

ALBUM



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"Times" Aug 26. 1881.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

It is not a matter for surprise that the enormous success which has attended Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's attempts at founding an indigenous school of English comic opera should stimulate the efforts of other men in the same direction. As such an effort the joint production of Mr. H. P. Stephens and Mr. Edward Solomon, brought out at the Olympic Theatre on Wednesday night, must be considered. The hero of the piece—none other than the far-famed Claude Duval—is, it is true, a historic person, and the bold highwaymen who follow his leadership are seriously intent on business. But the dramatic consistency of these personages and the probability of the deeds of valour they perform are scarcely superior to those of their prototypes, the formidable *Pirates of Penzance*. To find out parallelisms between the two pieces would be more easy than it would be satisfactory. Neither is it necessary to add that as yet neither Mr. Stephens, the librettist, nor Mr. Solomon, the composer, have attained the ease and perfection of their respective models. The plot of the piece is somewhat incoherent, the dialogue is without point, and the laudable attempt at indicating the diction and manner of the Restoration period is sadly marred by the not very refined and intensely modern parlance of some of the comic characters. On the other hand, Mr. Solomon's score is wanting in distinct features of any kind. There is not much tune, although agreeable snatches of melody are met with now and then, neither is the dramatic characterization of the various types attempted to any perceptible degree. The music continues its even course without much interruption. Sentimental ballad follows upon comic song, and is in its turn relieved by a short *ensemble*, but the general type of these various components remains very much the same throughout. The sparkle, the quaint humour, and the charming touches of instrumentation to be found in everything that Mr. Sullivan writes would be vainly looked for in *Claude Duval*. At the same time, Mr. Solomon's work is not without some merit of its own. There is, for instance, a very graceful chorus for female voices at the beginning of the second act, and the ballad with the refrain "Heigho! so the story goes," sung by Constance, the heroine, is not without a certain antiquated grace; this being one of the attempts at what is somewhat vaguely called "Early English" colour, which, as a matter of course, is not wanting. Another opportunity for giving "local colour" of the same kind, offered by the famous incident of Claude Duval releasing a lady on condition of her stepping a minuet with him on the heath, Mr. Solomon has not turned to equally good account. The dance composed by him for the occasion, although pretty enough in itself, is certainly not a minuet, neither is the term "coranto" applied to it by Duval himself more correct. For the *courante* or *corrente* is of rather rapid movement and in 3-2 or 3-4 time. Among the most successful numbers of the piece we may mention, in addition to those already named, a soldiers' march and chorus, fashioned after the familiar scene in Gounod's *Faust*, a comic song for the truculent lieutenant of Duval's band, and the ballad in which that great highwayman expresses sentiments worthy of Don Giovanni under circumstances probably suggested by Auber's *Fra Diavolo*. To sum up, Mr. Solomon's music, whatever may be thought of its artistic worth, has at least the merit of pleasing the public, and there is every reason to predict a successful career of the opera, which is splendidly mounted and well performed, under the composer's own direction. The chief characters, Claude Duval, (Mr. F. H. Celli), Constance, the heroine (Miss Marion Hood), and Charles Lorrimore, her sentimental and successful lover (Mr. George Power) are in competent hands, other less important parts being equally well filled. Chorus and orchestra also leave nothing to be desired. Of the plot it will be sufficient to give the barest outline. The action is chiefly concerned with the fortunes of Charles Lorrimore, who is an adherent of Lord Clarendon, and at the downfall of his patron shares his disgrace and danger. His broad acres have by some unlawful means come into possession of a certain McGruder, a villain and miser, whose beautiful niece is loved by Lorrimore. The latter has, fortunately for himself, saved the life of Claude Duval, and the generous highwayman in return attacks the wicked McGruder in his own castle, and presents his friend Lorrimore with the recovered title deeds of his estate and with a lovely bride into the bargain.

"Era" Aug 20. 1881.

"CLAUDE DUVAL."

In connection with the new comic opera at the Olympic, the following particulars may not be without interest to our readers:—Claude Duval was a famous French highwayman, who infested the northern roads of this great Metropolis, and made Holloway, between Islington and Highgate, frequently the scene of his predatory exploits. In Lower Holloway he was kept in memory by the name of Duval's-lane, an ancient road which commenced from Holloway-road, skirting Hornsey-wood, and leading to Whetstone, by way of Crouch-end. In the year 1831 it was lighted with gas. Mr John Timbs, in his "Romance of London," states that, within memory, Duval's-lane was so infested that few persons would venture into it even in mid-day. About twenty-five years ago stood a very ancient old farm-house in the lane, now Hornsey-road, which was partly built of wood, and was formerly surrounded by a moat, over which was a drawbridge. In 1770 it was a tavern, with tea-gardens attached. The landlord's name was Fawcett. It has been stated that Duval resided there, a circumstance which gave it the name of Duval's House. It is now taken down, and Dillon's-place occupies the site. The late Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay, born October 25th, 1800, and who died December 28th, 1859, tells us, in his "History of England," that Claude Duval took to the road, and became captain of a formidable gang of highwaymen; and that it is related how, at the head of his troop, he stopped a lady's coach in which was a booty of £400; how he took only £100, and suffered the fair owner to retain the rest, on condition that she danced a minuet with him on the green sward. William Powell Frith, R.A., has made this celebrated exploit the subject of one of his wonderful pictures exhibited in 1860, which has been engraved. Duval's nefarious career was cut short. He was arrested at the Hole-in-the-Wall Tavern, Chandos-street, Covent-garden, and was executed in the reign of Charles the Second, at Tyburn, January 21st, 1669, in the twenty-seventh year of his age; and, after lying in state at the Tangier Tavern, St. Giles's, he was buried in the middle aisle of St. Paul's Church, Covent-garden. His funeral was attended by ladies of quality bearing flambeaux, and a numerous train of mourners, the great grief of the women who were present being exuberantly expressed.

There is a sad lack and an infusion of cratively demanded. get of the theatre. piece has received Solomon, who was warmly greeted.

F. H. Celli, and to. in White Wh.

New and Original Romantic and Comic Opera, in Three Acts, called
 "CLAUDE DUVAL; OR, LOVE AND LARCENY,"
 by H. P. Stephens and Edward Solomon.

Claude Duval	Mr F. H. CELLI
Charles Lorrimore	Mr GEORGE POWER
Sir Whiffle Whaffle	Mr ARTHUR WILLIAMS
Martin M'Gruder	Mr CHARLES ASHFORD
Captain Harlelgh	Mr LEUMANE
Blood-red Bill	Mr FRED. SOLOMON
Boscatt	Mr HAROLD RUSSELL
Hodge	Mr GOLDIE
Podge	Mr COOPER CLIFFE
Constance	Miss MARION HOOD
Rose	Miss EDITH BLANDE
Mistress Betty	Miss HARRIET COVENEY
Dolly	Miss NELLIE SANSON
Mary	Miss DAISY FOSTER
Prudence	Miss MAY LENNOX
Kezia	Miss VIOLET DANE
Barbara	Miss BRAUMONT

After being postponed from Saturday last, the new comic opera *Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny*, by Messrs H. P. Stephens and E. Solomon, was produced on Wednesday evening in presence of a very large audience. The subject was certainly a novel one treated as an opera. We have had Claude Duval as the hero of many a ballad, and in fiction the dashing highwayman has appeared scores of times; but it was reserved for Mr Michael Gunn to present him to the public associated with operatic music, which we may at once say is very good. Indeed, there could be little doubt in making a comparison of the music with the libretto as to which was the best. The author, while occasionally treating his subject with cleverness, seems to have been somewhat undecided whether to give up his characters to reckless fun or to make them sentimental, and this hovering between two styles has given a certain weakness to the libretto, which, however, did not prevent its being generally well received by the audience; while the tuneful music of Mr Solomon found great favour from beginning to end. The young composer has not, perhaps, hit upon quite such catching refrains as are to be found in one or two instances in *Billee Taylor*; but the music, as a whole, is decidedly superior in quality, and again raises the question why, while we have native composers so qualified to write English operas, our authors and Managers should run after foreign composers. In the score of *Claude Duval* will be found many a bright and pleasant idea, many a tuneful passage, and many a clever bit of instrumentation, showing what an advance the composer has made during a short period. Having already done so much and so well, there is hope that he will do something still better, for there are indications in this opera that the composer has only begun to explore his mine of musical ideas, and that the vein will bear working freely. We shall have occasion, as we proceed, to note some of the brightest and most attractive passages; meanwhile, we will narrate the chief incidents of a plot which is chiefly due to the inventive powers of the author. Macaulay tells us how Duval took to the road and became the leader of a dashing band of highwaymen, whose exploits on the North-road made them the terror of travellers; while the name of the leader was chosen as the title of a lane leading from Hornsey. Mr Frith, the Academician, has also made a pictorial hero of Claude Duval, having painted the incident of the highwayman stopping a lady's coach, and then restoring part of the proceeds of his robbery when the fair one consented to dance a minuet with him. The story of his arrest and execution at Tyburn in 1669, when only in the twenty-seventh year of his age, and his burial in St. Paul's Church, Covent-garden, his funeral being attended by ladies of title carrying flambeaux, has been already told in these columns, and gives a curious picture of the sentimentality of the period. Introducing two or three of the actual incidents in the career of the notorious highwayman, Mr Stephens has blended them with a story of domestic and sentimental interest, and we cannot help thinking that the author would have been more completely successful if he had made greater use of the reckless vein of jocular and caricature which we find so freely employed in the works of Offenbach. As it is we have an opera approaching closely, in some instances, to the style of the English opera with which we have been made familiar by Balfe, Wallace, and Macfarren. The work opens with a short overture, in which some of the chief melodies of the opera are introduced, and then the curtain rises upon an extremely picturesque view of Newmarket Heath, where we find the followers of Claude Duval disguised as gipsies, and engaged in fortune-telling, as a means of compensating themselves for the scarcity of wealthy travellers. There is a pretty chorus made up of the sham gipsies and the maidens who come to have their fortunes told. The scene, musically, will remind some of the opening incidents in Wallace's *Maritana*; but Mr Solomon may be credited with a fair amount of originality in the music, which is besides cleverly scored. The first dramatic incident comes with the entry of Charles Lorrimore, who, having been a follower of Lord Clarendon, is proscribed, a reward being offered for his arrest. He is flying from the military when he is captured by Claude Duval's band; but when the leader comes in on horseback in the most approved style of "dashing highwaymen" he discovers that he has met Lorrimore in London in convivial circles, and Lorrimore had also saved Duval's life in a brawl. Learning his difficulty the highwayman, to the great disgust of his lieutenant, Blood-red Bill, determines to befriend the hero, and an agreeable duet is given as the musical issue of this scene. Duval gets an inkling that love is one of Lorrimore's difficulties. He is attached to the niece of a miserly old fellow, Martin M'Gruder, who has contrived to get possession of the estate of the Lorrimores, and soon the coach of M'Gruder, with his two nieces, himself, and his maiden sister, breaks down on the heath, and the highwaymen rush to the spot in anticipation of booty. Then occurs the scene of Mr Frith's picture exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1861, and since engraved. The old-fashioned carriage, drawn by a couple of horses is driven upon the stage, and Claude Duval, having pacified his gang, comes forward to soothe the fears of the ladies, and especially of the young ladies, and eventually he allows the party to go in peace after Miss Constance, betrothed to the proscribed Lorrimore, has danced with him. Frith's picture is very prettily realised, and the first act winds up gaily with this incident. The second act takes place at the village green of Milden Manor, where festivities are in progress and in anticipation of the marriage of Constance to Sir Whiffle Whaffle, a very rich and extremely silly baronet, the match being, of course, at her miserly father's

desire and command. There is a secret meeting between the lovers, and then we learn that the military are coming to arrest Lorrimore; but Duval changes cloaks with him, and is arrested in his stead. This concludes the second act, and in the third we find the highwaymen gaily disguised as guests in the great hall of Milden Manor, and the Lieutenant of Claude Duval still bent upon making a great haul out of the great hall—if the joke may be forgiven. He makes love to Mistress Betty, M'Gruder's sister, and obtains from her the key of an old-fashioned chest, in which the lady says there are papers of the greatest value. Upon one of these papers hangs the fate of the chief personages, for when Claude Duval, after escaping from the soldiers, comes back to the manor, he discovers that one of the documents relates to the estates, which legally belong to Lorrimore, while the dashing highwayman is provided for by a free pardon unsigned, in which Duval inserts his name, and all ends happily with the union of the lovers and the discomfiture of Sir Whiffle Whaffle. This, if not a particularly striking libretto, serves its purpose, and will, we have no doubt, give still greater satisfaction when a few superfluous passages are omitted. Of the music we have more to say. The opening chorus on Newmarket Heath is pretty and catching, and the refrain of the highwaymen, "Mum's the word," appeared greatly to please the audience. A rather commonplace, but still effective, air for Claude Duval, "Robbers, they call us," occurs, and the dance music, for the scene of the picture is cleverly written in imitation of the old school. One of the prettiest items was a duet for tenor and baritone. The second act opens with a tuneful chorus of villagers and a plaintive song "The willows and the lilies," which Miss Marion Hood, the representative of the heroine, sang with much taste and expression, was heard with pleasure. Then there is a song for Duval, describing the life of a highwayman from the romantic point of view, and Mr Celli, who was as good a Claude Duval as could well be imagined, was vociferously encored in this melody, which is well written and graceful. A quartet occurs also which has great merit. This is where M'Gruder invites Duval to join their frugal meal "Off a crust and a handful of peas." This had the true comic spirit, and was well contrasted with a tender and elegant duet "Across the sea to Normandy." That is where the lovers propose to elope. This piece was written in a thoroughly musicianly and refined style, and would of itself be sufficient to prove Mr Solomon a composer of genuine ability. The chorus of highwaymen "Hush, most distinctly," was not particularly new. We have had many such in the opera bouffe works of late years, but there was a remarkable brightness and flow of tune in the soldiers' march and chorus in the scene where Duval is arrested instead of Lorrimore. This march was encored amidst enthusiastic applause, and will, we have little doubt, be one of the most popular pieces in the opera. In the third act the music is less distinctive. The song "William is sure to be right" is after the pattern of the topical Music Hall song, and it was not very well received at first by the audience. A comic song for Sir Whiffle Whaffle, "Oh! beware my rakish glances," should be mentioned as a good specimen of its kind. The librettist has not given the composer much chance in the last act, which is chiefly occupied with details of little dramatic interest, the *finale* being made up of snatches from other melodies, which have been heard in the earlier portions of the opera. Taking the music as a whole, there is much to praise and much which it would be extremely ungrateful to ignore, and it will, we fancy, be due to the music and the acting and singing if *Claude Duval* should enjoy a lengthened career. But, at the same time, there are incidents in the story of which more can be made, and probably these opportunities will readily occur to the performers after the work has been a few times repeated. But the music deserves, and will obtain, hearty commendation. As the highwayman, Mr F. H. Celli was seen to great advantage. His commanding figure and the freedom and spirit of his entire performance, added to admirable singing, rendered his Claude Duval a most agreeable, amusing, and picturesque impersonation. He was several times encored in the music, and his rendering of the entire character was satisfactory in every way, and quite worthy of the hearty reception he met with. Mr George Power was graceful and refined as the lover. It would be well if he could throw a little more spirit into the part, for in such a subject we require animation and gaiety rather than sentiment. *Claude Duval* cannot be a serious work; therefore, the livelier it is made by all concerned the better chance it has of success. The little character of Whiffle Whaffle, as interpreted by Mr Arthur Williams, gives a good notion of the whimsical kind of fun required. Mr Arthur Williams also sang the one song of his part in just the right style, and with a commendable absence of coarseness and buffoonery. It was simply quaint and absurd. Therefore it was exactly in the spirit of the character. Mr Charles Ashford was efficient as the miserly M'Gruder, and Mr Leumane sang the song of "The Captain of the Guard" with taste, but Mr Fred. Solomon will do well to tone down his exuberance as the Lieutenant Blood-red Bill. We can do with a little less of Blood-red Bill and be thankful, for when this personage becomes obstreperous he throws the entire scene out of harmony. There is enough for Blood-red Bill to do without making him the central figure of every scene, and if Mr Fred. Solomon will take a hint to this effect he will make the character far more amusing. He has a sense of drollery which needs only to be restrained within due limits, and he will be a gainer in the end. The grace and delicate singing of Miss Marion Hood well fitted her to represent the heroine. The character might have been elaborated a little more. But, whenever Miss Hood had a chance to act or sing she was fully equal to her task. Miss Edith Blande was lively as Rose, and Miss Harriet Coveney as the maiden sister, who is so ready to be wooed by a highwayman, displayed her customary talent in making the most of the part. The opera has been placed upon the stage with the greatest care and effect. Mr Charles Harris has, evidently, spared no pains. The scenery by the Messrs Fox was admirable in every way, the Village Green, the Heath, and the Great Hall of the Manor being remarkably picturesque. The dresses of M. and Madame Alias, from designs by Pilotell, enhanced the effect. The author and composer were called for at the close of the opera, and had every reason to be congratulated upon the cordial reception they met with from an enthusiastic audience.

Daily OLYMPIC THEATRE. Telegraph
Aug 26. 1881.

In "Claude Duval," the new and original romantic and comic opera by Mr. H. P. Stephens and Mr. Edward Solomon, there is ample and very satisfactory evidence of what, in modern phraseology, is called a "new departure." As such this bright, tuneful, promising, and animated work is highly to be commended. Author and composer have joined hands and determined to imitate nobody. They might, no doubt, as in the case of "Billee Taylor," have once more suggested the inconsequent topsy-turviness of Mr. Gilbert's vein of thought, or the comic solemnity of Mr. Arthur Sullivan's music; they might have said ridiculous things with a grave face, and illustrated eccentric situations with strains of religious harmony; their humour might have been of the school whose comicality consists in its daring, and their melody fascinating from its utter inappropriateness to the text. So clever was their first effort that a second edition in the same vein might well have been expected; but they have apparently higher ambitions. Leaving the Gilbert-Sullivan school out of the question, it was possible for them to tread in the footsteps of the composer of modern French opera bouffe, and to depend for attraction on the personal charms of innumerable ballet-girls and the gorgeous glitter of the modern costumier. But, to tell the truth, they have done nothing of the sort; the new opera is as encouraging as it is continually wholesome, and in it we find an honest and praiseworthy attempt to give to the English stage one of those light, piquante, and pretty trifles which are found on the contemporary stages of the art-loving capitals of Europe. "Claude Duval" is precisely what it professes to be—romantic and comic as well—and it says much for the ingrained sense of music available for the composer's hand when a chorus of male and female voices is found at once so capable, so sound, and so workmanlike as this. Every one knows that Claude Duval was a dashing French highwayman in the reign of Charles II., who levied toll in the lonely lanes about Holloway, Islington, and Highgate, who was beloved by the ladies, and of whom a story is told that he stopped a lady's coach, and suffered her to retain a fair share of her treasures on condition that she would dance a minuet with him on the sward of Newmarket Heath. Is this not all recorded in the archives of the Royal Academy, and has not Mr. William Powell Frith, R.A., given it an undying significance in one of his most celebrated pictures? Lord Macaulay tells us most that we know of the highwayman of the Regency; but poor Claude Duval, like the majority of his companions, came to Tyburn Tree at last, and was buried in St. Paul's Church, Covent-garden, amid the flaring of the torches and the sobs of the distressed women whose hearts he had broken. On these tragic episodes Mr. Pottinger Stephens is discreetly silent; but he tells us, on the other hand, how the noble Claude—known as Sir Harry Villebois—sacrificed both heart and ambition for his friend Charles Lorrimore, who had once saved his life, and succeeded eventually in restoring to him his estates and marrying him to Constance M'Gruder, the young lady he adored. Taken as a hero of operatic romance, Claude Duval, to tell the truth, does not cut a very important figure. He is for ever in the background and suffering the penance of self-abnegation. His one fine situation of the stopping of the lady's coach and the dancing of the famous minuet is taken from him and frittered away on his companions; the girl of his heart he has to give up to his friend, and whenever the audience wishes to see more of the handsome Claude, so brilliantly realised by Mr. F. H. Celli, who appears on horseback and acts the romantic highwayman to the very life, he is continually and obstinately supplanted by his lieutenant, one Blood-red Bill, who is not even funny, and who is a serious incubus on the opera. Not to judge the matter harshly we might have far less of Blood-red Bill with very great advantage; he is noisy, coarse, obstructive, and a scoundrel of the modern rather than of the Charles period, and Mr. Fred. Solomon, who has apparently been accustomed to amuse provincial audiences, who love an extra flavour of farce, has yet to learn how sensitive a London audience is on the subject of excess. A little colouring goes a long way here, and the actor was made to feel that he had exceeded the border-line of extravagance. Otherwise, except for a milk-and-water tendency on the part of the young lovers, Mr. George Power and Miss Marion Hood, there was little to which exception could be taken. To the eye they were a pretty pair enough; but to the ear not invariably true. Mr. Charles Ashford, who might with greater propriety have been cast for Blood-red Bill, and Miss Harriet Coveney divided the comic interest with Mr. Arthur Williams, who, as Sir Whiffle Whaffle, made one of the successes of the evening in a song that cannot fail to be popular. The entire music, cleverly scored, free from affectation and imitation and continually bright, will grow upon acquaintance. If it does not rush to the whistling lips it at least lingers on the memory, and amongst the prettiest and most sparkling bits, in addition to a happy overture, will be found Miss Marion Hood's song, "The Willow and the Lily," the dashing highwayman melody admirably given by Mr. F. H. Celli, and the quaint and catching aria, "My name's Sir Whiffle Whaffle," very comically

rendered by Mr. Arthur Williams. But until the musical score and the libretto are published it is not possible critically to discuss the technical qualities of the work of Mr. Stephens or Mr. Solomon. The mounting of the play, in which M. Alias and M. Pilotelli have had a hand, is gorgeous in the extreme, particularly in the last act, which is a very rainbow of prismatic colour. It could be wished, however, that Mr. Gilbert's example of two acts, and two acts only, were more constantly followed. The best comic operas invariably dwindle and fade after a couple of hours, over which the attention and interest refuse to last. Author, composer, and all concerned were called when the performance was over, and Mr. Michael Gunn, the new manager, has not only found success, but deserved it.

