* of Mdlle. Howe, at the Opéra. Any criticism of Madame Patti's performances would be superfluous, inasmuch as the qualities of her art are much better known in England than in France; but there are circumstances connected with her reappearance on the Paris stage which may be mentioned. The extraordinary success of the concert at which she sang, given in the Salle des Fêtes of the Trocadéro last autumn, led to the engagement which Madame Patti has recently been fulfilling at the Gaîté. Almost all the tickets were immediately subscribed for, in most cases by the speculators, who are a veritable pest in Paris; and on the eve of the first representation, "Traviata," fabulous prices were demanded and obtained for seats. The price of a good *fauteuil* ran up to 250f., while 800f., and even 1000f., were asked for a *loge*. These rates were all the more absurd from the fact that, with the exception of the famous *cantatrice*, there was scarcely a singer in the company that supported her who was worth listening to. Indeed, the whole of the stage arrangements were about as bad as they could well be. Even the ballet was greeted with laughter, while some of the leading artists did not fare much better in the appreciation of the audience. The effect, excepting the chief figure in the picture, was simply *mesquin*. Those who crowded the auditorium from the ground-floor to the topmost gallery, by no means represented the pink of French society; on the other hand, the presence of money was most noticeable—diamonds flashed in every direction; but the prevailing social tone was very different from that which Patti has been accustomed to meet at Covent Garden. Of the commercial success of the engagement there can be no doubt whatever.



THE THEATRE, NO. 4, THIRD SERIES. WOODBURYTYPE.

"There would be no place in creation for such women as I, if it were not for such men as you."

Stephanie, Marquise de Mohrivart.

"Forget me not" Geneviève Ward

The Theatre.

APRIL 1, 1880.

"THE OLD CIRCUITS."

By a Septuagenarian.

IT was in the month of July, 1817, that I was introduced to what in my childish supposition were "the marvels" of the stage. The occasion was a benefit in a midland town of Norfolk, which the "Fishers" biennially visited, and where they were respected on all hands, and although invariably designated as "strollers" (1), always met with a hearty welcome. The entertainment of the evening in question consisted of the old comedy of "Laugh when You Can," followed by the "once-upon-a-time" popular farce, "The Turnpike Gate." The "Fishers'" company was chiefly made up of the members of the family of that name. On this occasion the grandfather of the present "Old David"—as he is now designated because his son has recently "entered into the profession"—played leading parts, and that of Crack in "The Turnpike Gate" was one of his most highly popular performances. The old man (2), who not long afterwards retired from his managership, had made not only his own but the fortunes of the family, and had so prospered as to bring them much more than a mere competency. The various theatres throughout the circuit were his own and unencumbered, so that he could afford to be liberal to the numerous members of his family, of whom the company in chief was almost wholly constituted. The intelligence of the "Old Fisher" was beyond his time, not only as regarded theatrical management but in consequence of his comparatively enlarged views concerning education. One of "Nature's gentlemen" himself, he believed in the vigorous training that was calculated to make his sons and nephews (3) deserving of the same character he himself enjoyed. As a means to this end he used the stage, upon which at the earliest age they were placed and trained, not only to act but to sing and dance, fence, and play various kinds of musical instruments. He also caused them to acquire a smattering of French; for owing to the difficulties of obtaining competent masters, the services of the *émigrés*, driven to England at first by the Revolution and then forced to remain in exile during the career of Napoleon Bonaparte, were not available in those country towns of Norfolk and Suffolk where the "Fishers" held their histrionic sway.

His sons (4) David and Charles he himself trained so as to become alike competent in tragedy, comedy, and melodrama. His nephews, John and George, who were also under his tuition, he planted in his company as his first low comedian and old man; and as the boys and girls of the former emerged from childhood they, too, were made available for dramatic purposes by means of strict and severe training. Besides those members of the "Fishers" I have mentioned, there were other more distant branches of the family incorporated in the "circuit," whose wives were also admitted to share in the performances, one or two of whom—Mrs. Charles Fisher especially—rose to a position far above mere mediocrity. It was not upon acting alone, however, that the talent of this remarkable family was concentrated. They themselves (5) painted the scenery; not, indeed, of a very high-class sort, but quite good enough for the approval of their patrons and supporters. They set the type and printed the playbills of their performances, and themselves distributed them by hand from house to house, after the usual manner of the time, for securing popular favour and patronage. Whatever were the plays or farces "underlined," they not only assumed the respective parts appertaining to their particular *métier*, but, as soon as the curtain was "drawn," donned a top-coat over their stage-costume, went into the orchestra, and played the *entr'acte* music, which was chiefly drawn from the minuets and trios of some one or other of Haydn's or Mozart's symphonies. In spite of the chief "business" being exclusively confined to "the family," the "circuit" was looked upon as a "school," and not a few actors and actresses who submitted to the drudgery of playing inferior parts, in order to obtain confidence and repute, found their way not only into more highly-considered "circuits," which were held to be the especial training-ground for the metropolitan boards. Two years with the "Fishers"—and an engagement rarely lasted longer, because of their "doing" Norfolk one year and Suffolk the next—were accepted by the managers of Bath and York, of Norwich and Newcastle as a recommendation, so far as "general utility" was needed.

About the year 1820, "Old Fisher" (6), after much deliberation, and with not a few misgivings, made up his mind to retire altogether from his professional cares, anxieties, and duties. His elder son David had been offered an engagement at Drury Lane to compete with Edmund Kean, and the season of his absence had told disadvantageously upon the "take" throughout the theatres that at that time had to be visited and kept going. Fine actor as the then David Fisher, jun., unquestionably was, combining great power and intelligence, both in tragedy and comedy—"a Triton amongst the minnows" in his own provincial "swim"—he obtained no more than a mere *succès d'estime* in London, and, after one season's trial, went back again to his provincial homes, to be welcomed and petted with even larger welcome than he had ever received in earlier times. The old man then determined to transfer his management upon liberal terms to his two sons, reserving, however, the larger share for the elder. This was resented by the younger brother, and he declined to accept the offered terms, gave his father and brother notice of his determination to quit the stage at once and for ever, and to seek a livelihood thenceforth as the organist of a cathedral or of any other parish church, either within or without London, where high-class services were required.

Well do I remember this circumstance, from Charles Fisher having, in my presence, communicated his purpose to my father, a pupil of Dr. Beckwith, the accomplished organist of Norwich cathedral, and a musician of no mean type or capacity. To this hour I can, "in my mind's eye," behold the expression of my father's countenance when this determination was made known to him. It was indicative of his astonishment to hear upon inquiry, what the "poor player" knew about organ or pianoforte execution, reading a score, or accompanying a choir from "a figured bass," but he received the answer: "I can do all that and more, as I will show you if you will give me the chance." "Agreed," said my father; "come here to-morrow evening, and I will judge for myself what you can do." "I shall bring no music with me," replied Charles Fisher; "that you must yourself provide." Again, "Agreed" was the word. The moment my father was left alone he started off to the cathedral library, and brought away with him several "scores" of the most difficult services and anthems he could think of, exclaiming, on his return, heavy laden, "Well, if Charles Fisher can play any one of these at sight, I shall indeed be surprised!" The trial came off the next afternoon as proposed; and I myself, with some degree of pride, opened the pianoforte for the trial. It was called "my own instrument"—a square Broadwood, with which I had been only a few months before presented as a reward for progress made in mastering several of Cramer's Studies and one or two of Kalkbrenner's flashy fantasias. The first selection was Orlando Gibbons's eight-part anthem, "Hosanna, to the Son of David," about as hard a nut to crack as was ever set before an aspirant for musical honours. Charles Fisher, after saying, "I have never seen this," at once sat down before the keyboard and applied himself to his task without even looking through the pages of the composition to ascertain the construction of the several voice parts! He played the anthem through without a trip from the first to the last bar, taking up the "leads" with the utmost accuracy, and remarking upon the clearness of the figured bass as he went along. I should remark that this anthem was not printed as almost all modern church music nowadays is, in the treble clef, and with an organ part, but in the old-fashioned arrangement of the various clefs handed down "from the ancients." Scarcely believing that this task had been overcome without some previous knowledge, my father next handed him the score of Child in D, the most cramped and crude Te Deum that was ever put on paper. Looking at the first page for a moment, Charles Fisher said, "That's a teaser;" but, "teaser" as it was, he played it through just as he had done with Gibbons's anthem. My father's astonishment knew no bounds. Yet he was determined to make a further trial of his friend's competency. So he handed him Croft's "God is gone up," and then Greene's "God is our hope," in the execution of which the same proficiency was manifested. The task accomplished, a consultation took place between the two friends as to the course that would have to be pursued if the stage were to be forsaken for the Church. The many difficulties that would meet an actor in the desire to obtain employment in the latter sphere were freely discussed. Clerical no less than general prejudice would be rife on all hands, and could not easily be arrested. Nevertheless, it was agreed that an effort should be made upon the first known vacancy; and so, equally satisfied with each other, the two friends parted.

"Old Fisher" having ascertained his younger son's intentions, and well knowing that the "circuit" would "go to pieces" without him (6), he being the better business man of the two brothers, entered at once into another arrangement, and so one of the most accomplished organists of the future lost the opportunity of being enrolled amongst those "worthies" who have supported and adorned the services of our cathedrals from the days of Tallis to the present time.

David and Charles Fisher, in not a very amiable partnership, then carried on the "circuit" for several years, bringing forward their sons, both alike named David and Charles. From various causes, however, the hitherto well-earned prestige of the two brothers declined, and about the year 1838 or 1839 the circuit was broken up (7), the property in the various theatres sold, such members of the family as survived being dispersed hither and thither. David Fisher retired altogether from public life, and shortly afterwards died; but Charles continued to seek and find occupation as a violoncellist in various theatres of the United Kingdom, to die at last in comparative poverty at Glasgow. Young Charles went to America, where he made for himself a well and worthily-earned reputation, and has never returned; whilst the career of young, now old, David, is too well known to need any explanation. "And now a fourth appears," David Fisher, jun., who has sustained the histrionic fame of the family by his careful and painstaking acting at the Haymarket Theatre in Mr. Albery's "Crisis," and has since appeared at the Prince of Wales's Theatre in an original part.

Such, in brief, is a narrative of the "Fishers' Norfolk and Suffolk Circuit." It may not, however, unnaturally be inquired, "What plays were presented, and of what sort of acting were the 'family' capable?" Most of the more prominent acting-plays of Shakespeare, Massinger, and Beaumont and Fletcher were amongst their "stock pieces," as were also such comedies as "The Way to Keep Him," "The Rivals," "The School for Scandal," "The Road to Ruin," and numerous others which then held possession of the London stage. Popular farces were supplemented by melodrama, one of which, "The Floating Beacon," especially, brought gold into the treasury to a large amount. All of the above-named comedies, as well as "The Floating Beacon," I myself in my boyhood saw the "Fishers" play, as I thought then, superbly, although to modern tastes the performances might nowadays appear mediocre. I have seen David Fisher play Hamlet—the first of thirty-three representatives of that part whom I can name—Richard III., Macbeth, Sir Giles Overreach in "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," and the chief character in "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife," as well as Jaffier, in Otway's "Venice Preserved," and "The Stranger," he being supported by his brother Charles in the leading walking gentleman's parts in each, as Laertes, Richmond, Macduff, Wellborn, the Copper Captain, and Pierre. I have seen the two brothers alternate Othello and Iago, and the one play Romeo to the other's Mercutio. In comedy the elder took the heavier and the younger the lighter parts; the former, in Sheridan's creations, being Falkland and Joseph Surface; and the latter, Charles Surface and Captain Absolute. Old Fisher—the great-grandfather of the young David now acting in London—has taken me on his knee when I was not more than ten years of age, and talked to me of the "glories" of David Garrick, and given also in my presence imitations of the manner of that eminent man, both in tragedy and comedy, although the only time I ever saw old Fisher act upon the stage was as Crack in "The Turnpike Gate," as has been already said.—C. E. T.

[Anxious to obtain corroboration of the varied details contained in this interesting article, I submitted it to Mr. David Fisher, now playing at the Court Theatre, and at his request I preserve the original article intact, but append his notes, which will be read with interest by all who desire information on the "Old Circuits."—C. S.]

(1) The company never was, even from the first, a strolling one; it was never so spoken of. The following is its history: My grandfather first (nearly a century since) being connected with the building trade in Norwich, attracted attention amongst musicians by his singing. He had a fine voice, and sung with great effect *sea* songs of a patriotic character. He gave up his bench, and joined when a very young man the Norwich Theatre as singer, and became very popular. In a short time, however, "Fisher and Scraggs" joined together to form a circuit in Norfolk and Suffolk, to be called the "Norfolk and Suffolk Company." From the first the circuit was established by direct communication with people of influence, and "Fisher" took with him his popularity from Norwich (his native town). At first, unquestionably they acted in fitted-up places, but my grandfather BUILT theatres in the following towns in Norfolk and Suffolk:—Bungay, Beccles, North Walsham, East Dereham, Swaffam, Sudbury, Woodbridge, Eye, Newmarket, Wells-near the-Sea, Lowestoft, besides visiting others. Now these theatres were built and designed by "Fisher" ALONE—"Scraggs" early leaving by himself. Possessing no machinery either beneath or over the stage, but the stage and scenery, wings, etc., all very complete and ample, general scenery was conveyed from town to town; but act-drops, curtains, etc., were fixtures. The *size* of these small theatres may be thus guessed. In my early recollections the prices were—boxes, 4s.; upper boxes, 3s.; pit, 2s.; and gallery, 1s.; the stages being larger in proportion to other parts of the house. At these prices the theatres variously held from £50 to £70. The prices during only the very last few years were lowered, but never under 3s., 2s., 1s., and 6d. "Fisher's" "Norfolk and Suffolk Circuit" was well established and known in the latter part of last century—but never was spoken of as a strolling company. I call attention particularly to this, not from any objection to the word *stroller*, if TRUE,—but it is NOT.

(2) My grandfather had put all his money, and more, in building. He left nothing.

(3) He had no nephews.

(4) There were four sons—David, Charles, Henry, and George—all of

whom received a thoroughly good education at a first-class school in Cambridgeshire. For "nephews"—George and John—read "brothers." For "boys and girls of the former" read simply "grandchildren," or "children of David and Charles."

(5) My father was the scene-painter, he having studied thoroughly, and, being a fair landscape painter, was also a thorough master of architecture and of linear perspective, etc. His brother George became a compositor for the express purpose of setting up the bills—printed on both sides—but here it stopped. The *property-man* was the bill-distributor. The notion of any one of the "family" doing it would have made any one of them look aghast!

(6) The whole of this is inaccurate. It is clearly derived from long-remembered talk.

Here are the facts: My grandfather died in 1832, and up to the date of his death was the actual manager, and registered the theatres also under his name. My father came to London in 1818, and as was usual at that time, was put through certain parts, *vide Morning Chronicle*, *Sun*, etc., of the latter part of that year. My father did not leave after trial. He remained as a permanent member of the Drury Lane company. He was Titus in "Brutus," and threw up his engagement in the middle of the second season. The reasons were various. But he returned to the Norfolk and Suffolk on the death of my mother and earnest entreaty of the family. The supposed quarrel between the brothers David and Charles never took place. There could be no such arrangement of the management. The brothers both received a salary and good benefit terms. It was a temporary desire on the part of Charles to leave the stage that led to the musical ordeal. My father left the stage entirely in 1831, and my grandfather dying the following year, the management devolved on Charles; my father, in fact, although the eldest son, never having been the manager.

(7) The circuit finally collapsed about 1845. On the retirement of my father in 1831, my cousin Charles, now in New York, came forward (son of Charles). The property went into the hands of mortgagees—but there was not a shilling of *debt*. About 1843 my uncle Charles gave up the fight to his brother George, and entered the Norwich Theatre as leader of band, where his son was then the leading actor. My uncle Charles never came to anything like poverty. His wife had an annuity, and she outlived him. He also worked to the last week of his life, and died aged seventy-six, now nine years ago.

The foregoing are simply corrections. I have felt bound to make them, but, as I have observed to the editor in a private letter, it seems a pity to spoil a good article. When my father left the stage in 1831, I, a boy, went with him to teach music. I studied the violin; played solos in St. Andrew's to all Norwich; played in the orchestra under Benedict, Spohr, etc. An accident, by which I broke my leg, seemed to banish me from the stage, but on recovery I joined Glover at Glasgow. I obtained for my uncle Charles the engagement with Glover, where he remained for twenty years, dying at his post. From Glasgow I came to town in 1853.

The theatres were supported by all classes. Plays used to be "bespoke," or, as it was understood, "bespeak nights" took place, when the names of Lords Rendelsham, Berners, Suffield, Heniker, etc. etc., Sir Edward Kemson, Coke of Holkham, Villebois, etc. etc., would be found at the head of the bills; and the family of the patrons also in the theatre, with large parties from the mansions of the family. In fact the families of the counties from the very highest estate were the constant patrons of the theatre, and I have recollections as a boy of dress-circles filled on occasions by persons of the highest distinction. To look at the towns now, it could not be believed that families remained longer in the country then; *high prices* ruled up to the end of the war, and it was some time before the reaction set in and destroyed the little circuit; but the six or eight weeks of the visit of the company was a *gala* time. They played but four nights a week—Tuesdays and Fridays being devoted to *parties*, musical and otherwise. The brothers played quartets, changing all instruments round. Two of them (my father and Henry, who died early) being left-handed with their bows, owing to a slight lameness in left wrist. They were for many years connected with musical matters in Norwich. From the commencement of the festivals the name of Fisher will be found in the list of players.

The writer of the above article dwells chiefly on my uncle Charles. He omits to say he was, at the time spoken of, an excellent singer. But he was a most eccentric fellow. From youth he was a violinist and violoncellist. But he took it into his head on one occasion to learn the double bass. As was usual with him, the one thing absorbed him morning, noon, and night. For about a year he was at the double bass, and it is a fact, when he played the same on orchestra with Paganini, the latter said to the Rev. Robert Elwin (who managed the festivals), he was glad there was one man besides Dragonetti who could play the double bass in England. Sometimes, however, he ran mad on pictures, and had a small gallery. Then it was conchology. However, music was the ruling passion. During his latter years, for recreation he scored all Haydn's and Beethoven's quartets; then made an arrangement for his own use of Beethoven's quartets for pianoforte.

Amongst the things remarkable in the company was the accurate dressing—a complete wardrobe for everything and everybody; but the feature of the Fisher wardrobe was the dressing of old comedies. "Old David" had costly presents of dresses of the last century, and bought largely of gentlemen's servants old swords, wigs in heaps, and some very costly dresses indeed.—David Fisher.

DRAMATIC LICENSE IN THE TREATMENT OF HISTORY.

By W. G. Wills.

WHAT freedom may fairly be conceded to the dramatic writer in the treatment of historical subjects is a question which cannot be precisely determined by the aid of precedent or authority. The liberation which Lessing effected for the dramatist from the bondage of old-fashioned rules and unities, is grudgingly conceded by the pedantic critics who love to retain their easily applicable tests of merit, foot-rule laws by which to measure genius. The struggle between liberty and law is always being unconsciously waged; imagination seeks for freedom, criticism to bind it to rules, and to recover its lost territory. Such subservience as that of M. Vitet, who bewails in his preface to "Des Barricades," having placed

Henri III. on the stage with the Duc de Guise on a Monday, whilst that personage cannot have arrived in Paris until Tuesday, would make the dramatist cease to be a poet, a maker, and would reduce him to the rank of a mere chronicler in blank verse. It has been justly said, if you deprive him of the right of moving about freely in the midst of the fictions which he creates, *"Adieu le drame!"* Historical drama would then revert to its primitive type, the chronicle histories of Shakespeare's predecessors; it would simply be a popular medium for instructing the vulgar.

The Shakespearian departure of the drama in this country has accustomed us, it is true, to a literal following of history. But Shakespeare's genius was a stately tree that grew out of the poor and mean materials of the chroniclers, one of the latest of whose productions was the "Tragedy of Sir Thomas More." In them he found an inexhaustible supply for his creations, and his plays derived from this source somewhat of the value of contemporary records. They have taken up from those obscure and crude writings the living impressions of history, and perhaps of the tradition still floating about the land, in days when as yet the oral had not been wholly superseded by the written. They have, therefore, an original and independent historical value, which has coloured our views of what the historical drama ought to be. They were called *par excellence* "histories," while those treating of other historical subjects, whether ancient or modern, are included under the heading of "tragedies."

The question remains, however, whether that which is natural and so valuable in Shakespeare, is to be imposed as a trammel upon the dramatist for all time; or whether he is entitled to make the best use for his purpose of such materials, arranging, interweaving, colouring, or even altering events and characters at his sovereign discretion. History, as it actually falls out, shows a lamentable want of dramatic art; events are strung, and people are brought together, in a promiscuous fashion, and are not compacted into a plot suited for representation on the stage. By merely fitting speeches to real characters, in the circumstances as they actually occurred, we could not secure the brisk action, the dramatic situation, which are necessary to make history compete with fiction. The use of it would therefore be forbidden to the dramatist; unless, indeed, as Sir Walter Scott used it, to form a mere background for the plot of his novels, in which the real interest depends upon fictitious people and adventures. Where historic incidents and personages should form the main or sole materials, it would be impossible or a needlessly difficult task to impose on the dramatist, to require him to observe a rigid adherence to the verities. If, then, he be reduced to refusing the bondage of fact, compelling him to be a historian before he can be a dramatist, and to tame and weary his muse by Dryasdust studies, in order to please those literal gentlemen who will criticise his performance, such criticism does not allow for the necessity of producing *effects*, and altering the fact in order to make it like the reality. Who would apply a foot-rule to a foreshortened limb, and declare that as it was so much shorter than the other, the artist must have deformed his subject. If this kind of criticism is to prevail, what is gained and what is lost? Is there no advantage to the public that the tragic drama should be associated with the traditions of national history, where that object can be attained by a free dramatic treatment without doing serious violence to the accepted versions of national events? Surely there is some educating use in it—some teaching of national self-respect—some awakening of interest in the past. And if allowing free dramatic license, by which this may be gained, by letting the dramatist arrange events as they did not exactly happen, supply motives which may not have existed, bring together men who never met, the question may be retorted on such discontented carpers—why not?

If you are measuring the performance by strictly dramatic rules, not by historical canons which do not apply, and of which the dramatist is free, in what has he transgressed against the rules of art? Do not indict him for one offence and try him for another; as a dramatist, not as a historian, let him stand or fall.

There is certainly nothing sacred in history, but yet we must set one limit to dramatic license in dealing with its facts. The author may shake them in his kaleidoscope as much as he pleases, provided he keeps within the boundary of not shocking the historical conscience of the public. There is a certain common acquaintance with history which he may assume his audience to possess; this he must respect, or he will strike with an irresistible feeling of incongruity—he will break the illusion of his historic tableaux. Let a corner of crude untruth protrude, a fatal angle of improbability, and the faith is lost or shaken on which his success depends. The historic conscience of the pit is blunt, perhaps, but it is sufficient for the purpose of adding fresh zest to a national drama if it do not grossly offend against it. So long as it is not offended by a gross and palpable solecism, it is pleased to see hit off the likenesses of familiar characters, without being greatly scandalised if they do not coincide with latter-day conceptions. There is all the interest lent by being "founded upon fact;" and whether it is the whitewashed villain, or the villain in his original dyes, the honest theatre-goer little cares so long as the impersonation is sharp, distinct, and dramatic. He has not furbished up his political conscience, and he has no temptation to discover the discrepancies which the dramatist has fallen into with his eyes open, simply because they suited his purpose and interest his audience. The author has, in his appropriation and arrangement of materials, had before him a question of their use, of how they could be turned to his purpose, retaining the flavour of fact; and to him historic truth would have been dramatic falsehood. In character painting there is even more to be said for the license which he claims, for it is asserted by the historian himself. Is the leaning which is allowable in the historian to be inexcusable in the dramatist? Is he alone to attain to some cold literary height of impartiality? Surely it is perfectly puerile to criticise him in that which is outside and irrelevant to his art, and which in those who are really responsible is readily pardoned. In history how wide are the discrepancies which represent, not a subject for blame or critical wrath, but are rather the different sides and aspects of truth, which we can only get from different minds and different writers. The cause, therefore, which the historical dramatist must acknowledge is to keep within the bounds of popular knowledge, and not to destroy the *vraisemblance* by palpable anachronism or incongruity of facts.

LAWDON'S LOVE CASE.

"WON'T do, young man, won't do. If you wish to succeed in your profession, you must abjure pretty girls, and wine and spirits, and all good things—including idleness; and—— Come round here, Lawson, and pay for two glasses, and I'll give you some more advice."

I told him I was going to follow what he had already given and abjure wine and spirits, when he laughed and walked away, leaving me feeling as if I would have liked to kick him for reading my thoughts and seeing the direction of my looks. I suppose most young men feel the same strange mingling of shame and pride as I did at that time; pride at loving so worthy an object, shame that it should be known. I had thought it the most profound of secrets, even to the lady herself; and yet my eyes had betrayed it to old Roberts, the heavy man. Perhaps, too, they had betrayed my secret to the lady herself.

I'm afraid I was very weak and boyish. I am not sure of that; but I am sure that I could scarcely learn my parts for thinking of Rose Wilson, the fair, innocent, clever girl, who had lately joined the company of the Theatre Royal, Parterre. From the first day I set eyes upon her she occupied my thoughts, and lovingly and jealously I watched her every look, listened to every word; and, with a feeling of joy that I cannot explain, grew day by day more sure that she was everything that was innocent and good.

I am not going to inflict a description of her appearance. I have said that she was young and fair—let that suffice.

For the first month I was absolutely happy, living a new life in her presence, and revelling in delight as I heard the applause which invariably greeted her efforts on the stage; not that these were great, but she had that natural gift of throwing herself entirely into the part she played, and, whatever character she assumed, that character she was to the end. Join this to her sweet girlish looks and silvery voice, and the public enthusiasm —and mine—are explained.

But now I began to have misgivings, and a strange feeling of despair came upon me. The theatre filled more and more, the private boxes and stalls were always taken, and the foremost places were occupied by men whose attraction was evidently the same as mine. Their plaudits were enthusiastic, and great bouquets of exotics were flung upon the stage, to be carried off by one who, I found to my horror, was fast growing to be a popular favourite.

Perhaps I ought to have felt proud of her success—maybe I did; but it was accompanied by a terrible feeling of depression; for it seemed to me that every day she was being removed farther and farther from my reach. I was no spy upon her actions, but I could not help seeing that notes and little packets were constantly being left for her at the stage-door; and one day, in a fit of madness, after shutting myself up to study a part, I fell to reviling her, and called myself fool, idiot, and ass, for wasting my honest love upon one who was evidently becoming frivolous, if not worse.

As I have said, I was alone; there was none to see my passionate rage and self-abasement, with which, as the fit of frenzy wore off, I in spirit asked her pardon and made an honest vow that, come what would, doubt should never enter my brain.

It was a hard task I had set myself, for though Rose was apparently always the same, and the most exacting judge could not have wished her different, still it was more and more evident that she was beset by admirers who increased in numbers day by day.

To me she was always gentle and kind. The little we had to do together was always pleasant, but as I met her eyes I could feel that there was no response to my passion. Still, I told myself with a sigh, that I ought to be happy, for she evidently liked me, though every advance was checked with a quiet firmness that more and more won my respect.

She used to come to the theatre with an elderly woman of the most repelling nature I ever met. She was a perfect dragon in petticoats, and it was a standing joke at the house how first one and then another had been snubbed and set down by her. I verily believe, on one occasion, when I had eagerly proffered my services to see Rose home, I should have had my ears boxed had I persisted; and, certainly, I had to retire in anything but a dignified manner.

Time went on, and Rose's popularity seemed to increase, while I was no nearer to winning her than before; the consequence being that I was fast growing into a cynical misanthropist, whose aim in life rapidly assumed a very dog-in-the-mangerish tendency. If Rose was not to be mine, I was ready, at any cost, to stand in the way of others.

To add to my misery, I found that one of the company, a fine, handsome-looking fellow, high in the manager's favour, was deeply struck with Rose. Everyone in the place admired her; even those of her own sex were so won over by her gentle ladylike ways, that, after the jealousy of the first month or two, there was not a soul who had not a kindly word, or who was not ready to sound her praises. But in Delmore (so he called himself upon the stage) I found that I had a dangerous rival. His far more prominent position in the cast brought him constantly in contact with Rose, and many a time the reality of their acting in some passionate love-scene has sent me home in a state of feverish despair.

A hundred times over I determined to declare myself, and know my fate—whether there was hope for me in the future; if not, I felt that I had better leave the house and seek my fortune elsewhere, for I knew I was going backward in my profession; and at least, if I were away, I should be removed from the daily torture to which I was subjected.

It was so easy to plan—so hard to carry into effect. Whenever opportunity served me, I was disarmed by her gentle pleasant ways. Nothing could have been more friendly: but there was no love. That she respected me I was sure; and when, after vainly trying to spur myself on to speak, I failed, and we said *good-bye*, with her soft, cool little hand lying for a moment in mine, I felt that it would be an insult to her to raise it to my lips.

Still I had some solace: while she was cold and quiet with others, her face always lit up at my coming. We might not be able to speak, but there was always a pleasant recognition to reward me for my genuine, heartfelt respect.

Matters were getting worse, and my state of torture unbearable. I could laugh at the over-dressed boys, who came night after night to the stalls, some of whom carried their folly to the extent of wearing flowers or gloves, or carrying handkerchiefs of the particular colours affected by Rose in the pieces in which she played; but the constant attendance of elderly men caught my jaundiced eyes, and made me increase my jealous watchfulness.

I am afraid that I degenerated into a spy—who would not at such a time? And very soon my attention was taken by a man of about fifty. He was not pleasant-looking, having one of those countenances with prominent, strongly-marked features; and as I again and again watched his deeply-set eyes and thin gray hair, I set him down as a man of strong passions and relentless determination.

At first I saw that he came two or three times a week—then he came regularly night by night, sitting always nearly in the same place; and while those around were full of rapturous applause, which they discharged in volleys at the bright sweet girl upon the stage, he sat back in his stall with his arms folded across his broad breast, watching every movement, and drinking in every word.

That man fascinated me, and I watched him—hopefully at first, thinking that in my jealous care I had been mistaken; but as the nights glided by, it was too plain he was evidently Rose's most intense, and as I judged it, dangerous admirer.

Did she know her danger?

Young men of inventive minds, if set off in the right groove, are ready enough to imagine all sorts of horrors about the ladies of their choice. They dash away into realms of romance far wilder than novelists' pen and paper, and I found myself believing in elopements or abductions; in this stern dark-eyed man, whose eyes flashed beneath his thick gray brows, making his plans; and in finding that some night Rose had been hurried into a brougham, and carried off, never to be seen again.

Follies of this kind so haunted me that I became a kind of amateur detective, and in this *rôle* I found out that the occupant of the stalls was a wealthy baronet, residing in a fashionable street near Lowndes Square, and this strengthened my suspicions. Everyone who has read cheap novels knows what ultra-double-dyed scoundrels your wealthy baronets are, and what noble names they bear—Sir Reginalds, or Sir Vavasours, or the like. Unfortunately the baronet in question only bore the name of Dunton Green—Sir Dunton Green. But what was in a name? He was evidently pursuing Rose, and I redoubled my watchfulness.

I followed her and her duenna home, night by night, right to Canonbury, and then crossed London again back to Camberwell, worn out but happy, for I had seen her safe. I waited about and followed them to the theatre at night, and whenever there was a rehearsal, I endeavoured to perform the same duty. It was always unobtrusively done, and I believed she was ignorant of the presence of her retiring escort. But let that rest.

Matters grew worse. It was evident that mine was a hopeless case, and my feelings may be guessed when, one night, after noticing with jealous eyes a bright single diamond ring upon Rose's finger, as a rule quite free from ornamentation, I saw her without a doubt exchange glances with the dark, gray, elderly man in the stalls.

I thought that I might have been mistaken, but it soon became evident to me that she was playing to him and him alone.

I followed her home that night with a sickening sensation of despair at my heart, and then walked back to my sleepless bed, to lie tossing about, waiting impatiently for the next night to verify what I believed.

It was too plainly verified then, and again and again, night after night, during which I suffered tortures that seemed unendurable.

What should I do?—try and warn her against the danger? I tried, and as I met her sweet, gray, innocent eyes, and watched the play of her, candid lips, I was disarmed, and could not speak a word.

A month went by, during which time if I had had any doubt before of the influence Sir Dunton Green possessed, it was entirely removed. Moreover, I found that Frank Delmore was furiously jealous, and had loudly proclaimed his intention of putting a stop to the coming of this man.

I went to the theatre one day to a rehearsal, and, after meeting most of the company upon the stage, I had occasion to go back to my dressing-room, when, on entering one of the passages of the great, dark, wandering place, I suddenly heard voices, and the next instant became aware of the fact that Frank Delmore was speaking in an angry voice.

"How dare I?" he said; "I tell you I won't have it. He comes there every night, and I've seen you make eyes at——"

"Mr. Delmore, let me pass, sir, this instant!" exclaimed a voice which thrilled me.

"Not till you've promised me that—— There, it's no use to struggle. I——"

"Oh this is insufferable—help!"

How it happened I cannot tell, but, as I heard that appealing voice, and the cry for help, all the blood in my body seemed to run to my head, except a little that began to trickle from my knuckles, as I stood over Frank Delmore, quivering with passion, and with Rose clinging to my arm.

"Take me home, please, Mr. Lawdon," she said, in a hysterical voice.

Take her home? Spite of all I knew I'd have gone to the world's end to serve her; and, as she drew down her veil, and Delmore began to gather himself up in a half-stunned fashion, I hurried her out of the stage-door and into the street.

"Ellis was coming for me in a couple of hours," she faltered, after a few minutes' silence, during which she had been sobbing bitterly, every sob going right to my heart. "I must go home at once. Please don't speak to me. You know where I live."

I started slightly at this, though I might have known she had seen me; and, obeying her wishes as to silence, I walked with her to Canonbury Square, with her little hand resting trustingly on my arm the whole way.

As we reached the house I saw the ill-favoured lady who was her companion at the window, and directly after she came to the door, when Rose threw up her veil.

"Good-bye, Mr. Lawdon," she said, gazing full in my eyes, and holding out her hand. "Good-bye. I shall never forget your kindness."

"Good-bye," I said quietly, for I felt very bitter at heart. "Don't say any more."

As I spoke I turned sharply round, and hurried away, but, in spite of myself, I could not help turning, as I reached the corner of the square, and seeing her and Ellis still at the open door looking after me.

Of course there was no rehearsal for me that afternoon, and at night I found that there were notices up announcing the indisposition of Miss Rose Wilson.

"A scoundrel!" I muttered, of course meaning Delmore; and as the word passed my lips, I met him ready to give me a very peculiar smile with his swollen lips, and directly after I received a summons to the lessee's room, where from him and the manager I received my immediate dismissal.

I was too young and proud then to stipulate for fulfilment of engagements, especially as I was told that I was an encumbrance to the company. I read the name Delmore between every word that was uttered, and went my way home to my lodgings.

The next day I was in a very strange frame of mind. I loved Rose more than ever now, and, in spite of what I knew, I determined to go and see her, confess my true honest love for her, and ask her for her own sake, if not for mine, to be warned in time.

I told myself that I was mad, but I was too much infatuated to stop, and the look she had on the previous day given me had completed my slavery.

It was some time though before I could summon courage to call, and when I did venture it was to encounter Mrs. Ellis, who told me that Miss Wilson had gone away.

"Will you give me her address?" I said.

"No."

"As you like," I said quietly. "I can meet her as she goes to the theatre."

Mrs. Ellis looked at me with a grim strange gaze, and feeling it was useless to persuade, I went away.

That night I took my seat in the pit, in a position where I could see Sir Dunton Green; but before I had been seated many minutes I caught sight of the notice that Miss Rose Wilson would not appear.

I waited, though, to see if Sir Dunton Green arrived, but he did not; neither did he appear at the house during the whole week, during which time I found from friends that Rose had left the theatre for good.

"Frank Delmore's mad about it, they say, for she has gone off with that old fellow who used to sit in the middle of the stalls."

How I parted from my friend I don't know. The next thing I recollect is finding myself at my lodgings, and for six weeks I was too ill to leave.

During those horrible weeks of trouble, Rose had never been out of my mind. I had raved against her, cursed her, sworn I would never look upon her face again, and ended by making up my mind to find her out, no matter where she was, and offering her—with my passionate, faithful love—full forgiveness of the past and an honest name.

I had upbraided myself, called myself weak, and told myself that such conduct would be base; but there was my unconquerable, forgiving love ready to master all opposition, and directly I had the strength the search began.

I had anticipated terrible difficulties in the way, but there were none; for, on going straight to Lowndes Square, a servant gave me Sir Dunton's address at Worthing, and I went down at once.

It was a delicious spring evening when I stood there by the sea—heart-sick and exhausted; and the moonlit waters, that plashed musically upon the strand, sounding so melancholy that, in my weak state from the past illness, I felt as if I could sit down and sob like a woman. I had eaten nothing since morning, for I could think of nothing but Rose; and at last I stood in front of the house where I believed her to be. Even then I felt that I should be baffled, for Sir Dunton would certainly have hidden her away. Perhaps this was only a false scent. To my surprise, though, as I stood in front of the garden, holding on by the iron railing, I heard the sound of a piano, and through the open French window came

Rose's voice—so sweet and pure and clear—singing that little ballad, "Coquette."

My first impulse was to enter at once; but I stood listening till the last note seemed to throb on the soft night air, and then, with a bitterness of spirit that seemed intensified, I told myself that she was but a vain weak coquette, without a woman's heart, and that I had wrecked my best feelings upon a barren strand.

"But I'll have her in spite of all," I said; and, swinging open the gate, I walked sharply across the little lawn right into the well-lit room, when Sir Dunton Green started up from a lounge, as Rose uttered a cry of alarm.

"Mr. Lawdon!" she cried, holding out her hands.

"Yes," I said hoarsely. "This is no place for you, Rose. Come with me—for God's sake, come—and let the past be dead."

"Mr. Lawdon!" she said, shrinking back, but I held her hand tightly in my own.

"How dare you, sir!" cried Sir Dunton fiercely, advancing. "Is the man mad?"

"Stand back, you cowardly villain!" I roared furiously, and I made at him; but Rose now clung to me, increasing my fury though as Sir Dunton and I closed. A shriek from the door arrested us both, and I saw a pleasant-faced old lady hurry in, to whom Rose hurried in alarm, but only to turn again to me.

"Take Lady Green out with you," said my adversary, "and send for the police."

"Lady Green!" I stammered, as my hands fell to my side. "There is some mistake."

"Mistake!" said Sir Dunton angrily; "I think so, indeed."

"Oh, yes, yes," cried Rose eagerly, as she caught my hand; "it is all a mistake. Mr. Lawdon, why have you come? Sir Dunton and Lady Green are my dearest friends."

I looked from one to the other in a dazed helpless fashion, with their faces growing bleared and seeming to swim round; and then I have some notion of muttering, "Ill—water," and all was blank.

When I came to, I was lying on the floor, with my head upon a cushion and Rose was kneeling by me, holding my hand, while I read that in her eyes which told me that there was hope for me after all.

And now, for the first time, I recognised in Lady Green the pleasant face of one whom I had often seen in the stalls; and by degrees the explanation came when Sir Dunton and I were left alone.

I felt no shame then to tell him of my honest love, but it was not until he had related to me how both he and Lady Green had been taken with Rose, and her strange resemblance to the daughter they had lost. How, after inquiries, they had asked her to their place, and ended by offering her a home if she would quit the stage. This had been for some time refused, but Delmore's insult had sent her to them, and hence my blunder.

"And now then, Mr. Lawdon," said the old gentleman frankly, "since you look upon me as such a scoundrel, what ought I to do?"

"Forgive me, sir, for I love her with all my heart."

My answer was a warm pressure of his hand, while, before I left them that night for an hotel, Rose's faltering words told me that there was a spark already kindled—that it was my fault if it were not fanned into a flame.

G. Manville Fenn.

THE FIRST NIGHT OF "LA DAME AUX CAMÉLIAS."

WHATEVER may have been the faults and shortcomings, social or political, of the late Duc de Morny, indifference to the welfare of men of letters was certainly not one of them. His own contributions to literature were of the slightest, being limited to a couple of vaudevilles performed at the Bouffes Parisiens, under the name of M. de Saint-Rémy, one of which, "M. Choufleury restera chez lui le . . . . ," became, mainly owing to the excellent acting of Désiré, a fixture in the *répertoire*. But, if he wrote little himself, he was ever ready to aid and encourage those who had need of his support; and more than one young author at the outset of his career was enabled by his influential patronage to overcome the innumerable obstacles which bar the way to beginners, and especially to the aspiring dramatist who ventures to forsake the beaten track, and whose craving for originality is pitilessly checked by two formidable antagonists—managerial routine and the *censure*. Such, in a word, was the case with Alexandre Dumas the younger, then comparatively unknown, and a novice in the profession of which he was soon to become so illustrious a member; and it is evident from his own confession that, if either M. Léon Faucher or M. de Persigny had retained their ministerial portfolios, he would in all probability not have written another line for the stage, nor, which is more to our present purpose, would "La Dame aux Camélias" ever have been played.

I have "assisted" in my time at many a first representation in almost every Parisian theatre, from Eugène Süe's "Mystères de Paris" to Lamartine's "Toussaint l'Ouverture," and cannot call to mind any one of these "solemnities" productive of greater excitement among the play-going population than this attempt to dramatise on the boards of the Vaudeville the leading incidents of a book which all the world was rightly supposed to have read. There were several reasons for this. First, the attraction of what had hitherto been forbidden fruit; secondly, a certain sympathy with the son of a popular writer; thirdly, the recollection of the heroine of the story, of her beauty, short-lived notoriety, and unhappy end; and, fourthly, curiosity to witness the appearance in an entirely new line of character of that very charming actress, Madame Doche. Each of these would doubtless have sufficed to create a sensation, but together they were irresistible; and it is not surprising that, weeks before the appointed date, every stall and box had been eagerly bought up, and that, when the eventful night at length arrived, a long string of disappointed applicants receiving in turn the unvarying answer, "Tout est loué," still lingered in the Place de la Bourse in the vain hope of securing a *contremarque* for at least one act of the piece.

The result of the rehearsals had been so eminently satisfactory, that I myself had little doubt of the success of the drama; but behind the scenes people were not so sanguine, and the manager Bouffé, a striking contrast to his namesake the actor, being as stout as the other was thin, looked as fidgety as a votary of the board of green cloth, whose last stake is still dependent on the capricious evolutions of the wheel. Business had been bad of late, and visions of possible bankruptcy in the event of the novelty proving a failure tended not unnaturally to disturb his usual serenity; nor were the performers, with the single exception of Fechter, wholly exempt from misgiving. Gil-Pérez, who was to play St. Gaudens, was annoyed at not being allowed to caricature M. de G——, a constant *habitué* of the theatre, who could not speak a word without hissing and spluttering; Delannoy could hardly reconcile himself to his part of heavy father; and Madame Doche, on whose shoulders rested the main responsibility of the piece, felt as nervous as on the night of her first *début* on any stage.

A few minutes before the rising of the curtain every seat in the house was occupied, and I may be permitted to doubt whether the Vaudeville, from its original foundation by Piis and Barré to the memorable evening in question, had ever beheld a more brilliant and, as it turned out, a more appreciative audience assembled within its walls. Of course, the "ban et arrière ban" of contemporary journalism were present to a man: Jules Janin, surrounded by admiring satellites, sat enthroned in one box, and Théophile Gautier in another; the thin partition between the *avant-scènes* alone separated patrician beauties of the Faubourg from perilously fascinating sirens of the Quartier Bréda; while in the stalls beneath them the *fine fleur* of the Jockey Club and the Embassies displayed their airs and graces amid the usual throng of inevitable nondescripts invariably to be found at every first representation in Paris.

At length, the sound of the "trois coups" announced that all was ready; the spectators settled down in their places, and, after a slight orchestral prelude, scarcely important enough to be dignified with the name of overture, the curtain slowly rose and the piece began. It is not my intention to inflict on the reader even an outline of the plot, for it is presumable that he is already acquainted with it, at least through the medium of Verdi's "Traviata;" suffice it to say, that although perhaps not the best dramatic work of its author, it is unquestionably the most sympathetic, and more than redeems occasional traces of inexperience by the impulsive freshness and vigour of its style. The first two acts were listened to attentively, but without enthusiasm; the "Ah, comme je prends du *plasir!*" of Gil Pérez, and his imperturbable stolidity of aspect while his auditors were convulsed with laughter, being for the time more effective than the love-passages between Marguerite and Armand; but as the drama progressed, and the actors warmed to their work, the interest became more and more concentrated on the two prominent personages, and at the conclusion of the third act, when Armand, convinced of his mistress's infidelity, threw himself with a heart-broken cry into his father's arms, there was scarcely a dry eye in the theatre. From that moment the success of the piece was assured, and the battle of the young dramatist virtually won; but it was not until the ball-room scene that the enthusiasm fairly reached its climax. The meeting, face to face, of Varville and Armand at the lansquenet table, the sarcastic reply of the latter to Olympe (played by Mdlle. Clary, an extremely pretty girl, all smiles and dimples, familiarly known as "Tata"), "Ah, tu me tutoies quand je gagne!" the supplicating accents of Marguerite and the passionate reproaches of her forsaken lover, gradually worked up the audience to a pitch of excitement I have rarely seen equalled: and when, at last, Armand, pointing to the bank-notes he had rudely flung at the feet of the fainting Dame aux Camélias, exclaimed in a tone of uncontrollable anguish, "Vous voyez, messieurs, que je ne dois plus rien à cette femme!" there arose from all parts of the house a storm of applause, the effect of which was perfectly electrical, overpowering the shouts of the *claque*, and rendering almost inaudible Varville's contemptuous rejoinder, "Décidément, monsieur, vous êtes un lâche!"

If, up to this point, the opportunities offered to Fechter, of displaying his peculiar qualities, had been more frequent than those afforded to his fair colleague, it is but justice to say that the triumph of the final act—the most touching episode of the story—was entirely and exclusively attributable to Madame Doche. No one who had watched the progress of this delightful actress, from her earliest essays as Mdlle. Eugénie Fleury to the evening the result of which entitled her to rank among the first artists of her time, could have imagined her capable of so complete a transformation from the elegant *jeune première* to the heroine of contemporary drama—from the Anna of "Trop heureuse" to the Marguerite of Alexandre Dumas. That we should once more admire her beauty, grace, and that indefinable charm of which she alone had the secret, was a foregone conclusion; but we were not prepared for the depth of feeling and exquisite tenderness which, from the first scene to the last, marked her personation of the erring Magdalen. There was nothing forced, nothing in the slightest degree "stagey," either in tone or manner; the illusion was disturbed by no spasmodic contortions, no straining after sensational effect; she seemed to fade away gradually and almost imperceptibly before our eyes, and as with a faint sigh and a lingering look at Armand she sank back on her couch, her lover's despairing cry alone awoke us to the consciousness that what we had witnessed was fiction and not reality, and that for one of the greatest histrionic triumphs within my recollection we were indebted to an actress whose embodiment of Marguerite Gautier was, as Dumas himself expresses it, not so much a creation as a revelation!

On leaving the theatre I overtook Janin, then on his way to Madame Périchon's cigar depôt on the Boulevard Montmartre, where for many years he was accustomed to hold an evening levee, and asked him what he thought of the piece.

"Ce que j'en pense," he replied, "je pense que j'aurai demain un mal de tête soigné, car j'ai pleuré comme un veau. C'est bête, mais c'est comme çà."

What he *did* think of it was told to the readers of the *Debats*—as he only could tell it—on the following Monday.

Some weeks later, by way of tribute to the dramatic event of the season, there appeared in the *Charivari* two caricatures by Cham, the first depicting Madame Doche carried off the stage in a state of utter exhaustion by two porters, followed by two others bearing Fechter in a similar condition, and resembling in shape the stereotyped policeman after passing through the pantomime mangle; while in the second, representing the interior of the Vaudeville, the occupants of the stalls and pit were shielding themselves from the deluge of tears shed by those in the boxes and gallery under an unbroken vista of umbrellas.

I may add, while venturing to record this pleasure of memory of my younger days, that at the conclusion of the hundredth performance of "La Dame aux Camélias," a supper was offered by the author to his valiant interpreters; and I am afraid to say how many bottles of champagne were relieved of their contents on this festive occasion by Manager Bouffé.—Charles Hervey.

A COMPARISON IN A CHARACTER.

"MONEY" was first produced at the Haymarket, in 1840. In its rhetoric, but still more in its sentiment—sentiment is the quality that most rapidly changes in times of transition—the comedy is already beginning to acquire a slight tinge of the passing of time; and it is, I think, a mistake to present "Money" with such alterations and modernisations as may seem to make it—but do not really make it—a play just written or conceived. By the modernising method, some touch of critical charm, some strain of romantic interest, are unavoidably lost; and the play of 1840 seems somewhat unnatural when it is attempted to push forward its tone into that of the present hour. The style of acting, as well as the ideals of public feeling, have changed since 1840. Forty years after its first production, "The School for Scandal" would not have shown a touch of age; but men live, manners and sentiments alter and develop now more rapidly than they did in the day of Sheridan, and Bulwer's play should surely be produced and enjoyed with a certain glance of retrospective tenderness. When first acted—and so admirably acted!—"Money" was played mainly in the tone of high comedy; but the change which has since then occurred in things theatrical, leads to tameness in the representation of romantic passages, and to sometimes overcharged low comedy in the merely comic portions of the play.

A comparison of great interest may, as it seems to me, be instituted between Clara Douglas, as rendered by Miss Helen Faucit and by Miss Ellen Terry.* This comparison affords an opportunity of contrasting, not only two great actresses, but also the change in the style of acting—the change from the ideal to the realistic school—which has occurred between the departure of the one and the advent of the other lady. A Clara Douglas now rendered from the altitude of feeling, and in the large noble style of Miss Helen Faucit, would be out of keeping with its surroundings, and would seem exaggerated to an audience of the hour. Miss Ellen Terry, belonging to another day, is unavoidably, if unconsciously, compelled to lower the key and pitch in which she plays the part. Macready records that "in the last scene (of 'Money'), Miss Faucit, as I had anticipated, had quite the advantage over me. This was natural." Clara Douglas is a nobly womanly part, which enabled Miss Helen Faucit to achieve a great triumph of true acting in the larger style of her day; and which also gave to Miss Ellen Terry an opportunity of showing that our stage has gained, through another school of acting, an artist who can embody worthily the same heroine of womanly nobleness. Miss Terry has risen now to the position of the most exquisite representative on our stage of winsome and tender womanhood. In Clara Douglas she had an easier, if not more sympathetic task than she has in Portia. In playing Clara, she has the advantage—an advantage to her, because she came on the stage when the ideal school had nearly vanished from it—of representing manners and feelings which are modern and are familiar to her. She has not to translate herself into the Elizabethan era, to breathe in the fine air of abstract poetry, to pour out the royal roll of rhythmic line. The traditions of the ideal drama have hardly existed for an actress so young as Miss Terry. In the day of the poetical, and the passionate drama, the stage was not a chapel-of-ease to the drawing-room. The long reign of poetical acting which existed in almost unbroken sequence from Burbage to Macready, from Elizabeth to Victoria, has practically ceased in England; and the temporary era of realistic decadence has succeeded to it. Our young actors and actresses must study backwards if they wish to regain the grander, larger, older style. The true ideal is based upon the real; the bird that "singing ever soars" rises from a nest upon the ground; and the true ideal of acting is based always upon nature. With that keen intuition which is gift—which passes through no laborious logical process, but leaps in one flash of instinctive feeling to a just conclusion—Miss Terry strikes clearly and at once the true key-notes of Clara's character. Generous devotion, delicate pride, abnegation of self, pure and noble love, refinement of modesty, the depth of romantic passion—all these qualities, as indicated by the dramatist, were seized upon intuitively by the actress, and were represented with rare grace and emotion by the finely-gifted artist. Miss Helen Faucit was much stronger, much more powerful, in her rendering of the character; Miss Faucit presented a woman of loftier nature and more enthusiastic temperament; her ideal stand-point was higher than that of Miss Terry; but even Miss Faucit could not render gentle delicate feeling with greater gentleness or delicacy. Between the two actresses there is a certain likeness through dissimilarity. Miss Terry can trust unhesitatingly to her own impulse; can abandon herself to the full force of feminine emotion, and can be sure that she will never violate due temperance and smoothness in any revelation of woman's tenderness or passion. In her acting, eyes, voice, features, form, gesture, all work together harmoniously to produce a totality of expression; and this rare combination and faculty is a note of a born actress. Sometimes, like a song-bird in its ecstasy, she seems to quiver tremulously with the inner force of her own sweet strong feeling. Thank heaven that our stage possesses such an artist!

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* It is almost needless to note that Miss Ellen Terry played the part under the Bancroft *régime* at the Prince of Wales's Theatre.

These few lines may, I hope, offer a hint or suggestion to those lovers of acting who care to compare old lamps with new; who, "while the old order changeth," can yet take a vital interest in the genius and the grace of two great actresses of two differing schools of art, ladies who, through so much that is divergent, retain so much that is, in very essence, akin. Honour to both!—H. Schütz Wilson.

THE GAY CITY.

I AM inclined to be sceptical, and, as a rule, do not believe all that is told to me; and yet I have been often made the victim of a traveller's tale, although I am certain that there is no more dangerous person than the tourist in general. *He dare not tell the truth.* If he does, he betrays his own weaknesses, his own failings, and his own disillusions. When he returns home, he *must* say that he has enjoyed himself; he dare not narrate how he nearly always took the wrong route and the wrong train, how misplaced avarice or generosity, as the case may be, led him oft into scrapes; how he was robbed right and left by coachman, hotel-keeper, guide, money-changer, and all the other usual and unusual parasites.

He has done the right thing, *he* has stopped at the right hotel, the place that *he* has chosen to visit is Eden and Utopia rolled into one,—go then and do likewise. And weak-minded people follow the boaster, and waste their time, health, and money, because the wretched excursionist cannot and will not speak by the card. The man who could edit and publish a Dictionary of Overrated Places, would be a national benefactor, but where is the unprejudiced being who could resist the golden bribes of venal innkeeper, doctor, and builder—the people who work up pestilential localities, and create health resorts out of sand-banks and marshes? Every year I notice that a few English families travel eagerly over to the most fashionable of French watering-places—Trouville,—Deauville—but they never return for a second season. Yet they go home and beseech their neighbours to try that horrible, tropical, sandy desert, where the sea is as far away as it is from Southport, where lodgings are unobtainable, landlords bland robbers, and the visitors either too exclusive or too free in their manners. A quantity of vile holes in the south have been "written up," and rushed into favour by venal scribes and pushing medical men. Cannes is exposed to bitter easterly winds when cold, and to the *mistral* when hot, the latter a fearful hurricane that blows across from Africa, and literally makes one's bones ache. And yet it is fashionable to go there, probably because the late Lord Brougham believed the place agreed with him. Heaven help the poor invalid who falls into the clutches of the German landlords of these places. At Mentone, he may ask in vain for nourishing food, and slowly starve on withered yellow Piedmontese pullets. At Nice he may suffer from the brusque transition and the quinsy which is familiarly called "Nice sore throat;" and from Italy he may bring back any disease he fancies, including scarlet, intermittent, typhoid, and other assorted fevers. In that country he will discover that his musical friend who has advised him to visit the celebrated opera-houses of the most artistic people in the world, has either been led away by natural enthusiasm, or is a real practical joker. He will find in Italy insufficient orchestras, bad actors and singers, scenery cut out of old canvas, flopping about miserably to save carpenters' expenses, and dresses of the cheapest and most tawdry description. I myself have heard Nelusko break down badly at the San Carlo at Naples—the best lyrical theatre in Italy after La Scala at Milan. And last year at that latter theatre when Massenet's "Le Roi de Lahore" was produced, the French baritone Lassalle was specially sent for from Paris, to star in the principal part. The Italians put up with all this, and are still termed a nation of *connaisseurs.* We have had one of these horrible third-rate Italian troupes foisted on to us in Paris, by the impresario Merelli, whose name deserves to be handed down to posterity as the artful concoctor of one of the most glorious mystifications of modern times. He promised to bring Patti to the Gaité; all the modern aristocracy, by right of wealth, eagerly filled up the subscription list, and they now find that Merelli has kept his promise to the letter, for he has shown us the divine Patti, but "divil a soul else." He has brought his worn-out travelling company with him—a pitiful batch of strollers, who have delighted such outlandish places as Odessa, Nijni-Novgorod, Bucharest, and Frankfort-on-the-Main. He plays "The Barber of Seville," and cuts out Figaro's song in the first act; Almaviva wears the same costume as Alfredo in "La Traviata," and so the charming opera is well hissed on the second night. He dare not play "Linda di Chamounix," because his tenor and baritone have met with naught but derision; but he does not care, because the subscriptions are all paid in advance. Nicolini has achieved a great triumph in "Il Trovatore," while Patti is not liked at all as Leonora. We think, in Paris, that she is not tragic enough, and that she takes too great liberties with Verdi's score. But we adore her all the same.

And now for a rapid review of the Parisian play-houses. At the Gymnase, the veteran director, Montigny, is dead. His wife, the great Rose Cheri, had preceded him years ago; she died through devotedly nursing her infant son, ill with the croup. Zola makes his last loathsome heroine, Nana, die in the same fashion, falling a victim to maternal devotion. "Le Fils de Coralie" is still a great success at this theatre, and it is said will shortly be adapted in England. Plays taken from novels seem to be the fashion now, as, by the time this magazine goes to press, the Porte Saint-Martin will have produced a real Princess's drama, "Les Etrangleurs de Paris," from Belot's novel of that name.*

The old Beaumarchais has never been empty since it gave up the legitimate and went over to the pomps and vanities of opera-bouffe. "La Girouette" has achieved a fair, honest, local success. The music is by Coedès, formerly prompter at the Grand Opera, a really fantastic and rising composer. The weathercock in question is the high and mighty lord of Birmensdorf, who, in order to regild his faded escutcheon, is about to marry his daughter Frederica to a young Spanish nobleman, the rich and silly son of one of his old brothers-in-arms. The young bridegroom, who is unknown to the Birmensdorfs, arrives on the scene at the same moment as a certain Hildebert de Brindisi, beloved by Frederica. The last-named gallant knight tries to pass himself off for Eustache, so as to marry the girl of his heart. Old Pépin does not know who to believe; he turns from one young fellow to the other like a real weathercock, and his mind is not made up till Hildebert has led Frederica to the altar; while the real Simon Pure, duped by similarity of costume, espouses Suzanne, Frederica's foster-sister. An underplot is furnished by the loves of Colardo, captain of the Royal Guard of Virgins, who are comely amazons, adorned with orange-blossoms, and Pélagie, sister of the noble Pépin. This maddening story is gay and amusing, and the music is elegant and graceful, easy to listen to, and frankly tuneful. The dresses are signed Grévin, the cynical draughtsman of the *Journal Amusant.*

On your way down the boulevard, on the smooth asphalte so dear to the Parisian—to use guide-book phraseology—stop at the Théâtre des Variétés and see "La Petite Mère," portrayed by our dear old friend, Celine Chaumont, who, by-the-way, was within an ace of throwing up her part. The management have, however, made a great mistake by attempting a strange innovation and fairly hoaxing their *habitués.* Audiences do not like to be hoaxed. They go to a certain theatre with the preconceived idea of applauding a certain kind of piece. They came to the Variétés to laugh, and having been sent home in tears, they are inclined to kick. Meilhac and Halévy have tried to revive the old vaudeville of pathetic interest, but their efforts have not been crowned with success, although they held all the trump cards, in the shape of willing, clever, favourite actors. They had better come back to their Parisianism, if I may be allowed to coin a word, and give us cunningly-sketched *tableaux des mœurs du temps.* The Little

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* "Le Fils de Coralie," 1879. P. Ollendorf, 28 *bis*, Rue de Richelieu. 1 vol. 18mo. fr. 3.50.—"Les Etrangleurs." 1879. E. Dentu, Galerie d'Orléans, Palais Royal. 2 vols. 18mo. fr. 6.

Mother is Brigitte, a faithful peasantress of Brittany. She is watching over two orphans: Valentin (Dupuis) and Henriette (Baumaine), brother and sister. But Henriette loves a young *gommeux*, Saint Potent (Didier), and Valentin aspires to taste the forbidden fruit which is successively offered to him by a kind of girl-waif cowkeeper, a *demi-mondaine*, and a lady of good society. His timidity, however, permits him to pass through these ordeals unscathed. Of course, in the third act, Brigitte's task is brought to a satisfactory end, for Henriette marries Saint Potent, and Valentin proposes to—his Little Mother, who is only two years his senior. They loved each other without knowing it. Dupuis is excellent as a young, fatuous, musical enthusiast of the nincompoop school that Du Maurier hits off so well. When, in the first act, about to depart for Paris, his pupils of the village choral society come to escort him in triumph to the station, with full band and banner covered with medals, he seizes a cornet-à-piston and treats us to a real delicious solo. This droll performance is encored nightly. Chaumont does all she can with a bad part that necessitates a deal of forced acting.

"Jean de Nivelle" is a great success at the Opéra Comique, and the music by Delibes, known to fame through his many successful ballet partitions, leaves nothing to be desired. The story turns upon the quarrels of the Burgundian factions during the reign of Louis XI., and the management has reproduced with more than usual fidelity the quaint costumes of a quaint epoch. Mdlle. Bilbaut-Vauchelet, the coming *cantatrice*, has been praised to the echo in the creation of the part of the gentle shepherdess Arlette. She is a pupil of Madame Miolan-Carvalho, and has certainly a great future before her. All true playgoers have already foreshadowed her success when they saw her in the rôles of the répertoire.—E. Manuel.

THEATRICAL NOTES FROM BERLIN.

By Hofrath Schneider's Ghost.

THE production at the Royal Opera House of a new and original opera by a German composer, the story of which is derived from an old popular Teutonic legend, is always a noteworthy event, exciting genuine interest in the German musical public, naturally predisposed in favour of any work strongly impregnated with national tone, colour, and feeling. All these qualifications are not possessed by Wagner's latest compositions, the *libretti* of which are excerpts from Scandinavian Sagas and Keltic folklore. Besides, the management of the Berlin Court Theatre has not yet thought fit to produce the stupendous Trilogy acknowledged by the Saxon Tone-Prophet to embody the exponence of his peculiar views with respect to the development of the musical drama. Whilst Vienna, Dresden, Munich, and half-a-dozen provincial cities of minor importance, have witnessed frequent performances of Siegmund's and Siegfried's somewhat startling adventures, the German capital, although it teems with Wagner-worshippers, has heretofore been debarred from making any more intimate acquaintance with the Trilogy and its remarkable Prologue than that afforded to the frequenters of concert rooms by orchestral and pianoforte selections from the "Feast Tone Plays." Herr von Hülsen stuck fast at "Tristan and Isolde;" the fact is that he is as autocratic and leonine as the masterful Richard himself, and could not, or would not, stomach the latter's pretensions with respect to *mise en scène*, cuts, and *tantièmes*. "The other lion thought the first a bore;" and so, as the Emperor lets his favourite ex-guardsman do as he likes with the opera-house, our modern Athenians are obliged to perform a long railway journey whenever they want to hear "Rheingold" or the "Walküre." Under these circumstances you may imagine how lively a sensation was aroused in the breasts of a patriotic and music-loving public by Hülsen's announcement, promulgated early in the winter season, that he intended to bring out Victor Nessler's "Ratcatcher of Hameln," before the end of February, with all the splendour and completeness that the extraordinary artistic resources of the Royal institution under his sway could achieve. For once in a way His Excellency has been as good as his word. The "Rattenfänger" has been produced with praiseworthy care, taste, and efficiency. Being somewhat weary of hovering about impalpably on the scene of my old carnal triumphs, I determined to witness the *première* at my ease, and in something like comfort; so, having "appeared" a night or two before to one of my former friends, who rents a stall in the opera house all the year round, and persuaded him to lend me his body for the evening, I occupied his place in the second row, and, I must say, enjoyed the performance not one whit the less keenly because I was somebody else for the time being.

Nessler's librettist has kept pretty closely to the original legend of the rat-catching magician, as narrated by Wolff in immortal verse. The first act opens with a meeting of the Hameln municipal councillors, convened to consider what measures they may take to rid their town of the rodent plague which has effectually undermined its well-being, and threatens its inhabitants with the perils of starvation. To them, in their pitiful perplexity, appears Hunold Singuf, a specialist in the ratcatching craft, gifted with strange spells, and a copious *répertoire* of irresistible songs, to which the hearts of maidens and children, as well as of rats, are bound to succumb whenever he chants his magical lays *avec intention*. He contracts with the Town Councillors to relieve them of their rats; and the Burgomaster, in his exultation over Hameln's approaching deliverance, affiances his only daughter, Regina, to the son of the Recorder, a travelled youth, but recently nominated to the office of municipal architect.

At the commencement of the second act the curtain rises upon a Kermesse, attended by the leading characters in the story—amongst them Singuf, who espies amongst the crowd a fisher-maiden, whose image had haunted his dreams long ere Destiny, in deference to the requirements of Hameln, had directed his steps towards that city. Oddly enough, Gertrude Roegner had also seen the gaily-apparelled ratcatcher in a vision of the night. From the operatic point of view, this coincidence indicates beyond a doubt that they are made for one another; and the love-scene which ensues upon their accidental meeting in front of a wax-work booth, goes far to satisfy the audience that Gertrude's betrothal to a muscular, but otherwise unattractive blacksmith, Wulf, must have been (like that of Senta to the lackadaisical huntsman, Eric, in the "Flying Dutchman") an error of judgment on the part of their respective parents. Gertrude and Singuf, to borrow a descriptive phrase from Hoffmann's libretto, "weld themselves to one another's breasts," and Wulf is left out in the cold—a position which, to a man of his thew and sinew, appears intolerable. He therefore meditates revenge, and keeps his eye upon Singuf, with the amiable purpose of attacking him by stealth upon the first convenient occasion, and of putting an end to his seductive enchantments, ratcatching and otherwise, by one swashing blow.

This enterprise the vindictive smith attempts to carry out in the third act, which opens on the banks of the Weser, by moonlight—a masterpiece of scene-painting—where Singuf is engaged in casting his melodious spells over the Hameln rats. Whole battalions of these usually wily creatures hasten to the river-side, obedient to his tuneful summons, and plunge into the stream, the willing victims of their taste for music. As soon as the last civic rat has committed suicide, Wulf emerges from his ambush, and rushes upon Singuf with uplifted hammer; but the wizard who has just successfully circumvented a million or so of able-bodied German rats, is scarcely the sort of person to be taken off his guard by a clumsy lout of a blacksmith. Flashing out his snickersnee, he speedily overpowers and wounds Wulf. This done, he vows that "he will fight no more, but live and die at peace with all the world." He changes his mind, however, next morning, at the Town Hall, when the thrifty councillors refuse to pay him his stipulated reward, upon the more ingenious than veracious pretext that he has omitted to lure the king of the rats from that rodent monarch's dwelling in the burgomaster's cellar. Singuf, deeply wounded in his professional pride by this accusation, and indignant at the Town Council's barefaced attempt to swindle him out of his well-earned remuneration, resolves to be avenged upon the town in general, and to make an example of the Burgomaster in particular. Regina's betrothal feast is to come off that afternoon. The ratcatcher announces his intention to attend that festivity, and to exercise his magical power over her in such sort that her family rejoicings shall be converted into lamentations.

In the fourth act, the municipality of Hameln, enfranchised from its rats, and delighted with its astuteness in, as it fondly believes, having outwitted its emancipator, indulges in high-jinks at the unprincipled Burgomaster's house, in which the betrothal ceremony has just been celebrated, when—enter Singuf! He fixes his glittering eye upon the bride, who is standing at the head of the festal board, her waist encircled by the arm of her affianced lover, and sings at her until she disengages herself from Heribert's embrace, moves slowly, as one spell-bound, towards the lyrical ratcatcher, and finally throws her arms round his neck, greatly to the mortification of her inexpressibly respectable relatives. The mediæval equivalent of that spirited functionary now known as the Town Beadle hauls Singuf away to prison, after imparting to him the cheering intelligence that he will be tried next morning for unlawfully practising the magical arts upon a minor of the female persuasion. Chorus of exasperated town-councillors, to which the curtain drops:

> To-night, incarcerate this much too gay man;
> To-morrow, he shall hang as high as Haman!

The last act teems with powerful situations. Gertrude, though cruelly betrayed by Singuf, is still under the charm of his enchantments. Her hopes of life-long bliss are shattered; but she generously resolves to save the man she loves, even at the cost of her own life. When, therefore, Singuf's trial results in his being sentenced to death as a flagrant sorcerer, she claims the right, under a statute of Kaiser Karl, to suffer in his stead. Her claim is allowed with some reluctance by the Recorder, and, following the example of the suicidal rats in the third act, she drowns herself *coram* *populo* in the Weser. Singuf's wrath with the Hameln municipality, which has cheated him out of his honorarium and driven the object of his affections to seek surcease of sorrow in a watery grave, now rises to fever-heat, and suggests to him a truly terrible method of punishing his tormentors for their duplicity and cruelty. Freed from his bonds, he takes his stand upon the bridge leading from the town-gate across the river to the open country, and there intones a new incantation, which draws all the children of Hameln to his heels. As soon as they are assembled he starts off, they closely following him, towards a rift in the distant mountains, through which a glimpse is obtainable of a high table-land, adorned with seven stately castles. This *dénouement* has reference to the old German tradition anent the migration of Hameln's sons in the tenth century to Transylvania (Siebenbürgen). Amidst the farewells of the departing children, and the wailings of their bereaved parents, repentant too late of their perfidy towards the wizard ratcatcher, the curtain falls upon a *finale* of extraordinary musical merit. Nessler may fairly be credited with having produced the most considerable German opera of the past decade. The influence of Wagner upon his instrumentation and treatment of *Leit-Motiven* is recognisable throughout the work; but he has kept clear of the Master's system of composition with laudable steadfastness. The "Rattenfänger" is no descriptive orchestral symphony with vocal accompaniments, like "Goetterdaemmerung" or "Parzifal," but a highly intelligible lyrical drama, the incidents and emotions of which find expression in songs, duets, concerted pieces and choruses, each one of which is a distinct entity, susceptible of being understanded of the people by itself, and apart from its musical context. The work was enthusiastically received, as it deserved to be, and has established itself firmly upon the *répertoire* of our opera-house, whence it will travel, I am convinced, to every theatre of importance in the Fatherland, and may haply even make its way to music-loving countries far beyond the German frontiers.

When I had rid myself of my borrowed corporeality, and restored his carnal property to my obliging friend, at the conclusion of the performance, I floated away complacently to Vienna, where a new operetta, by Franz Suppé, "Juanita," awaited me. Well was I rewarded for my journey; but I have so much to say about this charming work that I deem it expedient to reserve my notice of it for your next month's number, lest my encroachment upon your April space be pronounced inordinate, even in a garrulous old disembodied fogey like myself. But I must tell you a good and too true story of the Imperial censorship, *apropos* of "Juanita," which has convulsed the Kaiserstadt with spasms of Homeric laughter, and even stimulated me, when I heard of it, to unghostly efforts in the direction of chuckling.

