

'We were extremely gratified on Tuesday evening, at Covent Garden Theatre, to hear that Mr. Sinclair had attended to our advice, and that his adoption of it was eminently serviceable to his professional character. In executing the polacca, he very prudently abstained from any wild flourishes, but kept strictly to the laws of melody, by which he was encored three times by the universal desire of the whole audience.' It is possible that the popular vocalist may have taken his critic's advice to heart, and resolved to forego indulging himself in wild flourishes; and if the opportunity had been afforded him, he might possibly have earned the extraordinary compliment of a triple encore. Unfortunately, neither singer nor song was heard at all that night on the boards of Covent Garden; and the critic had small reason to congratulate himself upon adopting the rule of Captain Absolute's too ready-witted man, who, whenever he drew upon his invention for a good current lie, always forged endorsements as well as the bill, in order to give the thing an air of truth.

The *Herald* seems to have had an unhappy knack of selecting gentlemen of this adventurous turn of mind. When the Piccolomini was attracting musical London to the old Opera-house by her winning portrayal of the heroine of *La Traviata*, the curiosity of opera-goers was piqued by the announcement of a rival Violetta at Covent Garden, in the person of Madame Bosio; but when the night came which was to bring the respective merits of the two great prima donnas to the test of comparison, circumstances compelled the postponement of the trial. The disappointed audience must have been more astonished than edified at the appearance next morning in the above-named newspaper of a highly panegyric criticism of Bosio's Violetta. The conscientious writer, after describing the deep pensiveness pervading the performance, declared it was not surprising that the first representation of *La Traviata* at Covent Garden should have achieved one of the most remarkable successes of the season, Madame Bosio having, by her admirable rendering of the heroine, taken a new lease of fame. Descending to details, the critic says: 'Perhaps Madame Bosio never sung so admirably as she did last night. Her first aria was sung to perfection.... In the duet with Germont, and the finale to the second act, she created a profound impression by her energy and feeling. Mario surpassed himself.... The recalls of Madame Bosio and Mario were numerous during the performance, and at the conclusion the usual ovation was paid to the lady and gentleman.' Doubtless the critic was satisfied with his production, and considered, as an exercise of the imaginative faculties, it was not bad; his editor, however, took a very commonplace view of the matter, and the following paragraph appeared in a prominent place in the next issue of the paper: 'The report of the performances of *La Traviata*, which appeared in a portion of our impression of yesterday, was altogether incorrect, the *Traviata* having been postponed in consequence of the illness of Signor Graziani: we are compelled to confide in the honour of our reporter in all such matters, and therefore we have felt it our duty to at once dispense with the further services of the writer of the pretended critique.'

A now defunct literary periodical was guilty of a comical blunder. Just a couple of days before a *Tale of Two Cities* was brought out at the Lyceum Theatre, the *Critic* informed its playgoing readers that 'the sole event of any moment which has taken place in the metropolitan theatres during the past week, is the production of Mr. Tom Taylor's dramatised version of Mr. Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, but as it has been even more unsuccessful than similar attempts to convert a novel into a piece usually are, we shall refrain from any detailed criticisms,' which was wise under the circumstances. The manageress of the Lyceum thought this prophetic condemnation a little too bad, and gave the public a bit of her mind on the subject through the medium of the daily press; and being a popular actress, her complaints were endorsed by the newspapers, and some rather hard words flung at the offending weekly. The editor

of the *Critic*, however, was quite equal to the occasion. In his next number, he explained that his theatrical reporter had left a note at the office running thus: 'As the *Tale of Two Cities* has failed me, I have nothing for this week without going far afield; pray say a few words about it.' In reading this, the recipient managed to ignore the little word 'me,' and therefore supposed that the piece had been played without success; the result of this error being the concoction of the aforesaid notice. The explanation was all very well as far as it went, but it certainly scarcely justified the announcement of the supposed failure being made in such very emphatic terms. The editor thought otherwise, or pretended to do so, and actually assumed the tone of a highly injured individual, complaining that so much should have been made of what he delicately described as a 'single deviation from accuracy,' while the reporter, whose bad writing was apparently the cause of the original mistake, taking his cue from his superior officer, coolly declared he had only told the truth, 'as many wise men have done, a day too soon,' and then hastened to console his maligned editor with the assurance that if he were to devote his space to correcting the errors of fact, logic, and language daily committed by his assailants, all the space and time at his command would be occupied with the ungrateful function.