"Daily News" Aug 25th 1881.

OLYMPIC THEATRE

Last night a new and original comic opera, entitled *Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny*, from the pens of Messrs. H. P. Stephens and E. Solomon, the joint authors of *Billee Taylor*, was produced at this theatre. The adventures of the renowned robber who, in the times of his Most Sacred Majesty Charles II., made love to the ladies and levied contributions on his Majesty's lieges, have already attracted the attention of professed parodyists; and perhaps the best recollected perversion of the story was that produced by Mr. Burnand during the latter days of the Oliver management at the Royalty. The *Claude Duval* of Messrs. Stephens and Solomon has, however, nothing in common with Mr. Burnand's burlesque. In accordance with the modern fashion—for which it must be confessed, Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan are in a great measure responsible—*Claude Duval* is no longer played by a lady who sings topical songs and treats her audience to a clog-dance and break-down; but he comes riding on the stage clad in the costume immortalised in Frith's picture. Similarly, too, the dialogue no longer depends upon the puns and word-twistings with which it used to be stuffed; while instead of a rechauffée of music-hall songs and operatic ditties, we now require brand new music, such as Mr. E. Solomon has striven to supply for the opera produced last night. Although the *Claude Duval* of Messrs. Stephens and Solomon little resembles Mr. Burnand's burlesque—in which playgoers of twelve years' standing will recollect Miss Pattie Oliver, Dewar, the whimsical Danvers, Miss Charlotte Sanders, Miss Kate Bishop, Miss Nelly Bromley, and others took part—it still less follows the extravaganzas of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan. In Mr. Stephen's *Claude Duval* the serious element is introduced to an extent unusual in works of this character, and Claude himself is depicted far less in the light of a dashing highwayman than of a gallant, or lady-killer. He does not, as Macaulay says the real Claude was in the habit of doing, frequent the Holloway-road, now a paradise of francars, or ply his trade between Islington and Highgate. The scene is removed away from Hounslow to Newmarket Heath, and here an attempt is made to reproduce the scene of Frith's famous painting. The band, disguised as gipsies, capture firstly the unfortunate political outlaw and depressed lover Charles Lorrimore, and afterwards the miser M'Gruder, his elderly sister, and his pretty daughter Constance. It is Constance who is young Charles Lorrimore's love, and it is with her that the highwayman dances to a "courante." The finale to this act is one of the most ambitious and one of the best-written numbers of Mr. Solomon's score. The second act is far too long, a fault which of course can easily be remedied. It opens with a pretty scene, in which Constance is singing a song to her maidens, who are weaving garlands around her. Both Claude Duval and his lieutenant, William, arrive to reconnoitre the miser's house, into which they propose to break; and we are further introduced to the top, Sir Whiffle Whaffle, who proposes to wed the miser's daughter. Soldiers arrive to arrest Charles Lorrimore; but Claude, out of gratitude to the youth who has saved his life, pretends he is the political outlaw, and is carried off. If however the second act is too long, the third act is even more redundant in dialogue. A tedious scene in which the Lieutenant William cajoles the aged sister into giving him the key of a deed box last night elicited decided sounds of disapprobation from a portion of the house, and William was greeted with cries from the pit of "Get it over." Eventually the soldiers return to announce Claude's escape, but just as the real Lorrimore is arrested the highwayman returns with a free pardon from the King. He produces title deeds stolen from the miser's strong box, showing that the estates of Milden Manor, which the miser has seized in the times of the Commonwealth, really belong to Lorrimore, and withdraws with his men

as the various couples pair off. Mr. Stephens' work certainly needs to be played closer, to be pruned of its abundance, and to have a little of that epigrammatic spicing in which Mr. Gilbert's libretti are so wealthy, before a just judgment can be expressed upon it. Mr. E. Solomon's music is, on the other hand, decidedly the best the young composer has yet given us. To any special individuality Mr. Solomon obviously lays no claim. But his score is a happy mélange of the pretty and the brilliant, the charm of the ballad and the sparkle of opera bouffe. Even still more satisfactory is Mr. Solomon's instrumentation, which is adequate without being too ambitious, which seems to have hit the happy mean between the baldness of the French and the coarseness of the ordinary theatrical styles, and in which the comparatively small orchestra is used to the fullest advantage. The burden of the performance falls on Mr. Frank Celli, who plays the amorous highwayman to the life, and who sings his music as few artists on the operetta stage can do. Mr. Fred Solomon was an amusing, though at times a somewhat obtrusive, Lieutenant William, Mr. George Power played the part of the depressing lover Charles Lorrimore, Mr. Charles Ashford was the miser, Mr. Arthur Williams the top, and Mr. R. Russell a member of the robber band. Miss Marjan Hood, who was entrusted with the rôle of the heroine Constance, was unfortunately out of voice, and sang much out of tune. But Miss Edith Blande was an excellent representative of her sister Rose, Miss Coveney was a most amusing old maid, and a crowd of pretty girls, clad in a variety of pretty dresses, assisted in the choir and the waltz ballet. Indeed the opera is mounted in the most tasteful and luxurious manner, thanks to the liberality of Mr. Gunn, the manager, and the judgment of Mr. Charles Harris, under whose direction it was produced. At the fall of the curtain the chief artists were, as usual, re-called, and the authors likewise came before the curtain to receive unusually warm and general congratulations.

"Standard" Aug 26. 1881.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

The change effected by the musical dramas of Messrs. W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan has given a fresh lease of life to English opera. Too often bad librettos spoil bright and promising music, and not a few of the old English operas might now be played as burlesques, with the slightest alterations. With Mr. Gilbert's whimsical plays, however, there dawned a new era for art, and now the author of the book is not a mere supplier of the pegs whereon the composer may hang his melodies, but stands upon an equal footing with the musician. Naturally enough the Gilbert-Sullivan drama found its disciples, and the most remarkable imitation of it was made by Messrs. H. P. Stephens and Edward Solomon, in the opera of *Billee Taylor*. That this success would lead to further efforts was obvious, and we now find the joint authors of *Billee Taylor* courting favour with a new "romantic and comic" opera at the Olympic Theatre, to which the title of *Claude Duval*—with the sub-title of *Love and Larceny*—is appended. Claude Duval has been immortalised on canvas by Mr. Frith, and it seems to have occurred to Mr. Stephens that the reproduction of this picture upon the stage was almost equivalent to writing a stirring drama with the chivalrous robber for its central figure. There is very little interest in *Claude Duval*. The outlaw is an ornament rather than the prime mover in the action, which revolves around the doings of a sentimental adherent of Lord Clarendon, one Charles Lorrimore, and his sweetheart. How Duval rescues his friend from the clutches of the soldiery, and is eventually successful in restoring to him his inheritance, is set forth at great length, but is not of much importance at any time. Mr. Edward Solomon's music is throughout bright, fanciful, and pleasing. But no one can take a keen interest in Claude Duval, or his friends and followers; and the dramatic interest is so continually shifting and changing about that the spectator gets wearied long before the end of the story is approached. It is just within the bounds of possibility that a wholesale reconstruction may secure a success for the new opera, but the dialogue as it stands is dull. It needs writing up, and the action demands immediate condensation. Fortunately for the authors of the piece the players do much to make it endurable. Mr. F. H. Celli makes a handsome and dashing highwayman, and sings his music admirably. While he is upon the scene all goes well, though in his absence it must be confessed the play becomes a little tiresome. Mr. George Power contrives to interpret his love songs prettily, and Miss Marion Hood not only sings with taste and feeling, but looks very charming in a coiffure adopted from Mr. Frith. Miss Edith Blande, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. Charles Ashford, Mr. Fred Solomon, and Miss Harriet Coveney render such service as can be expected from them, but on the whole, there is a sad lack of "go" about *Claude Duval*, and an infusion of livelier blood seems to be imperatively demanded. It is only fair to the new manager of the theatre, Mr. Michael Gunn, to say that the piece has received the most liberal mounting. Mr. Solomon, who conducted the opening performance, was warmly greeted.

Morning OLYMPIC THEATRE Advertiser
Aug 25 1881

In undertaking the management of this theatre, Mr. Michael Gunn produced last night a new and original comic opera by Messrs. H. P. Stephens and Edward Solomon, who, as author and composer, have selected for a hero that irregular French page of the Duke of Rich-travellers and the idol of women until justice and the hangman put an end to his misdoings. "Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny," hardly makes a feature of the first act his associates stop a coach and he dances the historical coranto with a lady as the price of a ransom of herself and her party. But we first find the band carrying on the profession of fortune-telling in true gipsy fashion, and the latter part of the play shows them engaged, as the lieutenant of their gang expresses it, in cracking a crib. The book, in fact, hardly helps the composer with his work, the plot is vague and drifting, and we seem to feel an absence of any constant current as regards the story. Claude Duval (Mr. F. H. Celli) has owed his life to Charles Lorrimore (Mr. G. Power), who has forfeited his estates through having been an adherent of Lord Clarendon. These estates are held by a miserly fellow, Martin M'Gruder (Mr. C. Ashford), whose niece Constance (Miss Marion Hood) is beloved by the unfortunate young gentleman. Duval and his gang have come to Mildens Manor with the purpose of robbing that mansion just at the time when Lorrimore, who has been paying his lady-love a visit, is about to be arrested by the soldiers as a rebel, and Duval rescues him by exchanging cloaks and allowing himself to be taken in his place. In the third act, in which there is a masque in celebration of the forced nuptials of Constance with Sir Whiffle Whaffle (Mr. Arthur Williams), Duval's lieutenant, Blood-red Bill (Mr. F. Solomon), obtains from the vain old sister of M'Gruder, Mistress Betty (Miss H. Coveney), the key of a certain cabinet which is found to contain deeds that restore his confiscated estates to Charles Lorrimore, whilst as to his proscription, Duval, who has escaped from his captors, produces a mysteriously obtained blank pardon which he fills up with the young fellow's name, he himself resolving to take once more to the road. With his fortune restored, we may understand that M'Gruder will no longer oppose Lorrimore's alliance with Constance, who has been aided through the piece by her sister Rose (Miss Edith Blande), and their servant Dolly (Miss Nellie Sanson). This brief suggestion of the story may be sufficient preface for our remarks upon the music, which is certainly far better than the libretto, although we can hardly say that the former possesses that spontaneity and freshness that serve to make a composer suddenly famous. When the curtain rises after an overture consisting principally of certain numbers of the opera, a chorus of the banditti, as they lie on Newmarket Heath playing at cards and dice, is effective from its surroundings, that which follows soon after, "Mam's the Word," being most characteristic, as was the song of Duval, in which Mr. Celli obtained an encore, "Robbers they call us," although the refrain was certainly suggestive of a music-hall parasse. "With a wot, wot, wot," but apart from this it seemed original and was very melodious. The couplets that accompany the dancing of the corants by Constance and Duval were also pretty, and went well with the measure. Of course, this scene was a representation of Mr. Frith's picture. In the next act a lively chorus of villagers precedes a pretty song by Constance concerning the lily and the willow, which Miss Hood gave with much taste and expression, Mr. Celli obtained a vociferous encore for his lyric about Duval, which was certainly as much the due of the singer as the composer. The quartette, "Off a crust and a handful of peas," was a better composition, and Misses Hood and Coveney and Messrs. Celli and Ashford did it justly, and the pretty duet, "Across the sea," sung by Miss Hood and Mr. Power is also another good specimen of writing, being beautifully modulated and harmonised. The chorus of the highwaymen, "Hush, most distinctly," if it had not reminded the hearer of the Angot Co-spirators' Chorus, would have commanded high praise. A clever whimsical song of Sir Whiffle Whaffle capiti-tally rendered by Mr. Arthur Williams, entitled "The ornamental baronet," with a chorus introduced with good effect, was one of the most successful numbers of the act, although the "Soldiers March" chorus, which was encored, and which was also repeated as the drop descended was an excellent specimen of choral composition. The concluding act has a good opening chorus and a song, for Blood-red Bill asserting that "William is sure to be right." But this latter met with considerable opposition, which seemed rather to apply to the actor than to the music. Of the rendition of the opera, great praise is due to Mr. Celli, who sang with that charm of sentiment and manliness by which he is so distinguished. His Claude Duval song, however, both in its composition and rendering, missed the dash that one associates with the

attributes of such a highwayman. He looked eminently handsome, and acted with ease and romantic effect. Miss Hood was charming as Constance, and sang like a true artist, as did Mr. Geo. Power. Mr. C. Ashford and Mrs. Edith Blande had parts that admitted of nothing being done with them; and Mr. F. Solomon, as Bill, had one with which he did too much. We were sorry for him, for he was conscientious, singing his music carefully and well, speaking his words plainly, and showing a very good conception of the part; but a portion of the audience tired of him, and let him learn it without any reticence. We think, however, that his make-up had something to do with the dissatisfaction. Of the mounting, we can say that everything has been done by the management; the scenery by Messrs. Fox, whilst, as regards the dresses, they could not be in better taste, nor provided with more liberality. A good chorus, and a carefully-selected band, conducted by the composer, did all that the authors could desire. The audience called Messrs. Solomon and Stephens before the curtain at the end, and by their applause assured them that they had been satisfied with their work, whilst like compliments were paid to the artists.

"Daily Chronicle" Aug 25 1881

OLYMPIC THEATRE

It would be subject for regret if the graceful music Mr. Edward Solomon has composed for *Claude Duval, or Love and Larceny*, the new opera produced last night at the reopening of this house under the management of Mr. Michael Gunn, should suffer in popularity by being joined to a story sadly wanting in life and movement, but it is patent that the favour bestowed upon light musical works of the modern English school has been due as much to ingenious and whimsical libretti as to melodious airs and bright choruses. The time appears to have gone by when audiences will excuse weakness or dullness in the literary portion of an opera on account of the pleasant fancy or originality displayed by the composer. Agreeable remembrances of *Billet Taylor* with its joyous tunefulness and happy elaboration of a well-known story, afforded the prospect of a most cordial reception for *Claude Duval* if the united labours of Messrs. Edward Solomon and H. P. Stephens proved to a fair degree inspiring. From last night's performance this can scarcely be said to be the case. Mr. Solomon's share of the work is even better than in *Billet Taylor*, for although *Claude Duval* contains no chorus that from the comic aspect will compare with the ditty of the charity girls, and scarcely a song with such a taking refrain as that ascribing everything to the perfidy of "Eliza" (which, as sung by poor James Stoye, took the town by storm), the composition, as a whole, will probably rank higher in the estimation of musicians, and, whatever be the fate of the opera in its stage form, can scarcely fail to direct attention to the young composer as one from whom great things may be expected if the opportunity be given. The story might almost be compressed into the limits of the traditional "nutshell," but a slight description of the action will allow of reference to the *morceaux* that would otherwise be difficult to distinguish, inasmuch as no "book of words" was last night to be had, and in the excited curiosity attendant upon a first representation the first lines of the songs occasionally escaped the memory of listeners more intent upon the music. After a brisk overture, principally formed of some of the tunes subsequently heard, a beautifully-painted view of Newmarket Heath by sunset introduces us to the gang over which the notoriously handsome and gallant highwayman Claude Duval has control. Business in the thieving line has for some time been bad, so that the scoundrels have to be content with turning a "honest penny" by fortune telling. This leads to a pretty chorus of village maidens and the supposed male gipsies. With the entry of Charles Lorrimore, who had been one of the followers of Lord Clarendon, and is now proscribed, although his father had done good service in the Royalist cause, we obtain a hint of the very thin story. The military are in pursuit of Lorrimore, when by meeting with the highwaymen he seems to step out of the fryingpan into the fire. Lorrimore, however, has saved Claude Duval's life when the latter, who masquerades under the title of Sir Harry Villebois, had been beset by ruffians in a gaming house, and Duval both acknowledges the debt and determines to repay it. Blood-red Bill, the lieutenant of the pre-lator's band, and a character last night a little too prominent, has here a song, and there is the set air for the tenor Lorrimore. With the appearance of Duval on horseback, attired in his scarlet coat, with high boots, and crape mask over the eyes there comes a bold song about "Knights of the Road" (encored last night). Superior to anything that has gone before, however, is the duet for Duval and Lorrimore, "What times were those when you and I," a *morceau* that will not escape

appreciation. Shortly afterwards a travelling carriage breaks down on the road, and the occupants are surrounded by Duval's gang. Martin M'Gruder, an old miser, whose hoards he has hidden in the mansion of which he has been dispossessed, the rightful owner, Duval is already scheming to obtain, and his middle-aged spinster sister Betty are very much frightened; but Duval so speedily reassures their niece Constance that when he consents to let the party depart she is induced to dance a minuet with him whilst the coach is being repaired. To the eye this scene recalls Frith's famous picture, and musically it is very effectively treated. In the second act, Constance and her guardians are anticipating the arrival from London of the conceited Sir Whiffle Whaffle, who is desirous of making her his bride, but the maiden's heart has been given to the outlawed Lorrimore. After some unimportant business, the soldiers nearly succeed in capturing Lorrimore; but at the critical juncture Duval persuades the young lover to change cloaks with him, and he magnanimously departs, guarded in his stead. In this act there are two or three very telling "numbers," including a sentimental legend about willows and lilies for Constance, a dashing air for Claude in praise of female beauty, a duet for the lovers, "Across the sea in Normandy," a little gem in its way; a chorus tern set by Lecoq in *La Fille du Madame Angot*, a capital song for Sir Whiffle, "Oh, beware my rashish glances," and a chorus for the soldiers. In the third act, the highwaymen are in the miser's house, and one of the desperadoes, breaking open a safe, obtains some valuable papers. Claude escapes from custody, turns the tables on the soldiery, and is greatly instrumental in bringing about the finale, in which the happiness of the lovers appears to be permanently secured. The chief pieces in this act, which musically is not too strong, are an air with a swinging refrain, "William's sure to be right," sung by Blood-red Bill, and another love duet. It is no equivocal compliment to assert that Mr. F. H. Celli looks the fascinating highwayman to the life, and he sings the music allotted him with much taste and effect. Miss Marion Hood is unaffected as Constance, and is vocally efficient; whilst Miss Harriet Coveney, as the middle-aged spinster Mistress Betty, cleverly renders the conspicuous the mere shadow of a part. Of this practised comedian, as of Mr. Arthur Williams (the Sir Whiffle Whaffle), the audience of last night would doubtless have been glad to see more, whilst from their not very complimentary manifestations during the final act it is justifiable to suppose that they would on the other hand have desired to see less of Blood-red Bill, although the character in some of its phases was not unskillfully played by Mr. Fred Solomon. The chorus executed their task in a very creditable manner, as did the orchestra, the performance being conducted by the composer, who was warmly greeted on taking his seat at the commencement. The curtain fell to applause, with calls for the principals and the authors. The opera is elegantly mounted.

"Court Circular" Aug 27/81

OLYMPIC.