You must know that the scene of "Juanita" is laid in Spain, *tempore* 1796, during the French invasion of the Peninsula; and that one of its episodes is the triumphal entry of the Republican troops into San Sebastian. Suppé "plays in" the French legions to the highly appropriate strains of the "Marseillaise," at that time, as now, the National Hymn of France. On the morning after the first performance of "Juanita," an official of the Censorial Department called upon the manager of the Carl-Theater, and conveyed to him a positive prohibition of the "Marseillaise" during any further representations of the operetta. The amazed manager ventured to utter a mild remonstrance against this surprising ordinance, pointing out to the censor that in the year 1796 France was governed by a Republic which had adopted Rouget de l'Isle's inspired melody as its National

Anthem. "We have nothing to do with that," replied the Imperial functionary; "thank God, we have not come to such a pass in Austria that we are likely to permit the 'Marseillaise' to be played upon the stage of a theatre!" One would like to know what air this intelligent official would consider it the correct thing to play (say at the railway station, by the band invariably attached to a guard of honour when a foreign potentate is received by the Emperor on the occasion of his visiting the Austrian capital), should M. Grévy take it into his head to pay his respects in person to Francis Joseph I. Even an Austrian theatrical censor would scarcely, I should think, recommend that the President of the French Republic should be greeted on his arrival at the Westbahnhof by "Vive Henri Quatre," or "Partant pour la Syrie." Anything but the "Marseillaise" would be a gratuitous offence to the French Republic, with which the Austrian Empire is upon excellent terms; and, if the performance of that stirring melody be obligatory, under certain circumstances, upon the Imperial military bands, why should it be tabooed to the orchestra of the Carl-Theater? I do not propose to mention the name of the benighted bureaucrat who has immortalised himself by pronouncing the above transcendently stupid prohibition; but I may mention that he is the identical individual who, some years ago, acquired an unenviable celebrity in the theatrical world by the following censorial feat. A farce, about to be produced at a minor theatre in the Austrian capital, was sent in to the "Kaiserliche Koenigliche Censur" for approval, according to the rules and regulations in such cases made and provided. In the dialogue of one of the scenes, laid in a popular restaurant, the leading low comedian, addressing a "super," in the character of a waiter, was made to say, "Bring me a beefsteak!" Opposite this line, on the margin of the manuscript, when the latter was returned to the management from the censor's office, was found inscribed the order, "Should this piece be performed during Lent, the text of this passage must be altered to 'Bring me a dish of fish!' It is not essential that any particular fish should be specified; but, should these instructions be neglected, or violated through recalcitrance on the part of the actor, the play will be immediately suppressed." All lovers of the ludicrous should be thankful that the author of this sublime marginal note still lives, and functions with unabated ineptitude.

CAMBRIDGE REVISITED.

The A.D.C. Anniversary Dinner.

I AM going down to Cambridge for the first time since I took my degree, save one flying visit of which mention is made in F. C. Burnand's amusing "Recollections of the A.D.C."—that Amateur Dramatic Club of which I am an honorary member. There is to be a dinner of past and present members at the Guildhall, Cambridge, and a special performance at the little theatre of the club afterwards, with the additional attraction of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales's presence, in his capacity as president, at both ceremonies. The A.D.C. was founded by Frank Burnand just twenty-five years ago. Good heavens! how time has flown since then! Why, Irving was unknown, and Ellen Terry must have been playing with dolls! Frank was hatching "Happy Thoughts" *in posse*, and I was learning how to waste time by sitting on a truss of hay in Canterbury Barracks stables while the troopers polished their bits or watered their horses.

Here we are now! Frank Burnand, Twitter Quiss, the popular drawing-room comique, myself, Joey Footley, the Grimaldi of the Bar, Buckler of Jesus (who still has a snug fellowship, which makes his college a pleasant country house, with cosy quarters for himself and friends, and the run of the kitchen for as many guests as he likes), and Librome, once British attaché, now a resident Parisian of the Champs Elysées, make up a pleasant party, full of memories of old college days, recollections of rows with the proctors, escapades at Newmarket mixed with relations of interviews with dons, gossip about "coaches," and incidents of free university life. The express train, which has no stoppage between St. Pancras terminus and Alma Mater's precincts, was almost too rapid for the flood of souvenirs which rolled on as we opened the locks of our brain-reservoirs, and the only drawback to the fun of the moment was the presence of an ominous bag, belonging to our friend Twitter, which looked so like the gas-receptacle without which the lime-light would be impossible, that we were in continual fear of an explosion. Quiss assured us there was no cause for alarm; but if it was not for the lime-light what was it for? Unless, which is more than probable, the eminent amateur had thought it just possible he might be called upon to give an entertainment, and had brought down a nice selection of comic wigs and spangled trunks. However, as it turned out, the only explosions were of laughter, and to have heard the roars and listened to the stories, an outsider would have put down our united ages at a sum of under a hundred for the six of us. The fact was, we were all undergraduates again, and remained so through the day, dinner, drama, supper and all, till we returned to the serious grindstone of London labour on the following day.

On arriving at Cambridge we broke up till the evening, as our quarters for the night were, some in college, others in lodgings, while myself and Joey Footley put up at The Bull Hotel, where beds had been secured by telegram. A crowd of two gyps, a bedmaker's daughter, and a handful of street arabs (even Cambridge possesses the varmint), were expecting the advent of H.R.H., who, however, did not arrive till later on in the afternoon. We were practically a disappointment, and though the genial reception by the landlady made up for the contemptuous glances of the waiters, there was an evident intention of reserving fire for the reception of Royalty to come.

Our first procedure, after a cut at the cold roast beef in the coffee-room, was to seek the A.D.C. club-room, and find out the order of the day. Going out through the crowd, which had been recruited by some shopkeepers' womenkind and a further contingent of juvenile arabs, passing King's beautiful chapel, and just wandering into the courts of dear old Trinity (where the fountain splashed its welcome, and the pigeons fluttered off the steps of "Hall," as they have done for centuries) and out again, it was not long before we were received by the Secretary, Mr. Tapling, from whom we learnt that the dinner was to be at six, at the Guildhall; that the *menu*, which proved almost as long as Rabelais himself could have desired, had been cut down one-half by the Prince himself, who had commanded the performance for nine o'clock; which would give ample time for dining and speechifying, and not make the theatrical entertainment pass the hour of midnight, when all respectable undergraduates have to be safely housed in their respective colleges.

After looking at all the framed photographs with which the walls of the club-room are adorned—photos of all the past and present members in their favourite parts, among which marvellous imitations of lovely woman are to be seen in the transformations of Cyril Flower, Herbert Gardner, Lord Carington, and others too numerous to mention; after paying our guinea for the dinner of the evening, and looking round the old rooms which were billiard saloons in the quondam Hoop Hotel, Footley and I still found time for a walk down the river, where we renewed acquaintance with the same muddy banks, turbid gutter, calling itself the Cam, boathouses, barges, bridges, and dog-fanciers, all of which seemed to have changed in no wise since we ourselves wore the mortar-board and gown which made the undergraduate.

A bitter east wind made the rowing-men who were on the river look more uncomfortable than rowing-men generally are, and one wondered what the fascination could be to any young man to shiver in a jersey at such a time, on such a ditch as that we had often rowed over, just as we saw these doing, and as others will do for centuries to come. The University crew passed us, coached by Messrs. Prest and Close on horseback. No style, but a good deal of speed, wind and current being with them. However we have to dress for dinner; so back we go to The Bull, where the busy smartness of the ladies at the bar, and the pompous importance of the waiters, are indications enough—without the presence of some strapping flunkies — that Royalty is already within the precincts, and princely preparations being made for the approaching solemnity. . . . . A crowd in front of the Guildhall — a by no means imposing edifice, reminding one of a small provincial theatre, and rejoicing in an illuminated clock over its façade — is patiently awaiting the arrival of H.R.H. A mild bonfire has been lighted not far off to give some semblance of a popular welcome, and the multitude is perfectly ready to cheer anybody and everybody approaching. We have not long to wait; just time to shake hands with a few old comrades, and make acquaintance with a few new ones, when the Prince arrives. In the kindest manner, he asks for some of the more prominent members, and, after a few pleasant words, he leads the way to the dining-hall. A high table across one end of the room, backed by a panorama now visiting the town, the proprietors of which have been bought off for the night, but whose loyalty finds expression in the fact that the curtain is up, and we are treated to a view of the Prince of Wales in India, mounted on a most extraordinary elephant, and surrounded by rajahs and begums and a yellow sky, which illuminates the entire hall with its radiance. In the centre of this table of course sits His Royal Highness, with the president of the A.D.C., the Hon. Ivo Bligh, next to him, and Lord Carington, Lord Houghton, and F. C. Burnand opposite him, with some twenty others, including the Sandringham chaplain, who says grace with laudable simplicity ; and Twitter Quiss, who, with his tongue in his cheek, looks as if he would give up princely preferment for private independence, if he might laugh in his own way out of the ken of royal notice.

Four other tables stand parallel at right angles with the high table, and I have the pleasure, I mean it, of sitting at the top of one next to as good a specimen of young university mankind as one might wish to meet, Mr. Ponsonby, who holds some office in the A.D.C., and held his post as president of our table with all the hospitality of a fellow of a college, and all the ease of a man of the world.

The dinner was excellent, and did it not take up too much room, I should be much tempted to give the *menu*. But we had the speeches to come, and the performance to assist at, so it was sufficient to note the excellent turtle-soup, the super-excellent Chaufroîd, and the dryness of the Heidsieck. The Prince wasted no time, and was soon on his feet to propose the health of the Queen, and after a really good well-delivered speech by Mr. Ivo Bligh, proposing the health of the Prince, His Royal Highness stood up to propose the Club, and prosperity to it, recalling the pleasant days he had passed at the University, and reminding Lord Carington that he could scarcely now play the heroines he delighted the stage with in those days; with a kind reference to Mr. Burnand's book of recollections of the A.D.C., which all University men have doubtless read by this time, he wound up a genial unaffected speech with the best wishes for the future of the Cambridge A.D.C. Needless to record how this speech was applauded, and needless to say the band played "God bless the Prince of Wales." Who proposed the old members? I think it was the honorary secretary and treasurer, Mr. Tapling. Anyhow, the toast was coupled with the name of Frank Burnand, and the author of "Happy Thoughts" responded in his happiest-thoughtfully vein. (In a parenthesis I may state that it had given me much pleasure to assist in a very small way to the *fête* by designing an illustration for the programme of the evening's dramatic performance, and as the occasion was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the club, I had made a sketch of the Silver Wedding of the University, indicated by a gownsman, with Comedy figured forth by a young lady in cap and bells, both holding a ring between them, to which are fastened ribbons on which "*A.D.C., Silver Wedding, twenty-fifth anniversary. Founder, F. C. Burnand,*" may be read by anyone possessing a copy of this now historical document.) Mr. Burnand at first protested against the idea of being called *old* members. For his own part he did not feel old at all, it seemed only yesterday that he had been an acting and active member of the club. The programme for the evening represented the club as a female. He had no objection, and he thought that the most apposite feminine representative would be Cinderella. Had not the A.D.C. been educated almost in the back kitchen, until the good fairy Committee had helped her, and at last, still more like Cinderella, had not a good Prince—(cheers)—arrived, to take her by the hand, and did she not find herself to-day, if not in gilded halls, at least in a Guildhall at a banquet, which the same good Prince was kindly presiding over, more than ever ready to be her guide and preserver? With a great deal more fun, which requires the sparkle of Burnand's eye to give it full force, and plenty of puns more or less atrocious, the room at last resounded with laughing cheers as Frank resumed his seat. We were not allowed to stay long, as the Prince, knowing the curtain was ready to rise on "Ticklish Times," gave the order to quit the halls of dazzling light for the small stage attached to the club-room of the A.D.C. Thither, after successfully spotting our coats and hats, we all took our way. A covered entrance had been constructed since the afternoon, and we soon found ourselves crowding, in the wake of His Royal Highness, into the neat little theatre. Weeds having been lighted, and an overture played by the band, under the able conductorship of White-Headed Bob (I never knew him under any other name, and have a decided affection for him in that; for when I first knew him he visited undergraduates' rooms in conjunction with a modest harp and a youthful cornet-à-piston, who—the cornet—has since risen to prominence in some of the best London orchestras; and White-Headed Bob looks as if age had never touched him or his violin, so much respect has time for his artistic fingering), the curtain rose on the first piece, "Ticklish Times," by J. Maddison Morton (*not* a fellow of Trinity, I believe), and any dialogue more essentially Maddisonian-Mortonian could not well be heard. The set was excellent, representing the interior of an Elizabethan house. The performers knew their lines, and in many instances played well, the young ladies, all university *men*, being most elegant and ladylike. One gentleman represented Mr. Odell much better than I have ever seen Mr. Odell represent himself, and the bold buccaneer, who is sent to carry off the comic man Griggs, was a capital bit of character. The Prince led off the applause more than once, and the curtain went down on a success, to rise in five minutes after on the "The First Night." The managers had been fortunate in securing a real Frenchman, M. Beyllard, to play the part of Achille Talma Dufard, the old Parisian, who secures an engagement for his daughter. M. Beyllard was very satisfactory in the earlier acts but, strangely enough, seemed scarcely to understand the deep interest the old man takes in his daughter's essay in the dramatic art in the last. In any future performance it will be well for him to *soigner* this last act. It wants pathos, a feverish excitement and exhibition of feelings which perhaps his youth makes him incapable of showing. Altogether the performances were above the average of amateur acting, and the audience were certainly amused. The play over, the Prince did Mr. Mortlock, the banker, the honour of supping with him, and to that supper F. C. Burnand and the officials of the A.D.C. were commanded. Buckler of Jesus did the honours of his college to myself and some dozen more, and in rooms decorated with old English furniture and Chelsea china, we met such succulent oysters and such demoniacally bedevilled bones, that the shades of Evans's and the Cider Cellars would have glowed to taste them. Hospitality and pleasant memories kept us here till past two in the morning, and it was by a bright moonlit sky that Joey Footley and I returned to our hotel, both agreeing we were delighted to have come, and both sorry to leave so soon. We were quite disappointed at not being stopped by the proctors, who, with their bulldogs, had probably long since retired to their virtuous couches; and so little were we inclined to sleep that four o'clock saw us playing sixpenny "Nap" in the coffee-room of The Bull. We were not the last to turn in, and sundry legends are now extant as to the various finishes of that night. Twitter Quiss is still relating to his temporary landlady how he is not the undergraduate he looks, but has nine children, and will be happy to take her rooms again on the fiftieth anniversary of the club's existence; while the bonfire is smouldering out and the Prince is off to lay a first stone or preside at another banquet.—Alfred Thompson.

THE STAGE IN HOLLAND.

Amsterdam, February 10th, 1880.

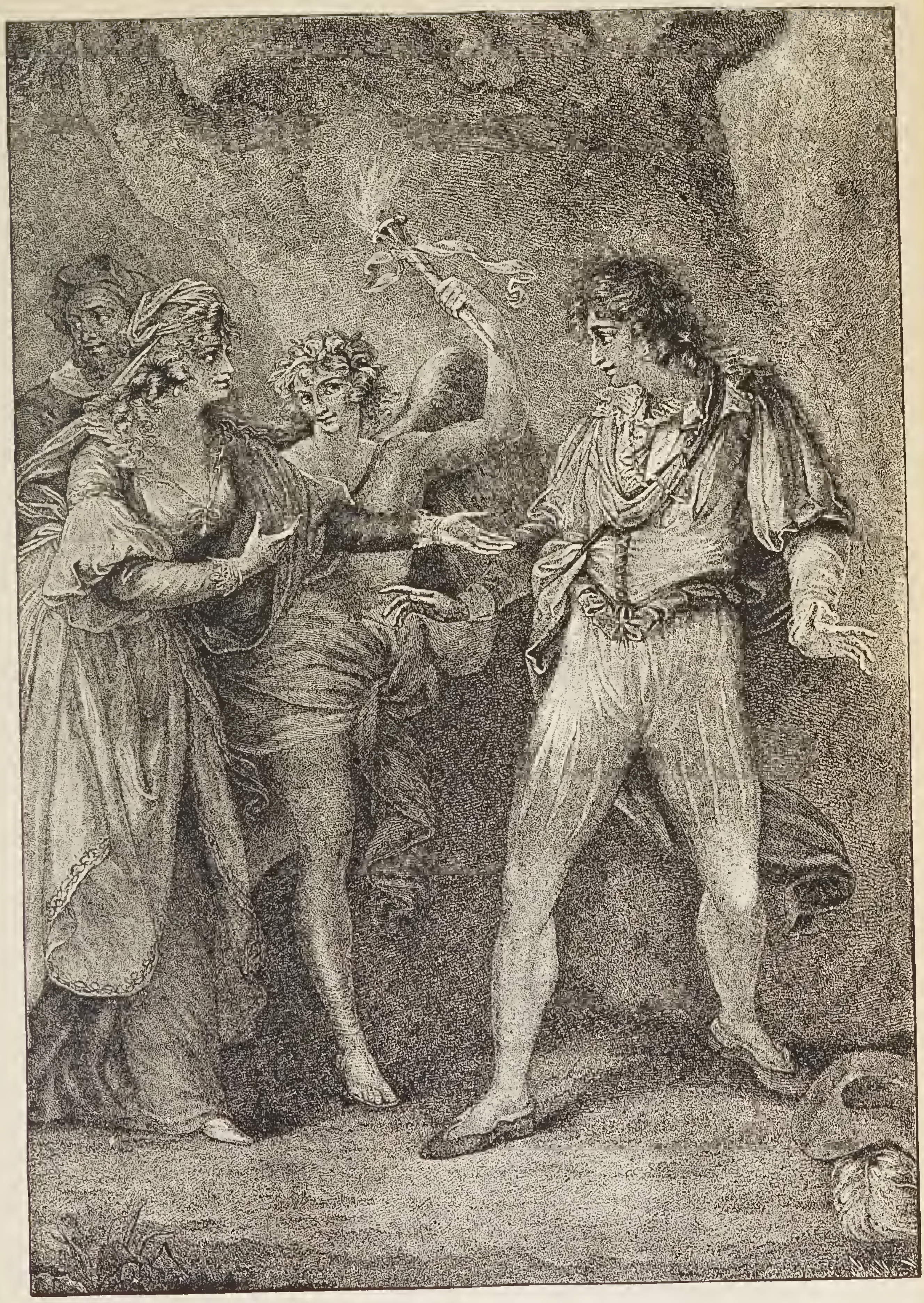
As I am permitted to give a short account of the principal theatrical events which take place in our country, I wish to begin by giving an idea of the present condition of our stage and its literature. The history of the present Dutch stage is the history of the efforts which are put into practice to raise it from the state of decline in which it has fallen for the last twenty or thirty years. The Amsterdam "Stads Schouwburg" (City Theatre) may be called our national theatre, our Théâtre Français. The adventures which have befallen that establishment compose the history of our stage. Glorious periods this history contains, but the historian of the present day has unhappily nothing else to relate than a sorrowful tale of woe. In Rotterdam and the Hague, the metropolis excepted, the only places of which the names are mentioned in the annals of the Dutch stage, it was no better, nay, even worse than in Amsterdam.

I need not dwell on the circumstances which accompanied this decline. English readers who are gifted with only an ordinary memory will perhaps have the kindness to fill up from their own experience this chasm in my story. Respectable, intelligent audiences had died away. Plays and actors stood on the same level of insignificance. Bad translations of French melodramas and German farces, produced by stagey and uneducated artists, was all our stage could boast of. The indispensable relations between literature and the stage no longer existed. Original plays were as scarce as literary managers.

About ten years ago people began to feel that indeed something, or rather a good deal, was rotten in the state of the noble art. A kind of Dramatic Reformed Society was created, which issued a theatrical review, founded a school for the training of future histrionic artists, and ever since has done its best to encourage and patronise dramatic art and its representants. In due time this school may be changed into a "dramatic institute," so as to have the saying confirmed that small beginnings may lead to great ends.

By the side of this reform society, called "Het Nederlandsch Tooneelsverbond" (The Dutch Stage Union), another society arose. At the head of this corporation, "Het Nederlandsch Tooneel" (The Dutch Stage), stands a body of gentlemen, who have chosen for their chairman one of our first novelists and ablest dramatic authors, Mr. H. J. Schimmel. In September, 1876, "Het Nederlandsch Tooneel" undertook the management of the Amsterdam City Theatre, and, at the same time, the direction of the Royal Theatre in the Hague. The difficulties it had to encounter were numerous and powerful. Among these ranked want of sympathy from the higher classes, lack of good plays or adaptations, and the hostility of a good many critics and other persons of sometimes disputable merit, but certainly of more or less credit. Indeed it is not denied that several grave mistakes were made, but most of them were owing to the circumstances above mentioned and not to the managers.

However, the enemies of the City Theatre directors succeeded in preparing for them a temporal defeat. When, in the autumn of 1879, the lease of this theatre expired, they were most undeservedly turned out of a place which had been the scene of their trials, their efforts, and their triumphs. It is not worth while to give a detailed account of the means employed which aimed at this deplorable result, enough that the disaster did not in



"As You Like It."—Act V. Scene iv.

Ros. To you I give myself, for I am yours. *Orlando.* If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind.

Photo Reproduction from an Engraving by P. Simon, after a Picture by W. Hamilton. Published Sept. 29, 1791.

the least discourage Mr. Schimmel and his brave companions. Several actors and actresses of merit having deserted their former managers in order to continue at their own risk the direction of the City Theatre, others were engaged. "H. N. T." removed its seat to a smaller theatre, which was opened in September last. Since that time the endeavours of the union are rapidly rising in the regard and the interest of the public and of the Press. Indeed, it is a matter of fact that in the Hague it has become fashionable in the literary and official circles to visit the theatre, whereas formerly high-bred and high-placed folks made a point of ignoring the existence of such a thing as a Dutch theatre. In the metropolis also a long-wished-for reconciliation is taking place between literature, wealth, birth, influence, and the stage. I wish to devote the remainder of this article to a short account of the chief events which have occurred during this season under Mr. Schimmel's government, so as to give the English reader an idea of what an intelligent Amsterdam playgoer has to enjoy. The first representation consisted of Molière's "Le Médécin malgré lui," and Madame de Giradin's "La Joie fait Peur," both perfectly translated.

The first piece did not meet with great approval, and was deemed not altogether fit for modern audiences, French ones excepted, who have their Molière traditions of course; but the second proved a brilliant success. The actor who performed the part of the old warm-hearted servant was applauded the loudest of all. Mr. Louis Bouwmeester, as this artist is called, has had a most singular career. For years and years he acted in a second or third-rate *théâtre de variétés*—a kind of Amsterdam music-hall—where he played all the first parts in the well-known productions of this theatre. Mr. Bouwmeester had, indeed, a lot of fervent admirers; but his fame was nearly confined to the rude walls of the smoky and narrow hole, to which entrance could be obtained for the magnificent sum of a shilling. But so richly endowed was the artist who now possesses the undisputed fame of being the first actor of the Dutch stage, that immediately after his engagement by "H. N. T.," the whole playgoing and critical world acknowledged in Mr. Bouwmeester an artist of unrivalled genius. It is greatly to be regretted that his voice seems to have suffered a little from over-exertion; but especially in its lower range it is extremely musical, and has tones of a most touching pathos. His face is exceedingly and variously expressive. Mr. Bouwmeester represents with great force all kinds of passions. Rage and tenderness, scorn and despair, are at his immediate command.

The names of some of the parts he has played in this season, or which are promised for the remaining months, will speak louder to foreign imagination than any praises of mine. They are: Noel ("La Joie fait Peur"), Nareiss ("Nareis the Vagrant"), Romeo, Shylock, Hamlet, Tartuffe, Filippo ("Le Luthier de Crémone," by Coppée), and Armand Duval ("La Dame aux Camélias"), besides the leading character in a successful "new *and* original" play, entitled "S of Z" (S or Z), of which comedy I wish to treat in a subsequent article.

The representation of "Romeo and Juliet" was one of the chief events in the theatrical history of the past year. The translation is universally approved of, but, as it is not yet published, an ample criticism would hardly be desirable. This felicitous revival of the poetic drama on the Dutch stage inspired all friends of dramatic art with bright hopes for the future; indeed, if the present favourable phenomena will prove to be lasting, the honour of having inaugurated a new era of prosperity to our stage must, for the greater part, be assigned to the efforts of Mr. Schimmel and his fellow-managers. The part of Juliet was acted by a young lady of twenty years, a Jewess by birth, whose first appearance a year ago excited general enthusiasm. A clear and powerful voice, large black eyes "charged with lightning," highly expressive features, added to a rare artistic disposition and a careful training at the Brussels Conservatoire, combine to present our stage, in the person of Miss Josephine de Groot, with a precious gift. Still she has much to learn, and also a few less laudable trifles to unlearn. Miss de Groot is already the hope of our stage; in due time she may become its glory.

We have also had a very clever version of "Le Demi-monde," the well-known masterpiece of Dumas *fils*. The parts of Olivier de Jalin, played by Mr. Morin, a *raisonneur* of extraordinary merit, and of Suzanne, acted by Madame de Fries, whose qualities as *grande coquette* are greatly admired, gave both artists an opportunity of exhibiting brilliant specimens of airy, accomplished, witty, and natural drawing-room acting. The incisive and spirited dialogue, the interesting and well-constructed plot, together with the charming rendering, made the whole a regular hit.

Another successful production was "Dr. Klaus," the most popular of German comedies. It was produced in the beginning of August, but its run lasted till the half of September. In Holland, by-the-way, a series of twenty or thirty representations of a piece is considered a fair success.

Besides "Le Demi-monde," the modern French répertoire supplied us with several of its finest pieces, viz.: "Les Femmes Fortes" by Sardou, "Les Contes de la Reine de Navarre" by Scribe, Madame de Giradin's "La Joie fait Peur," "Gringoire" by De Banville, "Mdlle. de la Seiglière" by Sandeau, and "La Dame aux Camélias" by the younger Dumas.

The visit which the French poet M. F. Coppée paid us, with gossip concerning the remaining metropolitan theatres and the Rotterdam stage, will, I hope, furnish the matter for a second article.

Till then, kind reader, fare thee well! F. van der Gies.

Poem for Recitation.

BILL GIBBON'S DELIVERANCE.

By Arthur Matthison.

Never heerd tell o' Bill Gibbon?
  Why yer've kinder bin out of existence!
I don't believe some on you'd think!
  If it warn't for a little assistance.

I ain't "over smart" not myself?
  Well, who said I was?—what's it matter!
To know Bill was I guess kinder cute,
  So let's have no more o' that chatter.

"What did he do?" well—I'm darn'd!
  If yer won't, pretty soon, raise my dander!
For yer ought to know Bill just as well
  As the geese on a pond knows the gander!

Wal, there! yer needn't get riled!
  Smooth your feathers back, steady, I'll tell, mates—
Tell yer one of his feats in the woods,
  A braver deed never befell, mates!

In Wisconsin's big forests, one day,
  We was makin' a clearin' in Fall time;
And the thing as Bill Gibbon done then,
  I, for one, shall remember for all time.

A broad-shoulder'd coon was old Bill,
  With a will, like his muscles, of iron;
He'd a' tackled a buffalo bull,
  And at choppin'—well, warn't he a spry 'un.

It was choppin' as brought it about, boys,
For Bill had begun on a whopper,
A two hundred foot mighty pine,
As was doom'd to sure death by his chopper!

We'd all on us stopp'd, work was done;
He'd finish, "dog-gorn'd, if he wouldn't!"
An' we quit him, all full of our chaff,
An' laughin' and sayin' he couldn't!

He buried his axe in the tree;
We set off for our cabin, us others.
"I'll kill him afore eight!" he cries,
"Him and p'raps one or two of his brothers!"

On the floor of his hut "afore eight"
He lay, and he told us all, gasping,
How it happ'd—his voice broke,
His rough big brown hand my own grasping.

Fast and strong fell his strokes on the tree,
It sway'd, an' it creak'd, an' it quiver'd,
It toppled, it fell!—then says he—
As he spoke, why we all on us shiver'd—

"I struck the last blow with such force,
That the tree, in a second, was timber,
And I fell to the earth, just as stiff
As the minute before I'd bin limber.

"Swoop upon me the giant tree crash'd!
Fiercely fell on my right leg, and broke it!
An' it seem'd to shriek out for revenge,
Revenge! just as if it had spoke it.

"Help! I cried, but a long hour had gone
Since I'd seen you boys homewards all file off,
And a bugle's voice wouldn't bin heard
In them thick woods and bushes a mile off.

"I couldn't lie there all the night,
So I made up my mind in a second—
I know'd as the leg must come off,
So, to do it myself! best, I reckon'd.

"One stroke!—what was left of the leg
Was freed from the tree and its branches!"
And what poor Bill Gibbon then said,
Why, the thought of it, now, my cheek blanches.

My heart knocks aloud at my ribs,
Though I ain't in the leastways white liver'd!
When I think what he did on that night,
By his right hand how he was deliver'd.

He tried with a pluck, all his own,
To crawl, inch by inch, to his cabin;
Though each move as he made on the road
Was, we'd most on us think, just like stabbin'.

When he found as he couldn't get on,
Because his two legs wasn't equal,
A bold thought comes into his head
As you'll see, when I tell you the sequel.

A word and a blow 'twas with Bill,
He'd act on a thought soon as catch it,
His right leg was off, his axe gleam'd,
And he cut off his left leg to match it.

He sturdily stump'd to his hut,
A glass of hot rum quick we mixes;
"Overcome!"—there's not one of us speaks
As his torn limbs we splices and fixes!

"A stout constitooshun!" well, yes!
A hero, too, birth, bone, and breeding.
What's that you say, you out there,
How he did fur to stop all the bleeding?

Oh, didn't I mention? that's odd!
'Bout them limbs as was torn into ribbons;
Wal, yer see, didn't matter to him,
They was wooden legs, mates, was Bill Gibbon's!

PLAYS PRODUCED IN PARIS LAST MONTH.

NAME OF PLAY.	DATE OF PRODUCTION.	REMARKS.
L'Indiscrète	March 2	Gymnase. (Success.)
La Petite Mère	March 6	Variétés. (Failure.)
La Girouette	March 8	Fantaisies Parisiennes. (Success.)
Jean de Nivelle	March 8	Opéra Comique. (Success.)
La Part du Butin	March 11	Gymnase. (Success.)
La Victime	March 12	Palais Royal. (Success.)
Le Ménage Popincourt	March 12	Palais Royal. (Success.)
Les Etrangleurs de Paris	March	Porte St. Martin. (Success.)
Les Mousquetaires au Couvent	March	Opera Bouffe. (Failure.)

Our Play-Box.

"FORGET-ME-NOT."

By F. C. Grove and Herman Merivale.

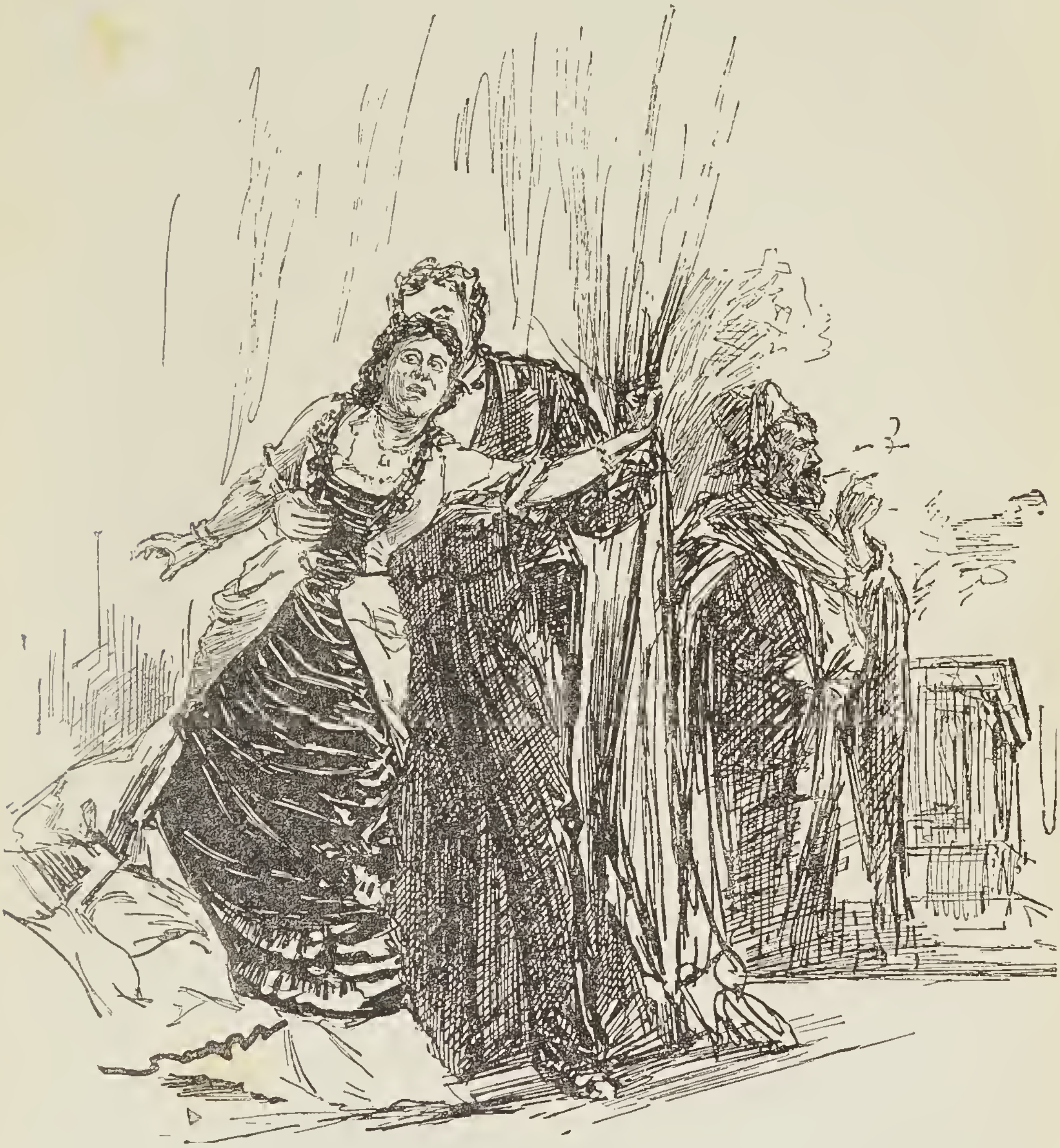
Originally produced, Lyceum Theatre, August 21st, 1879. Revived, Prince of Wales's Theatre, February 21st, 1880.

Sir Horace Welby ..	Mr. John Clayton.	Stephanie, Marquise de Mohrivart ..	Miss Genevieve Ward.
Prince Malleotti ..	Mr. J. G. Shore.	Alice Verney	Miss Kate Pattison.
Barrato	Mr. Flockton.	Mrs. Foley	Mrs. Leigh Murray.
Servant	Mr. Ian Robertson.	Rose, Vicomtesse Brissac	Miss Annie Layton.
Porter	Mr. F. V. Walter.	Maria	Mrs. Vere.

In his new venture Mr. Bruce, like a good many well-meaning people, has done well and also ill. He said to himself whilst tossing about between the sheets, with many a groan and tumble : "Bless those old traditions! How on earth am I to keep 'em up? If I don't keep 'em up the critics will be down on me, and the public 'll turn its back, and all the fat will be in the fire, or, rather, the fire will go out for want of coals." And so Mr. Bruce racked his brains; and at length came to the brilliant conclusion that the old traditions of the Prince of Wales's were composed of three elements: a good play, good actors, good appointments.

Now, one of our very best living playwrights is Mr. Herman Merivale, a gentleman who dares to snatch at the highest apples on the Hesperian tree and does not always tumble down in the attempt. This said Mr. Merivale—in conjunction with another—had a piece played last year, as it were, under a sofa in a back attic—a piece which certain people happened to catch a glimpse of by accident when the attention of the general public was occupied in another direction, and which those people babbled about in an aggressive and provoking manner. "Here is a starting-point," cried Mr. Bruce, beginning to feel a little less uncomfortable over his venture. "Here is a playwright whom I can trust, whose play shone out like a night-light when exhibited in the back attic. Better still! The babblers whisper of a remarkable impersonation by an actress who has already honourably won her spurs. Here are two of the required elements ready to hand. It will be odd if we fail to command the third." And so Mr. Bruce, having settled all this comfortably in theory, went to sleep *on the two ears*, as the French quaintly put it, forgetting that if other people provided the first two elements, the third depended on himself. His *cheval de bataille* (is it rude to call a lady a horse?) was Miss Genevieve Ward, armed cap-à-pie with cunning plates of steel forged by the blacksmiths Merivale and Grove. But the clothing which was to set off the armour and prevent it from eating into the flesh was to be provided by Mr. Bruce, and Mr. Bruce was napping, indulging in pleasant dreams. The piece was there; Miss Ward was there; Mr. Clayton, Mr. Flockton, Mrs. Murray, and Miss Pattison were there, to give their experienced help. But where, oh where, were the appointments for which the Bancrofts had made the house so celebrated? The piece required but one scene, and that scene was—well, never mind.

Thus we perceive that the new manager made a stumble at starting. The scene now is better, Mr. Bruce having awoke out of his nap; but it is still coarse and vulgar, entirely devoid of the taste and originality which so distinguished the appointments of his predecessors. He would say, probably, if twitted, that this is a small matter; that if the play be good and the acting up to the mark, the scenery signifies little; and discourse learnedly anent the days of Shakespeare, when they wrote up on a piece of arras, "Here is a tree." And, in the main, he would be right, for "the play's the thing;" and nobody would have noticed the appointments if he hadn't blown his trumpet about *old traditions.* Either leave the trumpet

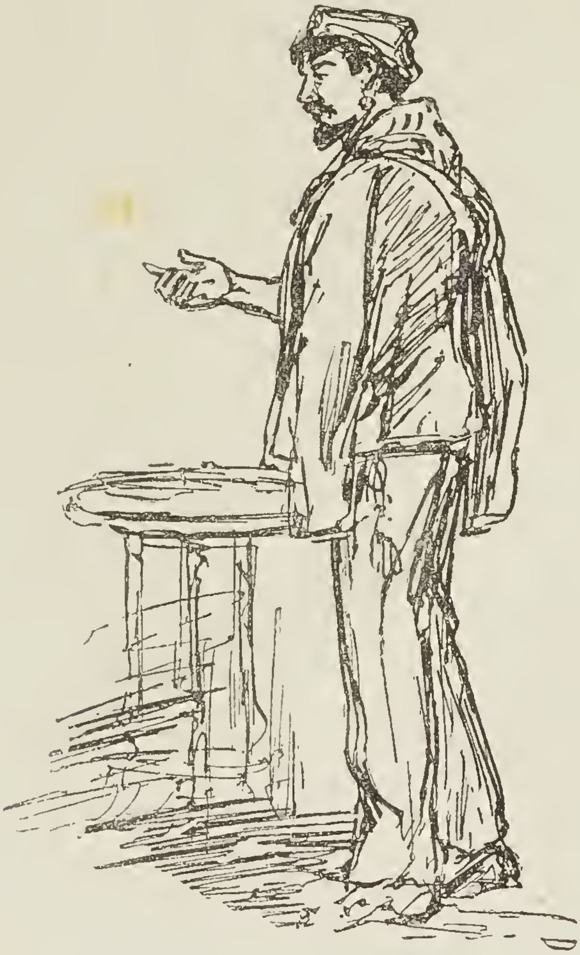


in its case, Mr. Bruce, or take the trouble to recall what those old traditions were.

As regards his choice of a first play, it is doubtful whether he was quite judicious. The story is stirring and well told, the dialogue unusually crisp and nervous; but it turns on a clause of the Code Napoléon, which is profoundly uninteresting to Englishmen. The result is, that when the clause is read, Crutch and Toothpick, instead of trembling and gnashing their teeth, turn round in their stalls and yawn, saying one to the other, "By Jove! you know, how infernally disagreeable for a fellar!" and beyond this are utterly unconcerned. Again, a play, like a novel, stands on very insecure foundations when its heroine is wicked and *not young*. The base being rotten, it is likely to give way altogether when the love element is almost nil. "Lucrezia Borgia" never drew sixpence when shorn of the charms of music. Dolores, in Sardou's magnificent drama, "Patrie," is a heroine, you will say, and wicked. That is so; but the lees of her wickedness are stirred up by an all-mastering love which goes straight to the heart at once and commands the sympathy of her audience. Now, Stephanie de Mohrivart (as the heroine of Messrs. Grove and Merivale is named) is middle-aged, and spiteful, and mean, and selfish, and crafty, and altogether offensive, without a redeeming trait. Who shall feel anything in common with this repulsive female? Is it not well known that, whatever our individual peccadilloes may be, we are painfully virtuous as a body? I, in the solitude of my chamber, may be plotting to murder my great grandmother by inches; you, under cover of the night, may be jumping upon the wife of your bosom and pulling out her hair in bunches; but when we meet in public and sit with a host of others who are no better than ourselves, we are moved to wholesome indignation by the spectacle of triumphant vice, and cry out with one accord, "We are too sensitive to look on anything so horrid! Give us virtue—undraped, if you like, we don't mind that—but virtue still." This Stephanie de Mohrivart is not in love, and, apparently, never has been in love with anybody except herself. She wants to be a fine lady. That is the summit of her ambition, and we—pure you and I—are expected to look on while she is trampling virtue, in the shape of Miss Pattison, under foot for the gaining of this ignoble end—to gaze on this harrowing spectacle without a protest. Fie! If I am to see a sinner, let her be a magnificent sinner, like Dolores, who is proud to be capable of the blackest crimes to win a single smile from the lover she adores. When I behold Miss Pattison—so pretty and ladylike in white merino—sobbing on an ottoman, I am consumed by rage against that odious Stephanie, and am quite oblivious of having, only half an hour ago, given my great grandmother her dose of arsenic. Poor Miss Pattison in tears! It must not be permitted. Unfortunately, I am unable to transfer my interest to that young lady, although she be "lovely woman in distress;" for the authors have distinctly declined to allow her to become a heroine. She is shadowy; her loves are insipid; she implores and weeps upon an ottoman, and, to rise to the level of a heroine, she must do a good deal more than that. No. Stephanie is the backbone of the play, and I vow that I would not allow such a woman to stand on my drawing-room carpet for five minutes—not even if she was merely calling to inquire about the character of my last cook. Not for one minute, the petty atrocious schemer!

And this brings me to the manner in which Stephanie is played. I have seen a good many plays in my time and a good many actresses, but I have very seldom had the chance of seeing anything better than this impersonation. It is marked by one of the rarest of histrionic qualities, viz. the sinking of one individuality within another. It is not Miss Ward who stands there in that becoming costume of *sang de bœuf*—at least, I hope not, for the benefit of her friends and relations. It is Stephanie, Marquise de Mohrivart, gambler, adventuress, heartless she-serpent, bohémienne, veneered with the polish of the *grande dame* through constant contact with the dissolute high-born. She is a disappointed, embittered woman, whose heart, if she ever had one, has long ago been turned to stone by the abject baseness of her surroundings and the dirty work she has been called upon to do. You can trace it in her steel-cold manner, her pitiless indifference to the pain she may inflict on others. You can see what she has had to put up with—the buffetings, the humiliations, the slaps in the face—by the nonchalance with which now, ripened and hardened, she accepts insults with a scornful smile. You can catch a glimpse of the after-effects of tempest-tossing in the elegant languor, the cat-like quietude, the suavity of movement, the stillness of demeanour. She is a woman to whom much may be forgiven, because she has suffered much; but in whom we can have little interest, because her ambitions are so low.

And this, perhaps, is the reason why we can dissect her with such ease. Instead of being carried away by sympathy with her desires, we find ourselves coolly examining her motives, sifting the reasons which sway her conduct; and this, not because she is artificial or because the wires are visible which move the puppet. Have I not already said that it is a real woman, not a puppet? Once only does she really stir us, and that is when, in the last act, the veneer of the *grande dame* vanishes—blown away by terror. Then we feel for her as we do for an inferior animal at bay, and, thanks to the great acting of Miss Ward, hold our breath and cling to the arms of our *fauteuil*, and heave a sigh of relief when we know that the horrid wretch is not to be torn piecemeal before our eyes.



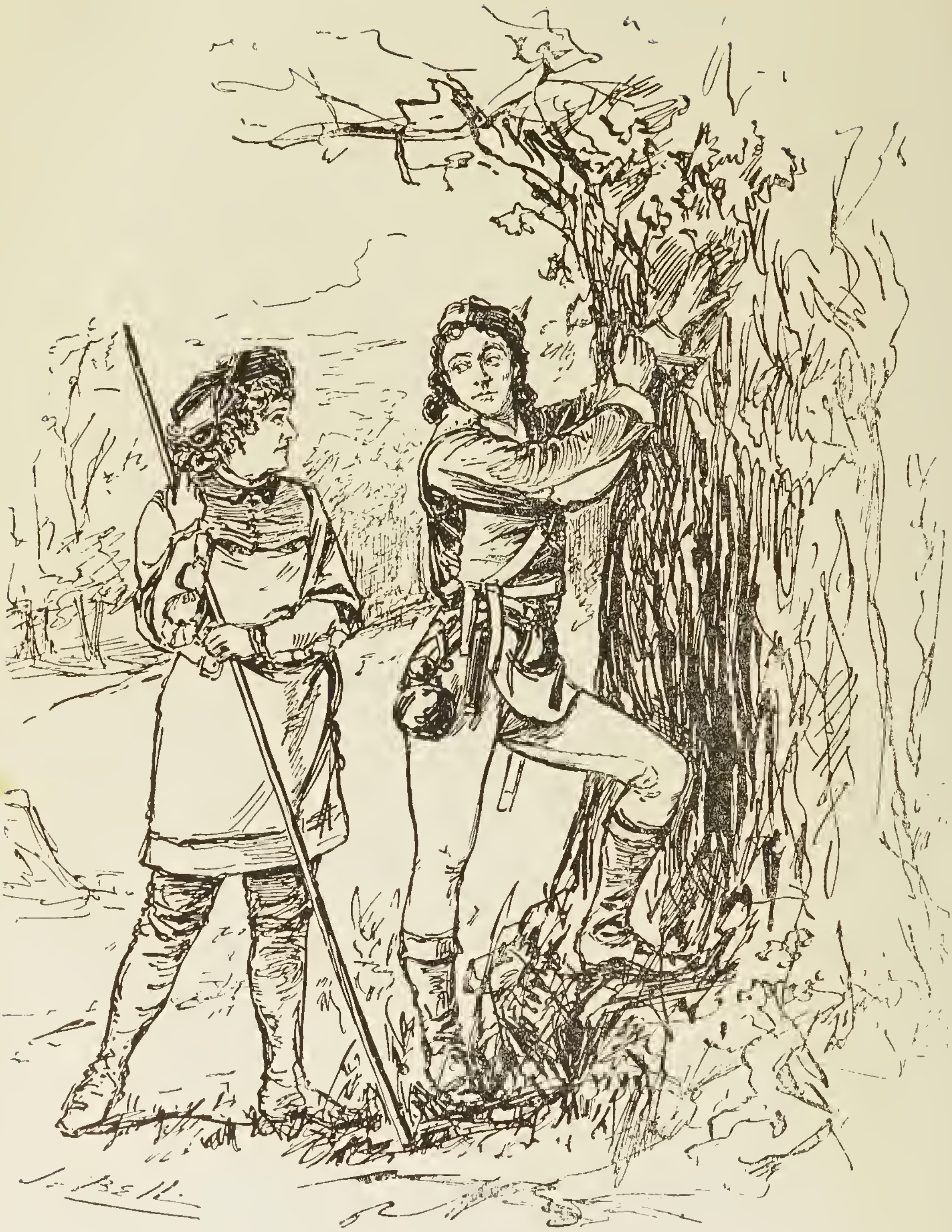
Miss Ward, in this part, recalls to the memory Madame Fargeuiel more than any other of her contemporaries; and this is high praise, as all will admit who ever saw the French actress play Dolores. When will Miss Ward essay some of that lady's parts—say Miss Multon, to begin with? There is the same completeness of conception and execution; the same nicely-modulated voice and laugh; the same distinct articulation. In studying either actress the spectator feels the same delightful sense of suppressed power (which, nowadays, we so rarely have an opportunity of feeling), and is thankful for once to be assured that the power is there in abundance, unused because not needed, instead of being lamentably conspicuous by its absence, as is the way with too many of the persons who dub themselves "leading ladies."

As a whole, the play is well-acted all round. Mr. Clayton, in the part of Sir Horace, finds a character which he grasps well and renders effective, though, at the same time, it does not show him off at his best. His largeness of style as well as of figure are cramped on the tiny stage of the Prince of Wales's. To show what he can really do—and there are only two or three English actors who are capable of doing it—he requires a big stage, a romantic part, picturesque attire. The square-cut of the Georges fits him better than his frock-coat; silk stockings and breeches, better than his rather short pair of trousers. For my part, I would much rather see him in "All for Her," or "The School for Scandal;" but, then, I would rather see him in "Forget-Me-Not" than not at all. Is it not odd to reflect how some people seem to have dropped by accident into the wrong century—to have been born in a wrong age? It is clear to me that Mr. Clayton was distinctly intended to be a "George;" just as Mr. G. Rignold was evidently meant to walk about during a swaggering existence in a neatly-fitting suit of chain-mail. Both these gentlemen seem equally ill at ease in the Victorian tail coat, and both are pictures in the costume of the period to which they properly belong. I would not advise them, however, to break through established rules in the way of dress, lest the result should be inconvenient. If Mr. Rignold, for example, were to sally forth clothed in the garb of the Fifth Henry (and looking every inch a king), he might haply, for all his regal mien, be taken for a portion of the Lord Mayor's show, and be pursued with derisive applause by an unwashed rabblement. The lieges of this nineteenth century of ours are sadly deficient in respect. Ours is the era of the humdrum and commonplace, whose decorous emblem is the sable swallow-tail.

Ah me! It is a crooked world. I myself was intended for a millionaire. How lucky are those who can *se payer une folie.* Were such luck mine I would build a model theatre, and write high-flown poetic dramas, and engage Messrs. Clayton and Rignold at prodigious salaries to play for me. Well, well! They probably would approve of the salaries, but the cold-blooded public might not care about the plays. The world is round, and things are fit.

But to return to the Prince of Wales's. Miss Pattison makes a charming *ingénue*—one on whom managers should keep their eyes, for *ingénues*, who move and behave like the ladies of the great world, are rare. Some of her scenes are played with a winning grace which seem to show that, had the authors permitted it, Miss Alice Verney might have stormed our hearts and reigned in our inmost citadel. As it is she is bidden to be soft and ladylike and touching, and in the hands of Miss Pattison she fulfils her destiny. As for Mrs. Leigh Murray, she is as good as she always is. Can I say more?

The situation may be summed up thus. Play good, but unsympathetic. Acting good in most instances (Mr. Flockton, by-the-bye, plays excellently a very tiresome man, who, like the Ancient Mariner, is always wanting to tell a tale which nobody wants to hear). Appointments, very so-so. Stage-management, ditto. The way everybody hovers over that ottoman is funny till it becomes exasperating. One after the other the characters swoop at



Rosalind and Orlando
[Miss M. Litton and Mr. Kyrle Bellew.]
Imperial Theatre, 1880.

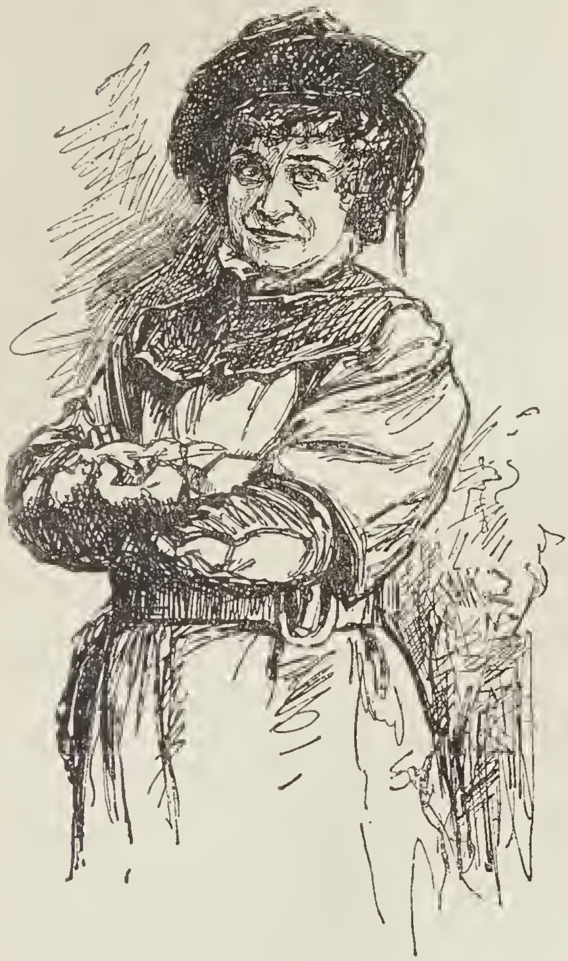
it like vultures on carrion; and, if it chances to be unoccupied, flop down and squat on it with fiendish glee till ousted by somebody else. I should like to throw that aggressive piece of furniture out of window.—Lewis Wingfield.

"AS YOU LIKE IT."

A Comedy in Five Acts, by William Shakespeare.

As revived at the Imperial Theatre, Wednesday afternoon, February 25th, 1880.

Duke (living in exile)		Mr. F. Everill.
Amiens	Lords attending the banished Duke	Mr. Coventry.
Jacques		Mr. Hermann Vezin.
Duke Frederick	Brother of the rightful Duke, and Usurper of his Dominions	Mr. Coe.
Le Beau (a Courtier attending Frederick)		Mr. F. Charles.
Charles (a Wrestler)		Mr. Allbrook.
Touchstone (a Clown)		Mr. Lionel Brough.
Oliver	Sons of Sir Rowland de Bois	Mr. E. F. Edgar.
Jaques		Mr. Stephens.
Orlando		Mr. Kyrle Bellew.
Adam (Servant to Oliver)		Mr. W. Farren.
Corin	Shepherds	Mr. Bunch.
Sylvius		Mr. C. Trevor.
William (a Country Fellow, in love with Audrey)		Mr. Bannister.
Rosalind (Daughter of the banished Duke)		Miss M. Litton.
Celia (Daughter of Duke Frederick)		Miss Helen Cresswell.
Phœbe (a Shepherdess)		Miss Brunton.
Audrey (a Country Girl)		Miss S. Hodson.



This exquisite comedy takes a rank in the romantic works of Shakespeare abreast of that held by Hamlet in the tragic. The one is as pre-eminent for its delightfulness, and as unapproachable in its fusing and creative force of imagination, as the other is unequalled for its pathos and power of conflicting affections, its depth of self-question, and its blending of what is most awful in the other world with what is most moving in this. In none of Shakespeare's plays are romance, drama, and poem so exquisitely combined as in "As You Like It;" none calls up such a series of rich and lovely pictures, ranging from palace to forest, with their animated groups of court wrestlers and woodland hunters; none dallies so charmingly with love-making, and so seasons the sauciness of its play with the fervour of its passion. Where else shall we look for such happy harmonising of two moods of folly, like that of Jacques, the *blasé* sentimentalist and cynical Epicurean, with that of Touchstone, the sententious shooter of sharp bolts, the licensed whipper of affectations, the motley mocker of the time; such fine contrast of despotic injustice in the usurper, with philosophic use of adversity, and profitable study of nature, in the exile? Who ever so lovingly united adventurous gaiety, wit, humour, and resistless high spirits with feminine gentleness, sweetness, affection, and good sense, as Shakespeare in Rosalind and Celia? so married love's jest and earnest as in Rosalind and Orlando? so beautifully brought out the devotion and faithful service in age, in contact with grateful and protecting affection in youth, as in Adam and his young master?

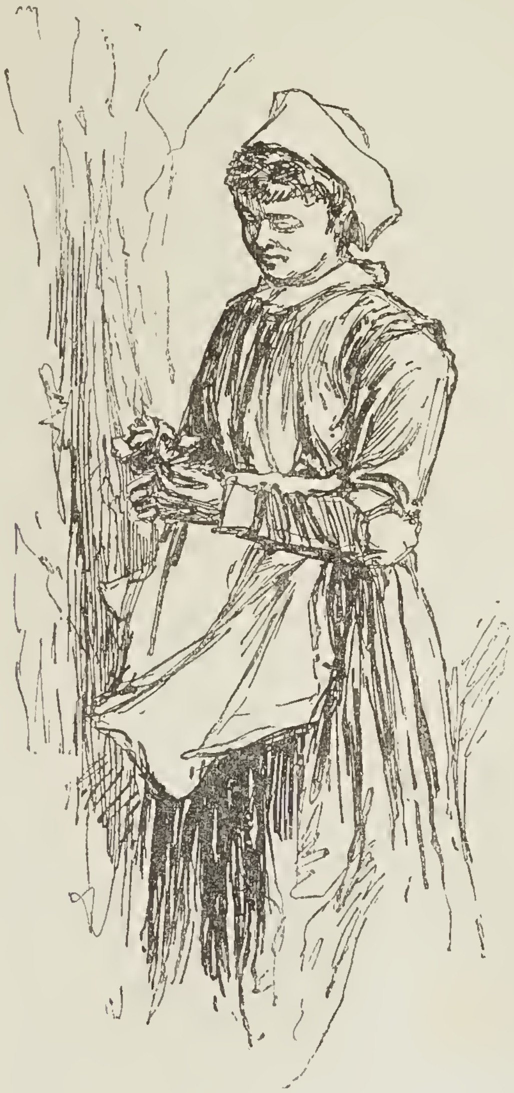
It is, indeed, a delightful play to read, to think over, and to see, when even tolerably presented. And it is not to be wondered at that, taking it all in all, with its various pictures, its graceful costumes and disguises, the field it offers to actress and actor, from Rosalind and Celia to Phœbe and Audrey, from Jacques to Touchstone, from Orlando to Adam, from the Usurping and Banished Dukes to the repentant Oliver, with its array of minor personages, courtly and rustic, Le Beau and Silvius, Corin and William, the play should be a stock-piece on the stage, as well as a stand-by in the study; and that the parts of Touchstone, Jacques, Rosalind, and Orlando, in particular, should be three of the favourite rôles in their various lines. It gives an added interest to the piece to know that the part of Adam is one of the three with which we have good warrant for identifying Shakespeare himself. An old tradition, testified to by an aged eye-witness—Shakespeare's own younger brother, Gilbert—and recorded by Oldys, one of the most respectable antiquarians of last century, informs us that Adam was one of the parts played by Shakespeare, as a member of the King's Company, which acted at and owned the Blackfriars first and the Globe afterwards. The other two parts with which we have evidence to associate him are the Ghost, in "Hamlet," and Knowall, in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour." We learn, too, that he acted in Ben Jonson's "Sejanus," though we know not what part. The facts would seem to indicate that Shakespeare's line of business as an actor combined what would now be technically called the "first old man" and the "heavy lead."

In date, "As You Like It" belongs to the time when Shakespeare, at the age of thirty-seven, was touching his height of power. It was entered at Stationers' Hall in 1600, three years after that purchase of the handsome dwelling-house, New Place, which was followed by the acquisition of other property in and about Stratford-on-Avon, preliminary to the dramatist's permanent settlement (at what exact date is uncertain) in his native place, for those latter years of competence and leisure, through which, freed from the distractions of the actor's calling, if not from the cares of management, he was able to give his best mind to his dramatic writing. These are the years to which so much of his best work belongs, including (among other plays) "Hamlet" (in its later form), "Othello," "Lear," "Macbeth," the three Roman plays, "The Tempest," and "The Winter's Tale." When he wrote it, the poet of thirty-seven must have been healthy, prosperous, and happy in himself. The play breathes of it.

Another point in connection with "As You Like It" is the instructive light it throws on Shakespeare's method of using the sources of his plays. This source, for "As You Like It," was Thomas Lodge's "Rosalynde, or Euphues' Golden Legacie, etc., found after his death in his cell at Silexedra, etc., etc.," as it was lengthily christened, first published in 1590, but often reprinted. It was no doubt a very popular tale, and is, itself, founded on an earlier English metrical romance, the story of "Gamelyn," long ascribed as a second Coke's Tale to Chaucer, found in some of the inferior MSS. of the Canterbury Tales, and printed in one of the later editions of them, but not, so far as we know, extant, except in MS., in

Shakespeare's time. The foundation of the old romance is in all probability a French *chanson de geste,* though its original has not, so far as I am aware, been discovered. And, no doubt, the French *chanson,* if we but knew, had its old Aryan prototype.

Lodge had, as usual enough with clever young fellows of that time after leaving Oxford and entering at Lincoln's Inn, been an actor and dramatist, then a soldier on land and sea, in which capacity he accompanied Clarke and Cavendish in several of their voyages—half buccaneering, half exploratory. On one of these, a cruise to the Canaries, he wrote his "Rosalynde," as he tells Lord Hunsdon in the dedication, "to beguile the time." Lodge seems to have been a versatile as well as adventurous spirit, for, after law, the stage, soldiering and sailoring, he took to physic, and ended his days, probably, in that calling, dying of the Plague in 1625.



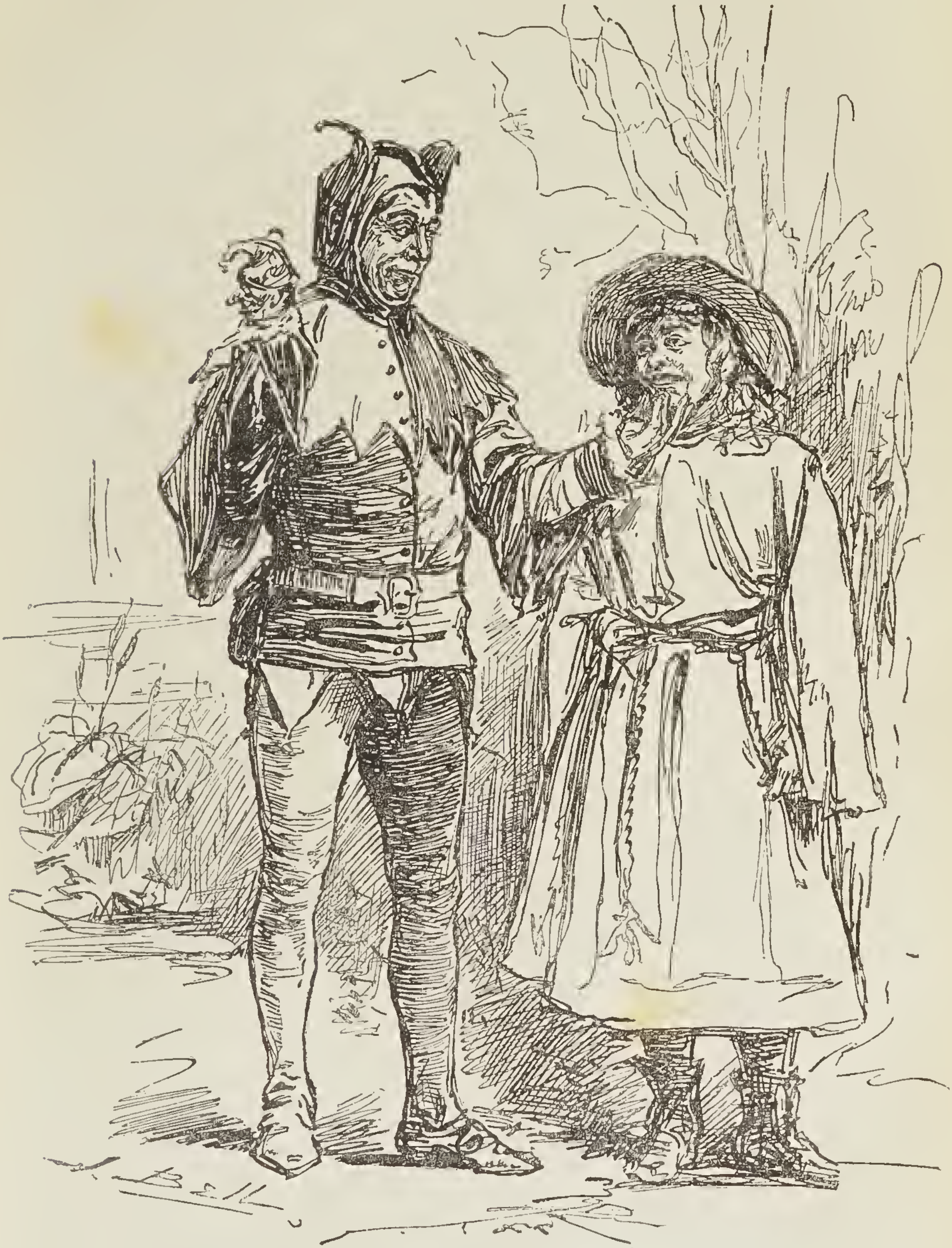
His "Rosalynde," though tedious from its laboured and over-decorated "Euphuistic" style, contains, as far as story goes, most of the dry bones of Shakespeare's play. But the personages of Touchstone, Jacques, and Audrey are purely Shakespeare's creations; the character of Adam is entirely altered from that of Adam Spenser, the burly and rather truculent, if true, old servant of the tale; as is that of the courteous and chivalrous Orlando, from the headstrong and violent Rosader; while, for the affecttion, artificiality, and over-laboured conceits of Lodge's long-winded narrative, we have the swift and easy movement of life, the play of the free air, and the wholesome breath of the forest. The lovers become true lovers instead of tedious talkers about love; the shepherds, real homely breeders and tenders of sheep, not puppets tricked out in artificial flowers of speech; the duke and his lords beings of flesh and blood, instead of lay-figures — mere pegs for platitudes and conceits. The verses, very abundantly interspersed through the text of the tale, are as different from the exquisite lyrics of Shakespeare, which ring like the very echo of the woodland, as the living personages of the dramatist from the dead abstractions of the romancer. If we wish to learn how little the story which may suggest a play has to do with all that gives the play its life as a drama, and its value as a work of stage art and creative imagination, my readers cannot do better than compare, at more length than I can do here, Lodge's "Rosalynde" with Shakespeare's "As You Like It."

I have lingered thus long on "As You Like It" in its relation to Shakespeare, both as author of the play and as actor in it, and in its connection with Lodge's story, because it seemed worth while to devote some attention to these points in noticing so important a dramatic event as the present revival of it at the Imperial Theatre.

Among recent Shakespearian revivals we have had none more complete and careful than this. We have even heard some critical complaint of an excess of pains and cost in the mounting and dressing of the play, for which I can see no warrant whatever. When a play of Shakespeare's is set before the public nowadays, it is but a due mark of respect to the work that the picture should be as complete as possible in scenery and costume, having regard to the class of theatre and the audience appealed to, and with allowance for the distinction between a play brought out for a few nights' engagement of a favourite actor or actress and one for which a long run is expected.

In this completeness the late Charles Calvert, after Macready, Charles Kean, and Phelps at Sadler's Wells, was the last great master-manager. We see the practice laudably followed at the Lyceum. As things are now long-continued success is only to be hoped for when, besides careful cast, we have provided tasteful and correct, or at least consistent costume, good music where music is introduced, with well-planned and well-painted scenery. I find nothing beyond this in the Imperial revival of "As You Like It." The costumes have been artistically and consistently designed by Mr. Forbes Robertson, specially fitted for such a task by his accomplishments both as actor and artist. The scenery has been excellently planned and painted by Mr. Perkins, the music well selected and superintended by Mr. Barnard. But with these elements of effect I am glad to find—what does not always accompany this adequate casting, dressing, and mounting—evidence of thorough rehearsal, intelligent study of the text, and supervision of stage-arrangements, with correction of objectionable—but often time-hallowed—stage deviations from right reading and correct business as indicated in the play itself.

As examples of both in the Imperial version may be pointed out the restoration to the first lord of the description of Jacques moralising over the wounded deer; the conversation at the first appearance of Corin and Silvius, carried on while they sit on the bank, as Corin describes it later on; and the whole conduct of the dialogue and action between Rosalind and Orlando in the forest, as well as in the scenes of the exiled duke and his companions, which acquire a new appropriateness by the arrangement and movement of the groups. The avoidance of all unnecessary changes allows of a great improvement in the setting of the forest scenes, which have never been more charmingly presented than they are here; while the transition from late summer moonlight to early summer dawn at the opening of Act iii., besides its beauty, gives new significance to the text. In the first act, also, needless change of scene is avoided, and the action of the wrestling-match is excellently managed. The music, too, so important an element of effect in the play, is carefully and efficiently given, and the solo songs well sung by Mr. Coventry.



But when all has been done that can be done in these ways, the acting remains the essential test of the revival. In this respect the performance deserves very high praise, having regard to the difficulty of compassing anything like a complete cast of a play of Shakespeare's in the present state of the stage. Miss Litton's Rosalind has all the required conditions of grace and good looks. She has thoroughly studied her text, and has come to the right conclusion that the key-note of the part, after she assumes doublet and hose, is to be found in her "aside" to Celia: "I will speak to him like a saucy lacquey, and under that habit play the knave with him." From this point, except in little gestures and tremulous touches of suppressed passion, unnoted of Orlando, and in her *tête-à-têtes* with Celia, Miss Litton never lets the woman peep out from under her doublet and hose; never gives undue stress to the words that can be forced into feminine suggestiveness; so bears herself, that Orlando may be excused for thinking her a pretty boy, and so playing his part of the game as never to suggest that he takes her for aught but what she gives herself out—a saucy, keen-witted, sharp-tongued lad, forest-born, but with some inland breeding. This, as far as I know, has not been the rule with previous Rosalinds of the day in my experience, all of whom, without exception, have made the woman so palpably apparent in look, bearing, even in dress, and still more in accentuation of every word to which womanly significance could be given, that they not only rendered Orlando's blindness to Rosalind's disguise inconceivable, but deprived her dialogue with him of that charm of harmless high spirits and innocent love of fun which it is meant to convey, and does convey, in the mouths of Miss Litton and Mr. Bellew. I did not find that Miss Litton ever missed the true significance of her words, while she carried the part through with rare spirit, and a bearing which, though thoroughly boyish, was never rude or unwomanly. Some huskiness of voice, partly natural, partly due to cold or nervousness, and a certain constraint which familiarity with the part will no doubt correct, here and there marred the full effect of her Rosalind in the first act. But there was hardly a trace of the one, and none of the other, from the moment she assumed doublet and hose. Altogether it seemed to me a most intelligent, consistent, and agreeable impersonation, far beyond anything Miss Litton has yet attempted, and quite one of the best Rosalinds I have seen.

Mr. Bellew's Orlando is the best I remember. His lithe, light, graceful figure, if it seemed hardly one to cope with "the bony prizer of the humorous duke," his handsome face, and his fervent and feeling manner in his first encounter with the princesses and his first flush of love for Rosalind, and in his subsequent scene with Adam, were exactly what the part demands. Nor less well-conceived or well-given were his tenderness to the exhausted Adam in Ardennes, the earnestness of his appeal to the duke and his co-mates at their woodland board, the easy *insouciance* of his sharp passages of repartee with Jacques, and his interchange of speech first, and of playing at love afterwards, with the disguised Rosalind. I do not know when I have seen a youthful part of Shakespeare better graced by the actor. It is to be hoped that this will be but Mr. Bellew's first step in the personation of passion in its ideal form. It was not difficult, while watching his Orlando, to imagine him as Romeo, when experience shall have matured his force and deepened his fervour.

Mr. Vezin's Jacques is open to such question as will always, probably, be suggested by the part. Is Jacques a profound philosopher, as stage usage represents him, or is he, as the duke describes him, a libertine, who, satiated with excess of the world's enjoyments, has taken to decry and contemn them, and parades as stoicism what is but epicureanism outwearied? Is he, in fact, as Ulrici conceives, but the counterpart and mental kinsman of Touchstone, the pair being two fools, who, by virtue of the contrast in which they stand, mutually complete each other? Are his melancholy and his contempt of life and men but the varnish of a mask worn ostentatiously? Is he, like the fool by profession, the personification of capriciousness as well as love of wit and ridicule, except that he wears a cloak of melancholy sentimentality? In essentials, I cannot but think, this is the sound view of Jacques, and if so, Mr. Vezin's assumption hardly suggests it. It is so sincerely saturnine, so genuinely sad, that we can hardly understand his admiration of the real fool, and his wish to play his part, and so fail to reconcile the sentiment with which Mr. Vezin gives "The Seven Ages" (an admirable piece of elocution in itself, and refreshingly unexaggerated and unvulgar), and the chuckling delight of Jacques's "A fool, a fool, I met a fool in the forest!" which Mr. Vezin made, it seemed to me, as much too serious, as his "Seven Ages" was over sad. I am not aware that any actor of our time has presented the cynical view of Jacques, but I think Mr. Irving could do it to perfection, and I believe when he does, he will let in new light, not only on the character itself, but on Jacques's relation to the other personages of the play, and his purpose and function among Shakespeare's forest world.

