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THE ART OF TEACHING: A Manual for the use of Teachers and School Commissioners. By Frederick C. Emberson, M.A. Montreal: Dawson Bros. 1877.

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MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

As usual during Lent, theatre-going has diminished considerably, and the audiences at the Grand Opera House during the past month have been much scantier than ordinary. The bill of fare, too, has been of a somewhat lenten character, the only things which call for notice being Boucicault's 'Forbidden Fruit,' given for three nights and a matinée by a New York Company, and Mr. Montague's week's engagement.

'Forbidden Fruit' is an adaptation from the same French drama which supplied the materials for the 'Great Divorce Case,' in which Sir Randall Roberts appeared early in the season. Mr. Boucicault's play is very much the cleverer and more entertaining of the two; indeed, no more amusing performance has been witnessed in Toronto since the Vokes Family appeared last summer. It is a mistake, however, to call that a comedy which is really a farce in three acts; the plot and situations are so wildly absurd as to remove the production altogether out of the category of legitimate drama. A far graver objection is that much of the business of the piece is of a more than questionable description. A fast and vulgar female trapeze performer, whose manners and morals appear to be equally free and easy, exercising the arts and wiles of the demi-monde upon every man, married or unmarried, with whom she comes into contact, is not precisely the kind of spectacle which a wise mother would select for the edification of her unmarried daughters,—unless, indeed, on a principle akin to that acted upon by the old Spartans when they made their Helots drunk. It must be admitted, however, that the dialogue is so exceedingly sparkling and witty, the situations and surprises are so ludicrous, and the whole thing is acted with such unflagging zest and spirit, that the objectionable features are, to a certain extent, kept in the background. Still, the taint is there, and being of the very substance and fibre of the piece, is ineradicable. The best drawn and best acted character is *Sergeant Buster*, said to be a 'portrait à l'huile' of a well-known member of the London bar. It was played by Mr. Herbert (the English actor who supported Mr.

Toole during his visits here last season) with a freedom from exaggeration, an unforced humour, and a lifelike naturalness that made it a really delightful bit of comedy. Next best in artistic merit, was Miss Dickson as the irrepressible *Mrs. Sergeant Buster*. Miss Josie Bailey, as *The Great Zulu*, the Princess of the Trapeze, was also, alas! unquestionably amusing, notwithstanding a good deal of exaggeration. The other characters were all well acted, but do not call for special mention.

'False Shame' and 'Our Idol,' the two principal plays in which Mr. Montague appeared, are both admirable specimens of the modern society drama, and perfectly unobjectionable in every respect. In both, we have simply a modern society novel cut down to the limits of three or four acts. Mr. Montague acted the part of *Jack Beamish*, in 'Our Idol,' naturally, and with a good deal of spirit; but there are many actors who could perform it equally well, and one or two, much better. As *Lord Chilton*, in 'False Shame,' however, Mr. Montague is unapproachable. The impersonation is as unique in its way as the *Dundreary* of Mr. Sothern. There is, however, no real likeness between the two parts. The semi-idiotic, semi-supernaturally-clever nobleman whom Sothern has created, exists nowhere except on the boards of the theatre. *Lord Chilton*, however,—making allowance for some exaggeration and idealization, is a genuine specimen of a by no means uncommon type of young English aristocrat. Miss Wyndham, who accompanied Mr. Montague, is a sister of Mr. Charles Wyndham, the well-known English actor. She appeared in Toronto last season with Mr. Sothern, and is a natural and charming actress in light society parts such as those filled by her during her two visits. Of the other characters in 'False Shame,' the best acted were *Col. Howard* (Mr. Hudson) and the *Earl of Dashington* (Mr. Stokes). The last named actor has greatly improved during the present season. The scene in the third act, where these two badger *Lord Chilton* about his supposed cowardice, was so admirably played as to make it one of the richest episodes in a piece fertile in telling situations.