

## HÆMONY.

"Among the rest, a small, unsightly root,  
But of divine effect, he culled me out;  
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,  
But in another country, as he said,  
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil;  
He called it Hæmony."

A little dust the summer breeze  
Has sifted up within a cleft,  
A slanted raindrop from the trees,  
A tiny seed by chance air left—  
It was enough, the seedling grew,  
And from the barren hoar drew  
Her dimpled leaf and tender bud,  
And dews that did the bare rock stud;  
And crowned at length her simple head  
With utter sweetness, breathed afar,  
And burning like a dusky star—  
Sweetness upon so little fed,  
Ah me! ah me!  
And yet hearts go uncomforted.

For hearts, dear love, such seedlings are,  
That need so little, ah, so less,  
Than little on this earth, to bear  
The sun-sweet blossom, happiness;  
And sing—those dying hearts that come  
To go—their swan-song flying home,  
A touch, a tender tone, no more,  
A face that lingers by the door—  
To turn and smile, a fond word said,  
A kiss—these things make heaven; and yet  
We do neglect, refuse, forget,  
To give that little, ere 'tis fed,  
Ah me! ah me!  
And sad hearts go uncomforted.

I asked of thee but little, nay,  
Not for the golden fruit thy bough  
Ripens for thee and thine who day  
By day beneath thy shadow grow;  
Only for what, from that full store,  
Had made me rich, nor left thee poor,  
A drift of blossom, needed not  
For fruit, yet blessing some dim spot.  
A touch, a tender word soon said,  
Fond tones that seem our dead again  
Come back after long years of pain,  
Lonely, for these my sick heart bleed—  
Ah me! ah me!  
Sad hearts that go uncomforted.

## SOME PARIS CRITICS.

French critics may be divided into three classes:—Critics who give an account of the play on the day after it has been performed; Vitu, at the Figaro; Wolff, at the Evénement; La Pommeraye; at the Paris, etc. They write with more brevity, and have not the same finish that is expected from the weekly critic, though they carry great weight in the world of comedians and play-goers. The weekly critic, or lundiste, so called as his "feuilleton dramatique" appears every Sunday evening or every Monday morning at the lower part of the front page of the paper, a space generally taken up by a novel; Sarcey, at the Temps; Henry Fouquier, at the Dix-neuvième Siècle; François Coppée at the Patrie, etc.; and last, but not least, the reviewers of the Revue des Deux Mondes, Nouvelle Revue, etc., who give their verdict but once in the month, and who have, therefore, ample time to gather documents and mature their thoughts.

In some periodical mondains, and by such we mean papers like the Figaro, the Evénement, the Gil Blas, the Gaulois, which give a large share to society, fashion, and amusements, two daily articles are devoted to the Soirée Parisienne and to the Courier des Théâtres.

The Soirée Parisienne is either an account of the last play—given from a humorous point of view—with a list of the celebrities present at the performance, together with a description of costumes, scenery, etc., or a fancy article which, when signed by the Monsieur de l'Orchestre of the Figaro (Arnold Mortier), contains in a light form a great deal of wit and imagination.

The Courier des Théâtres is mainly the daily gossip and information regarding the theatrical world. To string together this kind of news men of great ability are not required. Nevertheless, writers like Jules Piével (Figaro), Louis Besson (Evénement), have great influence, not on account of their own talent, which is null, but for the services they may render to, and especially the bad tricks they may serve upon, managers, actors and authors.

We shall not in these short sketches speak of that latter class of writers, who are to true critics what a reporter of "faits divers" is to the writer of a leading article. Of the others, we shall select a few who, being representative men will give a good idea of the class at large.

## AUGUSTE VITU.

A small head with a wrinkled face, little piercing black eyes, a sharp nose, and a moustache—emerging from a large ulster coat, in which is wrapped up a slim, middle-sized individual: such is the appearance of Vitu, considered by many, especially by comedians, as the most influential of dramatic critics, as he writes in the Figaro, the paper with the largest circulation in Paris. Indeed, Vitu's articles are free from ambiguity; with great dexterity he unveils the plot of the darkest drama, draws out the thread of the most complicated operetta, or exhibits in a clear light the various scenes of the least intelligible of farces, but this is all. He is full of prejudices which often mar his judgment and good sense, while his business-like mind will not allow him to be carried away either by author or actor. Vitu does not by any means realize the type of the dramatic critic; he might as well be a man of finance or a political writer. In the eyes of his fellow journalists he is considered a learned man, but savants look upon him only as a journalist. He has lately given to the world a thick octavo volume treating of the house in which Molière, the great comic poet, died, with a good deal of it taken up with an