Mr. Lionel Brough's Touchstone, if it lacked the neat, smart, dry sententiousness of the part as I read it, was not overcharged, indeed rather failed in the opposite direction of looseness and slackness in his shooting of the fool's bolts. He commendably resisted the tendency which so besets our low comedians to extravagance, and over-emphasizing his points. But one piece of his business was certainly unwarranted and out of keeping—that is, the caressing familiarity of his exit with the out-wearied Celia after their first arrival in Ardennes. For all his devotion to her, and the familiarity allowed to the court-fool, he should never so far forget the distance that separates them as to lay her head on his shoulder, put his arm round her waist, and pat her cheek as he supports her off.

Mr. Farren's Adam was too plaintive and pathetic, and not robust enough. He looked more like a devoted family abbé than a hale old country servant; and though he gave the beautiful speeches of the part with care, and an evident desire to make both their sweet poetry and sound philosophy of life felt by his audience, he failed to convey a due sense either of the feeling which prompts his devotion to his young master or of the strength bred of frugality, which only fails under stress of starvation and over-travel. One cannot but call up the image of a haler, heartier, homelier Adam.

Mr. Everill speaks blank verse like one who knows the secret of its music, and was a very much more adequate representative of the banished duke than the part usually finds. As much may be said of Miss Cresswell's Celia. In spite of some flutter of inexperience and want of measure in delivery of the beautiful speeches of her part in the first act, she evidently both understood and felt them. And in the disguise of Aliena* she was as dainty and charming a shepherdess as one could wish to see. Miss Silvia Hodson in Audrey was picturesquely uncouth without being ungraceful.

If Miss Brunton, who played Phœbe, could soften the ear-piercing upper notes of her voice, she would do more justice to the intelligence with which she speaks her lines. Mr. Edgar gave the due weight of malignity to Oliver in the first act, and, in the forest scene, spoke his long and difficult description of Orlando's rescue of him from the lioness with discretion and good emphasis. Mr. Charles was a more significant Le Beau than we are used to see, and showed that he understood what a wonderful epitome of courtier nature in little the part may be made. Mr. Stephens, as the first lord, only wants more elocutionary practice to render with excellent effect the moralisings of Jacques over the wounded stag; while, in the little part of William, Mr. Bannister showed himself the intelligent and conscientious artist he is in all he does. When Mr. Trevor, in Silvius, has acquired confidence enough to give easier and fuller expression to the very significant byplay of his part, he will fill very satisfactorily his place in a picture of which the smallest figure is, in its degree, an important element in the grouping, and a material aid to the general effect. Only one excision I have to regret, that of Hymen in the last act, who, in the play, brings in Rosalind to still music, and ushers in the marriage chorus which celebrates her joining of hands with Orlando. [See our first illustration.]

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* Alĭēna, not Alē-ĕna, *pace* the critic of *The Athenœum*. He mis-scans the line which gives the measure of the name, by making "Celia" a word of two syllables instead of three.

Shakespeare knew his business, and saw that, without some such accompaniment, the first encounter of Rosalind, in her own attire, with her father and lover would be hurried, bald, and ineffective. He felt, too, that the introduction of the classic god of marriage would set the seal of idealism on this fascinating play, the name of which seems intended to stamp it as the picture of an ideal world of delight, in which evil is strangely turned to good, and wrong mysteriously righted, such a world as we would all rejoice to live in if we could—a world, in a word, as we like it.—Tom Taylor.

As Mr. Thom's reprint from "Notes and Queries" of his notices of and extracts from Oldys is rare, I subjoin Oldys's note* on Shakespeare's acting of Adam:

"One of Shakespeare's younger brothers, who lived to a good old age, even some years as I compute after the restoration of King Charles the Second, would, in his younger days, come to London to visit his brother Will, as he called him, and be a spectator of him as an actor in some of his own plays. This custom, as his brother's fame enlarged and his dramatick entertainments grew the greatest support of our principal, if not of all our theatres, he continued, it seems, so long after his brother's death, as even to the latter end of his own life. The curiosity at this time of the most noted actors (exciting them) to learn something from him of his brother, etc., they justly held him in the highest veneration. And it may be well believed, as there was besides a kinsman and descendant of the family, who was then a celebrated actor among them,† this opportunity made them greedily inquisitive into every little circumstance, more especially in his dramatick character, which his brother could relate of him. But he, it seems, was so stricken in years, and possibly his memory so weakened with infirmities (which might make him the easier pass for a man of weak intellects), that he could give them but little light into their inquiries; and all that could be recollected from him of his brother Will in that station was, the faint, general, and almost lost ideas he had of having once seen him act a part in one of his own comedies, wherein, having to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company, who were eating, and one of them sung a song.

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* It will be found reprinted in Part I. Vol. ii. of "Shakespeare's Library, a collection of the Plays, Romances, Novels, Poems, and Histories employed by Shakespeare in the composition of his Works," by Mr. Payne Collier (1843), of which a second and enlarged edition was published in 1875 (Reeves and Turner)—a book invaluable to all students of Shakespeare.

Oldys died in 1761, one of the most accurate, industrious, unselfish, and ill-rewarded of our bibliographic antiquarians.

† Charles Hart, the actor, was born about the year 1630, and died in August, 1683. If he was a grandson of Shakespeare's sister, he was probably the son of Michael Hart, her youngest son.—*Malone.*

"OLD CRONIES."

An original Comedietta, written by Theyre Smith.
Produced at the St. James's Theatre, Saturday, March 6th, 1880.

Dr. Jacks	Mr. Mackintosh.
Captain Pigeon	Mr. T. N. Wenman.

Mr. Theyre Smith is unrivalled in the art of writing telling dialogue. Every sentence sparkles like champagne, and in the bandying about of cross-questions and crooked answers that exhilarate and amuse an audience, he has founded a school of his own. He is to the dramatist proper just what the writer of polished society verse is to the poet. His art takes the place of inspiration, and his polish supplies the part of originality in idea. Now the conversation between these two old gentlemen, springing out of the slightest circumstance and ending literally in nothing, can scarcely be called a play in its ordinary and accepted sense. It is a thoroughly amusing sketch of character, and by the exercise of rare cleverness opportunity is given for talk of the liveliest and wittiest kind. An amorous old gentleman, who is uncommonly like a fire-eater, but who is tamed by the soft influence of love, comes to consult another old fellow, who is a bit of a pedant and a scholar, as to the best and most appropriate method of proposing to the fair one. They discuss the matter exhaustively, and argue out the rival merits of a personal interview, a love letter, or a prosaic telegram, when the subject in debate is cut short by the curt announcement that the faithless fair one has engaged herself to someone else. That is about all the story; it contains neither more nor less, and towards the conclusion is inclined to drag by reason of the conversational matter pressing so heavily on the extremely thin fabric of a plot. I cannot help thinking that a slight exercise of ingenuity might have suggested an imbroglio; for instance, suppose that old Dr. Jacks had been smitten with the same girl on the sly, and, loyal to his friend, had smothered his passion; then what a point might have been made by the lady refusing Captain Pigeon because she could not abandon the thought of one day becoming Mrs. Jacks? The solution of the difficulty would at any rate have given the semblance of a dramatic idea, without interfering with the conversational excellence of the dialogue. We talk sometimes warmly and enthusiastically about French acting, but there are few, very few, theatres in Paris where better skill could be found than that shown by Mr. Mackintosh and Mr. Wenman. Admirably finished and rehearsed to a fault, it is a treat to see such acting as this: how different indeed from the clumsy, half-hearted, and scamped work that too often is allowed to play in an audience! "Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well," and the observance of this motto is the ambition of both Mr. Hare and Mr. Kendal, and will tell in the long run, let people say what they like. Why, indeed, should not a farce be as well acted as a comedy, when all who come pay to see the best possible entertainment? Why should the pit and gallery be neglected in order that extra attention should be given to the stalls? For my own part I never could see why this should be, and the care taken with the present comedietta shows that the management intends to polish from the first to the last. Mr. Hare's skill as a stage-manager is shown here in numberless touches; and surely, unless I am very much mistaken, I can detect some of his vivid points of instruction in the clever manner of Mr. Wenman. The play is thoroughly successful, and deserves to be seen.—C. S.

"STILL WATERS RUN DEEP."

A Comedy, in Three Acts, written by Tom Taylor.

Originally produced, Olympic Theatre, May 14th, 1855. *Revived, St. James's Theatre, March 13th,* 1880.

Mr. Potter	Mr Hare.	Markham	Mr. Draycott.
John Mildmay	Mr. Kendal.	Gimlet	Mr. Denny.
Captain Hawksley	Mr. Terriss.	Jessop	Mr. Chevalier.
Dunbilk	Mr. T. N. Wenman.	Clerk	Mr. De Verney.
Langford	Mr. Brandon.	Mrs. Mildmay	Miss Grahame.
Mrs. Sternhold	Mrs. Kendal.		

One of the most astonishing things to the observer of dramatic matters is the positive hatred shown by an old playgoer to the revival of a popular play. He is perpetually worrying us with theories of his own as to what ought to be done and what is left undone; he is never weary of insisting that the times are bad and that nobody knows anything; he is never so happy as when he is ridiculing modern rubbish, and wondering why managers do not revive old plays; and yet, when the attempt is made, who so intolerant as the old playgoer? A good critic at ordinary times, he loses all power of judgment and discrimination on the occasion of a revival; he can see with the old eyes, but never with the new. He has formed his ideal, and nothing can shake him from the worship of it; and he very often positively frightens a too-deferential manager from attempting an old play with a new cast. In every audience that is assembled to see one of these revived works, nine-tenths of the people have never seen it before, don't know who played in it, or how it was done; and yet this pertinacious old playgoer is allowed to go about ridiculing the pretensions of the new school, and trying to disgust everyone against the pleasure that they very properly and legitimately feel. Now "Still Waters Run Deep" is a case in point, and had not accident conveniently dated the revival within the convenient memory of very many unbiassed and unprejudiced judges who saw the old cast, some of the best acting now to be seen in London would be ridiculed, simply because it was not the same acting of the original play. I for one am thankful that it is not; for in my humble judgment it is infinitely better. I don't pretend to say that I was capable of forming a lasting judgment of this comedy in 1855; but it was revived at a comparatively recent date at the Queen's Theatre, and that is well within my immediate memory. Now if accident had made the comedy a little older than it is, these depreciators would positively have felt so injured at the success of the modern comedians, that they probably would have ridiculed it out of recognition, and influenced the weak. We should have heard: "Ah, my dear fellow, but you should have seen Mr. and Mrs. Wigan, what acting that was; and George Vining, what a Hawksley he made; and Potter, was there ever such a Potter in existence as Emery?" Well, and what then? I have seen Mrs. Wigan play Mrs. Sternhold, and an admirably clever performance it was—one in which art conquered nature, and made one admire the rare skill of the performer; but Mrs. Wigan was not a bit like the Mrs. Sternhold of the play as I picture her in my mind; she was not like the fascinating woman of golden maturity who was not proof against the arrows of love; she was not the French mother who would be likely to fall in love with her daughter's admirer—(such is the plot of Le Gendre)—she was powerful and wondrously clever. But Mrs. Kendal is Mrs. Sternhold at any rate in appearance, and plays it to my mind with consummate skill, and in a style which is refreshing to see. How unfair it is, how wanting in encouragement, to perceive that scene at the breakfast-table, to see how with well-concealed art the love for Hawksley fades out of the proud woman's heart, to hang on every detail of that exit where Mildmay has the mastery, and then to institute these comparisons with a clever actress who created the part in 1855, and has retired from the stage. Let us have reasons at any rate, and not moanings. In 1855, Mr. Alfred Wigan enjoyed the privilege amongst his admirers of being the "only gentleman on the stage;" that reproach, if it were ever true, no longer exists, and there are many Alfred Wigans in 1880. I could name half-a-dozen with the greatest ease, and though I admit he acted John Mildmay with great skill and discretion, I don't see why I may not be permitted to admire Mr. Kendal all the same. In some respects he plays the part far better, more naturally, and more agreeably. When Mr. Alfred Wigan acted the character, I detested John Mildmay, and thought him a flashy, consequential, and somewhat ill-bred fellow, self-conceited, and a cheap swaggerer. As Mr. Kendal plays the part, I like John Mildmay, and I believe he ought to be liked if the play is to have any meaning. Nothing could be better than Mr. Kendal's acting in the breakfast scene, and also the scene where he unmasks Hawksley. As to Mr. Terriss as Hawksley, and Mr. Hare as Potter, surely people do not seriously mean that George Vining or Mr. Emery were better than these? George Vining was an artificial tinsel swell, badly dressed, and extravagant to an extent that no one would now tolerate; and clever as was Mr. Emery's Potter, it did not contain a tenth part of the *finesse* and finish of Mr. Hare. The Hawksley of Mr. Terriss is a possible being, a plausible fellow, the kind of man who would dazzle women and deceive men with assurance, nerve, and determination. The Potter of Mr. Hare is a keen instance of unexaggerated eccentricity. Can anyone, without prejudice, say the same of Mr. Vining and Mr. Emery? Seriously I think not. But even if they could, here is a play as well acted as a comedy can be according to our present strength, well cared for, and carefully selected, and I cannot see there is much advantage in going to the St. James's Theatre to howl over the memories of a combination that will probably never be seen again. It was very well in 1855, but the question is, would it *all* be accepted as so very admirable in 1880? Remember what has happened since then. We have had all the advantages of a revival, based on the study of the modern French schools; and now that much of our acting is quite on a level, if not superior to, our neighbours', we are asked to go back to the times before we appealed to France for a model. That seems to me strange and inconsistent, and to sum up, if people are not content with the acting now to be seen in "Still Waters Run Deep," they must be very hard to please. But even I, who am no pessimist, must have my lament over a portion of the past, although it is not so very long ago. I really do miss Miss Ellen Terry as Mrs. Mildmay, for I saw her play the part delightfully at the Queen's, and with such sweetness, charm, and abstract dreaminess, that I remember it as clearly as possible, and as if it were but yesterday.—C. S.

"A QUIET PIPE."

An original Domestic Scene, by Miss Cowen and Mr. S. M. Samuel.
Folly Theatre, March 17th, 1880.

Edwin	Mr. F. H. Macklin.
Angelina	Miss B. Henri.

If wives will be so silly as to object to their newly-married husbands smoking, and husbands have not the pluck to assert their rights to quiet pipes, without recourse to deceitful stratagem, they must expect to endure domestic "scenes" akin to that so brightly sketched by the authors of this comedietta. Edwin, who sends Angelina off to a ball by herself that he may enjoy a smoke in peace at home, is, as he deserves to be, caught in the very act on his wife's sudden return. Angelina, who has induced him to make a promise which he cannot keep, is, as serves her very well right, much put out at the storm in a teacup which follows, and which is not calmed down until she sings to her faithless but much-tried spouse one of Mr. F. H. Cowen's pretty new songs. Both Mr. Macklin and Miss B. Henri—the Edwin and Angelina of the occasion—might with advantage employ a somewhat lighter touch over the trifle, and the long soliloquy allotted to the former should be cut down. But "A Quiet Pipe," as it stands, and as it was played on its production, is a very agreeable *lever de rideau*, and may readily be worked up into still further success.—Ernest A. Bendall.

"RIVAL CANDIDATES."

New Comedy, in Four Acts, by G. R. Douglas.
Folly Theatre, March 17th, 1880.

Sir Fitzurse Drawlington	Mr. F. H. Macklin.	Mr. Judkins	Mr. A. Wood.
Hugh Josceline	Mr. J. Carne.	Mrs. Desborough	Mr. Leigh Murray.
Arthur Kennedy	Mr. W. Draycott.	Ethel	Miss M. Cathcart.
Morris	Mr. W. Brunton.	Lady Drawlington	Miss B. Henri.

Mr. G. R. Douglas, the author of this comedy, has made in it a marked advance beyond his previous dramatic work, as typified in his "Stage Land;" but he cannot be said to have achieved a play worthy of more consideration than is usually given to new pieces tentatively produced at *matinées* by scratch companies. As is not unusual with followers of the late Mr. Robertson, he is a good deal stronger in the manufacture of neat and telling dialogue than in the matter of plot, and, while he has several entertaining scenes to illustrate and some decidedly good things to say, he has forgotten the requisite framework supplied in an interesting story and in characters capable of commanding sympathetic attention. He has also made a great mistake in not compressing into at most three acts an apology for a plot which has scarcely enough dramatic substance even for these. He has, in fact, beaten out his material very thin indeed, and he has not skill sufficient to enable him to conduct the process without detriment to his fabric. At the same time he deserves all credit for some bright and occasionally forcible dialogue, for the fresh though frequently exaggerated fun of some of his situations, and for the mastery of some of the secrets of stage-craft in arranging the general movement of his drama.

Though the candidates in a contested election are nominally the chief personages in the comedy, its principal motive is supplied through the medium of the wife of one of the rivals, Lady Drawlington, who, before marrying the imbecile Sir Fitzurse, was Madame Lucile, a prosperous

Regent Street milliner. Lady Drawlington has a disreputable father in the public-house politician Mr. Judkins; but except for this proof of her low birth, and for her unaristocratic business capacity, she has little to make her the Lady Drawlington for whom we are prepared by the peculiar circumstances of the case. In spite of her brisk determination, the *ci-devant* shopkeeper seems to have more of the instincts of a lady than is possessed by her hostess of the earlier acts, a Mrs. Desborough, whose position in the county makes her patronage of Sir Fitzurse all-important to his candidature. When, therefore, the Drawlingtons are made by this snobbish though haughty dame to suffer for the sins of old Judkins, his amusing vulgarity, and his inconvenient familiarity, and when Josceline is started by Mrs. Desborough as a rival to Sir Fitzurse, our sympathy goes wholly with Lady Drawlington in her resolve to win the battle in her late patron's teeth. Lady Drawlington, in fact, interests us more than does anyone else in the play; but it is a pity that her character is not sketched with a little more subtlety and more consistent truth to human nature. She would never surely have talked in metaphors borrowed from the workroom; and in this instance as elsewhere a good impression is spoiled by the author's inability to resist an ingenious and laughable series of quips. Lady Drawlington, despite the unwished-for aid of her unworthy papa, wins a victory for her husband, who for his part does an excellent stroke of business—though without any selfish motive—in aiding his rival's intended bride, Ethel Desborough, to run away with young Kennedy, a lover more to her taste than her mother's *protégé*, Mr. Josceline. Mrs. Desborough is thus very heavily punished for her social sins—more heavily indeed than from the author's point of view she seems to deserve; and the candidate who loses the seat, loses his expected wife into the bargain. "Rival Candidates" had been more carefully prepared by most of the players than is usual in the case of such isolated performances, the point of the whole production receiving the best possible emphasis at the hands of Miss B. Henri as Lady Drawlington, and of Mr. A. Wood as Judkins. Mr. Macklin made of Sir Fitzurse a solemn swell of unconventional moderation; and in the Arthur Kennedy of Mr. Wilfred Draycott, a young actor of promising decision and grace was introduced.—Ernest A. Bendall.

Our Musical-Box.

DR. VON BÜLOW has been appointed Director of Music at the Ducal Court of Meiningen.

The solemn inauguration of the Schumann monument in the cemetery at Bonn will take place on the 2nd May. Two concerts will be given to further celebrate the event. The Beethoven monument in Vienna will be unveiled on the 23rd of the same month, on which occasion a grand concert will be given, at which it is hoped that Franz Liszt will appear.

The audiences at the Scala, in Milan, have lately been most discontented and discourteous, but Ponchielli's new opera, "Gioconda," seems to have restored them to good humour.

Hamburg papers announce a visit of the Messrs. Gye to that town. Their object was to attend the performances of Rubinstein's "Nero," prior to its production at Covent Garden next season.

Pollini, director of the Hamburg Theatre, is earning new laurels. After giving a most successful performance of Mozart's operas, he is now about to produce Wagner's complete Trilogy, and, later, intends to give a "Wagner Cycle," beginning with "Rienzi" to the "Götterdämmerung," an enterprise not yet undertaken by any manager.

The *Gazette Musicale* and other French papers are loud in praise of Madame Essipoff's performances in Paris. She has appeared several times at Pasdeloup's concerts and at concerts of her own. She pleased in all styles, but perhaps her interpretation of Chopin's works aroused the greatest enthusiasm. At a concert which she gave in the Salle Erard, she was joined by M. Saint-Saëns in the performance of his tarantella for two pianos.

A new orchestral work, a suite, by Tschaikowsky, has been performed in St. Petersburg. The papers mention that it is of exceptional interest, and was received with enthusiasm, the fourth number, a most original and piquant "Miniatur-Marsch," being encored.

Lecocq is at work on a new comic opera, which will be produced next autumn at the Renaissance Theatre in Paris. It is entitled "The Marquis of Windsor," the libretto by Messrs. Meilhac and Halévy.

Dr. von Bülow was lately asked *why* he took so much trouble giving concerts for the Bayreuth Funds. He replied: "In about a year I shall have realised the 40,000 marks I undertook to raise, and shall then feel proud to call myself the 1-25th of the German nation to whom Richard Wagner appealed.

Rubinstein's new opera, "Kalaschnikoff, the Merchant of Moscow," was given at St. Petersburg for the first time on the 5th March. It was received with great enthusiasm, the composer being called before the curtain after each act.

One of the most interesting events of the season, Mr. Walter Bache's Orchestral Concert, took place on March 11th, in St. James's Hall. The programme comprised only three numbers. And first of all the "Zauberflöte" Overture, admirably performed (at the right speed), under Mr. Manns's direction. This gentleman also led Chopin's Second Concerto in F minor, re-scored by Klindworth, the pianoforte part being played by Mr. Bache in a most finished and clever manner, and warmly applauded by an enthusiastic audience. The event of the evening was the first performance in England of Liszt's "Faust" Symphony. This great work is divided into three character-pictures (after Goethe), the first division depicts Faust "*in seinem dunkeln Drange*;" in the second, Margaret's exquisite simplicity pervades the scene; while the third is devoted entirely to Mephistopheles, "*der Geist der stets verneint*," the whole being brought to a close by the *chorus mysticus*, for men's voices. This stupendous work, so full of poetry, so rich in ideas, a masterpiece of orchestration, was most splendidly performed; but space will not permit of a detailed account. Luckily we are promised a second hearing of the Symphony at one of Hans Richter's concerts.

The Philharmonic Concerts do not call for any special notice, but mention must be made of Herr Scharwenka's fine performance of his Pianoforte Concerto in B flat minor, and of Herr Joachim's splendid playing in Brahms's Violin Concerto.

The Bach Choir gave a highly interesting Concert on March 16th, the main feature of which was Brahms's gigantic "German Requiem." The enormous difficulties of the work were surmounted by the Choir in a highly creditable manner, barring a slip here and there. In the *tempi* there might have been many an improvement, and there was a frequent want of attack and point, which perhaps may disappear in a second performance. But these were spots on the sun; nothing could repress the prodigious power and the deep sentiments which reigned throughout, from the first bar to the last. Here is a work of thorough originality, like nothing that ever preceded it, and fully up to the height of its subject, which is one of the most impressive that poet or composer can deal with. Among the musicians present—and they seemed to be all in the room—there was but one feeling, that this was a composition destined to take its place by the side of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. We trust soon to have to announce a repetition.

On the afternoon of the following day, March 17th, there was the annual performance of Beethoven's Posthumous Quartets, by Messrs. Joachim, Ries, Straus, and Piatti, at St. James's Hall. The two selected were the A minor and the B flat, and the playing was beyond all praise. Notwithstanding the elaborate nature of the compositions, there was hardly an obscure bar from beginning to end. Joachim was even more than himself; and the tone and expression of his violin in the *Cavatina* of the B flat, especially at the passage which Beethoven has inscribed with the word *beklemmt* (choking with grief), were deeply affecting. The more these astonishing works are heard, under such favourable conditions, the more does their nobility and beauty and (as in the Finale of the B flat) their extraordinary youthful freshness, appear. Joachim played on one of his new fiddles—a superb instrument.

Among the numerous musical societies founded during the year 1879, mention must be made of the "Palestrina (Choral) Society," in New York, under the direction of Signor Fanciulli, from Florence; the "Euterpe," in Boston, for chamber music; and "Les Trouvères," in Paris.

Goldmark's Opera, "La Reine de Saba," is rapidly becoming popular abroad. In Bologna it has reached its twenty-fifth performance; in fact, out of the thirty evenings which composed the season, twenty-four were devoted to this opera. It had also great success in Dresden and Prague, when the composer conducted himself.

When the success of his Orchestral Suite first made him favourably known to the public, he used to go about to all the towns where it was performed, to enjoy, with youthful enthusiasm, his newly-found fame. On the occasion of a visit to Salzburg to hear the above-mentioned Suite, he happened to lodge in the same hotel with the celebrated violoncellist Popper. The latter saw the following entry in the visitors'-book, "From Vienna, Carl Goldmark," and, prompted by a spirit of fun, could not refrain from adding, "and Suite." The joke soon became known, and was circulated through all the German papers.

Madame Héritte Viardot has written a new opera (both libretto and music), "Les Fêtes de Bacchus," which is shortly to be given at the theatre in Stockholm, where also her opera of "Lindoro" is in rehearsal. This latter work has been performed with success in Weimar.

A great music festival is to take place in Brussels this year, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. It will begin on the 21st of July, and last three days, and all the works performed will be by Belgian composers. A large concert-room is now being built for the purpose in the Zoological Gardens.

There have been some interesting programmes at the Crystal Palace Saturday Afternoon Concerts. On the 31st January, it being the anniversary of the birth of Franz Schubert, the entire programme was devoted to his works; the Symphony in C, the introduction and allegro from his first Symphony in D, written when only sixteen years of age, and selections from "Rosamunde." The vocalists were Miss Lilian Bailey and Herr Henschel. At the concert on the 7th, Mendelssohn's Octet was played by all the strings of the orchestra; also two short numbers from Berlioz's "Damnation de Faust," the "Danse des Sylphes," and the "Rakockzy March." Mdlle. Janotha played Beethoven's E-flat Concerto, and Madame Sinico was the vocalist. A fine performance of Rubinstein's Dramatic Symphony, for the first time at these concerts, was given on the 14th February. The pianist was Miss Dora Schirmacher, whose playing of Beethoven's G-major Concerto was thoroughly appreciated. This young lady also contributed two solos, Romance in F sharp by Schumann, and Chopin's A-flat Waltz, Op. 42, giving a really exquisite and original rendering of the latter. Mrs. Osgood sang "Sei mir gegrüsst," from Tannhäuser, and two songs by Maude V. White, the present Mendelssohn scholar, "Absent yet Present," a charming song, quite above the average style, and "The Sea hath its Pearls," which is certainly not up to the mark of the other.

A series of performances of Beethoven's symphonies was begun on the 21st February, and will be continued every Saturday afternoon until the nine have been played. At one of last month's concerts Herr Barth gave an admirable rendering of Brahms's Pianoforte Concerto. Herr Joachim has also appeared at the Palace, on which occasion, besides Spohr's *Concertino* (as it is called), he introduced a Theme and Variations of his own composition.

Mention must be made of some novelties introduced at the Popular Concerts. On Saturday, the 7th February, Goetz's Pianoforte Quartet in E flat and Kiel's "Deutsche Reigen," for piano and violin, were performed with great success. On the following Monday a fine performance was given of Brahms's Sextet in B flat, Op. 18, the scherzo of which was encored.

A most interesting work by the Bohemian composer, Anton Dvorak, was introduced (through Herr Joachim's agency) at the Monday Concert on February 23rd, and repeated on Monday, March 8th. The work in question is a sextet for strings, and is of unusual beauty and originality. At the Saturday Concert on the 5th March, another work of Keil's was performed. It is written in what seems to be a favourite form just now, and consists of a set of waltzes for string quartet. A second performance of Henschel's "Serbisches Liederspiel" was given on the 8th, and on the same occasion Miss Agnes Zimmermann's suite for piano, violin, and violoncello was played for the first time.

Madame Halévy, widow of the composer, has just completed a statue of her husband, which is to be placed in the Town-hall in Paris. The well-known bust of the celebrated composer is also from her hand.

It is rather remarkable that so many leading pianists should have been disabled this winter, and all from the same cause. Miss Mary Krebs, who had played with great success in Stuttgart, where she had received the Gold Medal for Art and Science from the King of Würtemberg, proceeded to Warsaw, where she was engaged to play at several concerts. But there she was forced to give up on account of a bad finger, which, after being operated upon, is now well again, and Miss Krebs is looked for in London before very long. Madame Szarvady's case was of a more serious nature, and it was feared for a time that she would lose the use of her finger. She has happily recovered, but has had to give up all her concert plans for the present. Madame Essipoff, after giving two brilliant concerts in Pesth, was also afflicted in the same way, but she has since played in Brünn and Vienna, and at Pasdeloup's concerts in Paris. The clever Russian pianist, Mdlle. Vera Timanoff, has also been obliged for the same reason to suspend her public appearances for the space of three weeks; but she played lately with great success at the third subscription concert in Brunswick, and is shortly expected in London.

Why can we not manage to get up Popular Orchestral Concerts in London? The British public is patient indeed to have suffered the want of them so long. Mr. Chappell's Chamber Concerts on Saturdays and Mondays have proved so successful, both artistically and financially, that it is most marvellous and very disappointing to find that a series of *Orchestral* Concerts at popular prices has not been organised. In this respect the Parisians are much to be envied. At Pasdeloup's Concert on the 25th January the programme was as follows: "La Harpe et la Lyre" by Saint-Saëns, Serenade Hongroise by Joncières, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

The following programme of the third Popular Concert in Brussels will perhaps interest and certainly surprise English concert-goers: Selections from Massenet's "Erinnyes," Introduction to Wagner's "Meistersinger," Overture to "Romeo and Juliet" by Tschaikowsky, Beethoven's Violin Concerto played by M. Marsick, and Liszt's Mephisto Waltz for Orchestra.

Biondina's Song, by C. Salaman. (Stanley Lucas, Weber, and Co.)

Mr. Salaman is one of the few English composers whose songs may be called original and finished compositions. Biondina's Song, though not so imaginative and poetical as, for instance, "I arise from dreams of thee," is a happily-written song, and perfectly melodious throughout. The opening key is E minor, the first verse being written in common time. The second verse is set to the same melody, rhythmically altered, it being in 6-8 time. There is a brief return to the original form of the melody, and then a change to the key of E major, affettuoso ed animato, leading up to an appassionato climax, making a happy close to a thoroughly grateful song.—S. Carmichael.

Our Omnibus-Box.

We had been half promised, for our present number, a criticism by Mr. Ruskin on the subject of the play of "The Merchant of Venice," as acted at the Lyceum Theatre, contained in a private letter addressed to Mr. Henry Irving, not originally intended for publication. Although Mr. Ruskin was courteous enough to waive all objection to the public production of that letter, Mr. Irving has, with equal consideration, and for reasons which are eminently creditable to his good taste and fine feeling, asked to be relieved of a responsibility which has been thrust upon him, and which he never for one moment courted. Serious pressure of business and overwhelming work have hitherto prevented Mr. Ruskin from repeating his views, which are doubtless most interesting, so here for the present the matter must drop. It is needless for the editor of this magazine to assert that he has not seen Mr. Ruskin's letter, and is not aware what form the particular criticism took, but he was naturally anxious to obtain for his readers any opinion on so interesting a subject from so eminent a writer and critic.

It is pleasant to be able to announce that Mr. Terriss, whose art has advanced so rapidly since he cast off the spell of Adelphi melodrama, is not after all to leave us for an American engagement. He will remain a member of the St. James's Company, where, thanks to his invaluable decision of manner and his reposeful strength, he is doing such excellent service. Very judiciously, by-the-way, he has removed the one blot upon his first nervous performance in "Still Waters Run Deep," by altering his too juvenile make-up as Hawksley, a scoundrel who has seen life, and should certainly show in his face the scars left by warfare against the world.

I shall scarcely be surprised if the usual order of things is inverted with regard to Mr. Frith's story on canvas, "A Race for Wealth," and if a "melodrama of domestic interest" should be founded upon his picture. The spider might be made to marry one of his victims—say the pretty widow or one of the country clergyman's daughters—and the plot, as the plot of such pieces go, would be complete. Of course the financier's terrible wife, as presented to us in her appalling drawing-room, would have to be done away with; but the wicked hero would be quite equal to the occasion, even if the playwright were not.

The crucial test at the Haymarket will be tried some time this month, and the management will probably be said by epigrammatists to go to "School" after having dropped "Money." As a matter of fact "Money" might well be run remuneratively much farther on into the spring; but Mr. Bancroft is anxious not to put off his intended experiment until the fag-end of the season.

If "Cobwebs" is by Mr. C. Wills, what has become of the new play by Mr. Albery, which was to have been the next production at the Vaudeville?

The version of Jerrold's "Black-eyed Susan" by Mr. W. G. Wills—one has to be careful about the initials now—respects the original text very little until the famous trial-scene. The whole tone of the earlier acts is, we believe, completely changed, which proves that the adapter has the courage of his opinions.

Let no one who appreciates a magnificent scrap of dramatic recitation miss a chance of hearing Mr. Charles Warner give Bret Harte's "At the Mouth of the Pit." For intensity of feeling indicated by a few masterly touches, I call to mind nothing to surpass this living, thrilling, burning exposition of that agony of suspense which is more maddening than despair itself. In the strongest emotional drama Mr. Warner has yet to do himself full justice upon the stage.

I have received another interesting note from our friend Mr. H. C. Coape: In your March number I incidentally mentioned, *à propos* of managerial pigeon-holes, the fact that Sheridan, at Drury Lane, used, as a substitution, "a room-like cupboard, opening out of the present committee-room, wherein the MSS. were flung pell-mell one upon the other." I had then present to my mind a little anecdote, which may be worth relating for the delectation of your readers in general, and those among them who are dramatic authors in particular. I was conversing one day, in the above-mentioned committee-room, with William Dunn, of facetious memory (who was at once secretary to the committee and treasurer to Alfred Bunn, the then lessee), and Lord Glengall, the chairman of the committee, whose comedy, "The Follies of Fashion," was then being played at Old Drury. Something said elicited from the earl the remark that it was "difficult to get a play into a manager's hands, but a deuced deal more difficult to get it out of them." Hereupon Billy Dunn, who was brimful of theatrical anecdote, rose, deliberately took his keys from his pocket, as deliberately took a pinch of snuff, and then, opening the door of the room-like cupboard in question, proceeded: "You remind me, my lord, of a story I've heard told of Sheridan. A person who had, very long since, sent him a five-act tragedy, after firing numerous letters at him, demanding the restitution of his tragedy, at length succeeded in running him to earth in his room (this room). Sheridan, aware of the utter futility of attempting to find then, or at any other time, any given MSS. whatever amid the chaos of this cupboard, dived into it, disappeared, and, after an apparently zealous search of some minutes, came forth. Then—calling doubtless to his aid some of that magnetic suavity of demeanour which had so often stood him in good stead in the presence even of applicants armed with the terrors of the law—said: 'My dear sir, at the present moment I cannot lay hands upon your tragedy. But here I have what you will permit me to call small change for it. I beg to present you, in lieu of your five-act tragedy, with a couple of two-act comedies, a musical drama, and two farces—in all five acts. What may, and doubtless will, be wanting in quality will be made up to you in quantity.'"

Here are some good, sensible, practical hints that may be commended to the notice of those sitting in the stalls of a theatre, who are sometimes oblivious of the fact that eager eyes are upon them. They come to me with scores of others, thanking us for our defence of the old pit:—We must be honestly fond of a good play, well acted, for to secure a seat we wait sometimes two hours or more, and wearisome though the waiting may be, we feel repaid when we settle down in the front row and the play begins. And then the people come sauntering into the stalls all through the first act, and a man will slowly struggle out of his coat and leisurely examine his surroundings, and until it pleases him to sit down, our enjoyment is interrupted; but what does he care? though if we clap he turns, annoyed. I have seen many ladies in the stalls *reading* the play, not only at the commencement of it, when, as they come in so late, it may be excusable; but, to take "The Merchant of Venice," for instance, they will read all through the Trial Scene. One lady immediately in front of us, who had been steadily reading throughout, looked up startled when Shylock dropped the scales! but down went her head again, perhaps to see if "that was in the book." I do believe it annoyed us as much to see her reading and missing all the acting, as the clapping in the pit could annoy her. Could she really care for the acting? Could the man sauntering in so late and going out before the end, with no regard for his neighbours' convenience or the actors' feelings, care? No wonder that we pittites, who like to rest our chins on the bar in front, and gaze and gaze until our eyes ache to catch every expression, and who go through the long standing and the dreary little farce or comedy that we have already undergone twice or thrice, feel ourselves ill-used at being ousted from our place by such as these, that these fashionable loungers may not have the annoyance of our close neighbourhood, for I conclude that is the real reason of the change.

I have heard a great deal about the new artificial diamonds, and now

I have seen them. As they may be extremely valuable for the stage, I say a word. A new diamond has been invented, one that, without actually equalling its incomparable model, will suffice to add beauty to beauty that seeks adornment, and will not sink capital which might have been more profitably invested perhaps. The new chemical diamond supersedes, according to many competent judges, all those previously brought out as imitations. I have carefully examined, and hugely admired, some specimens sent by Messrs. Thornhill and Co., of Bond Street, the sole agents in this country, and they are certainly works of art. By their effective brilliancy and moderate charges, they would be invaluable for stage purposes, as well as for private use; in fact, it will no longer be considered derogatory to wear diamonds on the stage, however much the part may require them. The most modest actress can now appear legitimately with the adornment of a duchess. The setting is admirable, and the effect splendid. I rather prefer the smaller ones to the larger, as the deception is much greater, for obvious reasons—enormous diamonds are not to be had in such profusion, therefore they suggest at once the impossibility of being genuine, and it seems to me that a quantity of small diamonds produces a more brilliant effect than a large one of equivalent value, although the latter has probably a greater power of refraction. Messrs. Thornhill have sent me aigrettes, necklaces, earrings, and bangles to look at, which are very perfect, and it seems to me that the original and exclusive stone will have to give up its proud position, and stand side by side with the new *Diamanté Brilliants.*

Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Mr. Arthur Sullivan have arrived in England, flushed with their American victory. On landing it was discovered that the score of the famous "Pirates of Penzance" was missing, and great was the consternation at the Opera Comique Theatre, where George Grossmith and Rutland Barrington were awaiting a taste of the delectable music, and a read at the inimitable libretto. Luckily the missing packet "turned up," having travelled twice across the Atlantic, and the play which we all anticipate with so much eagerness has been for some time in active rehearsal.

The Haymarket bills, during the run of "The Love Chase" (1837), had on their fly-sheet the following criticism from *The John Bull* newspaper:

"By your leave, ye majors! Leviathans though ye be! You are not the only fish that swim, nor the most dainty. And this week, at least, your rank must give place to the higher order of merit. The little theatre in the Haymarket may boast of having presented the public with many of the choicest comedies that grace the stage. Here Foote, Colman, Goldsmith have in turn first triumphed; and broad satire, genuine humour, and playful wit have endeared it as the seat of pleasant recollections. It has remained for Sheridan Knowles to make it classic ground. 'The Love Chase,' produced here on Monday, October 9th, from the pen of this gentleman, will mark an epoch in its history, as it assuredly forms an era in modern dramatic literature. The acting of 'The Love Chase' is highly relished by the audience, and, combined with the pleasure of hearing language at once so poetic and racy, affords a treat which no one with pretensions of love for the drama should grudge himself the pleasure of seeing. We should more than doubt his enthusiasm in behalf of a healthy literature and a rational amusement, who would regret his money after the curtain fell! *Vivat Regina!*"

The last farewell representations by Macready in 1850 (not all recorded in his published diary) were eighteen characters in fifty-nine nights, viz.:

Macbeth, six; Hamlet, three; Shylock, two; King Lear, seven; Richelieu, seven; Werner, three; Othello, three; Virginius, four; Iago, two; Brutus, two; Cassius, two; Richard II., two; Wolsey, four; King John, four; King Henry IV., Part II., six; Mr. Oakley ("Jealous Wife"), six; The Stranger, one; Benedick, one. King Henry IV. (one act) and "Jealous Wife" were given on each occasion on the same evening. I may add that the bill (Feb. 3rd, 1851) which announced "positively the last night of the eminent tragedian; Mr. Macready's final performances on any stage," concluded with a statement that the retiring actor would take his farewell of the stage on the 19th February.

In June, 1852 (Mr. Buckstone's first season), an extract from "Blackwood" was addressed to the public at the foot of the Haymarket bill. It ran thus: "Let us for the satisfaction of all squeamish spinsters, and for the honour of the Haymarket lessee, announce a small fact which we think greatly redounds to his honour. Brazen-faced men in elegant apparel it is, of course, impossible to exclude, but the moment the royal patronage was extended to the theatre, most rigid orders were given to the doorkeepers and attendant police to exclude every brazen-faced personage of the other sex, however elegant might be her apparel. This holds good not only on the evenings on which royalty condescends to share the gay or sad feelings of loyalty, but on all nights and on all occasions. This is a sacrifice to propriety and decorum which persons acquainted with the interior workings of a theatre have stated to us to amount to several thousands a year. Go therefore in perfect safety to the Haymarket."

The price of the Haymarket pit remained at three shillings until Buckstone, in 1857, submitted some alterations, when the price to that part of the house was reduced to two shillings. In 1859 the small programmes came into force which gradually superseded the large bills printed in such ink that immediately soiled the gloves with which it came in contact. At the same time the small programmes were very often minus a date, as is so often the case now, making them of so little use for the purpose of reference. Mr. Sothern's engagement being subsequently a marked feature in the history of the "little theatre," it may be curious to note that he was announced on his first night (11th November, 1861) as "formerly of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, and from the principal American theatres in his original character of Lord Dundreary, as performed by him in the chief cities of the United States for eight hundred nights." Mrs. Charles Young (now Mrs. Hermann Vezin) was the original Florence Trenchard.

Permit me, once and for all, to explode the extraordinary idea dinned into our ears by occasionally unfortunate authors, that criticism ought to be deferred until the third or fourth night. Why should it? The production of a new play is an item of *news* or it is not. A newspaper is supposed to contain news—that is to say, fresh news and not stale news. To my thinking our daily newspapers pay a great compliment to dramatic art when they devote as much space as they do to elaborate dramatic notices. When a play is fit to be produced in public, and fit for money to be taken at the doors, then it is, or it ought to be, fit to be criticised. Are the playgoers to pay for a worthless production for three or four days? is the news-loving public to be deprived of its news? and would not the delay in the production also delay the rehearsals, accuracy, and completeness that the best plays obtain? Whilst newspapers exist plays must be treated as news, and criticised accordingly; but at the same time those who criticise in the pages of THE THEATRE, and sign their articles, are enabled to see a performance two or three times if they like, and to bring to their work maturity, reflection, and ample consideration. For instance, I am bold enough to say that had it not been for The Theatre, such an able, scholarly, and exhaustive article as that written for us by Mr. Tom Taylor this month on "As You Like It," would probably have been lost to literature. It will now be preserved, and I am pleased to offer it to my readers. I have never, however, heard a case of a successful author objecting to a first-night verdict or to first-night criticism; he is only too glad that the news of his success shall be spread over the town; indeed, if he does not get criticised on the spot he is apt to resent the indignity of the delay.

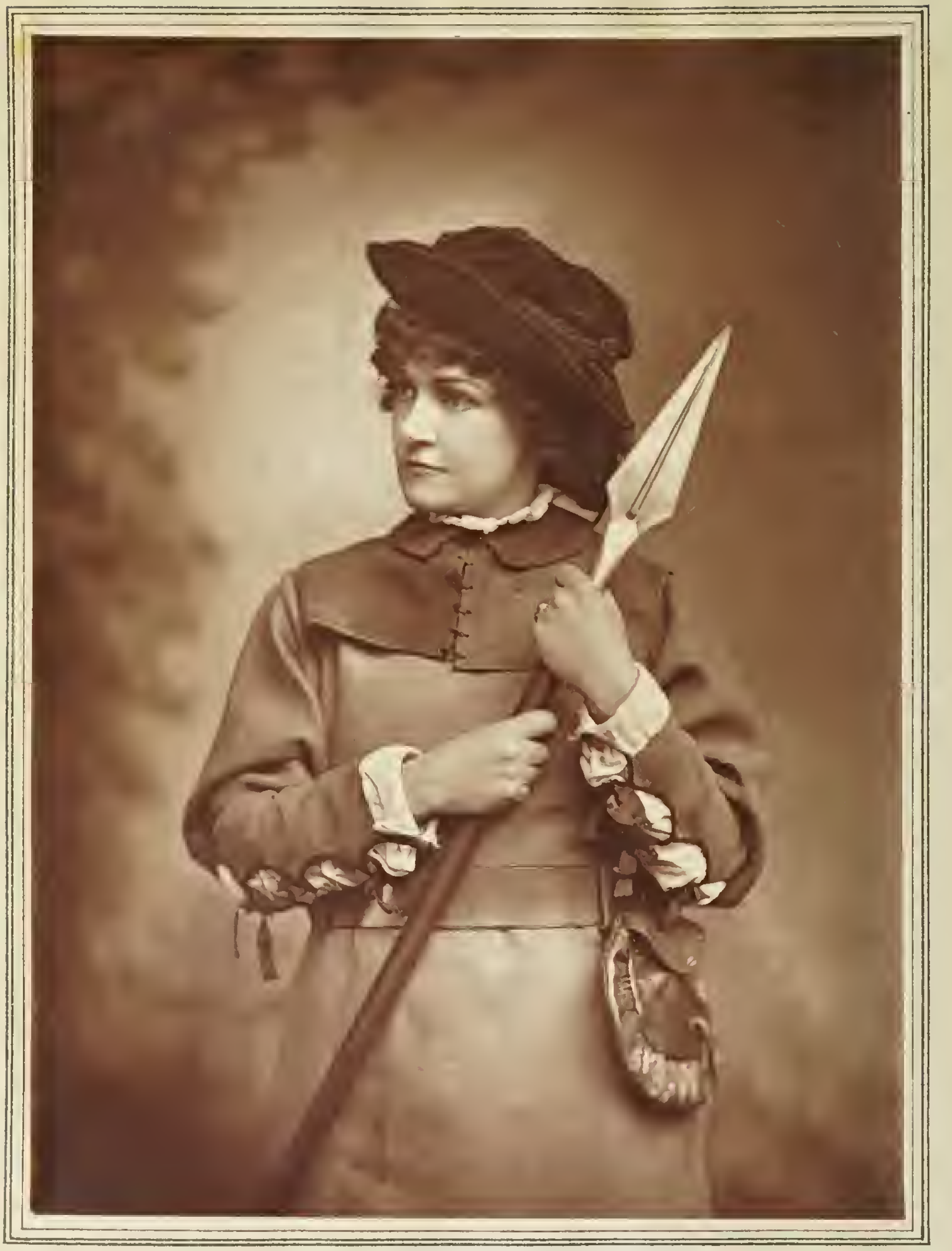
Unless the pure art of pantomime is dead, the Hanlon-Lees are destined to make a genuine success at the popular Gaiety, where they come to make us all laugh in their entertainment that has convulsed Paris, so appreciative of the gambols of the English clown. The quick eye of Mr. John Hollingshead soon detected the rare excellence of the Hanlon-Lees, and they were engaged at once.

What a strange fortune has been attached to "Forget-Me-Not," the play that is attracting all London to the Prince of Wales's Theatre. It was produced last autumn at the Lyceum during Mr. Irving's absence, and though praised in all the papers failed to hit the public. It was taken to the country and only secured a *succès d'estime.* It was revived at the Prince of Wales's Theatre when Mr. Edgar Bruce took over the management, and for very many days positively trembled in the balance. Nothing could have been more glowing than the criticisms; nothing so shy as the public. As good luck would have it, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales went early to see the play, and, as everyone knows, he is one of the most competent and experienced critics in existence. The Prince was loud in his praises of the play as a work of art, and of Miss Genevieve Ward as an artist of the first rank. Round went the public in a second, the stalls filled up, the booking was unprecedented, and after a third trial "Forget-Me-Not" was proved to be what everyone considered it to be who watched its progress—the best play of 1879, and the success of 1880. Mr. Hermann Merivale is to be congratulated, and Miss Ward after her long struggle gets her reward.

Madame Modjeska, the great American actress, has arrived, and is reciting privately in London; and I hear wonderful accounts of another American recitress, Miss Kellogg—no relation to the singer.

The Princess's Theatre is to be pulled down immediately, and rebuilt on the same site.

The St. Cecilia Choral Society gave a concert recently at the Royal Academy of Music. The singing of the choir reflected great credit on the conductor, Mr. Malcolm Lawson, under whose bâton was given a selection of part-songs by Brahms, Lawson, Carmichael, and others, the evening terminating with a performance of Reinecke's "Cinderella." In this cantata a very charming feature is the pianoforte accompaniment, to which full justice was done by Miss Carmichael. A word of praise is due to Miss Wakefield for her artistic rendering of the solos in the work, as also to Miss Webling for the effective manner in which the descriptive verses were delivered. Pianoforte solos were contributed by Miss Dora Schirmacher, and songs by Messrs. Theo. Marzials and Bernard Lane.



THE THEATRE, NO. 5, THIRD SERIES.

"Can one desire too much of a good thing?" As you Like it.
Mary Litton Robertson.

The Theatre.

MAY 1, 1880.

THE OBER-AMMERGAU PASSION-PLAY.

When to See It, and How to Get There.

TEN years have passed away since a crowd of holiday pilgrims was found wending its way to a peaceful village in the heart of the Bavarian Mountains, to witness a dramatic, scenic, and musical representation of the chief events in the life and passion of the Redeemer of Mankind. The picturesque descriptions given of the scene in 1870 in many newspapers and magazines must even yet be fresh in the memory of many, for so thoroughly was the impressive character of the performance brought home to the reader with all its calm dignity, impressive grandeur, and deep earnestness, that those who had been denied the privilege of ascending from Munich to the highland home of "Ober-Ammergau," and had made no arrangements for being present at a religious ceremony that only occurs once in ten years, expressed no little regret at the loss of an invaluable impression, and no doubt registered a mental vow that, if the year 1880 found them alive and well, they would strain every nerve to be present at the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play. That time has now arrived; all through the bitter winter in the still Bavarian village, they have been rehearsing, practising, rearranging, and recalling the traditional business of the sacred pictures. The Christus of 1870, Joseph Mair, a man of calm exterior and deeply religious life, has once more been awarded an honour which he recognises as the most precious gift of his life. The excitement of the war that concluded the performances abruptly ten years ago, and hurried Mair away to his military duties that were specially lightened by command of the King, will no longer interfere with the peaceful arrangements of the villagers; and in a very few weeks' time a mighty audience will be hushed to speechless silence by the living pictures that must appeal to every heart, whether dulled by scepticism or sensitive with religious feelings, whilst the surrounding hills in all their peace and purity will resound to the music that is described as of unspeakable beauty, and is held in extreme veneration by the simple villagers of Ober-Ammergau. The time has come again for another representation of the sacred scenes that gave the drama of the world its origin, and the most exquisite and pathetic story that was ever written will be represented under the canopy of heaven and in the heart of an amphitheatre of hills. Nothing will be left undone, no labour shirked by those who enter upon their task in so reverential a spirit. The dresses are to be of costly magnificence; a new open-air theatre has been erected on the old models. Without attempting the vulgarity of realism, the perfection of illusion will be aimed at in reproducing the most harrowing passages of the life of our Lord; and on the part of those who approach the scene in a spirit of inquiry, or as an act of devotion, all that can be demanded is the toleration, the courtesy, and the taste that the simplicity of the Bavarian villagers is entitled to receive. Times have changed in ten years, the impressive character of the scene has got wind, excursions from all parts of Europe will take the place of pious pilgrimages. Men and women of various tastes and feelings, the religious and the irreligious, the devout and the sceptical, will be found mixed up together in the large auditorium on the mountains. Some will come to scoff, and some to pray, but at least there can be demanded of them, one and all, the gift of charity and the courtesy of silence. Once more the play will be discussed in all its bearings upon history, the drama, religion, and manners; once more it will be described in all its minute details, and many of us will see for ourselves what effect it has upon a mixed multitude as the Redeemer of Mankind is lifted on the cross amidst the angry tumult of the surging crowd. Such words as "blasphemous" and "impious" will be unjustly applied to a proceeding that is actuated by the highest, the purest, and the holiest motives; but in order to prepare, as it were, the mind of the intending spectator for the scenes that are awaiting him, I have collected together some of the materials on this subject contained in the interesting volumes that have recently been published, and which should all of them without fail be put up in the portmanteau of the visitor this year to Ober-Ammergau.*

First, then, for the origin of the play, which shall be told in the words of Mr. MacColl:

> In the year 1633 there raged in the neighbourhood of Ammerthal (Valley of the Ammer) a deadly plague which threatened to depopulate the districts infected. These were Partenkirchen, Eschelohe, and Kohlgrub—all separated from Ammerthal by a rampart of mountains. The Ammerthalers took every precaution to protect their valley from the dread contagion, but without avail. A native of Ammerthal, who worked during the summer in Eschelohe as a day-labourer, evaded the quarantine, and entered the valley by a secret path in order to celebrate among his family an annual church festival. He carried the infection with him, and on the second day after his arrival he was a corpse. In three weeks eighty-four of the small community were carried off, and the mourning and terrified survivors, despairing of human succour, made their supplication to God, and registered a solemn vow that if He heard their cry, and removed the plague, they would represent every ten years, "for thankful remembrance and edifying contemplation, and by

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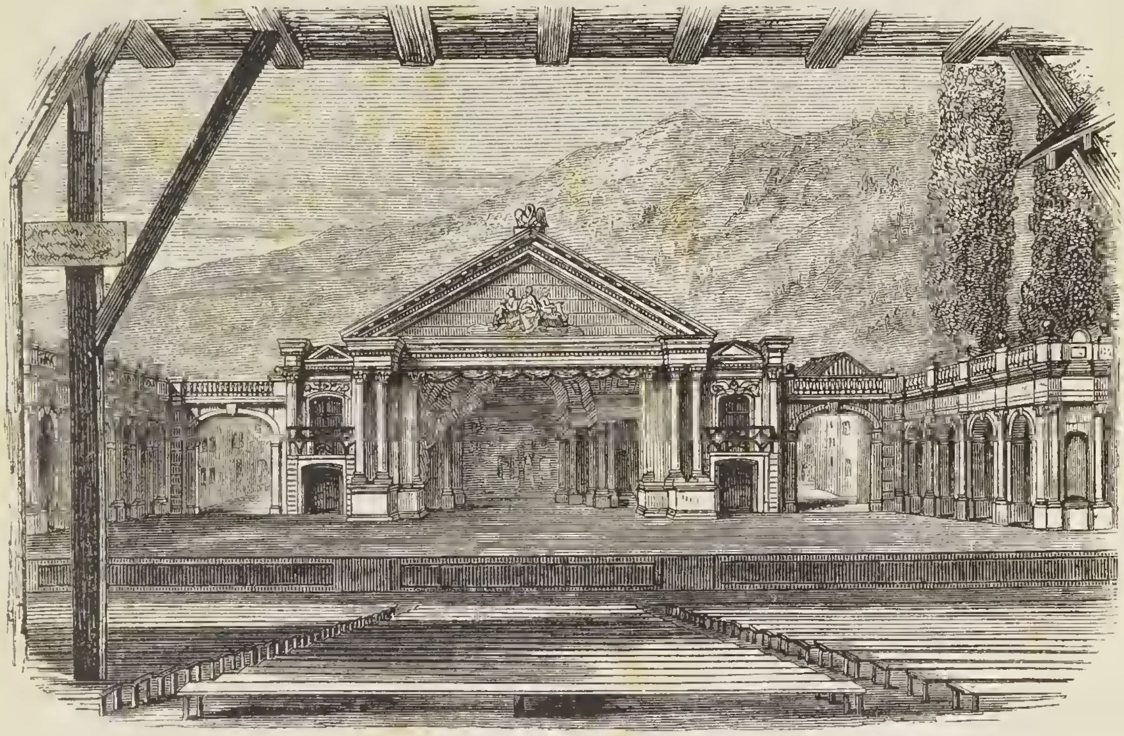
* "Art in the Mountains:" the Story of the Passion Play. By Henry Blackburn. Sampson Low and Co.

"The Ober-Ammergau Passion Play" (reprinted from *The Times*). By the Rev. Malcolm MacColl. Rivingtons.

"Recollections of Ober-Ammergau in 1871." By H. N. Oxenham. Rivingtons.

the help of the Almighty, the sufferings of Jesus, the Saviour of the world." So runs the local tradition, which goes on to say that the prayer was heard, "for not a single person died of the plague after the vow was made, though many were infected with it." In the following year the fifist fulfilment of the vow was made, and our Lord's Passion was first represented in Ober-Ammergau, and has been continued since then without intermission every ten years. The sanction of the King has to be obtained before each representation, and is given as a matter of course. Within the last fifty years the Play has been improved both in the text and in the music; in the former by one of the monks of the Ettal Monastery named Ottmar Weis, in the latter by Rochus Dedler, who was born in the year 1779, became the schoolmaster of Ober-Ammergau in 1802, and died in 1822. His bones lie in the village churchyard, but his soul still lives amongst the grateful villagers in the sweet music which he bequeathed to them, and which they resolutely refuse to publish. They will not suffer a single melody or bar of it to bo copied. *Libretti* of the play may be had in abundance, but these do not contain a note of the music, and of the words only the chorus songs. The rest is committed to writing and learned by heart, but is kept secret among the performers. Visitors are forbidden to take notes during the performance.



THE THEATRE AT OBER-AMMERGAU.

I have spoken before of the earnestness and devotion with which the villagers approach their task in the matter of preparation and rehearsals; but, in order to convey it more readily to my readers, I cannot do better than give an account given by a German gentleman of a visit to Ober-Ammergau during the rehearsals of the play in 1870. It is contained in Mr. Blackburn's book:

> It was during Lent of the year 1870 that Herr Schmid first startled us, in the pages of the *Gartenlaube*,* with an account of a visit he had paid to Ober-Ammergau

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* See *Pall Mall Gazette*, June 10, 1870.

it was this narrative, and the reports that came from time to time into Munich, of the doings at this mountain village, that decided us to start in a few days for the mountains, so as to be present at the performance on Whit Sunday.

Herr Schmid's accounts of one of the rehearsals is so graphic that we shall do well to preface our own experiences with a short extract. Starting whilst the snow was on the ground—on rough roads, past the frozen lake of Starnberg, and through gloomy forests of firs—he arrives one evening, in almost total darkness, at the Schabenwirth, the principal hostelry of the village. Here he was greeted by the sound of a first-rate instrumental band, numbering thirty performers. It was the orchestra, practising the intended prelude of welcome to the audience. The company which formed the audience consisting principally of young men, some of whom were playing quietly at cards, and had otherwise the air of wandering artists. These listeners were mostly intending performers in the play, and, like three-fourths of the Ammergauers, were wood-carvers by trade ; whence perhaps a certain air of picturesqueness which they had imparted to the trimming of their hair and beards.

The following morning was a Sunday, and having ascertained that during Lent there was a Sunday acting-rehearsal every week, besides a Thursday musical rehearsal, Herr Schmid hastens to the abode of the parish priest to try whether it were possible to get a view of the proceedings.

After some difficulty, he obtains the necessary permission, and in the evening is conducted to a long low apartment, formed by throwing several rooms into one. At a table sits the pastor, Herr Müller, together with his predecessor in the cure, Herr Daisenberger, the author of the present text and arrangement of the Passion Play, who, after a quarter of a century's active work in the Ammergau, has retired upon a small stipend to remain, *emeritus*, in the home to which his heart is given. A villager, with the book open before him, sits ready to act as prompter if needful. The visitor retires softly to a window, and at once feels the magic spell upon him. He shall now tell his own impressions.

"I had already witnessed and borne a part in many stage rehearsals ; but at the first glance I saw plainly that this was something very different from a play in the ordinary sense. It was evident, too, whence proceeded the very remarkable effect which the dramatic performance of these simple villagers unquestionably produces on the beholder. In the first place, I felt convinced that the solemnity of the subject, the thrilling import of its mighty tragedy, was present with and above all technical preparations, and took from them the haste, restlessness, and distraction inseparable from dramatic preliminaries in general. These performers are not occupied with the thought that they are acting a play, setting forth, as it were, a representation of certain transactions apart from their own lives. Rather they are putting their whole selves into their assumed parts—they give the utterance of their own simple feeling without semblance of art or study. And in this absence of premeditated effect, this spontaneousness, lies the secret of their truth to nature, and of the impression produced on the beholder. No manager here conducted the arrangement of the scenes, no inspector watched over their succession ; nor was any such functionary needed, for all the actors listened and looked their parts when mute, or spoke and moved when the right moment came. Scarcely twice had the prompter to interpose with some trifling correction. Every speech was delivered with precision, every gesture was in order, and, notwithstanding the unfavourable conditions of the temporary stage, even the crowded scenes were performed with a method and accuracy perfectly astonishing."

In the evening Herr Schmid found himself in a small social circle of the villagers. They had got over their shyness of the stranger, and were ready to make him one of themselves with cordial hospitality. There sat the future Peter of the drama, a perfect model for a sculptor, with his bald head, full beard, and venerable aspect ; Judas, with pale, shrewd face and intense eyes ; Annas, with iron-gray beard and thoughtful melancholy expression. He described them all as simple, open-hearted, sensible men, content with their moderately gainful trade, whose placid lives are marked to them by successive epochs of the Passion Play.

Mr. Oxenham must describe the one great harrowing scene in the Passion Play, before which everything else is insignificant, and which, by its intensity and solemnity, moves so many in the vast audience to tears :

There are no tableaux between this and the Crucifixion scene—I presume, in order to avoid any break of continuity—but the chorus advance in black (instead of coloured) mantles over their white tunics, black sandals, and black woven into their crowns. An address, warning the spectators of the solemn spectacle to follow, is recited in monotone by the Choragus, but towards the close it passes into song, and is finally taken up by the whole chorus, in the words, "Oh bring to this love of His pious contrition of heart for an offering on the altar of the Cross," etc. During the latter part the dull heavy strokes of a hammer are heard, and when the curtain rises Christ is seen nailed to the Cross, which lies flat on the ground in the centre, surrounded by a crowd of priests, soldiers, and others. The crosses of the two thieves have already been erected on either side, and they are roped to them, their arms hanging back over the transverse beams. And now the central Cross is rudely dragged along the ground, lifted and fixed into its place with a jerk which seems to agonise His every limb. It is after this, and not, as usually represented, while the Cross is still lying on the ground, that He utters the first of the seven words, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." His face is deadly pale, and His body seamed with lines of blood. It is difficult to believe He is not actually nailed to the Cross; no trace of any ligament can be discerned. The remainder of the seven words follow in succession, but the fifth ("I thirst") was spoken between the "Behold thy Mother" and the "Eloi, Eloi," immediately before the sponge was raised to His lips, which he just touched and then turned away. When He has uttered in a loud voice the last commendation of His soul into the Father's hands, and bowed His head in death, the sound of thunder is heard, and a messenger hurries in, breathless, to inform Annas and Caiaphas, who are standing on the right, watching the accomplishment of their purpose, that the veil of the Temple is rent—an announcement which only increases their bitter hatred, and Caiaphas turns with a muttered curse to the dead figure on the Cross. All this time, in ghastly unconcern at the awful tragedy enacting before their eyes, a group of four soldiers have been sitting on the ground directly in front of the Cross of the dead or dying God, jesting over His sufferings and dicing for His raiment. They had first torn the red mantle across the middle, and then they sat down and began throwing their dice for the seamless purple robe. It made one shudder to look at them; but then, too, I remembered the merciful tradition which has floated down eighteen centuries, that, for all for whom it was immediately offered, that dying intercession has had its perfect work; and that not one of those who smote, or pierced, or nailed Him to the Cross, but is a saint before His throne. I should have said before that the dialogue between the two thieves was omitted; but not, of course, the forgiveness of the penitent thief on the right. Meanwhile, Mary and St. John and the Magdalen are standing silently beneath the Cross. And now soldiers came up to break the leg of the two thieves, whose heads drop heavily on their breasts, and they were taken down from their crosses; but when the soldiers approached the Cross of Christ, the Magdalen pushed them back, and on seeing that he was already dead they desisted. But Longinus lifted his spear, and thrust it deliberately into the left side, making a long dark gash on the dead body. Of course, one knew it was not really blood, nor is it difficult to understand how this part of the action is effected; yet so lifelike is the whole impression of the scene, that I could hardly suppress a cry of horror at this crowning indignity. Joseph and Nicodemus now appear with their order from Pilate, and are bitterly reviled by Annas and Caiaphas, and then in the deep stillness which follows the withdrawal of the priests, the deposition from the Cross takes place. Two ladders are placed against it, one before and one behind, on which Joseph and Nicodemus mount; a long white band of linen is stretched across the breast and under the arms of the dead Christ, hanging over the transverse beams of the Cross on either side, so as to sweep the ground, and thus helping to support the weight of the sacred body. The crown of thorns is then carefully removed, and the nails are drawn, or rather wrenched, out of the hands and feet, first with an instrument, and then by the hand—slowly, and, as it seems, with considerable difficulty; and the arms are laid on Joseph's shoulders, who slowly and tenderly carries the body down the ladder, and lays it with the head in Mary's lap. The Cross stands out bare in the evening light, with the long linen band still hanging over it. This deposition scene, whether regarded in a devotional or an artistic aspect, is truly marvellous. It is certainly *not* taken, as is sometimes said, from Rubens's picture, from which it differs in many material particulars. The burial follows, the sepulchre is closed up in front, and all is over.

So much for the past, and now concerning the on-coming performance of 1880. I find that the Passion Play will be given throughout the spring and summer season on the following dates:

Dates of Performance, 1880.

MAY.		JUNE.			
Sunday	16th	Sunday	6th	Sunday	20th
,, ...	23rd	,, ...	13th	Thursday ...	24th
,, ...	30th	Wednesday ...	16th	Sunday	27th
JULY.		AUGUST.		SEPTEMBER.	
Sunday	4th	Sunday	1st	Sunday	5th
,, ...	11th	,, ...	8th	Wednesday ...	8th
,, ...	18th	,, ...	15th	Sunday	12th
,, ...	25th	,, ...	22nd	,, ...	19th
		,, ...	29th	,, ...	26th

I append a programme of the scenes and tableaux of the Passion Play and a list of the principal performers in the years 1870 and 1880, as well as some very useful information for travellers, compiled by Mr. Blackburn:

Programme of the Scenes and Tableaux of the Passion Play.

Part I.

TABLEAUX.

1. Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise.
2. Angels bring glad tidings.
3. The sons of Jacob conspire against Joseph.
4. Tobias takes leave of his father.
5. The bride, surrounded by her handmaidens, laments the loss of the bridegroom.
6. King Ahasuerus, Esther, and Vashti.
7. The children of Israel receiving
8. manna from Heaven.
9. Joseph sold to the Midianites.
10. Adam tilling the ground.
11. Joab embraces Amasa and kills him.

SCENES.

1. Christ enters Jerusalem, expels the money-changers from the Temple, and departs from Bethany.
2. The Court of the Sanhedrim take counsel together to put Christ to death.
3. The journey to Bethany and the supper at the house of Simon—Christ takes leave of his mother and his friends.
4. The journey to Jerusalem—Judas tempted to betray the Christ.
5. The Last Supper.
6. Judas sells his Master.
7. The Garden of Gethsemane—Judas betrays his Master—Christ is seized by the soldiers and led away.

Part II.

TABLEAUX.

12. Micaiah the prophet before Ahab and Jehoshaphat.
13. Naboth stoned to death.
14. Job, seated by a well, taunted by his friends.
15. The death of Abel.
16. Daniel before the court of Darius.
17. Samson in the Temple of Dagon.
18. Joseph's brethren show the coat of many colours to Jacob.
19. Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac.
20. Joseph richly clad, surrounded by the Egyptians.
21. The scapegoat.
22. Abraham and Isaac go up to Mount Moriah.
23. Moses shows the brazen serpent to
24. the Israelites in the Wilderness. (*No tableau.*)
25. Jonah and the whale.
26. Passage of the Red Sea.
27. The Ascension into Heaven.

SCENES.

8. Christ brought before Annas.
9. Christ before Caiaphas—Peter's denial of his Master, and repentance.
10. The remorse and death of Judas.
11. Christ before Pilate.
12. Christ before Herod.
13. Pilate orders Christ to be scourged—He is buffeted, and crowned with thorns.
14. Christ condemned to death.
15. The Way of the Cross—Women bewail their Lord.
16. The Crucifixion.
17. The Resurrection—Christ appears to Mary Magdalene.

Hallelujah Chorus.

List of the Principal Performers in 1870 and in 1880.

	1870.	1880.
The Christus	Joseph Mair	Joseph Mair.
Peter	Jacob Hett	Jacob Hett.
John	Johannes Zwink	Johannes Zwink.
Judas	Gregor Lechner	Gregor Lechner.
Caiaphas	Johann Lang	Johann Lang.
Pilate	Tobias Flunger	Thomas Rendl.
Herod	Franz Paul Lang	Johann Rutz.
Annas	Gregor Stadler	Sebastian Deschler.
Nathaniel	Paul Fröschl	Sebastian Lang.
Ezekiel	Sebastian Deschler	Rochus Lang.
Joseph	Thomas Rendl	Martin Oppenrieder.
Nicodemus	Anton Haafer	Franz Steinbacher.
Barabbas	Johann Allinger	Johann Allinger.
The Maria	Franziska Flunger	Anastasia Krach.
Mary Magdalene	Josepha Lang	Maria Lang.
Leader of the Chorus	Johann Diemer	Johann Diemer.
Conductor of the Orchestra	Joseph Gutzjell	Jos. Alois. Kirschenhofer.

Information for Travellers.

The quickest and easiest route from England is by Belgium and the Rhine to Munich. The cost of the double journey between London and Munich (return tickets lasting thirty days) varies from £7 to £12 by railway; but it is possible to travel more economically *viâ* Rotterdam and the Rhine steamers.

From Munich to Murnau is 63 miles, a journey of about three hours by railway; from Murnau to Ober-Ammergau the distance is 24 kilometres (14 miles), partly over a steep mountain road. This latter part of the journey, from Murnau to Ober-Ammergau, need not cost more than 3*s.* or 4*s.*, as public conveyances meet the trains at Murnau.

There will be excursion trains on Saturdays from Munich (including the diligence to Ober-Ammergau) at moderate fares; and it is proposed this year to run a late train from Murnau, to enable travellers to sleep at Munich on the night of the play.

The performances commence at 8 a.m. and end at 5 p.m., with an hour's interval in the middle of the day.

The charges for admission to the theatre range from 1*s.* to 8*s.*; those at 5*s.*, 6*s.*, and 8*s.*, being numbered and reserved, should be engaged before arriving at Ober-Ammergau. The new theatre will accommodate nearly six thousand persons, the greater part being uncovered. There are 100 rows of seats, those at the back being raised and covered in. It is estimated that the new theatre and costumes have cost the commune more than £3,000; and that the number of persons engaged in the performances, including children, is nearly 700.

The difficulties of obtaining accommodation at Ober-Ammergau at the time of these performances have been rather exaggerated. Although Ober-Ammergau is a mountain village, it contains a large number of houses fitted up with beds on purpose for visitors. The majority of these houses are well built, clean, and quiet, and there are uniform charges for beds and living throughout the village—5*s.* or 6*s.* a day. These charges, as well as the admission to the theatre, are not increased on the most crowded days.