Such critical blunders as these tell their own story, but it is hard to account for the mistakes regarding personal identity into which newspaper critics have now and then fallen. T. P. Cooke must have been inexpressibly delighted to see himself praised for his performance of a part played by another actor; and Miss Faucit must have blushed with pleasure at the unintended compliment when, after playing Volunia, she saw Miss O'Neill reproached with making the character too youthful in appearance. The playbills in these cases may have misled the critics, and the theatrical 'make-up' of the actors have prevented them discovering the truth; but no such excuse is available for the musical critic who abused our great tenor, asserting that he had deteriorated in style, voice, and execution, as the said critic had prophesied he would do, if he persisted in travelling about the country singing commonplace ballads. The proof of the singer's deterioration was the manner in which he sang at a certain performance of the *Messiah*, when it happened—as it too often happens—that the popular tenor's place was occupied by a substitute; and the critic proved that he was short-sighted in more senses than one.

HOME.

A THOUSAND recollections cluster around that one word, many of them stretching away back to the days of our novitiate, when with bright golden dreams of the dim future, we enjoyed the mad romp with the winds, or took part in the exciting game. How vividly they rush before us when, after encountering much of the mutability of life, and witnessing other scenes, an opportunity is afforded of again visiting that familiar spot, endeared by the sweet memories of childhood. The accustomed haunts, where we so often rambled in search of innocent amusements, which then made up all our joys and sorrows, are still there, but oh! how changed? We can scarcely recognise the spot where stood the old branching elm under the shade of which we built our castles, and held our interesting councils, nor the projecting rock by the water's edge, upon which we fashioned our miniature boats, and proudly watched their manœuvring upon the smooth surface of the bay.

The narrow path, too, which then pointed the way our truant feet so often sought, when disobeying the kind request, "don't go to the water," cannot be found, a broader and more convenient one now forming the passage.

But still there is the same old grape vine throwing its tendrils over the garden fence, and the row of cherry trees behind which we would secrete ourselves when taking "the forbidden fruit."

The long narrow lane, too, leading back to the bush, over which we have so often travelled when driving the cows to and from pasture, still passes by the hickory grove, when many a great feat of climbing was performed.

"The old oaken bucket, the moss-covered bucket" still hangs in the well, and the water from its brim is just as cool and refreshing as when we gathered around the curb after returning from a summer day's ramble. While we miss many things familiarly associated with our youthful memories, there are many still remaining which appear to greet us as old friends. We love to look upon them, remembering the days gone by, and call to our recollection the thoughts and feelings which actuated us in those days of sunshine, and often, while thus musing, the names of those with whom we then sported come before us, and enquiringly we ask—

"Where are the friends of my youth?"

Say, where are those cherished ones gone:

Oh, why have they dropped with the leaf—

Oh, why have they left me to mourn?"

We cannot forget our young companions. Time, in its unceasing whirl, may produce wondrous revolutions, but still we remember them as the same loved counsellors they were when we formed our plans in early life.

Robert Pollok beautifully expresses this sentiment, when he says—

"Some I remember, and will ne'er forget;
My early friends, friends of my evil day.
Friends in my youth, friends in my misery too:
Friends given by God in mercy and in love.
Oh, I remember, and will ne'er forget
Our meetingspots, our chosen sacred hours,
Our burning words that uttered all the soul;
Our faces beaming with unearthly love."

But, alas! they are now scattered to the "four winds of heaven," and many of them have passed that bourne from whence no traveller returns; and as the memory of them steals over those that are left, the heart grows soft, and the eye dim under their soothing influence. A small marble slab, with their names engraved thereon, standing in the little quiet graveyard, just at the head of the bay, where the willow loves to grow, bending mournfully over them, points their last resting place. On many of them we read that significant sentence "gone home," as if they possessed no place called "home," while here they witnessed, with us, the changes incident to life, but are now entered into the full enjoyments of a "home" where change is never known, and where they enjoy the sweet companionship of friends from whom they are never more to be parted. When we remember the promises of him who said, "I go to prepare a place for you," we cannot question the reality of that sentence we read on the tombs of our early friends; and sometimes when the world feels cold around us, and there appears nothing to live for, we almost wish that we too could "go home." If to us the associations of our earthly homes are dear, and fondly remembered, we anticipate much greater enjoyment when we enter that "home in heaven," where sorrow, death nor parting ever enters, and where the ties which unite us are strengthened by the friendship of angels.

IONA.

Belleville, C.W., August 3rd, 1866.

INCREASE OF THE EARTH.—Some very curious speculations have lately been put forward by M. Dufour concerning the increase in size of the earth. Will it be believed that our globe is increasing in bulk year by year, owing to the quantity of meteors (falling stars) which are projected into it from the regions of space? M. Dufour has made calculations showing that the earth sustains an annual increase equal to 114,400,400th of its weight. It appears that nearly two cubic metres meteoric dust fall upon every acre of the earth's surface in the course of a single year. It is stated that in some parts of England this meteoric dust may be found in accumulations nearly a foot deep.

Commerce.—A cord that binds bodies of nations together, but which has often slipped on to their necks and strangled them.