historical sketch of the Rue Richelieu, which is not without some merit. Some of his other productions, "Contes à Dormir Debout," "Ombres et Vieux Murs," have also, we believe, been read. Vitu's life has been devoted to the press; he was a contributor to the Pays and the Constitutionnel, to name only the two most important of the papers on the staff of which he had been engaged; and in 1867 he was chief editor of the Standard, a paper supporting the empire. A staunch Bonapartist, he has remained faithful to the fallen dynasty, and has received from the Empress Eugénie marks of sympathy on several occasions, once, among others, at the time of his daughter's death. Vitu joined the Figaro in 1870. He is president of the Cercle de la Presse, one of the largest gambling clubs in Paris. Vitu is not very old (he was born in 1823 according to Vapereau), but looks more than his age. He is listened to in his circle of readers; but he is not one of those writers of whom it will be said—Scripta manent. No one will, we venture to think, ever commit the folly of reprinting Vitu's dramatic criticisms.

## ALBERT WOLFF.

That hairless face with bony cheeks, prominent nose, large mouth, from which gapes out a shrill voice, reminding one of the singers of the Sixtine chapel or of the keepers of the seraglio, well-known to boulevardiers and gamblers, is the face of Albert Wolff, the journalist, who, were he not clad with masculine garment, might, with petticoats and a chequered shawl, be almost taken for a charwoman. Albert Wolff is a Prussian, from Cologne, and, without any doubt, that Prussian of Cologne is the most thoroughly Parisian of our chroniclers. Nobody knows better than he how to catch the telling fact of the day, whether it be crime, politics, literature, or art. His ready pen, correct style, sharp wit, mixed with good sense, all combine to place him in the very first rank of those skirmishers whose prose is to last one day. We used the word chroniqueur just now, and it was purposely that we used it, as Wolff, whether he writes a notice of the yearly Salon, as Premier-Paris in the Figaro, an account of a play in the Evénement—nay, a play itself, is ever a chroniqueur. His articles afford always pleasant reading, though the second part of his papers is, as a rule, but a repetition of the first; but the reader must not seek in them learning or research; they are written with chic. Wolff writes with the tone of an austere novelist; but his readers are not bound to believe him; indeed, he does not believe himself in what he writes. He does, in fact, just the contrary of what he preaches to others. "The cowl does not make the monk," and the pen has been given to the writer to disguise his thoughts.

## HENRI DE LA POMMERAÏE.

M. de la Pommeraye was born a lecturer. He delivered lectures at the Salle des Capucines; he delivered lectures at the Théâtre des Nations at the morning performances of Madame Marie Dumas; he delivers lectures over a half-closed grave of a brother in letters; he delivers lectures at the Conservatoire, where he was appointed a Professor of Dramatic History and Literature, in the room of Samson; he delivers lectures everywhere; in short he is a lecture himself. La Pommeraye is the inventor of the feuilleton parlé, viz., a spoken notice of new plays. He has given up, however, for the feuilleton écrit, when Emile de Girardin summoned him in 1874 to the France. When, after the death of Girardin, part of the staff of the France started a new paper, Paris, La Pommeraye was one of the dissenters. La Pommeraye's countenance is familiar to all Parisians; rather tall, an intelligent face, high eyebrows, glasses, moustache, and dark brown hair falling down on the collar of a long black coat. He is of a kindly disposition, too much of a bien-séant perhaps, for he says neither yes nor no; consequently, as he is not feared, and does not choose to give severe judgments, he has but a limited influence.

## FRANCISSQUE SARCEY.

Sarcey and Vitu are the noted dramatic critics of the day. But Sarcey is a far superior man in every respect, and his fame rests solely upon himself; while Vitu derives much of his influence from the Figaro. We believe Sarcey is the only critic whose articles bring an increase in the circulation of the paper on the day they are published. He entered the Ecole Normale in 1845, the fifth on a list which included Taine as first, and About as third competitor. He was a professor from 1851 to 1858, and he has retained much of his former calling, his feuilleton being in style more like the lesson of a pedagogue than the weekly chronicles of the theatres of the city given to pleasure. He is certainly well suited to that grave and tedious, though well-informed paper, the Temps. At a first performance Sarcey may be seen in the balcony stalls, half drizzling. His portly mien, broad shoulders, large face, bulging forehead, strong nose, thick eyebrows, rough white beard, give him anything but a refined appearance, though intimate friends say that Sarcey has some pretence to elegance. He is a notorious republican and priest-hater, and pours out his political and anti-clerical effusions in About's paper, the Dix-neuvième Siècle. These articles will not add to his reputation if they increase his fortune, which we believe is the case. Sarcey's books are few, and never created any stir. In short, his talent seems to consist more in the examination of the work of others than in production of work of his own.