It is advisable to write beforehand to Ober-Ammergau to one of the principal persons in the village, stating what beds and places in the theatre are required; and also (to insure accommodation) to arrive there not later than the previous Friday. On one occasion, in June, 1870, when the writer was present, about two thousand persons were turned from the theatre, the majority having to sleep in waggons, in sheds, or on the ground, and to wait for a second performance, which took place on the Monday.

There is a central bureau in the village for providing accommodation for travellers (in connection with the principal hotels in Munich), but some of the best people to write to, direct, are Madame George Lang; Sebastian Veit; George Igwinck; J. G. Rutz; or Tobias Flunger. At the houses of George Lang and Sebastian Veit, French is spoken, but all letters and communications should be made, if possible, in German.

It should be stated that there is now telegraphic communication with the village of Ober-Ammergau, and that Messrs. Cook and Sons act as agents in London for securing accommodation.

The above remarks apply more especially to the four months in the summer of those years when the Passion Play is held at Ober-Ammergau; but as many people will probably visit the Bavarian highlands at other times, it may be useful to state that visitors can always stay in this pleasant mountain village, either at the inn, or at the house of Widow Lang.

Ober-Ammergau is only a few miles from Partenkirch, Mittenwald, and the old post-road between Munich and Innsbruck. Travellers from the south can reach Ober-Ammergau from Innsbruck in one day, by diligence. Posting is expensive and unnecessary, as there is a public conveyance daily to within five miles of the village. There are good inns at Murnau, Partenkirch, and Mittenwald.

Travellers in Switzerland (or coming from the west) may approach Ober-Ammergau by the Lake of Constance to Lindau; and by railway to Kempten or Immenstadt. From Kempten it takes twelve or fourteen hours by the ordinary road; but is better to take two days, sleeping at Reute. There is a beautiful carriage-road thence through the King's Forest (by the Plansee) to Ober-Ammergau.

We should add, for the information of those who might prefer a novel and primitive method of travelling, that a large raft is floated down the river to Munich about once a week in the summer, by which travellers can return to Munich from Ober-Ammergau for a few pence.

"The Homes of Ober-Ammergau," by Eliza Greatorex, published by J. Albert, of Munich, contains an interesting account of the home life of the people, with sketches made in the district during a long visit. H. B.

I have been asked, also, to publish the following letter from Mr. E. McQueen Gray, who has just written an admirable pamphlet for the guidance of visitors, and who has undertaken to arrange for the comfort of all who journey to the Bavarian highlands:

Sir,—I beg to inform you that I have been invited by Mr. Max Schimon (landlord of The Four Seasons Hotel), on behalf of the hotel-keepers of Munich, to undertake the arrangements for the reception of visitors to Ober-Ammergau during the coming summer.

This proposal having been accepted by me, and confirmed by the Burgomaster and Commune of Ober-Ammergau, I intend to take up residence at Ober-Ammergau on the 25th instant.

The contemplated arrangements are as follows: A complete list of the available accommodation in the village is being prepared, and will be ready by the time I return to Ober-Ammergau. Each house in Ober-Ammergau bears a distinguishing number, and the description of accommodation in each house will be specified; those houses in which meals are provided being placed first. Applicants will be allotted to the various houses in order of registration; we will thus be able to see to what extent the accommodation in the village has been taken before the day of performance, and if it be found advisable to repeat the representation on the following day, notices to that effect will be telegraphed to Murnau, Innsbruck, and Munich. By this means the overcrowding which was of such frequent occurrence in 1871 will be in great measure avoided.

The charges for lodging vary in the private houses from two to four marks per night, and in the inns from four to five marks, for each person, but the accounts must be settled by the visitors themselves, as I undertake no responsibility on this score.

When ordering accommodation, it will be necessary to specify the kind of seats that are to be reserved for the visitor. The prices of the covered seats are eight, six, and five marks each respectively, according to position. I need hardly say that it will be wise to choose those highest in price. Should it happen that the whole of the class of seats for which I receive an order are already engaged, I will reserve those next in value for the visitor, pending instructions to the contrary.

I must earnestly request all who can conveniently do so, to arrive at Ober-Ammergau two days before the performance, for several reasons. There will be more room for them in Munich on their way through; the following day may be very pleasantly spent in making excursions in the neighbourhood; the bed on the day but one before the performance will have to be paid for in any case; and finally, all the tickets which have not been claimed by the visitors up to five o'clock on Saturday afternoon will be sold at the office to all comers. Those who do not intend to arrive at Ober-Ammergau until the night before the performance must either run the risk of not getting a seat, or must send me the money necessary to purchase the seats with beforehand.

Each request for accommodation and seats must contain all necessary particulars as to the sex and requirements of the parties concerned, the date of arrival and departure, etc., and must be accompanied by a remittance of *seven shillings per person.* From this amount two shillings per person will be deducted by me to meet the expenses of correspondence, salaries, printing, etc., and the remaining five shillings will be deposited with the householder to whom the visitor is allotted, who will credit him with the same on his arrival. Should the person ordering rooms not arrive, the amount deposited with the householder will be forfeited, unless some other person be found to take the depositor's place.

On receiving the above-mentioned deposit, two vouchers will be forwarded to the intending visitor, one of which acknowledges the receipt of the deposit, and gives the number of the house at which accommodation has been provided, and the other describes the character and number of the seats which have been allotted to him. On arriving at Ober-Ammergau he will present these vouchers to the landlord, who will be prepared to receive him, and to hand over to him the tickets for the performance.

At a meeting held by the principal posting proprietors at Murnau on the occasion of my visit there on the 30th ultimo, the fare for a two-horse carriage to Ober-Ammergau and back was fixed at sixty marks, to include Trinkgeld, with this proviso, that if the occupants remain in the carriage during the ascent of the Ettaler Berg, the cost of the extra horses (Vorspann), which will then become necessary, will have to be defrayed by the hirers. The price of the Vorspann is five marks. I am prepared to engage carriages, if so instructed, on receipt of the full amount, but as it may be difficult for a traveller when at a distance to decide by what train he intends to arrive at Murnau, it will be better for him to wait until he arrives at Munich, when the hotel-keeper there can telegraph to me the necessary instructions. He will then receive from the hotel-keeper a set of red vouchers, each bearing the same number, to be used as follows: The first is to be given to the driver, who will affix it to the carriage; the second to my agent at Murnau; and the third is to be kept by the hirer. By this means the traveller can distinguish his carriage among a hundred others by referring to the number on the voucher. The coachmen of the carriages engaged beforehand will be distinguished by a scarlet favour pinned to the right coat-sleeve.

A person employed by me will accompany the first train from Munich to Murnau on the two days preceding each performance, and will remain at Murnau for the purpose of facilitating the transit.

I remain, your very obedient Servant,
EDWARD MCQUEEN GRAY.

SOMERSET HOUSE CHAMBERS, 142, STRAND, LONDON.
April 10th, 1880.

In conclusion, let me quote Mr. Oxenham's final impressions, which may well be taken to heart by such as object to the ceremony, and those who fear for its continuance, owing to its growing popularity. The events of the year 1880 will decide that question one way or another, and whatever happens, I think I can promise the readers of THE THEATRE a full, complete, and exhaustive account of the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play, with such illustrations as I am able to obtain.

To objections against dramatising the Passion altogether, as derogatory to the sacredness of the subject, this is hardly the place to reply at any length. That such representations become profane in themselves and injurious to all concerned if enacted or witnessed in any other than a purely religious spirit, is too evident to require any discussion. And it may not unnaturally be feared that, in an age like our own, the growing popularity of the Ammergau *Passionsspiel* will eventually prove fatal to its continuance. But I venture to think that the necessity for abolishing it, should it ever arise, will be matter of very deep regret, and few of those who have been this year at Ober-Ammergau will be disposed to say that it has arisen yet. To the simple and devout denizens of that mountain village this decennial solemnity is evidently still, as it may long remain, not an occasion of histrionic display or pecuniary profit, but, to quote the words of the pious editor of one of the most recent text-books of the play, a religious duty, from which they neither can be nor wish to be dispensed by any earthly authority. Their ordinary occupation as wood-carvers, chiefly of devotional objects, crucifixes, and the like, tends, no doubt, to develop both their religious and their artistic instincts; and the study of the great religious painters, which is expressly enjoined on those destined for the principal parts in the play, and above all for the highest, comes natural to them as a labour of love. They are engaged during the nine years' interval, not only in rehearsing, but, as the writer already quoted forcibly expresses it, "living into" their several characters. By those alike who enact and who attend it, the performance is regarded as an acceptable homage to Him, whose Passion is visibly represented in the Play, as it is mystically represented in the Mass. In saying this I am simply stating facts. I wish I could believe in the literal truth of another assertion of the same writer, that "all who have hitherto witnessed this *Passionsspiel* have gone home nobler and better men." Of very many it is unquestionably true, and if it is not true of all, the fault is entirely their own. We know that holy things may be approached in an unholy spirit; and those who come to Ammergau from mere idle curiosity or artistic dilettantism, or, still worse, if any such there be, to mock the simple earnestness of a faith they disrelish or despise, had, to say the least, far better stay away. But none who are content to witness the drama in the spirit of those who enact it, as a real, though minor fulfilment of the apostolic injunction to show forth the Lord's death till He comes again, need fear that their visit will prove other than a privilege and a blessing.

Wenn du das grosse Spiel der Welt gesehen,
So kehrst du reicher in dich selbst zurück.

C. S.

STAGE SLANG IN FRANCE.

By Walter H. Pollock.

NOT very long ago that accomplished and versatile writer, M. Jules Claretie, produced one of his liveliest and most telling novels, called "Le Troisième Dessous." A good many English people interested in French literature were puzzled by this unfamiliar title, and it is possible that many French readers, who were not well up in theatrical parlance, may have been equally at a loss. Those who read the novel, which deals largely with theatrical life, would in the end have discovered for themselves that *le dessous*, first, second, or third, corresponds to the mazarine floor of the English stage. They might, however, have found this out without reading M. Claretie's clever novel, by turning to a little book called "La Langue Théâtrale" (Paris: Arnaud et Labat), composed by M. Alfred Bouchard, which contains full information on all matters of this kind. Under the heading *Dessous* M. Bouchard writes that the *dessous* of the theatre generally consists of three stages, or divisions, one above the other, named first, second, and third, in order of descent. Things are so arranged that there is free vertical space for the working of the *trappes* and *trappillons*. Turning the page, one comes upon the word *Directeur*. This is defined, "Autocrate, pacha, sultan, placé, jadis, en vertu d'un privilége et à ses risques et périls, à la tête d'une exploitation théâtrale. Depuis la liberté des théâtres il n'y a plus de privilége *de droit*, mais il existe en partie de *fait*, surtout en province, où les salles appartiennent à la ville et à des particuliers. Le privilége ne vient plus du ministre, il émane de la mairie ou des propriétaires de l'immeuble." "Of course," M. Bouchard says, "in Paris, where there are many theatres of many styles, the director is of comparatively little consequence in the eyes of the public, but in the provincial towns with one theatre the play-going public depends entirely upon him. If a director in these conditions is ill-educated and has little taste, which is not uncommon, you will have a bad *répertoire*; if the director is a used-up actor, which is common, he will produce all the rubbish that he has formerly played in; if he himself still acts, so much the worse for you. He will think only of his own part and will look out for bad actors, worse even than himself, as foils to him; and the same thing will happen if it is his wife who acts." In fact the race of Crummleses is not more unknown in France than it is or was in England.

Under the head *Scène* is an elaborate description of the stage of a French theatre, with its mechanism and arrangements. This is so full of technicalities that to render it into English would involve a long parenthetical explanation at every second line; but some general notion of it may be given. The theatre is naturally divided into two parts, the *salle* or auditorium and the *scène* or stage. The law which regulates theatrical buildings enacts that these shall be completely separated by strong masonry, and that an iron curtain shall be ready to let down in case of fire. The stage has a slight rake, and is longitudinally divided into *côté cour* on the spectator's right hand, and *côté jardin* on his left These names were formerly *côté roi* and *côté reine*, and referred to the two royal boxes; but after the Revolution the present names, referring to the Cour de Carrousel and the Jardin des Tuileries, were substituted at the Français and adopted all through theatrical France. Transversely there are more divisions. The front of the stage, on a level with the float, is called *face*, the extreme background *lointain*. Between the float and the *manteau d'arlequin* is the *avant-scène*. (The *manteau d'arlequin* is the space between the curtain and the first *plan* of the stage; so called because in the old Italian comedy Arlequin made his entrances there. It is occupied in many theatres by boxes reserved for the actors, the firemen on duty, and for the lime-light men.) Between the *avant-scène* and the back are the *plans*—from five to twelve in number—which correspond to the grooves of an English theatre, except that a French stage has no grooves, properly so called. The whole stage can be broken up at will; and there are no such things as flats, the scenery, except that which comes up and down the *trappillons*, working on strong movable posts. The space between two *plans* is called a *rue*. The movable stage is composed of *trappes* and *trappillons*, the borders of which are supported by strong uprights which form the framework of the first, second, and third *dessous*. The use of the *trappes* is obvious; the *trappillons*, which are much narrower, are for the ascent and descent of scenery. The *trappe Anglaise*, "dont le nom indique l'origine," can be arranged vertically, horizontally, or obliquely, at will, and is, in fact, the vampire trap of the English stage. This trap was, we learn from Mr. Planché's "Recollections," first invented for his version of

"Le Vampire;" and it will thus be seen that the French stage-carpenters got at it in a curiously roundabout way. Next to the heading, *Trappe Anglaise,* comes the curious phrase *Travailler* (*se faire*), which, being interpreted, means to deliberately court being hissed for some whimsical motive. By way of illustration M. Bouchard tells us how a certain Rosambeau, whose pranks would fill a volume, once appeared at Caen as Orestes in "Andromaque," wearing the complete costume of a general of the French army. He was not unnaturally hissed as soon as he came on the stage. At this he walked calmly down to the lights, and said, "If you dislike my costume, you must blame not me but the manager. Let me read you out my engagement." He then read out, "M. Rosambeau jouera en chef et sans partage, dans la tragédie, la comédie, et l'opéra, les rois, les grands amoureux, et tous les premiers rôles *en général.*" The result, luckily for him, was the substitution for hisses of the burst of laughter on which he had counted. However, *ne fait ce tour qui veut.* I remember hearing signs of disapproval when one of the first of modern operatic basses, Herr Rokitansky, forgetting that he was new to the public of whom Lablache was the spoiled child, introduced some English gag of Lablache's in the part of Leporello. *Tringle* is a strong board on which are ranged pistol-barrels, connected with a slow-match, which are employed for the effect of file-firing and so on, while a *fusillade* "à la cantonnade"—that is at the wing—is indicated by means of an enormous rattle.

Turning back to the earlier part of the book, we find *auteur* amusingly defined as "Machine humaine chauffée avec du génie, de l'esprit, et du savoir-faire pour fabriquer tragédies, comédies, drames, vaudevilles, revues, voire même des *ours* et des *fours.*" *Ours* is the technical term for a bad piece which a manager produces against his better judgment; to "faire four" is to count upon a success and find it a dead failure. In his explanation of another phrase, M. Bouchard proceeds to point out, not without a touch of pedantry, that the word *entr'acte* ought according to every rule of reason to be spelt *entr'actes.* A "*ferme*" is a set piece, "*se gourer*" is to make such a blunder as that of wearing diamonds in the part of a beggar, and "*gratter au foyer*" is to wait for long years in the hope of getting a good part. To gag is "*faire de la toile,*" and to pack the house is "*faire la salle.*" There is hardly an English theatrical phrase for which an equivalent cannot be found in M. Bouchard's little volume, at the end of which there is an interesting appendix on theatrical legislation.

The innumerable friends of "Our Boys" will be glad to hear that at the Vaudeville such a hit has been made with Buckstone's clever and witty old play "Married Life." Mr. James Albery comes next with a comedy which is said to be the best he has ever written. If this turn out true, it will be applauded with both hands, for everyone enjoys a success at a popular theatre, managed by such favourites as Messrs. James and Thorne.

Poem for Recitation.

THE MIDSHIPMITE.

By Clement Scott.

"WELL! that's a woman I pity! Get out of your easy-chair,
Look out of the window; that woman in black with glory of red-gold hair."
"Why does she carry a primrose cross, and what has her misery been?"
"She has only lost her child, my lad, and is going to Kensal Green."

We prate of our little troubles, we men of muscle and brain;
We curse if our pipes of peace won't draw, and howl at the wind and rain,
And those of our band who scribble a bit are instantly down in luck,
If they're stabb'd in the back by an ignorant fool who hasn't a grain of pluck.

It's grim to feel you're honest, no doubt, possessing a soul to save,
When editors bribe some dissolute cad to hound you as cheat and knave;
'Tis God will winnow the false and true, who knows what our sins have been!
But think of poor innocent Margaret Gray, who is walking to Kensal Green.

What is her story? Well, light your pipe, and sit you down in your chair.
Two chapters—one, it is headed, "Of Love," the other is marked "Despair."
I have seen some joy, but the Park at Knole was never in spring so gay
As when Margaret Welsh in Sevenoaks Church was married to Bernard Gray!

'Twas a runaway match in the Weald of Kent that was blest by the parson prim;
His life was given to art—the stage; and hers was given to him:
Never a man have I known so pure and never a girl so brave
As were married that day in Sevenoaks Church when the primrose covered the grave!

They talk of love in an empty way; but this was the crown of life
When Bernard seemed in a dream and shook at the touch of his sweet voiced wife.
Whenever they kiss'd their eyes for love were brimming with tears of joy,
And the prize of happiness came next spring with the birth of their baby-boy.

What had they done to deserve God's wrath? In the old mysterious way
Death stretch'd his fingers out and felt for the heart of Bernard Gray.
Life was too happy for him, poor lad! he'd been fading for years
they said;
And the mother and child were asleep one night when Bernard Gray
lay dead!

Down like an avalanche swept despair through the house where love
had smil'd,
Crushing the innocent mother alone by the side of her only child—
As you make your bed you must tumble down, is the rule of our
worldly life,
And there wasn't a soul to pity the fate of the destitute actor's wife.

For six long years, as I live, 'tis true, in the midst of the city's din,
She slaved and starved for her baby-boy, and her soul was free from sin;
And at last they said for the actor's child they had found on the stage
a part,
So she said, "The gift that an artist gave I will dedicate pure to art."

They took him away from his mother, and her heart was sick and sore,
Though her baby-boy was the life and soul of "Her Majesty's Pinafore;"
Whenever the theatre rang with cheers and echoed with wild delight,
A heart in the gallery shook with fear for the fate of the Midshipmite.

For the boy was odd, old-fashioned, and over-clever, 'twas said,
He was full of the strangest fancies, and complained of an aching head;
And one day, half in earnest, and possibly half in fun,
He ask'd, "Who will help us, mother, when the 'Pinafore's' ceased
to run?"

'Twas the close of a heartless winter that chang'd to a cheerless spring,
With wind in the east that struck with a chill the child at the draughty
wing,
When the mother found, to her horror, the boy was too ill to sup,
And he said in his curious manner, "The 'Pinafore' run is up!

"Give me a kiss, my mother, and put me away to bed,
For my limbs they ache; I shiver; I've pains in my throbbing head,
I feel to-night so weary." And out of his tuneful store
He murmured the airs, in a childlike way, of "Her Majesty's Pinafore."

"Oh, say that you love me, darling!" she whispered, pale with fears;
But he murmured, "Hardly ever," as he kissed away her tears;
And then, as a nightmare vision the mind of a sleeper haunts,
He said, "You'll be kind to my cousins, my sisters, and my aunts."

On the ship that had been his playground he sailed to his rest at last,
With a cheer for his baby comrades as he clung to the yielding mast;
And he moaned out, rack'd with torture, as the sand in the hour-glass ran,
"Well, in spite of all temptation, your boy is an Englishman!"

* * * * * *

They buried the little sailor, quite close to his father's side,
Seven years from the day when in Sevenoaks Church his mother was made a bride.
So there's the story of that which is! God knows what might have been;
And this is the reason why Margaret Gray is walking to Kensal Green!

THE POOR (WALKING) GENTLEMAN.

By J. Palgrave Simpson.

It was by chance I met him. I was rambling alone in one of the most picturesque parts of England; and I had resolved on rather a long walk, from one point of vantage to another. The country was charming; but, nevertheless, my spirit began to flag; and so I turned, for a little rest and refreshment, into a small roadside inn, which, though of but humble pretensions, was picturesque and inviting.

The table of the inn-parlour was already occupied by a young man, who was paying assiduous attention to a humble meal of bread and cheese, with a jug of beer by his side.

Although shy, I am of a rather sociable disposition. But I scanned the stranger first, before entering into conversation. He puzzled me. His dress was neat, and put on with a certain air of picturesque pretension, but yet decidedly shabby. His "wide-awake," which lay on the table, had rather a weather-battered air; and his boots—I took care to inspect them from a possible point of view—had evidently seen long and arduous service. He had a bright, good-looking, intelligent face, but rather worn and hollowed, as if by care, or want, or sorrow, or fatigue. He could not be a tramp: his whole aspect was far removed from that type. No! there was an unmistakably gentlemanly air about him on closer inspection. I did not know what to make of him. But curiosity and a certain degree of interest prevailed; and, when my own refreshment was brought in, I pulled up my chair to the table and plunged into the usual desultory and commonplace conversation of strangers on British soil—the weather and the beauty of the scenery forming the staple elements, of course.

The young man was evidently pleased to have met with company; and as our conversation warmed up, I found him to be educated as well as intelligent. On the discovery that we were tramping on in the same direction, it was agreed that we should make our little excursion together. His "traps," he told me, he had sent on to the town, for which he was bound; and he added, with half a sigh and half a smile, that he was walking for economy's sake. As we left the inn, he took up a small bundle. "Only a few props," he said, with another half smile and a jaunty nod of the head. Did my ears deceive me? or what did he mean by "props"?

I found, as we strode on, that my companion, careworn as he looked, was cheery and pleasant, and had, what might be called, 'a pretty flow of fancy." As some remark fell casually from him relative to his position, which he qualified as "equivocal," I said, in rather an inquiring than a doubtful tone, "But at all events you are a gentleman."

"You have hit it," he replied; "I am a *walking* gentleman."

"A gentleman, who is walking. Yes!" I said.

"A gentleman who is walking is not necessarily a *walking* gentleman," he rejoined, with a strange smile, and his peculiar jaunty nod of the head.

I was at fault again.

"I see I must explain," he went on to say. And thus I learned that he was an actor, engaged in a travelling company, and that he filled, in the troupe, the position of the young lovers of second rank, the *deuxièmes amoureux* of the French stage, who are so strangely called, in English theatrical parlance, "walking gentlemen." This revelation made me very curious. I had a maniacal fondness for the stage and its exponents. So I ventured to interrogate him as to his position and prospects.

"I shall bore you terribly, I fear, if I speak of them," he answered, although obviously pleased by the evident interest I took in him.

I protested that I should be delighted to learn more; and so he began:

"The position of the walking gentleman—the *poor* walking gentleman—is a pitiable one. His salary is—well! feeble, to say the best of it—one-fourth, or perhaps still less, of that received by the light comedian or juvenile tragedian; and yet he has far more parts to play than those fortune-favoured individuals—three, or even four, in the same evening, perhaps. For each part he has to find a change of dress; he is sometimes obliged to supply two or three changes in one piece. His wardrobe must be necessarily extensive, however limited his salary may be; and in how many shifty ways has he to pinch himself in order to meet the requirements of his position—how many devices to eke out his store of gloves, and give the due polish to his boots! He is expected to be fully up to the standard of the fashion of the day, and to hold his place on the same high level of dress as the far more highly remunerated "light comedian" of whom he is generally supposed to be the intimate associate and friend in the pieces in which he plays with him. So much is this the case that 'Charles, his friend' (as supposed to be announced in the play-bills) has become the theatrical nickname of the poor walking gentleman."

"By-the-bye," he continued, suddenly checking his rather plaintive tone, and bursting into a chuckle of hilarity, "it once happened that the manager of a transpontine theatre in London, tired of placing perpetually in his bills the words, 'Charles,' or Frederick,' or whatever the name might be, 'his friend,' was on the look-out for some novel designation. He heard, by chance, the expression, 'arcades ambo;' he asked the meaning, and was answered, 'Oh, friends, of course.' On the next occasion appeared, on the bills of the theatre, the announcements: "Tom Sparkle, a man about town—Charles, his arcades ambo."

"You ought to know," he resumed, as soon as he recovered from the merriment this reminiscence had excited in him, "that, although the actors are expected to find their own modern clothes, the managements are obliged to supply all dresses in 'costume plays.' It must be a relief then, you may think, to the poor walking gentleman when he has a part 'cast' to him in a 'costume' piece. Alas! no such thing. The poor walking gentleman cannot escape his fate. He has probably only a small part to play; but still he has to find, out of his own scanty resources, all the requirements of his dress beyond the mere bare costume—his wigs, his shoes or boots, his tights, his lace, his buckles, his sword, his feathers, sometimes his cap, and a dozen other accessories to complete his attire. These are what we call our 'properties.' You heard me mention some of them just now as 'props,' which is our familiar phrase," and he tapped his bundle, the contents of which I should have been delighted to investigate.

"But still you have a pleasure in your art?" I inquired.

"I should have," he replied, rather sadly, "if I could think that what I do is really art. Generally speaking, you see, the parts allotted to the walking gentleman are utterly devoid of any marked character. There is nothing to represent—nothing to assume. He has to enact a gentleman, neither more nor less. To some of us even so colourless a part is difficult enough, to be sure. Perfect ease of manner is very hard to acquire on the stage."

"Well, if you know what you have to expect, you cannot experience much disappointment," I said, with a very ill-placed air of consolation.

"You think so—do you?" he resumed; "you are mistaken. Disappointment often comes. There are parts in which the walking gentleman may think, at first sight, and that he has the pull of it, that he is actually playing a light-comedy part, when in dashes the real light comedian, who puts an extinguisher at once on all his aspirations. Take, for instance, the part of Higgins, in the old farce of 'Boots at the Swan.' The walking gentleman, to whom it is cast, may dream, from his first scene, that he has at last obtained a character, which has a dash of brilliancy about it. Vain and bitter delusion! From the moment that Frank Friskly comes on the scene poor Higgins is not only shunted off the line, he is smashed, annihilated, and remains an utter nonentity to the fall of the curtain. In nine cases out of ten the part of the walking gentleman is a mere feeder."

"A feeder?" I exclaimed, with certain vague visions of stage breakfasts, dinners, and suppers, before my eye. "Not so bad, if they give you anything good to eat!"

My companion laughed outright.

"A feeder," he explained, when he had somewhat recovered from his burst of merriment, "is a character that feeds others, but gets no food himself. The term is well-known behind the footlights, although a mystery to the outer world, it seems. The feeder is the unfortunate actor who leads up, by his words, to all the good things the light comedian or the low comedian has put into his lucky mouth by the author, but never has a good or telling line to say himself; and thus he feeds his more fortunate fellow-actor with all the dainties. He gives, but gets himself in return no bit of fat—another theatrical slang expression for a taking speech. Everything he says leads to laughter, or gains applause—for others! He himself is left destitute and starving. For the most part he does nothing but ask questions, which elicit some smart repartee, striking witticism, or catching drollery. Did you ever see 'His First Champagne'? Probably not. It is out of date now. But I have had the misfortune to play the part of Captain Smith in it. The opening scene is full of wit and humour. It goes tremendously with the audience; but all the good speeches fall to the share of Dicky Watt, played by the low comedian. To that part come all the laughter, all the applause. Poor Captain Smith never has a crumb of all the sweets. He feeds throughout the happy Dicky Watts; he is the spoon who crams all the good things into his mouth. Yes! 'Spoon's the word.'"

"Well! but all this is trivial modern comedy or farce," I said. "Surely you are allowed a taste of Shakespeare sometimes?"

"Of course," he answered with a melancholy smile, which had a sweet expression of reproof about it. "Shakespeare! poor old Shakespeare! He was the greatest of the great among dramatists, no doubt; and I daresay he was an excellent manager, who knew how to write for his own company. But he had evidently no regard or consideration for the walking gentleman. Let us take Rosencrantz and Guilderstern, the younger son of old Sir Rowland, Benvolio, Vicentio, Lucentio, Solario, Solarino, and so many others, too numerous to mention. These are the Shakespearian walking gentlemen. They are necessary to the conduct of the scene, no doubt. But Shakespeare evidently did not think it worth his while to bestow on them any of his best lines—hard lines for them you will admit. No! poor old Will had but a small opinion of his walking gentlemen."

"And thus you never get a chance in Shakespeare?" I inquired, compassionately.

"Rarely," he rejoined—then added, after some hesitation: "Well the walking gentleman may probably be cast for Oliver, in 'As You Like It'—the 'green and gilded' as he is called, in allusion to his story of the snake. Here he at last obtains a little pull. He has a chance of three long speeches of some weight. He almost begins the play and then retires, it is true, for a considerable time. But there is a scene coming which is worth speaking and worth playing—his narrative to Rosalind of his adventure with Orlando in the forest. I defy him, if he has anything of the artist in his soul, not to think of this trying scene during his whole absence from the stage. He awaits with beating heart his cue for going on. There is an unwonted reward in store for him. The leading actress never fails to receive a call before the curtain at the end of the act; and the 'green and gilded' has to take her on. This is happiness nigh to rapture for the walking gentleman, who never has otherwise such honour awarded to him. I admit it is not he who is called. But what matter? He stands there to make his bow, and dream that he has a share in the applause.

"To be sure," he continued, "the long wait is a drawback in the part of Oliver; but there are other waits in other plays which are much harder nuts to crack. Look at Snake in 'The School for Scandal;' I have had to play him. He appears in the very first scene of the comedy, leaves the stage, and comes on no more until the very last. I myself have played my first scene, undressed, put on my ordinary suit, and taken a stroll or eaten my supper, then, after about two hours, returned, resumed my snake-skin, and confronted Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, against whom I was supposed to have been plotting all the while behind the scenes."

"It must be awfully monotonous work," I said pityingly, "to go on thus for ever and for ever."

"Well!" he said after a little reflection, "there are a few plums in the poor walking gentleman's pudding in the old comedies; but the pudding is very much like those one sees beside the reeking joints in a cookshop-window. The plums are few and far between. Now, Hastings, in 'She Stoops to Conquer,' is one of these walking gentleman's plums, and so is Charles in 'The Busy Body;' and in these little Jack Horner may think himself a very good boy. But you may search the whole pudding mass without finding many more such. No! to make the best of it, the position of the poor walking gentleman is but a pitiable one."

"Then why continue it?" I asked.

"The hope to rise in my profession bears me up," he replied, with a flash of pride in his eyes.

"How came you to adopt it I would ask, if I am not too indiscreet?" I inquired, rather hesitatingly.

"Can I say?" he answered. "Perhaps you do not comprehend, and never can be made to comprehend, the inborn passion for the stage, which amounts to a mania. My parents were in a good position in life. I received an excellent education. But, spite of all remonstrances, I would be an actor, and I am—for good or evil."

"For good I hope," I said fervently.

"Amen!" was his answer.

We shook hands; and, after a convivial symposium, we parted excellent friends.

I am glad to say that I was able to obtain for my poor walking gentleman an engagement in a London theatre, where his salary is considerably raised, and where he is mounting rapidly up the arduous ladder of his profession.

THE DEATH OF RACHEL.

By R. Davey.

NOT far from Cannes, a little back from the sea, and commanding a lovely view of the Gulf Joan, stands the Villa Sardou, in which Rachel breathed her last. Such is the greatness of genius, that millions who have never seen Rachel, and who do not even understand her language, feel the subtle influence of her powers, which have left their indelible influence on the modern stage. The mere mention of her name creates a keen desire to know something of her life. She lives still, because genius of the highest order never never dies. No spot is so full of her memories as the Villa Sardou at the Cannes. There the very walls and gardens speak to us of her last sufferings and agony, and her white-robed form still haunts the long alleys of orange and oleander trees.

It was my privilege, as a very small boy, to have seen her here, and to have also heard the following details of her death from the lips of the doctor who attended her.

Let me first describe the house I know so well in which she dwelt during the few months which preceded her demise. The Villa Sardou stands a little back from the sea on a slight eminence. A long avenue, bordered by monthly-rose bushes, leads to the villa-gate. Once within its iron rails, you find yourself in a paradise of palms, olives, orange and citron plants, laurels, and pine-trees, under the rich shade of which grow luxuriously, in early spring, tuberoses, violets, jonquils, and anemones. From the various terraces you behold the most enchanting of panoramas. The air is almost too heavily laden with perfume, and would be unbearably so were it not for the brisk sea-breezes which temper the atmosphere so delightfully in these happy regions. For many miles, spread around, fields pink with roses, golden with jonquils, snow-white with jasmine and tuberoses, and fragrant with mignonette; groves of orange-trees loaded down with waxy flowers, and shading a carpet on which you tread boldly as if it were common sand, made of Parma violets, kept ever fresh with running rills of clear water; the Eden-like plane, stretching out its hundreds of acres of flowers, cultivated for the perfumeries of Grasse, until their delicate tints become indistinct, and are lost in the slopes of a long range of grand rocky mountains, above which peer the snow-covered Alps. If tired of gazing at this entrancing scene, you have but to turn to the opposite quarter to behold a still more exquisite sight—the Mediterranean, blue as a sapphire shivering goldenly in the sunlight, and fanning with its silver wavelets the beautiful island of Lerins. To the left lies the infinitely varied outline of the Italian coast, and below you is Cannes, with her towers half hidden amidst dark pine-groves. To the right the three grand Estrelle mountains, called popularly "The Three Witches," on account of their weird outlines, rise abruptly from the sea. These mountains, which are separated from the rest of the Estrelle chain, are of unique appearance, and ascend like Cyclopean towers of granite to the height of four thousand feet. The effect they produce at sunset is particularly striking, for they intercept the rays of the sinking luminary, and start out in dark and bold relief against the crimsoned heavens. If the wind is high, this effect becomes still more extraordinary, for then their iron feet are lashed by the waves, which, catching the red glow upon their crests, look as if dyed with blood.

The villa itself is not large. It is built in such an irregular fashion that you are obliged to enter the drawing-room over a bridge, because half the house is, as it were, incrusted in the rocks of a hill, overlooking the sea, and the rest is built many feet below, on a level terrace. A little ante-chamber separates the salon from the dining-room. The salon is to the left, and the dining-room to the right; there is a bedroom between them. In the dining-room there is very little furniture. The tables and chairs are in that quaint stiff style of furniture architecture known as Louis XIII. On each side of the windows are two bronze statues, one of Sappho, and the other of the Roman Lucretia. On the pedestal of Sappho is this inscription: "Rachel to her friend Sardou;" on that of the Lucretia is written: "Ponsard to Rachel." Ponsard was the great classical dramatist of those days, who wrote for Rachel more than one noble tragedy. The bedroom is a very curious apartment. One very beautiful Gothic window, draped with creepers, opens on to the garden. The bed is all white and silver; at its foot stands that famous statue of Polymnia, at the sight of which Rachel was so frightened on her first arrival, and which inspired Matthew Arnold with some very well-known and noble verses. The ceiling is full of medallions executed in stucco, and representing Molière, Victor Hugo, Madame Becamier, Racine, Madame de Staël, and other celebrities. The chimney-piece is of white marble, style Louis XV. By the sofa is a prie-dieu of velvet, with a crucifix above it. Under the crucifix is a mysterious inscription, the secret meaning of which is lost. It reads thus:

H.
M. A.
D. M. C.
A.
N. C. J.

Some say that this has a religious signification, but others pretend that it contains the secret of Rachel's life. It is certain that it was placed there by her orders, and that in two other places which she inhabited similar inscriptions have been found. D. M. C., they say, means *Donne mon cœur* (give my heart) to N. C. J. (to Napoleon Charles Jerome)—evidently Prince Napoleon, who was at one time her lover, and who visited her during her last hours. I leave the enigma to be solved, for as yet its real signification has not been authentically discovered. The rest of the furniture of this chamber is simple and unpretending, and almost entirely of white wood, covered with white linen. A harp stands in one corner, and on the table are some books, with which the illustrious tragedienne beguiled the last months of her earthly career. Amongst these are the "Tour du Monde," the works of Chateaubriand, and an elaborate "Life of the Blessed Virgin." The "Imitation de Jésus Christ," which was in her hands when she died, is now in the possession of my friend M. Henri Maure, of Grasse, from whom I received many of the details I am about to relate concerning the last hours of the greatest of French tragic actresses. This gentleman is the son of the famous doctor who attended Mdlle. Rachel Félix to the end.

It is, I think, useless for me to enter into the particulars of Rachel's well-known career. Most people will remember that she caught cold whilst attending a great ceremony at the Jewish Synagogue of New York in 1855, and that, through her having unfortunately neglected it, it eventually settled on her lungs, and in a few months utterly destroyed the constitution of this very remarkable woman. A winter in Egypt, far from improving her health, seems rather to have aggravated her malady, and on her return to France she was advised to spend the following season of 1857 at Nice. M. Sardou, with exquisite politeness, at once placed his villa at her disposal, and, on her accepting it, M. Mario Néchard, the accomplished author of "La Fiammetta," who was inhabiting it at the time, withdrew to another residence near Cannes.

When Rachel left Paris she was fully aware that her last days were drawing near, and, before bidding a long farewell to her relatives and friends, she ordered her carriage and drove to the front of the Théâtre Français, where she stayed a long time contemplating the scene of her greatest triumphs. According to her sister, Mdlle. Sarah Félix, who was in the carriage with her, she did not, while thus employed, utter a single word; but the rapid changes of the expression on her wonderful countenance spoke a volume of mental sufferings and blighted hope. The journey to the south was performed by short and easy stages, and all went well until she reached Marseilles. From that city to Cannes and Nice in those days the journey had to be performed by carriage across the Estrelle Mountains, and was fatiguing even to persons in full health, but to an invalid of such a nervous and excitable temperament it was a perfect martyrdom. Two English ladies of distinction happened to be going to Nice at the same time as Mdlle. Rachel, but by diligence; whereas the actress and her sister occupied a splendid travelling-carriage. At Draguignan, one of the stations on the road, they fell in with Rachel and her sister Sarah, and breakfasted at the same table. A conversation sprung up, in which Rachel readily joined. I have often heard her person at this time of her life described by the ladies in question, who assured me that, although she was exceedingly emaciated and evidently dying, she still fascinated by the marvellous expression she could throw into her face and the extreme beauty of her dark but brilliant eyes, which retained their lustre until closed to open no more. A beggar-woman happened to come to the door of the inn just as Mdlle. Rachel was getting into her carriage. Touched by the story told her by the poor old creature, the great tragedienne opened her purse and gave her two or three gold pieces. This act of generosity exasperated Mdlle. Sarah, who was of a very parsimonious character; and she remonstrated sharply with her sister for her prodigality. Rachel quietly answered, "My sister, what does it matter? In a few days I shall be dead. Let me do what little good I can before I go. If the old woman is an impostor, so much the worse for her; God will judge with what intentions I gave her alms."

The lumbering diligence followed the fine carriage at a considerable distance, but overtook it some hours later in a wild and lonely pass in the Estrelles, many miles from any village or habitation, where the grandly-fitted-up vehicle lay on its side, a shattered and wheelless mass. On a rock sat Rachel, enveloped in a cloak and shivering with cold, while Sarah and the servants were in a state of consternation. Night was coming on and a thick mist gathering. One of the men galloped off in search of aid, but it would be hours before he returned. With true charity my two friends quitted the *coupé* and insisted upon Rachel and Sarah taking their places. The gratitude of both sisters was warmly expressed a few days afterwards in an autograph letter, accompanied by a splendid bracelet as a gift, from Rachel, to the younger of the ladies.

On arriving at Le Cannet she was received by several eminent persons, amongst others, by Dr. Maure, her physician. When she was introduced into her sleeping apartment she was seized with such a paroxysm of terror at the sight of the statue of Polymnia, that her attendants thought she had lost her reason. She stood before it, trembling from head to foot, her brow contracted, her eyes flashing, her usually pale cheeks glowing with an unnatural hectic flush. "Take away that dreadful statue; for God's sake, take it away!" she cried in the hollow voice which had so often struck awe into the hearts of thousands. "Take it away! It has sealed my doom, for under its shadow I shall surely die." In a few moments her delirium, for such it really appeared to be, so increased that, before the statue could be removed, she was in strong convulsions, which were succeeded by a death-like torpor. On recovering her senses, she explained the cause of the horror the statue had occasioned. On the night of July 8th, 1852, she had a dream, in which she fancied herself in a chamber all draped in white; in the centre stood a figure of Polymnia, which seemed to cry out to her: "Under the shadow of my hand thou shalt surely die." This story was no invention, as was afterwards found by reference to an entry in an old diary. Strange to relate, the statue could not be removed from the room, and was only concealed, without her knowledge, in an alcove behind her bed. This incident thus inspired Matthew Arnold:

Unto a lonely villa in a dell,
Above the fragrant warm Provençal shore,
The dying Rachel in a chair they bore
Up the steep pine-plumed paths of the Estrelle,
And laid her down in a stately room, where fell
The shadow of a marble Muse of yore—
The rose-crowned queen of legendary lore,
Polymnia—full on her death-bed, "'Twas well!"
The fret and misery of our northern towns
In this her life's last days we pass, our pain,
Our jangle of false arts, our climate's frowns,
Do for this radiant Greek-souled artist cease.
Sole object of her dying eyes remain
The beauty and the glorious art of Greece.

Rachel, like many exceedingly imaginative people, was given to what in other persons would be called lying. She would at times tell the most extraordinary untruths, and in perfect good faith; so that her brother Raphael once told me it was difficult to sift out the truth from the falsehood in what she said. If she liked people, she imagined and related a thousand agreeable anecdotes about them; and, if she hated them, any number of enormities to illustrate their evil qualities. At Le Cannet, however, a gravity came over her which showed that she was inwardly preparing for the change that awaited her. Almost the only book she now read was the "Imitation." Being asked by a sceptical friend what she considered its literary merits to be, she said gravely, "I do not care what they are. If, Monsieur, I had been carefully educated and trained from my youth, and had read this book earlier in life, I should have been a different woman. I advise you to read it with attention; its perusal will do you no harm." She frequently retired to her room to pray, and on several occasions held long conversations with friends upon religious subjects. I have been assured that shortly before her death she was converted to Catholicism and privately baptised. In the "Mémoires de Rachel" will be found a remark to this effect: "That Rachel believed in a future state there can be no doubt, for on a very important occasion of her life, December 15th, 1857, she made an open profession of her faith." This was the day, Mdme. S., a lady eminent for piety and charity and a frequent visitor at the Villa Sardou, asserted that she witnessed the baptism of the great Jewish tragedienne. The matter was kept a profound secret, out of consideration for the feelings of her sister, Mdlle. Sarah, who was a strict Jewess of the old school.*

When in Rome, in 1851, Rachel had frequently expressed her admiration of Christianity, and was observed to be greatly moved by the splendour of the rites in the various basilicas. It was during the sojourn in the Eternal City that she was presented to Pius IX., under somewhat singular circumstances. She was visiting the gardens of the Vatican, toward the close of a very mild evening, when suddenly the Pope and his court traversed the alley in which she was walking. She knelt as the Pontiff passed, and, on one of his attendants whispering who she was, he turned to bestow his blessing upon her. Rachel bowed low. His Holiness addressed a few kindly words to her, and asked her some questions on her religious opinions. Whether purposely or by accident, she is said to have answered in the words spoken by Pauline in Corneille's superb drama of "Polyeucte," when that heroine becomes a Christian: "Je vois, je sais, je crois, je suis Chrétienne enfin"—a speech with which she was used to electrify her audiences in the days of her glory.

I give this story as it was told me. Rachel certainly did meet the Pope in the gardens of the Vatican as described, and it is not unlikely that she did use the words quoted. They may have recurred to her memory, and have been almost unconsciously repeated by her with a vivid perception of the dramatic situation—a Jewish actress before the Christian High-priest in the gardens of his palace.

Her life at Le Cannet was very simple. She rose at midday, and spent a deal of time in sewing, an occupation which, whilst it kept her employed, did not excite her as did reading and conversation. She also received a few visits, and sometimes, when feeling well enough, played cards—her favourite amusement. She was now always gentle and kind, and still paid considerable attention to her dress, which usually consisted of a white muslin or silk *peignoir*, with natural flowers in her hair. The kindness and attention of her sister Sarah cannot be exaggerated; she who was usually impetuous and ill-tempered was now beyond praise patient and loving. It would be difficult to describe the interest which was manifested, not only in France, but all over the world, in the welfare of a woman who had once played the guitar in the streets of Paris. Telegrams of inquiry were sent daily from half the courts of Europe, especially from that of St. Petersburg; and the quantity of fruit and flowers which arrived for her acceptance was positively incredible. Many ladies and gentlemen of distinction from Nice went in person to inquire after her. I remember that one day Mdme. S——, the lady already alluded to, went with her daughter, and took me, then a very small child, with them. I was perched on the box with the coachman. On arriving at the Villa Sardou, we found Rachel, as the day was very fair, in the garden. She wore a white dress, and an old black-and-white plaid shawl wrapped round her body and head. She came to the door of the brougham, and received the flowers my friends brought her with pleasant courtesy. I had become in the meantime rather restless, and manifested a strong inclination to get down. The ladies entered the house, and still I remained on my perch, no one paying me any attention. Presently Mdlle. Rachel turned round and said to the coachman, in her peculiarly resonant voice: "Faites, donc, descendre cet enfant." I shall never forget the tone or the woman who uttered it. I can see her now: A very small, snake-like, but beautifully-shaped head; features small, but straight and regular; hair raven black, and simply bound up behind in a knot; eyes peculiar—one, I am sure, smaller than the other. The last peculiarity was so remarkable, at least to me, that I took special note of it in the room afterwards. I cannot recollect what occurred during the visit, but I do remember being presented with a handkerchief containing a quantity of *marons glacés*, which, like the contented witch, I mounched and mounched on my homeward journey.

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* Further details of this matter will be found in a curious little story entitled "Immaculata, the Convent Flower," by Fiorentina Straker. Burns & Oates.

On January 1st, 1858, she became suddenly worse, and on the following Friday her life was despaired of. She rallied on the Saturday, but on Sunday, the 5th, all hope was again abandoned. "I am dying, Sarah," she said, "and shall soon be with my sister Rebecca, and then God will show mercy." Rebecca was her favourite sister, and died, when only twenty, of consumption. Early in the morning of that fatal Sunday she wrote affectionate letters to her parents in Paris. Sarah, seeing her sister's danger, summoned the Rabbi and Jewish singers from Nice. They approached the bed and began a mournful chant in the Hebrew language: "Ascend, oh daughter of Israel, to God. Behold, O Lord God, the agony of thine handmaiden, Rachel, and pity her sufferings. Shorten her pains, good Lord, and break these bonds which bind her to life, so that she may be at rest. Lord God, pity Thy servant, and take her unto Thee, and let her agony redeem her sins, so that she may find peace." Whilst they were still singing Rachel fell asleep in death. Just as the soul and body parted she pressed her devoted sister's hand and opened her eyes, to fix them on her with an expression of tender affection. Six hours later Dr. Maure felt the corpse and found it flexible, even warm, and it was long before he permitted it to be placed in the coffin. The remains were transferred, with all possible honour and respect, to Paris, and there buried in the Jewish cemetery at Père-la-Chaise, in the presence of a vast multitude, including a galaxy of celebrities.

Here let me add a little-known detail concerning Rachel. She had a maid named Rose, who attended her through all her triumphs and was with her when she died. So pungent was her grief at the death of her mistress, that within a week she pined away, and is buried by the side of a woman who, with numerous faults, and who, for all the evil of her life, had so many redeeming and beautiful qualities that, whilst we admire the traditions of her genius, we are also bound to pity the vicissitudes of her career, for if erring, Rachel was still illustrious.

OXFORD THEATRICALS:

A Reminiscence.

OUR friend Mr. F. C. Burnand, having lately made allusion to certain inchoate attempts at Brazenose College, in 1858, to establish an Amateur Dramatic Society in the elder university, it may possibly afford the readers of The Theatre some amusement if I record in its pages the history of my own personal associations with the only successful college theatricals which ever obtained at Oxford. To Brazenose I honourably accord the honour of having floated the *first* private theatricals which startled the dons of that highly respectable foundation; and I offer Messrs. Morley, Allgood, Brandt, and Company my warmest congratulations on the accomplishment of their daring adventure. But it was in Balliol College that the theatrical *éclat* was made, and to this event I purpose to allude. Let me previously explain that the establishment of an "A. D. C." in Oxford is a far more difficult task to "exploiter" than it ever could be at Cambridge. There is more liberty, more of a town life, in that university than is to be found in the half-monastic routine of Oxford. We lived, in those days especially, a cloistered life; and to have overcome the objections of the college dignitaries on the point of these unholy pranks was, in itself, no mean triumph. No sooner had Messrs. Hills and Saunders published photographs of the Brazenose worthies in their theatrical disguises than the daring determination to imitate and excel their dramatic feats possessed the energies of two college chums, united by kindred dramatic tastes, and sworn companions and brothers. These firebrands amid the cool groves of Balliol were Herman Charles Merivale and the editor's very humble servant. We twain, raging votaries of the stage (Merivale was a particular friend of the late Charles Kean), instantly set to work to compass our fell design. We had already established a Shakespeare club in college, which was called "The Tents of the Keanites," and to our fellow-members we opened up our audacious scheme. "Theatricals in Balliol! Impossible!" went up as a despairing cry. But Merivale and myself were not to be daunted. The train was to be laid, and a fitting Fawkes was to be found. He was forthcoming in a singular being who earned a livelihood by (that I should have to expose such a system!) reading aloud "cribs" to lazy undergraduates, but who had been but lately an actor in a troupe that visited Oxford. How Merivale discovered this nondescript I do not know, but he was suddenly introduced to our theatrical cabal, and to his practical knowledge our success was entirely owing. Let me recite the names of the Keanites to whom this Bohemian and stroller made his bow. First was our beloved Edmond Warre (affectionately styled "Bellum"), one of that undefeated pair-oar's crew of which Lonsdale was stroke; a Balliol scholar, and one of the finest oars that ever sat in the thwarts. Then there was Herbert Hills (now one of H.M.'s judges in India), Robert Jasper More (late M.P. for Shropshire), Dawson, H. L. Whately, G. G. Thomas, W. W. Jackson (now sub-rector of Exeter College), D. Fearon (H.M.'s Inspector of Schools), and others. In whispers was our desperate design discussed. "Bellum" Warre, with his usual generosity and precipitation, instantly offered his rooms as the scene of the theatrical enterprise; ways and means were debated, a sum subscribed, and our trusty nondescript fled secretly to London and conferred with Messrs. Simmonds. Everything was to be kept a profound secret from the dons; for theatricals in Balliol were nothing less than an outrage, and we all knew it. Then came the selection of the pieces to be performed. For these Merivale and myself were responsible, he choosing "To Oblige Benson," and I the late Robert Brough's farce, "Crinoline." In "casting" these plays, some little difficulties had to be encountered. All the Keanites wanted to play the principal parts, but in time we simmered down to the following disposition of characters:

"TO OBLIGE BENSON."

Mr. Benson	G. Thomas.	Mr. J. Meredith	Edmond Warre.
Trotter Southdown	H. C. Merivale.	Mrs. Benson	H. L. Whately.
Mrs. T. Southdown	H. A. Hills.		

"CRINOLINE."

Mr. Coobiddy	H. A. Hills.	Mrs. Coobiddy	H. L. Whately.
Captain Le Brown	E. Warre.	Bella	T. B. Estcourt.
John Liptrot	C. Dawson.	Miss Tite Nancy Bitters	R. Reece.
Jacob Grimes	G. Thomas.		

N.B.—I only played in one piece, but I played two parts in that one!

Then we settled down to the fearsome task of facing the dons. Keep the affair completely "dark" we could not; one of the dons was a constant visitor to "Bellum's" rooms, and he quickly screwed our secret out, and rejoiced exceedingly at the notion. Soon the Prelector of Logic (performer on the accordion, and not averse to whist) got wind of the design; and when huge side-scenes and act-drops were openly "craned up" into Warre's rooms in the full gaze of Professor Jowett, all the plot came out. The dons, I believe, interviewed "Bellum," and held a "common room" on the question; but with great good sense they let us alone, and no longer impeded by the weight of an unholy secret, our theatricals progressed to a triumphant result. Scenery, costumes, and actors were all a success; so great a success that we were positively allowed by the Dean and Master of Balliol to give a second performance, and invite ladies and out-college men to see our plays. To accomplish this we had to shift our theatre (an excellent fit-up) to Huddlestone's rooms, and there we repeated our performance to an enthusiastic assembly, in which charming ladies and good-hearted dons mingled happily together. I am sure not one of the actors has ever forgotten that happy time, and to this day our theatrical names cling to us. Throughout our college career Merivale was known as "Trotter," Hills as "Toody," and myself as "Nancy." Warre, I know, never called me by any other name. I wonder if that stalwart Etonian ever thinks of his playmates now?

These were the first Balliol theatricals, and, with the exception of the performances at Brazenose, the last ever known in Oxford.

My friend Merivale still has a book with our photographs in our respective characters, and, when I look at them, I do not know which feeling most strongly possesses me—pleasure or pain.

R. Reece.

PLAYS PRODUCED IN PARIS LAST MONTH.

NAME OF PLAY.	DATE OF PRODUCTION.	REMARKS.
Aïda	March 22	Grand Opera. (Success.)
Les Noces d'Attila	March 23	Odéon. (Succès d'Estime.)
La Comtesse Berthe	March 24	Théâtre des Arts. (Failure.)
Robert Macaire	March 24	Ambigu. (Success.)
Grain de Beauté	March 27	Gymnase. (Success.)
Chien d'Aveugle	March 27	3eme Théâtre Français. (Local Success.)
Le Siége de Grénade	April 2	Palais Royal. (Succès d'Estime.)
L'Amiral	April 13	Gymnase. (Success.)
Les Folies de Valentine	April 13	Gymnase. (Success.)

* Has been altered, and is now played with a new last act.

THE GAY CITY.

HAPPY is the playgoer who knows nothing, for he is contented with whatever he sees. When he has paid for his seat he makes up his mind to be amused, and does not care whence come the materials of the concoction that shall move him to tears, or cause him to laugh from the rise till the fall of the curtain. You and I, when we go to the Bouffes Parisiens to see the new three-act operetta, "Les Mousquetaires au Couvent," have guessed all about it from the title. All the stories of disguised gallants crowd to our mind: Gresset's poem, "Vert-Vert," the opera of "Comte Ory," the naughty "Faublas," the "Adventures of the Abbé de Choisy," and all the fascinating novels of the last century, where convents seem to be kept up merely for the pleasure of the heartless *roués* of the time, who deceived all women coldly and systematically. They stopped at no ruse or artifice to gain their ends, even imitating the trace of hastily-dried tears upon their wicked cheeks with a solution of gum-arabic! The heroes of this musical novelty are not quite as bad. A gallant captain of musketeers and his sworn comrades disguise themselves as monks and penetrate into a nunnery, where, of course, has been unjustly detained a beautiful patrician lady and her sister. I shall not further describe the plot because the trifle is a failure, the hash-up of an old piece played at the Gymnase in 1835, and called, "L'Habit ne fait pas le Moine." At least, so say the public papers, for I confess that I have not had the courage to exhume the dusty *brochure*. The music is insignificant, and the acting and singing just above mediocrity. This once bright little theatre seems to be going to the dogs. The subject of the story was badly chosen, as at this moment our pot-house politicians are divided into two broad camps: one upholding priestcraft, and the other, red-hot "anti-clericals" and slightly atheistical. So imagine the effect upon our minds of three silly acts that turn all monasteries and conventual establishments into witless ridicule!

And now a rapid jump to the Porte Saint Martin, where we are immediately transported into the broad light of the present century, among professional murderers, convicts, prison-informers, detectives, judges, and jurymen, and all similar and pleasant offshoots of modern civilisation. Those who have no illusions and who do not suffer from headache the morning after they have passed six hours in the vitiated atmosphere of a Parisian theatre, where perspiring pleasure-seekers are packed as close as sardines, may rely upon having their money's worth. The dramatic entertainment entitled, "Les Etrangleurs de Paris" is a splendid drama of the style yclept "judicial." The French system of criminal procedure lends itself admirably to the efforts of romancist or dramatic author; and the struggle between the culprit who is isolated and left to the omnipotent tender mercies of the *juge d'instruction* has been often portrayed by the late Emile Gaboriau in a dozen of splendid novels, and by Adolphe Belot, whose latest effort is a worthy successor of "Le Parricide." Taillade, a dry, nervous, clever actor, represents the principal strangler, who uses his iron hands to murder an unoffending captain, and with twenty thousand pounds thus obtained endows his lovely daughter, whom he loves as the tiger does its cub. This is the only redeeming point about the paternal throttler, whose offspring ignores his real name and profession. He suffers condemnation to penal servitude for life, happy in the thought that his child is content with the husband he has chosen. Our gentle assassin's son-in-law is also his accomplice, and, instead of quietly settling down and enjoying the fruits of his father-in-law's labour, takes it into his head to choke his wife in a fit of jealousy. The actor who has to do this, to the delight of the upper galleries, had taken his task greatly to heart during the first few nights, so much so, that when the panting murderer was recalled with his victim, to bow their thanks to the lavish applause of the audience, the lady could be plainly heard "blowing up" her fellow-artist and complaining audibly to the leader of the band that "she was nearly choked to death!" It is to be hoped that by the time you get this into print, the zeal of the realistic artist will have abated in some degree. When the *forçat* father comes to hear of this, he pops over the side of the transport ship, which is in the harbour of Santa Cruz, and returns to Paris just in time to see his son-in-law acquitted for the murder of his better-half. He jumps up from among the crowd of spectators in the assize court and denounces him and himself as well, then commits suicide, and finishes the play in the twelfth tableau and the small hours. Such is the barest and most meagre outline of an interesting story, cleverly worked out. From a French point of view it is a substantial, popular, exciting drama, and is sure of a tremendous run. There are about thirty-six speaking male parts and fifteen female *rôles*, with a numerous *figuration* of convicts, and such small fry, of no importance. The comic part of the intrigue is entrusted to two comic detectives, *à la* Tricoche and Cacolet. One of them goes on board the transport-ship as a convict, in order to watch the mysterious strangler. Among the principal scenes is the grand staircase of the Opéra during a masked ball, showing us a gay troop of motley dancers, who are holding their revels in the vestibule, and doing their usual *can-can* on the practicable steps. Then the courtyard of La Roquette, with the prisoners gobbling their pottage in their hours of recreation. Hither is brought the strangler, in the hope that some old "lag" may recognise him. To render the task more easy, Tricoche, or it may be Cacolet, suggests that he should be shaved and shampooed as if he was already convicted. This is done, and the effect of Taillade's appearance, with close-cropped hair and pale livid face (he has hitherto been wearing a short beard and very long hair), as he towers over a trembling informer, is really very fine and dramatic. I may also notice the "between decks" of the convict-ship, with the human cargo packed in a wooden cage, the muzzle of a cannon frowning upon them through the bars. This changes quickly enough to the deck, and distant view of the Peak of Teneriffe (*sic*). The assize court, the garden of a modern villa by moonlight, the Pont Neuf, with a woman committing suicide and being rescued, complete the list of noticeable scenes. Let those philosophers who find sermons in stones draw inferences from my hasty *compte-rendu* anent the prevailing taste for *assommoirs* and scenes of low life. I have done my duty as a lazy idling *chroniquer*, who writes of what he sees and moralises as little as possible.

It is an agreeable change to find oneself at the Opéra, and comfortably seated in the handsomest theatre of modern times, enjoying the music of "Aïda," especially when Verdi himself is in the raised chair of the conductor of the band, as he was during the first five nights. Here the most delicate senses of the refined spectator are agreeably flattered, although perhaps he may report unfavourably upon the physical charms of the ladies, who nearly all wear low-necked dresses, with hardly any sleeve save a vertical strap across the top of the arm. If he possesses any notions of anatomy or hygiene, he will notice that the *corps de ballet* are all much better nourished than the beauties of society. Late hours and bad food act unfavourably upon the human frame, and ladies of fashion do not seem to pay attention to this simple fact. Most of the best cooks in Paris serve their masters *à forfait*—that is to say, they receive a certain sum per diem, reckoned at so much a head for every member of the family. Anyone can guess that the white-jacketed worthies try to pinch and save as much as they can, and the consequence is plenty of silver plate and nothing to eat! A brutal friend of mine from the north of England, who I met at the National Academy of Music, remarked that most of the *décolletée* beauties looked as if "A good rump-steak would do them good!" Alas, my friend, perhaps they would not be able to eat it, for in no other city in the world are cases of anæmia so common among the rich. Praying that I may be excused this slightly medical digression, I hie me back to Verdi, who was dragged upon the stage on the first night, and loaded with what are termed in the provinces "floral tributes." Parisians laugh at these insipid Italian ovations, common enough beyond the Alps, where there is usually an aperture in the curtain itself, or a convenient door in the proscenium, for triumphant musicians and authors to be led out and applauded to the echo. The success of "Aïda," originally written for the inauguration of the Italian theatre of Cairo, and produced in that city in December, 1871, is beyond doubt. The story of the two kingly daughters who fall in love with the Egyptian warrior, Radamès, is doubtless well known to my readers, many of whom must have seen the work itself at Covent Garden. The celebrated *fanfare* has at length succeeded, thanks to the efforts of M. Sax, who has furnished new and improved trumpets, and it threatens to become as popular as the famous march in "Faust." All who know how well the difficult art of *mise-en-scène* is studied at this house can guess how painters and costumiers have revelled in the brilliant and extravagant fantasy of the mysterious surroundings of the poetic dream of old Egypt. Before leaving the Opera I must tell you that the *habitués* have lately been pestered by a new class of rogues who take tickets for the cheapest seats in the galleries, and swooping down in the *entr'actes*, deftly sneak off with the costly opera-glasses that have been carelessly left here and there upon the seats of the *fauteuils d'orchestre*. I am ashamed to confess that I have been myself a victim to this daring innovation; and in these liberal days, when subscriptions and testimonials are of nearly daily occurrence in the English dramatic world, your faithful correspondent is almost inclined to appeal to his readers to replace the much-prized aluminium lorgnette which was torn from him when engaged on his critical duties. The morocco case alone remains to mark the glory of that which has gone, never more to return.

The Ambigu has made a tolerably successful experiment, and has shown us once more the legendary characters of Robert Macaire and his friend Bertrand, who were created sixty years ago. A diligent search among old newspapers and books of theatrical recollections would furnish us with a very interesting history of these celebrated rascals, who dramatic students in future centuries will probably suppose to have really existed. "L'Auberge des Adrets," a serious drama, seriously played, was seriously hissed in 1823. On the second night, Frédéric Lemaître, who afterwards became the greatest actor of his time, twisted and turned his part till he made Robert Macaire what he now is and always will be, a facetious bandit who jokes as he kills, and with mock gravity talks of his honour, as, while draped in rags, he vulgarly pilfers. Immense success and stupefaction of the authors. In 1834, Lemaître imagines a merry sequel to the melodrama; and in company with one of the original writers and another *collaborateur*, invents and produces "Robert Macaire," in four acts, played at the Porte

Saint Martin with but slight success.* In 1877, two Parisian journalists, aided by M. Busnaeh, one of the authors of "L'Assommoir," hit upon the idea of conglomerating these two plays into five acts and nine tableaux; and thus we get the version now playing called "Robert Macaire," preceded by "L'Auberge des Adrets," which serves as a prologue. No less than *nine* authors, or their living heirs, have a right to a share of the receipts, so that the three gentlemen who have sketched this modernisation will receive very little for their pains. The first play finishes by the escape of Robert Macaire and Bertrand, who throw snuff in their captors' eyes and depart while they sneeze. Claire, victim of Robert Macaire and mother of Charles, does not appear at all nowadays. In the second piece Macaire is supposed to be wounded while attempting to escape, and is reported to be dead. He comes to life, and, escorted still by faithful Bertrand, carries his swindling propensities into high life. Seeking a rich marriage he falls across Eloa, daughter of the Baron de Wormspire, a General of the Empire, without a guinea. *Arcades ambo*—son-in-law and father-in-law cheat each other at *écarté,* alternately turning up the king as each other deals; and Eloa's reputation is of the shadiest. The contract of marriage is drawn up with the utmost extravagance, the two penniless thieves rivalling one another in generosity, as in "Mereadet," who, by-the-way, is a near relation to our amusing Robert. He becomes director of an assurance company against thieves, and here we find a celebrated character, M. Gogo, the silly shareholder, who exists in every clime. At last, Robert Macaire finds that the Baron is his father, while Bertrand discovers that Eloa is his daughter. The gendarmes are announced in hot pursuit. "Open the door!" cries the famous robber; "this family picture is sure to soften their hard hearts." Then we have a burlesque chase by the soldiers, the escape of the bandit in a balloon; and, to wind up, an allegorical tableau, where, in the glare of red fire, Sergeant Loupy is seen waving the flaming sword of the archangel above the discomfited heads of our two old friends. Gil Naza, the original Coupeau, is wonderfully good in the title-rôle with the battered white hat cocked on one side, the darned green coat thrown proudly back, the patched red pantaloons, and the tattered lace ruffles and famous dancing-shoes. Dailly, the jovial Mes-Bottes, is a fair Bertrand; but he is rather too stout and jolly for the poor trembling wretch who so sadly obeys the commanding squeak of the master's snuff-box.

The author of a successful tragedy, "La Fille de Roland," produced some time back at the Comédie Française, has given us a meritorious four-act drama in verse, entitled "Les Noces d'Attila," and produced at the Odéon. Unfortunately, the success has been but moderate. The hero is badly chosen; and the play is neither patriotical or historical, although the author thinks the contrary. Attila, king of the Huns, captures a king's daughter, Hildiga, and shortly afterwards, in defiance of a flag of truce, enslaves Walter, a young chief, who, I need scarcely say, has come to look after Hildiga, his sweetheart. She would be more pleasing if played by a younger and more lively actress than Madame Rousseil. In the next act we are in a palace, that shows us plainly that Attila must have had a Greek architect. Our barbarian is awaiting his betrothed, a Roman princess, who sends an impertinent warrior to decline the proffered honour. Here we get patriotic speeches, *à propos* of nothing at all, but which agreeably flatter national *amour propre.* Attila, disgusted, resolves to make Hildiga his wife, and, in the event of her refusing, threatens to kill her father and those of her fellow-countrymen who are in his power. Young Walter is condemned to die by the hands of one of Attila's servants, but before he goes to death, he has what the Americans call "a good time," and gives Attila a bit of his mind. It may be remarked, that the terrible king, called in history "The Scourge of God," is a mild, talkative gentleman, who is insulted and reviled by everybody all through the play. The piece concludes with a cheerful wedding-night, when Attila is killed by his own axe, wielded by the masculine hand of Hildiga, and which has been given her by one of the female captives, Gerontia. (Observe the quantity of names terminating in *a*, and guess thereby how badly this correspondence of sounds grates upon the ear.) As it is a shameful thing to have been murdered by a woman, Attila declares that he has killed himself, and dies in great agony, while his palace is set on fire by invading conquering Gauls—this conclusion being historically false, but exceedingly picturesque. Dumaine, from the Porte Saint Martin, is a fine melodramatic actor, but no master of elocution. The rest of the acting calls for no comment. The dresses are very handsome, but the scenery is what professionals call, I believe, a simple "vamp."

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* At the old Strand Theatre, "Jacques Strop, or a few more passages in the Life of Robert Macaire."

The whilom famous Palais Royal Theatre has dropped down singularly of late in public favour, and theatrical wiseacres, shaking their sapient heads, give many different reasons for this change of taste. Some say it is because the centres of pleasure have become displaced, and that the once celebrated garden and galleries are given up to provincial and foreign visitors. Others, who reason better, declare that the side-splitting style of broad comedy that seemed to have its home at this old-fashioned and inconvenient little playhouse, is better done and better acted at the Vaudeville and Gymnase, witness "Les Dominos Roses," "Bébé," and all the later follies of the merry Belgian, Hennequin. Anyhow, nothing seems to succeed there now, so the troupe is going to visit London, and, during their absence, the entire building will be altered and renovated. My readers will soon have ample opportunities of judging the capabilities of the comic actors who have just given us "Le Siége de Grénade," after a long run of lame plays that have all been failures. This vaudeville is in four acts, and is one of those deliberately coarse and excruciating absurdities that are bound to excite immoderate laughter, but which defy criticism. "The Siege of Granada" is the title of an operetta, of which fat young Plautin (Daubray) is the unappreciated author. His great work has been successively transformed from drama into vaudeville, from vaudeville to tragedy, and from tragedy to opera-bouffe. It is about to see daylight, or rather the footlights, at a bankrupt theatre, which is managed with more energy than luck by the Widow Pincemaille, who is secretly discounting the fortune of Plautin's rich father. Plautin senior, however, when he learns that his son has married Madame Pincemaille's lovely daughter, cuts off the supplies, so that the "Siége" remains in manuscript form, and the career of the manageress is ignominiously cut short by bailiffs and brokers. Away goes young Plautin to Marseilles with his new family, who are engaged at the theatre of that town. Here Monflard-Bey, a rich old Egyptian, in love with Plautin's bride, pursues and puzzles them, while his own daughter elopes with Plautin, whose life is a burden to him on account of the tyranny of his mother-in-law. Then we find ourselves in Monflard's harem, where the ex-directress and her daughter are sold as slaves, to the disgust of Plautin, whose opera, with himself in the principal part, is coming out at the Grand Theatre of Cairo. Occupied in watching his wife, and at the same time making desperate love to Monflard's offspring, he lets the hour fixed for the performance go by. He keeps the Khedive waiting, a riot ensues, and the play is not produced. In despair, Plautin jumps into the Nile. In the last act we are back in Paris; "The Siege of Granada" has run a hundred nights, and a *fête* is being given to celebrate that joyous event, when Plautin returns from America, having been picked up on the sacred Egyptian river by a passing vessel (?); and all ends happily by the triumph of the tortured composer, who has reached the summit of his ambition at last.—E. Manuel.

THEATRICAL NOTES FROM BERLIN.

By Hofrath Schneider's Ghost.

