

THE NEW PLAY.

Seated in stall, with a frown of frigidity.
Mark the stern critic, the type of his race;
Quailing in box, in a state of timidity.
Watch the poor author, with care in his face,
Pouring in pit crowd a critical gathering.
Middle-class Schlegels, and Hazlitts, and Lambes;
While the front row of the gallery bath a ring
Formed of "first-nighters," defiers of "jams."

Down in the circle, close-packed, sit collected a
Mortley assembly who "missed taking stalls."
Some of the "free list," and some who'd "expected a
Box," and some friends who are sent in for "calls."
Meanwhile the hum and the bustle increases,
Bright flares the gas, and the music begins;
Now, the poor fellow who's written the piece is
Certain his chair's stuffed with needles and pins.

Up goes the curtain, and down comes the audience.
Friendly first nighters applaud the new scene,
Which is elaborate, not to say gaudy; hence
Gallery calls for the "Eminent Green."
First act "goes" slowly, till Muggins, the favourite,
Enters, when laughter greets every word;
Fun he's to utter, with insults to flavour it:
Act drop descends on a "picture absurd."

Then comes the chattering, sneering, sarcastical;
Brown says it's weak. White declares that it's trash;
Smith says the story is crude and fantastical;
Jones says it's French, and a horrible hash;
Black says to Gray, "Actors—stage—both declining."
Gray says, "Alas! undeniable facts."
Robinson, who's been extensively dining,
Hiccups, "A dooshe of a time 'tween the acts!"

Finally curtain comes down; all is ended.
Verdict!—A triumph for author and all.
Captain Hawhaw (who at heart thinks it splendid)
Languidly taps with his stick in his stall.
Strong-lunged old pitites express their approval,
Gallery shout in their usual way:
The critics observe that "perhaps the removal
Of half of the piece may much strengthen the play."

Flushed and excited, the actors delighted,
Feel a relief, and the author's polite,
Praising all round; not the smallest is slighted;
"No need to call in to-morrow Good-night."
Thus all successful, rosy, pleasantly,
Comes to a finish the latest new play.
"Ah!" growls the manager; "let us see presently
What those confounded newspapers will say."

A NEW STAGE MANAGER.

There are a few critics who have stood by Henry Irving from the first real opening of his career, and who felt a personal concern in his success of Monday night, when he played "Hamlet" in his own theater, and in his own way, with artists selected by himself, with a new leading lady, with a new arrangement of scenes, and in so far as decorations and fittings are concerned, in a new and beautiful house. There are other critics who have more than once turned upon the popular idol, and it would seem when you are opposed to Mr. Irving and his method, you must be bitter and personal; you must attack his legs, you must sneer at his gait, and, if you are a caricaturist as well as a critic, you must draw hideous pictures of him, forgetting that mannerism is individuality, and that a man does not make his own legs. But to-day it is all sunshine. The courageous artist, the thoughtful actor, the conscientious student, the generous and high minded man has conquered. It would be eccentric, nay clownish, to stand apart amid the general congratulations, and during the week not a journal of note but has paid tribute to the actor and the manager, who on the re-opening of the Lyceum on Monday night was welcomed in the double capacity by a brilliant and enthusiastic audience, which in the stalls waved handkerchiefs at him, and in the pit raised hats and cheered with one voice. It was a scene not to be forgotten when Mr. Irving came on, for, apart from his own personal popularity, he had abolished the fee system, he had cushioned the seats of both pit and gallery, he had made each stall a comfortable and elegant seat, and transformed the heavy looking house into a very temple of art. Behind the scenes, as in front, the manager-actor had introduced notable reforms. The dressing rooms had been decorated and properly furnished, hot and cold water being provided, and everything done to uphold the decencies and promote the comforts of life on the actor's side of the curtain. Until very lately, the conditions under which artists have had to dress in London theatres, as a rule, have been simply disgraceful. Strange to say, the provinces set the example in this direction, but even now, behind the scenes of one of the London theaters is worthy of a back-slam in Seven Dials or a Bowery gaff. The Lyceum, Prince of Wales', Covent Garden, the Gaiety, the Court, and the Olympic are more or less exceptions to this, and now that managers are in the humor to "reform it altogether," we shall soon have no reason to complain, for the managers of London are like sheep—they follow a bellwether pellmell. Mr. Irving has shown them the way, and in due course things will be pushed to extremes, changing from Seven Dials rooms to West-End boudoirs, from a Bowery gaff to a Fifth Avenue theater. The Lyceum scenery for the new version of "Hamlet" is of the highest order of stage art, and it moved on the first night with the regularity of clock-work and with the silence of greased wheels and list shoes. No entr'acte music was set down, no prompter's bell rang; the play went on without warning; the curtain went up and down with a mysterious regularity; and when, after each act, calls were made for the artists, they did not come on before the curtain, but received their honors on the scene. The orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Lombell Clarke, was out of sight, and the church-yard scene was played to a characteristic organ accompaniment. The interview between Hamlet and the Ghost took place on a wild rock-bound coast, the apparition addressing the Prince from