Claude Duval, the new romantic and comic opera at the Olympic, is a conspicuous success. Mr. Pottinger Stephens, the author of the libretto, has given us many graceful and amusing lyrics, his dialogue is neat and epigrammatic, and he has treated the story of *Claude Duval* with much skill. Such a clever "book" should inspire any composer, and Mr. Solomon has provided bright and tuneful music. He is addicted to an undue reliance upon his brass instruments and his choruses, but his orchestration shows him to be a thorough musician, and the opera may be pronounced a musical as well as a literary triumph. Mr. Celli sang and acted like an artist, and Miss Marion Hood, in the chief female character, left nothing to be desired. The stage management, which the playbill told us was under the direction of Mr. Charles Harris, did little credit to that gentleman, but in future representations matters may be improved. Actors and author were called before the curtain on the first night and applauded to the echo, and since its production *Claude Duval* has drawn large audiences. Messrs. Stephens and Solomon have scored one more success, and we trust it will not be their last.

"Morning Post" Aug 25. 1881.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

The subject which Messrs. Stephens and Solomon have selected for their new comic opera has all the merit of novelty. "Claude Duval" has been made the hero of more than one ballad, and also more than one novel, but his adventures have suggested the theme of very few dramas. The author of the words of the opera produced last night has exercised much skill in the invention of incidents, his sole indebtedness being the well-known incident described by Macaulay in that portion of his history which relates to the reign of Charles II., and which has furnished Mr. Frith with a subject for a well-known picture. In all other respects the story is new, and the treatment also new. It is exceedingly improbable, and, as the general tone of the piece is serious, the improbability somewhat interferes with the pleasure the work might give. If the groundwork and details were intended to be humorous, as might not be altogether unexpected in an opera avowedly comic, a little more license in incongruity would not be out of place. But the impression left upon the mind after the performance is that it is not dramatic enough to be serious, and it is not witty enough to be droll. This is simply an impression, which may be entirely obliterated upon further acquaintance with the details. There were no books of the words obtainable, and the perfectly independent manner in which the majority of the chief characters delivered the words they had to sing or to say made it difficult for one who came prepared to hear English words only on the occasion. Of the worth of the libretto it is impossible to offer an opinion, much less a judgment, but it may be assumed that the ability of the author has not deserted him on this occasion, even though it was for the most part inadequately reflected. The music is very good, and loses none of its brightness and effect because in more than one of the numbers there is a probably intended imitation of the style of the period. The performance will perhaps become more and more in accordance with the composer's ideas as night after night succeeds and the representatives become accustomed to the association of their several parts the one with the other. The part of Claude Duval is not altogether so interesting and absorbing as it might reasonably be expected to be. A word of praise is due to Mr. F. H. Celli for his excellent singing and acting. His delivery was both clear and distinct, and his conception of the part so good that it was to be wished that the work could have been so contrived as to give him more frequent opportunities of being on the stage, or at all events that his scenes should have afforded him better dramatic entries. The part of his Lieutenant Blood-red-Bill was given to Mr. F. Solomon, and he must be commended upon the clearness of his speech, even though his accent was marked by an appalling vulgarity, and his notion of the humour of the character limited to the refined manner of Houndsditch or Whitechapel. Mr. Arthur Williams made much of the character of Sir Whiffle Whaffle, and sang his song excellently well. Mr. O. Ashford, Mr. G. Power, Mr. Leumane, and Mr. Harold Russell were entrusted with other male parts, and Miss Marion Hood, Miss Edith Bland, and Miss Harriet Coveney represented the gentlewomen. The second title of the piece is "Love and Larceny," the first and second acts being each distinguished by one of these qualifications, and the third by both. The love interest is not strong and the larceny happily not of too violent a nature. The combination of the two is of the mildest sort, and so far being of a piece with the whole. The stage mounting is most beautiful and pleasing to the eye, even though the mind is unable to reconcile some of the inaccuracies of costume and appointments. It is perhaps of small consequence to note that the Coldstream Guards appear at a period a little in advance of the time of their institution, or that they should be armed with Snider rifles. The action of the piece is supposed to take place in 1670, a year after Claude Duval was hanged, and the knowledge of this circumstance may excuse other anachronisms, particularly as the music is the strong point of the work.

"Globe" OLYMPIC THEATRE. Aug 25/81.

The production of a new comic opera in three acts, written and composed by native writers, is an attractive novelty for English amateurs, and the Olympic Theatre was filled last night, when the "new and original" opera, entitled "Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny," was played for the first time in public. The librettist, Mr. H. P. Stephens, has shown some inventive ability in the construction of his plot, although it must be admitted that he has not confined himself strictly to historical facts, nor refrained from the employment of familiar devices. The "time" at which the action is represented as taking place is the year 1670; but Claude Duval was hung at Tyburn in January, 1669. It would, however, be profitless to enter into critical analysis of a work which aims at nothing higher than most operabouffes, and the plot, when shorn of its extraneous complications, may be thus condensed.

Claude Duval, known in fashionable circles as Sir Henry Villebois, has appointed a meeting of his robber companions on Newmarket Heath. They capture Charles Lorrimore (Mr. Power), described in the playbill as "an adherent of Lord Clarendon." Lorrimore has been faithful to Charles II., but—for inscrutable reasons—is suspected of high treason. He tells his captors that a large price is "set on his head." They do not proceed to decapitate him, but determine to obtain the reward. He is freed from danger by the arrival of Claude Duval, whom he supposes to be Sir Henry Villebois, whose life he had some time before saved. Duval not only informs him of the truth, but furnishes him with a gipsy dress, so that he may escape the officers who are pursuing him. In this act occurs the incident—founded on tradition—of Duval's gallantry to a lady, to whom he restored £300 out of £400 he had taken from her, on condition of her dancing a coranto with him on Newmarket Heath. The lady is Constance McGruder (Miss M. Hood), to whom Lorrimore is betrothed, and his jealousy is excited by the attentions paid to her by Duval. The curtain falls on an effective tableau, partly imitated from Mr. Frith's well-known picture.

Act 2 opens with a well-painted scene representing the village-green of Milden Manor. Hither comes Lorrimore, en route for France, to say farewell to Constance. Hither also comes Duval, bent on robbing the Manor House which overlooks the green and the village alehouse. Constance and her sister Rose (Miss E. Bland), both in evening attire, appear to find the village green the best place for private conversation, and their example is imitated by their spinster aunt Betty (Miss H. Coveney) and their miserly uncle McGruder (Mr. Ashford). Lorrimore, hiding behind a large oak, overhears Duval's flirtation with Constance, and challenges his former friend. The soldiers opportunely arrive, and Duval once more saves Lorrimore by exchanging cloaks with him, and allowing himself to be captured as the supposed traitor.

In Act 3 we are shewn the "Great Hall of Milden Manor"—a remarkably well-painted scene. Here, in a box about three feet long, McGruder is supposed to keep all his treasures, including the title-deeds of the Lorrimore property, on which Milden Hall stands. We also find that this grasping and remorseless miser constantly entrusts the key of his treasure-box to his frivolous sister Betty. A repulsive ruffian, named Blood-red Bill (Mr. F. Solomon), first lieutenant of Duval's gang, appears to be on a visit to Milden Manor, and, in his disguise as a country baronet, pays court so successfully to Betty that she agrees to show her confidence in him by entrusting him with her brother's key, Blood-red Bill leaving in her hands a gold snuff-box. This employment of "the confidence trick" results in the discovery of Lorrimore's title deeds, which are ultimately handed to him by Duval. The soldiers, led by Captain Harleigh (Mr. Leumane), enter the hall in search of Lorrimore, but are overpowered by Duval's gang, who have in some mysterious way obtained admission in the garb of noblemen. Duval not only gives Lorrimore his title-deeds, but also a free pardon—signed in blank by King Charles—in which the self-denying highwayman inserts the name of his friend, and the curtain falls on a scene of general contentment. Besides the characters above-named, there are numerous minor personages who exercise little influence on the dramatic action. In these, Mr. A. Williams (Sir Whiffle Whaffle), and Miss N. Sanson (Dolly), were prominently meritorious.

The new music, composed by Mr. E. Solomon, is creditable to his technical ability, although not remarkable for originality. In some instances—as in the "Soldier's March,"—he has palpably copied familiar models, and he appears over-anxious

to follow in the footsteps of Offenbach, to whom he sometimes pays that sincerest form of flattery known as imitation. His orchestration is often meritorious, and is indeed the most praiseworthy part of his work; his vocal part-writing is well written, and it is only in his vocal solos that he fails to interest the listener. He was not remarkably fortunate in his interpreters, for—with the exception of Mr. F. H. Celli, whose impersonation of Claude Duval was spirited and graceful—few of the performers were equal to the occasion. The opera was, on the whole, well received, and the authors were called before the curtain at its conclusion. It has been lavishly mounted, and is likely to prove attractive.

'Sporting Times' Aug 27, 1881.

PLAYHOUSES WITHOUT PLAYS.

It was the hour of uninterrupted digestion, when Crowners cease from troubling and corpses are at rest. We, that is myself and the frolicsome trio in the sunlight of whose society I occasionally bask, were seated round a table on which were four glasses of *Trappistine* and as many cups of coffee, wherewithal to *chasser* our modest dinner, and nought of sound broke the post-alimentary stillness, save, perchance, the dulcet snorelets of the Grave-digger's Understudy, compared by Blobbs the irreverent to the action of a wood-saw with five teeth missing and the rest rusty. "What shall we do with ourselves on Wednesday evening?" said I. The Chief-Discounter of Coffin Lids merely replied with a grating bark, suggesting that the saw had encountered a knot of unusual toughness. Pot having previously fortified himself with the liqueurs appertaining of right to himself and our stertorous companion, ran his hand gracefully through the tangled luxuriance of his Imperial, and, glancing into vacancy, spake these mystic words:—

"WHY do people rush to see rapid translations of French inanities when we have at home in our own countrymen the germs—nay, the matured growth—of a healthy plant far superior to such stale and sickly exotics?" Blobbs here mumbled something corroboratory about "a distinct plant," and then subsided into his ordinary occupation of wondering how many c's there are in "acceptance." "Why," continued Pot, "should I follow Farnie and Henderson, when with about three days' constant badgering I can usually extract an order from D'Oyly or McMichael, and listen to the works of a gifted Gilbert and a soundful Sullivan?—not, mind you, that I think either of them infallible—" "Oh, shut up, do!" rejoins Blobbs, who, a trifle dyspeptic after a few days' yotting with Master, has been re-reported at vast expense, to the great joy of the rest of the crew, and the equal dismay of his London acquaintances. "Of course, we know what you're driving at. Cat your anchor, lad—big pard'n, one gets so used to that sort of thing, don'tcherknow, on board. We understand. Yourself and Ted Solomon—Love and Larceny. By the way, which of you is Love?" But the play-smith scornfully disdains any rejoinder, and speaks not, except to request Komelli to add the day's total to Peter's score.

"WELL, I shall go and give the thing a good send-off," says the Corpse Worrier, who, to the surprise of everyone, is suddenly found to be wide awake, and busily engaged in extracting a spare portion of ice-pudding which Pot had thoughtfully placed in the sleeper's pocket. "Yes, your patronage would give it a send-off—right off the boards, if people knew who were present." It is the trenchant tone of Blobbs, and its object makes no reply. "Can't think of a repartee when you've only just finished forty winks," he explains aside to me. However, it is settled that we are to go to the *premiere* of "Claude Duval, or Love and Larceny," all save Pot, who proclaims his fixed intention to stay in bed during the whole of the eventful day. "You'd better come," remarks the Undertaker's Envoy. "There *might* perhaps be a call for the author," and for once again victory rests with the Silvery-pated one.

AND so we find ourselves at the Olympic on Wednesday night, and form part of a house that is packed simply from floor to ceiling, for is it not known that Ted Solomon has really "spread himself" this time, and that the opera, music, libretto and all will be either a great success or a big disappointment. The overture augurs well, and I spot several themes that will no doubt reappear in the course of the opera, and after a fruitless endeavour to drag the Crowner into his seat (why *will* he beam through his windows at the occupants of the dress circle), I betake myself to the perusal of my programme and post myself in the matter of the names of all concerned.

AND then as we settle down in our stalls I observe John Howson (otherwise known as the "Rock of Gibraltar"), together with Mountney Jephson, in a box on the prompt side. Ada Cavendish is here at the scene of her old triumphs. "What's become of that wicked play that Duhourg and Yates wrote for her?" My question unfortunately arouses the Head-stone Connoisseur, who at once plunges effusively at a passing gentleman of very full habit of body, exclaiming—"Thanks, Ted, my boy, for your action in defence of steam launches. We'll have a day up river soon, and if we have any luck you shall stand in with me in the matter of fees." It is subsequently explained that the Old Man has mistaken Pilottell for "Atlas," and the dress-designing communist hurries away to ease his feelings by a thumb-nail sketch of that beauty in French grey and straw in the dress circle.

VERY snappy looks Miss Marian Hood in a coffee-coloured gown, but both she and George Power are sadly nervous to-night, in strong contrast to Harriet Coveney, who is as chirpy as ever, and seems rather to enjoy having been run over a week or so since. Pilottell and Alias are voted to have scored heavily over the peasant girls' dresses—light blue with white sashes and finocoes and steeple hats. All this, I remark to Blobbs, who pays no attention whatever, as ever since the entrance of Duval's horse with Duval on it Peter has been unable to contemplate anything but the mutability of human affairs and the impossibility of settling over Dominic next Monday.

SOMEbody comes in and sits down in the stalls behind us. "Who are these?" he gasps to his neighbour behind his hand, and I feel myself blushing to the nape of my neck as I hear the whispered answer, "That is 'Stalled Ox,' the Eminent Critic. The plump young man with the heavy cavalry moustache veils his identity under the pseudonym of 'Blobbs.'" Here Peter caresses the down on his callow upper lip, and assumes the celebrated smirk affected by Master when he and Guitlar were respectively mistaken for Lord Falmouth and Wheel of Fortune. The Crowner wakes with a jerk as the voice continues, "That fine-looking man, in the prime of life, is the representative of Her Gracious Majesty in one of her most cherished judicial functions. In the days of the Witenagemot—" but here the voice becomes so darkly and confidentially communicative as to be inaudible.

"WHAT a pleasure it is," says the Crowner, "to find one's self surrounded at the theatre by an intelligent and appreciative audience. If it were not had breeding, I would turn round and ascertain who this extremely sensible person can be. How do! How do!" And the Banshee's Companion frantically waves his hand to Lal Brough as he enters, and is interrupted in a similar demonstration to Bainbridge—horsey-looking man in a dog collar, lessee of Theatre Royal Manchester—by a practical pittance, who remarks, "We can see yer bald 'ed witha' yer standin' up a puppus," and the Mortuary One retires temporarily into the extreme heel of his left boot.

FINE finale to Act I. Minuet, after Frith's picture. "Good music," saith the Crowner sententiously, "always makes one athirst." On investigation it appears that it always makes three athirst. We make our way to the lobby, and order "Large supplies of soda-water, tumblers bottomed well with brandy." And then I am at once thrown into raptures by the conduct of Blobbs, conduct the narration of the which deserves a fresh paragraph.

As we stroll along there saunters towards us a gentleman of Semitic aspect, whom I recognise as a prominent bookmaker. Blobbs falters for a moment—and then pulling himself together with a wrench at his waistcoat buttons—much as you see jolly inebriates hanging on to street-door knobs—airily remarks, "I couldn't turn up on Monday: had to go to funeral of a relative." "Really? Left you anything?" Peter sees his chance, and grabs at it like a handersnatch. "Well," he whispers, "I don't want it generally known, but he has." We smile.

IN the lobby we encounter Rumour, Theatrical Rumour, full of tongues and capacious of throat; knows every thing;

thinks it a wonder, *considering* that the piece goes so well. "Considering what?" we ask, breathlessly. "Why, the difficulties they've had at rehearsal with the whims and airs of a certain indispensable personage." "Who?" we enquire. Whereupon Rumour orders more drinks and changes the subject. Why this mystery?

AUDIENCE clamouring during the *entr'acte*. Audiences at opera never seem to remember that the orchestra has been hard at it all the time and wants a rest and a drink as much as anybody. Much knocking heard. Blobbs draws excited pictures of Charles Harris flying about the other side of the curtain, and the Crowner murmurs, "When I was stage-managing the *Corsican Brothers* at a private show my men got the heaviest 'set' ready in thirty-five seconds." Crowner's weight for the Great Ananias Handicap unanimously raised to 125 lb, and notice is given him that for one more similar performance his impost will be Jope (catch weight). "A catch that the best felder would drop," is Peter's commentary. This reminds us that Jope has been recently photographed. "How many did he have taken?" asks the Crowner innocently. "It only took six cabinets to represent his entire carcass. If he were to give an entire portrait of himself to a tithe of his friends he'd be hopelessly ruined."

ALL in for Second Act. Crowner, in his hurrying, almost sitting on a yellow-haired damsel who is in company with the Poet Burgess. Poet Burgess glares, and classes the Crowner with nigger minstrels, publishers, and other institutions that should be swept off the face of the earth. More pretty girls making flower wreaths while Miss Hood warbles to them. A very generally-cheerful expression to be observed on most of the histrions' faces, indicating relief at the departure of Claude Duval's steed and coach horses, all of which have a pleasant way of kicking over scenery and prancing on the toes of the unwary nigger. Gallery and pit getting a little noisy and the O. P. gods are for some reason particularly down on Fred Solomon. However, all goes well; highwaymen's and soldiers' choruses each encoored, and humbly considered by me to be about the best numbers in the piece. And once more do we test the wares at the bar outside.

THROUGHOUT the Second Act the mystic but well-informed voice is distinctly "on the job." "How well Edith Bland looks," it says. "Do you remember her as William in Burnand's *Black Eye'd Susan*? Strong? I should rather think the cast *was* strong. Charley Ashford plays the miser Magruder. Did Max Adler invent the name? Coincidence, mere coincidence. Good going thing for Arthur Williams (there's a man for you; knows more yarns than anyone else in the profession; always melancholy about something, while the more he grumbles the funnier he grows). Who's that comic peasant with the long nose drinking real beer out of a real mug? Well, ask anywhere between Ludgate and Charing and they'll be ready to bet a million to three that in his hands it wouldn't be a property pot," and so the voice runs on—really a most well-informed personage.

"THAT allegretto movement," remarks the Crowner, who can't quite tell a crotchet from a cabstand, "reminds me somewhat of Auber." "Ober de garden wall, you mean," says Blobbs, amid general chuckling. "As if you knew or care anything about classical music, except, perhaps, the 'Dead March.'" And here Peter confides to me his intention of dramatising the next inquest he attends, and getting Solomon to set it to music—"Excellent idea, you know." Chorus of jurymen—

"We sit over bodies and baccy all day,
And the Coroner sits upon us."

Then a good comic song for the Crowner—

"I sit at my ease,
And pocket my fees,
Oh! a Crowner's life for me."

"There's money in it, I'm sure," continues Blobbs. "If by 'it' you mean the pocket of the manager who produced such trash, I beg to disagree with you," and the box-office keeper, T. R. Hades, confides to me that he is in rare form to-night.

AT it again, Third Act. It's getting late, and the people who *would* encore every song and chorus take it out in grumbling. A lot more pretty girls, in pale pink and pale blue Watteau dresses. I notice that those who are most down on the lateness of the hour are unmistakably free admissions. 'Twas ever thus.

Who got a seat for each new play,
Who guded it ere he went away,
Who never could be forced to pay,
My deadhead.

Who in a dirty collar came,
Who knew each mummer's Christian name,
And goosed him every bit the same,
My deadhead.

Who comes on each succeeding night,
And claims an order as his right,
Nor e'er by snubs is forced to fight
My deadhead.

Whom would I reckon at his best,
When lulled to his eternal rest,
And waiting for a crowner's quest,
My deadhead.

FINAL chorus. Final verdict, a distinct go. "Wants a little cutting perhaps," says Blobbs. "Unlike our Mortuary Friend, who takes a great deal of cutting, and then comes up smiling," says the voice behind. "And what pleasure," it airily continues, "a comparatively decent fellow like 'Stalled Ox' can have in going about with a hoary-headed fraud like the Crowner, and a soul-less Groveller like Blobbs, is more than I can imagine. And now they are calling 'Author,' so I must go and bow my acknowledgments."

WE turn round open-mouthed. "The voice" was the voice of Pot.

STALLED OX.

'Groydon Guardian' Sept 3/81.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

One of the most picturesque comic operas the stage has seen for some time is "Claude Duval," now commencing a successful career at this house. Some of the critics have tried to write it down, but the public seem disposed to take it up. If it depended solely on the grouping of the various scenes, it would ensure success. But there is enough of catching melody in it to aid its claims to support, while the singing of Miss Marion Hood and Mr. F. Celli lend to it a charm sufficient to attract all lovers of operatic music. Each act seems to have had especial stage management, and the effect is delightful. Mr. F. Solomon and Mr. Arthur Williams sustain the comic element, and create as much laughter as comic operas usually permit. The piece is an undoubted success, and ought to fill the Olympic till Christmas at least.