## CHARLES MONSELET.

We have, we confess, some weakness for Monselet. Short and stumpy, the face clean shaven, Monselet in his stall, with his hands crossed, the head reclining on the shoulder, and the somewhat sensual mouth wrinkled with a smile, the nostrils wide opened, the eyes beaming behind glasses, looks much like a parson chuckling at the thought of a good dinner. He has earned, by several books on cookery, which place him by the side of Brillat Savarin and Grimod de la Reynière, the reputation of being a gourmet, though his small fortune did not, probably, allow him to indulge much in his taste for elaborate dishes. This is the sort of penchant some men have for the weak side of their talent. Ingres ranked himself higher as a violinist than as a painter; Orfila, the toxicologist, was a good musician, and liked to be told so. Monselet might have been a gourmet, but we do not believe that he was ever a gourmand. However, as a culinary artist he has left us a volume, "Gastronomie," and a few other books, which are amusing to read, but do not betray a deep knowledge of the art made famous by Carême. Nor does Monselet stand in the first rank as a dramatic critic. He reprinted a few years ago some of his articles under the title of "Les Premières Représentations Célèbres." But Monselet has a good knowledge of the eighteenth century; he delights in resuscitating some of the celebrities of yore, now forgotten, or seldom thought of, in the days of mercantile transactions; Linguet, Baucard, d'Arnaud, Cubières, La Morlière, Desforges, etc. He is at ease when he studies an original character like Restif de la Bretonne, or a sharp critic like Fréron. Monselet himself is acute in his criticism. Many there are who still resent the wounds made by the "Lorgnette Littéraire," that dictionary of great and little authors of our time which begins with About (Edmond) and ends with Zaccane (Pierre), "le dernier des littérateurs, comme M. Amédée Achard en est le premier, par ordre alphabétique."

## FRANÇOIS COPPÉE.

Coppée is a poet; he is a poet in his novels. He is a poet in his plays, he is a poet in his dramatic criticism—but a poet of second order only, for he is lacking alike in force and imagination. His redeeming quality is tenderness. Thirteen years ago, [1869] the "Passant," that delightful fancy, played at the Odéon by Agar and Sarah Bernhardt, made him famous. He has declined ever since. The "Luthier de Crémone" [1877] was favorably received at the Théâtre Français, and one of his poems, "La Grève des Forgerons"—perhaps the most powerful of his productions—has been the subject of several paintings. Coppée, who is but forty years old, will enter the Academy in the footsteps of his rival, Sully Prudhomme; but we doubt that he will ever find again the inspiration that dictated him the "Passant." Like Victorien Sardou, he wears long hair, thrown back, and his shaven face, aquiline nose and very pale eyes make altogether a characteristic ensemble.

## HENRI DE PÈNE.

Henri de Pène is a stalwart man, with a bronzed face, black curly hair and beard, of gentlemanly bearing. He has all his life belonged to the press, and he has written de omni re scibili et quibusdam aliis, with unequal competence and ability. His articles of criticism count in number, but are neither good nor bad enough to call for special notice. M. de Pène, after an article which gave offence, was challenged in 1858 by the whole of the lieutenants of the army! After a double encounter he was severely wounded, and was for some time between life and death. M. de Pène enjoys the reputation of being a brave swordsman, and occupies a high situation on the conservative press, being rédacteur en chef of the united Gaulois and Paris Journal.

## JEAN RICHEPIN.

Some eight or nine years ago a book made Richepin known to the public, "La Chanson des Gueux." The bold and popular poet was sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment and a fine of five hundred francs; "Ce livre est non seulement un mauvais livre mais encore une mauvaise action." Like Baudelaire, like Flaubert, Richepin had at his début the good luck of meeting justice on the way, and on that day the old dame was deaf and blind, and the blow she struck, instead of felling the culprit to the ground, raised him at once to the pinnacle. There is great merit and originality in that "Chanson des Gueux," with genuine poetical feeling, tenderness, and vigor.

Qui qu'est gueux?  
C'est-il nous  
Ou bien ceux  
Qu'a des zous?  
Pour les avoir, quell' misère  
Ah! les pau's zous, que j'les plains  
Souvent c'est nous qu' j' sans plains  
Et c'est eux qu' leu vent' se ferre.

Richepin, well built, with black curly hair and beard, would have been in the days of Louis XI, a joyful escolier, and well could he have sung—

Lo poète est le roi des gueux.