the summit of a rock, and afterwards gradually fading out, as it seemed, among the cliffs, as the russet morning broke over the sea. The court of the King was a fine solid-looking set, and the furnishing of the Queen's room was an archaeological triumph, full of well-studied mediæval detail, hung with tapestry and suggesting an atmosphere of superstition and religious exercise grimly suitable to the incident of the play which belongs to the scene. The funeral of Ophelia was performed at even-tide, which is defended by Mrs. Frank Marshall on the ground of the "maimed rights" accorded to a supposed suicide; though this view of the time when the ceremony should take place is not borne out by the text, for neither Hamlet nor Horatio see anything unusual of a funeral taking place at such an hour. But this is a small matter. The scene is laid on the slope of an old fashioned burial ground, in the solemn twilight, the processional chant of the monkish choir breaking out at intervals to the requiem strains of the organ. The business of Hamlet's leaping into the grave is kept out, and the Prince's exit is made behind the group of mourners, who represent a rare picture, both as to composition and color, as the curtain goes down. There is something incongruous yet curiously impressive in playing the last awfully tragic scene in a hall of the palace looking upon a pastoral scene of lawn and silvery birch trees in their first spring leaves. With this brief outline of scenery, which omits several exquisitely painted cloths for front scenes, the reader will have sufficient notes for realizing the fact that without loading the tragedy with gorgeous scenery, Mr. Irving has had the play mounted in a worthy setting, in which the poet and the artist have worked carefully together. When the audience insisted upon the new manager saying something at the end of the performance, Mr. Irving, in a short address, said he had been working all his life to realize that night's representation of "Hamlet," and London is agreed that the effort is honorable to the manager-actor and not unworthy of Shakespeare. As to the merits of Mr. Irving's Hamlet, itself, sufficient has been said on previous occasions. His scenes with the players, with Ophelia and with his mother, are unequalled on the modern stage for their subtle power. The princely graciousness of his manner to the actors is not only surpassed by his half disguised tenderness toward Ophelia, and the struggle of his affectionate nature to "speak daggers" to his mother. In the Ophelia scenes he was assisted by Miss Ellen Terry, who is to-day the most popular actress in England. Mr. Forrester played the King; Mr. Mead, the Ghost; Mr. Swinburne, Horatio; Mr. Kyle Bellew, Osrice; Mr. Beamont, the First Player; Mr. F. Cooper, Laertes, and Miss l'aucefort, the Queen. It is believed that "Faust and Marguerite" will follow "Hamlet," with Irving as Mephistopheles and Miss Terry as Marguerite.

ECHOES FROM LONDON.

THERE is a London toy which is popular in town at the present time. It represents two athletes, wound up by clock work, walking a race round "a board of green cloth," and it is certainly amusing to watch their antics. They pass and repass each other in the most natural manner, and put on a most determined spurt at intervals, when occasion demands.

MANY have seen in the Paris Exhibition, the popular statue of "The Dirty Boy." A very good caricature has been done of this, photographs of which are now on sale in the London shops, in which the Earl of Beaconsfield is the nurse and Mr. Gladstone the boy who objects to the soap getting into his eyes. The parody is executed with excellent effect.

"DAISY CUTTER" is the slang word of the day. Anything you like may be a "daisy cutter." A fascinating actress, a crack horse, or a pugilist are all in the vocabulary of the young man about town "daisy cutters." The word occurs in the Covent Garden pantomime, and seems to have commended itself at once to the *beaux esprits* on whom "Whoa, Emma!" had begun to pall.

ATTENTION has been called to a rather amusing slip Mr. Simpson, of the *Illustrated London News*, has perpetrated in his drawing of himself, as sound asleep, during a night bivouac in the Khyber Pass! Of course, the motive of the sketch is legitimate enough—only, on the surface, it looks rather odd how "a drawing by our special artist" could be done by "our special artist" when he was asleep.

It is in contemplation to publish a biography of the late Princess Alice. If the Queen's name is not wholly given to this work on the title page, Her Majesty will, at least, take a considerable part in the duties, and a good deal in the career of the Princess not hitherto known will be revealed in the book. Some curious anecdotes respecting her intellectual character, and also some bearing on the benevolent side of her nature, may be expected.