When I last wrote to you, a month ago, I was in uncommonly good spirits for a phantom. The enthusiastic merriment of the *première* of Franz Suppé's "Juanita" still pervaded my being, such as it is. I yearned to communicate my impressions to you whilst they were keen, fresh, and vivacious; but the space-limits to which you have wisely restricted my rambling records of theatrical sayings and doings opposed an insurmountable barrier to the fulfilment of my wish. More is the pity; for I am now a dejected ghost, grimly regretful of my incapacity to commit suicide, in consequence of having, since my return to Berlin, attended a soul-subduing performance of Wildbrandt's brand-new drama, "The Daughter of Mr. Fabricius," which harrowed up my feelings in so searching a manner that it will be long, I fear, ere I recover my normal condition of mild, ethereal cheerfulness. In stating that the Berlinese public is not congenitally given to the melting mood, I trust I am doing my stout-hearted, clear-witted, severely sceptical, and comically cynical compatriots no flagrant injustice. As actor, dramatic author, and journalist, I have studied them perseveringly for fifty years and more, being myself a child of the Spree City, born within a bow-shot of the Gerichtslaube, and dry-nursed upon a diet of pungent "Kalauer," or Berlin puns, that would have effectually cut short the existence of any infant not indigenous to the sandy plains of the Mark Brandenburg; and I cannot conscientiously say that I ever found them prone to pay tearful tribute to the mimicry of woe, however passionately rendered by artists of the highest merit. But the audiences that nightly crowd the Residenz Theatre shed unknown quantities of "unfamiliar brine" over the sorrows and sufferings of Mr. Fabricius and his inexpressibly virtuous daughter, and give vent to their emotions in every variety of dismal sound, from the subdued sniff to the strident sob. Wildbrandt's plot teems with absurdities and anachronisms, but it also abounds in powerful situations, each of which in succession, to use a familiar theatrical term, "brings the house down." His dialogue, too, is invariably forcible, and frequently instinct with genuine passion. Mr. Fabricius—whom, by-the-way, no other personage in the play ever addresses or alludes to with the predicate by which he is somewhat formally designated in the drama's title—is a moral, sentimental, and amnestied convict who, fifteen years before the action of the piece commences, was driven by unmerited misfortune to break into a dwelling-house for the purpose of relieving its proprietor of some superfluities, which the latter, a wealthy but selfish man, unwisely declined to part with in the dead of the night to an entire stranger. Justly indignant—at least, so we are led to infer from Wildbrandt's wording of the case—at this ungenerous refusal to adopt his views of property, its rights and obligations, Mr. Fabricius manfully slew the niggardly house-owner, for which bold vindication of communistic principles he was tried by the judicial minions of a worm-eaten society, and sentenced to life-long imprisonment His conduct, however, in the hulks was of so exemplary and even touching an order that, after fifteen spotless years of more or less laborious seclusion, he was restored, without a stain upon his character, to a world he had proved himself so eminently qualified to adorn and benefit. Meanwhile, his disconsolate wife, by the practice of pure morality combined with fancy-work, had contrived to keep up her station in society, and his daughter, the heroine of the drama, had grown up from graceful childhood to fascinating adolescence. It is upon this young lady's love-story, singularly complicated and threatened with a tragical *dénouement* by the return of her father, in disguise and under an assumed name, to the bosom of his family, that the most thrilling incidents of the piece turn. The imbroglio is not a new one, but Wildbrandt works it up to a succession of agony-points with great cleverness, if not with remarkable originality; and the result, as I have already mentioned, is very similar to—and, considering the proverbial stoniness of the Berlinese public, almost as miraculous as—the renowned achievement of Moses when he smote the rock with his divining-rod, and conjured forth its hidden waters. Not wishing to lower your readers' spirits and raise the totals of their washing-bills for the first week in May, I refrain from describing the harrowing scenes that have already unlocked the tear-founts of at least ten thousand modern Athenians, and take my leave of "Mr. Fabricius," with the closing remark that he is admirably impersonated by my gifted young friend Herr Keppler, an actor who, for *genre* delineations of character, in high comedy or drama, is at the present moment unrivalled throughout the length and breadth of the Fatherland.

The adventures of "Donna Juanita" afford a far more cheerful and congenial subject to "Your Own Ghost" than the afflictions of a returned convict, be he never so virtuous. Before, however, attempting to limn a word-sketch of Suppé's latest heroine, I must premise that the enchanting, the seductive Juanita is by no means the superlatively Spanish maiden she seems to be, but a dashing, audacious, and singularly comely young ensign of the French Republican army, hight René Dufaure, whose brother Gaston has been taken prisoner by the Spaniards during the Anglo-Franco-Spanish war of 1796, and is incarcerated in the fortress of San Sebastian—a stronghold, at the time selected for the action of the play, in the possession of an English garrison, under the command of the gallant but feeble-witted Colonel Douglas. Having obtained leave from the commander of his regiment to attempt Gaston's deliverance from captivity, René assumes the disguise of a muleteer, and succeeds in passing the British lines. Arrived safely in San Sebastian, the native population of which town he soon discovers to be extremely dissatisfied with its scarlet-coated defenders, he addresses himself to the task of finding out his brother's place of confinement. The latter, however, is a prisoner on parole, and, as such, enjoys entire immunity from personal restraint. He meets René whilst strolling about the chief Plaza with a Spanish friend, and the brothers, although forbearing from too demonstrative a mutual recognition, for fear of awakening suspicion in any of the English soldiers with whom the streets are profusely ornamented, exchange confidences at some length, and in an undertone of artistically-blended mystery and brotherly affection. Now, Gaston, you must know, during his enforced sojourn in the town garrisoned by his country's foes, has caused a terrible conflagration in the inflammable heart of Petrita, the *piquante* and impulsive daughter of his landlord. She is over head and ears in love with the handsome French prisoner, and as jealous of him as, from a dramatic point of view, a true-born Spanish maiden is bound to be when her young affections are exclusively bestowed upon one particular object. Her jealousy prompts her to dog Gaston's steps whene'er he takes his walks abroad; and it is whilst engaged in this absorbing pursuit that she becomes a witness of his cordially confidential interview with René. Drawing an incorrect inference from the latter's extraordinarily good looks, and from some fragments of the brethren's conversation which she manages to overhear from her hiding-place under a convenient portico, jutting out into the Plaza close to the spot upon which they are confabulating, she jumps with eminently feminine promptitude to the conclusion that the unmanfully comely young muleteer is a disguised female—a "wicked abandoned creature" of the French persuasion, who has sneaked into San Sebastian to rob her of her lover, and—who knows?—perhaps to betray the town to Gaston's countrymen in order to get him away from the place of his present sojourn. It becomes indisputably manifest to Petrita that any member of her own sex, besides herself, unprincipled enough to love Gaston, and immodest enough to indue the tightest of small-clothes in order to obtain access to another girl's adored one, is capable of any atrocity; acting upon which logical conclusion she straightway denounces René to the British commandant and the Spanish alcalde as a French spy of feminine gender and guileful designs. René is incontinently seized by the local authorities; but, with a readiness of wit worthy of the sex ascribed to him, resolves to turn his falsely-assumed womanhood to account, craves and obtains permission to array himself in female attire, and presently appears to the audience as the prettiest girl imaginable, though on somewhat a large scale. Under this aspect Donna Juanita besieges the too susceptible hearts of Colonel Douglas and Don Pomponio, the alcalde, with such success that those ancient citadels of passion promptly surrender at discretion to her batteries of melting glances and tender sighs. Moreover, she gains their confidence to such an extent by mysteriously imparting to each of them a bogus cipher despatch, irrefragably proving that she is the secret emissary of Spanish patriots, and charged with the mission of betraying the French besieging army to the garrison of San Sebastian, that the enamoured officials trust her with all their secrets, and nominate her president of a council of war, entirely composed of patriotic ladies and expressly organised for the completion of the city's defences. In this exalted position of trust and influence, René Juanita soon has all the plans of the besieged at his or her fingers'-ends, and is enabled to make exhaustive arrangements for admitting the Republican troops within the walls at the first convenient opportunity. That opportunity is of course supplied without delay by the garrison's celebration of a British national festivity, described in the bills as the "Jamaica Rejoicing," which, I fancy, must have become obsolete during the present century, as I never heard of its observance in any part of your realm throughout a long and, I hope, not altogether uninformed life. However, if we accept the historical information of "Juanita's" author as correct, it was a deeply-rooted English institution in the year 1796, and one of its sumptuary statutes strictly prescribed that all adults taking part in its joys should clothe themselves in the garments of babes and sucklings. What a pity that these jocund and picturesque old national *fêtes* should fall into desuetude and vanish, one after another, from the sparse tale of British popular recreations!

Whilst the soldiers of Colonel Douglas's command, travestied by the agency of bibs and longclothes into gigantic infants, are disporting themselves in inscrutable commemoration of some undisclosed event connected with your leading West Indian colony, Juanita furtively opens a postern to her expectant warrior-compatriots, who surround the feasting and flirting garrison to the strains of the "Marseillaise;" that is, they did so on the opening night with excellent effect, but were subsequently prohibited from repeating that inflammatory hymn by the sagacious I. R. theatrical censor, one or two of whose most justly celebrated exploits, *ejusdem generis,* I communicated to you last month. With the triumphal entry of the French troops the piece comes to a natural and jubilant close. By Juanita's judicious revelation of her real sex, Petrita's jealous suspicions are permanently disposed of. Gaston is released from the captivity of war to subside contentedly into that of matrimony; and the curtain falls upon a refreshing tableau of complete fraternisation between the British and French armies, in which the Iberian natives of San Sebastian exultingly join. Suppé was "called" no fewer than fourteen times at the conclusion of the performance; and Fräulein Streitmann—I need not say that the representative of René Juanita was an extremely pretty and *débonnaire* young actress—was enthusiastically summoned before the curtain four or five times after each successive act. The most notable numbers of the operetta, every bar of which, however, is fresh, sparkling, and tuneful, are a cleverly-constructed quintet in the first act, a serenade (sung by Spanish students), a duet, a "terzetto alla marcia," and the finale of the second act, and a particularly well-written duo in the third act. Such a success as "Juanita" has not been achieved in any theatre of the Viennese faubourgs since the production of "Boccaccio," hitherto regarded as Suppé's best work.

Whilst I was lingering in the gay and good-tempered Kaiserstadt, loath to quit that hospitable headquarters of good music and harmless fun, I heard a pleasant story of Richard Lewy, who, besides filling the important post of chief inspector in the Imperial Opera House (an office, I regret to say, he contemplates resigning), is one of the finest horn-players in Europe, and, moreover, notorious throughout the musical world for the smartness and pungency of his repartees. Some years ago, when his solo-playing on the *cor anglais* was all the rage in Viennese society, he was engaged to perform at a private party, and, having selected a peculiarly sentimental aria as his item in the evening's programme, was breathing the most dulcet and soul-subduing tones into his instrument. All present, save only two, were listening to his tender strains with rapt attention and in profound silence. The two exceptions were a lady and one of his most intimate friends, a dramatic author, who had, only a few days previously, brought out his first comedy at the Burg Theatre. This gentleman chatted on, only too audibly, with his fair neighbour whilst Lewy was producing the most pathetic sounds, his eyes, meanwhile, darting shafts of rage and scorn at the pair of delinquents, but more especially "fixing" his inconsiderate friend, who, obviously tickled by the remarks of his fellow-offender, indulged in repeated and obstreperous bursts of laughter. As soon, however, as Richard Lewy had terminated his solo, and the applause of his audience had somewhat subsided, he walked straight up to the seat of the untimely cachinnator and exclaimed, in a voice that was distinctly audible to the whole assembled company: "It is not nice of you, my good friend, to laugh whilst I am playing. I saw your comedy the evening before last, and the deuce a bit did I laugh at it!" *Dixit, et liberavit animam.*

Pauline Lucca's return, after an absence of nearly a dozen years, to the Berlin Opera House has been signalised by such a welcome as has never before been given by the Berlin public to any lyrico-dramatic artist. My kind old former master, the Emperor, sent a state-carriage to her hotel, on the night of her first performance, to convey her to the theatre; stalls were freely quoted on 'Change that morning at five pounds apiece; five thousand applications for places reached the Intendantur the day before; and her appearance (in "Carmen") on the stage was greeted by the orchestra with a "Tusch," or flourish—a salutation usually reserved for the reigning sovereign, or for foreign monarchs visiting the Opera House in state.

STARS AND STRIPES.

A Bird's-eye View of the American Stage.

THERE has been so little novelty here within the past few weeks, that I will devote this letter to a brief review of the present state of the stage in New York. It is frequently asserted that the Americans are not a theatre-going people. I candidly believe that the folks over here, as a mass, are not a theatre-going people, but that, in every large city, there is an enormous percentage of foreigners, and persons of foreign descent, who are great patrons of the drama. Religious prejudices are still very strong throughout the United States, and there are thousands of families in New York, and in all the other principal cities, who would on no account be seen inside of a "playhouse." Again, many educated persons of great respectability, at the present time abstain from frequenting theatres, simply because they do not approve of the class of plays produced. Those adapted from the French they deem improper, and the farcical ones too frivolous to suit their sober tastes. Shakespeare's plays and the old standard comedies, they will patronise, when properly acted, but as they very rarely are so, now that Mr. Edwin Booth has no longer a theatre of his own, they have almost entirely given up attending places of theatrical entertainments. The floating population of New York, although nearly as large as that of London and Paris, is made up of entirely different elements. It is not aristocratic or pleasure-seeking. It is essentially hard-working, and consists mainly of emigrants, who do not, as a rule, possess sufficient means to pay the high prices of admission demanded. Of course there is always a vast number of rich people of all classes constantly streaming through New York, either on business or pleasure bent. Still, it is a known fact that no play can run more than one hundred consecutive nights in this metropolis, for, by that time, the theatre-going community is completely exhausted. But, on the other hand, this section of the public is very fond of the theatre, and usually goes in succession to all the principal places of entertainment in the city. If a piece "runs" in New York, it is pretty sure to succeed in the "provinces," as the rest of the States are unceremoniously called, for, be it thoroughly understood, New York rules taste and fashion with an iron rod, throughout the length and breadth of North America. You may make a "hit" in Philadelphia, and you may turn the head of the "Hub of the Universe," as they call Boston, but it will avail you little in the end if New York does not endorse your pretensions. For this reason, almost every new play, opera, actor, actress, or singer, appears first in the "Empire City."

A New York audience is a very brilliant and elegant one, and it is also exceedingly intelligent and critical. As there is no "pit," the lower part of the house and the two "circles" are usually crowded on first nights with magnificently-dressed ladies and gentlemen in full morning costume. American gentlemen, as a rule, only wear evening dress, when they have a "box," and the ladies always go in "hats"—as they do in Paris. You can see no roughs or poorly-dressed people; they are relegated to the gallery, but generally they rarely patronise the up-town houses, preferring their "own dear Bowery," a theatre somewhat in the style of your famous Britannia at Hoxton, only much less magnificent.

Of all the New York theatres, Booth's is by far the handsomest. I do not, of course, include the two opera-houses, The Grand and The Academy of Music. It is a large and noble theatre, built by Mr. Edwin Booth expressly for Shakespearian "revivals," and under his management was very extensively patronised. With the exception of this fine house, and Niblo's Garden in the lower part of Broadway, the New York theatres are small and rather inconvenient, although all of them are tastefully decorated. The Maddison Square Theatre, recently opened, is so exceptionally beautiful and elaborate that it is quite unique. I described it in my last letter. The Union Square, Wallack's, Park, Broadway, Fifth Avenue, etc., are mere "band-boxes," but they are one and all elegantly fitted up, and admirably managed, notably so the Union Square, which, in the capable hands of Mr. Palmer, a gentleman of fine education, has become one of the most successful theatres in the world. A piece rarely fails here, because it is usually well selected, well cast, well mounted, and thoroughly rehearsed. Amongst its greatest successes, I must mention "The Two Orphans," "Led Astray," "Féréole," "Miss Moulton," "Rose Michel," "The Banker's Daughter," and "The Old Love and the New." Under Mr. Augustin Daly's management, the Fifth Avenue Theatre was noted for its long "runs;" and here Clara Morris, the greatest of American actresses, made her first appearance. "Wallack's" has been long associated with Mr. Lester Wallack, unquestionably still one of the finest actors now before the public, and one of the ablest of managers. This theatre and the "Union Square" have regular companies of well-selected and trained actors; some of whom have been employed for many years. The other theatres, with the exception of Mr. Steele McKaye's new house in Maddison Square, are usually occupied by troupes of "stars" and "combinations."

At the head of the dramatic profession in the United States stands Edwin Booth, the son of the famous Booth. He was born at Baltimore in 1833, and made his *début* as Tyrrel in "Richard III.," September 10th, 1849, at the Boston Museum. Superbly handsome—as handsome as the ideal Lucifer of Milton—with flashing black eyes, and a most intellectual countenance, Mr. Booth soon won his way to the front, and as Hamlet created an enormous sensation in New York, playing that difficult character at the Winter Garden Theatre for over one hundred consecutive nights. He then built the house which bears his name, but, I am sorry to say, was not successful in paying his enormous expenses, and he was soon afterwards declared bankrupt. As an actor he is certainly very fine. Nothing can exceed the variety of his facial expressions, or the intelligence of his conception of the parts he enacts. But I cannot say that I like his pronunciation of certain words, which, however correct in a scholarly sense, appears to me pedantic. When he first appeared, Mr. Booth was the "rage" with all the school-girls and misses in their teens, but now that he is married—by-the-way, to a sister of Mrs. J. S. Clarke, Miss Mary McVicker of Chicago—their enthusiasm moderated, and Mr. Booth is not the popular idol he used to be. I believe he will visit London, either in the autumn, or in the season of 1881. If he does, I imagine he will be greatly admired, especially as Iago and Richard III. Salvini once remarked that he had never seen anything so intellectually subtle and powerful as Mr. E. Booth's Iago.

Laurence Barett, a younger man, is a rising tragedian of some talent, but he does not seem to me to be making the progress in his art he ought to do. John McCullough in certain *rôles*, Virginius for instance, and the Gladiator, is excellent. He is a powerfully-built man, and blessed with a stentorian voice, which, however, he occasionally abuses. I need not mention Joe Jefferson—you know him as well as I do; but I will say that if he chose to play King Lear, a part which I have heard him read, you would be amazed at his intellectual conception of that terribly difficult *rôle*.

Of the rising American comedians, none as yet has been able to rival Lester Wallack in ease and grace of manner or purity of elocution. I look round the stage in vain for his successor. Mr. Charles Thorne has many of his qualities; but you have seen him in London, and have recognised his fine bold style; but he is rather a melodramatic actor than a comedian, an American edition of Mr. H. Neville.

If there is one man more popular than another in his profession, that man's name is W. J. Florence—"Billy Florence," as they call him. You will see him this season at the Gaiety, and confirm my opinion of his merits. I suppose he will appear there as Senator Bardwell Slote, in "The Mighty Dollar," with his admirable wife, the Alphonsine of the American stage, as Mrs. General Gilflory. I prophesy a great success for both these clever people. But Mr. Florence's genial nature is his chief charm. His social manner is absolutely irresistible. He and Sothern play more practical jokes than any two other men, not only in the dramatic, but in all the other professions combined. The other night, whilst Sothern was acting Dundreary, Florence took it into his head to pay him a visit on the stage, dressed as Bardwell Slote. Imagine the surprise of the audience to see this caricature step before the footlights to present his respects to Dundreary! Of course everybody laughed, and of course Florence was immensely "ovated." The next night Sothern returned the visit, and made his appearance, in the famous dressing-gown, in the midst of Bardwell Slote's grandest stump oration, and there was a repetition of the amusement of the preceding evening.

J. T. Raymond, whose famous impersonation of Colonel Lellus you are also to see some time this year, is a native of Rochester, N.Y., and a very able actor I assure you. He first appeared as Ratcliff in "Richard III.," and told me he was so frightened, that when he had to say, in the horrible Colley Cibber stage version of the play, the lines, "This way, this way! below yon thicket stands a swift horse," he bellowed out, "This way, below yon swift stands a thick horse." Mr. Raymond has acted in Paris and London with Sothern in "An American Cousin." Mr. McRankin, a very handsome man, is a popular actor here, and I hear is also bound for London this season, to act in the "Danites," a play by Joaquin Miller, in which he appears to advantage. These are our principal great "stars." In the "stock" are many fine actors—Mr. Gilbert, who has no rival *in classical comedy*, an ancient gentleman of the old school; Mr. David Fisher, whose Sir Peter Teazle is absolutely perfect; Mr. Tom Whiffen, who is supremely humorous; Mr. Stuart Robson, whom you know; Mr. Stoddard, whose impersonations of old French peasants are studies worthy of Balzac; Mr. O'Neil, a charming *jeune premier*; Mr. Plympton, who reminds many of us of poor Montague; and a host of others.

Not many years ago a little girl of twelve years of age played the part of a page in a Shakespearian piece at the Cleveland Theatre. "They gave me a pair of old tights and said I was to pink them. I had no pinking, but I had some blue, and so I blued them. They had a hole in the knees, and I patched it up with a piece of mother's cap-string, and in this rig I, Clara Morris, made my *début*." A little later, at the age of sixteen, she played the queen in "Hamlet" to the Hamlet of Mr. Booth. "The queen —I mean the regular queen," said she to me one day, "was taken ill, and I said I could do her business for her. Her majesty was very stout, and I am very thin. She lent me her black velvet gown and train, and I appeared literally swathed therein. Mr. Booth was enormously amused, and helped to pin me up tighter in the good old lady's funeral garments." A little later yet, at Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre, Clara Morris appeared as Anne Silvester in "Man and Wife." It was a marvellous performance, a revelation of genius. From that hour her triumph began, and, but for ill health, has never left her to this day, for, only last week, hundreds of persons were turned away from the California Theatre, San Francisco, unable to obtain admission to see her as Miss Moulton. To my mind, Clara Morris is the greatest emotional actress I have ever seen, greater even than Aimée Desclée. She is small, thin, and well made. Her features are flat, like those of the Sphinx. Her lips are unusually thick, her eyes are wonderful, deep gray, full of thought and expression. Her voice is so sonorous, so heart-stirring, that, notwithstanding her decided Yankee twang, it is impossible to resist its influence. As Miss Moulton, Cora in "Article 47," and Camille, she is unrivalled, and will, I believe, remain so, for such a strange, emotional, and magnetic nature is not often found combined with genius and culture; for although a self-educated woman, Miss Morris (Mrs. F. C. Harriot) is a lady of remarkable literary ability, and thoroughly conversant with books and art. The great charm of this fine artist consists in the extraordinary emotional power which she exhibits, and which sometimes gives an even too painful realism to her performances. She can cry real tears, and make the audience feel the force and truth of her pathos as can no other actress I have ever seen. It has been said that Miss Morris will not succeed in London; they will revolt at her accent, which is certainly very American. But I do not think this is likely to be the case, because I am sure that genius so exceptional is sure to be recognised and to make itself felt; it matters little what may be its minor faults of pronunciation.

Of the tragediennes, Mesdames Janauschek and Dargon, I will say very little. The first is one of the greatest actresses of this or any other age. A

Bohemian by birth, Madame Janauschek would be a very remarkable woman only as a linguist; but her dramatic power is something, to my mind, quite, as Dominie Sampson would say, "Prodigious!" As Brunhild she treads alone in those high walks of intellectual and classical tragedy where even Ristori has never been able to venture. The Greeks never imagined a more stately or terrible Clytemnestra. Madame Janauschek is, however, no longer young, and has appeared but rarely during the past two seasons. I remember once saying to her, "Madame, you must be very tired of acting." She had been playing for nearly a month her wonderful creation, Brunhild, a most fatiguing part. "Oh no," says she, "I am always busy. During my holidays I rested myself by translating from the Italian the 'Inferno' of Dante into Bohemian, and thence back again into English blank verse. Mr. Longfellow said it was very well done. I mastered Greek in two years well enough to act the Iphigenia of Sophocles in the original. I know Latin, besides German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Polish, and French. I have acted in French at St. Petersburg. English I contrived to learn well enough to act Shakespearian characters in less than three years. I mean before I die to add several Eastern languages to my répertoire." "Do you intend acting in Hindostan?" I inquired. "Oh no; but I like to read the literature of a country in the language in which it was written."

Miss Dargon, now in Australia making a great deal of money and winning great success, is Irish by birth, and a noble tragic actress. With the exception of Mrs. Agnes Booth and the above-noticed ladies, there are now no tragediennes in the States. There are several aspirant Lady Macbeths and Cleopatras, but they never do more than put in a first appearance in the traditional Siddonian *robes*, and disappear never to rise to the surface again. Miss Emily Leicester, a most able instructress, and Miss Fanny Morant, are our *faiseuses de tragédiennes.* Miss Leicester, I see, is going over to England for a month or so this season. She launched Louise Pomeroy, a beautiful and by no means indifferent actress; and now she has achieved success with a certain Miss Adel Belgarde, who rushes in boldly, where, as a rule, angels feel rather nervous about stepping. I must not omit to mention Miss Mary Anderson, a very beautiful girl, the Apollo Belvedere in petticoats, who acts with considerable appreciation of what she is doing, but who is utterly lacking in genuine feeling of any kind. Modjeska, too, has been a great success here, and may, since she earned her first laurels as an English-speaking actress on this "side of Jordan," be fairly claimed as an American artist. Brains have been bestowed by a lavish Providence on Modjeska, Countess Bozenta, as they have on very few men and women. She is not young, yet she manages to look any age she likes, from the fourteen years of Juliet, to the maturity of Cleopatra. She is socially the most accomplished and agreeable of ladies. She has all the *finesse* of a Polish woman, added to real erudition and genuine good breeding. I hear she is in London. I predict a success akin to that which Stella Colas made years and years ago. Modjeska is, however, a much greater actress than was the fair Stella, and, as Cleopatra, is a realisation of subtle power and intelligence. Rose Eytinge is with you—keep her, and value her at her just value. Let her but act some one of her favourite parts—the Countess de Chandoce, for instance—and you will see, not only one of the handsomest and cleverest of actresses, but one perhaps the most essentially womanly and charming.

Lotta Crabtree, our Jenny Lee, is a most delightful little personage both off and on the stage. A perfect gentlewoman off, she is an equally perfect artist on the boards. I tell my bachelor friends they ought to lay siege to the heart of Miss Charlotte Crabtree. That is the great Lotta's real name. She is good, she is pretty, and worth at the very least 500,000 dols., all earned by her small self. Among the very best of our leading ladies, many of whom deserve to be stars, are Mrs. Chanfran, Miss Charlotte Thompson, a superb comedienne; the beautiful Fanny Davenport, Miss Jeffries Lewis, Miss Teffany, Miss Dyas, stolen from London; as was also Miss Coghlan; Miss K. Putnam, Miss Ellsler; and to these let me add the names of those magnificent old ladies, Mesdames Ponisi, J. Sefton, Gilbert, and Wilton, each perfect in her way, and not to be eclipsed on the stage of any other metropolis, unless indeed it be that of Paris. These four ladies are really so very great, that were it not for "*des années l'irréparable outrage*," they would each of them deserve to rank as stars. In this brief review of the New York stage, I have necessarily been obliged to omit all mention of many of its ornaments, who richly deserve the honour of a special record in your pages; but space, space, space, that tyrant of those who have the brains and will to say much that is pleasant, prevents my so doing for the present.

Our Play-Box.

"VOYAGE EN SUISSE."

Gaiety Theatre, Saturday, March 27th, 1880.

Adapted by R. Reece. Music composed and selected by Herr Carl Meyder. Mechanical Effects invented and arranged by the Messrs. Hanlon-Lees.

Sir George Golightly	Mr. J. L. Shine.	Harry	Mr. G. Hanlon.
Finsbury Parker ..	Mr. Darley.	La Chose	Mons. Agoust.
Matthew Popperton ..	Mr. W. Penley.	Mr. Brown	Mr. Jones.
Bottleby	Mr. Newcombe.	Mr. Smith	Mr. Warde.
Schwindelwitz ..	Mr. Squire.	Mrs. Bottlby	Miss Rose Roberts.
Sellars	Mr. Warde.	Julia	Miss Kate Lawler.
Bob	Mr. F. Hanlon.	Maria	Miss Hobson.
John	Mr. W. Hanlon.	Gretchen	Miss Herbert.
Ned	Mr. E. Hanlon.	Bettlby	Miss Hunt.

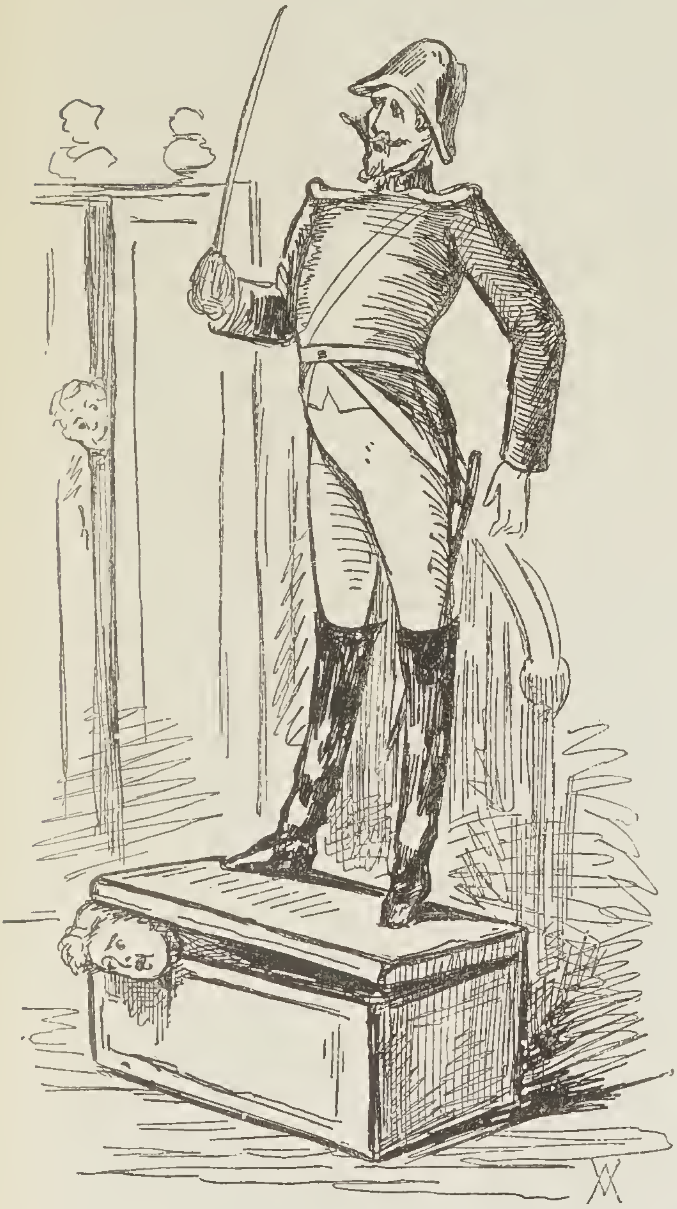
Constance .. .. Miss Blanche Lena.

I DOFF the hat of respect to Mr. Hollingshead. It takes a very clever man to gauge the recondite depths of fashionable imbecility, to tickle the sides of lethargic inanity, and to cater with success for the supremely idiotic. Fate, with her usual irony, has somehow decreed that the shrewd and long-headed Mr. Hollingshead should find himself surrounded by a crew of patrons consisting of all that is most frivolous and silly in golden youth. He accepts his position with cheerful frankness, and comes out of the difficulties in which he is placed with flying colours. "Crutch and Toothpick" have apparently got tired for the moment of burlesque. Miss Vaughan's graceful dancing and Miss Farren's energetic singing palls for a brief space upon the palates of the jaded ones; or perhaps the mental strain which was needed to grasp Mr. Byron's clever verbal distortions has proved too much for the weary heads, producing attacks of neuralgia or premonitory symptoms of brain-fever. Be that as it may, Mr. Hollingshead has found himself called upon to provide some form of interim-entertainment (pending a renewal of brain-fibre in his patrons) which shall be bright and amusing, and demand no application whatsoever of the intellectual faculties. A difficult task truly; but not too difficult for Mr. Hollingshead. He said to himself: "Punch and Judy wants novelty; a ballet, pure and simple, is a bore; real cabs cease to amuse; burning houses belong to another market; even the apotheosis of upholstery lacks interest. Would a carnival of machinery meet the present demand? No! I must seek further afield than this in order to rouse from apathetic indifference to enthusiasm willowing Crutch and worn-out Toothpick. Could I unite sprays from all these branches in a new bouquet of sweets? Perhaps. I must see." Then Mr. Hollingshead swept the Continent with a Napoleonic eye, scanned the great cities with an eagle orb, and saw at last the very thing he sought. The present generation knows nothing of true pantomime, has never seen genuine miming. In certain parts of Italy the real Simon Pure is still to be ferreted out sometimes, notably at Genoa and Bologna during the winter months; but practically the art is lost, at any rate so far as we Northerners are concerned.

Now in the course of his survey the manager of the Gaiety turned his orb, like a policeman's bull's-eye, full upon the Varieties in Paris, and here he discerned the Hanlon-Lees, a clever family, who are acrobats as well as comedians, and who have, besides, at their fingers' ends all the mechanical contrivances of which theatrical machinery is capable. His ukase went forth; the Hanlon-Lees came to London; and Crutch and Toothpick are delirious with admiration, even rousing themselves so far as to sit upright in their stalls and exchange congratulatory hand-shakes. The astute manager has found precisely what was wanted to save golden youth, for a time at least, from Earlswood, and has even succeeded in hitting upon an entertainment which can amuse those who are not yet completely imbecile.

Mimes and pantomimes! Let me think awhile. Yes. Up on a shelf yonder, half concealed by dust, lies a pamphlet upon the subject, written about 1749, by one Weaver, a dancing-master. An enthusiast he was in all artistic matters, who worshipped the Arts with bended knees and nose on floor, loving them for their calm beauty, revering them for their mild influence. This Weaver taught ladies of fashion to step a minuet or take a turn of *passepied*, and occupied his mind besides with the construction of pantomime for Covent Garden. Mr. Manager Rich, as all the world knows, was (under the *sobriquet* of Lun) the king of harlequins. Under his rule Covent Garden became as celebrated for trick-scenery and mimetic ballet as the other patent house was for high tragedy. What did he care if Mrs. Pritchard scoffed? We read of "Apollo and Daphne," in 1788, a spectacle in which Mr. Phillips, as harlequin, moved the people to tears, though he never uttered word, by his grief over Daphne, whilst the leaves were growing on her arms; and of a mechanical rising of the sun which impelled the powdered ladies to tap their fans upon the box-rails.

The first entertainment of the kind in England, the dancing-master tells us, was played by Italians at Drury Lane in 1702—a grotesque entertainment, called "The Tavern Bilkers," wherein Scaramouch and Pierrot took the town by storm. But stay! Our worthy Weaver goes farther back than that, and discourses learnedly, moreover, concerning the training of a mime for his high office. "The Romans," he observes, "became so sunk in Asiatic luxury as to lose their taste in arts as well as arms. They could not stir their brains to follow a poet (Crutch and Toothpick all those centuries ago!), but pleased themselves with a pompous triumph, relieved by pugilism and rope-dancing. Hence arose a species of play which appealed to the eye alone, in no wise to the ear, wherein the players danced not, but copied the force of the passions by the motions of their bodies. The hands and fingers took the place of the tongue. Lucian suggests that, by the fable of Proteus, no more is intended than the description of a cunning mime—one who illustrates the wind, fire, the fluidity of water, the fury of a lion, all by dumb show." Then Mr. Weaver proceeds to tell us, with a gravity which fits the solemn subject, that the following branches of learning must be mastered by the perfect mime: "He must borrow assistance from all sciences, viz. music, arithmetic, geometry, natural and moral philosophy; must be acquainted with rhetoric; be no stranger to painting

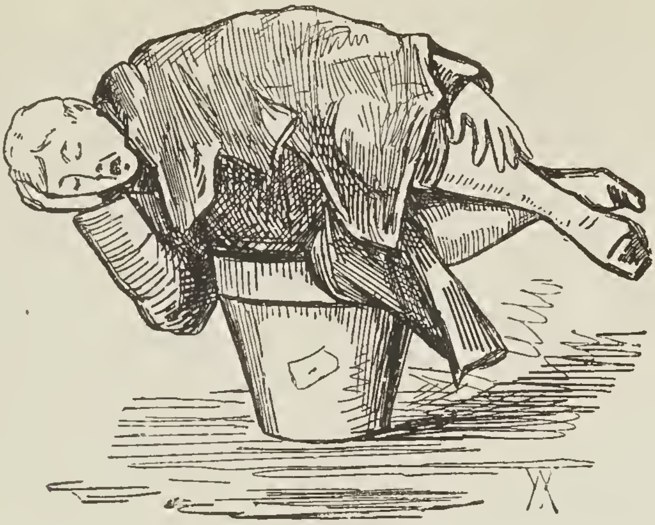


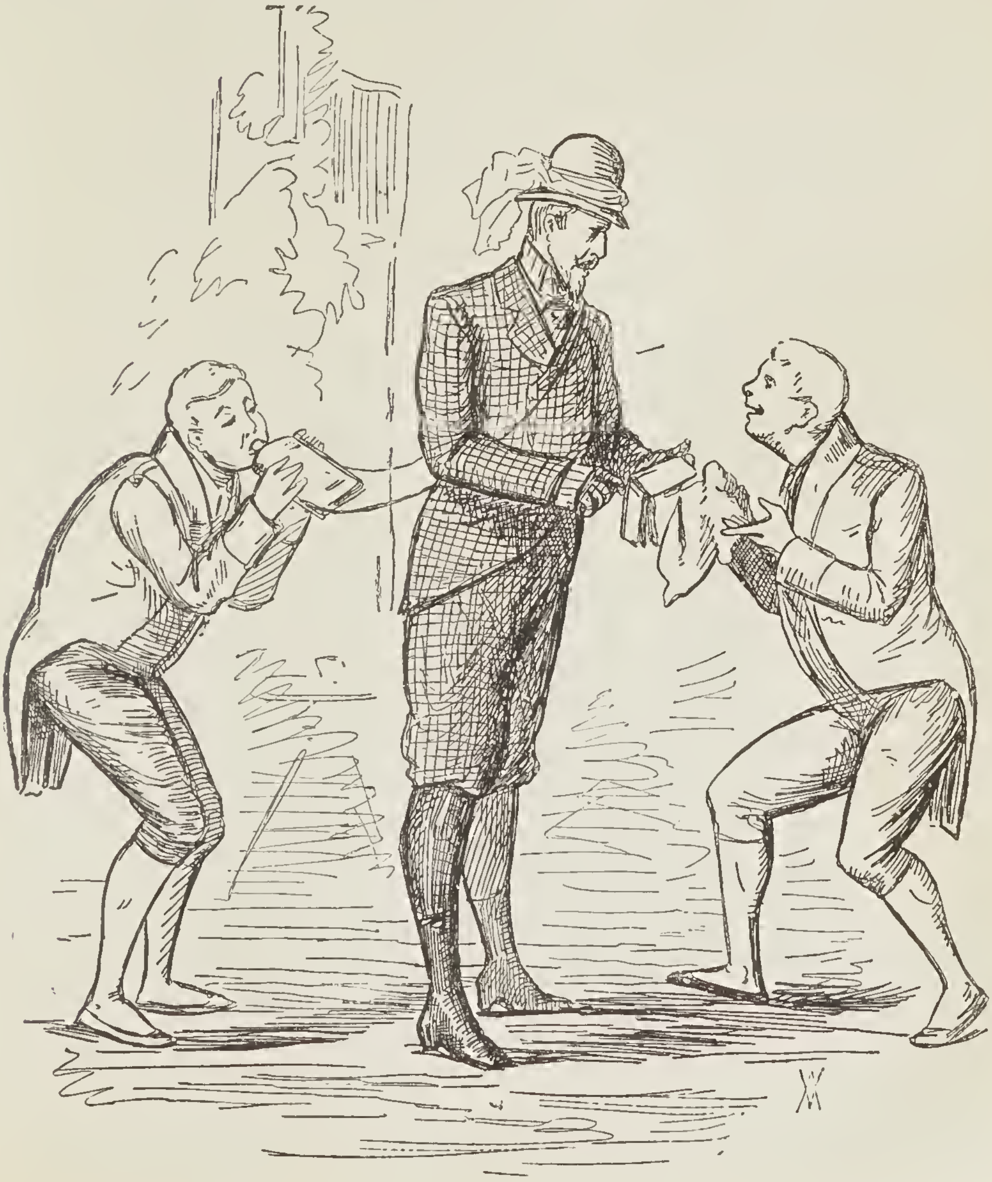
and sculpture; must possess a memory tenacious, and at command—in short, he must aspire to be an interpreter of all things enigmatical, and an explainer of ambiguities. The knowledge of our mime should begin from chaos or the birth of the world. He must be well read in the metamorphoses; be admitted into the secret mysteries of the Ægyptians; must be ignorant of nothing which may be found in Homer or Hesiod; must be understood, though dumb; be heard, though silent." Whew! What an array of accomplishments! And all this for the behoof of shallow-pated C. and T.! My respect for the Hanlon-Lees augments as I read on: "Demetrius, a cynic philosopher in Nero's time, gibed at an illustrious mime, who undertook thereupon to tell him a complete story without the aid of music. He played the amours of Mars and Venus, their discovery by the sun, their catching by Vulcan; he even delineated every god and goddess separately who came to view the spectacle in the net; and all this with such grace and beauty that the enchanted Demetrius cried out, 'Good man! I hear all you act, see the personages, hear them speak through your hands.'" Heavens! what a wonderful art, and what a pity it should be permitted to lie dormant! It has not been asleep so very long though, after all.

About 1830 there was a gentleman who was known as the "Facetious George Wieland," a pantomimist who indignantly repudiated the idea that the silent portrayal of anything whatever was impracticable. The ingenious George revelled as a monkey, did marvels as an elephant, sent the pit into ecstasies as a horned owl. Surely George Conquest must be the grandson of this elder George. But his culminating triumph was as the D——l on two sticks. The impersonation was something very awful and thrilling, no doubt; indeed, there is a fearsome woodcut of this appalling D——l in a penny paper of the period (yclept "Actors by Daylight"), with glaring eyes, and long nails, and a harrowing tail, and wings upon his hips, the contemplation of which, t'other day, caused my tongue to cleave unto the roof of my mouth, and banished slumber from my eyelids for a fortnight. So great was the inimitable George in this impersonation that a babbling unconscious Milton was impelled to seize his lyre and to pour forth his soul in poesy thus:

Here lies Wieland; take no heed
Of where his soul is, for indeed
Satan would turn away from one
Who has so more than he did, done.

How sublime is this thought! How perfect and rhythmical the metre! Verily, an expiring swan! But see. I also am carried away, and am gabbling of everything else except the Hanlon-Lees. Though they come to us as strangers, we have seen them before. If I mistake not, these gentlemen were the first to introduce trapeze performances, before the trapeze was set up as an idol for female worship in consequence of the fascinations of the ethereal Leotard. Since then they have wandered over the face of the earth, studying mankind, taking lessons in human nature, imbibing modern languages like mother's milk, after a fashion which might be expected almost to content the manes of the enthusiastic Weaver. And the result of their education is really wonderful. The members of the troupe differ widely to all appearances in degree of talent; yet all must be pronounced to be genuinely clever. The two best assume the rôles of a pair of comic footmen, and of these superior articles one is vastly superior to the other. Which it is I fail to make out by the play-bill. It is the one who





in the last act falls through the ceiling on to the supper-table. His art is absolutely perfect and complete. An idea dawns slowly on a face as vacant as a slate. By degrees it assumes form and consistency, lights up every feature, passes down the arms into the finger-tips, down the legs into the ankles. The whole man is permeated by that idea. You can read it in every delicate modulation of gesture. It seems to absorb the entire being, to throb in every nerve, to quiver in every muscle, just as an entire harp-string quivers throughout its length under the most delicate touch of a child's finger. These two servants (ably assisted by a M. Agoust, a Frenchman) go through a series of comic scenes with bottles, which are marvels (the scenes, not the bottles) of polished nicety and finish. But their highest achievement is a drunken scene, wherein they go through their business with the dogged determination and corrugated brow and set teeth of the extremely intoxicated. In its way nothing can be better than this. It is so dreadfully true to nature, and withal so genuinely diverting, that one gazes on it with an enthralled interest which would be more fittingly applied to some burst of passion at the Lyceum. Yet, after all, I am talking nonsense. Anything that is really well done demands respect and compels interest. In their own peculiar fashion these gentlemen perform their fooling every bit as earnestly, and in as thorough a spirit, as that in which Mr. Irving performs Shylock. Mr. Irving compels us to think and rack our brains, which, under given conditions, is grasping and inconsiderate of him. The Hanlon-Lees amuse us thoroughly while our minds lie comfortably torpid. Under some circumstances it is as well to give the brain a rest—to let the field lie fallow, in order that later it may produce a richer crop. Not only C. and T., but those who are careworn and tired out, may find amusement just now at the Gaiety. Anyhow, I would defy even Demetrius, the cynic, himself to witness the antics of the Hanlons without laughing; and Laughter which splits both her sides is, I suppose, all that their entertainment aims at. As for the play, it is the veriest peg whereon a set of eccentric trifles are to be hung.—L. WINGFIELD.

"COBWEBS."

A new and original Comedy, by CHARLES WILLS.

Vaudeville Theatre, March 27th, 1880.

Robert Makinson, C.B.	MR. H. HOWE.	Lady Maria Makinson	MISS C. RICHARDS.
Milton	MR. W. HERBERT.	Margaret Severne	MISS K. BISHOP.
The Hon. E. Melleray	MR. C. GARTHORNE.	Kate Makinson	MISS M. ILLINGTON
Arthur Severne	MR. LIN RAYNE.	Mrs. Smallrib	MISS S. LARKIN.
Joe Billiter	MR. T. THORNE.	Martha	MR. E. PALMER.
Mr. Smallrib	MR. D. JAMES.	Robert	MR. A. AUSTIN.

THE selection of Mr. Charles Wills's ill-fated play "Cobwebs," to follow at no long interval Mr. Burnand's not much more successful "Ourselves," was probably not designed by the authorities of the Vaudeville to provide an answer to the arguments of those who urge the desirability of breaking a supposed "dramatic ring." The most self-sacrificing of managements could scarcely be expected to deliberately waste its substance in order to demonstrate the fallacy of a conceited contention on the part of unheard Shakespeares and unacted Sheridans, though it may suit the purpose of one theatrical director to have his cynical joke at the expense of vague worshippers of unknown dramatic deities. And yet if Messrs. James and Thorne had proposed to illustrate the defects characteristic of the inexperienced dramatist, and to place him, for argument's sake, side by side with the mistakes into which the most practised writer for the stage may occasionally fall, they could not have done so with greater effect than in the production of "Cobwebs." The weak places of Mr. Charles Wills's plot are precisely those which would be looked for in the work of a beginner. The story and the characters give some promise in the first act, fall off in the second, and go all to pieces in the third. The sustaining power to develop either the individual characterisation or the general interest is lacking, and the consequence is that the amount of material at the author's command seems barely adequate to afford foundation for an ephemeral magazine tale, to say nothing of the requirements of a three-act comedy. And yet if it had been carried out by a practised hand, such a conception as that of Mr. Smallrib, the bibulous undertaker and money-lender, might well have compensated for many deficiencies, coloured as it was by Mr. David James's rich humour. Sympathy might have been won for the worthy self-made father, who having taken for his second wife a well-born dame, fancies that under her influence the love of his children by his first marriage is slipping away from him. Interest, albeit of a conventional kind, might have been aroused by the contrivance which enables the father to discover his son's forgery, and by the generosity of his attitude towards this unworthy prodigal. But the absence of all stage craft in Mr. Wills's elaboration of his themes, and his deficiency of dramatic resource, rendered any results of this kind impossible. The better parts of his work, including dialogue, often both natural and effective, and always unpretentious, thus went almost unnoticed; and the obvious inadequacy of "Cobwebs," as a play, prevented appreciation of any of its minor merits. It remans only to add that the piece was so acted as to give it that fair chance of success which it missed for the reasons which I have indicated.—Ernest A. Bendall.

"THEMIS."

A new farcical Comedy, adapted from the French of M. Victorien Sardou.

Royalty Theatre, Monday, March 29th, 1880.

Littleton Shuttlecock	Mr. Charles Groves.	Lacquers	Mr. Sam Wilkinson.
The Hon. Cavendish Skye Raker ...	Mr. Charles Strick.	Honoria Trinkett ...	Miss Rose Cullen.
		Mrs. Vavasour ...	Miss Marie Williams.
Joshua Trinkett ...	Mr. Charles Ashford.	Aunt Prunella ...	Miss Fanny Colen.
Uncle Cocker ...	Mr. Fred. Irving.	Bridget	Miss Katie Lee.

Sergeant X.Y.Z. ... ... Mr. Tudor Harris.

This farcical comedy, the original of which is "Les Pommes de Monsieur Voisin," seems in the process of adaptation to have also much of its original point, as is often the case with plays in which an unmarried heroine is substituted for that favourite character of the French stage, the risky married woman. A young barrister who finds himself compromised by his association with a respectable young girl, is by no means in so intelligible a danger as he would be if the lady had a husband, or were in some respects a disreputable companion for him in his series of involuntary adventures. When, therefore, Mr. Littleton Shuttlecock, a nervous barrister, is made miserable by his knowledge of the legal difficulties with which he surrounds himself in espousing the cause of Miss Honoria Trinkett, it cannot but be felt that there is in the circumstances of their companionship nothing to justify such extreme apprehensions on the part of the lady's champion. There is, however, no need to look very anxiously into the adequacy of the cause supplied for the really comic scene which forms the *raison d'être* of the play. The chase after Mr. Shuttlecock and Miss Trinkett, which commences in the sitting-room of The Green Dragon Hotel and ends on the tiles, is amusing very much after the fashion of a pantomime-rally, and has the advantage of being illustrated by a clever instantaneous change of scene, which takes the *dramatis personæ* a moment from the interior of the house to its roof.

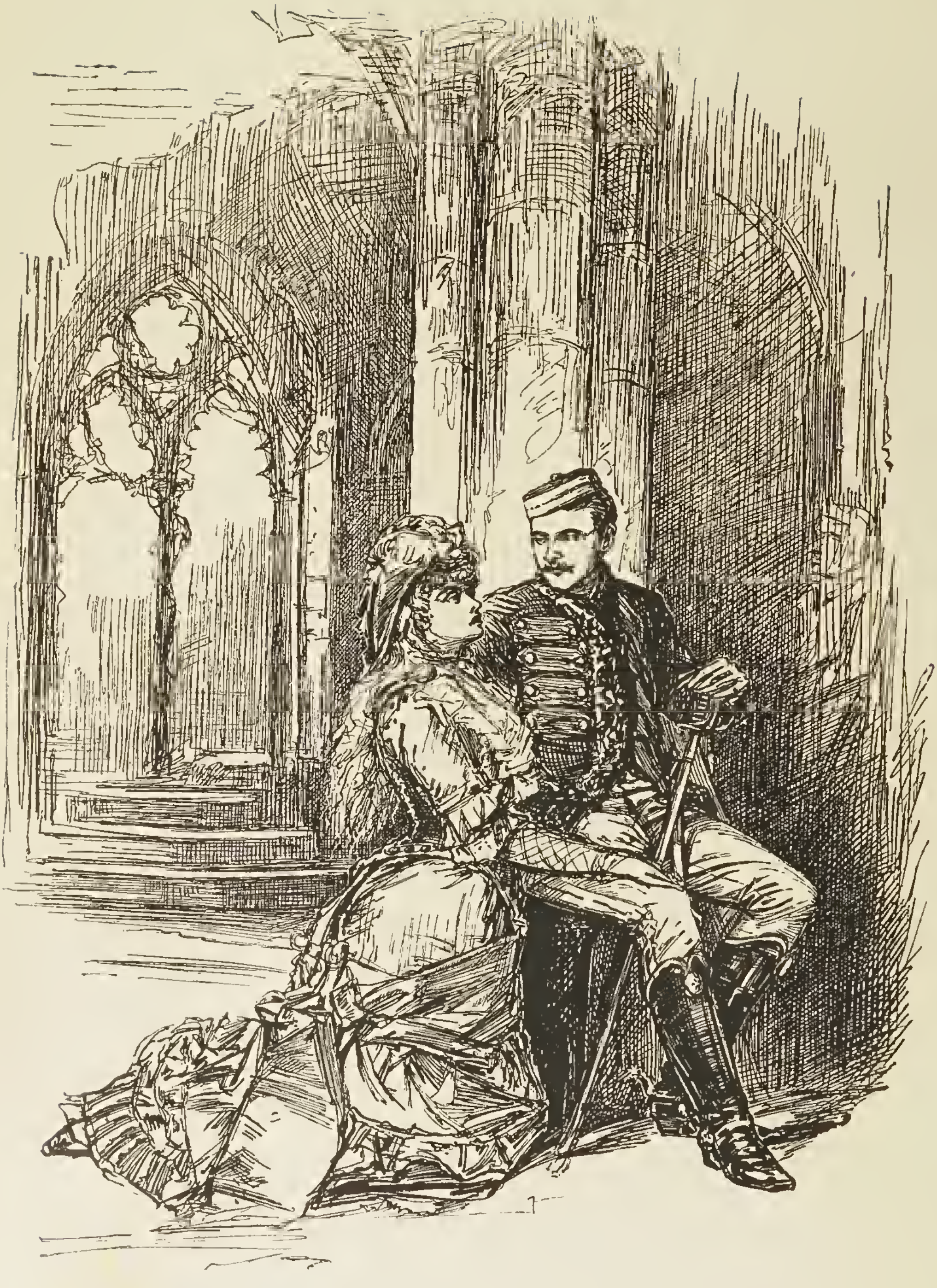
Though as the barrister Mr. Groves acts cleverly in the last act, the piece falls off rapidly after its central situation is passed, and has the further disadvantage of beginning very slowly to interest or amuse its spectators. Besides Mr. Charles Groves, Miss Rose Cullen helps very much to give the action its appropriate animation by displaying as the heroine a vivacity and a humorous intensity which show her to more advantage than usual as an actress of intelligence and energy. "Themis" obtains abundant laughter, and thus fairly justifies its existence.—Ernest A. Bendall.

"THE NAVAL CADETS."

Opera Comique, in Three Acts. Music composed by Richard Genée.
First produced Globe Theatre, Saturday, March 27th, 1880.

Inez Maria Estrella	Miss Violet Cameron.	Paz	Mr. Baron.
Dolores	Miss St. Quinten.	Vaz	Mr. Morganti.
Cerisette	Mdme. Selina Dolaro.	Don Prolixio da Frutti Porto	Mr. Harry Paulton.
Don Florio	Mons. Loredan.	Guava	Miss Katie Abrahams.
Don Miguel	Mr. Wilson.	Sebastiano	Miss Harwood.
Don Luis	Mr. Hill.	Gomez	Miss Kate Poletti.
Don Pedro	Mr. Savidge.	Gonsalvez	Miss Montelli.
Don Pascal	Mr. Reeves.	Carlos	Miss Clara Graham.
Januario	Mr. W. E. Gregory.	Vasquez	Miss Ruth Avondale.
Garlic	Mr. Mitchell.	Ferdinand	Miss M. Sharp.
Don Mauritio	Mr. Denbigh Newton.		
Vespuccio	Miss Kate Chorley.		

The comic opera of the latter half of the French Empire has evidently had its day. From the other side of the Channel come fainter tidings of seductive melodies allied to improper motives. Our feet are not set a-tripping or our heads whirling with sensuous song or the refinement of double meaning, and everywhere, in all the capitals of Europe, there is an attempt made to purify without boring the lighter lyric stage. London carefully follows the lead of the other great cities, and looks out for some light, pleasant, and cheerful music that can be listened to without the accompaniment of a curiously dangerous and suggestive story. There is much to be said for, and much also against "The Naval Cadets" as a popular spectacle. To a halting and uninteresting romance, connected with the loves and adventures of a young Queen of Portugal, has been united some fairly pretty music, ever tuneful and bright, but never particularly attractive, except in the case of interpolated melodies that have nothing to do with the original composer. Here, of course, there is a sign of weakness, for an opera that requires bolstering up in this fashion must be rickety at its foundation. If the opera depended upon its story and music alone, it would have enjoyed, I imagine, but a brief career. Serving its purpose as a light holiday spectacle, it would have been condemned to the dusty lumber-room of forgotten and neglected operas. But there were other conspicuous things in its favour, all of which show judgment and taste on the part of the management. The clever and winning Selina Dolaro, looking a perfect picture in her becoming dress as a fancy cadet of the Portuguese navy, and with a finish and a style given to her acting from recent association with the operatic stage, came to lead as prettily-grouped a stage as London has seen for some time. Miss Violet Cameron, with strengthened voice and fresh buoyant manner, ever picturesque, and, for a wonder, apparently enjoying her work, succeeded, as I cannot help thinking, in carrying off the honours of the evening in a particularly attractive character. Mr. Harry Paulton, a rare and true humorist, worked at a thread of a character until, by his own force of dry fun, he made it stand out as the most amusing feature of the evening's entertainment. For these good things anyone could afford to overlook the over-elaboration and forced consciousness of Mons. Loredan and Denbigh Newton, and look forward to the day when Mr. W. E. Gregory will fulfil the promise that is clearly held out of his ultimate success as an actor. At present he is



THE MADRIGAL. PIRATES OF PENZANCE.

[MISS MARION HOOD AND MR. F. POWER].

"Oh! leave me not to live
Alone and desolate.
No fate seemed fair as mine,
No happiness so great!
Fal-la! fa-la-fa-la!"

nervous and restrained as a love-maker, even under the attractive influence of Madame Dolaro. Coming away from a scene dazzling, beautiful, and attractive, and from the contemplation of dresses as bright as the eye could wish or fancy desire, I mused over what I had seen, and endeavoured to sort out the advantages of the evening's amusement. Not one melody of Richard Genée remained true to me; I could not hum an air or recollect a chorus; all was pleasant, but unpersuasive. But I remembered how Madame Dolaro acted in the duel scene as a frightened lad, who assumes a pretty swagger, recalling her look at the conclusion of the fight that was a masterpiece of Dejazet-like comedy; I recalled the fresh bird-like tones of Violet Cameron as, with evident feeling, she gave out from her heart a ballad, by Tosti, "For ever and for ever," and I chuckled grimly over many a scene in which the comical mystification of Harry Paulton had obtained full play. The result was pleasant but not animating. And then I fell to wondering at the difficulties encountered by all these artists in having to study the words of the most unmusical and unrhythmical libretto that has probably ever been appended to comic opera. Such a song as "There's a time than the noontide more exquisitely fair" cannot possibly be sung to the music without halts and pauses, making the vocalist leap over five-barred gates of words in order to get into the open again. The poet Bunn wrote nonsense occasionally, but, when sung, it sounded like sense. These words are unmusical, and often unintelligible.—C. S.

"UPPER CRUST."

A new and original Comedy, in Three Acts, by Henry J. Byron.

Folly Theatre, Wednesday, March 31, 1880.

Lord Hesketh ..	Mr. John Billington.
Sir Robert Boobleton, Bart. ..	Mr. E. W. Garden.
Mr. Barnaby Doublechick	Mr. J. L. Toole.
Walter Wrentmore	Mr. E. D. Ward.
Tibthorpe	Mr. T. Sidney.
Nora Doublechick ..	Miss Lilian Cavalier.
Kate Vennimore ..	Miss Roland Phillips.
Lady Boobleton ..	Miss Emily Thorne.

Unlike the mantle which the "kind curteous child, that cold much of wisdome," brought to King Arthur's court at Carlisle, Mr. Byron's dramatic talent lends itself with admirable suppleness to the peculiarities of the artist who is to give life and substance to his thought. An actor of considerable experience, as well as an author, Mr. Byron is completely master of the useful and practical art of writing a play, amusing in itself, and specially calculated to display the strongest side of the chief actor's faculty. It is of course competent to transcendental critics to maintain that such work should not be done at all, and that plays written for one person are of their nature inartistic, effete, and barren; but the answer to any such sweeping condemnation is in the success that attends plays of this kind, when carefully written and produced with proper attention to the minor parts. Both Robson and Charles Mathews pleased the public best in plays written specially for them, and it is natural that it should be so; for, in such cases, the dramatist, instead of writing, as the proverbial Scotchman swore, "at large," considers the stops of the pipe he is going to play upon, and pitches his key so as to get the best music out of the instrument. In writing "The Upper Crust" for Mr. Toole, Mr. Byron has not only clothed that most unctuous of comedians with a garment of motley which becomes him admirably, but has constructed a light and pleasant play running merrily through its three acts. The torment undergone by a rich and vulgar self-made man, in his struggles to break into "The Upper Crust" of county society, are a legitimate theme for satire; and Mr. Byron, by making the glitter of newly-made wealth reflect the meanness of hungry blue blood, raises his work at times into the higher regions of comedy. At the same time he justifies the verdict of "society" by making the proprietor of Doublechick's Diaphanous Soap an impracticable vulgarian. One sympathises completely with the people who will have nothing to do with him; and when he parts with his money to Lord Hesketh, who, for a consideration, is acting as his social sponsor, the question arises, which of the precious pair is the most contemptible? It has pleased Mr. Byron to denude his central figure of any claim to kindness or consideration. In M. Daudet's admirable "Nabab," the sympathy of the reader is quickly secured for the unlucky self-made one who brings his millions and his vulgarity to Paris, and spends thousands upon an orphanage in order that his doctor may be decorated. Jansoulet is a brutal ignoramus; but he is a man—strong and courageous, loving and generous withal. Doublechick, on the other hand, is merely a vulgar wretch striving to live among his betters. He has neither the spirit nor the ambition of the Southern Frenchman. When he wishes to display spirit he is only insolent. Such ambition as he has is only the paltry social variety of that "last infirmity of noble minds." He is made by Mr. Byron utterly contemptible. Why this resolution has been arrived at it is perhaps hardly necessary to discuss. To me it appears to suppress one side of Mr. Toole's faculty—that of expressing emotion. Doublechick would, I take it, be more interesting if he were more human—if he had some claim to pity or sympathy; but it must be owned that he is wondrously amusing as he is.

As portrayed by Mr. Toole, the successful soap-boiler, who finally sees his daughter, in spite of himself, engaged to the heir to a peerage, is compounded of those odd alternations of arrogance and servility, of semi-idiotcy and low cunning which the most laughter-moving of English actors renders with surpassing skill. The tone and attitude of Doublechick, as he complains of the way "The Upper Crust" has of "putting" him "down," is indescribable, as is his expression of satisfaction, after being "put down" very much, at the opportunity of going to his gardener and "letting 'im 'ave it 'ot." So strange is the grip of the comedian on the spectator that one forgets utterly the threadbare meanness of Doublechick to roar with laughter at Mr. Toole. Equally good, in its way, is the scene between the soap-boiler and the lord, in which the former complains that the county people still shirk him; that they watch him out before they call on him, and take care to be out when he calls upon them; but perhaps both of these are surpassed in the scene with the "horsey" baronet. Doublechick has discovered the baronet, who is supposed to be in love with his daughter, flirting with a niece of Lord Hesketh, and, venturing upon a remonstrance, is "put down" in the true "upper-crust" manner. Next he finds that his clerk, discarded for presuming to make love to Nora Doublechick, is the son of Lord Hesketh, and declares that he is not going to be puffed up by the discovery. Presently, however, the baronet or "bart.," as Mr. Toole calls him, comes back, and a richly-humorous scene occurs. Sir Bobert Boobleton, apparently, has it in his mind to break off his engagement with Nora, but is not allowed to convey his views. Dismissal, conveyed in the most arrogant manner, meets the amazed "bart.," who retires in confusion. This scene is excruciatingly funny. Doublechick sits by the fire, reading the newspaper, and, to begin with, ignores the presence of the man whom he feared but a short while before; and the audience is kept in a roar of laughter throughout.

Mr. Toole is very well supported. Mr. Billington makes a very good sketch of Lord Hesketh; and Mr. Garden, a quaint figure of the "horsey" baronet. Mr. E. D. Ward, as Walter Wrentmore, plays the lover with great taste and refinement, and with a concentration and decision which augur well for the future of this young actor. Stage lovers are very rare swallows. In Dundreary language, it takes many summers to make one; and I am therefore glad to see Mr. Ward fulfil the promise of his previous performance at the Folly Theatre. Miss Lilian Cavalier is a graceful Nora Doublechick; and Miss Roland Phillips, a bright and sparkling Kate Vennimore—a character, perhaps, too wholly worldly for a young girl. Miss Emily Thorne is admirable as Lady Boobleton. It may be fairly said that "The Upper Crust," albeit written for Mr. Toole, is by no means only a "one-part play," and that the minor characters are exceedingly well represented.—Bernard Henry Becker.

"THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE; or, THE SLAVE OF DUTY."

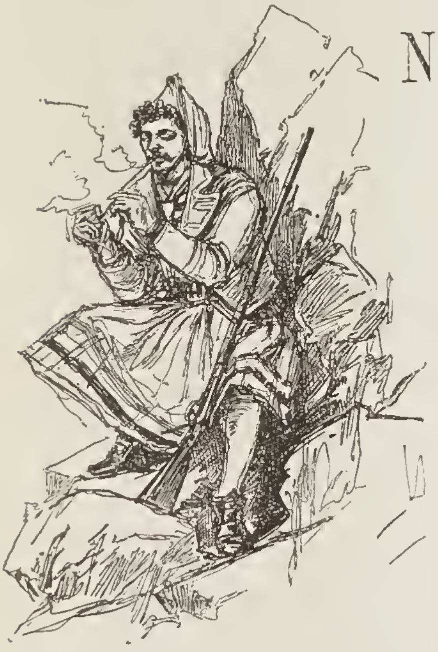
An entirely original melodramatic Opera, in Two Acts, written by W. S. Gilbert. Composed by Arthur Sullivan.

Produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, on Wednesday, December 31st, 1879.

Produced at the Opera Comique, London, on Saturday, April 3rd, 1880.

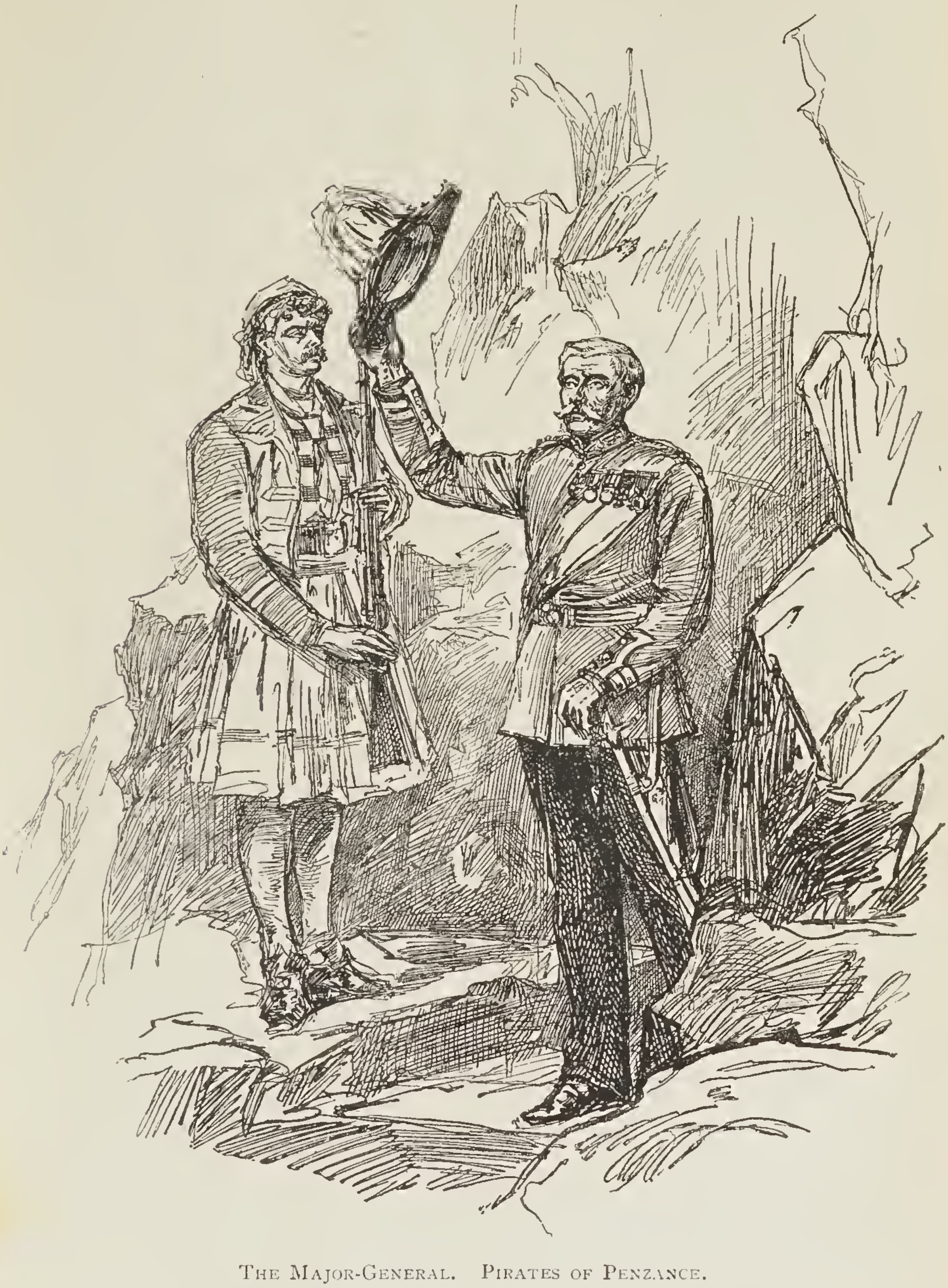
		London.	New York.
Major-General Stanley		Mr. George Grossmith.	Mr. J. H. Ryley.
The Pirate King		Mr. R. Temple.	Mr. Brocolini.
Samuel (his Lieutenant)		Mr. G. Temple.	Mr. Furneaux Cook.
Frederic (the Pirate 'Prentice)		Mr. F. Power.	Mr. Hugh Talbot.
Serjeant of Police		Mr. Barrington.	Mr. F. Clifton.
Mabel	General Stanley's Daughters	Miss Marion Hood.	Miss Roosevelt.
Edith		Miss Gwyn.	Miss Jessie Bond.
Kate		Miss La Rue.	Miss Brandram.
Isabel		Miss Bond.	Miss Barlow.
Ruth (a Pirate Maid-of-all-Work)		Miss Emily Cross.	Miss Alice Barnett.

Act 1.—A Rocky Seashore on the Coast of Cornwall.
Act 2.—A Ruined Chapel on General Stanley's Estate.



NO wonder, indeed, that stage success is so seldom obtained, when, in order to win the prize, it is necessary to elbow your way through a crowd of obstinate obstructionists who are positively offended at the pronounced amusement of the people. Between the author's desk and the voice of the public comes a formidable barrier of discontent, composed of men half cynical and semi-critical, weary and bored playgoers who never come to the theatre with a healthy appetite, but, with a faded and fastidious palate, proceed to discuss with slight interest, and to dismiss with ill-timed scorn, the kind of work that should, if for nothing else, be welcomed for its originality. It is only a very strong and powerful combination of opinions that can break through this quick-set hedge, and once more the authors of "The Pirates of Penzance" have been able to hold their own. Two dramatic writers in our time have acquired the art of amusing the public in an original manner, and have gradually become so firm in their saddles, conquering prejudice, and confident of their natural power, that they in time could afford to smile at the silliness that, once powerful to crush, can only now pull feebly at their successful skirts. They happened to be two friends—members of the same clubs, belonging to the same set, thrown together at the very outset of their literary career, valued by such as watched their undaunted progress and soaring power, destined, as we all thought then, to become greater than the rest of their fellows, unless comparisons were utterly at fault—and their names were T. W. Robertson and W. S. Gilbert. The fame of Robertson was not obtained without a struggle; he was sneered at and jeered at, held up as the king of teacups and saucers, and the founder of namby-pambyism. He was so simple that the quidnuncs insisted he was little; he gained recognition with such ease that his style was laughed at as milk-and-water. The success of Robertson for a long time seemed to irritate such as professed to study art. Here were the people in the theatre laughing and crying all the evening, charmed with a pure, fresh, and incomprehensible feeling, touched to the quick with light turns of humour and rays of fancy as sparkling as the spring-time sun that steals into the window and suddenly illuminates the room; but all that the malcontents could say was that it was elaborated nothingness, and that every play was the same. Here indeed was a fallacy. The author was the same, not the play. He treated various subjects with the same kind of handling. We could go into the dramatic gallery, and, hearing his dialogue and appreciating his love of manliness in men and purity in women, could say, "That is a Robertson," just as we say, That is a Walker, or an Orchardson, or a Fildes, or an Allingham, or a Marcus Stone; but it was a long time before those who craved for originality and English work permitted the worth of the happy and delightful painter of English life.

