

try.' Sheridan on being told this the next day, burst into tears. Time has confirmed the verdict of Byron, at least with regard to 'The School for Scandal.' The extraordinary vitality of this great comedy was shown in a remarkable way in London two or three years ago, when it was produced simultaneously at two theatres, at one of which it ran for over two hundred nights, and at the other for nearly as many.

The close of the regular season was followed by a visit from a company from the Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York, who appeared in 'Lemons.' The play is not a good one; the plot is intricate, the situations are forced, and the characters and dialogue weak. In spite of some clever acting by Mr. Fawcett as *Major Gooseberry*, and Mrs. Wells as *Mrs. Stark*, it was a failure, and 'The Big Bonanza' was substituted in its place. This play is familiar in Toronto, having been given here two years ago by another company from the Fifth Avenue Theatre. The present performance, though extremely good, was markedly inferior to the previous one.

At the Royal Opera House, Mr. Sothorn and company gave a week's performances. On seeing him a second time as *Lord Dundreary* we were more than ever disposed to agree with the able critic of the *London Academy*, in the opinion that, by dint of constant repetition during ten or fifteen years, the impersonation has degenerated into 'mere reckless, unbridled fooling.' No being bearing even the remotest resemblance to Dundreary could by any amount of searching be discovered in real life. The character must therefore be condemned in a dramatic sense. In the way of farce and buffoonery, however, nothing more amusing can be witnessed on the stage to-day. There is a sense, even, in which the performance is thoroughly artistic, for, absolutely unreal as the character is, it is perfectly consistent throughout, even to the minutest detail; and no better exemplification could be given of the remarkable genius of the actor. Mr. Sothorn appeared in three plays new to Toronto audiences: 'The Hornet's Nest,' 'Sam,' and 'The Crushed Tragedian.' The last is an adaptation, with many alterations by Mr. Sothorn, of Byron's 'Prompter's Box,' a play produced in London about ten years ago. The drama as now given is not a particularly good one. There are some faults of construction. The climax is reached at the close of the third act, and the fourth (the final one) falls flat after it; and the scene in the third act,

in front of the stage entrance, contributes nothing to the action, and ought to be excised. The dialogue, too, is in parts weak, and would bear brightening up throughout. The play has been resuscitated apparently for the purpose of giving greater prominence to the part taken by Mr. Sothorn, *De Lacy Fitzalmonst*, a tragedian of the old gloomy and stagey school now almost extinct, which it is intended to satirise. The design is not without its difficulties. a character of this sort, carried through four acts with perfect naturalness and consistency, would be unendurably monotonous; and to avoid this fault it is necessary to exaggerate and caricature, and even to introduce here and there jokes of the Dundreary pattern. It is no small praise to say that in spite of these drawbacks, Mr. Sothorn's performance was fairly successful, and gave fresh evidence of his great versatility. This being so, it might help the piece to give the part greater prominence than it now has. We have no space to notice at length the 'Hornet's Nest,' and 'Sam.' Both are wonderfully amusing plays, particularly the latter.

Mr. Sothorn was followed after a brief interval by Mr. McDowell's fine company from Montreal, the plays given being 'Our Boarding House,' 'Rosedale,' and 'The Shaughraun.' The last two were noticed on the company's previous visit in September. 'Our Boarding House' is a moderately good play, as plays go. The general idea of the piece is decidedly original, though much of the filling in is the reverse. For instance, the farcial combat between *Col. Elevator* and *Prof. Gillypod* bears a striking resemblance to the one in 'Slasher and Crasher'. The characters are numerous, and many of them were well acted. Mr. McDowell looked the part of the rascally Italian, *Joseph Fioretti*, and acted it well, but his dialect was a curious mixture of English, French, German, and Italian. Mrs. McDowell, as *Beatrice Mannheim* was as graceful and natural as she always is. Mr. Lytell was exceedingly amusing as *Prof. Gillypod*, and Mr. Hudson, who took his place after the first night, was even better, being more natural. Mr. Arnold was also amusing as *Col. Elevator*, though his desire to make the most of the part led him to rather overdo it. Miss Fiske gave the part of *Betty*, the maid-of-all-work, to the life, and also sang a couple of songs very acceptably. The other parts do not call for notice. This excellent company will, we understand, return in about a month, when they will produce Byron's burlesque of 'The Field of the Cloth of Gold'.