WE hear that an ancient document consisting of thirty folios which has been missing from the archives of Gloucester Cathedral for some eighty years, has been discovered in the possession of a

book-dealer in Berlin, who asks the modest sum of £160 of the Dean and Chapter as the price of its restoration. The document was written in the fourteenth century, and contains historical matter relating to the Cathedral for the previous two hundred years.

Is Greek to be given up in our public schools? Mr. Oscar Browning, whose former position at Eton gives him a right to speak and to be heard, says "No." And there are many who would cry out "No; perish Latin rather than Greek!" It is to be hoped that it will be long ere it will be exiled from Eton and Harrow. Greek is the basis of all scientific nomenclature, both French and English; and without a little knowledge of it, our doctors, chemists, geologists and zoologists would be utterly at sea.

THE authorities at the British Museum—or rather those in the Print Department of that excellent art educational establishment—are elated at the really splendid bequest of original pictures and drawings by Turner, De Wint, David Cox, and other similar notabilities, on the point of being received from the executors of the late Mr. Henderson. It is a choice, though small, collection of some 200 specimens of pure aquarelle art, and as it is well worthy of exhibition, the public will have an opportunity of seeing it.

It is said that Monivea Castle, in the county of Galway, and province of Connaught, is likely to be chosen as the future residence of the Duke of Connaught. It is situated in a fine sporting district with respect both to hunting and shooting; and belongs—as a reference to Burke's *Landed Gentry* or to Hardwicke's *County Families* will show—to an old family named French, who have been seated there for centuries, in fact, ever since the Irish Invasion, and who formed one of the fourteen ancient "tribes" of Galway so celebrated in Hibernian history.

THE Urban Club at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, held their boar's head supper, as usual, at which the dish was preceded in the old style by choristers singing—

Caput aprî defero.
Reddens laudes Domino.

as it is sung at Queen's College, Oxford. Those who were present on the occasion—and most of the literary and artistic world were there—might have fancied themselves placed back a couple of hundred years in the diary of Father Time. In the room where the repast was held David Garrick made his first essay as an actor in Fielding's *Mock Doctor*. Johnson, whose chair is in the same building, and the property of the club, was then writing for the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, and it was he who introduced "Little Davy" to Cave, who originated the said amateur performance for the *début* of one who was afterwards destined to be one of the greatest actors of any age.

To the use of the post card it is constantly and reasonably objected that one is not safe in confiding thereto any communication other than those of a public character, which all who "run may read." There are many things we should like to write for one pair of eyes only, which if found on a post card would be patent to all. Cryptograms are tedious and difficult, and one must have the key always at hand. An invention of a very simple and ingenious character has lately been devised by Sir Edward Lee. At first sight the series of curves, dots, and right lines seem puzzling and complicated, but with the aid of the key, which can be mastered in five minutes, and then finally discarded, it is seen that the curves form symmetrical segments of a circle—the right lines are made up of the intersecting diameters, and the number of dots alter the value of the characters. The simplicity of the arrangement is as remarkable as its ingenuity; and for practical purposes the method is very safe and secret enough.

BRELOQUES POUR DAMES.

A BOOK that is always filled with good points for women—a needle-book.

A DELICATE way of complimenting the old lady—"Ah! madame, you grow every day to look more like your daughter."

MARRIED men are apt to forget that if it had not been for their mothers-in-law they would not have their wives.

A WESTERN paper wants to know why a woman always sits on the floor to pull on her stockings? We suppose it is simply because she can't sit on the ceiling.

AN excited old man came in recently to inform us that he had seen six women sit a whole hour in a social conversation without once referring to what they were.

"WHAT," said an inquisitive young lady, "is the most popular colour for a bride?" We may be a little particular in such matters, but we should prefer a white one.

MUSICAL and dramatic criticism by the intelligent public: Young lady to her escort at the end of the second act of "Faust": "Why, that Mephistoffe is an awful feller, ain't he?"

IN view of the great sufferings of the poor this winter weather, a sentimental young lady worked until midnight for three nights embroidering a blue flannel ulster for her favorite black-and-tan-terrier.

"I NEVER shall invite her to visit me again," said an English girl; "she shut herself up in her own room the whole morning while she was with us, and copied all my towels." Here's a new social sin; civilization grows more complicated daily.

A MAN can fasten skates on his sister in much less than half the time he can fix a pair on some other fellow's sister. Why is this? Figure it out and send us the answer on ice. That's easy enough. It's because he would let his sister slide before the other girl.