Mr. Gilbert is undergoing the same kind of trial. Here he is making his audiences laugh without ceasing, tickling them with the concealed straws of his unexpected fun, pleasing their ears with his ingenious lyrics and verbal conceits, fascinating them, only they do not know it, with his masterly workmanship, showing the value of finish even in his extraordinary eccentricity. And yet what are his countrymen ordered to do? Is it to encourage or disparage? Do they say, Thank Heaven, here is an original humorist at last; an author who has been accepted *nem. con.* in the land of quaintness of thought and expression—America—a relief from the burden of bad French books and nasty French innuendo; a writer who can write words that tune themselves to the musician's fancy; a composer of songs that sing of themselves, so happy is his skill in turning a verse and polishing a sentiment? or do they not rather say, Why, my dear Gilbert, you have given us all this before! This patter-song is that patter-song, this chorus answers to that chorus; we can trace your bumboat woman in your piratical maid-of-all-work, your First Lord of the Admiralty in your Major-General, your spick-and-span sailor in your duty-loving Frederic, your Dick Deadeye in your Pirate King? Ingenuity is exercised in recalling the incidents of one comic opera in order to fit it into the motive of another; but it is forgotten the author has a style and a manner, and that though he is the same, he is still uncommonly different in all that he undertakes. Look at the Bab Ballads; there they are, scores of them, all together, bound up in one volume, one after the other. They are all in the same vein, touched by the same governing spirit, and yet the reader of books does not weary of them. Why should the spectator of plays be tired of a succession of "Sorcerers" and "Pinafores" and "Pirates" when, with the same touch, Mr. Gilbert has always got a new tune? The people don't say so; they can listen to Mr. Gilbert without a book to guide them, and they applaud him, although the superfine gentlemen insist that laughter, applause, and encores ought really to be put down as "bad form"—a detestably vulgar expression that marks the character of those who use it. Why on earth should not people applaud and cheer if they are so disposed? The art of the stage must die if it is to be draped in funereal silence at the dictation of old young men.



The Major-General. Pirates of Penzance.
[Mr. George Grossmith.]
"I'm the very pattern of a modern Major-General."

The style of humour of which these Bab Ballad operas is composed has hitherto defied analysis and description. Everyone has had a try at it, but no one has hit the mark. Literary critics, with the Bab Ballads, and dramatic critics, with these inverted dramatic studies, have all made an attempt to define the Gilbertian fun; but I believe it to be beyond definition. It has been called topsy-turvy, deformed, exaggerated, caricature, grotesque; it has been compared to the effect of a man looking at his face in a spoon, in a magnifying-glass, or at the world through the wrong end of an opera-glass; but none of these things hit the mark. It is a kind of comic daring and recklessness that makes fun of things which most people would not dream of mentioning, and reveals to broad daylight the secrets of suggestiveness. In a dim, dreamy, and incoherent way we have all *thought* many of Mr. Gilbert's ideas; but he *says* them. They are true, or they would not be so familiar to us. Most people suppress some of their funniest thoughts for fear of offending somebody. Mr. Gilbert makes of his conscience, or inner guide, or daily companion, a friendly jester, who urges him to say the first thing that comes uppermost, careless of consequences. This humorist is so extremely frank and determined in his unbelief, that he can see no human action without believing it to be veneered with humbug. Now, how exquisite is the satire here of duty. Ten out of every dozen men would hesitate to ridicule such a sentiment, believing that it is a good, a pure, and generous impulse. But Mr. Gilbert can only see the humbug in it, and searches for its ludicrous aspect. In a comical way he shows us all that is mean, and cruel, and crafty, and equivocal even in the world's heroes; and he makes us laugh at them because we are convinced such faults are lingering in the breast of the best of us. "That's all very well," says the serious mother to the sharp and observant child; "but there are some things that little children should not say!" The author of the Bab Ballads is no believer in this doctrine of reflection. He says exactly what comes uppermost, and gets the laugh. A man has a ridiculous face; he looks like a dog or a bird. Some of us don't say so; it might offend or give pain. Mr. Gilbert has it out and amuses by his very truthfulness. Most of the incidents of life have their comic side; there is humour mixed up with pathos in our everyday experiences. We pass over the fun as perhaps too trivial for special mention; but Mr. Gilbert stores it up, remembers it, and, when he alludes to precisely the same funny things that have occurred to us, we appreciate his daring and recognise the justice of his observation.

Meanwhile, "The Pirates of Penzance" is a success beyond question; the malcontents have been beaten down, the humour of the text appeals to the whole audience, the quaintness of the conceits are as original as in any of the other operas, and the spirit of the thing, musical and literary, is beyond all praise. Musicians who have technical knowledge may not like this, that, or the other; but, given such a subject and such a character of work, I cannot see how it could have been better done than by Mr. Sullivan, who is such a magician that he makes me listen to his orchestra as well as to his voice-parts, and enables me to enjoy without fatigue a most delightful entertainment. On this point I can only speak as one of the public. We can enjoy music and criticise in our way without being technical. Some people will like one thing and one another, as, for instance, the singing of Miss Marian Hood in the madrigal, "Oh, leave me not to live alone and desolate," which, by consummate art and exquisite expression, is turned into a song-poem worthy of the highest-class opera; the admirable simplicity and irresistible quiet of Mr. George Grossmith, as the patter-song singing Major-General; the burlesque spirit of Mr. Temple, as the Pirate King; and, certainly best of all, the true comedy, twinkling fun, and delightful gravity of Mr. R. Barrington, as the Policeman, who in the smallest part of the opera makes the greatest hit. I wish that actors would remember how often this occurs, and how little an audience thinks of lines, or scenes, or being out of the first act. Supposing this had been a play, how many leading comedians would have played the policeman? Not one, and yet Mr. Barrington is remembered when all is over as having done the best bit of art in a very clever company. There are scores of things more, no doubt, to praise; but, in truth, the whole thing goes so well—it is so sharp, concise, and well-organised—there is so much good acting in the rank and file of the piece, in each individual member of the famous police force, and in the fluttering tribe of the Major-General's daughters, that for once the mind is deadened to individual excellence and astonished at the general effect. The whole thing ripples and rhymes as neatly as Mr. Gilbert's verses, and flows as charmingly as Mr. Arthur Sullivan's music. I can give it no higher praise.—C. S.

"LA FILLE DU TAMBOUR MAJOR."

Adapted to the English Stage by H. B. Farnie.
Alhambra Theatre, Monday, April 19th, 1880.

Stella	Miss Constance Loseby.	Griolet	Miss Fanny Leslie.
Claudine	Miss Edith Blande.	Captain Robert ..	Mr. W. Carleton.
Duchesse della Volta	Miss Fanny Edwards.	Duc della Volta ..	Mr. Fred Leslie.
		Marquis Bambini ..	Mr. L. Kelleher.
The Abbess ..	Miss Turner.	Clampas	Mr. C. Power.
Theresa	Miss Sallie Turner.	Gregorio	Mr. R. Sweetman.
Bianca	Miss Claris.	Serjeant	Mr. Redman.
Lorenza	Miss C. Devine.	Monthabor	Mr. F. Mervin.

I honestly confess that I enjoyed this musical evening immensely, and it was only during the close of a long and varied evening that the attention of the audience flagged a little, but then came a stage full of military display, a waving of flags, and clash of brass bands, a shouting, a din, and puffs of red fire, so that away went the audience home thoroughly delighted, and humming the sparkling airs of "The Daughter of the Drum-Major." This is distinctly as it should be. Hitherto the Alhambra has been a difficult place to deal with, and managers have attempted to overweight the entertainments with costly magnificence at the expense of art. Too much turtle would weary the appetite of the most conscientious alderman, and spoil the richest feast, so we ought really to be glad when, with the aid of clever people, a bright company, attractive music, and a neat book, so emphatic a success has been obtained. I see they are all finding fault with Offenbach for repeating himself. Well, for my own part, I do not mind too much of a good thing, and I am not disposed to find fault when my ears appear to revive acquaintance with old friends out of "Lischen and Frischen," "Sixty-six," and "Bataclan." By-the-way, talking of "Bataclan," or "Ching-Chow Hi," as they called it in the old days of the Gallery of Illustration, what fun that was; and how we used to enjoy it when Madame d'Este Finlaison sang and Mr. Shaw was so funny, and Mr. Whiffen gave us the tenor music. I think I recall some Bataclan idea in the new opera, and all the better, say I. There is evidently a growing taste for introducing serious dramatic motives in the light comic operas. In the "Cloches de Corneville," we had a strong Robsonian burst of passion, and here is the Benjamin Webster effect out of "One Touch of Nature." The old Drum-Major who recognises his daughter is Mr. Pennholder in another dress. All these things tend to increase interest; but I could wish Mr. Farnie had made up his mind to be a little bit more serious with his strong dramatic moments. It was not the fault of Miss Constance Loseby and Mr. F. Mervin that they did not get more effect out of this strong scene. They did their best and acted extremely well, but they had such extravagant sentences put into their mouths at serious moments that the audience laughed against its will. That allusion to the "bullfinch" made the house roar, and became bathos, and surely an agitated father, seriously and honestly moved, would not at this crucial moment try to get a laugh by saying, "he (or she) is *not in it.*" Of course the audience tittered, and away went the dramatic grip of the scene. Reverence before all things is wanted in dramatic points like these. This is about the only fault that could be found with a book that is otherwise singularly happy. One lyric called the "Confession" struck me as being worthy of Mr. Gilbert, so neat was it and well adapted to the music. What, for instance, could possibly be better than the couplet,

> And I've always thought creation's plan,
> Is not complete if it wants a man.

These are just the words that the music requires.

But, after all, the success of the opera depends upon the judicious selection of the cast. Lightness, gaiety, animation, sparkle—these are the things wanted at the Alhambra, and there never was a better idea than the engagement of Miss Fanny Leslie, who, in addition to her overflowing spirits, has a method of expressing her songs that to me is exceedingly charming. There is a pathetic ring in her voice that gives to her ballads and couplets a rare value, and besides managing her notes with rare skill, so as to conceal the defects of compass (Dejazet and Chaumont did it to perfection), she utters every word so that it can be heard in every part of the house. It was a pity to reserve such a clever actress and pretty singer for an annual pantomime; and now that she has received such encouragement, there are scores of light operatic characters she could undertake. Let her study Granier and all will be well. In time the restless impetuosity will be disciplined, for over all I detect a governing sense and quiet appreciation of art. The opera also owes much to the services of Miss Constance Loseby, who is never weary in well doing; and who, in her habit of a novice and her dainty costume of a *vivandière*, makes old stagers rub their eyes, and wonder if time has not stood still? Dear me, is this bright Stella, with her fair hair and innumerable fascinations, the boy-hero of the Princess de Trebizonde when the Gaiety opened, and the companion of Miss Tremaine in so many of the early operas? What does it matter? True to her art, the old charm revives, and Stella will be pronounced one of the most successful performances of Miss Constance Loseby. Good acting and singing come also from Mr. Carleton, Mr. Kelleher, and always from Mr. Mervin; and there is nothing to offend the most fastidious taste, or to weary the most faded and melancholy playgoer. Offenbach has awakened from a dream; and so has the Alhambra.—C. S.

Our Musical-Box.

"LA DAMNATION DE FAUST," by Berlioz, given at the fourth concert of the Symphony Society, has been quite the sensation of the season in New York. Dr. Damrosch has worked with untiring zeal and patience in the preparation of this interesting work, and the result was a splendid performance, which was so thoroughly appreciated, that by universal request it was repeated five times within a few days. This work has also been enthusiastically received in Paris and Bordeaux; in the former town no less than twenty-six performances have taken place. Thanks to the enterprising spirit of Mr. Charles Hallé, "La Damnation de Faust" will be heard twice at St. James's Hall during the month of May. This indeed will be an event of great interest for London, as hitherto only short excerpts from this work have been given.

The American composer, Mr. Dudley Buck, well known in England as the author of a charming and effective setting of the "Ave Maria," gained the prize of two hundred pounds offered by the College of Music at Cincinnati, for the best cantata.

The news comes from St. Petersburg that the performances of Rubinstein's latest opera, "Kalaschnikoff," which were recently interdicted, are now about to be resumed.

Sarasate is at present giving a series of concerts in his native country, and arousing the greatest enthusiasm. The King of Spain recently decorated him with the Order of Charles III.

From Buda-Pesth the death is announced of Frau Ida Benza-Nagy, the *prima-donna* at the National Opera in that town. She was the daughter of a celebrated buffo singer, Carl Benza, to whom is due the cultivation of her wonderful soprano voice. She married the tragedian, Emerich Nagy, and her premature death (she was only in her thirty-third year) is deeply regretted.

Another blank in the musical world has been made by the death of Henri Wieniawski, the distinguished violinist. He was born in Poland in 1835, and studied at the Paris Conservatoire. He enjoyed a world-wide reputation as a violinist, and has also written a great number of brilliant compositions for his instrument.

A fine performance of Bach's Passion Music (St. Matthew) was given in Liepzig on Good Friday. The German papers make special mention of the beautiful singing of the alto solos by Miss Fides Keller of Düsseldorf, who also distinguished herself at the Bach Society Concert in the same town on Easter Monday. This lady has arrived in London for the season.

A most interesting concert was given in Vienna on the 23rd of March, the programme of which was exclusively composed of Liszt's music, under the master's own direction. The works performed were, the Mass in C, for men's voices and organ; the symphonic poem "Die Ideale;" and (for the first time in Vienna) the cantata "Die Glocken von Strassburg."

Madame Marcella Sembrich, who, besides being a singer of the highest order, is also a clever violinist and pianist, has resigned her post at the opera in Dresden, and intends for the future to devote herself to Italian opera. She gave a farewell concert on the 21st of April, on which occasion she appeared in the threefold capacity of singer, violinist, and pianist.

The approaching Rhenish *Musik-Fest* (the 57th) will be held this year at Cologne at Whitsuntide, and will last, as usual, for three days. It will be under the direction of Dr. Ferdinand Hiller, and the programme will include, among other works, "Israel in Egypt;" Beethoven's Eighth Symphony; Schumann's Piano Concerto, played by Clara Schumann; Symphony in A minor, by Mendelssohn; and Beethoven's Violin Concerto, played by Joseph Joachim.

During the summer, there is to be a wonderful *Wagner-cycle* in Leipzig. The whole of the master's operas, from "Rienzi" to the "Ring des Nibelungen," are to be given. Frau Materna, from Vienna, is engaged for "Brûnnhilde," and Herr Jäger, from Bayreuth, for "Siegfried." It is said that "Tristan und Isolde" will be performed on the occasion of Wagner's visit to Leipzig. The solo rehearsals for this colossal work have already commenced.

An event of real importance and interest has taken place in Münich; and that is the revival of "Tristan und Isolde." The marvellous performance by Herr Vogl, of Tristan; and by Frau Vogl, of Isolde, are well known and appreciated in Germany. The distinguished Künstler-Paar received the warmest marks of approbation from an enthusiastic audience, as did also Herr Kindermann in the part of King Mark. The performance was repeated the following Sunday.

The great attraction at the Crystal Palace Saturday afternoon concerts has been the splendid performance of Beethoven's nine Symphonies in regular numerical order. Mention must also be made of a remarkable work from the pen of one of our cleverest composers, Mr. Hubert Parry. This composition, a concerto for the pianoforte, is full of interest and great originality; and was finely played by Mr. Dannreuther.

Sir Julius Benedict has said farewell to the Liverpool public, whose Philharmonic concerts he has conducted for so many years. Distinguished vocalists and instrumentalists offered their services on this occasion, among the number, Albani, Trebelli, Miss L. Bailey, Henschel, Miss Dora Schirmacher, Strauss, etc. The veteran musician presented himself as composer (his pianoforte concerto was magnificently played by Miss Dora Schirmacher), as pianist, accompanist, and conductor. Great interest was naturally taken in Lady Benedict's first appearance in Liverpool. She joined Miss Dora Schirmacher in the same duet for two pianos, which she had played with Mdlle. Janotha in London.

It is satisfactory to learn that Herr Max Bruch has been appointed resident Kapellmeister in Liverpool.

A music festival will be held in Cincinnati from the 18th to the 21st of May. It will be under the direction of Theodor Thomas, and the programme, among other works, will include the following important compositions: Jupiter Symphony, by Mozart; Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis;" Schumann's D minor Symphony; "The Tower of Babel," by Rubinstein; scenes from Dudley Buck's prize cantata, "The Golden Legend;" scenes from the Third Act of Wagner's "Götterdämmerung;" and Overture to King Lear, by Berlioz.

The season at the Scala in Milan closed with Verdi's "Aïda," and Ponchielli's "Gioconda," as the two last representations.

At the grand opera in Paris there are forty female and sixty male chorus singers, and each one received from Verdi a copy of "Aïda" (piano score), with his autograph, in remembrance of the performances of that opera, which have taken place under his direction.

According to a French paper, the once celebrated tenor, Mario, lives in Rome, and holds some post at court with a salary of ten thousand francs. He has resumed his original name of Marquis de Candia. In spite of his seventy-two years, he is said to be still active and lively.

Wagner's "Lohengrin" has been given for the first time in Rome. The performance took place in the Apollo Theatre, and was well received.

Dr. Hans von Bülow has recently been playing in Münich: on the 12th April in the fourth concert of the *Musikalische Akademie*, and on the 13th in a concert of his own in aid of the Bayreuth funds. Previously to this he had been enjoying great triumphs in Dresden as pianist in Beethoven's G major Concerto, and as conductor in the overture to Tannhäuser, and Liszt's Faust Symphony, played by Mannsfeldt's orchestra. Dr. Von Bülow is shortly expected in London.—S. C.

Our Omnibus-Box.

NEXT month there will be published in THE THEATRE the first of a very valuable series of literary papers, historical, anecdotal, and gay, called "Queens of Trumps," that will deal in turn with the reigning favourites of the old English stage, illustrated by their portraits. And who is the Old Parr who has undertaken to revive past times, and to recall the interesting moments in the curious lives of so many "dear dead women?" Well, look into the next THEATRE, and you will see.

In many of the French provincial towns the engagements of artists are decided by the audiences themselves; and, in this wise, actors and actresses play a trial night, and they are engaged for the season or not as the auditors applaud or hiss. On one occasion a pert little brunette essayed the part of *seconda donna* in an opera bouffe, and, although her pertness should have prepossessed a Gallic *parterre*, somehow it did not, and my lady was hissed. She instantly and spontaneously snapped her rebellious fingers at her judges and turned up the stage. "*Comment! Grand Dieu!*" etc. etc. And the theatre shook with cries, "*Des excuses! des excuses!*" That potent personage, the *chef* of the police, interviewed our brunette, and insisted on an apology. Madame Pert at first refused, but was at last brought to understand the enormity of her crime, and advanced timidly, humbly, meekly, conciliatingly, to the footlights. The audience, as one man, folded its two arms and sat, tempering its dignity with mercy, to hear the apologetic words: "*Messieurs et mesdames*," faltered the apparently tamed actress, "I am commanded to make my humble excuses to you." (Increased benignity and magnanimous smoothing of frowns on the brow of the audience.) "*Eh bien!*" The broken-hearted accent of this "*Eh bien*" touched everybody, "*Eh bien!*" a lightning transition of humbled expression to one of the most audacious defiance. "*Eh bien!*"—her plump little thumb in close communion with her nose, be sure *retroussé*—"*Eh bien! des navets!*" which, being freely translated, means, "Go to Jericho!" not to put too fine a point upon it. The effect was electrical. Homeric laughter, peals of applause, universal ratification of engagement; and the pert brunette and the provincial audience "lived happy" till the end of the season.

What a wise old saw is "Practice makes perfect." The great Paganini's remark thereon may be new to many of our readers. Said he: "If I discontinue my practice for a single day I discover it myself; if for two days my friends discover it; and if I do not practice for three days, the public find it out."

All who wish thoroughly to understand the plan of Richard Wagner's operas, and to enjoy the romantic charm of the celebrated "Nibelung's Ring: a Festival Play for Three Days and a Fore Evening," should read the English version, in the alliterative verse of the original, written by Alfred Forman, the clever husband of an equally clever wife—Miss Alma Murray, of the Lyceum Theatre.

If anyone cares to see the picture of a really lovely woman and a fine example of photography, let the eyes be directed to the fascinating window of Mr. S. French, in the Strand, where, amidst other celebrities, stands in stately grandeur Miss Mary Anderson, the American actress. That is indeed a picture and a face to dream about.

Mr. E. A. Sothern, in the rudest of health, writes a pleasant and cheery letter from "'Frisco," sending good wishes to all friends at home.

An anecdote of Verdi has been sent to me, put into neat verse by Mr. Coombes Davies:

"La donna è mobile!" Who has not listened
To the suave air? suggesting dreams erratic
Those summer nights, when shimmering starlight glistened
On lapping wavelets of the Adriatic!
One night, some twenty years ago, maybe,
That air was carried on the salt sea breeze
That blew along the shore by Rimini
To where two friends were sitting at their ease.
What was there in the notes that brought a light
Half sad, half merry, to the earnest eyes
Of one of the two friends, and made them bright
With a keen look of vexed yet pleased surprise?
For, sooth to say, the melody was played
By a blind beggar, on vile violin
Whose tuneless strings such woful discord made,
That their harsh screeches made a horrid din!
The two men walked to where the minstrel stood
In the bright moonlight, on the silver sand,
And one of them, in no unfriendly mood,
Took the offending fiddle from his hand,
And, with a few swift master-touches, brought
The strings to music and to sweet consent,
Gave back the viol when the change was wrought,
And dropped a piece of money as he went!
That man was Verdi! Rimini, just then,
Rang with his praises—echoed with his name;
For "Simon Boccanegra," from his pen,
Had just been welcomed there with loud acclaim.
The violin was glorified. Alas!
The blind musician's *ears*, as well as eyes,
Were marred by Fate! Again did Verdi pass;
With puckered face the angry minstrel tries
To readjust the strings, and bring them round
To false idea of harmony and sound!

The New York *Spirit of the Times*, which has long been recognised for its spirited independence and fair play, has, or had, for its dramatic editor a man called Stephen Fiske, who ended his career in this country in a manner that did not command the admiration of his intimate friends. This is the latest instance of Fiske's method of warfare:

> Here is a specimen of London criticism from *The Daily Telegraph*, the two paragraphs being written by the same person and referring to the same piece:

D. T., July 15, 1872.	*D. T.*, Feb. 23, 1880.
A new comedietta, written by Mr. Sydney Grundy, under the title of "A Little Change," was produced, and fairly won a most cordial reception. The briskness of the writing and the ingenuity of the situations commanded a quick recognition of the claims of a new writer introduced under such favourable circumstances.	A greater contrast in literary manner could not be afforded than the scholarly prose and educated style of Mr. Herman Merivale in "Forget-Me-Not" and the unwelcome flippancy of Mr. Sydney Grundy in a new comedietta, called "A Little Change." It is well that such unwholesome smartness as this play contains is restricted to so small a sphere.

> This specimen helps to explain why the usual Cockney contraction for the *Daily Telegraph* is *Delirium Tremens*, and it is, in turn, explained by the fact that the writer did not supply plays to order in 1872, and, consequently, was not a business rival of Mr. Sydney Grundy.

It is needless, I trust, to state that the inference is utterly erroneous; and as the two criticisms were *not* written by the same person, but by two different writers, with an interval of eight years between each criticism, the accusation falls to the ground, and shows up the vindictiveness of the accuser. I should not have noticed the matter had not Mr. Sydney Grundy, hastily and with indifferent courtesy, communicated the same erroneous inference to an English newspaper. If Mr. Sydney Grundy had really desired to know the truth, he could have obtained it from those who had no desire for any concealment, but he preferred to circulate a gratuitous misrepresentation, and has once more exhibited the folly of rushing blindly at his fences, and making himself the victim of his own frivolous impetuosity. If Mr. Sydney Grundy elects to base his literary reputation upon such slender foundations as "A Little Change," many of his friends, who, whilst admiring his undoubted cleverness, will be sorry for the pitifulness of his ambition.

So delighted were the people in Boston to get a return visit from Miss Adelaide Neilson, on her homeward journey towards New York, that it became necessary to improvise special ticket-offices, and to subject the enthusiasm of the literary city to organisation and discipline.

Mdlle. Ambre has made a decided "hit" in New York as Aïda, and is universally praised for her fine acting, and intelligent, if not great, singing.

At Mrs. Park Nicol's residence, No. 17, Denham Terrace, a "musical at home" took place recently, which was unusually excellent. It introduced to a very elegant and fashionable society, a remarkable harpist—Miss Marion Bear—who will appear at a matinée, given by kind permission of Mr. Nicol, early in May, under the patronage of a royal lady. Miss Bear touches the harp with consummate skill and taste, and with true expression. She is destined to assume a high position in her profession. Mrs. Nicol's party was, moreover, rendered exceptionally entertaining, many artists were present, and the music was of a high order; in short, all declared that it was a great success. Amongst the singers were Signor Rocca, Li Colssi, Madame Zimeri (a remarkable singer), and then, to crown all, there was a reading by Mr. R. Davey, an accomplished scholar and linguist, who has been complimented by no less a genius than Salvini, who called him "un grand artiste," and gave him a certificate as past master in the difficult art of elocution.

Madame Modjeska, the Polish actress, lives in Half-moon Street, where she has a reception every Tuesday, which is very numerously attended by fashionable artistic people. She is to appear at the Court Theatre (Matinée) on May 1st and following days.

Mr. W. G. Wills has written a new version of "King René's Daughter," which has been accepted at the Lyceum Theatre, and in it, of course, Miss Ellen Terry will enact the heroine—a part that is eminently well suited to her, and one to which this gifted and sympathetic artist is likely to do ample justice. Playgoers of another generation will remember the acting of Miss Helen Faucit (Lady Martin) in the version of the play written by Sir Theodore Martin.

Recitations are the order of the day; and what a treat they are when sound and divested of amateurishness. Why does not someone, on the occasion of the next benefit, organise a matinée of recitations? Fancy hearing, at one sitting, Henry Irving recite "Eugene Aram," a perfect masterpiece in its new and improved form; Charles Warner give Bret Harte's "At the Mouth of the Pit," one of those intense studies that has an electrical effect; and, as a wonderful variety in the way of style and absorbing power, the description by Mr. James Fernandez of "The Level Crossing," a story by Mr. G. R. Sims. This last is, to my mind, a perfect model of rapid recitation, quiet, bold, broad, incisive, and so full of nervous interest that the audience is hushed to still silence. The other evening I heard all these at one sitting; it was an intellectual feast, and one that I shall not readily forget.

All who go to "School" on May Day at the Haymarket, may prepare themselves for a delicious woodland scene by Mr. Hawes Craven, who has no rival in the art of suggesting sylvan scenery. I look forward to this revival as a great treat, with Mrs. Bancroft as Naomi Tighe.

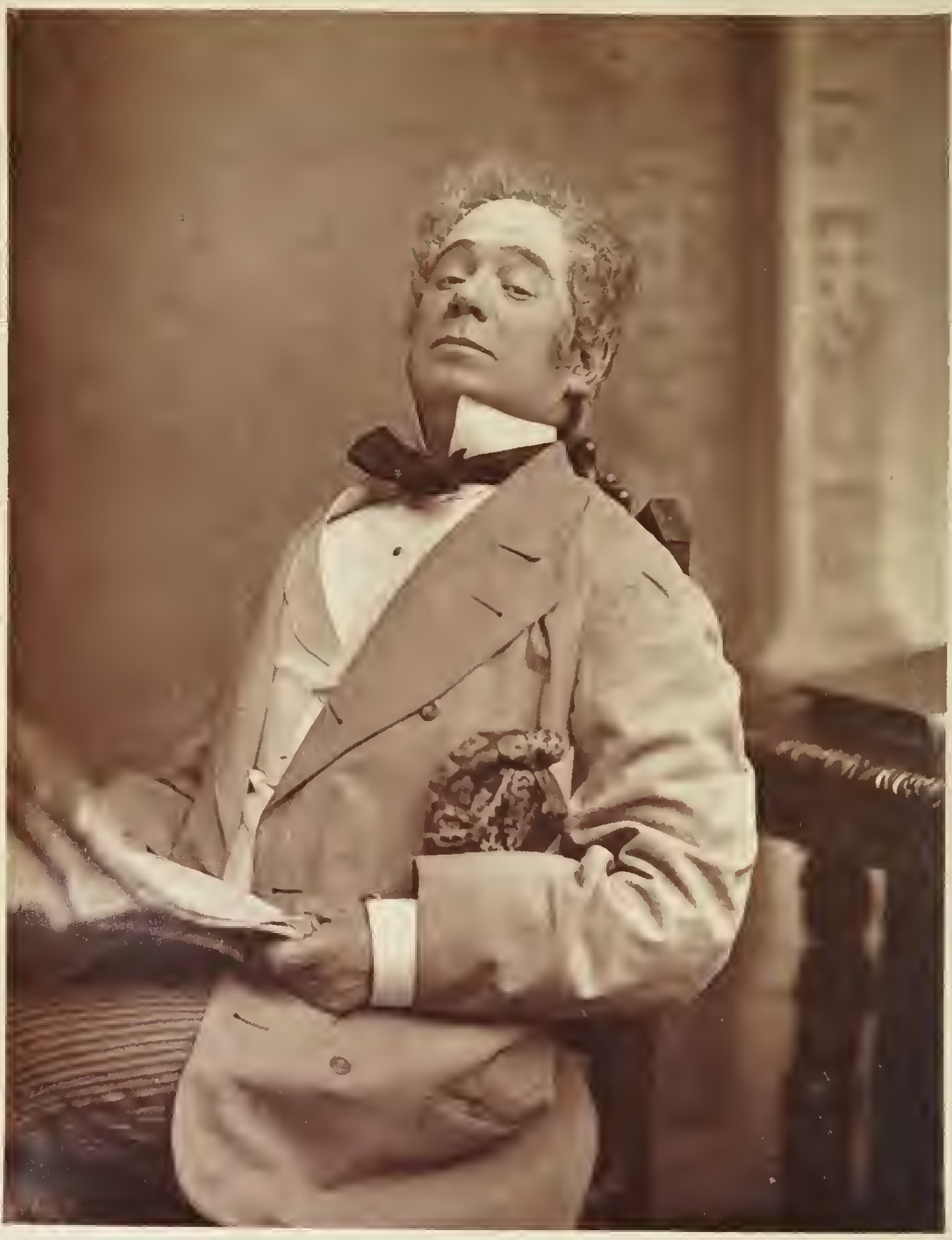
In the last number of The Theatre Mr. Tom Taylor expressed his regret, in criticising the Imperial Theatre version of "As You Like It," that, in the last act, Hymen was omitted, who, according to the text, ought to bring on Rosalind to still music, and usher on the marriage chorus which celebrates her union with Orlando. The hint was quickly taken, for, on the occasion of the fiftieth performance of this memorable revival. Hymen was restored, together with some delightful music by Mrs. Tom Taylor, a very talented musician, and an earnest enthusiast in the field of art.

Old playgoers are one and all delighted with the new Rosalind. though they profess to be very much scandalised that Mr. Forbes-Robertson, the designer of the costumes, will not allow the traditional "doublet and hose" for the heroine. Our artist, who has preserved for our friends and subscribers this month so charming a likeness of Miss Marie Litton, settles the difficulty by hiding the pretty buff boots on which so much criticism has been expended.

The revival of "Emile Augiers, L'Aventurierè" at the Français, has ended in a deplorable circumstance. Goaded by bitter disappointment and unjust treatment, Sarah Bernhardt has put the bit between her teeth and bolted. The whirligig of fashion performs strange freaks, and lately it has been the fashion in Paris to ridicule the great Sarah as much as she was previously praised. Her success in London irritated the Parisians, who, in the most mysterious fashion, proceeded to chip at their idol, and to irritate an extremely sensitive nature. They first pretended to make clever little Bartet a rival, and then Baretta; and, having seen Bernhardt play in "L'Aventurierè," the critics laughed at her. London will have an opportunity of refuting this injustice, and making amends for the cruelty of Paris; for I cannot conceive it possible that those who acknowledged the great gifts of the actress in 1879 will linger cruelly over her faults in 1880. Here, at any rate, Sarah Bernhardt will receive fair play, and that courtesy to which her talent and her sex entitle her.

There is an advertisement to which I should like to call attention. It is the one in which our publishers announce a bound half-yearly volume of The Theatre, containing all the pictures and criticisms of the year, indexed and complete up to the end of the ensuing June. For years and years it has been urged that there is no complete record of the stage, or book to which anyone can immediately turn to see when such-and-such a play was produced, what was the cast, and when so-and-so first made her or his first appearance. This pressing want will be supplied by the bound volume of The Theatre, which will be published in a handy form for the library bookshelves. I shall be personally indebted to any friends for hints and suggestions during the ensuing month, in order to make this dramatic history as accurate and as complete as possible.

I am compelled to ask our friends to keep copies of the manuscripts with which they favour me from time to time, as, I regret to say, I cannot undertake to return rejected communications, except under very exceptional and particular circumstances.



THE THEATRE. NO. 6, THIRD SERIES.

"This is upper Crust indeed"

Barnaby Doublechick

J. L. Toole

The Theatre.

JUNE 1, 1880.

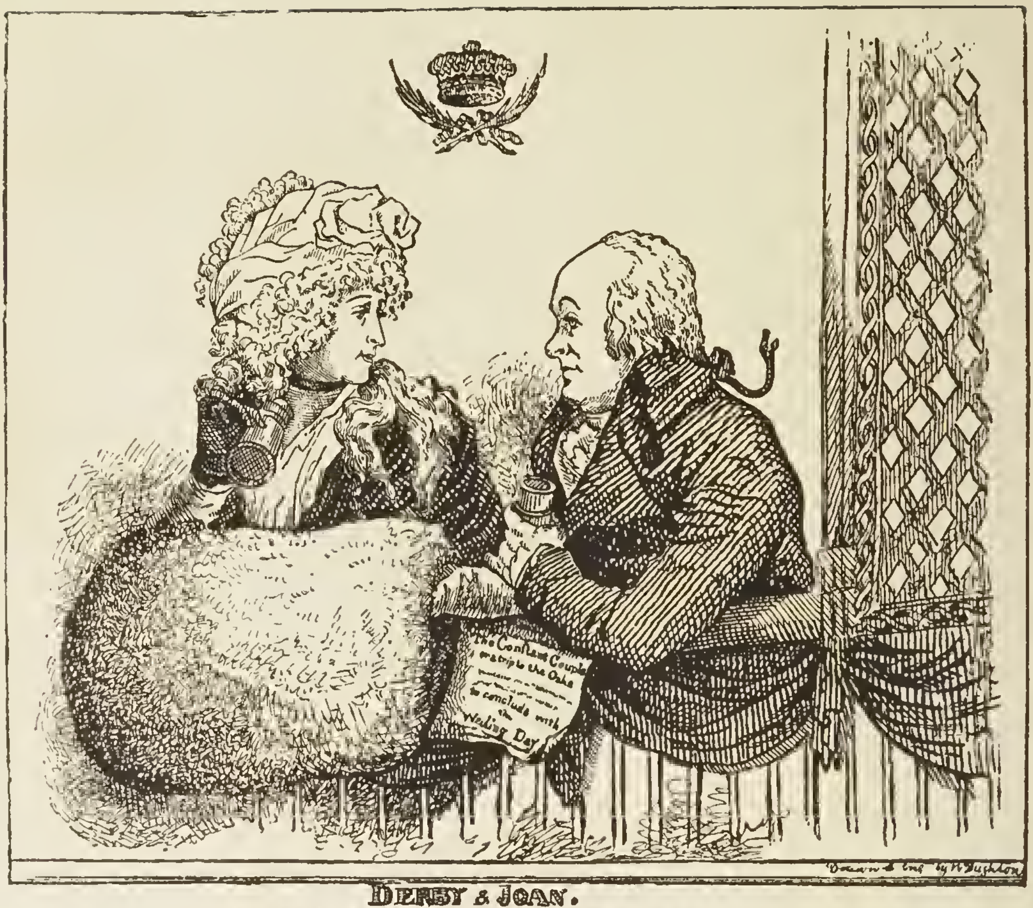
"QUEENS OF TRUMPS."

By the Hon. Lewis Wingfield.

No. I.

"YOU can play no games of cards? Then you prepare for yourself a sad old age." So spoke, once on a time, a wise old gentleman; ay, and a kindly one too, for surely it was kind in him to pour forth the precepts of his experience for the benefit of vacuous youth? That old gentleman had made his mark in the world, and had looked into the dark cupboard, where all the cobwebs and bloated spiders and empty pomade-pots are; had examined the tapestry of life on both sides, and had found, as shrewd old gentlemen will, that while one surface is comely enough, the other is but a confused jumble of untidy threads. He had gauged the wisdom of that hackneyed old speech of that tiresome old Solomon who is for ever being thrust down our throats, and cried with him that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. The experience of his long life told him that woman is unstable and given to deceit; that man is sly and selfish; that the only living creature which may be trusted wholly and entirely is the dog; that we mortals, so soon as the elfin barriers of delusion are overthrown, must be sufficient unto ourselves, relying upon our own resources for wiling the last hours away. He knew this, the clever old gentleman; and so he abandoned himself to the fascinations of red and black, to the reckoning of pips, the counting of "what's out." Whist was the goddess whom he elected to worship in his declining years, and cribbage was her handmaid; and the old gentleman faded out of the world at last, sighing something about trumps, clutching a court-card in his slackening grasp.

Now I am old—older far than he—and, therefore, wiser, of course, in the ratio of my years. You've heard of me, no doubt. My name is Parr—Thomas Parr, of Aldbury—rather a celebrity in my humble way, for I am a hundred and fifty-three years old, and hale and hearty still. I married my first wife when I was eighty-two, and—but this is a secret—was forced to do public penance in church at the age of a hundred and twenty for making too free with one Kate Milton; but then we were married shortly afterwards, so everything is proper and decorous. But I'm best known through my pills—wonderful pills! You shall have a box in return for fifteen stamps. They'll make your years as many as mine, I'll guarantee that. But there, there! Some folks are so crooked and cross-grained—say that the ordinary span of existence is too heavy for their shoulders—complain and show querulous discontent. I've looked upon this world for a hundred and fifty-three summers and have seen a queer thing or two, and enjoy my life still, albeit time does hang a leetle heavy on hand sometimes. But then I've lots of amusement in recalling what I've seen. I chew the cud of a century and a half. Retrospect is as bread and meat to me. I read books and laugh at them—silly books, written by silly people, about things which they've never seen, as I have, and then I lay them down and memory conjures up the events as they really were, and I go into day-dreams for hours and hours together. And then I play cards. Oh yes! Like that other old gentleman, I have no notion of a *triste vieillesse.* I play cards, but after a fashion of my own. A game invented by myself, wherein each card stands for an event; each picture for a personage who came and is gone. You know the game of patience? A game worked out by a single player with the help of a full pack. He shuffles and places the cards in a certain order, then shuffles again with solemn hocus-pocus and turns up a trump, and works the suits by cunning art till each takes sequence out of chaos, and lies in a little heap by itself. There are different games of patience—an infinite variety. There's one I'm fond of playing, which acts as a kind of aid to memory. I take down from a shelf within my brain a special class of persons who have lived and whom I've seen. I blow upon the pack upon the table, and with my breath there goes something into the senseless heap of squares which gives them colour and meaning. They act on me and I on them, and things long forgotten take form once more, till ofttimes I'm fairly surprised myself. The first picture-card which shows itself is trumps, and, as I look at it, the ill-drawn eyes become very nature, soft and melting, or flashing and severe, or mocking and sarcastic, as the case may be; and I pore over those eyes, for they are familiar to me, and I rack my brain to discover to whom they once belonged, and as I search and delve the truth dawns slowly, and a whole troop of memories babble out a name. Come now! Here's a pack. For your behoof I'll blow on it and shuffle. From which pigeon-hole is the influence to come? What do you say? The purlieus of Covent Garden and Old Drury, and those who moved and breathed there? Stage-queens, you mean, who moped and mowed like dim shadows under the circles of tallow-dips, and fought and quarrelled and fretted out their souls, and schemed and hated as only women hate! You wish them to take form and substance as they lived, to display to you the colour of their suit—red or black, according to the colour of their hearts. Alas! I fear the black predominates, though some you'll find of the most vivid rose. But they shall speak for themselves, through me, their sibylline interpreter. Shuffle them well; now cut; watch how I deal. The first picture-card, remember, and the next common one which follows it. See. A queen—of a red suit—hearts or diamonds? The next card a ten. Each pip stands for a decade. That throws us back a hundred years or so. Ah!



The Constant Couple
or a trip to the Oaks
to conclude with
the
Wedding Day
Drawn & Eng by R Dighton

DERBY & JOAN.
Long look'd for—Come at LAST.
RICHES—HONOR—& TITLES. the reward of VIRTUE.
Published as the Act directs Nov 6th 1796 by R. Dighton Charing Cross

Those blue eyes: how well I know them. Chill, limpid, calm; they speak of a life unruffled; and yet there's a tinge of trouble, a delicate veil of blurred indistinctness, which tells us that all was not quite smooth and even after all. Beautiful eyes, that in their coldness seem to have belonged to one who was too fair to worship, too divine to love. I know you well. Step forth—

ELIZABETH FARREN.

Hum! A bad deal to start with. Surely you shall find little that is amusing or instructive in the career of this lovely woman, who marched steadily to a distant goal without looking to the right hand or the left. A humdrum, staid, and proper life was hers. When you begged me to produce stage-queens, you desired, of course, to survey those who tottered from puddle to puddle, too weak to stand alone, and who fell at last face-downward in the festering mud before their time to die, choked, forgotten, and forlorn. Well. Better luck next time. Elizabeth, whisper. Jog my memory.

What do I see? A drunken Irish apothecary with a bottle-nose. A poverty-stricken country shop with one broken chair, a few empty phials, and a squalid counter furnished meagrely. This is a ne'er-do-well, named Farren, who neglects his business—but a poor one at the best—to go gadding after the strollers whenever their drum and fife are heard within the village precincts. What happened to this ne'er-do-well? Just what might have been expected to take place. He was idle, and dissolute, and stage-struck, as many of his betters have been before and since. His mortar was empty, his pestle had naught to grind. This being the case, he flung them from him in a moment of disgust, and joined the first strolling company that passed, which turned out—ill-luck pursued him always—to be one of the very poorest in all the impoverished land. Heavens, what a company! and how scantily equipped with the war-paint of their trade. The person who played the Widow Brady (which is a breeches-part and should be dressed as a dashing bewitching cavalier) wore high-heeled shoes, bare legs, a shift, and an old great coat. No wonder if the poor thing caught cold from the draughts which swooped into the barn, ranted forth her lines with the voice of a hackney-coachman, and clothed her inner woman with alcohol. The gentleman who played Captain Plume in "The Recruiting Officer," who was no other than our bibulous apothecary, was fain to attempt a martial exterior by borrowing the plush breeches (in exchange for a few orders) of the serving-man of the local rector. After the first play the "juvenile lead" of the troupe was met in the green-room by the said serving-man, who came to reclaim his effects before they could be pawned, and who was astonished to perceive that so important a personage as the dramatic hero should be mouthing up and down, to try and fix his words, in a soiled court-suit and shoes (borrowed from the Widow Brady), and that, like her, he wore no stockings. Why was this? he wondered. Sure play-actors ought to know more of town gentlefolk than he, a country bumpkin; but it did seem odd to his ingenuous mind that, while his own rector's legs were warmly clad in rusty wool, the representative of a town duke should elect to show so much flesh. Always anxious to learn, the honest fellow essayed to improve his mind; but his innocent attempt was met by a tart rejoinder. "Faix!" retorted the hero pettishly, "the wife's on—can't yez see?—and has the stockings. When she comes off I'll slip a nimble leg into 'em in a jiffey, and nobody 'll know. It's by the mercy of Providence that we don't appear in the same scenes."

Well, the bibulous one was tossed like a cork upon the waters and was happy; for there are waters and waters, and he preferred his strong, and made it his business to see that they were so. The wave at one time bore him from his native soil and landed him at Liverpool. In a penny gaff he strutted up and down as Jacques, Richard, what not; assuaging his drouth from time to time at a blind pub hard by, where a delicious Hebe tendered him his glass, mellowing his whisky to an amber hue by the occult glory of her smile. In the cosy back-bar, among the glistening pots, she listened to his aims, his ambitions, and his hopes. What to her then was a bottle-nose, a moistened lip? The ruddy fire on the hearth turned all to a rose-colour for her, just as her presence flooded his battered life with sunshine. His nose was aquiline now, not red or bottle-shaped. 'Twas but the envious reflection from the embers. Don't you see him smoking his pipe at her expense and dipping that nose into the pot, and pinching her waist and blowing like a bellows; then rushing off to don a ringlet-wig, and stamp and roar while yokels stared? You think it all ridiculous. I don't. The man was bloated, ready to burst, with drink and enthusiasm and smoke. She, womanlike, was carried away by his cajoling. She was sublime during the one instant in which it is given to us in this life to be sublime—the instant wherein a lightning-flash carries us up to heaven, to drop us by-and-by with a thud of numbing disillusion on the iron earth. She was sublime, because she saw in him a beautiful god, a dear lord with an aquiline nose, at whose feet it would be a joy to grovel on for ever. He was sublime, because in the interval betwixt two gills of whisky he believed in himself and his star, and clasped the warm soft hand which was to point the way to heaven. Alas! what a thud was theirs. They married, and the scales fell from the vision of both. He beat her, because as an actress she turned out execrable. She revenged herself by becoming the mother of seven creatures who required food, and food was scarce in their society, as everything else was except misery. This was in 1759. Then he riposted, and his revenge was best, for it clung to her skirts like a burr which might not be shaken off. He died, and left her—a bad actress—with seven mouths to fill besides her own. And now Fate—hitherto so obdurate—smiled on the unhappy woman for a moment. Five mouths were closed. All her children joined their father except two. Had it not been so she must have succumbed; for, trudging as the strolling players did, more than two pairs of weary limbs to drag besides her own would have been too much. The mother and her nestlings would have dropped beside the road and perished there, while the company of strollers marched on their rugged way, closing their ranks without daring to look back. As it was, Mrs. Farren played "utility" even in that humble troupe, and helped to carry the "properties" from town to town, as her two remaining children did as soon as they could stagger. There was Betsey, a bright-eyed little thing, staid beyond her years; who considered herself of vast importance, because it became her duty as well as privilege to bear the drum. Now, perhaps, you think that a drum is a drum, no more; a round cumbrous instrument, which makes a hideous noise and is a bore to carry. This was quite another sort of drum. Know, oh ignorant individual, that strolling companies, in the days of which I speak, could not afford the printing of bills, through the medium of which to inform the lieges of their advent. When they entered a town they beat a drum, a patriarchal method of claiming attention; when they rose a little in the world they did as mortals always do—they kicked over the ladder by which they had mounted. In other words, they (so soon as it was possible, if ever) ignored the drum, printing at the bottom of their bills, as may now be seen by a student of old playbills: "N.B. This company doth not beat a drum." At the moment which now occupies us the strolling company which numbered the Farrens in its ranks was very far from being ashamed of the drum. On the contrary, it was for these wanderers the voice through whose charming pennies were to be lured out of closed pockets. Hence the bearer of the drum was an important personage, whom it behoved to be duly conscious of the responsibility. Hence, also, through many a weary day the tiny spindle-shanked Betsey struggled along manfully with the precious ponderous fetish on her head, and the consternation was correspondingly awful, swelling the throbbing souls of all with woe, when she tumbled down and dropped it. On one occasion, indeed, despair threatened direful consequences, for it began to pour with rain, and there was no covert; but the tiny Betsey was equal to the emergency, for in her piping childish treble she screamed, "Quick, Billy! Cover me with the fat alderman!" which was promptly done, and the pigskin saved from injury. It may be well to explain that the "fat alderman" was a full-length portrait used in the play of "The West Indian," under whose ponderous bulk one of the actors stumbled, like another Samson bearing a gate of Gaza. When the tide gets to the lowest ebb it must needs turn. Up to this point the airy levity of comedy served as breakfast to the Farrens, while the sober dignity of tragedy supplied the place of the more solid delights of a good dinner. The two children were careworn, hollow-eyed, pinched mites; their mother (whilom a buxom, bright-eyed barmaid) a broken-backed, weary woman. Hunger robbed the little maidens of their roses—their parent, of all energy. At this juncture they toiled back again to Liverpool, where, by good fortune, the attention of Mr. Younger was drawn to their state of penury. He—patentee of the Theatre Royal—engaged the family *en bloc* out of pure charity: Kitty (afterwards Mrs. Knight of Covent Garden), as chambermaid; Betsey, as general utility; Mrs. Farren, as keeper of the wardrobe. So far so good. The wolf was driven from the door, and the maidens regained their roses. All should now have been well. A hot joint once a week was an attainable luxury. Deft stews were possible on other days. But the soul of Betsey soared above stews. Takin advantage of his kindness, she strode one day into the sanctum of Mr. Younger and demanded, with chin in air, to be raised out of the slough of "utility." Fancy being *useful*—nothing else; how crushing to feminine pride! He laughed, saying that she was a chit, a mere slip of a child, who would fill out some day and do honour to her progenitors. She replied with withering hauteur: "I am fifteen, and I want to be leading lady." Again the manager laughed. She was a quaint child, skinny and old-fashioned; but she should have her way, for mere fun's sake. "What would you like to play, you imp?" Her cheek was hectic now, and, pressing both hands upon her bosom, to quell the fluttering there, she murmured, bobbing an abashed curtsy, "Oh! if you please, Rosetta!" "Love in a Village" was duly announced. None of the actresses were jealous of the scraggy thing, so they all elected to be kind for once, and provided each a garment or a bauble for the effective bedizening of the *débutante*. She appeared, and was not a failure, which was tantamount to a negative success; passed on to Chester and to Shrewsbury, playing all the range of tragedy as well as of comedy. Her patron, Mr. Younger, then wrote to the elder Coleman, begging for an opening for his odd *protégée* in London. She came; made a first appearance at the little theatre in the Haymarket as Miss Hardcastle. "A useful though stuck-up bit of goods," decided Coleman, whose judgment, for so clever a man, was singularly untrustworthy. A professional critic of the time wrote: "The person of Miss Farren is genteel and above the common height; her face, full of expression; her voice, clear, if sharp; her action, very awkward. She displays the desultory burlesque style of the country barn; but this is a relief from the buckramed motions and constrained manners of the painted puppets of Drury Lane and Covent Garden." Although pronounced far from perfect, her *début* produced an engagement at a winter theatre. Covent Garden took her in for a short while; then, when her friend Younger became stage-manager of the opposition house, she removed to Drury Lane, and remained there all through her theatrical career. During the coalition which united the two rivals in a temporary embrace, she played at both houses—Juliet, the Fair Circassian, all the tragic rôles; wherein she was set down as "passable."

Mrs. Abington at this time usurped all the high-comedy plums. The public declared that there was but one Comedy and that Abington was her only prophet; when Abington died or retired, Comedy would die too; and so forth, after the foolish malapert fashion of idle praters who never can discern the difference between that which is a principle and must stand along with Time, and mere passing human flowers of illustration which fade as all that is human must fade, and rot, and give place in turn to fresher and more modish blossoms. The Abington transferred her allegiance to the other house. Betsey saw her advantage, and, like a cool clear-headed girl, seized it. Coleman's own comedy of "Separate Maintenance" was to be performed; but its appearance was delayed because, in the absence of the Abington, there was no one fit to cope with the difficulties of Lady Newbury. "I'll play it!" cried confident Betsey, who was speedily snubbed by the author, who took the opportunity to let her know that she was too raw-boned, awkward, and illiterate to presume to assume the character of a fine lady. Betsey blushed up and bit her lip, but had her way in spite of Coleman. *Faute de mieux* she appeared as Lady Newbury, and took the town by storm, though critics still mumbled that her thinness was a prodigy; that her elbows were scarifying to the sight; that her byplay was excessive, her play of feature mere grimace, her voice thin and weak.

One success will not make a reputation. Miss Farren made a second attempt, and by her Lady Townley fixed her position for ever. Even the incomparable Abington, people declared, was incapable of anything more refined than this. What romance! what delicacy of gradation! what breeding! Where did the hussy get it from? Not from the apothecary surely? Then rumour, as rumour always does with regard to successful people, went to work. "My dear," one whispered behind a fan, "it's a royal bastard. It's a love-child of the Marquis of Carabas, my darling; and folks do say——" and so forth, and so on, as usual. But Betsey remained calm and dignified and statuesque, as unmoved by homage as by hunger. With mamma and Kitty she abode in Suffolk Street, and wrote with a gleeful *élan*, unusual in one so cold, to a friend at Liverpool: "Actually, my love, we have meat every day! This day it is to be shoulder of mutton, cooked in a brown dish, upon potatoes, and a mug of porter!" Acme of felicity! Culmination of luxury! Sybaritic joy! But after the fashion of the dear ladies—and of all human nature, for that matter—she didn't tell quite the whole truth. The family had meat every day, no doubt; but could not be expected to soar seven times per week to the glorious dignity of a joint and potatoes. Mrs. Farren, mother and duenna and *femme de ménage*, let the secret out one morning when, in the middle of rehearsal, she adjured her child to come home at once, lest "it should get cold. I've sat on it, to keep it hot," she murmured plaintively, "but it's growing cold in spite of me;" which singular and enigmatical announcement was too much for the curiosity of the company, who forthwith proceeded to probe the hapless lady, and brought to light the fact that she was in the habit of purchasing slices of hot meat at an à-la-mode beef-shop round the corner, and that she wore a pocket lined with tin under her hoops, "lest the gravy should all dribble away whilst I'm waiting for my pet."

But despite undignified and homely episodes, Betsey marched ever onward, straight and prim, serene and haughty. As she was the recognised rival of the worshipful Abington, it was only natural that to her, too, an altar should be erected. Notes poured in on her, jewellery, gorgeous gifts, money. All the sparks vied with each other as to who should win and wear the icicle. Charles James Fox panted and puffed for her. On what terms would she be his own—his very own? On none, replied the scornful maid. The more scornful, the more he puffed and panted. There is no telling to what ends passion might have pushed him, had not his flame been in mercy suddenly chilled and nipped in the bud by an untoward circumstance. *The fragile Betsey showed herself in a breeches part*—Charlotte, in "The Suicide." Fox was heard to groan in anguish, both loud and deep. "D—n it! A growing lout of fifteen, upon my honour. She is as straight as a board, and her limbs are like two sugar-loaves!" And from that harrowing moment Charles James darkened her doors no more.

She was delighted, for such homage merely pained and annoyed her. In the natural course of things her lovers, as a rule, were stout because she was thin—Charles James, Lord Derby (known as the Obese Earl), Palmer, the comedian, and a host of others more or less rotund. It is said that her heart spoke once, or rather tried to speak, with futile flutter, in favour, not of earl or minister, but of her fellow on the boards. One day the comedian was late at rehearsal. Betsey turned white and red. Presently she sprang from her seat, crying, "He has arrived; I know him by his tread;" and then became deadly pale. Everybody laughed. She scowled. The leading lady did not act that night, and shunned poor Palmer for many a week to come. She was not content to batten on such carrion, but aimed at higher game.

And she fished with skill. The singular purity of her private life, combined with so much talent and beauty, drew the attention of jaded fine ladies as well as of amorous fine gentlemen. She became the fashion. My ladies Dorothea Thompson and Cecilia Johnson took her up, procured for her the odd position of "stage-manager to the Duke of Richmond's theatricals," gave teas in her honour, afforded to the apothecary's child opportunities of studying high life, of which she was not slow to avail herself. She moved now to a gorgeous house in Green Street, and people whispered that that was in order to be within a stone's-throw of the obese earl, who lived hard by in Grosvenor Square. She was said, too, to be cold and calculating, and ungrateful to old friends; but then she was unduly prosperous, and enjoyed in consequence the envy of many. At all events, her life was of the purest. She never went anywhere without mamma, who trudged humbly in the extreme distance, but always within sight; and lynx-eyed Lord Derby made it the occupation of his life to escort his adored to rehearsal and back again. Many a time he trotted by her side, wheezing, and sighing forth soft tales at a jog-trot, whilst she strode firmly on without a smile. At last, taking his courage in both hands, he blurted out something about a *carte blanche* and the usual etceteras; and she stood stock still, with frowning brow, and both arms crossed over a virgin breast, and, looking down, scorched her stout admirer into nothingness. The citadel was not to be carried that way. The delicately-chiselled nostrils were distended by rage. With humble protestations and abject grovelling he muttered that she should be my lady so soon as his odious wife died, from whom he had long lived separate, if *now*——. To which compromise the marble damsel replied curtly, and without emotion, "When she dies it will be full time to think of it," and left him heart-broken on the doorstep. But though so frigid, she pinned him like a butterfly with all her female arts. For eighteen years—no more, no less—a footman knocked at her door each day to know how Miss Farren had slept; and if she had chanced to suffer from even a trivial ailment, the obese one fell straightway into fits and tore his wig. I vow that it was the most comical of courtships, and rendered none the less comical by the complications of a *contretemps.* When my lord had the gout or was engaged elsewhere, his son, Lord Stanley (a puny strip of a lordling), was bidden to escort the *diva* home. What should possess the perverse youth but a burning desire to make love to his future mamma-in-law upon his own account! What a kettle of fish it might have been! But she withered him as she had withered his papa, and marched on and waited with composure as only so cold-blooded a woman could. Yet there were moments when even her heart wavered. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. The children of Hope are the children, too, of Fear. She was seized by an unconquerable desire to dive behind the curtain of futurity. There was a certain pauper in Shoreditch Workhouse at that time who was cunning as a student of the stars—a lunatic or an enthusiast. Even royalty consulted the seer, under the cover of night. Gamblers hung about the workhouse in the hope of hearing the winning numbers of a lottery; lovers flocked thither to read their future; speculators, giddy girls, and boys. The towering figure of Betsey was seen gliding to Shoreditch. She entered the workhouse, and came forth comforted. The seer had said that shortly she would wear a coronet. True enough. When she got home she found a note pinned to the cushion by the silver mirror, among the thousand and one gimcracks, wherein the obese earl with renewed vows and contortions of affection announced that "that accursed woman was gone at last." The moment for which Betsey had schemed, through all those weary years, was come. Society wondered whether the earl would dare to keep his promise true. His Grace of Bolton, a long time ago, had transformed Polly Peachum into a live duchess, but that was not to be accepted as a precedent. Would Miss Farren be raised to the dignity of Countess of Derby, and quit the boards? Doubts were soon laid at rest, for her farewell was announced to take place without delay—May, 1797. She was to make her last bow as Lady Teazle, and all the rank and fashion flocked to see the sight, much as, in the remembrance of ordinary mortals, all the world flocked to look their last on Miss Kate Terry, who died, to the anguish of the public, as Juliet, and then revived in private life a golden phœnix, to the joy of a host of admiring friends. Everybody wept pints; the dressers howled; the supers gurgled. The green-room was suggestive of influenza. It was a sight, so some frantic person wrote, "to wring drops of dulcet sorrow from the cheek of frozen apathy;" but the tide of enthusiasm was somewhat checked by the meanness of her ladyship, who, with condescending pomp, called up the boy-page whose duty it had been to bear her train nightly from the green-room to the wings, and nobly bestowed upon him *half-a-crown!* But that was merely an episode which smirched her triumph for a second. My lord was so enchanted that he had an attack of gout, which nearly left his place open for the "puny lordling," but recovered in time to lead his bride to the altar with indecent haste—an altar improvised in his dressing-room at Grosvenor Square, after which the happy couple retired to his lordship's seat, near Epsom, for the honeymoon. But this singular story had a strange end, which is big with meaning. For eighteen years had the lovers been steadfast in their faith. *After two days of honeymoon* they returned to town and gaiety and the busy throng, and it was remarked by those whose business it was to watch, that my lord and my lady always sat up at cards till four.

The victorious princess in white satin marched straight to her goal, the culminating altitude of which was not even reached yet.

Her ladyship, though she smelt of orange-peel and sawdust, was presented at Court, and was even received graciously by the frigid and aggressive Charlotte; but, alas! the odour of the orange-peel was not to be washed out. "Ma'am," said her ladyship, with a prodigious curtsy, "I have the distinguished honour of appearing before your Majesty this evening in a new and original character." The sharp nose of Charlotte was puckered with wrinkles; the maids of honour tittered. But he (and she too) laughs best who laughs last. Betsey had played her game with steadfast care and won it. She made for herself a *salon*, and wore the family jewels with consummate ease and grace. She held the train of the Princess Royal at her marriage. Of the charming countess a pamphleteer and poetaster drivelled thus:

"Pause! View the juvenile adventurer on the great theatre of the world engaged in the line of life most favourable to the meretricious allurements of folly. Should a person so situated diverge from the line of rectitude, no rigid portion of severity could be exercised by the candid mind on viewing the slippery situation of the object of its contemplation. Let detraction blush, and youth be instructed!

"While wondering angels as they looked from high
Observed thine absence with a holy sigh,
To them a bright exalted seraph said:
'Blame not the conduct of the absent maid!
She goes with every virtuous thought impressed—
Heaven on her face and Heaven within her breast.'"

For my part I contemplate, and blush all over, and am instructed. Here is a stage-queen for you—of a red suit—which? Evidently a queen of diamonds.

THE LOVE OF A "STAR."

By Jean Middlemass.

I AM a star of about the third magnitude, that is my designation as an actress. Some few years ago I arrived, one hot Sunday afternoon in May, at the notable inland town of Flushington, which my Bradshaw told me had over a hundred thousand inhabitants, and which I knew to be quite a commercial centre in its way; but which was apt to run somewhat to stagnation during the London season, as regarded the drama generally, and my especial forte—the legitimate in particular.

It was my first visit to this town, and I was announced to play twelve nights. Manager Rowe met me at the station, and conducted me to the quiet lodgings he had recommended to a whole firmament of former "stars."

A tall, stoutish, good-looking man of fifty, Betterton Rowe rejoiced in a manner which I can best describe as wavy; this action, of which he used a good deal even in private life, being all rounded like the periods of his rather grandiloquent speech. He gave you at once to understand that, whatever else he might be, he considered himself first and foremost a gentleman. If he was not altogether right in his assumption, it was doubtless to his credit that he made this his chief aim in life. He waved me from my second-class carriage as I alighted, and into the fly which bore us from the station; he waved me out of it when it stopped, and he treated the cabman to a wave off as he gave him his fare, seeming as he did so to consider it at least equal to an extra sixpence. He waved me into the passage with his right hand, and into the parlour with his left, this last gesture being in accordance with the old stage rule we give to novices—never to act across yourself—since the door happened to be on his left. I sat down. Mr. Rowe deposited his hat on the sideboard, and striding straight to the rug, struck what I afterwards found to be his pet attitude, both on the boards and off them—one arm akimbo, the other on the mantel-piece, one leg advanced but not crossing the other, and both knees rigid. As he stood there, gazing on me benevolently as if any pleasure he might take in looking at me was of course as naught compared to what I must feel in looking at him, a sudden conviction came upon me that he was posing for Sir Thomas Lawrence's great picture of the Regent. The likeness was wonderful, if a trifle grotesque. There was the curly brown wig, the round clean-shaved face, the fat yet shapely hand, the air of the old beau, and the all-absorbing though not altogether ill-placed vanity. We had never met before, but I had heard of him long and frequently. I do not think in all my varied life I ever met a person who, on further acquaintance, proved so absolutely like his reputation or so complete a confirmation of a first impression as Manager Betterton Rowe. In money matters I may sum him up by saying that he not only pays his company, if the money comes in, but that even if it does not he gives them some of his own if he has any. True, he generally has none.

On this occasion I was not guaranteed anything whatever, but was to share after fifty pounds a week, and to have a half clear benefit on the second Friday.

"How have you been doing?" I inquired.

"Why the fact of the matter is they won't come out at Flushington to see trash. Larry Bullion was announced for last week, and his agent telegraphs to me the last minute: 'He's in bed with the gout.' So I was obliged to do the best I could with the stock; but they wouldn't have it at any price. See, here is the bill. You'll find yourself underlined at the bottom."

Of course, as is always the case when there is absolutely nothing to see, the bill was headed: "Enormous attraction. Two great dramas! 'Dumb Man of Manchester' and 'The Raging Ravager of the Rhononoco; or, Trickling Tears from the Torrents of Torriducto.'"

"You see—nothing, absolutely nothing, unless we could hope for an audience of schoolboys or sailors from the North Pole; but I have hopes that you, madam, will pull the money in for me. I've had you well-paragraphed in all the dailies and the two weeklies as well; and besides—besides," he added mysteriously—"well, I'm a man of resource. The fact is, things have been going from bad to worse for some time, and it's the hour for a stroke of genius. I think I've hit it, my dear madam, I think I've hit it."

"What on earth do you mean?" I cried, half fearing that bad-business-on-the-brain—that common complaint of managers—had made him mad.

"Seek not to know," he said, laying his fingers on his lips; "enough that I have left no stone unturned to wake them up this coming week for your sake as well as mine. You do your very best, as I am sure you always do, and 'leave all the rest to me.' Betterton Rowe is but mortal, yet a man of resource, do ye mark me?—a man of resource." And expressing a fervent wish that the theatre-goers of Flushington were keeping their money for me, and stating apropos of nothing that he had twice played Macbeth to Helen Faucit, this great shade of George IV. waved itself from my presence.

I opened the following night in "The Lady of Lyons." There was a farce at seven, and I wondered who sent me the beautiful flowers at a quarter to eight. I had not expected much; but my spirits sank when I saw the wretched emptiness of pit, gallery, and dress circle. Strange to say, the private boxes, of which there were six—three on each side of the stage, a large one on the pit-tier and two above—bore a refreshing contrast to the rest of the house; both the large ones and the upper one on either side being peopled.

The sole occupant of the top one on the right was a lady in black, apparently of great age; at least eighty-five, I should say; and I wondered at so very old a dame coming to sit for hours at a theatre without a companion of some kind. Below her were a party of three or four; but they were evidently in deep mourning, or for some other cause anxious to preserve a strict incognito, as the thick lace curtains were so closely drawn that they might as well have been behind the *grille* of a French *baignoir* for anything I saw of them save that they were there.

In the top box to the left the most conspicuous object was what I confidently declare to be the most lovely—the most faultless white arm I ever beheld, surmounted by a single large diamond bracelet, apparently of great value, which flashed and dazzled all over the house. Whether the lady's face was not so beautiful as her arm, or whether she was as shy of showing it as she was evidently anxious to display the latter fair possession, certain it is that, with the exception of that member, she remained well concealed behind the curtain, through which I could only distinguish that she was apparently young; that she wore a wreath of white camellias, and that her deep cut, square, and very low bodice was of some light-blue material, probably satin. She had a playbill hanging over the cushion on which her arm—oh, that arm!—rested, but she never seemed to consult it. At the back of the box stood a man, middle-aged as far as I could see, who evidently avoided the light on account of his eyes, which were guarded by a pair of green goggles. If this lady and gentleman conversed, it must have been most quietly, for not a whisper ever reached me, and I have the sharpest ears in Christendom.

Finally, in the large stage-box beneath them, there sat, in full view from the stage, but so as to be only partially visible to the audience, what I then thought—before I had had bitter experience of his coldness and neglect—by far the handsomest man I had ever seen or dreamt of. His dead yet rich paleness was relieved by masses of silky-black hair, a thin moustache a few shades lighter, and eyes—well, to use a hackneyed phrase, "description fails me." Yes, but fails me utterly. I thought so then, and I say so now, that never man had eyes like his, circles of soft fire, of mingled genius, passion, a tiger's courage and a lamb's tenderness; but nay, it is useless, I will not attempt to paint them. He was faultlessly attired in evening-dress, and his hands, small almost to effeminacy, were encased in the neatest gray gloves. He had that obtrusive repose which only accompanies the bluest blood. Before him lay a large bouquet, bound in old lace (real), and which my experienced eyes at once coveted and hoped for. Beside this costly piece of fragrance lay a gigantic pair of opera-glasses. My heart, hitherto unsubdued, though oft besieged, went forth to him from the first glance, and I felt if I ever played the love-sick impassioned maiden of Lytton's fancy it should be to-night.

My first glance on re-entering after a short exit, was for the large box on my left. Alas! *He* was gone! Had I then failed to please him? Could he be ill? Oh joy! he will return, for there are the glasses, and there the—his—my (?) bouquet.

The lady with the arm had now retired to the back of her box, and the respectable owner of the goggles had taken her place. To my right all seemed unchanged. A few more people had come in at half-price, and we nearly took the call at the end of the act, but did not do so in order to make more effect by responding later on. It is in Act III. that Pauline has her best scene, and great was my chagrin to find my Lara—as I had christened the handsome unknown—was still absent. I was much applauded, however, and Manager Rowe came round from the office in the front of the house to my dressing-room door on purpose to congratulate me.

"I thank you very much," I said; "and how much is there in?"

"Pardon me," he replied. "You have, of course, every right to know; but may I ask you, as a special favour, to let me withhold the returns for a night or two. It is for your own sake as well as mine. My dear madam, grant me this mark of confidence."

What could I say? I was preparing a remonstrance, but he waved it down.

"As you will," I repeated; "but pray, Mr. Rowe, who are those people in the private boxes? There is—was—a gentleman to the left——"

I had not heard anyone call; but when I had got so far Mr. Rowe suddenly turned his face to one side, and shouting, "Yes, all right! coming," with a most *affairé* countenance, hurriedly begged me to excuse him, and waved himself away.

When the Widow Melnotte led me on in Act IV. I blushed with pleasure through my rouge to see that Lara had returned. He sat as before, but with folded arms, and those mystical eyes of his followed me, and me only, wherever I moved.

Presently I began to wonder whether my idol meant ever to break up that very noble pose, unfold his arms, and join in the applause which was now being lavishly accorded to us. "Perhaps," I thought, "he is royal. I am sure he looks it; or, at least, too great a man to clap his hands."

As I declaimed, "Sir, leave this house; it is humble; but a husband's roof is, in the sight of God and man, the temple of a wife's honour," I durst not look at him, for it must have spoiled the situation; but I listened for him all the same, and felt certain he did not applaud. When I did look, a moment after, he was so exactly in the same position that I could have sworn he had not moved. The call at the end of Act IV. is Claude's presumptive property; but as I was the "star," my stage-lover came to fetch me, that we might take it together. I however declined. The fact was, I could not bear to run the risk of Lara making no sign. When the curtain again rose he was gone. I mean, utterly; he himself, bouquet, opera-glasses—all had vanished. It was some slight consolation that I was playing a scene of the utmost dejection and misery. I fancy I never played it better. I had insisted on the management putting up a farce to conclude with, that the people might sit quiet to the end of the drama. This had the result of procuring me a hearty call from the few present, and judge of my surprise and delight, when just as I was leaving the narrow space before the pulled-back curtains on the O. P. side, and making a final bow, what should come tumbling at my feet from the depths of my Lara's still apparently empty box, but the identical bouquet for which I had been sighing all the evening. Naturally, I was not looking in that direction at the time, but when I did so I only saw the door close hurriedly at the back of the box. I hastened to my dressing-room, breathless with anxiety to examine my treasure; but oh! the meanness! The valuable old lace had been removed, and a common stamped paper now enveloped these really choice flowers. "He never did this!" I exclaimed mentally. "He has deputed some valet or some menial of the theatre to throw me these flowers, and they have stolen the lace. My Lara is no miser."

I ransacked the trophy for a letter, a line, a card—even spoiling the flowers considerably thereby—but in vain. No; it did not contain a word.

The piece for the next night was "Leah;" and I wondered with painful interest whether she would indeed prove "the forsaken."

There was a rehearsal, of course, which Mr. Rowe conducted in person. It may have been fancy, but he seemed to me to avoid anything like private conversation with me.

The performance that evening was under the patronage of the Colonel and officers of the Dragoon Guards, then quartered at Flushington. They filled the two large boxes, and overflowed slightly into the stalls. None of the box people of the previous night were present. And *he!* should I ne'er behold him more?

For the Wednesday we put up "The Hunchback," and Mr. Manager Rowe did me the honour to play Master Walter. He told me that Thursday was always so bad a night that we might as well do a repeat. The bills, therefore, announced that by special desire "The Lady of Lyons" would be repeated, owing to my great success as Pauline.

The miserable fraud failed to lure more than a mere handful of people, save again to the private boxes, where, to my bewilderment, I recognised all my old friends of the opening night—the aged solitary, the family in affliction, the lady with the arm, and my "great unknown."

