

fault-finder would be at his wit's end to point out anything to cavil at. The enlargement of the gallery has added to the capacity of the theatre, and the seating-room is now about as follows:—lower floor, 556 seats; dress-circle, 433; gallery, 600; private boxes, 48; making a total of 1,637, a figure which camp-stools and standing-room would bring up to over 2,000. The arrangements for exit are so excellent, that in case of necessity, an audience of that number could obtain egress in three or four minutes.

The opening of the theatre was fittingly inaugurated by Toronto's favourite, Miss Neilson; and her appearance to recite the excellent opening ode, written by Mr. F. A. Dixon, an old and valued contributor to this Magazine, was greeted with all the old-time enthusiasm. Miss Neilson's merits as an actress have been so often enlarged upon in these columns, that there is little to say on the general subject. It may not be uninteresting, however, to institute a comparison with her former self. She appeared in four characters, *Juliet*, *Rosalind*, *Viola*, and *Pauline*, in 'the Lady of Lyons;' twice in each of the first three, and once in the last. It was a matter for regret with many of her admirers that on the occasion of this, her last visit to Canada, she did not substitute for her repetitions of *Rosalind* and *Viola*, some of her more arduous roles, such as *Julia*, in the 'Hunchback,' *Isabella*, in 'Measure for Measure,' or *Imogen*, in 'Cymbeline.' Probably, however, a somewhat delicate physique renders it necessary for the actress to confine herself principally to lighter parts, a circumstance which may also possibly account for the omission of the scene in 'Romeo and Juliet,' where the nurse brings to Juliet the tidings of Tybalt's death. On any other ground than that suggested, the excision of this—one of the greatest scenes in the play—would be a quite inexcusable outrage on dramatic propriety. One or two innovations on the text are by no means improvements. Thus, the repeated utterance of the name of Romeo, after she falls to the ground in the scene of parting with her lover, and also after taking the sleeping potion, are unwarrantable additions, which have the disastrous effect of making the representation, to the extent indicated, that of, not a girl in love, but a love-sick girl. A

great Shakspearean critic has pointed out, quite truly, that Juliet and Romeo, desperately as they are in love with each other, are *not* love-sick. The consummate art of the poet is, indeed, nowhere better exemplified than in the way in which, in this wonderful play, he keeps clear of that pitfall. How bright and healthful, for instance, is the demeanour and mental tone of Romeo, when in exile, before the news of Juliet's supposed death is brought to him; how utterly free from anything mawkish, or maudlin, or melancholic. If there is any green-sickness visible in him at any time, it is in the early portion of the play, when he is in love, not with Juliet, but with Rosalind. A careful examination of the drama will show that the Juliet of Shakspeare is quite as free as Romeo from anything resembling morbid sentimentality. Even the agonizing parting from her lover has not the effect of bringing her down to that level. In the phrase—and how beautiful and touching an utterance it is—which may be taken as the key-note of this scene—

"O, by this count I shall be much in years  
Ere I again behold my Romeo,"—

as well as in the succeeding question—

"O, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?"

there may be the foreboding of a vivid imagination—a foreboding justified by the event—but surely there is nothing which bears the faintest indication of a mind disordered or made sick by love. That even so trifling an addition to the text as that indicated, should have the effect of introducing an element into the character of Juliet which the poet was so careful to exclude, shows how rash a thing it is to attempt to improve upon Shakspeare. Even the swoon, or partial swoon, into which the actress lapses at the close of the scene, is an innovation not found in the text, though possibly an allowable one, in view of the fact that, to the modern society girl, fainting is not the unfamiliar thing which it was to the robust and less sensitively organized women of Shakspeare's time. Of the closing portion of the potion scene, the actress gave a different interpretation from that given during her first visit to Toronto. On the former occasion she drank off the sleeping potion with comparative calmness, with an expression