

asked to the Governor-General's Ball, or if he lived in the States he certainly had a Government "sit," or whence arises this—"With them of all the countries in the world can poetry inform politics with a purity of intention and bend it from all base ends"—a fine sentiment, but, bother my ears, they somehow ring with "Alaska," "office-seekers," "Irish vote," "Fisheries Treaty," "Sackville," and a thousand other such by-words. We are threatened with "some impending and momentous change" which "will annihilate all the labours of those who do not work with a desire to hasten destiny and precipitate the change that future histories will moralize on forever"—i.e., annexation! Thank you, dear Defunct, "forever" is a long time and we would sooner shine in another and opposite direction. "The Atlantic is cold," we admit, it is also salt; I wish I'd had a glass before I read that Legacy. I don't think the race that begot a Homer were annexationists—"champion oarsman" is not to be ridiculed. At least Athens owed a good deal to hers, I think.

Alas! dear H., that our "immense uncultivated areas of land" should stand in the way of poetry—what in the world are the emigrant agents about?—they are an unpoetical lot anyway; the opposition might add this to the list of offences of Minister Ross. And so the letter goes on from here to the end bidding us to choose between country or song—country first, say I, and song after, even if it is sung by our descendants as they lament our premature death in defence of the country that had no "leisured wealth" or "material prosperity." No Canadian that reads the latter part of the Legacy will, I think, experience anything but a desire to know at what university in the States the testator was educated. I will forbear comment on it, only let me say that Mæcenas did not live in the early days of Rome, and it was not the descendants of advocates of submission to a foreign power that he patronized, or perchance he might have given his Sabine farm to a Roman who had become a naturalized Gaul. Tell me, dear H., of a country with a poetry that was not at some time or in some relation "omnipotent in arms"; tell me, dear H., of a country that manufactured a poet and became a land of song by capitulation. Shut up the armoury, ye ancient Janitor, and stock it with 'Ras Wimans, for we would have a literature. Patriotism may give us a poet, annexationism never will.

I forgive his friend for leaving the country; we have no desire to retain him, and I'd forgive the testator if he had signed himself R. I. P.

Yours truly,
S. L. O.

M. COQUELIN.

Toronto has seldom been offered such a dramatic treat as the leading living French comedian's appearance at the Grand Opera House at the beginning of last week, and it is tolerably certain, judging from the very small number that took advantage of it, that it will be long before the opportunity occurs again.

The reasons for this poor reception are not far to seek. In the first place, of course, the French language, in which all the performances were given presented an obstacle to the enjoyment of those who were not familiar with that tongue, although this obstacle does not prevent Sara Barnhardt from drawing immense houses whenever she visits us. But the grand reason for the financial failure was the ignorance of the Toronto public in regard to M. Coquelin's position in the dramatic world.

From an artistic standpoint, however, the success was pronounced and complete. The representations were as carefully given as they could have been before the most crowded and enthusiastic audiences, while the lack of numbers in the house was partially atoned for by the appreciation which was manifested throughout.

The first impression derived from the performances is the perfect naturalness that characterizes the acting throughout. There is no staginess, no ranting; nothing of what might be called padding. Every action has its meaning, and when the passage affords no opening for dramatic effect, there is no striving after a meretricious glamour which we see so frequently

in English companies even of the best. On the other hand, first play on Monday night was Madame Girardin's "*La Joie fait Peur*," a sentimental comedy, somewhat light but intensely however, there is no coldness or repression of feeling.

The pleasing, wherein the interest turns on the unexpected return of a son who has been given up for lost, and the difficulty of breaking the joyful news to his mother. M. Coquelin takes the part of "Noël," a faithful servant of the family, to whom the son first reveals himself and whose embarrassment and perplexity under the trying duty which devolves on him are the chief humorous touches. Exquisitely portrayed they are; as might be expected, for it is his faculty of exciting sympathy and interest by comic acting almost pathetic in its reality that has won for M. Coquelin his present position as leader of the *Comédie Française*. In dealing, however, with M. Coquelin's company we cannot, as in most cases, after dwelling at length on the "star," dismiss the other actors with a brief word. For this is the next prominent characteristic; the perfect balance and symmetry of the representation as a whole. There is no such thing as what we are accustomed to call a "support," for the play appears rather as a living organism than as a lay figure propped up on stilts.

The joy, almost agonizing, of the mother when her son is at length actually in her presence, was at once boldly and delicately manifested. With a fervour which few actresses could venture to imitate, she clasped him passionately to her breast, and kissed him again and again on the face, head, and neck, as if to assure herself that it was indeed he. Her daughter's demonstrations of delight, more child-like and direct, were most winning. Mlle. Kerwick, who played the part, captivated the audience by the manner in which not only her face but her whole body seemed to respond to her emotions.

Molière's well-known "*Les Précieuses Ridicules*" was also played on Monday night. M. Coquelin in it appears as an impudent and shallow-pated valet who assumes his master's place and clothes, and visits the fiancée of the latter as the *Marquis de Mascarille*. The character is most opposite to the previous one, and it would be impossible to say in which M. Coquelin was most at home.

"*Le Mariage de Figaro*" which was given on Tuesday night, was undoubtedly the most successful performance of the visit. Even for those who knew no more French than Figaro did English, the action was so continuous and varied that they could follow the thread of the action without difficulty, while the wit of the dialogue made it doubly enjoyable for those who were fortunate enough to be able to keep pace with the rapid movements of the Gallic tongue.

To attempt in the small space available to give an adequate idea of the ever-changing situations which distinguish this comedy would be impossible. The grouping and careful attention to the stage effect were even more noticeable than on the previous evening, greater opportunities in this line being offered by the large cast of characters and the kaleidoscopic manner in which they were ever changing their relations.

"*Mlle de la Seiglière*," which was given on Wednesday night, can hardly be said to be an interesting play according to our ideas, although it has held the French stage for considerable time; and as whatever merit it may possess lies not at all in the action but in the dialogue, the finer points of which must necessarily be thrown away on the great majority of an English audience, it is not at all surprising that it fell somewhat flat after its predecessors. It required all M. Coquelin's histrionic powers to redeem the performance from mediocrity.

J. H. M.

What promises to be an interesting addition to the ordinary issue of the *Nineteenth Century* will be a supplement to the March number of a series of papers by eminent American educators on the relation of examinations to education. The same magazine has introduced a new style of reviewing books. The editor has asked certain of his friends to send him from time to time notices of books which they may consider worthy of bringing to the attention of the reading public. Mr. Gladstone contributes one of these notices and the report that he intended to do so was the occasion of the remark that "if you want a book to sell get Mr. Gladstone to write an introduction or notice for it."