I at once felt there was something uncanny, not to say magical, in this simultaneous and, so to speak, symmetrical reappearance. When we were all in the garden scene, and Monsieur Deschappelles has just made his first speech, a sky-piece close to the proscenium suddenly caught fire from one of the head lights on the extreme left, and quickly burning through at the end on that side fell, all in flames, upon the stage in front of us, and began to burn upwards with great fury, fanned as it was, too, by the draught which always prevails upon a stage. There was nothing like a panic, however. We felt that at the worst we had only to make our exit by the stage-door, which was just at the back of us, in our costumes; and the audience knew, I suppose, that on such an occasion there is safety in *small* numbers. Still, all showed great excitement, screaming and shouting "Fire!" etc., and everyone in the house at least starting to their feet, *except the occupants of the dress boxes!*

The men in the flies, who always had a dozen pails of water at hand in case of an emergency, rushed to the corner from which the sky-piece hung just before the flames reached it, and deluging both the burning fragments and the stage below, never gave the fire a chance. Now although few, if anybody, had time to observe aught but the flames while they lasted, the stupendous imperturbability of those aristocrats during the alarm could not fail to strike everyone as soon as the danger was removed.

Though the rest of the audience was small it was evidently impressionable, and, throughout the remainder of the performance, I had the unpleasant feeling that no one was attending to me. There was much ill-suppressed talk, especially in the pit, which the episode of the fire would barely account for, and more than once some low fellow, bolder than the rest, shouted out an ejaculation which seemed to be addressed to the boxes.

My Lara, however, remained impassible. Again a bouquet in front of him, which, though inferior both in size and quality to that of the first night, was wrapped in what seemed to me the identical piece of old point which I had mentally accused some menial of purloining. As before, he left the theatre between the fourth and fifth acts, without returning, nor did anyone throw me the bouquet, which lay on the front cushion to the end.

Friday, if any, was the fashionable night in Flushington. The best townspeople reserved themselves for that evening by common consent, and now and then a county family would come in from their neighbouring seats. But the weather was warm, the time of year bad, and things had not been looking up so far. I expected a twelve or fifteen pound house at the outside.

In order to reach the stage-door it was necessary to pass in front of the theatre. I generally indulged in a shilling's-worth of dignity in the shape of a fly, both going and coming, though when fine I far prefer walking; but it does not pay; the public do not think it becoming in a "heavenly body" to trudge.

As I drove in sight of the façade or front entrance of the theatre, which looks on one of the widest streets of the town, I was surprised to find a crowd which literally blocked my way. There was no election going on. Could it be a riot? I never dreamt these many hundreds of people were coming to see "Romeo and Juliet." However, I soon discovered that the Theatre Royal, Flushington, was undoubtedly their goal. I pulled down the blinds, though the crowd was unusually quiet and orderly for a crowd, and soon found myself safely deposited at the stage-door. The first person I came upon was Mr. Horsecollar, the low comedian, ready dressed for Phil. Flicker in his own farce, "The Loves of a Lamplighter."

"Evenin', Miss Aster. Here's a go! they've twigged 'em."

"I beg your pardon." This with celestial dignity.

"Well, you ask the guvnor, that's all. I'm sworn to muteness; but of course the murder's out. Ha! ha! ha!"

And here came that wonderful stage-laugh of his, upon which he lives and supports a wife and family. It is as unlike "Ha! ha! ha!" as it is possible for a laugh to be, and reminds one more of a kettle boiling over than anything else.

"Well, our guv' is a wonder, and no mistake," he simmered on; "and it's my religious persuasion that he'd fill a house on an uninhabited island."

The overture was now nearly over.

"Beginners!" shouted the call-boy on the stairs.

Utterly bewildered, I rushed to my dressing-room just as the curtain rose. What was my surprise, then, not five minutes later to hear the band strike up another overture. I sent my dresser to inquire the cause; but she could only ascertain that there was a regular tumult among the audience; that they were yelling for the manager, and would not allow "The Loves of a Lamplighter" to proceed.

As I had received no intimation to the contrary, I went on adorning my person as the Veronese Maiden. I was nearly ready when my friend, the "first low," knocked at my door, and begged me not to miss the fun, adding that the "guv'nor" was before the curtain. I found the whole strength of the company on the stage, and every one with a broad grin upon his countenance. For some minutes the turmoil in front was deafening. A thousand voices seemed to be screaming out contradictory orders at once. At last Mr. Rowe, after several vain efforts to speak, made a feint of retiring with all his immense supply of injured dignity displayed. This acted like a charm, and, waving himself back to the middle of the stage and into his George-the-Fourthean attitude, as I could see by his shadow on the curtain, he thus began :

"Ladies and gentlemen" ("and dummies," shouted a voice),—"Ladies and gentlemen," he resumed, imperturbably, "if I am again interrupted I shall retire." He said this as if he considered it the most terrible threat that man could use. "That you should be angry with me I cannot believe. That what I have done requires explanation, I am willing to admit" (cheers). "The first thing I have to say is, that the high-minded and distinguished lady who is at present honouring us with a visit—I allude to Miss Aster—is in nowise the cause of your excitement" (cheers). "Nay, more, I have taken pains to keep her in absolute ignorance of—of the step which I am about to attempt to justify in your eyes. What I have done, ladies and gentlemen, was as much—nay, more—for your sakes than my own" (a boy in the gallery, "Catch a weazel"). "I wanted, for all our sakes, that the great talent of a highly-endowed *tragédienne* should not be wasted on her first visit to our town from the appalling apathy which at this season of the year is so apt to take possession even of the appreciative and intelligent, with regard to visiting the temple of our glorious drama" (faint applause). "I held that, as manager, it was not wholly unjustifiable if—if—if I extended the legitimate delusions of the stage for a few yards beyond the footlights. Having made up my mind, and acting upon that maxim of mine which has so often obtained favour in your eyes, that 'what is worth doing is worth doing well'" (a wag from the pit, "You've done *us* well!") "I procured from London these triumphs of the art of wax-work." (Here the uproar burst forth again with the force and suddenness of thunder, and lasted for more than a minute.) "I did so, ladies and gentlemen, to dispel that gloom which empty boxes must needs impart alike to audience and performers. So dexterously was the mirror held up to nature that I doubt if the artifice would have been discovered, but that last night, ladies and gentlemen, last night, an unforeseen accident occurred, and the preternaturally stoical behaviour of—of my statuesque friends from London betrayed their want of feeling, although, no doubt, they had never been so nearly 'melting' in the whole course of their existence."

Here Mr. Betterton Rowe ventured on a laugh at his own wit, which he hoped might cajole his hearers into good humour; but they had come out for a row, or at any rate for a scene, and were not going to be balked of their fun. So that when the speaker went on to express a hope that they would soon listen to "the immortal bard's sublime tragedy," the turmoil and confusion burst forth with even renewed vigour.

At last he managed to say that if they would elect a spokesman and state what the majority required him to do, he would, if possible, carry out their wishes. Poor man! His chief dread was that they would manufacture a plea for demanding back their money, and he knew there was at least a hundred and fifty pounds in the house. After much rough and noisy squabbling it was at last amicably arranged that the offending graven images should be handed over to the audience, and that after being passed with ignominy from hand to hand through the other parts of the house, they should be given over to the fury of the "gods," to receive such condign punishment as those divinities should deem fit to inflict. The scene-shifters forthwith invaded the mysterious boxes and proceeded to carry out the sentence of *vox populi*. I was looking through the hole in the curtain, and when it came to the turn of my "Lara" I felt how bitter a thing is a shattered dream.

The wax-works were demolished to that degree that I believe there were few out of the many hundreds present but obtained some fragments as a relic. After half-an-hour given up to this childish havoc, "Romeo and Juliet" was suffered to begin, and I have seldom played to a better, warmer, or more orderly set of spectators. Business, from that night, continued brisk till the end of my stay. The wax-works had given all the theatre-goers of Flushington a wholesome fillip, and I return there regularly once a year to reap quite a little golden harvest from their patronage.

SCHUMANN IN G MINOR.

St. James's Hall.

The sunset's burning in the western sky,
And down this length of narrow crowded street
Strikes with a sudden shaft of gold—till I,
Weary with work, and full of fancies fleet,
Fling wide the window, and lean out, and draw
A deep, deep breath. Ah! see the crimson glow
Turning these London flags to heaven's floor!
The hopeless souls that hurry to and fro,
Look upward wond'ring at the sky, and straight
Changed are the sunken eyes and wrinkled brow,
As if some angel stood by yon cloud-gate,
And touched with healing finger each heart's woe.
    A ragged wretch forlorn,
A flower-girl, sets her basket 'neath my sill;
The soft air fans the ferns and violets faint,
And drooping bunches of sweet daffodil,
Poor blossoms! dying in the city's taint.
Their breath tells of the fresh wild birth of Spring,
Where part the leaves in some green woodland deep,

And hides the nightingale o' nights to sing,
While close the primrose buds in silken sleep.
Their shafts of perfume will not let me rest!
I long to be with flowers—
Away from the city's din; to press my brow
Upon their cool cups! lean my weary breast
Against soft springing moss—'mong bluebells, low
Lay down my head, and learn from them the way
To call back hope's sweet pulse! I hasten out
Uplifted by a sudden passionate sway,
And going with the throng who press about
An open door, I, too, pass in, and there
Janotha, Schumann plays! * * *

* * * * *

Schumann she plays; and with the first soft strain
Peace and white-wingèd hope fly back to me;
Comes with the chords, patter of April rain,
Upon a slender pink-starred almond-tree;
And as I open wide the door to breathe
The scented sweetness of that gracious shower,
You striking idler chords, soft interweave
Schumann in minor G! that golden hour
I live again, and while Janotha plays
That passionate preamble, hear you grieve
That you should never hear it played the ways
The master meant it. Ever when I leave
The spell-bound crowd, and, dreaming, homeward go
Back to the narrow street, and climb the stair,
Though faded quite is now the sunset's glow,
Yet in my heart beats still its glory fair.
Oh! sweetest mystery!
Soft on the music came the healing wise,
Voice of the master-mind to souls in pain,
Strength and heart's ease. Dear one! in Paradise
Do you recall, I wonder, patter of rain
When Schumann plays? * * *

A. L. L.

CRICHTON AT MANTUA.

By Frederick Hawkins.

EARLY in the summer of 1582 a well-graced horseman might have been seen wending his way along the road from Padua to Mantua. He was not more than twenty-two years of age, but had already filled the whole of lettered Europe with his fame. Descended on his mother's side from Robert II. of Scotland, the Admirable Crichton—for it was he—had left his Dumfriesshire home about two years previously in consequence of family dissensions, provoked, it would appear, by a refusal on his part to embrace the doctrines of the Reformation. He repaired in the first instance to Paris, where, according to bombastical Sir Thomas Urquhart, he challenged the learned world to a disputation on any subject, to be conducted in any of ten given languages—and came off victorious in the encounter. How far this story is true we are unable to determine; but it is certain that after spending two years in the French army, then at war with the Huguenots, and a few months among the literati of Venice, who spoke of him with generous enthusiasm, he accomplished at Padua a feat similar to that with which he is credited by the Cromarty knight. His erudition seems to have been immense; in all branches of learning—philosophy, science, history, jurisprudence, the belles-lettres, and what not—he is said to have been a match for the oldest and ripest scholars. Nor were his personal accomplishments less conspicuous than his intellectual gifts. He danced with singular grace, was a master of the guitar and other musical instruments, excelled in manly exercises, and, above all, seemed to bear a charmed lance and sword. The doors of every court in Italy, it need hardly be said, were open to such a man; and it was as the guest of the Duke of Mantua, Guglielmo Gonzaga, that he had set out for that city.

The traveller may well have drawn rein on coming to the first eminence from which a view of Mantua could be obtained. In his eyes the place could not but have had a variety of attractions. Built on an island in the "smooth sliding" Mincio—

> Propter aquam, tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat
> Mincius, et tenerâ prætexit arundine ripas—

it had been fortified at many points, and, as Crichton's military experience must have taught him, could hardly be taken except by famine. The buildings it contained seemed at this distance to be huddled together, but the cupolas and towers which surmounted many of them were standing out in clear relief against the Italian sky. Beyond the covered bridge connecting the island with the other shore, the Ponte di San Giorgio, and all but surrounded by quaint mediæval houses, feudal towers, and Lombard arches, was the palace-fortress of the Dukes of Mantua, the Castello di Corte, and next to it the massive palace begun by the unfortunate Buonacolsi. The Mantuans were evidently a prosperous people; the river was studded with little craft, and a good deal of activity could be noticed in the island. Much of this prosperity must be ascribed to the Gonzagas, who had obtained possession of the place early in the fourteenth century, and had attained to the ducal dignity on the eve of the Reformation. Endowed with rare talents for government, munificent in their patronage of art and literature, and fully sharing in the then prevalent love of splendid pageantry and amusements, they had long since made their court one of the gayest and most powerful in Italy. I am disposed to think, however, that as Crichton approached the city he thought less of all this than of the many associations of the spot with the memory of Virgil, who was born within sound of Mantuan revels and probably wrote his noblest verse within Mantuan walls.

Attended, I think, by a party of courtiers, stationed at the Porta di San Giorgio to meet him, Crichton made his way across the bridge already mentioned to the Castello di Corte—a noble pile, flanked by machicolated and lofty towers. At the chief entrance, like all distinguished visitors to Mantua, he was received by his host in person. Guglielmo Gonzaga was about sixty years of age, very humpbacked, with lumpy features, a narrow gray beard, and a genially courteous manner. He wore a dark rich gown, bordered with fur, and a jewelled hat. The *insouciante* expression of his face was eminently characteristic. He was above all things a votary of pleasure. His long reign may be described as a round of fêtes and tournaments and theatrical performances, varied by occasional intervals of lettered ease. He left the duchy to take care of itself, or at any rate allowed it to be governed in his name by subordinates. But if he neglected his duties as a ruler it was rather from constitutional indolence than a want of the capacity to fulfil them. He distinguished himself at the Council of Trent and the Augsburg Diet, and suppressed a rebellion among his subjects—provoked by the heavy taxation which his lavish outlays had rendered necessary—with the energy and decision of the Gonzaga race. His rule, however, was usually gentle and generous; the iron cage which projected from the Torre della Gabbia, and in which malefactors were exposed to the derision and even attacks of the crowd, was but seldom occupied.

Crichton had scarcely taken up his quarters in the Castello di Corte when he saw an opportunity of signalising himself in a to him altogether new field. The Revival of Learning had given birth to the modern drama, and at this time, as for a few years to come, Italy stood in the van of dramatic progress. This was more particularly the case in regard to comedy, now well established in nearly all parts of the country and with all classes of people. It was to be met with in a variety of crude forms: the *commedia erudita*, the character of which is known by its designation, and which had been introduced by Ariosto and Macchiavelli; the *commedia a sogetto* or *commedia dell' arte*, a meagre outline of plot and character, on which the actor extemporised dialogue and by-play; the *contrasti*, in which, as in the English Moralities, the interest was centred in abstract or mythological figures; the *frottola*, which reintroduced us, among other flesh-and-blood-like characters, to the famous braggart in the "Miles Gloriosus;" and last, but not least, the masked comedy, in which nine figures, representing as many cities in the country, and speaking the dialects peculiar to each—Pantalone, Dottore, Spaviento, Pullicinella, Giangurgulo, Coviello, Gelfomino, Brighella, and Arlecchino—appeared. Equally popular with the educated classes was the pastoral drama, brought into fashion by Tasso's "Aminta" and Guarini's "Pastor Fido." Mythology and allegory are here engrafted upon the bucolic with the most pleasing results. In no respect was the Italian drama so weak as in its tragedies, which, while written in the modern tongue, were at best laboured and spiritless imitations of the ancients. Domestic tragedy (*tragedia cittadina*) was also represented, but not with great effect. Now, every play of even average merit was played at the courts of Italy, and as often at Mantua as elsewhere. Guglielmo Gonzaga, in fact, was so enamoured of these amusements that, in addition to constructing a theatre in his palace, he had a company of skilled actors in his pay. Crichton soon burned with a desire to appear on the Duke's private stage, and with this view prepared a *commedia a sogetto.*

The performance probably took place in one of the noblest apartments in the Palazzo adjoining the Castello di Corte—the Sala di Troja, adorned with frescoes by the hand of Giulio Romano of incidents in the "Iliad." Never before, I should imagine, had a more august and expectant audience assembled within its walls. First of all, of course, comes the Duke, his face lighted up by a genial smile, and with his hump rendered more conspicuous than usual by the depth of the ermine on his cloak. He is deferentially bringing in his wife, formerly Arch-Duchess of Austria, who to marry him had declined to become Queen of Denmark, and to whom Tasso has just dedicated his discourse on feminine virtue. Near them is their son and heir, Vincenzo Gonzaga; very picturesque in his ruff, white satin doublet, and twirled moustaches and pointed beard, but with a hard and sinister expression in his face. By his side is his sister, the Princess Margherita Gonzaga. The Duke and his family are surrounded by the whole of his court, a crowd of less distinguished spectators, at any rate as far as rank is concerned, occupying the rear. Among the latter I fancy I see some of Crichton's Venetian friends—Aldus Manutius, Sempronius, and Donatus—and one of the most illustrious men he was allowed to have vanquished in disputation—Mazzoni. It is in vain that you look for Tasso; he is now shut up at Ferrara. That keen-eyed man, however, may be Paolo Sarpi, just arrived from Padua to witness the latest achievement of the "prodigy." Eventually the busy hum is replaced by a dead silence; the curtain rises, and the piece begins. Sir Thomas Urquhart's description of the performance was probably written from one supplied to him by an eye-witness, and, apart from its obvious exaggerations and rhetorical flourishes, may be accepted as correct. This *commedia a sogetto*—the title of which, if it bore any title at all, has not been preserved—was designed, then, to lash the vices and ridicule the foibles of mankind by means of fifteen different characters: "an overweening monarch, superficial courtier, proud warrior, dissembling churchman, doting old man, cozening lawyer, lying traveller, covetous merchant, rude seaman, pedantic scholar, amorous shepherd, envious artisan, vain-glorious master, tricksy servant, and peevish swain." These characters are represented in succession by Crichton, each in appropriate costume, and with such complete changes of voice and gesture and manner as to individualise them with remarkable distinctness. Having finished one performance, he disappears behind a screen, there "to shift off, with the help of a page, the suit he had on, and apparel himself with another." The performance lasts five hours, and at its close the *commedia* is declared by the court of Mantua to be the most ingenious and pointed satire ever heard from the stage.

The comedy was soon to be followed by a tragedy. The Duke, enchanted with his visitor, requested him to act as tutor to Vincenzo. Crichton must have wished to decline the offer, but the comparative poverty he was in at this time induced him to accept it. Now, it unfortunately happened that Vincenzo had conceived a bitter hatred of his preceptor, partly, no doubt, on account of the phenomenal combination of accomplishments he displayed, but chiefly, it has been suggested, because he had supplanted him in the affections of a lady attached to the court. Be that as it may, Crichton, while roving, guitar in hand, through the town one night, was suddenly attacked under the shadow of the old Palazzo della Ragione by no fewer than six men in masks. He defended himself with such bravery and skill that in a few minutes five of them sought refuge in flight; and the sixth, having been disarmed, was impelled by his fears to discover himself. It was Vincenzo! Evidently in the belief that he had been attacked by mistake, the tutor fell upon one knee, and, taking his sword by the point, courteously presented it to the prince. The latter—inflamed by jealousy, stung to the quick by his defeat, and also, let us charitably hope, heated with wine—immediately ran him through the body.

The court of Mantua, after having his remains interred with great pomp, went into mourning; many poems were written in reference to his untimely end, and his portrait, representing him with a sword in one hand and a book in the other, was long to be seen in the galleries of the Italian nobility. The superstitious may be excused for believing that his blood did not cry for vengeance in vain. From the moment he fell a cloud seemed to rest upon the hitherto proud and prosperous house of Gonzaga. Early in the next century they began to quarrel as to the succession, and about a hundred years after that were finally deprived of their possessions by Austria. Their fortress-palaces are falling into decay; the Castello di Corte has been used as a prison and public offices, and the castle adjoining it as barracks. Of the noble frescoes which once adorned these buildings hardly a trace remains. Efforts have been made to restore the castle to its pristine strength and beauty, but invariably to no purpose. In one sense the house of Gonzaga may be said to have been buried in the same tomb as the unrivalled young scholar who nearly three hundred years ago left Padua for Mantua to become the honoured guest of Duke Guglielmo.

ELLEN TERRY.

By Dutton Cook.

SOME four-and-twenty years ago, when the Princess's Theatre was under the direction of the late Charles Kean, there were included in his company two little girls who lent valuable support to the management, and whose young efforts the playgoers of the time watched with kindly and sympathetic interest. Shakespearian revivals, prodigiously embellished, were much in vogue; and Shakespeare, it may be noted by the way, has testified his regard for children by providing quite a repertory of parts well suited to the means of juvenile performers. Lady Macduff's son has appeared too seldom on the scene, perhaps, to be counted; but Fleance, Mamilius, Prince Arthur, Falstaff's boy, Moth (Don Armado's page), King Edward V. and his brother the Duke of York, Puck, and the other fairies of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and even Ariel—these are characters specially designed for infantile players; and these, or the majority of these, were sustained at the Princess's Theatre, now by Miss Kate and now by Miss Ellen Terry, who were wont to appear, moreover, in such other plays, serious or comic, poetic or pantomimic, as needed the presence and assistance of the pretty, sprightly, clever children. Out of Shakespeare, opportunities for Miss Kate Terry were found in the melodramas of "The Courier of Lyons," "Faust and Marguerite," and the comedy of "Everyone has his Fault." The sisters figured together as the princes murdered in the Tower by Mr. Charles Kean as Richard III. What miniature Hamlets they looked in their bugled black velvet trunks, silken hose, and ostrich feathers! They were in mourning, of course, for their departed father, King Edward IV. My recollection of Miss Ellen Terry dates from her impersonation of the little Duke of York. She was a child of six, or thereabout, slim and dainty of form, with profuse flaxen curls, and delicately-featured face curiously bright and arch of expression; and she won, as I remember, her first applause when, in clear resonant tones she delivered the lines:

Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me;
Because that I am little, like an ape,
He thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.

Richard's representative meantime scowling wickedly and tugging at his gloves desperately, pursuant to paternal example and stage tradition. A year or two later and the baby-actress was representing now Mamilius and now Puck, her precocious talent obtaining, I observe, the favourable mention of Mr. Charles Kean's biographer, who comments, too, upon "the restless elfish animation and evident enjoyment of her own mischievous pranks" she displayed as the merry goblin Robin Goodfellow. Upon the second revival of King John, in 1858, Miss Ellen Terry succeeded to the part of Prince Arthur, which her sister was now deemed to have outgrown.

The public applauded these Terry sisters, not simply because of their prettiness and cleverness, their graces of aspect, the careful training they evidenced, and the pains they took to discharge the histrionic duties entrusted to them, but because of the leaven of genius discernible in all their performances — they were born actresses. Children educated to appear becomingly upon the scene have always been obtainable, and upon easy terms; but here were little players who could not merely repeat accurately the words they had learnt by rote, but could impart sentiment to their speeches, could identify themselves with the characters they played, could personate and portray, could weep themselves that they might surely make others weep, could sway the emotions of crowded audiences. They possessed in full that power of abandonment to scenic excitement which is rare even among the most consummate of mature performers. They were carried away by the force of their own acting; there were tears not only in their voices but in their eyes; their mobile faces were quick to reflect the significance of the drama's events; they could listen, their looks the while annotating, as it were, the discourse they heard; singular animation and alertness distinguished all their movements, attitudes, and gestures. There was special pathos in the involuntary trembling of their baby fingers, and the unconscious wringing of their tiny hands; their voices were particularly endowed with musically thrilling qualities. I have never seen audiences so agitated and distressed, even to the point of anguish, as were the patrons of the Princess's Theatre on those bygone nights when little Prince Arthur, personated by either of the Terry sisters, clung to Hubert's knees as the heated irons cooled in his hands, pleading passionately for sight, touchingly eloquent of voice and action: a childish simplicity attendant ever upon all the frenzy, the terror, the vehemence, and the despair of the speeches and the situation.

Assuredly Nature had been very kind to the young actresses, and without certain natural graces, gifts, and qualifications there can scarcely be satisfactory acting. All Romeo's passion may pervade you, but, unless you can look like Romeo, or something like him—if your voice be weak or cracked, your mouth awry or your legs askew—it is in vain to feel like him; you will not convince your audience of your sincerity, nor induce them to sympathise in the least with your actions or sufferings; still less will you stir them to transports. Of course Genius makes laws unto itself, and there have been actors who have triumphed over very serious obstacles; but, as Mr. G. H. Lewes has observed, "a harsh, inflexible voice, a rigid or heavy face, would prevent even a Shakespeare from being impressive and affecting on the stage." The player is greatly dependent upon his personality. At the same time, mental qualities must accompany physical advantages. The constitutionally cold and torpid cannot hope to represent successfully excitement and passion. The actor must be *en rapport* with the character he sustains, must sympathise with the emotions he depicts. A peculiar dramatic sensitiveness and susceptibility from the first characterised the sisters Terry; their nervous organisation, their mental impressibility and vivaciousness, not less than their personal charms and attractions, may be said to have ordained and determined their success upon the stage.

Charles Kean's management terminated, and for a time continuous performances of Shakespeare's plays ceased in London: the poet seemed almost to have died of being revived so elaborately. The sisters appeared in one of those duologue, so-called drawing-room entertainments, which enable the performers to assume a variety of characters, but are not so much devised in the interests of histrionic art as to conciliate and divert the benighted, half-witted folk who hold playhouses to be sinful and the players wicked. After this I remember Ellen Terry, the school-girlish heroine of a forlorn-hope management at what is now called the Royalty Theatre, in Dean Street; an establishment once much devoted to dramatic experiments of a desperate sort. For some years the circumstances of her private life withdrew her from the stage; happily for the public, however, she returned to the active pursuit of her profession. In 1867 she was personating a leading character in Mr. Tom Taylor's luckless drama, "The Antipodes," at the Holborn Theatre. In the same year, at the Queen's Theatre, she appeared in Mr. Charles Reade's scarcely more fortunate play, "The Double Marriage," an adaptation of "Le Château de Grantier," by Auguste Maquet, and subsequently in a revival of Mr. Tom Taylor's "Still Waters Run Deep." After that I lose count of the lady's performances until I find her, in 1875, playing Portia in "The Merchant of Venice," at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, and afterwards Clara Douglas, in "Money," and Mrs. Vane, the young wife in the comedy of "Masks and Faces." In 1876 Miss Terry became a member of Mr. Hare's company at the Court Theatre, appearing as the heroine of Mr. Coghlan's "Brothers." At the same theatre, during later seasons, she sustained leading characters in Lord Lytton's posthumous play, "The House of Darnley," in the Haymarket comedy of "New Men and Old Acres," and in Mr. Wills's "Olivia." Since 1879, as I need not remind the reader, the actress has given her services to the Lyceum Theatre, under Mr. Irving's management, personating Ophelia, Pauline (in "The Lady of Lyons"), and Portia.

Miss Terry's professional education had commenced at a very early period, but it had been intermittent enough, nevertheless. After her performances as a child in Charles Kean's theatre, few opportunities of appearing in the poetic drama had been permitted her. It followed that her personation of Portia, in 1875, was as a complete revelation to the London public. Mr. Bancroft's revival of "The Merchant of Venice," it is true, for all the painstaking, elegance, and artistic beauty of its appointments, failed to attract remunerative audiences; but Miss Terry's Portia won general admiration. Our playgoers were amazed to find that the finished representation of the heroines of Shakespeare was still among the potentialities of the modern stage. The early promise had been nobly fulfilled; the child's histrionic genius, her instinctive sense of the dramatic, her emotional intensity, had grown with her growth and strengthened with her strength. The little Duke of York of the past was the Portia of the present, a consummate actress with all the refinements and resources of her art at command—dignified, tender, natural, loving, a skilled elocutionist, charming of presence, graceful of gesture, stately of movement—*et vera incessu patuit Dea.* Here was, in truth, Shakespeare's heiress of Belmont—a noble maiden, beautiful, witty, brave, "a loving daughter curbed by the will of a dead father," weary of her "parcel of wooers" and their importunities, whose heart bounds frankly forward when a suitor she can really love, a most gallant gentleman, presents himself to choose the right casket and to claim her hand. It has been my good or my ill fortune to see several Portias, and, while I am little apt to sacrifice the memories of yesterday to the experiences of to-day, or to kindle the altar-fires of new worships with the remains of old idols, I must avow that no Portia I have ever seen has appeared to me so entirely in accord with the intention, spirit, and poetry of Shakespeare's play as the Portia of Ellen Terry. I may add that no actress of my time has contributed so greatly to the picturesque qualities of theatrical personation, or displayed a finer sense of the æsthetic graces, the attractions and loveliness of costume. Miss Terry's Portia, Olivia, Ophelia, Pauline, and the rest were as living pictures by the grandest masters. Nor let it be supposed that this is merely the instinct of an actress young and beautiful, relying upon the signal advantage of her personality to do the duty of representation and obtain a sufficiency of admiring applause. Miss Ellen Terry portrays: varying and distinguishing her personations with special inventiveness and skill. Compare, for example, the sweet sadness, the gentleness, and pathos of her Ophelia, with the vivacity and archness, the humour and brilliant comedy of her Portia.

The extraordinary success of the actress, the enthusiastic reception of her efforts, induce prompt expectation and curiosity concerning her future performances. Her Portia and Ophelia induce hope of her Beatrice and Desdemona, her Rosalind and Imogen, her Miranda and Cordelia; and why not also her Juliet? with Mr. Irving, I would suggest, not as Romeo, but as Mercutio. Nor should these assumptions, and such as these, be over-long delayed,—in spite of the commercial advantage attaching to the modern system of prodigious "runs,"—for the same reason that we are bidden to gather our rosebuds while we may, because with all of us "time is still a-flying." For Miss Terry's impersonation of the more mature and matronly of Shakespearian characters—Volumnia and the Lady Constance, Queen Katharine, Hermione, and Lady Macbeth—I am content, so far as I am concerned, to wait awhile.

SHAKESPEARE AT HOME.

BY DAVID ANDERSON.

INASMUCH as it was necessary that Shakespeare should be born somewhere in England, there is no valid objection to his first having seen the light at Stratford-on-Avon. That part of Warwickshire is pastoral and pretty. The level meadows, fair and fresh; the gently-sloping parkland, alive with playful conies and graced with dappled deer; the willow-bordered river, remain unchanged since Shakespeare was a boy.

It touches the heart to look upon the sights which inspired the rustic background of his works. The resting and flying clouds, the old grand trees and fat fields of Shakespeare's country knit the traveller in those parts closer to the man who knew the secrets of nature and of philosophy by intuition; it is only in the poet's town and among his townsmen that sorrow is aroused by the traders upon his name and fame.

The worthy burgesses of Stratford cannot shut in the meadows and the streams of Shakespeare's native county and charge the outside world so much a head for a sight of a clod of earth as seen by him, but it must be granted them that they make the most of their opportunities. At Holy Trinity Church, close to the bank of the Avon, the door of that ancient structure is kept close shut because in the chancel within, in front of the altar, Shakespeare lies buried; and there, against the left wall, is his monument and what (the modern world flatters itself) may be his likeness. The show-person lodges at a little shop hard by. He accompanies you to the door of the church of the tomb, and, interposing his shoulders between you and the entrance, frankly intimates that the charge is sixpence each person. No sixpence, no sight of Shakespeare's presentment in the church of the Establishment, in the building which has been a house of God since the Conqueror's time. Sixpence is not much for the privilege if the person would but hold his tongue. It is his familiar commentary which is so irritating. But it is the same all over Stratford. The natives infer there is something in the air which makes them know more of Shakespeare than do such as are strangers to the town.

Holy Trinity Church has this advantage over other Stratford curiosities, that the bust in the chancel is the one which was really set up to his memory, the stone in the floor is probably the original slab placed above his bones. Alas! there is much less of reality about the house where Shakespeare may have been born, in Henley Street; the site of New Place, where he may have died; the field on Avon's bank, where he may have stolen the deer; the cottage at Shottery, where he may have courted Ann Hathaway. I have but lately returned from Stratford-on-Avon, where I paid to see the poet's tomb, what purports to be his birthplace, and Ann Hathaway's cottage. I paid the fee to see the house in Henley Street, and the extra fee demanded to see the museum, as it is called, inside; but I do not believe that the most stupid magistrate would be justified in committing a poacher for stealing a rabbit on such evidence as is offered touching the genuineness of many of these relics. Though the kind ladies in charge are voluble enthusiasts, their tedious speeches are ofttimes based upon a foundation looser than sand. The house at Henley Street is practically a restoration without, and has been vastly altered within. Certainly the greater part of the contents of the museum must be taken on trust; and, when every allowance is made, who shall say that this is the house in which Shakespeare was really born? The old woman at Ann Hathaway's cottage makes a point of telling travellers that she is descended from Mrs. Shakespeare's family, and it may be assumed gets many an extra sixpence, from Americans more particularly, on that account. But logically the contents of Ann Hathaway's cottage, save and except the female custodian, will not bear criticism, though, for my own part, I have no doubt but that the photograph of the Shakespearian commentator against the wall of the keeping-room of the cottage is what it pretends to be.

Let it not be supposed that I complain of the municipality of Stratford-on-Avon for making money out of Shakespeare's memory. So far as I can see, the town has no other source of profit. It seems a pity that the State has not purchased these relics, such as they are, from the poet's townsmen, to save his fame from their further interference; but the accuser, inclined to be harsh, should pause to consider what Stratford would be but for the memory of the poet. The streets, as Shakespeare saw them, have disappeared from the face of the earth; fire destroyed them; and the commonplace Stratford of to-day is an ugly, dull, and mean country town, existing on the legend of Shakespeare. Its tradesmen derive their income, its local officials such consequence as they assume, through Shakespeare; and, if they carry out the trust imposed upon them by the accidental honour, it is to their credit. If in Stratford-on-Avon you could see for sale in the shop-windows rare and uncommon editions or reproductions of early copies of the poet's works, if you could buy his likeness cut in cameo or intaglio, or statuettes in silver or the best prints of his doubtful portraits, there would be something worthy for the pilgrim to carry away and preserve. As it is, almost every shop is devoted to Shakespearian curiosities —of a sort—photographs in plenty, wooden boxes of all shapes printed in transfer with views of the town and its contents, and awful little plaster and Parian images of the poet, most of them quite wrong and baked awry. Upon these tiny images (fearfully and wonderfully made), these photographs and pallid wooden monstrosities, Stratford thrives and supports a mayor and town council and a Memorial Theatre, and aspires to found a school of acting to turn out Garricks, and Keans, and Kembles to measure.

The Memorial Theatre is a handsome building, raised by the subscriptions of English and Americans, upon a piece of marshy ground by the river's bank, presented to the town by Mr. Flower, the mayor, who owns considerable property in the district. I think I am right in saying that the foundations are under water during flood-time, and that it would have been better if the house had been built farther away from the water; but that does not detract from the motive of Mr. Flower in presenting the site, nor from the fact that the neighbourhood has been improved and the value of contiguous land increased by the erection of the theatre. The scheme of the promoters is set forth by themselves as follows:

"It has never been contemplated to erect a vast gloomy building, and to attempt to carry it on with an indifferent company to empty benches throughout the year; nor is it expected that first-class actors will bury themselves for life in Stratford; but it is intended to erect a theatre to hold about 700 persons, the rental from which, instead of being divided among shareholders, will be applied towards the ultimate portion of the scheme—namely, that of making it a training-school, where young actors of promise will have an opportunity for—say, three or four months in every year—going through a course of instruction in every branch of their art under competent professors."

So far from it being contemplated to keep the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre open throughout the year, not to speak of the "indifferent company" of actors, I have it from the lips of Mr. Flower that the theatre will be kept closed during the summer, with, perhaps, a short season of opera during the autumn. Opera, it is true, was not acclimatised in England in Shakespeare's time; but the council of the Memorial Theatre seem to argue that, had the poet been acquainted with that form of art, he might probably have approved of it. Moreover, true to their original proposition, the council have made no effort to induce "first-class actors to bury themselves for life," or for a period of time at their disposal, "in Stratford;" and the proposed training-school for young actors of promise remains an unfulfilled aspiration. Whether a youthful histrion would perfect himself in his art better in the birthplace of Shakespeare than elsewhere would, of course, to some extent, depend upon the young person himself; and though nothing is said in the scheme with respect to promising young actresses, it may be assumed that incipient Siddonses would not be left out in the cold, or, like daughters of Jephthah, to bewail themselves on the banks of the Avon. The object of the Memorial Theatre is distinctly stated in a pamphlet published for the council of the association, and that object is altogether so worthy of admiration that I cannot do better than transcribe the council's own words :

"Many projects have been proposed in past years for a monument to Shakespeare, and now several who have quite different views upon the subject have agreed to yield their own particular ideas, and to unite in putting up a Memorial Theatre, where occasionally his plays may be performed in his native town in as perfect a manner as possible, with every convenience for the actor and comfort for the audience—a condition of things which can hardly be said to be the case in any English theatre at present, and, in fact, can hardly be attempted in any theatre made to pay."

It will be remembered that a dramatic festival took place on the occasion of the opening of the Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon; a festival which, if it did not quite satisfy the standard of exigent criticism, proved that the council were not idle. A second festival, or series of performances, has lately taken place, partly in honour of Shakespeare's birthday, and partly, it is supposed, to perform the poet's plays "in as perfect a manner as possible." Subjoined is the full programme of entertainments:

SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE, STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

The Theatre opened on Monday, April 19th, 1880, for a series of performances extending over three weeks, in which Mr. Barry Sullivan appeared, supported by Misses Masson, Austin, Hope, Newcome, and Rivers; Messrs. W. H. Stephens, W. H. Hallatt, Hy. Vernon, John Amory, A. Matthison, Scudamore, Steyne, R. Dolman, James Wheeler, H. Hamilton, T. Thornton, T. J. Merridew, H. Rivers, H. Turner, &c. &c.

The performances took place on the first five evenings of each week, and on Saturday afternoons.

Programme :

On Monday evening, April 26th,
"HAMLET."

Tuesday evening, April 27th,
"HAMLET."

Wednesday evening, April 28th,
"THE LADY OF LYONS."

Thursday evening, April 29th,
"THE LADY OF LYONS."

Friday evening, April 30th,
"AS YOU LIKE IT."

Saturday afternoon, May 1st,
"AS YOU LIKE IT."

Monday evening, May 3rd,
"OTHELLO."

Tuesday evening, May 4th,
"OTHELLO."

Wednesday evening, May 5th,
"THE MERCHANT OF VENICE."

Thursday evening, May 6th
(To be announced next week).

Friday evening, May 7th,
"MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING."

Saturday afternoon, May 8th,
"MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING."

Concluding the Season.

I was present at Stratford during several days of the "Festival," and visited the theatre, which was well attended, and I am told that on Shakespeare's birthday persons were turned away from the doors. The programme seems to have been faithfully carried out, but it appears to me—considering the challenge of the council that the plays were performed "in as perfect a manner as possible"—that criticism is disarmed. It should be added that, in deference to the memory of Shakespeare, "The Gamester," "The Lady of Lyons," and "The School for Scandal" were added to the programme. The theatre will probably look nicer when it is painted and gilded inside, but it would be manifestly unfair to the council to ask them to decorate the building until they are satisfied that the walls are thoroughly dry. Moreover, if I am correctly informed, the scheme is still in need of further assistance. In conclusion, I desire to say a few words in simple justice to Mr. Barry Sullivan. It has been reported that Mr. Sullivan gave his services gratuitously, but that statement scarcely covers the fact of the case. The council of the Memorial Theatre applied to Mr. Barry Sullivan, offering him a half share of the total receipts—a considerable sum of money—but this proposition the veteran actor declined, and gave his services and those of his company as a free gift toward the fund of the institution. Whatever, therefore, may be thought of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, of its aims, its scope, and management, Mr. Barry Sullivan, at least, has behaved in the true spirit of an artist and of a friend.

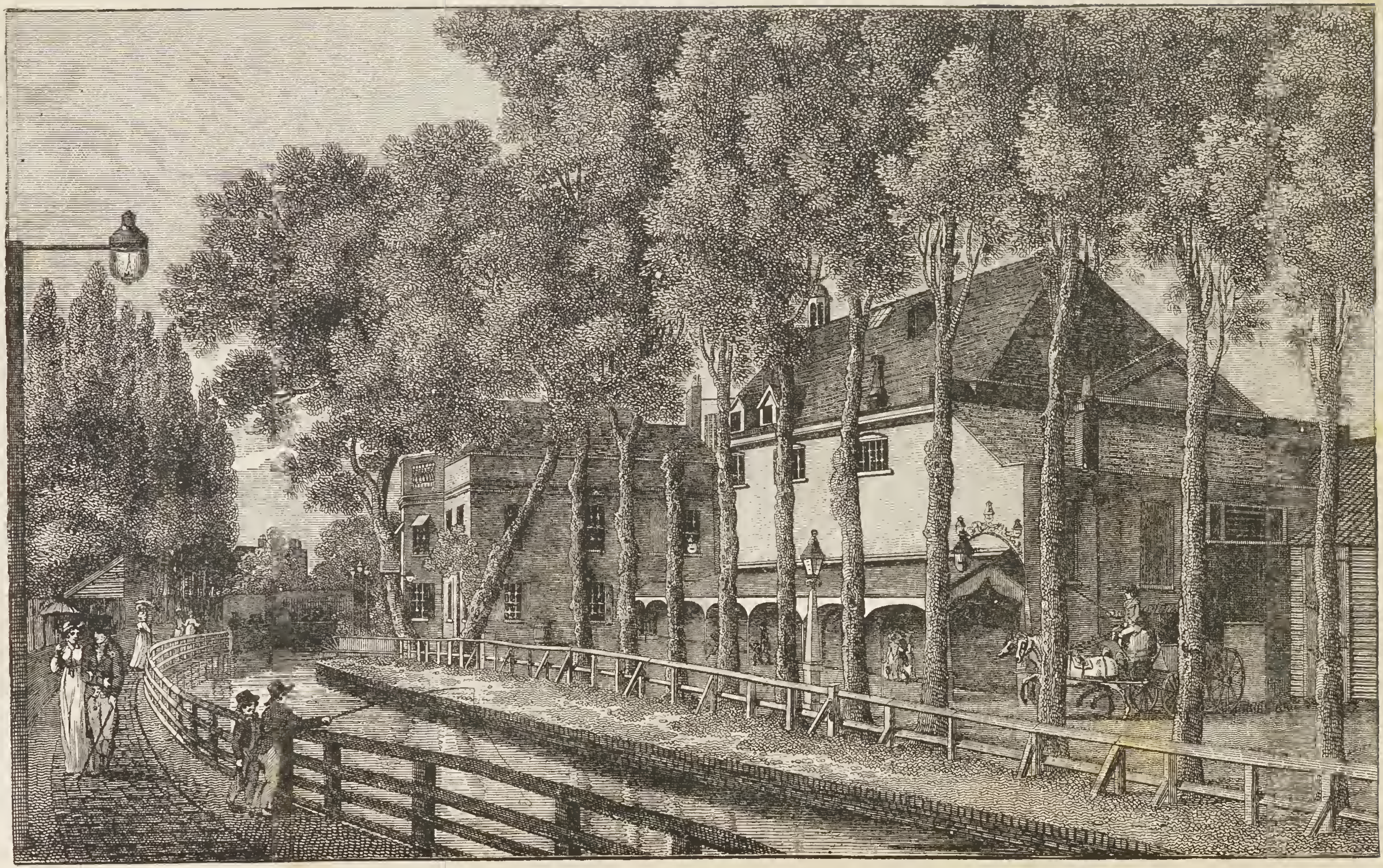
THE GAIETY REVIVALS.

By Frédéric O'Keene.

THE project of reviving some of the plays brought out in the so-called palmy days of the drama, *i.e.* the eighteenth century, was conceived, of course, in a satirical spirit. Mr. Hollingshead is far from being a *laudator temporis acti*, and it occurred to him that a series of these neglected productions, though represented with pious care, would silence the ignoramuses who in regard to stage matters are incessantly praising the past at the expense of the present. The experiment might be a costly one, but then it was not improbable that the bathos and rodomontade of the tragedies would prove more diverting than a modern burlesque or a farcical comedy. His principal aim, however, was "to give the present generation"—we are quoting from a letter he recently wrote to a friend—"an opportunity of judging whether the old patent monopoly, which is still looked back upon by some unwise persons with regret, did really maintain the standard of dramatic literature in return for the enormous privileges which the patent houses so long enjoyed. I think that to give specimens of the most conspicuous of the original pieces which they produced and contrived to render popular serves, from this point of view, a useful purpose. Remember that while these pampered establishments were doing their best to degrade the public taste they were empowered by law to hinder anybody from doing better. . . . The immense success of such pieces I attribute to the generally depraved taste of the times, for which the patent houses should be held responsible. No doubt poor plays are produced in these days; but the question is, whether State pampering and privileges are likely to do good. Experience, I think, shows the contrary."

The pieces selected for revival—among which are Rowe's "Jane Shore," Southerne's "Oroonoko," Lillo's "George Barnwell," Murphy's "Upholsterer" and "Grecian Daughter," Hughes's "Siege of Damascus," Colman's "Mountaineers," Sheridan's adaptation of Kotzebue's "Pizarro," and Monk Lewis's "Castle Spectre"—can hardly be read now without an oppressive sense of weariness; but it appears to me that Mr. Hollingshead is altogether wrong in ascribing their mediocrity to the monopoly vested in the old theatres. If anything, that monopoly, however unsuited it would be to existing conditions and circumstances, was formerly of direct service to dramatic art. By protecting particular houses from competition at a period when the number of playgoers was comparatively small, and when the theatre was rather a resort of a few than a great national institution, it enabled the managers to aim high without exposing themselves to ruinous loss. For example, although the majority of the playgoers preferred turgid tragedies and rather coarse comedies to anything written by Shakespeare, whose greatness, indeed, was not then appreciated, it is certain that no author's name appeared so frequently in the bills as his. Mr. Hollingshead's theory, moreover, is inconsistent with the fact that the finest plays have been produced under the system which he regards as fatal to dramatic excellence. It is more than probable that Shakespeare and his fellow-players received exclusive privileges from Elizabeth, and the best productions of Molière and Racine, if not those of Corneille as well, were produced in what Mr. Hollingshead would term "pampered" theatres. Nor is there any ground for the assumption that the protection formerly enjoyed by the patent theatres served in any way to keep dramatic genius in the background. If such genius had existed its promptings would have been obeyed, and the managers, for sufficiently obvious reasons, would have availed themselves of and fostered it.

The real cause of the dearth of good plays in the eighteenth century is to be found in the comparative absence of creative power which marked that period. A fine poem then appeared like an oasis on a broad expanse of absurdity and dulness. The giant-race had passed away, and the earth seemed to be resting in preparation for another luxurious harvest. The complexion of the age, too, was by no means favourable to the exercise of the little poetical talent that existed. The chivalrous and romantic spirit which animated society down to the time of the civil wars had given place to an indolent epicurism. Ideas, manners, tastes, customs—all had become intensely artificial. Depth of passion and warmth of imagination were cynically derided. The accents of nature were as unknown to the bewigged and powdered beau or belle as the music of the spheres. The "Seasons," with all its freshness and beauty, had far less popularity than the effusions of didactic writers, and inanities like those of the Della Cruscans were accepted as poetry. That literature suffered by such a state of things need hardly be said. Men of poetical gifts, disheartened to find that works aglow with inspiration were unheeded, often wrote down to the level of their readers. Fiction assumed an exclusively analytical aspect. The drama was not less unfortunate. Comedy, it is true, found it comparatively easy to breathe in this peculiar atmosphere, but in all plays of serious interest a lamentable want of soul and spirit was apparent. Fashion had decreed that tragedy should be written on the French model; in other words, be regular in form, inflated in expression, and generally unnatural in tone. It was to no purpose that a play by Shakespeare frequently appeared in the bills; the fiat had gone forth, and it had to be obeyed. Before long, as may be supposed, the consequent flood of rodomontade palled upon the taste, and the time-honoured theory that no tragedy could be dignified unless it dealt with monarchs and heroes was gradually abandoned. This was due in a large measure to the introduction of tearful domestic drama, a plant which might have taken vigorous root at once if those who cultivated it had possessed dramatic power, and if, in their anxiety to humour the susceptibilities



SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE, 1813.

of the audience, they had not become turgid or commonplace. The war of American Independence and the French Revolution aroused society at large from the lethargy into which it had fallen. The new ideas generated by these events, the latter especially, induced a deep intellectual agitation; life was no longer regarded as a masquerade, and most of the affectations which had held undisputed sway since the days of Anne were silently laid aside. This moral uprising imparted fresh vigour to every department of literature; but the drama did not benefit by it to so great an extent as might be imagined. The muse of poetry had deserted the theatres, to return only at long intervals. The secondary German drama, which had the rare merit of dealing with the passions of human nature, but the inspiring influence of which was qualified by false sentiment, inflated expression, melodramatic incident, and not unfrequently supernatural horrors, had possession of the London stage when the century closed.

Two of the plays announced by Mr. Hollingshead—"George Barnwell" and the "Castle Spectre"—have already been given, and as soon as the French season is over the series will be proceeded with. "George Barnwell" is one of the earliest specimens of domestic tragedy in the Georgian era, and the earliest indication, perhaps, of the reaction against the formalism and spurious dignity of the classical school. It was originally produced at Drury Lane on the 22nd June, 1731, with Theophilus Cibber as the apprentice, Mrs. Butler as Millwood, and Mrs. Cibber as Maria. The title first chosen for it seems to have been "The Merchant; or, The True History of George Barnwell." The author, Mr. William Lillo, "a short, fat, one-eyed Dissenter and jeweller of Moorgate Street," already known to fame by a musical piece called "Sylvia," had, for the benefit of the rising generation, dramatised a ballad of the middle of the seventeenth century, showing how a naturally virtuous apprentice had been lured from the paths of rectitude and brought to an ignominious death through surrendering to the blandishments of a wicked woman. The story, by-the-way, is one of the town of Ludlow, where Millwood, the destroyer of the hero, was hanged. The ballad being well known when "George Barnwell" was first played, many of the spectators had provided themselves with copies thereof, and were inclined to view the fate of the unhappy apprentice in anything but a suitable mood. But the pathos of the piece impressed them so deeply that before long they threw away the ballads and buried their faces in handkerchiefs. "George Barnwell" proved decidedly successful, and Bob Wilks, the actor, received an order to submit the MS. of the play to the Queen at Hampton Court. Mr. Pope, albeit not given to the melting mood, was much moved by the sorrows of the apprentice. "Lillo," he is reported to have said, "never departs from propriety here, except in a few passages where he aims at a greater elevation of language than is consistent with character and situation." The critical faculties of the author of "The Dunciad" were hardly as keen as usual. The plot is not ineffectively managed, but it is difficult to believe that even in those days some of the speeches put into the mouths of the characters did not send a titter through the house. The "aim at inconsistent elevation of language" is shown in silly or tawdry similes. The author at times goes to the other extreme, as when Millwood, finding that her confederates are filled with horror at the idea of her prevailing upon Barnwell to murder his uncle, remarks: "They disapprove of my conduct!" However, it is satisfactory to know that the object of the play was in at least one instance attained. Many years afterwards, when the chief character was in the possession of Ross, an apprentice who had embezzled £200 in order to please a mistress happened to see "George Barnwell," and, seized with remorse (probably intensified by the sight of the gallows), fell into a violent fever. Eventually he revealed the cause of his distress to the doctor attending him, who had the deficiency in the accounts made up before it could be noticed. The dishonest apprentice profited by the lesson he had received; he became a prosperous and otherwise respectable merchant. From that time Ross never took a benefit without receiving from an anonymous donor the sum of ten guineas, "as a tribute of gratitude from one who was largely obliged and saved from ruin by seeing 'G. B.'" Down to a comparatively recent period Barnwell was exhibited to the audience on the scaffold, the curtain falling upon a scene in which we are told that Millwood—at one time impersonated by no less an actress than Mrs. Siddons—is sharing his fate with a terror no less acute because she has come to loathe existence. "Barnwell" was long on the list of acting plays, and, probably on account of the conversion of the apprentice alluded to, was given with the pantomime on Boxing Night by way of warning to the many youths who made a point of being in the theatre on that occasion. But, with all its absurdities, "George Barnwell" is far more acceptable than "The Castle Spectre," which, produced in 1797, abounds—like all Lewis's writings—in supernatural and other horrors to the all but complete exclusion of poetical feeling. It met with great success, owing partly to the ability with which it was played (the cast included Mrs. Jordan, Kemble, Dowton, and Bannister), but chiefly to the newly-created taste for such monstrosities. The story goes that Lewis, having a dispute with Sheridan, offered to bet a night's receipts of "The Castle Spectre" that he was right. "No," said the wit, "I can't afford that; but I'll bet you all it's worth." Had Lewis lost such a wager he would not have been much out of pocket.

SCENERY, DRESSES, AND DECORATIONS.

BY GODFREY TURNER.

IN these days of stage realism, when, in order to ensure local accuracy, the artists commissioned to paint the scenes travel half over the world, that they may sketch mountains, meadows, market-places, cathedrals, town-halls, bridges, chambers of justice, ramparts, galleries, battle-fields, and other places associated with dramatic action, the property-room of any theatre, in which the spectacular or picturesque element of histrionic art finds place, has quite a South Kensington air of æsthetic archæology. Is this an altogether new condition of stage-management? Many suppose it to be so, grounding their assumption on the knowledge of such well-known facts as that Garrick played Hamlet in the court-dress of his own day, and that, even in the present century, the Kembles were accounted strange innovators for importing a few articles of furniture upon the scene, and for adding meretricious effects of common life to their performance, by sitting down in real chairs to a real library-table, with real books on it. But the age of Garrick was not very favourable to stage adornment, and the age of the Kembles was even less so. The dumb-shows, ballets, and pantomimes were poor affairs, scenically considered, until painting took its place again in England; and a landscape artist, Loutherbourg, led the way for Stanfield, Callcott, Telbin, Grieve, Beverley, and the younger painters, who can hold their own on the walls of any picture-gallery.

Let us, however, go back to earlier days, and inquire a little into the state of theatrical appointments, when mere pageantry was governed by taste, learning, and art-handiwork. There are evidences of a magnificence, quaint, no doubt, but both imposing and impressive, which dazzled the vulgar and charmed the educated and refined. We are looking now at the era of masques and processions, from which in some degree the rougher decoration of the public stage caught a certain dignity of form and fashion. Those memorably splendid revivals, with which Mr. Charles Kean graced the stage of the Princess's Theatre, comprised, in more than one particular instance, close and careful repetitions of the pageants of yore. The sands of time run fast; but I am writing still for many whose recollections, like my own, are vivid with respect to the archæological splendours of "King Henry VIII." as produced by Mr. Kean. So full is that play of revels, processions, masques, visions, and episodes of a spectacular nature, that its quality in this respect has given some strength to the theory of Ben Jonson's having had a hand in it. Now, there can be no question that Mr. Kean not only took infinite pains to follow the stage directions, precise and explicit as they are, but further embellished and vivified the representation of this historical drama, into which the pomps and ceremonies of twelve years are crowded, by consulting Hollingshed and Cavendish as to the stately masquerade in Wolsey's presence-chamber. Noble as was the court-pastoral set on the stage, its sumptuous quality had been anticipated to the smallest detail in the masques of King Henry's day, one of them, as mentioned by Hall, being a device of the king himself. In a very careful reproduction of "Henry VIII." at Manchester, on the lines laid down with such lavishness of illustration by Mr. Kean, a curious misapprehension of a single word led to an incongruity which must have strangely exercised the minds of the spectators. The scene in which this trifling solecism occurred was that of the Cardinal's entertainment, when having been announced as a noble troop of strangers, "enter the king and twelve others, as maskers, habited like shepherds." The masks worn by the new-comers had been, in Mr. Kean's representation, "golden vizards," the idea being taken partly from a stage direction in the later scene of Queen Catherine's vision, and partly from Hall's account of a royal masque. Now, there have been several ways of spelling "vizard," such as vizer and vizor, the last being most common in modern references to the beaver or the lower front-part of a helmet. The etymology, however, is plain: a vizor is a covering for the face—a mask." It would seem that the designer of the costumes for the Manchester performance of "King Henry VIII." could think of no other vizor than the one belonging to a helmet; and he accordingly tacked on to each of the shepherds' bonnets an odd piece of gilt pannier-work, neither knightly nor pastoral, but merely an unmeaning and anti-symmetrical excrescence.

There was, no doubt, a wide difference between the "mounting" of masques, such as were expressly devised for palaces, and the usual scenery of the playhouse, in Elizabethan and later days; but we are apt to be misled into underrating the stage-management of our forefathers when we lay too much stress on traditions informing us how scrolls were sometimes used to denote localities, in such manner as "This is a forest," or "This is a donjon." First let us glance at those courtly inventions wherein the genius of Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, and Lawes, or Ferobosco, united to produce the most magical effects, and to realise all the dreams of fancy. In order to understand, even imperfectly, the true nature of that singular kind of play, imagination must be brought to the reinforcement of careful and exact antiquarian research. "The Eloquence of the Masque" would remain an obscure study did we depend on musty records, without some light from the poetry of a most poetical age; and those persons for whom such poetry has no living significance will find it hard to imagine what real substantial splendour, and what elaborate mechanism were at the poet's beck and call. Masques were the "private theatricals" of a golden age—of a court and nobility whose culture was imbued with High Platonism, and whose sense of amusement was an altogether different sense from that which is general at the present time. All this must be borne well in mind; and perhaps we shall be assisted in forming a true idea of the elaboration which ran through all artistic devices in those days, if we look at the finished paintings of men who followed in the school of Hans Holbein, Lucas Van Heere, Peter Pourbus, the Clouets, and Sir Antonio More. And as every object in a picture, so every fancy of the mind, and all the parts, phases, and varying aspects of a fancy, were wrought out to the highest point of exquisite—it must be confessed, in frequent instances, tedious—perfection. There was little or no reliance on distant effects for the illusion purposed in the masque. Much, indeed, of the major part of the movable scenery was "of releeve, or whole round," built out in *alto-rilievo*, that is to say, and so blended with the painted cloths as to present a wonderfully pleasant combination of modelling and tapestry. Though the curtainless stage projected into the body of the hall, as, at the public theatre of that period, it encroached upon the area of the pit, ravishing effects were produced by machinery quite as ingenious as that which is used in a modern theatre. Let those who would hastily demur to this proposition be reminded that Inigo Jones, the architect who planned and built, so to speak, the scenic decorations, was the unrivalled machinist of his time, as Ben Jonson was the matchless masque-maker.

The mere prose descriptions of the scenes in Jonson's masques are, as Gifford observes, "singularly bold and beautiful;" they imply a tone of praise scarcely short of adoration to the art of Inigo Jones, who himself took great pride in his work; and they denote such contrivance and artifice as may well have accounted for the feeling of admiration among the spectators, who were at least as much astonished as they were delighted. In particular, a very magical effect was produced in the "Masque of Hymen," which was enacted at court in 1605, on the occasion of the marriage of the Earl of Essex to the daughter of the Earl of Suffolk. A great globe of the earth, "the sea expressed by heightened silver waves," hung suspended by no discernible means behind an altar, and, turning softly on its invisible axis, discovered the first scene of the masque. This mechanical movement, it is recorded, Jonson would trust to no other hand than his own. The cost of such entertainments was enormous. A sum nearly equal to £10,000 of our money was expended on "The Masque of Blackness," which was performed at Whitehall on Twelfth Night, and which was the first production of its kind that employed together the ripe capabilities of Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, and Lawes. The devices for the last grand masque that was presented at the court of Charles were planned in committee by Lord Bacon, Selden, and Whitelocke, the last-named statesman actually composing a coranto which for three decades after was the most popular of dance-tunes. "So much personal honour," says Isaac Disraeli, "was considered to be involved in the conduct of a masque that even this committee of illustrious men was on the point of being broken up by too serious a discussion concerning precedence; and the masque had nearly not taken place, till they hit on the expedient of throwing dice to decide on their rank in the procession." It was the author of "The Curiosities of Literature" who discovered and communicated the discovery to the appreciative Gifford, how and when Jonson and Inigo Jones slid suddenly from brotherly affection into hatred, envy, and malice. It was all because the poet put his own name before that of the architect on the title-page of their Shrovetide masque, "Chloridia." Thenceforth Master Inigo, all-powerful at court, deprived Jonson of his employment there, and supplanted him by more compliant poets, namely, Heywood, Shirley, and Davenant. Great writers of masques, not to speak of Milton, have been George Chapman, Thomas Campion, and William Browne. In fine, the masque, in Lord Bacon's words, "was composed for princes, and by princes it was played." That its ornaments should therefore have been designed with consummate art, to accord with the inexpressible grace of its movements, is not surprising.

It is different, however, when we turn to consider the public stage at the same time. But even here the intention of the dramatist was often carried into better effect than we are in the habit of supposing. Malone, who was not blessed, or cursed, with an over-fervid fancy, was shocked that anybody could suppose Shakespeare capable of trivial "stage directions," and resolutely declined to believe that the great dramatist wrote such things himself in historically spectacular plays like "King Henry VIII." But besides the consideration that genius does stoop to trifles, and deems, in fact, nothing too small for its great and infinite pains, the very circumstance of Shakespeare having been a manager appears to have escaped the memory of Malone. There is no doubt that the practical poetry of the "myriad-minded man" involved the purpose of as much display as he felt necessary to the popular understanding of his plays. He indifferent to show and stage effect! He, who wrote "The Tempest," and who ended the loveliest of pastorals—"As You Like It"—with the daintiest of masques! Why, the pictures incidental to "Hamlet," to "Cymbeline," to "The Winter's Tale"—the last finishing with a picture that has been led up to by five acts--are contradictions to the theory shared by Warburton, Malone, and other grave commentators, that Shakespeare was above scenery, dresses, and decorations.

I have a strong impression, strengthened yet further by observation of the method sometimes employed, with good effect, to *scenify* a circus, that, in the roughest era of theatrical illusion, painted cloths, properties, and modelled objects borrowed from the masques went a long way. Processions, off the stage as well as on, called into activity much fanciful skill. I observed but lately in the fine armoury of a friend one object to which a prominent place was given amid the stately gathering of figures in complete steel. It was what is known to collectors as a "processional helmet," not a helmet at all, nor anything very like a helmet, but such a device of colour and gilding as one might observe in a pictorial allegory, designed in Jacobean or Caroline days. There was a touch of the classical and the ideal about all such accessories of public shows and pageants. If a knight or other heroic personage had to be represented on the stage, in days when armour was a reality, there would have been no fillip to the imagination if his individual armour had been real. This sort of thing was reserved for the more modern days of Lord Mayors' Shows. The "processional" helmets, body-pieces, and tunics of Roman form had by that time died out; but, meanwhile, they had very sufficiently performed their part in stage illusion, when neither poets nor painters nor theatrical managers studied archæology, and when audiences and critics alike abstained from troubling their heads about anachronisms. Perhaps it may have been better for their constitutional imaginations, that the painted cloths *did* suffice for scenery, that the costumes *were* a little out at their chronological elbows, and that the decorations *had* a Doric simplicity suited to the comprehension of simple folk.

Our Play-Box.

"THE DANITES."

By Joaquin Miller.

First produced, New Sadler's Wells Theatre, Monday, April 26th, 1880.

Bill Hickman	Mr. M. V. Lingham.	Grasshopper Jake	Mr. Henry Lee.
Hezekiah Carter	Mr. Geo. B. Waldron.	Billy Piper	—
Alexander McGee	Mr. McKee Rankin.	Sam	Mr. J. Richardson.
Charles Godfrey	Mr. W. E. Sheridan.	George Williams	Little Belle.
William Wise	Mr. E. M. Holland.	Washee Washee	Mr. Harry Hawk.
Thomas Adolphus Grosvenor	Mr. Lindsey Harris.	Nancy Williams	Mrs. McKee Rankin.
		Hulda Brown	Miss Cora Tanner.
Stubbs	Mr. J. G. Peakes.	Sallie Sloan	Miss Isabel Waldron.
Henrietta Dickson	Miss Emma Marble.		

SINCE the publication of "Life amongst the Modocs" there can have been no two opinions concerning Mr. Joaquin Miller's power of making his work life-like and dramatic; but other qualities are required for producing an effective stage-play than those which are necessary to ensure the success of a brilliant romance, published in the form of personal reminiscences. Mr. Miller has performed his task admirably, and although there are no scenes or characters in his piece which will appear strikingly original to anyone conversant with Bret Harte's sketches of life in the Far West; yet he makes such good use of his material that he may count on the interest of the audience throughout the play. The plot may here be briefly given. Nancy and George Williams, the last survivors of a family implicated in the rising against Smith the Mormon prophet, are flying before the faces of the Danites, or avenging angels, whose business it is to hunt down and destroy them. In spite of the protection extended to them by Sandy McGee;

the hero of the piece, who gives them shelter in a miner's camp in the mountains, the boy George falls a victim to a well-directed shot, levelled at him from behind a rock by one of the Danites. The first act closes with an effective tableau; the miners, attracted by the sound of firearms, rushing on the stage, when Hezekiah Carter, the Danite, comes forward from his hiding-place and fires on them, his revolver luckily missing fire, while the boy's unhappy sister jumps down the ravine into which he has fallen. She is supposed to have perished, but turns up in the next act at "The Forks," in a boy's disguise, and under the name of Billy Piper. There is much good fun in the scene at the "Howling Wilderness Saloon," where "the boys," hearing of the advent of a schoolmaster by the next mail, determine "to lay for him," and are utterly taken aback when the object of their intended vengeance walks into the saloon in the shape of a pretty woman. It is to be regretted that the remaining acts are somewhat incoherent, and contain much which does not seem to bear very directly upon the matter in hand; but, after all, as long as the incidents are sufficiently exciting, one should not ask for more from a piece which aims only at startling effects. Of course all "the boys" fall in love with the schoolmistress; one of them, who is called "the parson" (because he could outswear any man in the camp), attempting to appropriate her to himself, and emphatically warning the supposed boy, Billy Piper, to keep his hands off her. Mrs. McKee Rankin has a most trying part in the uncompromisingly abject Billy Piper (the only entirely unnatural character in the play), and one feels that fate has been kind in making her delivery of Billy's tiresome speeches somewhat indistinct. As might be expected, the schoolmistress discovers Nancy Williams's secret, in spite of her disguise, and determines to keep it at the cost of her own good name. Accordingly when, after a short period of happy married life with Sandy McGee, appearances turn so much against her that her husband believes her to be unfaithful, she bears his angry reproaches rather than betray her friend. In the end the Danites succeed in discovering the object of their vengeance, but are seized and hanged before they can do any mischief. Nancy Williams, who has no further object for concealment now these men are disposed of, steps among the miners in a nice new dress, and learns from a letter just arrived that her brother is after all alive and well. So, villany having been punished and virtue rewarded, the play comes to an end. The acting is excellent throughout. There is an irresistible charm in Mr. McKee Rankin's impersonation of the hero, Alexander McGee, a part which has many points in common with the character of Prince in "Life amongst the Modocs;" and his splendid physique is of no small service to him in situations which imperatively demand a fine presence. Mr. Sheridan's Parson is also a fine piece of acting, powerful, and at times truly pathetic; but it seems to us that Mr. Waldron's rendering of Carter the Danite gives evidence of higher artistic capabilities than are displayed by any other member of the troupe. Every motion is perfect; it is impossible to see him without a shudder. Though his part is an important one, he is not often on the stage; yet one never forgets him for an instant, and his presence is felt even when he is not there. He has a way of rubbing his hands slowly over each other, an action which he makes so expressive that one never sees it without feeling a sickening apprehension for the object of his vengeance. There is something terrible in the silence of his movements, and one might almost say to him, as Victor Hugo said to Baudelaire, "*Vous avez inventé un nouveau frisson.*"

Among the minor characters, Mr. Holland's Judge, who was "elected because he was fit for nothing else," and Mr. Hawk's Heathen Chinee are the most prominent. In conclusion, we may safely say that those who enjoy a good thorough-going melodrama cannot do better than pay a visit to Sadler's Wells without loss of time.—Maurice Pollock.

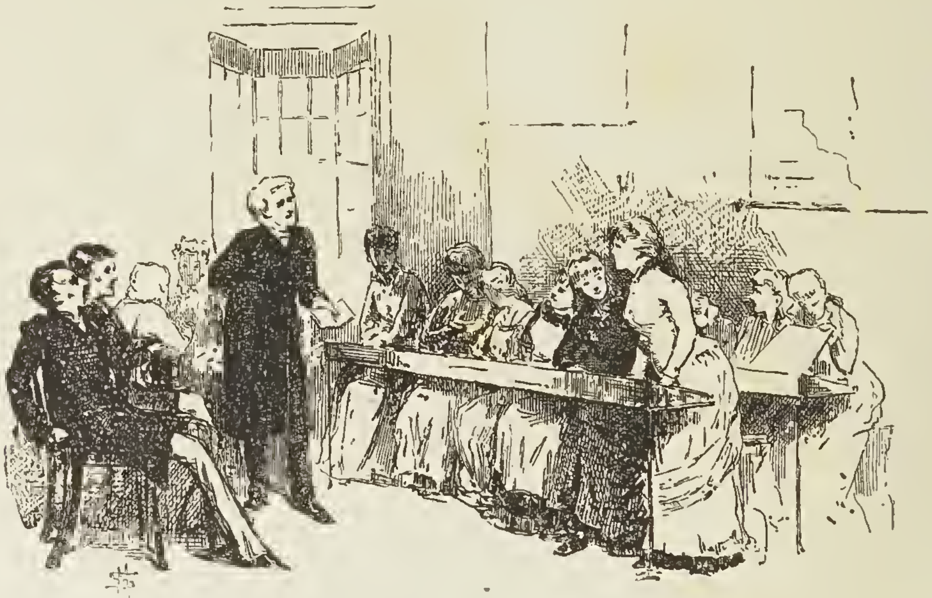
"SCHOOL."

A Comedy, in Four Acts, by T. W. Robertson.

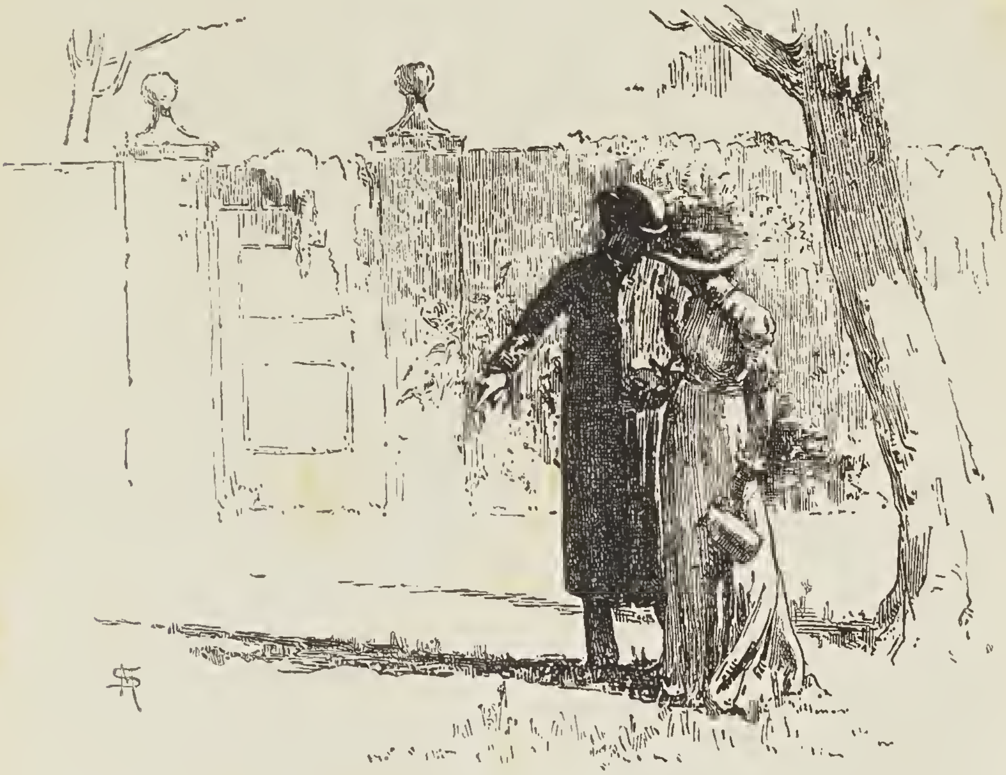
Revived at the Haymarket Theatre, May 1st, 1880.

