

*The Athenian Stage.*—Such was the license of the Athenian stage, that at one period the names of the persons intended to be satirized were announced to the audience as part of the dramatic personæ. It is said Socrates was often present at the play of Aristophanes, in which he is so unmercifully lampooned.—This practice being forbidden by the laws, the comedians used masks, which accurately represented the faces of those intended to be ridiculed. This also was prohibited. Comedy afterwards became more decorous, as may be seen in the plays of Menander, but it lost much of its wit and vivacity.

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THE GARLAND.

HAMILTON, SATURDAY, OCT. 13, 1852.

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*Critics.*—Necessity compels us, for the benefit of a few would-be critics, to express our opinion, as regard what they are, their origin and their usefulness. Critics are a class of writers which lead their readers to the fountain-head of true sense and sublimity; teach them the first and infallible principles of convincing and moving eloquence, and reveal all the mystery and delicacy of good writing.—The origin of criticism was, in its beginning, a deep and philosophical search into the primary laws and elements of this kind of writing, as far as they could be collected from the most approved performances. In the contemplation of authors, the first critics not only attended to the power and different species of words—the force of numerous composition, whether in prose or verse—the altitude of its various kinds to different subjects, but they farther considered that, which is the basis of all, *the meaning of the sense.* This led them at once into the most curious of subjects: the nature of man in general—the different characters of men, as they differ in rank or age—their reason and their passions: how the one was to be persuaded, the other to be raised or calmed, and the places or repositories to which we may recur when we want proper matter for any of these purposes. To obviate an unmerited censure,—as if we were an enemy to the thing, from being an enemy to its abuse—we would have it remembered, it is not either with criticism or critics that we presume to find fault. The art, and its professors, while they practice it with temper, we truly honor; and think, that were it not for their acute and learned labors, we should be in danger of degenerating into “an age of dunces.” Indeed,

critics—if we may be allowed the metaphor—are a sort of masters of the ceremony in the court of letters, through whose assistance we are introduced into some of the first and best company.

*Poetry.*—For the benefit of some of our readers, we will say as did Julius Scaliger, that “no one was ever a poet, or a lover of poetry, that was not an honest man.” Would not this definition strike off a great many names from *their* roll of Parnassus, and greatly reduce the number of *their* readers?

*To Correspondents.*—It affords us no small satisfaction and pleasure in having received so many original communications, and we take this opportunity of returning our sincere thanks, and soliciting a continuance.

*Oscar and Luthera*, a tale, meets the desired approbation, and will be attended to.

*The Maiden's Choice*, is passable for the “first attempt.”

There is not original enough in *An Adventure to “find a place.”* The real Simon pure, we have in our possession.

*El Donador* is a good poet. Can we have a specimen of his prose in time for the fourth number?

“C. M. D.” is welcome to our columns.—*My Native Land* we honor. *The Mermaid and the Mountain Swain*, is under consideration.

*Paul* may anticipate our meaning when we refer him to a prominent expression in the leading *heady-tory-al* article in the last ‘quarterly.’

*The Monthly Traveller.*—This was for a long time a constant companion of ours, but for a few months past we have been deprived of it altogether. It is published at Boston Mass. monthly, by Badger & Porter; each number contains 40 pages.

*The Casket.*—To the “publisher” of this interesting “quarterly,” we would merely say—“*c'est votre faute, si vous êtes dans misère.*” *Que dit-on en ville?* We advise him to get a patent for his *apology* and *dun*,—to accompany the forth-coming ‘caricature’ representing his “journey to Brantford.” We do not wish to enter into sciomachy.

☞ Will the editors of the *Hallowell Free Press* and *Brockville Recorder* give “us” the credit, instead of *Mr. William Smith?*