

and if good plays were properly patronized, bad ones would be soon off the stage, and we should hear no more of its degradation, or of the immorality which it fosters.

Mr. Gopsequill.—Yet how many fellows with pursed up lips, and what is intended for a pious sneer, prate to us, about the conscientious scruples they have against going to the theatre; that the actors fall into all manner of vice and dissipation, that the actresses are exposed to temptation, are made to display their persons, and act in such a manner as to destroy that delightful modesty, which they assert to be the parent of all virtues.

Mr. Jonathan.—Delightful fiddlestick, the parent of all bassviols, poor drivelling fools! Are actresses not women? Are they not frequently women of a high order of talent, have they not feelings and affections, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, virtues and failings, like other women? And are they to be excluded from the pale of society, by the speers of a set people half donkey and half zealot? Exposed to temptation! So are we all. The more honor is due to those who pass the ordeal unscathed, so are chambermaids at inns, sempstresses, shopgirls, every woman with a pretty face. They expose their persons too:—so do our lady friends at balls, soirées, and temperance tea-parties. No lady rides through our streets on horseback, but she is stared at by a crowd, and how many fops go to church, think you, for the sole purpose of staring at the ladies. Remodel society, make our men all monks, and our women all nuns, people our earth with spirits pure from fleshly stain, and then rail at the theatre. Our virtues would be of a very negative quality, if tried by no temptation. More good is done by fitting men to resist temptation, than by keeping them out of its way.

Mr. Goosequill.—By your leave, I'll tell you an anecdote of one of our actresses. She is the daughter of a widow, with several children, all of whom she supports from her salary. One season, when playing in a garrison town, a young officer paid her a good deal of attention, which she neither rejected nor encouraged. He made her some presents, which she accepted. One evening he went to the theatre tipsy, and demanded admittance to the greenroom, to see her; this was refused by the manager, who (the gallant persisting in the demand,) handed him over to the tender mercies of the police. Next day, he called upon the lady, to lay his complaint before her, and, after endeavoring, for some time, to excite her indignation against the manager, he asked her to quit the theatre, and ended by making her dishonorable proposals. She rose, went to another room, returned with his gifts, placed them in his hands, and much to his shame and mortification, shewed him to the door in a very quiet and dignified manner. Such is but one instance of many, which might be related; and puppies, who are thus treated, are wout in revenge, to brag of their *liaisons* with the very actresses, who have thus repulsed their advances.

Mr. Jonathan.—Ay, this is the "delightful modesty" I like, not that which consists in silly blushes, which mark the inward consciousness of what is wrong, coupled oftentimes with a fear of nothing but appearances.

Sir Peter.—Several similar instances have come under my own personal observation. But it waxes late. What says friend Skerrett?

Magician presents a paper.

(Reads) "Oh dear! Oh dear! what shall I do for the Montreallers. I play the regular drama to an almost empty house, and the few who are present come to criticise, sneer and snarl at every thing. I get up some out-of-the-way affair, and these people are ready to hiss it off the stage. I bring the Operatic troupe and that won't pay. I bring the Viennoise, and the theatre is fashionably attended, but unfortunately fashionable people pay me no more than unfashionable. What will suit them? not my stock company I fear. The old hands are good enough: Ollier is a passable substitute for Pardey and Crocker a decent exchange for Palmer. But that agent! (how I'd like to throttle him) for the rest he sends me animals to stock my farm in prospectu, not actors for a stage. What a fool I was to bring horses on the stage, when I had so many asses on it already. But this shall be the end of agency and quacking; I'll never disgrace myself by bringing either species of animal on my boards again. The Legitimate drama, and good actors old boy: then if thou fall'st," Skerrett, "thou fall'st a blessed martyr". But hang it martyrdom won't give me bread, nor Mrs. Skerrett bread, nor feed or clothe the little Skerretts. Never mind it will all come right in the end; it's always the darkest the hour before dawn."

The magician removes the Lantern and all depart.

SKETCHES BY "JACK."

MY FIRST PLAY.

"It shall not be thus much longer" muttered I, as I buttoned up to the top my almost threadbare coat; "I shall soon be able to get another;" at the same moment I felt instinctively, for my own copy of manuscript play, which was carefully placed therein.

I hurried out of my lodgings, which were "two pair back," and after slamming too the street door, I stood on the door steps surveying the clouds. It was a cold November's evening; a most inauspicious time to produce a new play; for all the good natured fashionables are out of town, and none but surly critics, reporters to newspapers, play going lawyers, and a sprinkling of stage, stricken illiterate "B'hoys," in it. The darkening clouds, and chilling fog proclaimed the approach of evening. "This night is big with fate!" escaped my lips, while with a rapid step I hastened to the theatre, there, to witness the performance of my first play. Trembling with hope, and fear, I found myself at the threshold of that huge pile dedicated to the drama; and my heart leapt within me, when I quietly seated myself in an upper box, where I could hide myself as much as possible from the gaze of the public:—for I fancied every eye in the theatre turned towards me; and every time I saw an individual whisper to another, I thought it must be to point out myself, as the author of the new piece. I regarded every musician in the orchestra with an anxious look, and at