Claude Duval song, however, both in its composition and rendering, missed the dash that one associates with the

"Ball Mail Gazette" Aug 25. 1881.

"CLAUDE DUVAL."

WHEN the joint labours of Messrs. H. P. Stephens and Edward Solomon resulted in the production of "Billee Taylor," it was said generally that the authors had worked on the lines laid down by their more illustrious compatriots Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan, and that the piece was not altogether such an unsuccessful imitation as might have been anticipated. Perhaps this view of the matter was not considered complimentary; at any rate, in "Claude Duval," a new and original romantic and comic opera produced at the Olympic Theatre last night, the librettist cannot be charged with attempting to infuse even a modicum of Gilbertian humour into his work. The famous or infamous French highwayman was made the subject of a successful burlesque about twelve years ago, but this method of treatment has been equally avoided by Mr. Stephens. His story is a curious mixture

of the serious and the grotesque, and it is occasionally difficult to determine the line where the one ceases and the other commences. In matters of detail the author leaves historic, or rather traditional authority. There seems no reason for transferring the incident of the dance with the fair and wealthy damsel to Newmarket Heath, nor for the abandonment of the minuet in favour of a nondescript measure, vaguely described as a "courante." If by this is meant the old dance in triple time, the music seems to be wrong. However, the principal end of forming a tableau which shall recall Frith's picture is fully attained, and the situation brings down the curtain at the close of the first act very effectively. There is a general want of briskness in the action, the principal comic character, Claude's lieutenant, being somewhat of a bore, while the wrongs of the outlawed Charles Lorrimore, a lugubrious adherent of Lord Clarendon, interest no one. A tragical *dénouement* being out of the question, the hero gets the better of his enemies at the close and resumes his lawless career, notwithstanding a free pardon somewhat mysteriously obtained from his pious Majesty King Charles the Second. It is chiefly in the second act that the business flags, and curtailment here may be advised, especially as there is a superabundance of pointless dialogue which it will be an advantage to abridge.

If the piece is successful it will be due, without doubt, to the music of Mr. Edward Solomon. Speaking generally, this is not only a distinct advance on "Billee Taylor," but, as compared with French light comic opera, shows a higher aim, a more directly artistic impress. Mr. Solomon has a vein of singularly graceful melody which displays itself alike in the sentimental and the comic numbers of the score. It is quite possible that many who are wedded to *opéra bouffe* will miss the sparkle and bustle usually associated with this class of work, while others may see the evidence of talent capable of being turned to higher uses. Among the pieces that proved most effective may be named Claude Duval's two songs, a charming chorus of country girls, a quaint romance for Constance, the heroine, "Heigh ho! so the story goes," a conspirators' chorus, a species of patter song sung by Sir Whiffle Whaffle, a rakish baronet, and the military march and chorus that forms the finale of the second act. Mr. Solomon's concerted music is uniformly pleasing, and his handling of the orchestra shows much skill. The performance lacks the advantage of a good ensemble, some members of the cast being scarcely up to the mark. No better representative of the "dashing highwayman" than Mr. F. H. Celli could possibly have been secured. Handsome, gallant in bearing, and picturesquely attired, Mr. Celli realizes all that romancists have imagined of Claude Duval. Miss Harriet Coveney, always thorough in whatever she undertakes, causes some amusement in the part of a typical stage old maid. The character of Claude's lieutenant, Blood-red Bill, is played with an excess of energy by Mr. Fred Solomon, who had to endure the somewhat harshly expressed impatience of the audience. Miss Marion Hood, Miss Edith Blande, and Miss Nellie Sanson look very pretty, and the first-named lady sings nicely, though her voice seems weaker than it was. The band and chorus are excellent, and the mounting as brilliant as the occasion requires. With a little compression "Claude Duval" may settle down into a success.

"Sporting Life" Sept. 1. 1881.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

At the Olympic Theatre on Wednesday last, "Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny," by H. P. Stephens and E. Solomon, was produced for the first time. The joint work, which is called by its authors "a new and original romantic and comic opera in three acts," had been promised for the Saturday previous, but its introduction was obliged to be postponed owing to the amount of preparation involved. The spacious house was filled in every part by an audience, like most first night assemblages, willing to be pleased, but for a time, with all the good will shown, the piece failed to make its mark; but the pretty scenery and the charming tableaux at the close of the first act won favourable opinion, and the applause was so genuine that there could be no doubt about "Claude Duval" having hit the public taste, while to the end the impression was confirmed. Neither Mr. Stephens nor Mr. Solomon has provided much that is original, but between them they have concocted an opera interesting in its plot, and set to pleasing music. There is a better defined story than is usual in such plays, while a good deal more of the romantic than the comic about it; in fact, as far as an attempt is made to justify the title "comic" no little is done to spoil the piece, and it would have been better almost left as an operetta, with only the average share of lighter business. The fortunes of the three principal characters, Claude Duval (Mr. F. H. Celli), Charles Lorrimore, a proscribed adherent of Lord Clarendon (Mr. George Power), and the latter's fiancée, Constance (Miss Marion Hood) make a charming romance, once the stage character of the picturesque magnum and swindler is accepted. Their troubles and dangers raise an interest amounting almost to sympathy, and quite out of accord with the custom of the English school of comic opera, wherein all human nature is shown with a "kink" in it. In the first act, Duval's band, disguised as gipsies, are under the command of Lieutenant Blood-red Bill, who looks every letter of his name (Mr. Fred Solomon), "working" Newmarket Heath. They capture Lorrimore, who, at the risk of being taken as a rebel, is making his way to bid adieu to Constance at Milden Hall, once his own property, but now in the hands of a miser (Martin M'Gruder), who has "come by" it. Shortly after Duval has joined the band and released Lorrimore (who knows him as Sir Harry Villebois), old M'Gruder, his sister (Miss Harriet Coveney), and Constance fall into the nest of thieves. Here occasion is taken to work in a tableau "after" Frith's celebrated picture, Claude and Constance dancing a minuet, and at this most inopportune moment comic business is gratuitously introduced to upset the good effect of the scene. The M'Gruders are released by their niece's ransom, and return to Milden Hall, whither also go Lorrimore, Duval, and the gang, who have marked the Hall for "burgling." At Milden Hall some very pretty love-making between Charles and Constance is interrupted by the arrival of a company of the Coldstream Guards, who are on the scout for Lorrimore. When he appears certain to be taken Duval causes himself to be arrested as the rebel, and with his removal the curtain falls on a second splendidly bright stage picture. The prisoner escapes, and makes his way to Milden, followed by the troops, to whom the real Lorrimore discloses himself. The lovers are on the point of being plunged once more into distress, when Duval again comes to the rescue by handing over to his friend a king's pardon, and some deeds extracted by the active and intelligent lieutenant from the strong box of M'Gruder, who had suppressed them, to the exclusion from the estates of the rightful owner. At the close of the opera the applause was very great, and the author and composer were called before the curtain. Throughout the scenery is exceedingly well painted, and the dresses, designed by Pilotell, very rich and chronologically accurate. For filling the stage in the grand tableaux, highwaymen, peasants, village maidens, and soldiers are available, and these, artistically grouped, admirably fulfil their purpose. Mr. Celli, as Duval, acted and sang with great spirit, and looked the dashing, chivalrous highwayman (of romance) to the life. Mr. Power played very carefully, and Mr. Arthur Williams (Sir Whiffle-Whaffle) made the most of a not important character, as did also Mr. Lenman (Capt. Harleigh, of the Guards), Mr. Charles Ashford (Martin M'Gruder), and Miss Edith Bland, Rose, another of M'Gruder's nieces. Mistress Betty M'Gruder, a mature spinster of obtrusive modesty, was done full justice to by Miss Harriet Coveney, the model stage representative of the marrying lady of uncertain age. Mention should be made also of two yokels, carefully played by Mr. Goldie and Mr. Cliffe. No small share of the work falls to Miss Hood, who sang prettily, and in the dress of the period looked charming enough to cause a revival of the costume. There was a good deal too much of Mr. Fred Solomon's "Blood-red Bill," who was offensively prominent and unnecessarily loud. A large portion of this "lieutenant" wants cutting out, and what is left toned down so as not to interfere with the better parts. The dialogue is not particularly smart, though some of the verses are well written, and not only in the libretto but the score, a lot of old material is worked in. Some of it is pleasing enough, but there is a suggestive familiarity about it, and occasionally an old friend, almost undisguised, crops up, as is the case particularly with Bill's "William is sure to be Right," which long ago earned popularity under other names. "Claude Duval" must have cost a mint of money, and of the mounting, the dresses, and the scenery too good a word cannot be said. With a few not important alterations it should go, and will doubtless prove a valuable property.

Aug 27. 1881. Licensed Victuallers Guardian

A crowded audience assembled at the Olympic on Wednesday night, on the occasion of the reopening of the theatre, under the management of Mr. Michael Gunn, whose long theatrical experience in Dublin has certainly entitled him to the confidence of London playgoers. The novelty selected was a new comic opera by Messrs. E. Solomon and H. P. Stephens, based upon the history of that attractive, if somewhat apocryphal hero of romance, *Claude Duval*. It may at once be said that neither in the structure of his story, nor in the dialogue through which it is unfolded, is Mr. Stephens entitled to unqualified approbation. His plot is indistinct, and his writing commonplace. This, however, is the usual dead-weight with which it is the unhappy lot of "opera" to be too often laden; and at least a large proportion of the impedimenta may easily be swept from the present work.

Mr. Edward Solomon's music, though wanting in melody, is full of quality, if somewhat monotonous and laboured. It is, indeed, music of a sort difficult to imagine as wedded to the comic element; nor, though the opera is announced as "comic," is it easy to see on what grounds, unless it be those on which one of the characters digs so deeply, in the honest determination of convincing the audience that he is entitled to their sympathies as a very *low* comedian indeed. But these are considerations which will not weigh too nicely with the public, who will be taken by the manly and chivalrous style with which Mr. F. H. Celli carries off the honours of the evening as *Claude Duval*, by the humours of Mr. Arthur Williams and Mr. Charles Ashford as Sir Whiffle Whaffle and Martin McGruder respectively, and by the gentle but effective singing and acting of Miss Marion Hood and the amusing shrewishness of Miss Harriet Coveney.

But more than by either or all of these considerations will the public be drawn by a distinct vein of

romantic interest which runs through the opera; and Mr. Solomon will probably, when some day relieved of the supposed necessity of dragging in the "comic" man—who does not make the opera comic—do something entirely worthy of his undoubted powers. Not indeed, that there are not several numbers of real beauty in *Claude Duval*, but they are too massive for the theatre, and the present work, which is, as the bill assures us, a "comic opera." The scenery by the Messrs. Fox, of Her Majesty's Theatre, is excellent, and the dresses extremely rich, tasteful, and picturesque. Crowds will certainly be attracted to the Olympic, and we heartily wish Mr. Gunn success in his new enterprise. The opera has been produced under the direction of Mr. Charles Harris.

News of the World. Aug 28/81

OLYMPIC.—On Wednesday night Mr. Michael Gunn, a theatrical manager of the highest repute in the Irish metropolis, reopened this house for the purpose of presenting a new comic opera, entitled *Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny*, by Messrs. H. P. Stephens and Edward Solomon, whose collaboration was so eminently successful in *Billet Taylor*, produced about a year ago at the Imperial Theatre. The music of *Claude Duval* is much more ambitious than in the former work by the same author and composer, but it is equally pretty and effective. The score contains some very catching airs in its choral portions, whilst the solos are marked by point, easy flow of melody, and originality. The "dashing highwayman" who was hanged at Tyburn in the days of Charles II. is the hero of the opera, and advantage is taken of the popularity of Frith's picture of *Claude Duval* dancing a minuet with a lady whose coach has been stopped on the road to bring the first act to a picturesque close. *Claude* is of course represented as a robber of renown, but he is not devoid of nobler feelings, inasmuch as he duly pays a debt of gratitude incurred to an outlawed young English gentleman by helping to restore him to his paternal acres, and smoothing the way to his marrying a damsel whose grasping guardian had selected for her hand a London beau. The lieutenant of the robber-gang is also a leading character, the weight of the "low comedy" element falling on his shoulders. The opera is placed upon the stage in beautiful style, the dresses being charmingly designed; whilst the scenery, more particularly the views in the first and second acts (Newmarket Heath and a village green with approach to baronial hall), is remarkably well contrived, considering the somewhat restricted dimensions of the Olympic stage. Mr. F. H. Celli plays the highwayman with appropriate heartiness and gallant bearing, and does the fullest justice to the music of the part. Mr. Fred Solomon is grotesquely melodramatic as the chief ruffian of the "road," and other parts are distributed among Miss Marion Hood, Miss Harriet Coveney, Miss Edith Blande, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. C. Ashford, and Mr. George Power. The band and chorus are good, and everything is provided to secure the attractiveness of a work which, with the revisions that have doubtless been made since Wednesday, should fully realise the managerial anticipations.

"Observer" Aug 28. 1881.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

A new comic opera in three acts, entitled *Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny*, was successfully produced on Wednesday last at the Olympic Theatre. The libretto, written by Mr. H. P. Stephens, is not remarkably interesting, and would be improved by elimination of the slang put into the mouth of the highwayman, Blood-red Bill, and severe curtailment of the sentimental speeches assigned to the two lovers and *Claude Duval*. The famous highwayman is not the real hero of the new opera, although the part was so well acted by Mr. F. H. Celli that it became more important than that of Charles Lorrimore (Mr. G. Power), the rightful heir of Milden Manor, and the lover of Constance McGruder (Miss M. Hood), the heroine of the story. Lorrimore is not only kept out of his estates by the villainy of Martin McGruder (Mr. Ashford), who has misappropriated the family title-deeds, but is about to be driven out of England by political persecution. In each act of the opera he is pursued by soldiers anxious to arrest him on a charge of high treason, the treason being that he is "an adherent of Lord Clarendon!" At the end of each act he is saved from danger by *Claude Duval*, whom he had once protected from assassins. In Act 1 *Duval* disguises him as a gipsy; in Act 2 exchanges cloaks with him; in Act 3 supplies him with a remarkably valuable document—a free pardon signed in blank by King Charles II. (!), and not only fills up the blank with Lorrimore's name, but hands him the Lorrimore title-deeds, which have been stolen by Blood-red Bill from a diminutive chest, supposed to contain all McGruder's treasures, yet left exposed in the "great hall of Milden Manor." Except that *Duval* dances the traditional coranto on Newmarket Heath with Constance, and occupies his spare time in flirting with pretty girls and spotting sentimental sophistry, he has little else to do but to watch over Lorrimore's safety. Lorrimore is a vapid and uninteresting personage, who never enlists the sympathies of the audience; McGruder is a miser of the well-known pattern; Sir Whiffle Whaffle (Mr. A. Williams), Capt. Harleigh (Mr. Leumane), Boscatt (Mr. Howard Russell), and the rustics Hodge (Mr. Goldie) and Podge (Mr. C. Cliffe) are mere sketches; and Miss H. Coveney (Miss Betty McGruder) and Miss E. Blande (Rose) were burdened with commonplace rôles. Blood-red Bill is a strongly developed ruffian, and this character was rendered needlessly vulgar by Mr. E. Solomon, who is evidently capable of better things. By toning down this character, and greatly curtailing the libretto, Mr. Stephens will promote the success of *Claude Duval*, and the absence of a dramatic plot will be the more readily pardoned.

Mr. Edward Solomon's music approaches closely to the style of *opera bouffe*, and he seems to have made Offenbach his model. The overture to *Claude Duval* might have been written by Offenbach himself, and this may be considered by Mr. Solomon a high compliment. It is to be regretted, however, that in some instances he has descended to the level of music hall melodies, as in the song "Willyam is sure to be right." He shows his ability to greater advantage in vocal part writing than in solos. His choruses for female voices are melodious and charmingly harmonised, and the finale of Act 1 is well constructed. His orchestration is always well written, and is frequently brightened by fanciful and picturesque writing. The strings were happily employed in the quaint "coranto" danced by *Duval* and Constance, and in the accompaniments to Sir Whiffle's song, "My name's Sir Whiffle Whaffle," and the brass instruments were never predominant, except when required by the dramatic situations. The soprano song, "A Willow Once," *Duval's* song, "Claude Duval," the duet, "Across the Sea," and the waltz in Act 3 may be singled out for commendation, and there are numerous passages in the score which encourage the belief that Mr. Solomon may ere long take a high position amongst modern writers of light comic opera.

Excepting that the representatives of the hero (Lorrimore) and heroine (Constance) were hardly strong enough for their respective rôles, the artists engaged in the performance were fully equal to their tasks, and Mr. F. H. Celli's spirited acting and polished vocalisation merited special praise. The opera has been placed on the stage by Mr. Michael Gunn with taste and liberality. The *mise en scène* by Mr. C. Harris, the beautiful scenery by the Messrs. Fox, and the tasteful costumes made by M. Alias, from designs by M. Pilotel, combined with Mr. Solomon's attractive music, will probably ensure lengthened popularity to *Claude Duval*.

Aug 28 Weekly OLYMPIC THEATRE, Times 1881.

It is some satisfaction to find that we are now enabled to get our own plots, dialogue, and music for comic operas without depending on the French. We commenced in a small way with "Cox and Box;" this was followed by more ambitious attempts with "The Sorcerer," "H.M.S. Pinafore," and "Patience," all of which were more than ordinarily successful; then we had "Billee Taylor;" and on Wednesday night was produced at the Olympic Theatre by the authors of the last-mentioned piece, Messrs. Stephens and Solomon, a new and original comic opera, entitled "Claude Duval," a subject which seemed to have in it all the elements of success if properly treated. As far as the dialogue is concerned, we doubt whether full advantage has been taken of the excellent materials at hand. A somewhat too serious vein runs through the work, and we fail to find one "happy thought" or a single allusion that calls for the slightest cognizance. Our opinion may perhaps be modified when we have had an opportunity of seeing the book, for, as the words were very indistinctly delivered by the majority of those who had to sing them, the greater portion of the enjoyment that might have ensued under more favourable circumstances, was lost. Of the music itself we can speak more favourably—it is tuneful and bright, and although it cannot lay claim to much originality, it is nevertheless pleasing and effective, and was excellently rendered by a small though highly efficient orchestra, under the baton of the composer, Mr. E. Solomon. Some of the concerted pieces were marked successes, and showed that the young composer is a thorough musician, and gives promise of greater things hereafter. Mr. F. H. Celli makes of Claude Duval a dashing hero, his singing and acting being equally good. He imparted a vivacity to the scenes in which he appeared, and relieved the general dulness and want of life which pervaded the greater part of the opera. It is difficult to understand why Mr. Power was selected to represent Charles Lorrimore, unless his inane personation of Ralph Rackstraw in "The Pinafore" was his recommendation. A gentleman who is an amateur of amateurs, and who can neither sing nor act, is scarcely a person we should expect to find attempting to represent what should be a dashing part. The piece suffers materially in consequence of this rôle being inadequately filled. Lieutenant Blood-red Bill finds a fitting and efficient representative in Mr. F. Solomon, as far as the acting is concerned, but his pronunciation is vulgar in the extreme, and what we suppose he would call his "make up," is not successful—he looks as though he had been "mull-larking for a week, and had neglected to wash his face; but there is a good deal of stuff in the young man, and if he could be a little more refined in his manner and speech, he would become a valuable burlesque actor. Mr. Ashford, a most clever actor, had not much to do, but did it well, and the same may be said of Mr. Arthur Williams; while Miss Harriet Coveney infused much humour into a part which, in other hands, would have called for no remark. Miss Marion Hood and Miss Edith Bland showed no special aptitude for the parts entrusted to them. The piece has been placed on the stage in capital style, the costumes and scenery being all that could be wished. "Claude Duval" is one of those operas that will improve by practice, and we should not be surprised to find, with all its deficiencies, that it will have a lengthened run. The chorus is excellent, and there are crowds of pretty girls in fascinating costumes. Mr. Gunn may be congratulated on his first venture as a London manager.

Lloyd's OLYMPIC THEATRE, Aug 28/81.

