

encies in support, and other depressing features reveal themselves, and that portion of an audience that can better employ itself than by sitting out a performance that grates upon the ear, and wearies the brain, quits the house disenchanted with its attractions, and worried by its shortcomings. The remedy for this is not far to seek. In a great degree it is a question of expense—and with an augmented interest in theatrical affairs on the part of the public, objections such as these would be removed.

In addition to an active enterprise in securing the stars of the theatrical world—and there should be no stint in the endeavour to bring them on the boards of the Opera House—one great requisite is an efficient and attractive stock company. The management last season was only fairly successful in regard to this essential. But its importance should be thoroughly appreciated. How often do we find a performance, clever and artistic in itself, dragging and palling by the utter inability of some of the actors to appreciate the points of the play represented or to apprehend its drift, and how more frequently do we find the good acting of some member of a troupe utterly marred by the *gaucheries* of one less gifted; and the pleasure thus received from the efforts of the intelligent and pains-taking actor thoroughly damped by the deficiencies of him who is otherwise. It is not the question of genius and inspiration in an actor that we are discussing, but the contrasts presented in the actor who has brought study, culture, refinement, and art to bear upon his work, and him who is utterly lacking in any of those requisites, and has yet to learn the very alphabet of his profession. But not a little of the responsibility necessarily falls upon the stage manager, whose duty it not only is to exercise a judicious supervision over the plays put upon the boards, but to see that they are properly mounted, their parts intelligently represented, and that the piece shall possess a symmetry and completeness, without which it must fail of its effect. It is not only that there shall be triumphs of acting, and successes in scenic display, but care should be taken that the atmosphere that surrounds and attaches to a play shall be preserved. Much of this is frequently lost in the mechanical style of the representation, and the play is made to fall from the standard of art to which it belongs, to that of a peripatetic show, to which it ought to have no kinship. Of course, for the sensational drama, these niceties of representation are not of so much consequence; but for the imaginative drama, they are prime requisites; and as they are absent or present, so the play may be said to be artistically presented or otherwise. Another feature on the boards that may give pleasure or annoyance to the play-goer is the manner, the voice, and the bearing of the actor. On these again, much depends. A distinction of bearing and deportment, and an ease

and self-possession of manner, contribute greatly to the impression created upon the spectator, and aid in no little degree, to elevate the play and impart an imposing effect to the representation.

But the pre-requisite of gifts is that of the voice, which in intonation and flexibility should be carefully sought for, of that which is pleasing in the one, and of variety and compass in the other. Nothing so much disturbs a house as to learn of the approach of an actor from the wings of the stage by familiarity with the defects of his voice. And on the contrary, there are few things more pleasing to an audience, than to listen to a well-delivered phrase, or a fine bit of declamation, in a voice that has not only power and pathos, but in a tone which is tuneful and agreeable to the ear, and that haunts the recollection, it may be, long after it is heard.

How far the management of the Opera House may be said to have selected its company, and placed its representations on the boards of the theatre, with a full appreciation of those requirements, in regard to the one and the other, which are so necessary to success, it is not, of course, for us to say. We have only to do with results; though, considering the experience, judgment, and energy of Mrs. Morrison, we should only be doing her justice in taking it for granted that her efforts to cater for the lovers of the drama in Toronto, have always been directed by that intelligent apprehension of the business of her profession, which has hitherto been her distinctive characteristic. Yet, it is not to be forgotten, that the drama in Canada is only in process of naturalization, and that it is but yesterday that we had a building worthy of being designated as a Theatre, or an Opera House. Moreover, there are few amongst us who can play the helpful *role* of a dramatic critic, and those who possess a sound judgment in theatrical matters, and who are capable of giving their opinion of a play without betraying the zeal of the partisan, or the gush of the youthful enthusiast, may be counted on one's fingers. To expect as yet, therefore, any very exalted standard of excellence, either in regard to the class of plays produced at the Opera House, or in the manner of their production, would be unreasonable; and to judge of the result here by comparison with the achievements of the London and Paris stage, would be a foolish injustice. Here we have no recognized class of play-goers, except those frequenters of the theatre that belong to the more frivolous and unemployed section of society, and the audience that is drawn from those visiting the city is as yet too small to be of much account. In the face of these facts, the sight that meets one at the play, and bearing in mind the large and continuous expense involved in the "running" of a theatre, is not only creditable in itself, but an achievement in the interest of the dramatic art in our midst that calls for the warmest com-