THE Mormon women say their husbands are the bravest of men. We believe it. Here the man who ventures on treble blessedness is regarded as a truly heroic character, but there are no words to express the true estimate of the man of whom sixteen women are able to say—he is a darling and devoted husband.

A VETERAN observer says that ladies, in crossing a street, get one-third over, see a team approaching and the driver trying to pass behind them, then invariably turn around, and unless the driver is quick will throw themselves under the horses. If they would go on or stand still they would be safe, but they will turn back. Watch them and see for yourself.

GIRLS, if you want to encourage young men, get an album. It's the first thing a bashful young man grabs when he enters a strange house where there are girls. We've seen them look through one until they knew every picture by heart, from page one to General Grant in the back part. It's wonderful what interest a bashful man will take in a girl's grandmother and pug-nosed uncle at the first visit, but it's always so. Get 'em, girls. It's best thing in the world to occupy a fellow's hands, and it's a sure cure for bashfulness.

HUMOROUS.

STATISTICIANS affirm that countries raising the most onions have the fewest marriages.

A LADY, describing an ill-natured man, says he never smiles but he feels ashamed of it.

A NEW brand of cigars is called "The Lottery Ticket," because only one in a thousand draws.

A GREAT many men are of the opinion that a certain quantity of wine is good for a man. It is the uncertain quantity that hurts him.

A LITTLE four-year-old came as near right as any one else, when she said that the Lord was the author of "the beautiful snow."

THE man who wrote that "nothing was impossible" never tried to find the pocket in his wife's dress when it was hanging up in a clothes-press.

A CHATTANOOGA dandy, who was one of a jury which failed to convict for want of evidence, explained to his brethren that the culprit was "released on a piccon."

A SCHOOLMASTER spoke of his pupils as having been so thoroughly disciplined that they were as quiet and orderly as the chairs themselves. It was probably because they were came bottomed.

WHAT this country most needs at present is a species of honey bee which will work all winter and give us spring honey. The idea of a bee loaning away six months of the twelve is absurd.

WILLIAM sends a letter to this office asking us to explain what is depressed currency. A depressed currency, William, an awfully depressed one, is the buttons found in a church collection basket.

ABOUT this time Prince Bismarck steps around to his tailor's and remarks: "Say, Schneider, just put a copper lining in dem goats and bants, will you? I dinks ye have anoder Zoocialist schutzenfest poody sudden, maype."

"THE Lord loveth a cheerful giver;" but there's no use chucking a copper cent into the contribution box loud enough to make the folks on the back seat think the communion service has tumbled off the altar.

PROBABLY the last, dreadful day, when Gabriel sounds his trumpet, if he doesn't stop once or twice between the blasts and shouts, "General! general! colonel, I say?" not more than two-fifths of the men in American cemeteries will get up.

A MISER's character described in two lines: "You who are acquainted with Mr. B., can you tell me the reason, being so rich, he always takes a third-class passage to go to his villa?" "Oh! it is very simple. It is because there is no fourth-class."

SPEAKING of dull times, a wicked Mobile man says that a few weeks ago a stranger arrived there and bought a bale of cotton, and a pleasant rumour was at once started that the cotton buyers had arrived, but it only proved to be a Chicago man with the earache.

WHEN a snow-ball as hard as a door knob hits you in the back of the head as you are crossing the street, no matter how quickly you turn, the only thing you can see is one boy, with the most innocent face and the emptiest hands that ever confronted a false accusation.

SHE figured up: "Two cans at 20 cents, 40 cents—that is 150 oysters; milk, butter and sundries, \$1.50—that is 150 stewes; at 25 cents, will be \$40. A net profit of over \$35." Then she smiled sweetly, and the oyster-man knew that she was the refreshment committee of the church festival.

FIRST small boy: "Your father's going to lecture to night, ain't he? My father and mother are going, and I'm going too. Ain't you?" Second small boy: "Pooh! I guess I've heard it afore you will. Dad speaks it afore the looking-glass every night. It's fun to see him, I tell yer."

"MAMMA," said a wicked youngster, "am I a canoe?" "No, child, why do you ask?" "Oh, because you always say you like to see people paddle their own canoe, and I didn't know but maybe I was yours." The boy went out of the door with more reference to speed than grace.

A COUNTRYMAN startled the waiter in an up-town restaurant recently by his stowing-away capacity. After he had eaten enough apparently for four men, the waiter pressed him to have something to drink. "Thank you," came the reply between mouthfuls, "I never drink until I am half through eating."

What are little boys made of?
Snipe and snails, and puppy-dogs' tail,
And that's what they are made of.

What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice, and all that's nice,
And that's what they are made of.