It is not likely that there will be any revival at the present day of the very warm discussion carried on in the last century as to whether or no the making a thief the romantic hero of comic opera tended to increase the number of highwaymen. But Messrs. Stephens and Solomon have followed the example of Gay, with *The Beggar's Opera*, by depicting Claude Duval as an object of fear, admiration, and love. He is far more of a gallant than a rascal, and affords such a proof of generous daring that an officer of the King's army pays him a compliment, and allows him to escape. Before glancing at the plot, we must congratulate the young composer on the charming music he has provided. It is a distinct advance on that which found so much favour in *Billee Taylor*, and is always bright, expressive, and melodious. The author of the libretto has not been so happy in his treatment of the subject, and much of his dialogue is weak and dull. Far too much sentiment enters into the love episode of Charles Lorrimore, a young Cavalier, who has fallen under the displeasure of Charles the Second, and is therefore banished, while his ancestral estates remain in the possession of a miserly old squire, Martin McGruder, who is the guardian of his niece Constance, to whom Lorrimore is deeply attached. In the first act Lorrimore is seized by Duval's band on Newmarket-heath, and when brought before their Captain recognises him as Sir Harry Villebois, the name by which Claude passes in town. Lorrimore, it transpires, once saved Duval's life in a gaming-house, and the highwayman now promises to pay the debt he owes. At this juncture a coach breaks down, and McGruder, his niece, and sister, are surrounded. Gallantry here stops knavery, since the party are allowed to depart unrobbed, on Constance consenting to dance with Duval, the scene realising Frith's famous picture. The second act shows the band preparing to turn burglars, and rob McGruder's mansion. A company of soldiers appear with a warrant for the arrest of Lorrimore, whereupon Claude Duval changes cloaks with him, and is taken in his stead. The action of the last act passes in the interior of Mildon Manor, where preparations are in progress for the marriage of Constance to a vapid baronet, Sir Whiffle Whaffle. Blood-red Bill, the lieutenant of Duval's band, however, gains admission, and secures the deeds which prove Lorrimore's right to the estate. Duval, having escaped from the soldiers, appears with a blank pardon, which he fills in with the name of Lorrimore, and the way is thus cleared for the happy union of the lovers. Mr. F. H. Celli represented the highwayman with excellent dash and spirit, and sang the music of the part most effectively. Blood-red Bill was made rather too obtrusive by Mr. Fred Solomon, although the principal fun was in his hands. The heroine had a charming representative in Miss Marion Hood, who sang very sweetly. Miss Harriet Coveney and Mr. Arthur Williams played with their accustomed ability in small parts. The Charles Lorrimore of Mr. George Power was a colourless performance. Miss Edith Bland and Miss Nellie Sanson looked and acted well, and there was a numerous chorus. Among the most telling pieces of music may be mentioned a duet for Claude and Lorrimore, in the first act; a swinging song and chorus, "Knights of the Road"; a sentimental air, descriptive of lilies in a storm, by Constance; a duet for the lovers; a spirited ballad in praise of female beauty; and Blood-red Bill's song, "William is sure to be right." With new and effective scenery and rich dresses, nothing was wanting in the way of mounting, and the only deficiency was comicality. Nearly every song was encored on the first night, and at the close author and composer were called before the curtain and very heartily cheered.

Reynolds's Aug 28. 1881.

OLYMPIC THEATRE. Claude Duval—or Du-Val—the celebrated French highwayman, who in the time of Charles the Second rendered the north of London singularly unsafe for travellers, has always been a favourite as well as a noted character, apparently on account of the politeness with which the rascal seems to have filched purses and cut throats; and although his end was Tyburn, we are told that his body lay in state at the Tangiers Tavern, St. Giles, that he was buried in the middle aisle of St. Paul's Church, Covent-garden, and that his funeral was attended by ladies of quality bearing flambeaux, and a numerous train of mourners. His memory has been immortalized in verse, in painting, and in burlesque, and now Mr. Edward Solomon—Mr. H. P. Stephens serving as his librettist—has in the new three-act comic opera of "Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny," produced on Wednesday night at the Olympic Theatre, set one of the gentlemanly highwayman's real exploits and several imaginary ones to music. The plot of the opera, which is not very clearly told, shows how an uninteresting and melancholy individual, by name Charles Lorrimore, an adherent of Lord Clarendon, and a fugitive from justice, falls into the hands of Claude Duval's gang, who, probably for picturesque reasons of stage attire, are represented as Romany gipsies. He tells his captors he has no money, and they, in spite of the bravery of his clothes, evidently just sent home from the tailor's, take his word for it, a confidence which he returns in the most charmingly naive manner, by telling their lieutenant, Blood-red Bill, that there is a price set upon his head. This sum, of course, his captors resolve to claim, when enter, on horseback, Claude Duval, who recognizing in the prisoner an individual who had once saved his life, not only orders his release, but continues to protect him throughout the whole of the remainder of the three acts, obtaining for him the king's pardon—an episode which serves to introduce some scandalous his sacred and Catholic majesty, Charles II.—the hand of a lady "with eyes like the stars of heaven," whom the doleful lover is in the habit of keeping tryst with under the "Linden Trees," and his restoration as heir (pronounced, we learn, in those days with an aspirated h) to a fine estate. The dialogue of the new opera may be dismissed as puerile, depressing, and spun out to a degree; there was but one sentence that provoked a hearty and genuine laugh, which was put into the mouth of Claude Duval, who describes the *à propos* arrival of the saviour of his life as the appearance of "that god out of a machine" (*Deus ex machina*). That Mr. Solomon has been hampered by the uninteresting nature of the plot and the poverty of the words, of course, can only be surmised, but certain it is that the music of "Claude Duval" does not approach in tunefulness or originality to his clever musical work in "Billee Taylor," of which, by the way, there are several imitative numbers in "Claude Duval,"—instance "William is sure to be right," evidently suggested by "All on account of Eliza," whose popularity, however, it is not likely to attain. There are one or two effective choruses, one for the soldiers who come to arrest Lorrimore, and which forcibly recalls that in Gounod's "Faust," being encored; a capital patter song, capably given by Mr. Arthur Williams, "My Name's Sir Whiffle Whaffle," which received a similar compliment. Mr. F. H. Celli looked and acted the dashing highwayman to the life, if the too evident satisfaction he exhibited at finding himself safe and sound after a hasty descent from his "fiery steed" be excepted, and he gave his songs with feeling and *verve*. Mr. George Power made about as depressing a melancholy lover as could well be found to play a depressing part; Mr. Fred Solomon, to whom was assigned the song, "William is sure to be right" (giving it with plenty of spirit), over-owned the part of Blood-red Bill; Miss Marion Hood and Miss Edith Bland made a pretty pair of sisters, the former playing the rôle of lady-love to the melancholy Lorrimore; Miss Harriet Coveney managed to extract all the fun possible out of the part of an elderly spinster, who carries about in the pockets of her ball dress the key of a chest containing title deeds to estates and similar valuable documents; and a word of praise is due to the chorus, the women's voices being especially clear and fresh. The stage mounting was good, but it seemed a pity to destroy the effect of the minut scene (an incident in the life of Duval which has been made almost historical by Frith's wonderful picture) by crowding the stage with supers during its performance. The audience was a large but not altogether kindly one, and as the piece proceeded, a good deal of what is known as "guying" came from pit and gallery, their sarcasm culminating in a call not only for the composer, who has produced some really bright if not very original music, but also for the gentleman responsible for the libretto of "Claude Duval."

"Life" Sep 1. 1881.

RESERVING until next week our music-critic's notice of *Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny*, we may say that Messrs. H. P. Stephens and E. Solomon have made a distinct advance in this piece on *Billee Taylor*. Nevertheless, we doubt whether *Claude* will prove as attractive as *Billee*. There was a spirit of fun in the former piece which is absent from the latter. The highwayman whom Mr. Stephens has placed upon the stage is less a vulgar robber than a chivalric, gallant conspirator—a sort of aristocratic Robin Hood or Rob Roy—whose memory for favours shown him is keen, who is a lofty felon, who rights wrongs, who loves and rides away. The story of the piece is a little confused. Suffice it to say that "Claude" (superbly played by Mr. F. H. Celli, who looks as well as he sings, which is saying as much for his natural gifts as his cultured vocalism) confounds a miser, charms a fair maiden, unites a love-lorn couple, restores an estate to the rightful owner (one of the love-lorn couple aforesaid), and then

retires gracefully and pathetically from the scene. Unquestionably the best bit of acting in the piece is Mr. Arthur Williams's "Sir Whiffle Whaffle." It is full of refined humour and artistic finish. Mr. Solomon's "Blood-red Bill" was simply deplorable. Miss Harriet Coveney was, as usual, admirable, and the same may be said of Mr. Ashford, who plays the part of the miser. Miss Hood and Miss Bland sing the lyrics allotted to them (and with one exception all these are charming) effectively. The piece is splendidly mounted and "dressed"—by M. Pilotel and M. Alias—and the stage management (thank to Mr. Charles Harris) could not be better, but why not give us a simple copy of Mr. Frith's picture? Recollect "Broken Vows" in *Meg's Diversion*.

"Sporting life" Sep 8th 1881.

THE OLYMPIC THEATRE. "Claude Duval," revised and decidedly improved, continues to draw good houses at the Olympic, while last (Wednesday) evening the bill was greatly strengthened by the addition of a new operetta by Frank Despres and Edward Solomon, called "Quite an Adventure." This very laughable adventure, wherein are concerned Wallaby (Mr. Charles Ashford) and Mrs. Wallaby (Miss Edith Bland), Mr. Fraser (Mr. Arthur Williams), and a Footman (Mr. Fred. Solomon) is most comically told in prose and song. Throughout the little piece the business is brisk and the dialogue funny. It ran last night to an almost incessant accompaniment of genuine laughter, and at its close was heartily applauded.

Weekly Dispatch. Aug 28th 1881.

OLYMPIC.

There is no reason why light comic opera of home manufacture should not be as popular as the imported article, though ordinary librettists have not the peculiar humour of a Gilbert, nor composers the exceptional talent of a Sullivan. "Claude Duval" is not a remarkably brilliant production, but the book has more coherency than is usual with Parisian efforts, and the music is far more thoughtful and artistic than the best of Offenbach or Lecocq, though it lacks the glitter and vivacity of these composers. It is quite possible that Mr. H. P. Stephens determined not to incur a second time the charge of attempting to imitate Mr. Gilbert, and that the absence of any approach to humour in the dialogue of "Claude Duval" may be thus accounted for. Again, he has steered clear of the track of bouffe and burlesque writers, and there is more than a semblance of serious interest in his version of the "dashing highwayman's" adventures, though it is not well developed. Claude is made to espouse the cause of an outlawed gallant who desires to regain his estates, and also the niece of the old curmudgeon who is now in possession of them. The robber band waylay the family, and this gives occasion for the historic dance on the heath. According to the story, this dance was a minuet; but here it becomes a courante in name, though certainly not in measure. Eventually the schemes of the lovers are successful, and Claude resumes his profession, having declined a free pardon from the king. In an avowed extravaganza the weak points in the unfolding of the plot would, of course, pass unnoticed; but Mr. Stephens has unfortunately halted between two opinions, and the result is generally unsatisfactory. For the music of Mr. Edward Solomon we have little but praise. It is uniformly melodious, graceful, and even expressive. Of course the point of actual originality is not reached, but the advance on the lyrics of "Billie Taylor" is noteworthy, especially in the concerted music, and in the treatment of the orchestra. There is not one number for which exceptional popularity may be anticipated, but there are several remarkable for the elegance of the melody, notably a chorus of country girls, a romance for Constance, the heroine, "So the story goes," Claude's two songs, and a conspirators' chorus. The performance on Wednesday night was unequal. Mr. F. H. Celli, in appearance, manner, and vocal ability, is a model representative of the handsome and gentlemanly bandit. The principal comic part, that of his lieutenant, Blood-red Bill, is played with much force, even to the point of obtrusiveness, by Mr. Fred Solomon, and the audience at last expressed their impatience in no measured terms. Mr. Arthur Williams, as a "foppish baronet, Sir Whiffle Whaffle, is acceptable; and the three principal young ladies, Misses Marion Hood, Edith Blande, and Nellie Sanson, are, at any rate, pretty enough for their duties. But the most prominent female part is that of an old maid, interpreted in capital style by Miss Harriet Coveney. The piece needs compression, especially in the second act, and when this is done it may go very well.

"City Press" Aug 27. 1881.

MR. MICHAEL GUNN has commenced his rule at the Olympic by producing Messrs. Stephens and Solomon's new work, *Claude Duval*, which seems likely to secure a large measure of success, the music especially being very good. Based on the familiar story of the dashing highwayman who was so courteous to the fair sex, it represents Claude Duval as a hero endowed with a large share of good qualities, not the least of these being his power of keeping in order the somewhat ungainly looking band of followers who own his sway, and who are seen at the commencement lounging about in various attitudes, and forming a picturesque group. At the moment their captain is away, but his place is supplied by the lieutenant of the company, a truculent-looking ruffian whose character is sufficiently indicated by his cognomen of Blood-Red Bill. While this pleasant individual is giving his instructions, after he and his companions have indulged in a little flirtation with the village maidens who come to have their fortunes told, a prize turns up in the person of one Charles Lorrimore, an outlaw, for whose apprehension a reward has been offered by Government. Charles is out of sorts, dissipated, friendless, poor, and of course in love, so when he is promptly seized by the robbers his lot is about as bad as it can be. He is, however, speedily recognized by Claude Duval as having saved his life in a street brawl; and gratitude being one of the virtues highwaymen are apparently supposed to cultivate, the prisoner is at once set free, and the band turn their attention to a passing carriage, which is promptly stopped, Claude insisting upon a minuet being danced with him by one of the ladies, who has alighted at his bidding, thus realizing in very pleasing fashion the grouping of Mr. Frith's well-known picture. Later on the robbers agree to attack the residence of a rich old miser, and arriving on the spot the Captain once more encounters the lady with which he has danced under such peculiar conditions; and finding that Charles is her lover, while her uncle is determined she shall wed an empty-headed dandy whom she detests, he once more shows himself possessed of a good side to his nature, and on the lover being threatened with arrest gives himself up in Charles's place. Escaping from prison, Claude once more heads his band, and this time

puts the finishing stroke to his friendly services by discovering that Charles is the real owner of the property held by the old miser, and by filling up a free pardon which he has been fortunate enough to obtain with Charles's name. A variety of minor incidents are skilfully worked into the story of which we have but given the outline, and the interest is well sustained from first to last, though the effect would be still better if the dialogue could be rendered more telling by the introduction of a few good pointed epigrammatic sentences. The music being its chief characteristic. The part songs are capital, and if the chorus singers could only be induced to look as though they took a little interest in what they have to sing the impression produced would be still greater, though as it is the applause is genuine and hearty, and on two or three occasions renders repetitions necessary. Mr. Celli is in all respects an ideal representative of the handsome, dashing highwayman. He enters into his work in spirited fashion, and his singing is all that could be wished for. The lieutenant of the band is impersonated by Mr. F. Solomon, who might be a little less energetic in his fun, but on the whole acquits himself extremely well. His principal song, "William is sure to be Right," is very droll, and is capitably sung, so that it is likely to prove one of the popular numbers of the work; and another good bit of humorous singing is contributed by Mr. Arthur Williams as Sir Whiffle Whaffle, in a song descriptive of himself and his doings. Miss Marion Hood and Mr. George Power make a rather colourless pair of lovers, and by the tameness of their acting render it difficult for the audience to take much interest in them or their doings. Mr. Charles Ashford gives a well-conceived representation of the miserly uncle; and his sister, a lady of the elderly giggling spinster order, is capitably played by Miss Harriet Coveney. The opera has been well received, and author, composer, and manager are to be congratulated on the success they have undoubtedly scored.

"Globe" Sep 8th 1881.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

Last night a new operetta, entitled "Quite an Adventure," was produced at the Olympic Theatre. The libretto is by Mr. Frank Desprez, the music by Mr. Edward Solomon. The piece is scarcely entitled to the appellation of "operetta," as it is really a farce, with incidental music. The plot is outrageously extravagant. Mrs. Wallaby (Miss Edith Blande), on her return from an evening party, has fainted away on her own doorstep. Mr. Fraser (Mr. Arthur Williams), happening to pass by at the moment, tries to assist the suffering lady. He has heard that the application of a cold door-key is efficacious in cases of the kind, and puts his latch-key (possibly kept in a cool pocket) down Mrs. Wallaby's back. She revives, and is escorted to her sitting-room by her benefactor. He takes his leave, and returns to his own Lares and Penates, but finds that he cannot open his street door for want of a latch-key, which has been put down Mrs. Wallaby's back. When the curtain rises he is discovered—muddy and wet through—applying to Mrs. Wallaby for his latch-key. She is not aware that it is concealed upon her person, but after sundry wriggings and contortions—by no means in good taste—she releases the key from its enviable hiding-place, and it drops on the floor behind her. Fraser is about to depart, but she persuades him to remain until his clothes are dry, and insists on his wearing her husband's lounging-jacket and slippers. She departs to take off her wet mantle, Fraser goes into the passage to hang up his overcoat to dry, and a policeman (Mr. Frederick Solomon) makes his appearance, having found the street-door ajar. He is, of course, followed by Mr. Wallaby, and—equally, of course—Fraser and Wallaby are by turns supposed to be the "bold burglar," of whom the intelligent officer is in search. Mrs. Wallaby arrives on the scene; an explanation ensues, and all ends happily.

Mr. Edward Solomon's share in the work is slight, consisting of a duet, "When the shades of night"; the Policeman's song, "I always will be true to Mary Ann;" a well-written duet, "It's a burglar;" and a short final quartett. The music is unpretentious, but light and pleasing; and the piece, despite the extravagant absurdity of the plot, is likely to prove an acceptable *lever de rideau* to the opera "Claude Duval," which has been improved by condensation, and last night went extremely well, although an apology was made for Mr. F. H. Celli, who partially lost command of his voice during the first act.

"The Queen" Aug 27. 1881.

"CLAUDE DUVAL" AT THE OLYMPIC.

THAT THE SUCCESS which has hitherto so steadily attended the joint labours of Messrs Gilbert and Sullivan in the field of comic opera should stimulate others to work the same vein, is not a subject for astonishment. The announcement, therefore, that on Wednesday last at the Olympic Theatre a further addition was made to comic opera, will occasion little surprise. The new work is the joint production of Mr H. P. Stephens and Mr Edward Soloman, the former of whom is responsible for the libretto, and the latter for the music; and the occasion under notice is not the first in which those gentlemen have combined their labours for operatic purposes, inasmuch as Messrs Stephens and Soloman will be remembered as the joint producers of "Billee Taylor" — a two-act comic opera, brought out at the Imperial Theatre in October last, and which, if it had not a very protracted run in the metropolis, at all events possessed such a measure of vitality that it has not only once found its way into the provinces, but has likewise established itself on the other side of the Atlantic.

In their new work Messrs Stephens and Soloman deal with "Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny," a new and original romantic and comic opera in three acts. Although Claude Duval lends his name to the work, it is, however, more on the fortunes—or, we should say, the misfortunes—of one Charles Lorrimore that the plot hinges, than on the vicissitudes of the famous French highwayman, who quitted life so ignominiously in the reign of Charles II. Briefly the story to which musical illustration is sought to be given runs as follows: An adherent of "merrie monarch's" disgraced chancellor, Lord Clarendon, named Charles Lorrimore, who is likewise a ruined outlaw, and for whom a body of the king's troops are in search, in crossing Newmarket Heath alone is seized by what at first appears to be a gang of gipsies, but who prove to be a band of highwaymen, and causing offence to Blood-red Bill, the deputy of the band, he is detained by him among their body. The chief of the depredatory party, entering at the right moment on horseback in his scarlet and gold coat and highwayman's hat, is recognised by the prisoner as his friend Sir Harry Villebois, and one in defence of whose life he had on a past occasion drawn his sword. Reminded of the obligation and under a pledge of confidence, the leader of the disreputable band discovers himself to his friend, explaining that his title of Sir Harry Villebois is an assumed one, while he is in reality no other than the notorious Claude Duval. At this juncture a carriage crossing the heath breaks down, and, being surrounded by the highwaymen, its occupants are found to be a miserly and senile personage, one Martin McGruder, his equally antiquated sister Mistress Betty, and his daughter Constance, a young and charming girl, whose hand her father has promised in marriage to a dandified sexagenarian, Sir Whiffle Whaffle. A surprising affection, however, already exists between Constance and Charles Lorrimore, and the latter, taking advantage of the coincidence of their encounter among the highwaymen, arranges a private meeting prior to the time fixed for her wedding with Sir Whiffle Whaffle, when the former is to carry her off with him to foreign climes. Claude, by his engaging manners, has speedily reassured the alighted party of their safety, and ingratiates himself so readily into their good graces that Constance, prior to her leaving, is permitted to join the bold highwayman in a minnet, the subject of Frith's well-known picture being thus reproduced. The minnet over, the coach is allowed to depart with its three occupants, who have meanwhile been quietly relieved of much of their portable property. In the second act, after a scene between Constance and her attendant maidens, the meeting of the lovers takes place on the village green of Mildred Manor, but it is interrupted by the arrival of a body of the king's troops, who have traced the outlaw. Anticipating their arrival, however, and conscious of their purpose, Claude Duval, who is opportunely on the spot, rapidly exchanges the black scarf with which he ordinarily invests himself for the blue one usually worn by Charles Lorrimore, and by this ingenious device Claude is arrested in place of Lorrimore, and taken off prisoner, the vigilant troops apparently overlooking the fact of the difference of nearly a foot in the height of the respective personages. The last act is laid in the great hall of Mildred Manor, the residence of the miserly Martin McGruder, into which building, during certain festivities, and by elaborate disguise and much flattery to the sentimental Mistress Betty, Blood-red Bill, the lieutenant of Duval's band, has found his way. By dint of much persuasion, and as a test of her confidence, he obtains from that lady the key of a large oak chest which decorates the hall, and wherein he hopes to find abundant booty bearing the mark of the Goldsmith's Company. He is disappointed, however, in finding nothing in the chest but parchment documents. These, nevertheless, on being handed to Claude Duval, who has escaped from custody, prove to be the title-deeds of the property of which, it appears, Lorrimore has long been unjustly deprived. Another useful document found among the number is a free pardon signed by the king, the name of the pardoned one having been obligingly left out. This omission Claude Duval rectifies by very generously inserting therein, not the name of himself, but of his friend Lorrimore—a proceeding whereby many obstacles are removed, and the union of Constance and her lover facilitated.