He has now attained fame; his books sell well, and if the timid bourgeois refrains from opening them, not a literary man or an artist would leave unread Richepin's productions. As a dramatic critic he is very kind, and finds excuses for the unsuccessful authors, as if he re-

membered that he had to fight a hard battle for himself. But whatever work he may now produce he will always remain the bold poet of the "Gueux," as Barbier, after two and a half score years, is still the fierce poet of the lambes, and Baudelaire the morbid poet of Les Fleurs du Mal.

## HENRI DE BORNIER.

Henri de Bornier is a tragic poet. However, there is nothing about his dwarfed and hirsute person to impress upon you the idea of the grandeur of his calling. He made his way slowly, working hard at his desk at the Arsenal Library, of which he was one of the keepers. His manuscripts laid long ignored in the darkest corner of the theatrical managers' offices till 1868, when the Comédie Française performed his first tragedy, "Agamemnon," which was well received. But fancy "Agamemnon" in these Offenbachian days of the "Belle Hélène!" In 1875 Bornier found a real triumph in the "Fille de Roland," acted with great power by Sarah Bernhardt. Under the cover of Carlovingians and Saracens the play contained allusions to disasters only too recent, and struck by some fiery lines the patriotic cord of audiences easily raised to enthusiasm at the thought of revenge. "Les Noces d'Attila," given at the Odéon in 1880, was a successful piece, but did not draw large houses. "L'Apôtre," printed last year, has not been, as yet, performed. All of these, and sundry academical poems, will entitle Bornier to a seat in the Academy, but not to the remembrance of posterity. He will rank in that host of poets of lesser importance who are mentioned in literary manuals but are never read. Bornier is one of the habitués of Victor Hugo's house and of Madame Adam's salon. No wonder that he should write in the Nouvelle Revue. As a dramatic critic he does not rise above mediocrity.

## LOUIS GANDERAX.

Ganderax is the youngest—and certainly the cleverest, by far—of our dramatic critics. It is true that he has the great advantage of having ample time to see over and over again the pieces he renders an account of once a month in that old, correct, stately periodical, the Revue des Deux Mondes, and plenty of space to expose his ideas. He is very ingenious in his criticism and subtle in his deductions. His style, however, is full of mannerism, and would gain much by being more natural. His wit is great, but shows too much labor. Like Sarcey, a successful pupil of the Ecole Normale, Ganderax could have been sent, if he chose, to Athens or Rome to study antiquities, and in due time, after deciphering a sufficient number of mutilated texts, and discovering a proper quantity of broken jars and stones, he would have been elected a member of the Académie des Inscriptions; but he preferred literature to science, and he made his début only three or four years ago as dramatic critic in the Parlement; he joined the Revue des Deux Mondes last year, and occupies the place once held by Gustave Planche. Ganderax is also a promising dramatic author, and he gave last year at the Gymnase, as his first piece, "Miss Fanfare," which had but a succès d'estime, although it exhibits qualities of the first order—namely, wit, terseness in the style and simplicity in the plot.

## VARIETIES.

ON Primrose Day was published an ingenious cartoon. At the top of the picture was a bunch of primroses. Then comes a portrait of Lord Beaconsfield. In the centre Britannia in mourning, with her head bent, and the British lion by her side. "Would all this have happened had he lived?" asks the letter-press, and "all this" is represented by the Egyptian War, the Phoenix Park murders, the dynamite explosion and the assassination of Irish landlords.

EARL SPENCER paid a visit recently to St. Saviour's Church, Dominick street, Dublin, with a view to the erection of some suitable memorial inside the building to the late Under Secretary, Mr. Burke having been a frequent attendant at that church. The Lord-Lieutenant decided that the memorial should take the form of a window, and it is stated that his Excellency has given orders for its immediate construction.

MR. BRIGHT, when his son was married the other day in an Anglican temple by a canon from Westminster Abbey, told the breakfast party that weddings to him were always sad. He has had another occasion for sadness now his nephew, Mr. Walter M'Laren, was married recently to Miss W. A. Muller, the sister of the member of the London School Board, and herself a great public worker. This time the ceremony did take place in a Quaker meeting house in Westminster, of which *mirabile dictu*, Lord Salisbury is the ground landlord.

KING UMBERTO is much perplexed by his Queen's repented solicitations for concessions to the Vatican. The King is devotedly attached to the Queen Margherita, who exercises over him a legitimate influence. She, like many Italian ladies, is completely under the Pope's influence, which he naturally exercises for the advancement of his interests; but the country is opposed to any concessions to the Papacy, and the unfortunate King is placed between his Queen and his subjects. It will be impossible to please both, and his throne may be endangered should he yield to his consort's entreaties.