Lord Beaufoy ..	Mr. H. B. Conway.	Laura	Miss Bruce.
Dr. Sutcliffe ..	Mr. Kemble.	Hetty	Miss Gozna.
Beau Farintosh ..	Mr. Arthur Cecil.	Grace	Miss Otway.
Jack Poyntz ..	Mr. Bancroft.	Milly..	Miss Lambert.
Mr. Krux	Mr. Forbes-Robertson.	Tilly	Miss L. Lambert.
Vaughan	Mr. Heneage.	Effie	Miss Reynolds.
Mrs. Sutcliffe ..	Mrs. Canninge.	Fanny	Miss Leslie.
Naomi Tighe ..	Mrs. Bancroft.	Kate	Miss Montague.
Bella..	Miss Marion Terry.	Ethel..	Miss Reed.
Clara..	Miss Ida Hertz.	Sybil..	Miss Kate Rorke.
Nina	Miss St. George.		

Perhaps even more interest attached to the first night of "School" at the Haymarket Theatre than to the opening of the theatre itself. "Money" was originally written for the old Haymarket Theatre, and there was therefore much fitness in selecting it for the inaugural performance at the new house; but another kind of interest was awakened by the transplanting of "School" from the little theatre in Tottenham Street to the larger stage of the Haymarket. As the initial experiment with a Robertsonian comedy, made with perfectly fair conditions as to cast, scenery, etc., it was watched with keenly critical eyes. Believers in the reaction against the Robertsonian comedy pointed out the rashness of the experiment—the unnecessary hardihood of selecting one of the poorest, if not actually the most flimsy, of all the late Mr. Robertson's works. It is hardly of much avail now to discuss at any length the merits or demerits of "School." It is but an adaptation of the late



Herr Benedix's "Cinderella," a Teutonic essay in fairy comedy completely wanting in the grace and coherence which such airy trifles demand. "School" would indeed, if the fairy tale were not absolutely necessary to excuse its extravagance, go on much the same without any reference to Cinderella at all. What point there is in the application consists in making Cinderella a pupil-teacher, whom the prince, in the shape of a handsome young lord, marries, to the envy of all but her devoted friend Naomi Tighe. There is no glimpse of a court ball, no fairy godmother, and no haughty sisters, unless they may be considered as rolled together in the form of the impossible usher Krux, whose presence is a blot upon a highly fanciful production. Everything in "School" is impossible—the school, the girls, the examination, and the presence of Lord Beaufoy and Jack Poyntz at the same. It is all unreal, but so far systematic in its absurdity that it would be pleasant enough but for the equally impossible and melodramatic usher, whose appearance is as incongruous as that of a mute on a wedding-day.



All this being understood, it becomes obvious that "School" is only to be endured on one condition. There are plays which will bear a great deal. They may be superlatively, fairly, moderately, and even indifferently acted, and yet remain distinct dramatic works. But "School" is of a less firm texture. It must be handled with the greatest delicacy. It is rather the Coan robe through which the genius of the actor may shine without hindrance, than the stately apparel which proclaims the character carefully thought out by the author. Hence the demand for extreme lightness of touch and that absolute perfection of detail which Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft during their theatrical management have encouraged the public to look for. In some of the Robertsonian comedies which they have interpreted, or rather endowed with flesh and blood so admirably, there is something like human passion and feeling. In "Caste" there is visible a distinct regard for that strength of dramatic situation which will carry through even such dreary plays as "La Dame aux Camélias." In "School" there is not the slightest interest of any kind. There is not a single attempt at a situation which is not, as the Americans say, "discounted" by the dullest observer; and the dialogue is only remarkable for the closeness with which it approaches the stupidity of modern everyday conversation. Hence "School" is of the kind of comedy which requires superlative acting. The whole burden is thrown upon the actor, and this was the reason why the "croakers" predicted the failure of "School" at the Haymarket Theatre. They (the "croakers") held that the delineation of great passions or of broad fun could be seen and understood in the new house easily enough, as a peony or a sunflower is visible from a distance, but that a pale primrose like "School" would be quite lost on a large stage. On the other hand, the admirers of Robertson and of the wonderful manner in which his plays were produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, declared that a bright gem would look well in any setting, and that the picture-frame at the Haymarket would not prove too large for an exquisitely-painted picture of "School."

It is curious that the event should have justified both "croakers" and Robertsonians. Thanks to the admirable acting of Mrs. Bancroft, Miss Marion Terry, Mr. H. B. Conway, and Mr. Bancroft, the revival of "School" is a genuine success, not a little helped by the ironical rendering of the idyll of the milk-jug. But it must not be forgotten that the part of Naomi Tighe, perfectly played by Mrs. Bancroft, now, as on former occasions, is that of all in the piece most susceptible of breadth in rendering, and that Mrs. Bancroft is not unmindful of this, but accentuates her points very artistically. Miss Marion Terry and Mr. Conway also make the most of the milk-jug situation. They do not merely hesitate between the little bits of twaddle they are called upon to utter. They introduce long pauses, until the audience, slightly dense at first, detects the slender element of fun and goodnaturedly appreciates it. There is no real comedy, it must be recollected, in "School," no fun arising from humorous but possible incidents. The actors are therefore obliged to make ridiculous a scene which, if not genuine, reduces the entire scheme of the play to dust. If Bella and Lord Beaufoy are not really in love, "School" is absolute nonsense from beginning to end. If they are, by what poverty of invention are the lovers driven to make their great effect by appealing to the ironical vein and making the scene ridiculous? The whole idea of the effect is not only inartistic, but utterly opposed to anything like true art. But it is wonderfully executed. The long pauses and the hesitation, the awkward and sheepish sides of love, are strongly marked by Miss Marion Terry and Mr. Conway. There is, of course, a lingering feeling of regret that so much genuine talent should be wasted on unpromising material, but the result is so good that the selfish spectator is almost consoled. Mr. Bancroft's Jack Poyntz can hardly be made to fill so large a canvas as Naomi Tighe, but it is such a good "bit" of the "all-to-pieces" style that it fully occupies the audience.

The unfortunates are Mr. Arthur Cecil and Mr. Forbes-Robertson. Mr. Cecil, more than any other actor in the east, suffers from the size of the theatre. Beau Farintosh is, as he leaves the author's hands, a mere sketch, to be filled in by Mr. Hare or Mr. Cecil. This filling in of the purblind, silly old dandy could be admirably performed on the little stage of a little theatre. At the Haymarket it is lost. Despite very good stage management, the beau has too far to go to perpetrate the blunders caused by his defective eyesight, and what is worse, it is hardly possible to comprehend what he is about without employing an opera-glass oneself. At an ordinary performance of comedy, it is not only tedious to hold an opera-glass to one's eyes, but the operation has the additional disadvantage of shutting out the rest of the stage. Therefore, the fine microscopic work brought into fashion by Mr. Hare and Mr. Cecil should not be risked in a large theatre. What is wanted there is the handling of Tintoret or Veronese, not the tentative styles of Van Eyck and Mabuse. It is no discredit to the artistic faculty of Mr. Arthur Cecil that Beau Farintosh at the Prince of Wales's must be a different creature from Beau Farintosh at the Haymarket. In the latter house all the fine shades are lost. The indication of imbecility foreshadowed from the first is but just caught, and it is not certain whether the Beau should be laughed at or not. Mr. Cecil's brother-unfortunate has not only the sorrow of playing an impossible and disagreeable person, but the misery of knowing that he forms no part of the actual interest of the piece. Mr. Forbes-Robertson is cruelly condemned to enact Krux, the impossible usher, and does all that a good artist can do with a repulsive character. The play is admirably put upon the stage, and is an undoubted success.—Bernard Henry Becker.

"HEARTSEASE."

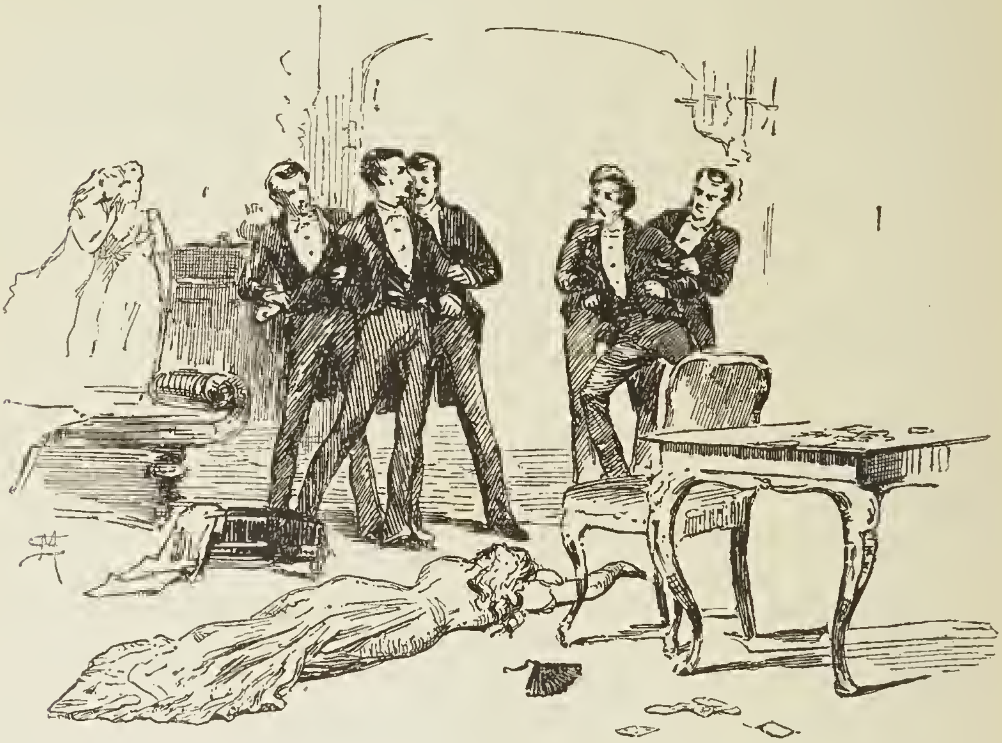
An English Version, in Five Acts, of "La Dame aux Camélias," by Alexandre Dumas the Younger, specially rewritten for Madame Modjeska by J. Mortimer.

Originally produced, Court Theatre, Saturday Morning, May 1st, 1880.

Armand Duval ...	Mr. Arthur Dacre.	Messenger	Mr. J. W. Phipps.
Monsieur Duval ...	Mr. Edward Price.	Constance	Madame Helena Modjeska.
Comte de Varville ...	Mr. Brian Darley.	Madame Prudence	Miss R. G. le Thière
Gaston Rieux	Mr. G. W. Anson.	Nichette	Miss Winifred Emery.
Gustave...	Mr. Earle Douglas.	Olympe	Miss Kate Varre.
The Doctor	Mr. W. Holman.		
Nanine	Miss M. A. Giffard.		

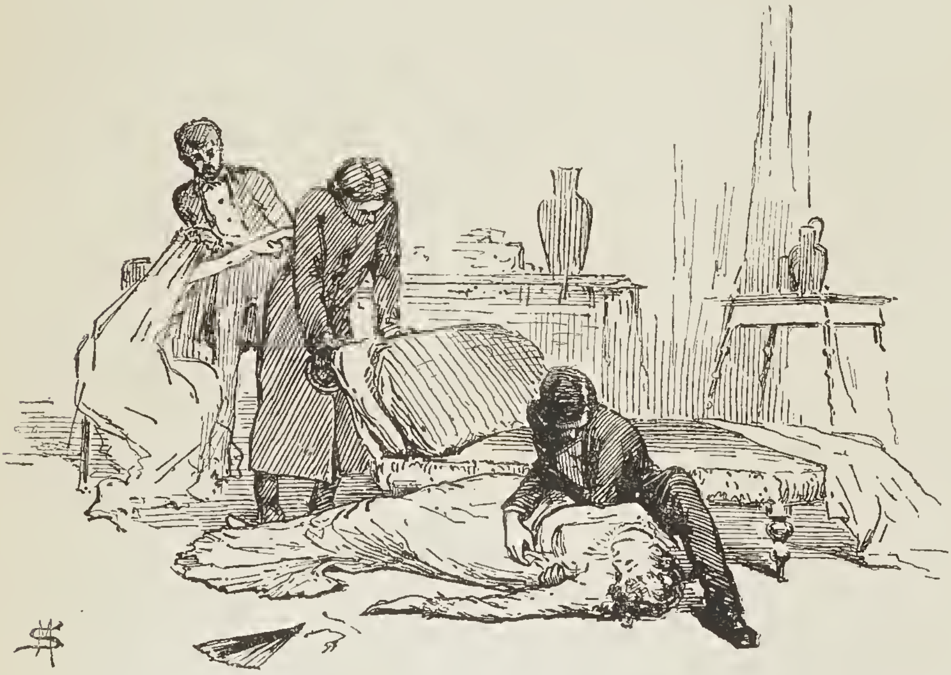
It cannot be said that the reception accorded to the famous Polish actress, Madame Modjeska, on her first appearing before an English audience, was courteous. She was a stranger amongst us, and yet scarcely a hand acknowledged her presence when she first stepped upon the stage. By-and-by, as her beauty and grace, and her intelligent and exquisite art began to manifest themselves, and little by little win admiration, the brilliant company, which included the Prince and Princess of Wales and almost all the fashionable, literary, and artistic celebrities in London, and which had been so cold and formal, warmed up to enthusiasm, and before the close of the performance all acknowledged that the distinguished artiste was indeed worthy of her Polish and American fame—worthy to be considered one of the greatest actresses of the age. The charm of her personal appearance, so lithe and sinuous, without being in the least degree ophidian, as was that of Rachel; her pretty and engaging countenance and the silvery tones of her voice, delighted; and when it was discovered that she added to these physical advantages the most intelligent and cultured mental qualifications, those who came determined to be unamiable and hypercritical remained to be converted into the most ardent of the lady's admirers.

Madame Modjeska's pronunciation of English is only slightly tinged with a foreign, but by no means unpleasant, accent. She enunciates her words with great distinctness—sometimes, perhaps, a little monotonously. She is a greater actress or *pantomimiste* than she is elocutionist; for whereas what is technically called her "stage business" is perfect, her reading is sometimes faulty, and either over-elaborated and artificial or else not sufficiently varied. Still we must always remember that she is not English, and that the absence in her acting of what is vulgarly called "magnetic power," which some complain of, is in all probability the result of a slight difficulty she feels at having to express strong emotions in a language which she learnt only recently, but which she speaks almost as "to the manner born." There are not a few critics who consider that, although Madame Modjeska's talent is of the highest order, it does not amount to absolute genius. In this they err, for to what else but genius can we attribute the amazing individuality and originality of this fine actress's impersonations? If an opportunity is given her to play Cleopatra, Adrienne Lecouvreur, and Marion de Lorme—her three greatest parts—then we shall be better able to judge of the variety and subtlety of her study of human nature and of the poets whose works she interprets. She is a woman of exceeding imagination, and this is proved by the surprising variety of her "business." She is always engaged in doing something graceful, picturesque, and appropriate. Her rôles are, so to speak, mosaics, built up of an infinite number of little bits of by-play, so natural and yet so charmingly illustrative of the character she is enacting, that one cannot forbear comparing her art with Balzac's literary work; for both are the results of the same peculiar mental process of quasi involuntary microscopic analysis of the human mind and of its actions. Those who know Madame Modjeska personally will assert that they have never met a more observant woman. Nothing escapes her notice, and she makes consummate use of everything she sees. If she observes anyone do a graceful or a picturesque thing she will treasure it up in her mind, and on occasion make admirable use of what had pleased her sensitive and appreciative nature. In a word, Modjeska illustrates her characters or rôles by minute pantomimic strokes and touches; Balzac his, by pages of the



most minute word-painting, in which not a variation of the countenance, a fold of the gown, or a crease in the coat is omitted.

There is a whole chapter of subtle meaning in the way, for instance, in which, as Constance, the Polish actress throws herself, in the first act, on the sofa, so lightly, so girlishly, and yet so wearily. The whole character is expressed in that simple piece of stage business. Its youthfulness and its petulance, its weariness and hunger for complete rest! No healthy minded or bodied woman could thus cast herself about. It is not comfort which is sought, only a feverish desire for rest and quiet. It is a coquettish and yet, at the same time, modest action. Not even the tips of her little feet are displayed. The desire for admiration has passed away. Her magnificent toilettes are no longer worn with vanity, but listlessly, almost carelessly. When happy and in the country, in the third act, there is a change; the garments are evidently looked after, and there is much sweet womanliness manifested in the way in which she occasionally adjusts her ribbons and looks at herself as she passes by a glass. But were ever satin robes and laces, diamonds and gems, worn with such evident carelessness—almost contempt—as those in which Modjeska appears when she comes to the gambling-saloon to break her heart and her lover's, by an exhibition of her gorgeous shame? One feels that these splendid garments were *put on* her, and that she never selected or even looked at them. They are as indifferent to her as a winding-sheet is to the dead body it enshrouds. She takes no interest in them whatever, no more than did Lucy Ashton, "The Bride of Lammermoor," in her fatal wedding-dress and bridal-wreath. Again, who will forget, who has once seen Modjeska in "Heartsease," the manner in which she suddenly stops short in the middle of her playing Chopin's "Impromptu?" There is passion and exasperation, too, in that abrupt pause in the rendering of an exquisite and dreamy melody. But apart from all this clever and, perhaps, to some, rather tricky pantomime, who can deny that it would require the pen of a George Eliot to analyse as



subtly, or as minutely, the process of the gradual growth of a strong but morbid passion as does Modjeska in the first three short acts of this melodrama her all-absorbing love for Armand? It would take many pages to describe in words the singularly varied expressions, intonations, and gestures which this extraordinary actress employs in order to create and finish, like a very miniature, her conception of Dumas's unhappy heroine. Her *finesse*, to use the French term, is absolutely marvollous. One has to watch her art as closely as one does a wonder under a microscope, for if we permit our eyes to wander from her for a minute, the chances are that we shall have missed some small but vitally important "point." Her Constance is a charming creation. We know from the very caressing manner in which she arranges flowers and smells them, that she is a lover of nature. That she is an accomplished musician is evident from the masterly touch with which she strikes upon the piano. It is certain that she is warm-hearted and kindly, less from what she says than from what she does. Her caress is endearing, and her greeting of her various friends hearty and courteous. Her passion for Armand is sincere and interesting, and the gradual advance of her insidious disease indicated with much delicacy. The death-scene has, perhaps, never been surpassed by any previous actress who has undertaken this arduous rôle. Those ghastly physical features made so prominent in scenes of this class, even by artists of the superlative rank of Ristori and Janauscheck, are subdued, and death is treated by Modjeska in its intellectual rather than its material aspect.

She has but a limited scale in "Heartsease" to play upon. The character she impersonates cannot make any genuine appeal to English feelings. It is unnatural and sickly; but Modjeska contrives to make it appear deliciously fresh and sympathetic. We forget Heartsease's vices and her amazing selfishness only to think of the sweet and pathetic girlish woman a great sorrow is killing, inch by inch, quite as rapidly as consumption. We love, pity, and admire the creation of Modjeska as heartily as we dislike that of Dumas. *Ceci tue cela!*—Constance has killed "La Dame aux Camélias." That is to say, Modjeska has applied the refining powers of her genius and converted a very clay image into a noble statue of gold. Let her but have a fairer chance for the display of her exceptional ability, and we shall then be convinced that Poland has indeed every right to feel proud of her illustrious daughter, who adorns her profession by her genius, her study, and also by the blamelessness of her reputation as a lady worthy of the admiration and friendship of the most famous men and women of her time.

Mr. Mortimer's translation of Dumas's morbid play is excellent enough for the purpose, although it is difficult to discover why a heartsease should be a more righteous flower than a camellia, or why the name Constance is less suggestive of impropriety than those of Marguerite or Camille. It seems, however, that such is the case, and that, according to the Lord Chamberlain, Shakespeare to the contrary notwithstanding, there is a difference in names. However, nothing can well be imagined more hypocritical, absurd, and maudlin than the way in which the authorities have treated this play; one, by-the-way, of the very worst in point of construction ever written. But since a whole literature has been created on this subject, no more need be said—at least, in this necessarily brief review.

The cast was good. Mr. Arthur Dacre, a young and very promising actor, made an exceedingly good Armand, and acted with manliness and spirit, and redeemed a weak and womanish rôle, by genuine virile pathos.

He loves, however, like an honest warm-hearted English boy, not like a sentimental French *écolier*. He has yet much to learn, but there is already evidence that in the near future he will take a very prominent and pleasant position upon our stage. Mr. Price made an excellent Monsieur Duval, and Miss Le Thière, always clever and painstaking, made the best of the repulsive part of Madame Prudence.—R. Davey.

"L'AVENTURIÈRE."

A Play, in Four Acts, written by M. Emile Augier.

Performed in French by English Artists, Prince of Wales's Theatre, May 11th, 1880.

Monte Prade ..	.. Mr. H. Beerbohm Tree.	Horace ..	.. Mr. George Power.
Fabrice ..	.. Mr. H. St. Maur.	Servant ..	.. Mr. Ian Robertson.
Don Annibal	.. M. Marius.	Célie ..	.. Miss Herbert.
Dario ..	.. Mr. Horace Wigan.	Clorinde ..	.. Miss Genevieve Ward.

As a *tour de force* it would be impossible to speak too highly of this performance of Emile Augier's celebrated play by an English company, at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, before an audience to which the Prince and Princess of Wales lent the *éclat* of their presence. In no other country could a piece by a foreign dramatist have been played in the original tongue with so much efficiency, or with so little tendency to excite ridicule in a critical audience. To Miss Genevieve Ward is due the initial conception of the performance so well carried out, and if, as Larochefoucault says:

L'honneur acquis est une caution de celui qu'on doit acquérir—

"Honour already won is a guarantee of future triumphs"—most of those who have seen Miss Ward's acting would expect to witness excellence in conception and acting of the highest order. Still it was, doubtless, looked on as not only a daring experiment, but almost an hallucination, to expect that any English actors could be got together with sufficient knowledge of the French language and the requisite power, if they possessed the facility of speaking, to support their accomplishments with suitable delivery and tolerable histrionic capabilities. Miss Ward, it was known, is such a good Frenchwoman that Regnier, of the Théâtre Français, would have received her willingly into his company, had she consented to play second to Madame Favart, to whom, by rights, all the parts in Miss Ward's *répertoire* would naturally fall. Nothing in her accent or intonation would lead one to suppose she had not lived all her life in France and among speakers of the purest French; but Miss Ward had to find a company of actors of such exceptional talent, that little in their mouths would foil her excellence or jar upon the cultivated ear. And this she satisfactorily accomplished. It is true that Mr. H. St. Maur (Fabrice), who thoroughly understood his lines and never hesitated in their delivery, though their effect was slightly marred by a wrong intonation, led one to believe by his accent that, if of Irish extraction, he had probably learnt his French in Austrian Italy; yet even he showed a distinction in his bearing and an earnestness of purpose that went far to make up for want of purity in accent. Mr. Beerbohm Tree, who played Monte Prade, has already made himself a name for his imitations of popular actors and foreign tongues; but he quite astonished those who heard him, by the sound ring of the lines he had to give, by his pathos and unobtrusive power, which he certainly has never yet had the opportunity to impress upon any public. He has much to avoid, especially a feebleness in waving the hands and an uncertainty in putting down his feet, which are not to be attributed to simulated old age; but his performance was worthy of all praise, and Miss Ward was fortunate in finding such a coadjutor. Mr. Beerbohm Tree also exaggerates a *grasseyement*, which is more French than the French; but this is more a fault of race than of tuition. Mr. George Power, playing quietly and inoffensively the young lover, Horace, suffered considerably from a costume which suggested the tenor of a third-rate opera company; but his accent was very satisfactory and his assistance most useful. Mr. Horace Wigan, who was amiable enough to appear, in the first scene, in the very small and uninteresting part of Dario, added effectually to the completeness of the cast. The two remaining characters in the play were sustained by Mdlle. Hébert, as Célie—why Miss Herbert?—and M. Marius, as Don Annibal, both Parisians—the former well known and appreciated in the French company at the Royalty, under Messrs. Schey and Didier's management; the latter, the popular exponent of opera bouffe at the Strand. Strange to say, a long sojourn in London had affected M. Marius's French to such an extent that it was not till he warmed to his work that the true Parisian got back his facility in speaking—the attempt to *Gasconner* being at first more British than foreign. He was detected, also, using the word "Yes" as a reply, which is certainly not admitted as French in the Dictionary of the Academy. Mdlle. Hébert looked charmingly and spoke well, though she has evidently not been in the habit of delivering Alexandrines for some time. So much for the enunciation of the language in this play. It would be absurd to say that on such an occasion criticism is out of place; on the contrary, such daring courts criticism, and the praise which none of the critics have spared is a proof how well Miss Ward and her colleagues can afford to stand the test and accept the exceptions which prove the rule.

Emile Augier's play, in four acts, "L'Aventurière," or "The Adventuress," has held the stage of the Théâtre Français as a stock-piece and test-drama ever since 1843. Arnould Plessy and Madeleine Brohan have both appeared in it with success, the former having created the rôle of Clorinde with a force and charm none have since effaced. Within a few weeks Mdlles. Sarah Bernhardt and Croizette have both appeared on the boards as Clorinde. The great Sarah did not come up to the expectation of her worshippers, and quarrelled with critics and manager because they failed to appreciate her interpretation. Where this clever actress has had so many incontestable successes, surely this was not sufficient reason to throw contract to the winds and take "French leave" of the house she once so ardently desired to enter. Mdlle. Croizette, who never has had and never could have half the talent of Sarah, has, by her feline grace and broad treatment, secured a distinct triumph in this her last assumption. Clorinde is the type of the educated Bohemian, whose finer instincts lead her to long for some haven of rest from vice and dissipation, and determines by all the charms in her power to ensure the eagerly desired home, where she may be surrounded by respectful admiration and virtuous tranquillity. Don Fabrice, the heir to a noble name, after a protracted absence of many years, returns to his father's house to find the old man caught in the toils of the adventuress Clorinde, who, at the opening of the play, is satisfied that her designs on Monte Prade will be shortly crowned with success. Fabrice, who returns as a prodigal, is still devoted to his father and the honour of an unsullied lineage. Clorinde is not alone, or her good angel might take pity on her, and, bringing into prominence her repentance and sincerity, might achieve by years of devotion the prize she is forced to give up. Her brother, one Don Annibal, a braggart of the Matamore type, has no sentiment or compunction. He lives on his wretched sister, and exacts by threats what he has not wit enough to obtain by his own exertions. He is simply a bully and a drunkard, and by his vice they both fall. Fabrice, determined that the pair shall unveil their own deceit, meets them with their own weapons. In a drinking bout with Annibal he unloosens the tongue of the bragging sot, and learns that Clorinde is an actress living with her brother on their own wits and the follies of others. And this is the woman who, not content with entangling the affections of his father, has the temerity to take in vain the name of mother and assert her authority in the house of his ancestors, *preux chevaliers* all! Lured on by a letter purporting to come from a prince of immense fortune, she turns her eyes on the son, Fabrice, and is discovered accepting his love by the father Monte Prade. Fabrice unmasks the siren; and after the discomfiture of the bullying swashbuckler, who challenges, but is cowed at finding the *botte secrète* he had learnt as the *coup de Matapan* so well known to his adversary that Fabrice himself was the man who killed the famous duellist. Clorinde, tortured by the discovery that she feels a true passion for the man who has conquered her, retires from the arena to bring father and son together and join the young lovers she was nearly the cause of separating for ever.

Miss Ward brings all the warmth of her intellectual fire and the powers of her matured art into play in her performance. She irresistibly reminds one of Madame Favart, though with less of the feminine fascinations of that gifted artist. Miss Ward is always at her best in her expression of vindictive energy, or in the more agreeable combats of wit with which the piece abounds. *Eheu! fugaces anni!* But what an incomparable representative of tragic heroines—Lady Macbeth, Volumnia, Queen Mother (in "Hamlet"), Queen Katharine, *et tant d'autres*, could Henry Irving secure, if he would, in Genevieve Ward. There is one point where swords must be crossed anent Miss Ward's appearance. She does not make the most of her natural gifts. The costume she appears in—why wear a dress, date 1640, when the time of action, according to the printed programme, is the sixteenth century?—is, neither in cut nor colour, at all advantageous to the actress; and where so much stress is laid on the seductions of the adventuress, surely no effort should be forgotten to impress the spectator with their existence. Miss Ward can afford to laugh at us, for she then shows as perfect a set of teeth as woman was ever gifted with; but she is not always smiling, and both cut and colour must be changed if she wishes to appear at her best.

In the capital part of Don Annibal, Monsieur Marius showed himself capable of higher comedy than he has yet attempted in London. He could not expect to eclipse Regnier or Coquelin, nor was he expected to do so. But it would be difficult, I fancy, in Paris to find so young an actor so qualified to represent this really difficult part. The nervousness and novelty of position, apparent at first, gradually subsided and made room for a very clever and picturesque rendering of the blustering *ribaud*. The drunken scene was carefully, if not strikingly, thought out and delivered; the clever lines put into the drunkard's mouth, realistic to a degree in their inanity and inconsequence, being well accompanied by the actor. But it was in the last act where, after bullying his sister, the ruffian trembles for his life at the hands of the man he has insulted, that Monsieur Marius showed the good stuff he is made of. Nothing could have been better than the change from brutal insolence to protesting cowardice; and when this actor has as completely mastered our language as Miss Ward has his, any comedy company in London will be proud to receive him as one of the lights of our stage.

Mdlle. Hébert aided considerably in the performance; her scene of indignation against the wiles of the designing Clorinde bringing very justly a round of applause. A word of praise is due to the management for the oak chambers in which the action of the drama takes place. It has seldom been our lot to see a similar interior so well painted.

Somme toute, those who came to scoff remained to praise, and Miss Ward has every reason to be proud of the accomplishment of an undertaking which it would be next to impossible to rival as a work of imitative art.

I have given my honest opinion, and, as Boileau says somewhere:

> Tel vous semble applaudir qui vous raille et vous joue ;
> Aimez qu'on vous conseille, et non pas qu'on vous loue.

Alfred Thompson.

"IOLANTHE."

An Idyll, in One Act, adapted and rewritten by W. G. Wills from Henrik Herz's Poem, "King René's Daughter."

First performed on the occasion of Miss Ellen Terry's *Benefit, at the Lyceum Theatre, Thursday, May 20th*, 1880.

Count Tristan ...	... Mr. Henry Irving.	Ebn Jahia ...	... Mr. T. Mead.
King René ...	... Mr. J. H. Barnes.	Bertrand	... Mr. J. Carter.
Sir Geoffrey ...	... Mr. F. Cooper.	Martha	... Miss Pauncefort.
Sir Almeric ...	... Mr. N. Forbes.	Iolanthe	... Miss Ellen Terry.

A poem like "King René's Daughter" demands a very rare kind of power to render its representation upon the stage altogether enjoyable. By no art or skill on the part of the dramatist can such a delicate and fragile theme be made to satisfy the robust requirements of drama. Its essential charm is of a sort that must inevitably be imperilled by contact with the vivid illusion of the theatre, for the nearer we are brought to the character which the poet has so gracefully conceived, and to the romantic circumstances he has imagined for its display, the greater becomes the danger of losing altogether our hold upon its beauty. It is entirely credible to us only so long as we do not seek to imprison its shadowy forms with the rough touch of reality; and the single situation that gives its point to the poem is of such a purely fanciful growth as to seem almost a caprice when it is tested by a direct reference to nature. With material that is truly dramatic the processes of stage realisation yield two very opposite results. The legend becomes sensibly enriched by the presence and resource of the living actor, and it is not until he unites his efforts to those of the author that we feel we can appreciate the possibilities of the subject. Mr. Wills, in fitting "Iolanthe" for representation at the Lyceum Theatre, has well understood the inevitable limitations of his task. He has not attempted to make a play; but he has taken care not to spoil a poem. Content to keep in subordination the special claims of his own craft, he has lent his aid in perfecting a lovely picture, and in strengthening the lines of an ideal portrait. Mr. Wills's labours, however, would have been all in vain if he had not been able to count upon the co-operation of an actress gifted by nature with the qualities essential for the success of such a doubtful experiment. Iolanthe makes no great demand upon Miss Terry's resources; and yet in a certain sense it bears the highest witness to her artistic gifts. It serves to exhibit at their best the distinguishing features of her style; and although she achieves easily all that is required of her, the result has a completeness and perfection according to its aim, such as few other actresses could hope to secure. No performer of our time possesses in anything like the same degree the power of casting off the special accent of modern life, and of passing without effort into the region of ideal fancy. In force of human passion, in the art of seizing and recording the subtle emotions and varied experience of a complex social existence, Miss Terry may often be found to exhibit a defect of sympathy and of resource; but in the ability to embody a conception of primitive grace, and to express the simpler moods of feeling, either joyous or pathetic, that are its fitting accompaniments, she is to our thinking altogether without a rival upon the stage. Herein lies the secret of her entire success in the performance of Iolanthe. Under the charm of her exquisite art the poem is translated into a picture; and the picture in its turn becomes a living presence; and yet in these successive changes, the romantic and legendary character of the poet's invention is never disturbed or broken. In common with the English author, she has sacrificed every other consideration to the paramount duty of keeping unspoiled the ideal beauty of the original invention. Her personality lends itself readily to the task; and by a constant grace of movement, and a tender romance brought to the utterance of each successive phase of feeling, we are beguiled into absolute belief in the possibility of the story. It was the presence of these qualities that gave to Miss Terry's Ophelia its unapproachable grace; and they are employed again with equal success in the portrait of Iolanthe.—J. Comyns Carr.

Our Musical-Box.

GOUNOD is at work on a new opera, "Otello." The opera will be produced in Paris in the autumn, Adelina Patti taking the part of Desdemona.

Sarasate is making a triumphal progress through Spain, which seems likely to prevent him from fulfilling his engagements in this country. He gave two concerts in Saragossa and five in Barcelona, and in each town was serenaded by military bands. In Barcelona a gigantic torchlight procession was arranged in his honour, in which 2000 people took part. He also gave two concerts in Valencia, and was to go on to Seville and Lisbon.

In Milan the Società Orchestrale della Scala is giving a series of orchestral and vocal concerts in the theatre, at the second of which two new works by Verdi were produced. The first was a "Pater Noster," for five voices, and the second, an "Ave Maria" for soprano solo (sung by Signora Teresina Singer), with accompaniment of strings. Both works met with such an enthusiastic reception that they had to be repeated. The programme also contained the following numbers: March from Bazzini's Cantata of "Sennacherib," "Panis angelicus," Motet by Palestrina, "Dies

Iræ," and Offertory from Cherubini's C minor Requiem, a Gloria by Lotti, and the "Inflammatus" from Rossini's Stabat Mater, sung by Signora Brambilla-Ponchielli.

In Milan a committee has been formed for the purpose of erecting a statue (in marble) of Verdi, to be placed in the Scala Theatre.

"Francesca da Rimini," a new opera by Ambroise Thomas, will shortly be put in rehearsal with a view to its production at the Grand Opera in Paris next winter.

Madame Viardot-Garcia is bringing out a series of vocal exercises for the female voice in the "Ménestrel." They are entitled "Une heure d'Etude," and are specially written for the use of her pupils at the Conservatoire.

A third edition of Wasiclewski's Life of Robert Schumann has lately appeared. This latest edition contains a good deal that is new both as regards biographical and artistic matters.

Max Bruch has written a new Violin Concerto for Senor Sarasate. It consists of four movements founded on Scotch national melodies, and is entitled "A Scotch Fantasia." It was to have been played by Sarasate on the 19th of May, at the Philharmonic Concert, but, unfortunately for London, the gifted Spaniard has decided to remain in his native country during the present season.

It is said that in the United States of America no less than four hundred and seventy-nine dramatic and musical papers are in circulation.

Mention must be made of Mr. Oscar Beringer's clever playing at his third annual concert, on the 21st of April. Of special interest was the performance of Liszt's Sonata, dedicated to Robert Schumann, now heard for the first time in England. Rubinstein's quintet in F major, for pianoforte and wind instruments, was finely played by the concert-giver and Messrs. Svendsen, Lazarus, Wendtland, and Wootton. In Raff's Chaconne for two pianos, Mr. Beringer was joined by a promising young pupil, Miss Randegger. These interesting concerts always make one regret that the public has not more opportunities of appreciating Mr. Beringer's talents as a pianist.

The Bach Choir gave their second and last concert on the 21st of April. the great attraction being the first public performance in England of Cherubini's "Messe Solennelle" in D minor. This important work, which is said to be the longest mass ever written, is in Cherubini's most masterly style, and is full of interesting numbers. It was finely performed by the chorus, as indeed was the whole programme, which included a Sanctus in D major by Bach, with most clever additional accompaniments by Mr. E. Prout; Beethoven's "Meeresstille und Glückliche Fahrt;" and Mendelssohn's "Walpurgis Night."

Our music festival in London has commenced. The first Richter concert took place on Monday, the 10th of May, when a large and enthusiastic audience welcomed the Viennese conductor, Herr Hans Richter, whose powers as a director are of the highest order. The concert opened with a magnificent rendering of the overture to Wagner's "Meistersinger," which was received with never-ending applause. A more splendid performance of Beethoven's Symphony in C (No. 1) has doubtless never been heard in England. The subtle gradation of tone, the clear rhythmical phrasing seemed to throw new light on a well-known work. The grace and delicacy of the *Andante cantabile con moto* so often suffers from being taken too fast: on this occasion it was simply perfect, and the same may be said of the rendering of the exquisite fairy-like trio of the Minuet; the *pianissimo* of the strings in the rapid quaver passages could not have been surpassed. Space will not permit of more than a mere mention of the rest of the programme, which included the magnificent scena from "Euryanthe," splendidly sung by Herr Henschel, who also contributed two songs by Brahms, from Tieck's "Magelone." Perhaps really the most important event of the evening was the performance of a highly-clever and original work by an *English* composer, Mr. C. Hubert Parry, whose Pianoforte Concerto in F sharp major was now (as on a former occasion at the Crystal Palace) finely played by Mr. Dannreuther. The concert was brought to a close by an admirable performance of Schumann's Symphony in D minor.

All the Beethoven Symphonies are to be given successively, one at each concert; in fact, the programmes of all the nine concerts are of unusual interest.

Among the numerous concerts, Miss Jessie Morison's pianoforte recital deserves a word of mention. This young lady, who is a pupil of that clever but, alas! too-seldom-heard pianist, Mr. Frits Hartvigson, played with great intelligence and musical feeling. Her programme, which was decidedly ambitious, included Bach's organ fugue in G minor, transcribed by Liszt; Weber's Polacca in E; sonata by Liszt; Schumann's Carnaval, and smaller pieces by Raff, Grieg, Chopin, and Liszt, the whole performed without notes and with a command of the instrument, especially in the Liszt Sonata, which promises well for Miss Morison's future career.

A deeply-interesting event took place on the 2nd of May in Bonn, on the Rhine. A monument in memory of Robert Schumann was unveiled in the cemetery, on the spot where a simple ivy-covered stone formerly marked his resting-place. There were present, besides the civil and military authorities of the place, Clara Schumann and her family, Brahms, Joachim, Bargiel, Dr. Hiller, Stockhausen, and many others. The ceremony began with a performance of the chorale "Was Gott thut, das ist Wohlgethan," conducted by Brahms and accompanied by brass instruments. Then followed an oration spoken by Dr. Schaaffhausen, at the conclusion of which the noble piece of sculpture, executed in gray and white marble by Professor Donndorf, was unveiled. Whilst the numerous friends were placing wreaths and flowers on the monument the brass band played an excerpt from "Paradise and the Peri," arranged for the occasion by Brahms. In the evening a grand concert took place, at which Brahms's Violin Concerto was played by Joachim; and the E flat Symphony, Mignon Requiem, and the Manfred music, all by Schumann, were also performed. The following morning a chamber concert concluded the festivities, when the programme included the following works by Schumann: the A minor String Quartet, "Spanisches Liederspiel," and the Piano Quartet in E flat.

Miss Dora Schirmacher has been gaining fresh laurels at a chamber concert in Liverpool, where her interpretation of Beethoven's "Waldstein Sonata" is spoken of as being "grand in the extreme, for not only was her execution faultless, but her original and sympathetic reading revealed at once the true artist."

Two English operettas, "The Stepmother" and "Lover's Knots," were performed at St. George's Hall on the afternoon of the 5th May. The music of the former, which is by Mr. Walter Austin, is of a light tuneful character, but unfortunately the libretto, written by A. Sketchley, is dull and uninteresting. "Lover's Knots," by Bridgman, set by Mr. Wilfred Bendall, is full of charming original music, and is most cleverly written throughout. Both works were well received by a large audience.

Messrs. Ludwig and Daubert's Chamber Concerts are certainly among the pleasantest musical evenings of the season. The programmes are invariably chosen with that taste and discretion which, alas ! are so often conspicuous by their absence. Two quartets—always one of the later ones by Beethoven—form the substance of the evening's entertainment. The second concert of the present series took place on the 15th May. The programme contained a quartet in F minor, Op. 95, by Beethoven, executed by Messrs. Ludwig, Gibson, Zerbini, and Daubert; Chopin's Sonata in G minor, for pianoforte and violoncello, was finely played by Mr. Richard Rickard (a clever young pianist, now heard for the first time in London) and Mr. Daubert, and Beethoven's quartet in F major, Op. 133, was performed in first-rate style by the above-mentioned gentlemen. The vocalist was Miss Fides Keller, whose rich contralto voice was heard to great advantage in songs by Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Hiller.

It is an undoubted fact that to the zealous promoter of the Bayreuth Funds we owe some of the most perfect editions of the old masters. By his edition of Beethoven's Sonatas for the Piano, Dr. von Bülow has done more good to the piano-playing public than can well be calculated. His latest work has been to save from oblivion the ballet music in Gluck's operas. Messrs. Aibl & Co., of Münich, have published the new edition of these old-fashioned dances, in four books—" Orpheus," "Iphigenia in Aulis," " Alceste," and "Armide." To take " Alceste," for example, it contains 1, The Solemn March of Priests; 2, Pantomime (the Sacrifice) ; 3, Divertissement containing four different dance numbers; 4, Gigue; 5, Festival March; 6, Sarabande; and 7, Gavotte; all transcribed for the piano in the most masterly style. Without departing from the grand simplicity and purity which distinguishes Gluck's harmonies, the editor has so happily treated these dances that he makes them thoroughly effective for the piano and interesting to all lovers of Gluck's music.—S. C.

Our Omnibus-Box.

I HAVE received the following letter from Mr. Sydney Grundy, who has a perfect right of reply to the remarks made last month : " Sir,—In the current number, you accuse me of having 'communicated to an English newspaper the erroneous inference,' and of having 'circulated the gratuitous misrepresentation' that two scarcely consistent notices which have appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* concerning a very little play of mine were written by the same pen, and that upon the second occasion the critic was influenced by dishonourable motives. I shall be glad if you will allow me to state that this is a mistake. What I 'communicated to an English newspaper' was simply the two notices, placed side by side, without comment. It was perfectly well known to me that they did not come from the same source, and I never intended anybody to suppose that they did; but, when a newspaper condemns my handiwork, surely I am entitled to point out that the same newspaper has upon another occasion commended the same handiwork. *The Daily Telegraph* is *The Daily Telegraph*; with the details of its internal organisation the public has no concern. Nothing was farther from my intention than to insinuate a charge of dishonesty against either of its critics. For the mis-statement of *The Spirit of the Times* I cannot hold myself responsible; I am not answerable for the erroneous deductions of illogical or prejudiced minds. I should have been glad to have expressed in more handsome terms my perfect confidence in the honour of the critic who has condemned me, if the tone of his observations in The Theatre did not preclude me from giving myself that pleasure.—I am, Sir, yours, etc., Sydney Grundy. West Dulwich, 1st May, 1880."

A special performance of a new comedy, entitled "Professional Beauties," written by Mr. Vincent Ambrose, will take place at the Imperial Theatre on the evening of Tuesday, June 1st.

Mr. Arthur Matthison has been starring it, and singing Shakespearian songs at the Festival performances at Stratford-on-Avon. A better engagement could not have been made; and, after the fatigues of the day, this gifted singer has been able to warble "Twickenham Ferry" in Warwickshire drawing-rooms, which was a rare treat for the Stratford-on-Avonites, who like good music well sung and admirably emphasised.

Said a cynical lady to me one day up in the corner at a fashionable "At home," "To tell you the truth, I cannot bear to listen to gentlemen who in morning dress recite on the hearth-rug; it may be my bad taste, but they invariably make me laugh." And yet, I observed, they soon take to the stage. There is Mr. Clifford Harrison, who harrows London drawing-rooms with the story of a fireman rescuing a family from destruction, I find has been playing Romeo at Sadler's Wells; and Mr. Beerbohm Tree, who is such an excellent mimic, is appearing as the Prince Maleotti in "Forget-Me-Not," at the Prince of Wales's Theatre.

Miss Marion Beard, whose harp recital was noticed in The Theatre last month, achieved a great success. Her touch on this difficult instrument was perfect, light, graceful, and expressive. She certainly has but one rival in London, Madame Sacconi. Miss Beard is the descendant of the eminent musician of the same name, and now that the harp as well as the violin are becoming fashionable instruments for ladies to learn, she will doubtless soon have more pupils than enough.

M. Albert Delpit, of the *Figaro*, has written in the *Liberté* an enthusiastic account of the performance of Miss Genevieve Ward as the heroine in Emile Augier's "L'Aventurière," quoting at the same time from the dramatic criticisms of *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* in justification of his high opinions of Miss Ward's talent. He declares that "she has no accent," which means that her French is absolutely pure, and he heartily regrets that this clever lady does not go to Paris to play Shakespeare, and thus to relieve the Parisian stage from the absurdities of Hennequin.

Having only just returned to England from Ober-Ammergau, I will postpone the remarks I intended to make on the Passion Play until the July number, when this interesting question can be treated exhaustively. Meanwhile I would advise no one to attempt to visit the Bavarian village until the Burgomaster, Mr. J. Lang, senior, has undertaken to provide the applicant with accommodation in the village, and seats at the theatre. These seats cannot be booked beforehand, as the Burgomaster has distinctly promised the indignant peasants who stormed his house on the morning of the first representation, that he would allow no more securing of seats beforehand by strangers, and would discountenance as far as he possibly could the tempting offers of agents.

In fact the simple peasant of Ober-Ammergau is not such a fool as he looks. If he is permitted to fight his way to the ticket-office the evening before each representation, he knows perfectly well that he can sell the prizes he has secured, at a premium, to the strangers who are unaccommodated, and who have crowded into the village. This formation of a ticket-ring, so well known in Paris, is perfectly appreciated by the Ober-Ammergau native, who desires his share of the plunder that has fallen to the lot of himself and his companions.

It has been roughly calculated that at least £10,000 clear profit will be made by someone before the Passion Play performances are over, and that nearly £30,000 of money will pour into Ober-Ammergau before the end of the season as payment for play, lodgings, and carriages. The profits are divided according to a fixed scale by the actors and the villagers who are natives of Ober-Ammergau, after the expenses for theatre and dresses are paid, and they cannot possibly amount to more than £4000 at the outside. So that on the whole the virtuous peasant will do pretty well out of the passion for acting, and for the future may look on wood-carving as a pastime, undertaking to perform to the innocent stranger winter or summer whenever an audience can be found to fill the theatre.

Ober-Ammergau holds about 1500 people, and all I can say is, that I pity those who are billeted on the inhabitants when 8000 souls have poured into the village. That was my miserable lot, and it is an experience that I should not care to repeat. Much may be endured for the sake of so curious and interesting a study, but comfort must be abandoned from leaving Munich until the art-loving city is found again. The Bavarian village is in a confined and enervating valley through which no breath of air passes; the atmosphere is thick, heavy, and headachy; the cooking is naturally of the most primitive kind. Thick beer is the only liquor procurable, and existence depends on the terms that life can be supported on unwholesome air and bad food. Nothing can exceed the civility of the villagers, but they have not prepared for such a rush, and have positively no means of meeting it.

This was the experience of a friend of mine. He had secured at one of the cottages an inner room and was sleeping innocently one morning when the daughter of his host, an angel with fair hair in the "Passion Play," came in to make a wondrous announcement in German, laughing all the time most heartily. The more the maiden chattered, her German the denser (apparently) became my friend. I believe he understood every word. However, "I don't understand" was all the reply he made to the Bavarian angel. Whereupon the bedroom door was slyly opened about an inch, and a silvery voice made the following announcement in English: "If you don't understand, sir, I must explain. We are three English ladies in here, and we are dressing. You must not come out of your room until we are ready, that is all!" Whereupon my informant remarked with the greatest courtesy: "Quite so, my dear young lady, but I have an important engagement and want to come out. How long am I to remain here, and how am I to know when I am to be released?" "We will knock," was the answer, and there he was kept until the mysteries were completed. That night when he went to bed the outer room was apparently deserted, but he heard an obvious giggling behind the bedroom door. Such are the ways of Ober-Ammergau.

M. Sarcey last summer expressed his astonishment at the knowledge of French displayed by the audiences which witnessed the performances of the Comédie Française. It is to be feared that in regard to the Dutch plays we shall not come off with such flying colours. How these plays are to be criticised is in itself a knotty problem. With one exception, no dramatic critic in London, I believe, is acquainted with the language.

At the instance of Mr. Reece, a benefit is being organised for Mr. Maddison Morton, now seventy years of age. Mrs. Keeley will play Betsey Baker on the occasion.

It is not unlikely that the Sarah Bernhardt question will be disposed of by the resignation of M. Perrin, on which the actress would return to the Comédie Française.

Kossak, "the Jules Janin of Berlin," one of the best of German musical critics, has just died in straitened circumstances. "If so famous a critic," writes Herr Max Ring, in the *Montagsblatt*, "had lived in England, he would have attained wealth, or at least competency. If he had lived in France he would certainly have become a member of the Academy or a Senator. But in Germany, though her greatest *feuilletoniste*, he died poor and neglected, saved from utter need solely by the benefactions of the Schiller-Stiftung and the help of friends."

The literature of the stage has been enriched by a collection of the letters of the Molière of Italy. The "Lettere di Carlo Goldoni," just published at Bologna, is valuable not only as a contribution to the history of the theatre, but as placing in a clearer light the character of the dramatist who, undeterred by the artificialities of his time, invariably adhered to natural truth. "The chief gift I have received from God," he writes, "is an evenness of temper which nothing can disturb. Woe to me if I were of a different temperament! Have I not had to do with actors?"

"The 'Penzance' is mightier than mere words," said Mr. Gilbert to Mr. Sullivan, after reading an unfavourable criticism in an American paper on their latest production.

A near relative of Mdlle. Rachel writes as follows, *à propos* of Mr. R. Davey's interesting account of the death of the famous French *tragédienne*: "Having read your article in The Theatre on the death of Rachel, I wish to correct an error you have made as to her 'maid named Rose.' As a very near relation of Mdlle. Rachel's, I am in a position to state the true facts of the case. Rose has ever since the death of Mdlle. Rachel lived with Mdlle. Dinah Félix, her youngest sister, in the capacity of companion and friend. When I last saw her in Paris she was in perfect health. She is about seventy-seven years of age."

M. Victor Hugo is not wanting in gallantry. He usually kisses ladies at meeting and parting. He complains, however, that they are forgetful creatures. They say "Good-bye," and then come back with, "Oh, monsieur, I forgot to tell you——"

An "Oxonian" writes as follows: "Will you allow me, as an old Oxford man, to correct a statement made by Mr. Reece in his article on 'Oxford Theatricals,' in your May number? He gives therein an account of a performance by himself and his friends, at Balliol, more than twenty years ago—very interesting no doubt—but why does he make the extremely reckless assertion, that these theatricals were 'the last ever known' at Oxford? I beg to assure him that this is very far from being the case. Only a few years later on—I speak from personal knowledge of the period from 1863–67—theatricals were much in vogue in the University; were, indeed, of quite common occurrence in several of the colleges. Notably there was an excellent series at St. John's, which included performances of 'The Rivals,' and 'She Stoops to Conquer,' as well as some clever original pieces by a member of the college. But more than that; in '66 there was started a University Amateur Dramatic Club, under the title of 'The Shooting Stars,' a name possibly suggested by the November meteors, whose appearance caused so much interest at that time. I remember an admirable performance of Offenbach's opera, 'La Belle Hélène'—the English version made by a member of the Club—being given by the 'S.S.' in a public hall in the town. The music was exceedingly well rendered; and one song in particular—The Judgment of Paris—'Goddesses those to Ida went,' will probably be remembered by many as highly popular in the University. The company was especially strong in musical talent. Their representations were not confined to Oxford, but extended to various other provincial towns; and in the summer of '68 they appeared in London, and gave two performances of musical pieces at the Gallery of Illustration. The club, however, was not established on so firm a basis as the Cambridge A.D.C., for it never possessed a local habitation. There was no club-house to keep the members together. In course of time they dropped off; and like the meteors from which they took their name, the 'Shooting Stars' shot far away into space. But as proofs of their existence, there still remains a quantity of playbills and newspaper-cuttings quite ample enough to confute Mr. Reece's strange idea, that since the halcyon time when he played the heroine in the farce of 'Crinoline,' the Dramatic Muse has never raised her head in Oxford."

The present number of The Theatre closes the first half-yearly volume. The publisher will supply bound copies of Vol. I. of The Theatre, or cases for binding loose numbers, on application being made to him at 26, Wellington Street. This handsome book contains various interesting photographs and pictures of dramatic celebrities, and the complete history of six months of the dramatic year of 1880.

DESDEMONA.

Draw back the velvet curtains; let the light
Pour radiance in; fear not that she will say
The sunbeams dazzle her. Eternal night
Hath closed for her the portals of the day.
Look you, how fair she is! As fair as when
She smiled on Cassio, and she did no wrong,
A woman sure may smile on many men.
'Twas but a little discord in the song,
A little jarring of the notes, a string
Snapt as the minstrel was about to sing,
But jealous love cast down the faulty lute,
And craving music, made all music mute,
Save "willow, willow," dying in the air,
The last faint utterance of a soul's despair.

Rose Trevor.

ERRATA.

Page 295, "VOYAGE EN SUISSE," *read*, Sir George Golightly ... Mr. Edward Righton.
Finsbury Parker ... Mr. F. Charles.
Bottleby ... ... Mr. Shine.
,, 301, "THEMIS," *read*, Aunt Prunella, Miss Fanny Coleman.
‘, 305, "THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE," *read*, The Pirate 'Prentice, Mr. George Power.

INDEX.

PAGE
Amateur Theatricals - - 103
America, Amusements in 98, 161, 290
"Andalouse," Song - - 15
Anderson, Miss Mary - 126, 313
Anderson, Mr. D. 111, 127, 343
Attitude of Audiences - 81

Bancroft, Mr. - 29, 30, 64, 191
  The Pit Question 129, 175, 190
Bancroft, Mrs. 30, 36, 177, 358
Beard, Miss Marion - - 372
Becker, Mr. B., Articles by 31, 44, 80, 97, 305, 356
Beefsteaks, Society of - 170
Beere, Mrs. Bernard - - 64
Belford's Benefit - - 35
Bendall, Mr. E., Articles by 2, 38, 115, 139, 180, 185, 244, 245, 301, 302
Berlin, Theatrical Notes from 17, 47, 86, 94, 158, 215, 286
Bernhardt, Mdlle. S. - 128, 191, 192, 316, 373
Bernhardt, Mdlle. Jeanne 191
Blackwood, Criticism in - 62
"Black-eyed Susan" - 250
Books, Reviews of 55, 58, 60, 61, 102, 103
Booth, as Richard III. - 99
Booth, Wilkes, and President Lincoln - - - 190
Boucicault, Mr. - - - 191
Bourset, Amy, Article by - 60
Bruce's Crisis, The - - 84
Buckstone, Mr., Management of the Haymarket 74
  Pigeon Hole Story - - 189
Burnand, Mr. F. C., Articles by - - - 8, 170, 175
  The Cambridge A. D. C. 56, 221
Byron, Mr. H. J., Articles by - - - 20, 135, 142
  On the Critics - - 20, 142

Cambridge A. D. C. - 56, 219
Cambridge revisited - - 219
Carl Rosa Opera Compy. 118, 186
Carr, Comyns, Article by - 367
Carmichael, S., Article by - 52
"Castaways, The" - 126, 191
Cavendish, Miss Ada - - 163
Cecil, Mr. Arthur - 29, 36, 53, 69, 117, 177
Clowning - - - - 105
Coape, Mr. H. C. - 189, 250
Comparison in a Character 211
Contralto Voices - - - 128
Conway, Mr. - - 31, 178
Cook, Mr. Dutton, Articles by - - - - 142, 340
"Countess Lea" - - 160
Crichton at Mantua - - 335
Criticism in *Blackwood* - 62
Criticisms on New Plays 20, 142, 253

"Dame aux Camélias," First Night of the - - 208
Damon, Articles by - 118, 186
"Daniel Rochat" - 154, 191
"Daughter of Mrs. Fabricius" - - - - 286
Davey, R., Articles by 273, 359
Dearth of Dramatists: Is it a Fact? - - - - 1
"Demi-monde" - - - 226
Diamonds, Artificial - - 257
Dickens, Mr. Charles, dramatic version of "Edwin Drood" - - - - 189
"Don Juan" - - - 96
"Donna Juanita" - - 287

PAGE
Dramatic Incidents. The Bruce's Crisis - - - 84
Dramatic Institute, A, by Professor Morley - - 76
Dramatic Licence in the Treatment of History - 199
Dramatic List, A - - 60
Dramatic Year, The - - 125
Drawing-room Plays - 55, 103
Drury Lane Theatre in 1776 270
Dunn, Mr., Anecdote by - 251
Dutch Plays - - - 372

"Etrangleurs de Paris" - 281

"Falcon, The" - - - 63
Farren, Elizabeth - - 319
Farren, Mr. W. - 104, 110, 239
Fenn, G. M., Article by - 202
"Fille de Roland" - - 284
"Fils de Coralie" - 192, 214
First Night in 1602 - - 151
First-Night Criticisms 20, 142, 253
First Night of "La Dame aux Camélias" - - 208
Fisher, Mr. David - 38, 199
Fishers, Family of the - 193
Fisk, Mr. Stephen - - 314
"Forget-Me-Not," Strange fortune of - - - - 254
Forman's plan of Wagner's Operas - - - - 313
"French Flats" - - 99
French Audiences choosing Artists - - - - 313
French Plays at the Gaiety 191

Gaiety Revivals - - - 347
Gay City, The 44, 90, 212, 281
Germany, Shylock in - 17, 86
Goldoni, Letters of - - 373
Gordon, Mr. W., Article by 69
Growls from a Playwright 20
Grundy, Mr. Sydney 34, 314, 370

Hackett, Mr., Death of - 8
Hanlon-Lees, The - 254, 296
Harcourt, Mr., recitals - 64
HARE, MR. Portrait as Colonel Daunt - 129; 170, 243
Hawkins, F., Article by - 335
Haymarket Theatre: Engravings of in 1821, 144, 160; Early Bills, 75, 252, 253; Brazen Faces, 253; Gas first used, 127; Old Pit Charges, 253; Recollections of the, 65; The "Court," 69; Macready Letter, 75; Story of Mr. Buckstone, 189
  Bancroft Management: The Pit Question, 129, 131, 175, 176, 190
  "School" - 250, 316, 356
Hervey, Charles, Article by 208
Hilliers, F., at Vienna - 160
Hive of Pantomime - - 11
Holland, The Stage in 224, 372.
Hollingshead, Mr. J., Articles by - - - - 131, 295
Howe, Mr. Henry H., Recollections of the Haymarket - - 71, 103, 127
Hugo, M. Victor - - 127, 373

ILLUSTRATIONS:
  Mr. Irving - - - 6
  Miss Ellen Terry - - 49
  Mr. Kendal - - - 80
  Mrs. Kendal - - - 97
  Mr. John Hare - - 129
  Miss Genevieve Ward - 193

ILLUSTRATIONS: PAGE
  Rosalind and Orlando - 223
  Miss Marie Litton - 255
  Mr. Toole - - - 317
  Haymarket in 1821 - 144
  ,, interior, 1821 - 160
  "As You Like It" - 224
  Theatre at Ober-Ammergau - - - 257
  Drury Lane Theatre, 1776 - - - - 270
  Black and White 228, 231, 233, 235, 237, 297, 299, 307, 357, 360, 361
  At Last - - - 318
  Pirates of Penzance 303, 307
IRVING, MR. HENRY. Portrait as Shylock - - 16
  Article by - - - 1
  An old Playgoer's impressions - - - 150
  As Digby Grant - - 35
  Mr. Ruskin's Letter - 169
  One Hundred Nights of "The Merchant of Venice" - - - 188
  Recitation by - - - 315

James, Mr. David 104, 172, 300
"Jean de Nivelle" - - 214
Jones, Mr. (The Count Johannes), Death of - 99
Journalism and Criticism 20, 142
"Juanita" - - - - 218

KENDAL, MR. Portrait as the Count Federigo 80; 41, 243
KENDAL, MRS. Portrait as the Lady Giovanna 97; 40, 243
"King René's Daughter" 315
Kingston, Beatty, Articles by - - - - 17, 86
Knight, Mr. Joseph, Articles by - - 24, 181
Kossak, Death of - - 373
Kulak, Anecdote of - - 75,

Lacy, Mr. Walter, Article by 65
La Roche, Charles - - 159
Lee, Miss Jennie - - 114
Lewry, Richard - - - 289
Lincoln, President, Assassination of - - - 190
LITTON, MISS MARIE. Portrait as Rosalind 255, 238, 316
Love of a "Star," The - 326
Lowden's Love Case, A Story 202

Mackaye, Mr. James Steele 161
Macready, Mr., Letters - 75
  Farewell representations 252
Manuel, E., Articles by 215, 286
Mapleson Troupe - - 100
"Marie Antoinette" - - 48
"Marriage of To-Day" - 160
"Married Life" - - - 266
Marshall, Mr. Frank. Articles by - - 117, 131
Mathews, Mr. Charles - 104
Matthison, Mr. A. - - 371
Max Nordau's Wanderings 96
Mayer, Mr. M. L. - 191, 192
"Merchant of Venice" at the Lyceum - 49, 62, 188
Merivale, Mr. Herman 109, 228
Metronome, A Pocket - 51
Middle Temple Hall, Theatricals in - - - 154
Middlemass, Jean, Article by 326
Midshipmite, The - 38, 267
Modern Theatre - - - 149
Modjeska, Madame - 254, 315
Morley, Professor, Article by 76

PAGE
Morton, Mr. Maddison - 373
Morris, Miss Clara - - 163
"Mousquetaires" - - 281
Music: Concerts, Operas, etc. - 50, 122, 245, 310, 367

Najac, M. Comte - - 128
Neilsson, Miss, as Juliet, Story of - - - - 126
Neville, Mr. H., Articles by 6, 184
Nicol's, Mrs. P. - - - 315
Nilsson, Mdme. - - - 128
"Ninon" - - 51, 55, 181
"Noces d'Attila" - - 284

Ober-Ammergau, Passion Play, When to see it, and How to get there - 255, 371
O'Keene, Mr. F., Articles by - - - - 151, 347
Old Circuits, The - - 193
Old Playgoer on the Modern Theatre - - - - 149

OPERA.

The Carl Rosa Company:
"Carmen" - - - 119
"Lohengrin" - - - 186
"Mignon" - - - 120
"Rienzi" - - - 118
"Taming of the Shrew" - 121
Our Omnibus-Box 62, 125, 188, 249, 313, 370
Our Portfolio - - 101, 166
Our Symposium:
Dearth of Dramatists: Is it a fact? - - - 1
Recollections of the Haymarket Theatre - - 65
Is the Pit an Institution or an Excrescence? - 130
Oxford Theatricals - 279, 373

Paganini, upon Practice - 313
Paint, used by Ladies - 850
Pantomime, getting ready - 11
Pantomimes, The - - 105
Paris, Plays produced in this year - - 185, 227, 280
Paris, The Drama and Music in - - 14, 90, 212, 281
Passion Play, The - 255, 371
Patti, Adelina 18, 126, 158, 192
"Petite Mère" - - 191, 214
Photograph Portraits:
Mr. Henry Irving as Shylock - - - 16
Ellen Terry as Portia - 49
Mr. Kendal as the Count Federigo - - - 80
Mrs. Kendal as the Lady Giovanna - - - 97
Mr. John Hare as Colonel Daunt - - - - 129
Miss Genevieve Ward in "Forget-Me-Not" - 193
Miss Marie Litton as Rosalind - - - 251
Mr. Toole as Barnaby Doublechick - - - 317
Photographs in Colours - 127
Pictures by Actors - - 101
Pictures for the Exhibition 101, 167
Pigeon Holes, Stories of 230, 251
"Pirates of Penzance" 98, 252, 373
Pit or No Pit - 129, 150, 190

PLAYS.

Name of Author, Entire Cast, and Review.

"After Long Years"—*Folly* 34
"As You Like It"—*Imperial* 233
"Aventurière, L'—*Prince of Wales's* - - - - 363
"Balloonacy"—*Royalty* - 33
"Brighton"—*Olympic* - 117
"Children's Pinafore"—*Opera Comique* - - - 38

Plays:
"Cobwebs"—*Vaudeville* - 300
"Cyril's Success"—*Folly* - 115
"Danites, The"—*New Sadler's Wells* - - - - 354
"Falcon, The"—*St. James's* 41
"Fille du Tambour Major"—*Alhambra* - - - 309
"Forced from Home"—*Duke's* - - - - 179
"Forget-Me-Not"—*Prince of Wales's* - - - - 228
"Heartsease"—*Court* - 359
"In the Orchard"—*Folly* - 185
"Iolanthe"—*Lyceum* - 366
"Just Like a Woman"—*Gaiety* - - - - 31
"Lord of the Manor"—*Imperial* - - - - 109
"Married in Haste"—*Folly* 111
"Midge"—*Royalty* - - 112
"Money"—*Haymarket* - 175
"My Enemy"—*Olympic* - 115
"Naval Cadets"—*Globe* - 302
"Ninon"—*Adelphi* - - 181
"Old Cronies"—*St. James's* 241
"Old Love and the New"—*Court* - - - - 36
"Ours"—*Prince of Wales's* 29
"Ourselves"—*Vaudeville* - 170
"Pirates of Penzance"—*at Paignton* - - - - 107
"Pirates of Penzance"—*Opera Comique* - - - 305
"Quiet Pipe"—*Folly* - - 244
"Rival Candidates"—*Folly* 244
"Road to Ruin"—*Vaudeville* 103
"School"—*Haymarket* - 356
"Still Waters Run Deep"—*St. James's* - - - 242
"Such a Good Man"—*Olympic* 39
"Themis"—*Royalty* - - 301
"Two Roses" (Bedford Benefit)—*Lyceum* - - 35
"Trial from Pickwick" (Bedford Benefit)—*Lyceum* 35
"Upper Crust"—*Folly* - 303
"Voyage en Suisse"—*Gaiety* 295
Poetry:
Bill Gibbon's Deliverance 226
Bruce's Crisis - - - 84
Called to the Bar - - 61
Death of Rachel - - 276
Desdemona - - - 374
Forgotten—A Last Interview - - - - - 164
Midshipmite, The - - 267
Schumann in G minor - 334
Verdi, Anecdote of - - 314
Pollock, Lady, Article by - 81
Pollock, Maurice, Article by 354
Pollock, W. H., Articles by 56, 146, 264
Poor (Walking) Gentleman 269
"Prince's Friend" - - 94
Princess's Theatre - - 254
"Professional Beauties" - 371

"Queens of Trumps" - 313, 317
Elizabeth Farren - - 319

Rachel, Death of - - 273, 373
"Ratcatcher of Hamelin" 216
Recitations - - 250, 315, 371
Recollections of the Haymarket Theatre - - 5
Rimmel, Mr. - - - 64
Ristori, Adelaide, at Berlin 47
Robert Macaire - - - 283
Ruskin, Mr., on Mr. Irving's Shylock - - 63, 169, 249

Sandringham, Theatricals at 79
Sardou's "Daniel Rochat" 154, 191, 192, 301
Scarborough Spa Grand Hall 128
Scene-Rehearsal, A - - 15
Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations - - - - 350

Scott, Mr. Clement, Articles by 29, 33, 35, 38, 39, 41, 60, 61, 102, 103, 111, 115, 116, 117, 125, 141, 179, 188, 241, 242, 243, 255, 303, 309, 310, 370
Shakespeare at Home - 313
Shakespeare's Brother - 240
Sheridan, Story of - - 251
"She Stoops to Conquer" 98
Shylock, Mr. Irving as - 16
Shylock in Germany - 17, 86
Simpson, Mr. J. Palgrave, Articles by - - 68, 269
"Siége de Grenade" - - 191
Sims, G. R., Poetry by - 164
Sothern, Mr., Dramatic Talent of - - - 146
In America 99, 128, 146, 148, 313
St. Cecilia Choral Society - 254
St. James's Theatre - - 126
St. Petersburg Theatricals 160
Stage Slang in France - 264
Stage, The Modern - - 150
Stage in Holland - - 224
Stalls, Hints to frequenters of 251
Stars and Stripes - - 290
Stedman, Mr. - - - 63
Stories:
Lawdon's Love Case - 202
The Love of a "Star" - 326
The Trial Scene - - 53
Successful Play, Profits of a 5

Taylor, Mr. Tom - 242, 316
Terry, Ellen. Portrait as Portia - - 49, 36, 211, 243
Terry, Ellen, Article by Dutton Cook - - - 340
Terry, Miss Kate - - 181
Terry, Miss Marion 31, 178, 358
"Theatre, The," New Serial 125, 127, 254, 316, 380
Thomas, Mr. Moy, Article by 5
Thompson, A., Articles by - 223, 363
Toole, J. L., Acting of - 25
Laying First Stone of Mr. Knapp's Theatre in Glasgow - - - 64
As Doublechick - - 304
Portrait of - - - 317
Trial Scene, The - - - 53
Tupper, Martin, Article by 84
"Twelfth Night," Date of First Production - - 151
"Two Orphans," The, at the Olympic. Amusing incident - - - - 126
Turner, Godfrey, Article by 350

Van der Gies, Article by - 227
Verdi, Signor - - 128, 314
"Vipères, Les - - - 128

Wagner's Mission - - 58
Operas, plan of - - 313
Wales, Prince of, at the A. D. C. Dinner - - 221
Wallis, Miss, as Ninon - 184
Ward, Miss Genevieve. Portrait in "Forget-Me-Not" - - - - 193, 228
Ward, Mr. E. D. 112, 116, 185, 305
Warner, Mr. C. - 36, 250, 315
Webster, Mr., Management of the Haymarket - - 73
Wegner, Ernestine - - 160
Whiffin, Mr. J. - - - 162
"Widow Bedolle Papers" - 99
Wigan, Mr. A. - - 242, 243
Wills, Mr. W. G. 55, 64, 179, 181, 189, 199, 230, 250, 315
Wilson, H. S., Articles by 212, 217
Wingfield, L., Articles by 233, 300, 326
"Witch, The" - - - 47

Yardley, Mr. W., Article by 105
"Youngest Lieutenant" - 160

Sc 188