No pains have been spared to present "Claude Duval" in as attractive a form as possible, and the work will probably retain a place on the stage of the Olympic for some little time. The libretto, however, will not only bear excision, but much of it could be rewritten with advantage, and a keener spirit of gaiety might be infused into it more in consonance with a comic opera; but the musical merits of the composition are considerable, the finale to the first act especially being very cleverly written. The airs, it is true, betray but little originality, but Mr Soloman is a comparatively young composer, and too much is, of course, not to be expected from him. The melodies he gives us are tuneful and pleasing enough, and the music throughout is sufficiently gay and sparkling to carry the story through to the end. Its lack of individuality will probably prevent the work from taking the town by storm. But if a want of true musical distinctiveness marks the production, the plot is intelligible, the chief parts are very competently filled, and the opera is admirably put upon the stage. For Claude Duval it would be difficult to find a better exponent, vocally or physically, than Mr F. H. Celli. In addition to an accurate intonation, a pleasing voice, and an excellent stage presence, Mr Celli acts with a skill and finish usually wanting in the interpretations we are customarily presented with in comic opera, where in too many cases the singer concludes he has only to sing. The air, "Lasses may leave us," in the first act, was capitally delivered, and its repetition insisted on; as was also "There are many that are thinking now of Claude Duval," and

in the duet with Lorrimore, "What times were those," and other numbers, Mr Celli also sang with marked effect. Mr George Power sings the music of Lorrimore intelligently, but the part needs further elaboration to give it its due effect. The duet, "Across the Sea, in Normandy," with Miss Hood, is one of the choicest gems of the opera, and one of his best achievements. The part of Constance finds a capable representative in Miss Marion Hood, who is already known in opera comique from her past achievements in Messrs Gilbert and Sullivan's Company, and Mistress Betty is interpreted with very considerable humour by Miss Harriet Coveney. Mr Frederick Soloman makes the most of Blood-red Bill; but his chief song, "Willie am sure to be right," is of a type to be looked for in the music hall. The scenery is excellent, and the costumes exceedingly pretty and artistic; not only those of the principals but likewise the dresses of the many highwaymen, peasants, village maidens, soldiers, &c., who crowd the stage at various intervals throughout the opera.

The composer, author, and the leading artistes were all called before the curtain at the conclusion of the work, and were cordially applauded by a crowded audience.

"Truth" Sep 1st 1881.

"CLAUDE DUVAL"

WITH all due respect to Mr. H. Pottinger Stephens, I do not see much "love," and certainly very little "larceny," in the modern history of Claude Duval. Hitherto I have looked upon the sentimental highwayman with a certain amount of appreciation, for he contributed an interesting chapter or so to the romance of the road, and proved that an unreasoning impulse on the part of womankind can make the veriest scoundrel into a cheap hero. If it be true that this foreign adventurer robbed, lied, and plundered; attached himself to a band of lawless and drunken ruffians; assaulted the old and crushed the weak; and, in the eyes of peaceful and law-abiding citizens, was the horror of the Holloway-road and the bogey of Barnet, no doubt he deserved the early hanging he received at Tyburn Tree. Morally considered, he was as great a pest to the society of the seventeenth century as the burglars and cut-throats of to-day; but, sentimentally viewed, he is a pattern to which ambitious youths may aspire who wish to win the affection of lovely woman. Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's "Jack Sheppard" was considered a very immoral book, because it was supposed to inoculate youth with vicious propensities; and, by the same reasoning, any allusion to Claude Duval should be prohibited by the censor, lest boys should take to stopping hansom cabs, and compelling the fair occupants thereof to dance a valse on the pavement. I will take the women's word for it that there was something good in Claude Duval, for they would not have wept so bitterly for the hanged highwayman when he lay in state at St. Giles's or was buried in Covent-garden, if he had not been altogether misjudged by his contemporaries. But I am perfectly certain that the ladies of no century would have made a fuss about the operatized Claude, except for his handsome face, fine voice, and suggestion of thorough good nature. The mainspring of the new and original, comic, and romantic opera is no hero, I confess. In fact, he is perpetually showing what little claim he has to any of the acknowledged heroic propensities. A more self-denying and long-suffering hero of romance has seldom been seen. He is thoroughly snubbed, brow-beaten, and cold-shouldered by Blood-red Bill, his first lieutenant; he allows the stage manager to cut him out of the very situation for which the opera was apparently founded, for, instead of being the principal figure of Mr. W. P. Frith's Academy picture, he is thrust out in the cold. When he desires to sing a song, he is forced to apologise to the ladies, and ask them to sit on the stool of repentance until he has finished his aria; and as to his love affairs, he is in as bad a condition

as the perplexed gentleman in Mr. H. S. Leigh's ballad of the Twins, who complains "that when my brother took a wife, the girl he chose was mine!" And in fact, from first to last, he gives his name to the story, and foolishly consents to play second fiddle. Now, if I were Claude Duval, who, as I observed before, is an exceedingly handsome, well-bred, and well behaved young man, a head and shoulders above his fellows, and apparently altogether their

superior in a vocal and intellectual sense, I should take Mr. Pottinger Stephens by the button-hole, and insist not only on personally rescuing Miss Constance McGruder from the coach when it is stopped on Newmarket Heath, but I should demand a minuet duet, free from the gratuitous assistance of the supers and the ballet, who turn up at incongruous moments. Fancy a ballet of young ladies on Newmarket Heath when highwaymen are about! Having done this, I should demand a love-interest all to myself, irrespective of the mice-behind-the-wainscot piping of Miss Marion Hood and Mr. George Power, who is the mildest specimen of "Charles's friend" I have ever seen; and above and beyond all, I should exercise my highwayman proclivities on Mr. Blood-red Bill, and beg him before he appeared in decent society to wash his face. Why Mr. Stephens and Mr. Solomon could have jeopardised the success of their piece by permitting the truculent bandit to do the "penny plain and twopence coloured business" *ad nauseum*, I am at a loss to discover. That Mr. Edward Solomon believed conscientiously in the introduction of the slangy music-hall element is sufficiently proved by his deliberately contrasting his well-scored music and graceful melodies with a hideous chant called "William's sure to be right." The author and composer of an original, tasteful, and, in a certain sense, an ambitious work, evidently thought they would be on the safe side by giving Blood-red Bill rope enough wherewith to hang himself, and a song to tickle the unmusical. But exaggeration is the most unpardonable sin in the eyes of the critical public, and it is easy to see that taste is changing very rapidly, and is beginning to take a stand against vulgarity. As matters stand, Mr. F. H. Celli has the weight of the opera on his shoulders, but is not permitted to shake off the burden. Mr. Arthur Williams distinguishes himself in one song, but for the rest there is little to say, except that they did their best prettily. There is nothing whatever in the opera to offend the eye or the ear—quite the contrary, for the choruses are first-rate, and the direction in excellent taste; but the high art people seemed to desire more characters, and the low art people more fun. I hope that between these two stools "Claude Duval" will not fall to the ground, for I found the book clever and the music sufficiently pleasing. The gentleman who was in such a hurry to find fault that he objected to the Coldstream Guards in the days of Claude Duval was perfectly wrong, for this famous regiment was enrolled in the town of Coldstream, in Berwickshire, by General Monk, on Jan. 1, 1660, and on the disbanding of the army in January, 1661, was retained by Charles II. in his special service. The only anachronism that I could discover in the characters and costume was the ballet of shapely maidens; but women, wherever they appear, are a "poetical license."

"Lute Acte." Aug 27th 1881.

OLYMPIC.

"Claude Duval," a comic opera in three acts, was successfully produced at this theatre on Wednesday night. This work, by Messrs. H. P. Stephens and E. Solomon, had been carefully prepared, and when the uprising of the curtain revealed a charmingly painted and arranged "set," the audience were prepared to welcome something good. And it was very good in its way. The libretto is built on lines which may be said to belong to Mr. Gilbert, and though we have no absolute fault to find with the lines of Mr. Stephens, yet it may be honestly said they do not positively sparkle with fancy, nor are they too full of funny conceits. "Claude Duval" is, perhaps, the best thing Mr. Stephens has done, for not only do his verses successfully serve the purpose of the musician, but as a story it contains a certain amount of interest, even to the end. The music which Mr. Edward Solomon has wedded to his theme is exceedingly pretty; and though now and then we fancy we trace a family likeness to something that has gone before—and where is the composer of whom we cannot say the same sort of thing—on the whole, the numbers may be said to be not only pretty and graceful, but they are original, and most agreeably represent the English school. Mr. Solomon seems to be possessed of an unlimited fund of melody; and, not only this, but his scoring for the orchestra is most effective. Concerning the interpretation of Messrs. Stephens and Solomon's work, unmixed praise cannot be given. Miss Marian Hood rejoices in a voice of pleasing quality, but she is somewhat *gauche*, and fails to assert herself adequately as the heroine of the new piece. Mr. B. Power, as the legitimate lover, is histrionically and musically weak; his acting and singing seeming about equally out of tune. Mr. F. Celli, as Claude Duval, handles his part with excellent skill. This gentleman's presence is as good as his voice, and agreeably emphasises his vocal efforts. Mr. Celli is entrusted with some of the best numbers of the piece, and it may be said that to these he renders every justice. As Duval's "lieutenant," Mr. Fred Solomon proves himself a spirited and apt actor, and most useful singer. This gentleman may be said to be entrusted with most of the low-comedy of the piece, and the song which he sings in the last act—"William's sure to be right"—and which is a lineal descendant of "All on account of Eliza," is bound to become highly popular. Messrs. Arthur Williams and C. Ashford, with Mesdames Harriet Coveney and Edith Bland, are not overburdened, but they do all that is possible with their respective allotments. The three "sets" which scenically illustrate the piece, are all heavy, but good; and the dresses are singularly pretty. "Claude Duval" is a fair success, and Mr. Edward Solomon, more than anybody else, is to be thanked for it. We should not forget to mention that the incidental dances which occur in the piece have been designed by Mr. John D'Auban.

"Daily News"

Free Aug 30/81.

In one respect, the authors of the new romantic opera "Claude Duval; or Love and Larceny," successfully launched at the Olympic, have improved upon "Billie Taylor," in that their present production is a more original work. The idea of the piece is excellent, and though the highwayman here is not the central figure, still he hovers sufficiently near to make love and indulge in larceny. If fault be found it lies more, perhaps, with the author of the words than with the composer of the music. The former is both strong and weak in his work, while the latter may be credited with a distinct uniform advance on his past efforts. The pulling together after a few nights' working will set the former into trim, and cause harmonious excellence from the operations of the two, Messrs Stephens and Solomon. In his effort after producing what may be termed an imitation of quaint old English music, the composer is to be highly congratulated, and this, taken in conjunction with the acting and the dressing of the piece, leaves a most favourable impression on the mind of the spectator. It is pleasing to note and put on record this success, because it gives life to a school which had too long lain dormant, and which only broke into life when "H.M.S. Pinafore" glided off the slips into popular favour. It is therefore the more pleasing being able to say that the talent of the present workers is not given to imitation, but to creation. The story of the dashing highwayman is, perhaps, as has been hinted at, not all the essence of the plot, but the historical episode has not been overlooked, when Claude Duval danced a minuet on the heath with the lady whose carriage he had stopped. Here Frith's pictorial remembrance of the subject finds fitting realisation. The cast is sufficiently strong, when such exponents as Mr Celli and Miss Marien Hood are entrusted with leading parts, and both fulfil their obligations with merit to themselves and satisfaction to their bearers. Add to these, the names of Miss Harriet Coveney, droll and concise; of Miss Edith Bland, stately and yet vivacious; of Mr Ashford, irresistible in his fun as a comedian; and Mr Arthur Williams, and it will be seen that what strength was needed was not lacking. "Claude Duval" will enhance the reputation of its composers, and will take its place in the higher shelves of English comic opera, and in this capacity, it is to be hoped, will revive the fortunes of the Olympic.

Court Journal
August 27-1881.

OLYMPIC.

It would be a task of some difficulty to enumerate all the managers and companies connected with this theatre during even the present year alone. They come, they have their little day, and they depart. "The fashion of this world changeth," and if an illustration were necessary, we should point to the management of the theatre in Wych-street.

The theatre has been re-opened this week by Mr. Michael Gunn, with every appearance of permanency. An original romantic and comic opera by Messrs. W. H. Stephens and Edward Solomon, entitled *Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny*, was presented on Wednesday evening, and the indications of success were not wanting. It will be remembered that the same author and composer together produced *Billee Taylor* at the Imperial last autumn, and the memory of that bright and sparkling work caused high expectations to be formed, which, we are glad to state, were not disappointed. The Claude Duval of real life, and his predatory band, committed their depredations upon unfortunate travellers in the northern suburbs of the metropolis. The dashing Claude was eventually captured at a tavern in Chandos-street, Covent-garden, and, in due course, was executed at Tyburn on the 21st of January, 1659, at the early age of twenty-seven. It could not be said that he died "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung," as ladies of quality bore flambeaux at his funeral in St. Paul's Church, Covent-garden. It is almost unnecessary to state that the Claude Duval of comic opera is not the handsome highwayman of actual life.

The curtain rises upon a picturesque scene, representing Newmarket Heath, the ferns and vegetation having a most natural appearance. The members of Duval's band, disguised as gipsies, are lying about on the green sward, talking and gambling, their leader being absent. They sing a song in praise of their peculiar avocation, and shortly after seize upon Charles Lorrimore (Mr. George Power), an outlawed gentleman who has wandered across the heath. When they learn that the government has offered a large reward for the capture of Lorrimore, they guard him carefully and await the return of Duval. Presently Claude (Mr. F. H. Celli) makes his appearance on horseback, splendidly dressed and masked. The highwaymen receive him with acclamation, the audience joining heartily in the applause, for Mr. Celli looks the beau ideal of a handsome dashing knight of the road, his novel entrance on horseback being most effective. Lorrimore is at once brought before him and a mutual recognition takes place. The outlawed gentleman saved Claude Duval's life in town at a tavern brawl a few weeks previously, and the latter in return cannot do less than at once set Lorrimore at liberty. Lorrimore has known Claude as Sir Harry Villebois, the highwayman necessarily assuming various disguises to avoid being taken. Lorrimore also discloses the fact that he is in love with Constance (Miss Marion Hood), the daughter of Martin McGruder (Mr. C. Ashford), the man who dispossessed him of Milden Manor during the troublous times of the Commonwealth. A commotion amongst the highwaymen interrupts these confidences, and in a few moments Martin McGruder, his daughter Constance, and his sister, Mistress Betty (Miss Harriet Coveney), are led in. Once more the band is foiled in obtaining the expected booty, for as soon as Claude learns who they are, he, for Lorrimore's sake, allows them to depart, and the curtain falls upon an exceedingly animated scene, a chariot of the Stuart period, drawn by two horses, forming the background.

The second act takes place upon the village green of Milden Manor. Rustic beauties dance, sing, and weave garlands. The highwaymen appear disguised as students proceeding to Cambridge, and fraternize with the village maidens. Their object is the plunder of Milden Manor, the miser,

McGruder, having the reputation of being enormously wealthy. The dejected Lorrimore also appears upon the scene in search of Constance, and some tender love-making ensues. Miss Marion Hood sings with pleasing effect a plaintive ballad, "Heigho! So the story goes." Further, there arrives Sir Whiffle Whaffle (Mr. Arthur Williams), a roysterer fresh from town, for the purpose of marrying Constance, a fact which naturally increases the gloomy forebodings of the lovers, and these reach their height when a company of guards (Coldstream) appear, the officer in command holding a warrant for the arrest of Lorrimore. Claude Duval once more comes to the assistance of the latter, and, by assuming the garments and name of the outlawed gentleman, is arrested instead.

The interval between the second and third acts was so long that the audience manifested much impatience. Managers of late years have greatly tried the patience of audiences in this respect. The pauses between the acts grow from year to year, and the irritation of the public increases in a corresponding ratio. If so much time is really necessary for preparing the scenes, we are sure that audiences of the future will be prepared to sacrifice that over elaboration and ornamentation which is now deemed requisite, rather than endure the prodigious intervals. In the present case the curtain at last rose upon a very splendid scene representing the "Great Hall of Milden Manor." The decorations were exceedingly rich, and the lighted candelabra shed a flood of light upon a most brilliant scene. All the characters in the previous act have in some way or another obtained admission. The highwaymen on plundering thoughts intent are lavishly attired as gallants of the day. A number of ladies appear in captivating toilettes, and some stately dances are gracefully executed. The festivities are interrupted by the entrance of the King's troops in search of Lorrimore, as Duval (personating him) had escaped. This time they secure the real man and are about to lead him off, when Claude once more opportunely appears, armed with the King's pardon, "whether obtained through Portsmouth, Cleveland, or charming Nellie Gwynne, the pretty orange girl," he declines to say. One of Duval's lieutenants secures by artifice the original title deeds of the manor, and these are handed over to Lorrimore. The curtain falls upon the happy union of the lovers and the rage of the baffled miser.

Mr. Edward Solomon, the composer, may be fairly congratulated upon his part in the collaboration of *Claude Duval*. The work abounds with charming airs and melodious phrases. As a rule the phraseology approaches the seventeenth century style, but occasionally there are lapses into modern vulgarity. One song, "William's sure to be right," from this cause (although set to a catching tune), was vigorously hissed. A great defect of the opera (which, however, can be happily remedied) is the prominence given to Blood-red Bill (Mr. Fred. Solomon), a lieutenant in Duval's band. This horrible looking individual is persistently obtruded upon the audience, and they naturally become tired of him. He is an exercise upon the story, and could be dispensed with altogether, or at least should occupy a very subordinate part. This of course is no reflection upon Mr. Fred. Solomon, who plays and sings well and speaks distinctly, but the grace and charm of the entire story is spoilt by the undue prominence given to this truculent individual. Mr. F. H. Celli plays in excellent style, and sings effectively. The oft-recurring music of the ballad sung by him, "There are many damsels thinking now of Claude Duval," haunts the memory and is one of the most attractive numbers of the opera. Mr. George Power was not heard to great advantage except in the duet with Miss Marion Hood, "Across the sea in Normandie." We expected that more prominence would have been given to the part of Sir Whiffle Whaffle, taken by that excellent comedian, Mr. Arthur Williams. He, however, merely appears and poses as a fop, and a humorous opportunity is lost. He amusingly sings a pleasant ditty about "A naughty little baronet." A tribute of praise is due to Miss Harriet Coveney (Mistress Betty), Miss Edith Blande (Rose), and Miss Nellie Sanson (Dollie). The chorus is exceptionally good. They are heard to great advan-

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tage in "Knights of the Road," and there are also a telling song for the soldiers, and a striking hush chorus for the highwaymen. The opera is splendidly dressed, the rich toilettes of the Restoration being faithfully reproduced. Miss Marion Hood appears in the first scene in a lovely pink dress with green flowered gown and hood, and Mr. Ashford and Mr. Power, as gentlemen of the Stuart period, were faultlessly attired.

The whole of the principal performers, and Mr. H. P. Stephens and Mr. Edward Solomon, were summoned before the curtain at the close of the performance, and were heartily applauded.

"Daily Chronicle" Sep 8th 1881.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

It is evident that there will be no lack of spirit and enterprise on the part of the management to make this house, in its new departure from all its old associations, a success with the public. If lavish display, but tempered by good taste, unstinted expense, but without gilding refined gold, and particular attention to the comfort of the audiences, can ensue patronage, the public will find each and all of these. That the comic opera of Messrs. H. P. Stephens and Edward Solomon, *Claude Duval*, supplies opportunity for all those accessories considered essential to the success of work of the class has been already stated. The period at which the sentimental bandit existed affords, in the dresses of the characters represented, scope for a perfect blaze of colour, while the village maidens of the "happy England" of that period allow of the display of pretty figures, and come in naturally as necessary chorus—albeit that to find the said maidens tripping about Newmarket Heath in the night, and when highwayman Claude Duval is at work, may seem a little incongruous. It is not necessary, however, to scan too closely the work of the librettist, for, fortunately, dramatic rule is not founded upon the laws of the Medes and Persians, "which altereth not." Probably Claude Duval in fact was as daring a highwayman as ever was hung at Tyburn, and well deserved that fate himself. But history has depicted him as a sentimental bandit at whose death ladies wept, and who had a "lying in state" and a public funeral in the consecrated ground of Covent-garden, and it is as a sentimental bandit Mr. Stephens has chosen to exhibit him, with the result that, as impersonated by Mr. F. Celli, he is highly satisfactory to the ladies. Aply supported by Mr. George Power as Charles Lorrimore, Mr. Fred Solomon as a bandit lieutenant, Mr. Charles Ashford as McGruder, Mr. Williams as Sir Whiffle Whaffle, with a numerous band of highwaymen; by Miss Marion Hood, Miss Edith Blande, Miss Harriet Coveney, Nellie Sanson, and a chorus of pretty girls, the opera goes well enough, and only those who demand something of higher art, which in another house has been given, can possibly find fault. As an opening trifle, the management last night produced another new work, which is called an operetta, and is written by a Mr. Desprez, the music composed by Mr. Solomon. This is called quite an adventure, but though not likely to gain any attention, will, perhaps, serve its purpose. It is simply a farce—original, and certainly funny in parts—with four pieces of music interpolated. The story is small. A Mrs. Wallaby (Miss Blande), living at Croydon, being taken with a fainting fit in the streets, receives assistance from a Mr. Fraser (Mr. A. Williams). He puts his latch-key down her back as a means of reviving her, and she goes home without having returned it. He late at night has to seek her abode, as he cannot get into his own apartments. Then from Croydon he cannot return to town, and so is to stay the night, but Mr. Wallaby (Mr. C. Ashford) is absent. When he returns there arises, of course, the usual *contretemps*—another man's coat, brandy and water, suspicion, &c.; but Mr. Wallaby does not suspect his wife, only that burglars are in the house. Mr. Fraser suddenly seizing him, their mutual cries bring in a constable, who, of course, apprehends the wrong man. Explanation is made by the entrance of Mrs. Wallaby and a quartette, the last of the 4 "numbers" brings down the curtain. The other 3 "numbers" are first a duet for Mr. Fraser and Mrs. Wallaby; 2nd, a song for the policeman (Mr. F. Solomon); 3rd, a concerted piece (Mr. Wallaby and Mr. Fraser); and 4th, the quartette mentioned. Of these, the best was the policeman's song, "I never will be false to Mary Ann," which was heartily encored. For the rest, neither author nor composer was credited with any recognition on the fall of the curtain, and the music certainly proved quite enough for the artistes.

"Whitehall Review" Sep 8th 1881.

I have an important announcement to make—one which will vastly interest all the musical and theatrical community and London Society to boot. That delightful composer, Mr. Frederick Clay, has completed an opera bouffe called "Princess Toto," for the Opera Comique; and, as much speculation exists as to what will follow "Patience" at the theatre so long admirably managed by Mr. D'Oyly Carte, it affords me pleasure to be able to say that "Princess Toto" will be the succeeding piece. Mr. Clay's work will be looked forward to with great zest, and it is thought that it may be produced some time in October. As the libretto is provided by Mr. W. S. Gilbert there seems every chance of at least a six months' run.

For the national credit I rejoice to be in a position to announce that an unmistakable financial success has been legitimately scored at the Olympic by our youngest composer and our youngest librettist; and I sincerely trust that Mr. Edward Solomon and Mr. H. P. Stephens will work the lode which

they have discovered to a very prosperous consummation. My skilful colleague, Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, has already dissected "Claude Duval," and pronounced favourably upon it, and I think all who see the sparkling opera will agree with him that it has great merit. That it has not pleased all the critics I can easily understand. There is more than one of the fraternity who is "*laudator temporis acti*," and I much fear that there is sometimes a disposition to look coldly—and if not actually coldly, certainly without over much enthusiasm—on the efforts of the literary outsider; I mean one who is not within the golden circle of the critics. As to the gentlemen who have written or are writing plays and operas themselves—why, they receive every new piece with a natural *froidure* which is very amusing to the onlooker. The demeanour of the critics, as a rule, reminds me of the sentiment vocally conveyed by the gentleman who had a shrewish spouse:

O! I have got a wife,
And she is such a teaser!
She really plagues my life,
For nothing seems to please her!

And nothing (or very little) "seems to please" the critics. The plain truth is that Messrs. Stephens and Solomon—two young men, and both outsiders, if they will forgive the locution—have written a clever work, one too with money in it; so they can laugh all adverse criticism to scorn. For years the Olympic has been notoriously the worst paying house in London: nothing flourished in that frowsy locality. But, now, the two Mr. S.'s may say, with pardonable pride, "*Nous avons changé tout cela*," for the treasury runs over with good coin, and there is rejoicing both before and behind the scenes. On Saturday the receipts were £120, and the business improves nightly. To realise the difference, the reader must have seen the Olympic, as I have often and often seen it, with certainly not more than £15 or £20 in the house. Mr. Gunn has, then, every reason to plume himself upon his good luck in securing "Claude Duval" for his opening piece at the Wych Street theatre, for there is every appearance that it will prove a decided "boom."

Nor do I see how it can be anything else. There are all the elements of a "big" success in "Claude Duval." In the first place there is Miss Marion Hood, to see whom in those wondrously picturesque costumes I would willingly go a long summer's day journey. In vain I tax my memory to recollect any more fascinating actress than this lady, who, as the reader will call to mind, made her *début* in "The Pirates of Penzance." Tall, with a face like a rosebud, a perfectly symmetrical figure, sympathetic, if I were the proud possessor of a theatre Miss Hood is the lady I should hasten to secure. To say that she is beautifully dressed is to say nothing; but I greatly fear that I should fail dismally if I attempted to give anything like a detailed description of her three robes. Yet they are well worth detailing. In the first act Miss Hood is the exact counterpart of Mr. Frith's heroine, wearing a lovely gown of a tender rose hue and a sage-green brocaded cloak. Secondly, a white satin dress, embroidered with flowers and foliage, and made still more superb by any quantity of lace. Thirdly, a wedding dress, made as Worth might make a gown for Madame de Sagan or the Princesse de Metternich. A similar richness and brilliancy characterise all the other dresses, designed by the ingenious Pilotell, who may be congratulated upon having produced a series of costumes without a parallel on the English stage. There is an indescribable *chic* about the dresses in "Claude Duval," and all are in good taste. I believe M. Pilotell made extensive researches at the British Museum to obtain an accurate idea of the costume of the period; and, in proof of his exceeding industry and conscientiousness, I may cite the fact that he consulted between sixty and seventy books of costumes in our national library. Would that all our theatrical *dessinateurs* were as careful as the skilful Frenchman who has now become one of us, and who is in such

great demand by managers that he will presently become imbued with strictly conservative principles. Much might be said concerning the brave costumes and gallant bearing of Messrs. Celli and Power, who win immense applause for their singing; of the grand proportions and dramatic talent of Miss Edith Blande, a seceder (like Miss Constance Loseby) from the Alhambra; the genuine comedy of the perennial Miss Harriet Coveney, Mr. Ashford, Mr. Arthur Williams, and Mr. F. Solomon—the latter a most capable actor, possessed of the *vis comica* in an unusual degree; and of the vivacity of the piquant Miss Nellie Sanson. The three scenes are telling pictures, the best, perhaps, being the famous Heath, albeit the Village Green of Mildenhall is a charming set and the Great Hall a very imposing interior. It is hardly too much to say that Mr. Solomon has the best chorus in London, and that he directs a highly-efficient band. They have added another row of stalls, of which there are now ninety-nine.

"Daily News" Sep 8th 1881.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

A bright little *lever de rideau*, written by M. Frank Desprez, and entitled *Quits an Adventure*, was produced last night to precede the successful opera *Claude Duval*. The story of the little piece is simple enough. A lady, Mrs. Wallaby, who lives in the suburbs, has been to an entertainment, and feeling faint in the street she has been assisted by a stranger. Arrived at her home she feels nervous of burglars, and dolefully sings a pretty drawing-room ballad, "What a happy life is mine," to cheer her. A pea of the street-door bell alarms her. It is the stranger who assisted her in the street. Very shyly he explains he had adopted every suggestion of the crowd. He had patted her hands, he had placed a burning cigar under her nostrils, and finally he had put a key down her back. Now, he was a young barrister, living in chambers in Victoria-street, and that key was his latch-key. The situation is highly amusing, and it becomes more so when the lady wriggles the key from her boddice. But the last train has now gone, it is impossible to obtain a cab, and it is raining pitilessly. So with great diffidence Mrs. Wallaby presses the stranger to remain till her husband returns, tells him to exchange his sopping coat for a dressing jacket and his dress shoes for slippers, and, giving him hot grog and a cigar, modestly leaves him. The stranger quits the room to hang up his coat in the hall, when a policeman enters by the window, and, after singing a song about his successes with the servant maids of the district, surveys the premises and retires. The stranger having returned, he is horrified to see a man scale the wall, and, crossing the gravel, enter the apartment. It is of course the husband, but in a duet each expresses his fear that his companion is a burglar. They struggle, the policeman enters, and after a diverting scene mutual explanations are given. This little piece owes its success to the fact that it is compact, that its story is not improbable, and its situations not too exaggerated, and that, as it is all comprised within the space of half an hour, its briskness is preserved to the last. Mr. Solomon has written for it a couple of duets and a couple of songs, pretty of their sort, and just adapted for the work. The various characters of the operetta are exactly adapted to the talents of their exponents, and Mr. Charles Ashford and Miss Edith Blande as the husband and wife, Mr. Arthur Williams as the stranger, and Mr. Fred. Solomon as the policeman, are all equally amusing.—It may be mentioned that *Claude Duval* now plays very much closer than it did on the first night, and that by judicious excisions its merits have been brought into greater prominence. The orchestra is conducted by the composer himself.

"London Figaro" Aug 31 1881.

was alleged with reference to "Billee Taylor" that it was a patent imitation of the manner of Mr. Gilbert. Mr. Pottinger Stephens indignantly repelled the accusation, if accusation it can be called, and in "Claude Duval" he has evidently set himself to show the originality of his genius. He has succeeded in the attempt. There is not a sign of Mr. Gilbert in his new libretto. It is Mr. Stephens from beginning to end, and we are never reminded in the slightest degree of Mr. Gilbert, unless it be by the sense of contrast.

SUCH is the inconsistency of human nature, however, that before ten minutes of the opera were over I found myself longing for a touch of Mr. Gilbert. I own it with a blush, but so it is. Mr. Stephens imitating Mr. Gilbert was now and then amusing; Mr. Stephens *in propria persona* proved terribly dull. "Claude Duval" is not a musical extravaganza like "The Pirates" or "Billee Taylor." It is a serious comic-opera—very serious indeed. This may seem a contradiction in terms, but it is not. "Comic opera" in technical parlance is a lighter species of "grand opera," the rejection of the recitatives and the retention of dialogue being its essential feature. It does not necessarily imply that there is a spark of fun or a gleam of humor in the libretto, so that "Claude Duval" comes exactly under the definition. The action is supposed to be genuinely dramatic, and the dialogue is not supposed to be merely fantastic; consequently "New and Original Romantic Comic Opera" is in every sense a just description of "Claude Duval."

UNFORTUNATELY, the dramatic action is far too meagre for three acts. In the first act Claude Duval meets an old acquaintance, Charles Lorrimore, who is outlawed for adherence to the party of Lord Clarendon. Lorrimore is in love with Constance, the niece of the miserly Martin McGruder, who has also fraudulently possessed himself of Lorrimore's estates. In a little, a coach containing McGruder and his two nieces, Constance and Rose, is stopped by Duval's band of highwaymen, and Duval dances with Constance the dance celebrated in history by Macaulay and in picture by Frith—and upon this the curtain falls.

It seemed to me that very little was made of this dance in comparison with the opportunities. Neither composer nor stage-manager seemed to have risen to the occasion. A dance, which Claude himself explains is a coranto, or "Courante" (which however it, strictly, is not), is substituted for the stately and graceful minuet, and an opportunity, both musical and scenic, was wasted. The chorus is always executing a few *pas* at all sorts of irrelevant moments, but on the one occasion when a dance was absolutely demanded by the exigencies of the play it was slurred and rendered ineffective.

IN the second act the whole action consists of the arrival of Sir Whiffle Whaffle, whom her miserly uncle wishes to force Constance to marry, together with the arrest of Claude Duval by a company of soldiers in mistake for Charles Lorrimore. This incident is introduced merely to afford a final tableau, arranged after a style—*absit omen*—a good deal like that of the tableau which concluded the first act of "Gibraltar." Duval's arrest produces no effect on the plot, for in the next act he has escaped by means unspecified. In the meantime his followers have effected an entrance into Me-

Gruder's house, and his lieutenant Blood-red Bill has broken open a strong box containing papers which prove McGruder to be wrongfully in possession of Lorrimore's property. The real Lorrimore gives himself up to the soldiers, but Claude Duval produces a free pardon signed by the King, with the name left blank. He fills in Lorrimore's name, and his highwaymen overpower the soldiers, so that they are effectually checkmated. Lorrimore of course marries Constance, and Duval goes off to resume his predatory career.

It would not have needed any great expenditure of invention to fashion a plot less conventional and more dramatic than this, or at any rate to have worked it out more coherently and effectively. To make matters worse, the dialogue is absolutely flat. The highwaymen, as in duty bound, laughed loudly at Blood-red Bill's little jokes, said Bill being their lieutenant and doubtless able and willing to inflict pains and penalties for non-appreciation of his humor. The audience, being under no such constraint, remained sternly grave when he remarked, "As the nobleman said of the bet—we're off," and when he called Mildew Hall "Mildew Hall." Yet Blood-red Bill, with occasional assistance from Mistress Betty McGruder, is the only person who even tries to be funny, the remaining characters being consistently matter-of-fact throughout. Claude Duval now and then attempts a joke on the cheerful subject of his probable death on the gallows; and the old miser on one occasion is moved to offer a tip to one of his servants, but on second thoughts adds, "No, I'll owe it you"—a piece of humor which is in a sense highly appropriate, since it is antique enough to have been current in the time of Charles II. and even several centuries earlier. This is practically the sum total of the humor of the book. Such passages as that in which the village maidens express their views upon matrimony fell utterly flat, while the two lovers were lugubrious enough to have wandered by mistake out of "Lucia di Lammermoor."

MR. SOLOMON'S music can hardly be adequately criticised without indulging in comparisons. Taking it on its own merits, it seems to show that the talent of the young composer has not yet matured, but that he understands his business, and is capable of far better things. Compared with the music of recent operetta composers, such as Mr. Clay or Mr. Cellier, it shows a worthy ambition to break through the trammels which seem to have bound English writers to the ballad and the ditty, thinly accompanied by a score which would be equally effective on the piano. Mr. Solomon's orchestration is indeed sufficiently good of its sort to give great promise of even superior excellence in future works, and he deserves ample credit for avoiding triviality on the one hand, and mere noise on the other. It would, of course, be easy to trace some of Mr. Solomon's music to melodies and musical effects which are not unfamiliar to us, but the task would be alike profitless and ungracious. The music is, however, of a very diversified character. Such pretty things as the duet for the two men in the first act, the beautiful song of the heroine, with its refrain, "Hey ho"; the duet for soprano and tenor, and the song of Sir Whiffle Whaffle in the second, and the duet for the melancholy lover and his mistress in the third, acts, are in strange contrast to many a rattling song and chorus, and to the musical vulgarity of "Willyam's sure to be right"—an effort better fitted for the music-hall than the theatre. Once or twice Mr.

Solomon seems to have been tempted to write an elaborate ensemble, but has modestly broken off short, and thus stands in the enviable position of causing his hearers to wish for more. The finales to both the first and second acts are well constructed, and contain, indeed, some of the most effective writing of a piece whose weakest point is certainly not the music. Mr. Solomon himself conducted a competent orchestra and a chorus of far more than average excellence.

THE chief character in the opera is of course Claude himself, and it is difficult to imagine anyone better able to fill it than Mr. Frank Celli. Handsome in person and gallant in bearing, Mr. Celli acted the "ladies' highwayman" to the life, while the experience he has had as a vocalist at Her Majesty's and many other theatres stood him in good stead. Neither Mr. George Power, who played Lorrimore, nor Miss Marion Hood, who played Constance, was in good voice, and the young lady's intonation was distressingly at fault. Dramatically speaking, neither has much to do. Mr. Arthur Williams was excellent in the character of Sir Whiffle Whaffle, that accomplished actress Miss Harriet Coveney was of course most amusing as the old maid Betty, Mr. Russell (the only surviving son of parents whose names are respected both in the theatre and the opera-house) played the small part of chief of the highwaymen band admirably, while Miss Edith Blande as Rose did the little she had to do, well. Mr. Fred Solomon as Blood-red Bill will probably appear to better advantage when his part is shorn of a good deal of the dialogue, which on the first night called forth decided sounds of disapprobation and no little chaff from pit and gallery. The mounting and dresses were lavish in the extreme—so much so that even the old miser's Mildew (or Mildew) Hall assumed palatial hues and proportions, while the miser himself, with his sister and nieces, wore costumes which would have made a sensation even in the court of the Merry Monarch. The dresses of the female chorus were unusually tasteful and splendid, but those of the male chorus struck me as gaudy and yet opaque in color. This, however, is a matter of individual taste, and the costumier was no doubt more or less trammelled by the necessity of keeping to something approaching the correct style of the period.

"London Age" Aug 27/81.

THE general impression on Wednesday evening, as the critical and crowded audience left the Olympic after the first performance of *Claude Duval*, was that a great deal of good money had been expended upon some generally meretricious music, and some singularly flabby dialogue. That Harrison Ainsworth is much funnier in his treatment of the subject must at once be conceded, and that those who were prepared to find in the latest effort of Messrs. H. P. Stephens and E. Solomon a worthy successor to *Billee Taylor* were doomed to utter and unqualified disappointment, is another fact which admits of no denial. It seems as though in pursuit of a higher and more ambitious success than that at which they have formerly aimed, the author and composer have, colloquially speaking, "come to grief." *Claude Duval*, considered as a "comic opera" (*vide programme*), fails ignominiously in point of both pith and coherence. *Claude Duval*, considered as an *opera-bouffe*, is equally unsatisfactory, through being burdened with a serious interest and saddled with melodramatic details utterly unsuitable to that form of opera which it most closely resembles. *Billee Taylor* was clever on the score of its wildly absurd incidents and characterisation; *Claude Duval* is dull by reason of its impotent ambition. Dialogue cannot be made witty by the frequent interspersing of "Gadzooks!" and "damme's" and "Pardi's!" The musical numbers can never enlist the appreciation of a West-end audience on the strength of mere "catchiness" and music-hall swing. And, for the sake of the management, I am sorry to add that sumptuous dresses and elegant appointments—combined though they may be with excellent stage-management—are powerless to convert a production of the *Claude Duval* calibre into a financial success.

The first act opens well. We find Claude's band of highwaymen disporting themselves as gypsies, whose revels are interrupted by the capture of a melancholy and objectionable personage named Charles Lorrimore, who subsequently wanders through the story after the fashion of an Edgar of Ravenswood more than usually "down upon his luck." This young gentleman is an adherent of the ill-fated Earl of Clarendon; a price is set upon his head, and his estates are in some mysterious manner held by one Martin McGruder, with whose pretty niece Master Lorrimore is in love. The appearance of Claude Duval soon sets matters straight, and the act ends with the stoppage and robbery of McGruder's party. Here a fine opportunity has been lost by the author of realising Frith's celebrated picture of Duval dancing a minuet with a lady, by way of ransom, on Newmarket Heath. A minuet is certainly attempted, but the picture is obscured and the tableau blocked out by a crowd of persons on the stage, even to the chorus of peasant girls who are literally dragged in by the neck and shoulders. In the second act we reach Mildenhall, upon which a raid is contemplated by Duval and his band, and here the fugitive Lorrimore visits his beloved, only to be followed, however, by the soldiers who are tracking him down. The advent of Sir Whiffle Whaffle introduces us to an antiquated fop of the period, who comes to wed the Lorrimore's *inamorata*. A tolerably strong, if somewhat conventional situation, occurs here, when Claude Duval surrenders himself as the proscribed Lorrimore, and is carried off to prison in his stead. In the third act the band, who have previously been seen lurking around the Hall, effect an entrance in disguise, as guests at the nuptials of Sir Whiffle Whaffle and Alice. The thievish propensities of Blood-Red Bill lead to the rammaging of a deed-chest, in which he discovers documentary proof of Lorrimore's "rightful herity" to the Hall and estates. This paper is retained by Duval until the exigencies of dramatic construction require its triumphant production to at once re-instate Lorrimore, reunite the lovers, shower confusion on the head of the miserly McGruder, and complete the Olympian apotheosis of *Claude Duval*.

From this very imperfect sketch of the plot it will be observed that the "comic opera" combines most of the elements of melodrama, farce, and opera-bouffe. Unfortunately, however, there is but a suggestion of each, and the whole is characteristic of neither. With a first act which promises well, a second which drags, and a third which might be the last act of a transpositional drama set to music, *Claude Duval* is entirely dependent upon smart dialogue and bright music for its redemption. I must reluctantly say that the dialogue, so far from being smart, is frequently both flabby and puerile; while, if I except the mysterious chorus and the love duet in the second act, and one or two minor numbers, the music is distinctly inferior to that which the promise of Mr. Solomon's earlier efforts justified us in anticipating.

Of the acting but little need be said. Mr. F. Celli exactly realised the ideal Duval, and sang and played in a manner which can scarcely be too highly praised. Mr. Power as the lachrymose Lorrimore contrived to excite an amount of amusement which it was evidently beyond his intention to call forth, and equally beyond his power to repress. From a gentleman whose appearance had been so freely paragoned in anticipation, the coarse self-sufficiency and almost aggressive assurance of Mr. Fred. Solomon were irritating to endure. His make-up was imbecile, his action exaggerated, and his rendering of the song "William is Always Right!" met with a reception which rather negated the assertion embodied in the

title. Mr. Ashford was a tame McGruder, and Miss Blande, a bewitching Gertrude. Miss Marion Hood sang charmingly as—I suppose I must call her—the heroine. The only piece of legitimate acting was the Sir Whiffle Whaffle of Mr. Arthur Williams, who sang his song and played a very sketchy part as might have been expected so excellent a comedian as he undoubtedly is. The dresses are of the most gorgeous description, and everything that could be done to promote the success of the production is to be found in the representation. That *Claude Duval* will reimburse the management for its enterprising outlay I greatly doubt. That it is not equal to the pretensions of its title as a "comic opera" few who witness it will deny.

"York House Paper" Aug 17/81

Mr. Barker has taken the Opéra Comique for a term, and will produce about October 1st another comic opera from the prolific pen of Messrs. H. P. Stephens and Edward Solomon. The title of the opera has not yet been determined upon. We may remind our readers that Mr. Edward Solomon was a pupil of Mr. Arthur Sullivan's.

We hear that the music of "Claude Duval," Messrs. Stephens and Solomon's new opera, to be produced at the Olympic on Saturday night, is very bright and sparkling, and that Mr. F. H. Celli, who plays the principal part, considers his part one of the best he ever played. Miss Harriett Coveney, who is fast recovering from the effects of her late accident, also appears in it.

Cuckoo Claude Duval at the Olympic. Aug 25/81

We wonder how many of our readers have *not* read the story of Claude Duval, the universal *beau ideal* of polished rascaldom. Modern habits, modern laws, and modern civilisation have, it is true, removed a little of the gloss attaching to his reputation. Modern habits or modern civilisation have, however, failed to remove that inborn love of the romantic and the daring which, there is no shame in confessing, lies dormant in all our natures. So that, though the mode of thieving adopted by this gentleman and his associates would be rejected with something like scorn by the veriest tyro in the modern art, and an area sneak or a pickpocket of the present day looks with contempt upon such ancient bogeys as Duval, Turpin, or King, in point of romance the old road captains had the better of the modern faker, and men *will* for ever continue to sigh for the good old days—the brigands, highway-men, and footpads of our forefathers.

Claude Duval last night appeared in his old original character of the ladies' highwayman. His song is one of chivalry. He poses throughout as a beneficent fairy in top boots—a kind of Cupid's messenger—except when he so completely loses himself in the part as to make love to the lady on his own account—by mistake. When we first meet him it is on Newmarket Heath, at the head of a band of noted robbers who have disguised themselves as gipsies. It would seem that when not following his legitimate profession he moves in the best society, under the *alias* of "Sir Harry Villebois." In these circumstances he has met one Charles Lorrimore. Just before the arrival of Duval, the *soi-disant* gipsies have made a capture of a richly attired stranger, who, in his agitation, has confessed himself to be a political refugee escaping from the law. In due course he is brought before Duval, when the two recognise each other as Lorrimore and Villebois. Lorrimore is now assured of Duval's protection; he having once saved the latter's life. The nature of Lorrimore's political offence is, by-the-bye, never made quite clear. Lorrimore further confides to Duval the story of his love for Constance, niece of Martin McGruder, who has by some inexplicable means obtained possession of Lorrimore's rightful heritage. Duval declares himself to his friend as the highwayman, and having induced him to accept his (Duval's) protection, further persuades him to adopt a disguise. While Lorrimore has gone, there enters on the scene the identical Martin McGruder, Constance, and her aunt Betty, whose coach has broken down on the road. They are presently surrounded by the robbers, and would be roughly handled but for the opportune return of Duval. Then ensues the incident, immortalised in song, story, and picture. Duval promises the young lady a free pass on condition that she dances a minuet with him on the grass. This she does. At this moment Lorrimore comes back in his disguise. Constance sees Lorrimore while she is dancing, but dare not acknowledge him, and the curtain falls upon the mutual recognition of the lovers. From this point the story is almost lost in a thick fog. People come on and go off without any conceivable

reason, and are perpetually finding themselves in all manner of impossible situations. In this scene we are first introduced to Sir Whiffle Whaffle, a well preserved beau, whom McGruder intends Constance shall marry. Sir Whiffle Whaffle has been attacked and robbed on the road by Duval's gang, and, in a whimsical song, describes his divers little peccadilloes. This was cleverly sung by Mr. Arthur Williams.

Lorrimore, somehow or other, finds his way to Milden Hall, and discovers Claude Duval in the act of making love to Constance. A duel between the two would be the natural consequence, when a party of soldiers enter with a warrant for Lorrimore's arrest. Duval quickly changes cloaks and hats with Lorrimore, and generously allows himself to be taken in his stead. In the third act we are shown how Duval's gang have obtained entrance to Milden Hall (which they purpose sacking), how Blood-red Bill (Duval's lieutenant) gets possession of papers establishing Lorrimore's right to his property, as well as a free pardon from the

King, mainly by working the confidence trick on Mistress Betty, and how Duval (who has escaped from captivity in the meantime) succeeds in confounding McGruder and Sir Whiffle Whaffle, and bringing happiness to the lovers.

Speaking of the libretto, we cannot honestly say that Mr. Stephens has done his work well. It is a tissue of more or less ridiculous twaddle from end to end, and we fear Mr. Solomon must have found it no pleasant task to have to write up to such poor stuff as he has dealt with here. The music in some parts is dull and commonplace, in others quaint and lively, notably the "Soldiers'" marching refrain, "Sir Whiffle Whaffle's" song, and "Claude Duval's" entrance air. The acting is altogether very uneven. All the ladies last night fell violently in love with Mr. Celli, and we expect those that follow will do the same. Certainly his dashing appearance fully bears out all the preconceived notions of the manner of man Claude Duval was, while his acting and singing (and he *was* in capital voice) were alike sympathetic.

As "Blood-red Bill," Mr. Fred Solomon has not quite got rid of the music-hall twang, but in the small part of "Sir Whiffle Whaffle," Mr. Arthur Williams must be commended for a thoroughly artistic performance. Of Mr. George Power's "Lorrimore" it will, perhaps, be more charitable to say nothing. Miss Marian Hood with all her charms is not a great actress or singer, and the same may be said of the other ladies, with the exception of Miss Harriet Coveney, who made the most of some wretched material.

At times the opera went with much spirit and go, but more often than not, dragged terribly. As we said yesterday, the piece is beautifully dressed, and the girls are among the prettiest to be found in all London. But the public sometimes want more even than bright dresses and pretty girls.

"Stage" Olympic. Aug 20/81.

Wednesday 24th inst., a new and original romantic and comic opera in three acts called *Claude Duval, or Love and Larceny* by H. P. Stephens and Edward Solomon.

Claude Duval	Mr. F. H. Celli.
Charles Lorrimore	Mr. George Power.
Sir Whiffle Whaffle	Mr. Arthur Williams.
Martin McGruder	Mr. Charles Ashford.
Capt. Harleigh	Mr. Leumane.
Blood-red Bill	Mr. Fred Solomon.
Boscat	Mr. Harold Russell.
Hodge and Podge	Messrs. Goldie and Cooper Cliffe.
Constance	Miss Marion Hood.
Rose	Miss Edith Blande.
Mistress Betty	Miss Harriett Coveney.
Dolly	Miss Nellie Sanson.
Mary, Prudence, Kezia and Barbara	Misses Daisy Foster, May Lennox, Violet Dane, and Beaumont.

The initial successes already scored by these clever collaborators drew together a crowded and critical audience, who evinced by repeated encores and much applause their general satisfaction with and approval of *Claude Duval*.

The curtain rises upon an encampment of highwaymen who, disguised as gipsies, are telling the fortunes of pretty village maidens. Having got rid of the damsels they, while awaiting the arrival of their captain, capture Charles Lorrimore, upon whose head a large price is set by the Government. Claude Duval soon rides into camp, and, recognising Charles as an old friend, persuades him to disguise himself with them. The breakdown of a coach is heard, and Constance Fleetwood, Squire McGruder and his sister, Lady Betty, entering explain in a trio their state of fear. They are surrounded by highwaymen, who are about to clear out their pockets, when Claude appears, assures the ladies of their safety, with the only stipulation that Constance shall dance a minuet with him. The lady consents, the highwaymen and village maidens join in, and the drop falls upon a realisation of the well-known picture.

The scene of the second act is placed near the gates of Mildenhall, which, though rightfully the property of Lorrimore, is in the possession of McGruder. Sir Whiffle Whaffle, the bridegroom intended for Constance, is expected. Blood-red Bill, learning from Dolly Roper that Sir Whiffle is to bring a quantity of valuable presents, arranges with his comrade highwaymen to stop and rob his carriage. Claude contrives to make Sir Whiffle believe that he has rescued him from cut-throats, and Sir Whiffle in his gratitude introduces himself to the highwaymen in a song. Claude soon improves his opportunity and, by flattering Lady Betty, contrives to get an invitation to luncheon at the Hall. He makes violent love to Constance, but is interrupted by Charles Lorrimore, who informs Claude that the lady is pledged to him. Soldiers arrive in search of Charles to arrest him for high treason, but Claude generously secures his escape by changing cloaks, and allowing himself to be taken prisoner.

In the third act we are transported to the interior of Mildenhall. Grand preparations are being made for the wedding, a number of the highwaymen are present disguised as guests, amongst them Blood-red Bill who, by means of desperate flirtation with Betty, obtains the key of a chest which contains valuable papers. While he is engaged in opening it Claude, having broken out of prison, surprises him and takes possession of the documents. The soldiers having tracked Claude, still supposing him to be Lorrimore, Charles, who has been concealed in the house disguised as Dolly's lover, declares himself to be the man wanted. The soldiers,

just as they think they have both Duval and Lorrimore in their power, are overcome by the highwaymen. Among the papers from the chest which are in Duval's possession, he finds the title deeds to the Mildenhall estate and a blank form of pardon signed by the king. He gives both to Charles Lorrimore, rendering him happy in the possession of his sweetheart and his property. The curtain falls upon a scene of contentment which is generally shared by all the characters with the exception of the captain of the soldiers.

It might almost pass without saying that Mr. F. Celli made a hit as Claude, so exactly is his fine appearance and style suited to the traditional bearing of that historical personage. Mr. Celli bore the principal brunt of the piece most successfully. He was encored in all his songs, one of which "There's not a prison rough enough" is destined we think to great popularity. Mr. George Power was deplorably weak as Charles

Lorrimore both in acting and singing. Mr. Fred Solomon worked hard and with a good deal of success as Blood-red Bill. His make-up and appearance however might both be toned down with advantage, he was inclined also to take his audience too much into his confidence, an honour which they resented in his rendering of "Willie is sure to be right." For a finished and delicate piece of acting the best thing in the play was Mr. A. Williams's Sir Whiffle, and it is a decided loss that the audience see so little of the part. Mr. Chas. Ashford made the most of McGruder.

We regret to say that Miss Hood was sadly over-weighted as Constance. In action she was insipid, and she sang a good deal out of tune. Miss Blande had little to do but to look well as Rose, Constance's sister, and she succeeded. Miss Coveney was highly amusing as Betty, the maiden aunt. The play is splendidly dressed and mounted, and when the representation proceeds more evenly will be a great success. Within the limits of a hurried notice it is impossible to do full justice to the music, which abounds in bright and catching melodies, and is enough of itself to ensure success. The Soldier's March is certain to be highly popular. The authors were called, and bowed their acknowledgments at the conclusion.

"Broad Arrow" Sep 3/81.

THEATRICALS.

"Claude Duval," the joint production of Mr. Pottinger Stephens and Mr. Edward Solomon, is the latest addition to the modern school of English comic opera, which first achieved such success through the efforts of Messrs Sullivan and Gilbert. The new work, as a comic opera, contains the two ingredients necessary to secure the approval of disciples of this school, viz., a well-constructed story allied to tuneful, bright, and sparkling music. With these credentials "Claude Duval" successfully enters the field of comic opera, and will hold its own for some time to come. A story that can be told in a few words has for its hero the famous highwayman whose name has been handed down to posterity in the pages of Macaulay and on the canvas of W. P. Frith, R.A. His life has been saved by one Charles Lorrimore, and in return for this the highwayman protects his friend from danger in the hour of need, and ultimately restores him to the estates out of which he has been tricked by one McGruder, a villainous miser, whose niece is beloved by Lorrimore. One familiar incident in the life of *Claude Duval* is turned to good account by the dramatist, who presents us with the scene of the stoppage of a lady's coach and her release on the condition of her dancing a minuet on the heath with the "Knight of the Road." Mr. Solomon's share in the piece should command the warmest praise, the music containing many pleasing numbers and much charming orchestration. Among the most noticeable pieces are a ballad with the refrain, "Heigho! so the story goes," a charming ballad, admirably given by the representative (Mr. F. H. Celli) of the highwayman; a soldiers' march, which will assuredly become familiar to more than one of our new territorial regiments; a comic song for the lieutenant of Duval's band, and a very quaint aria, "My name's Sir Whiffle Waffle," capably rendered by Mr. Arthur Williams. Of the performers we can only speak briefly. Mr. F. H. Celli plays the handsome, chivalrous highwayman to the life, and is well seconded by Miss Marion Hood, Miss Blande, Miss Harriett Coveney, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. Power, Mr. Ashford, and Mr. Fred Solomon, who, as a certain *Lieutenant Blood-Red Bill*, is a most amusing representative of the part. The scenery and dresses are as near perfection as thought and money can make them, and the result, as a whole, is a success which is undoubtedly scored by author, composer, and manager.

Review Aug 28. 1881.

WITHOUT the slightest apology to Teddy Solomon and Henry Pottinger Stephens, I beg to call the attention of the Lord Chamberlain and his Examiner of Plays, Mr. Edward Pigott, to the fact that the gentlemen first named have produced at the Olympic Theatre, with the full sanction of D'Oyly Carte and Michael Gunn, a comic, or so-called comic, opera, entitled "Claude Duval; or, Love and Larceny." In the story books which I so eagerly devoured in the days when I was young, the hero of the road was styled "Claude Duval, the Dashing Highwayman." What I want to ask of the Lord Chamberlain and Pigott is why they allow the title given to the Olympic production, and yet set their faces full and determinedly against "Jack Sheppard"? Jack Sheppard is supposed by his very name to exercise a deleterious effect upon playgoers, but it appears to me that if there is any moral or immoral influence exercised at all, "Claude Duval" is the greater sinner of the two; for be it remembered that Claude is made by everybody who writes about him a very handsome and a very gallant fellow, the darling of the ladies and the envy of the men. I remember quite well how, as I used to read about him, he was beloved by the women of his time; how, stopping the lady's coach on Newmarket Heath, he first took her purse and then returned a portion of the contents on condition that she danced a minuet with him. I fairly envied him, my envy being in no way diminished when I discovered that he was hanged at Tyburn and buried in St. Paul's, Covent Garden, while the tears of some score or two of distressed damsels flowed freely.

Sorry am I to give expression to it, but I am decidedly of the opinion that "Claude Duval" will prove a rank frost. The music is in places very good indeed, but its originality here and there is very questionable. Certainly it reminded me of a good many airs I had heard before in the course of a long life and some experience of matters musical as well as theatrical. The house was the most friendly that I have encountered for many a long day, but even friendliness broke down at the finish, and sibilations of a determined character was freely mixed up with the call which brought everybody to the front. The "book" is of the drivelling order of architecture. Some of the jokes are extremely old, and some are not jokes at all. It seems to me a pity that the man in front of the house did not have charge of the pruning-knife, or some hand in the arrangements behind the curtain. A Gunn would surely have made a better report. It is quite sad to think he should have got such a friendly and amiable and pleasant lot of old and new acquaintances together, and have had to waste them upon a tedious production like "Claude Duval." Perhaps when he has a really good thing to offer them they won't care to come and give his theatre an appearance of splendid business for one night only.

I used to believe in the independence of the pit, but the first two rows on Wednesday evening slightly shook my faith. The occupants applauded everything without regard to its merits. The gallery, too, was not all money, and I am in receipt of a letter from an indignant one which runs somewhat to the following effect. The writer was very much surprised to see such an extraordinary number of persons admitted with orders, while those paying to see the piece were annoyed by being kept waiting until those armed with paper—who in most cases came late—were comfortably seated in the best places. "I have been to many many first nights," concludes my correspondent, "but never before saw so much paper." This, of course, is one way of securing or trying to secure a favourable verdict. If a manager chooses to fill his house with deadheads I don't know that it is anybody's business but his own, except, indeed, when he makes their artificial applause the excuse for putting out announcements of a big and a great and a glorious success.

Claude Duval, if you please, was a genteel young thief who was sent to kingdom come at the early age of twenty-seven. Mr. Stephens has introduced him in the year 1670, and has shown him carrying on his little game of "love and larceny" just twelve months after his execution. I dare say, though, that he would like to contradict me on this point, for I notice that he has been writing to the editor of a fashionable morning paper to accuse the "able critic" of ignorance; to swear that the Coldstream Guards were in existence some ten or twelve years before the date named; and to assert that the guns carried in the piece by the soldiers are not Sniders, but flintlocks of the period made by a theatrical armourer of forty years' standing.

The three acts—there is one too many—show us in succession Newmarket Heath, the Village Green of Milden Manor, and the Old Manorial Hall. The death and burial and the female sobe are all left out, but Claude is brought under our notice as Sir Harry Villebois, a self-sacrificing hero, who, though he takes purse, is brimful of that beautiful and very scarce virtue called gratitude. There is a certain Charles Lorrimore, who "once upon a time" saved his life, and it is the business of Claude's life to get that same Charles into possession of the estates which are rightly his, and to see him comfortably married to Constance M'Gruder, whose charms have excited his love.

Mr. F. H. Celli made a very handsome and a very imposing Claude, and if the original only looked half as well there is nothing to be surprised at in those sobe which attended his funeral, and there is a good deal to execrate in the conduct of the judge and jury that sent him to Tyburn Tree. Masculine beauty is scarce in this world, and when a good-looking and gallant fellow—such as myself, for example, or Claude Duval—is born, it is my opinion that he ought to be allowed a considerable amount of licence, particularly in his dealings with the fair sex.

Mr. Celli not only looked well, but sang well and acted well. Mr. Fred Solomon was a big blot on the representation. He played Claude's companion, Blood-red Bill, and made a mess of it. As Lieutenant Charles this gentleman has been known at the music-halls, and he has yet to learn that music-hall noise and music-hall bounce and music-hall slanginess and music-hall vulgarity will not find acceptance at the hands of a theatrical audience. The "military comic," as he was wont to style himself, must moderate his ardour if his Blood-red Bill is to be endorsed. I didn't think much of Mr. George Power as the lover. He was quite too utterly too. Mr. Arthur Williams, as Sir Whistle Whaffle, scored well, his quiet humour being in pleasant contrast to the noisy buffoonery of Blood-red Bill. Miss Marion Hood made a nice little lady to be loved, and was deservedly cheered in her song called "The Willow and the Lily." Mr. Charles Ashford deserves a word of praise, as too does Miss Harriet Coveney, who, in a small part, was, as usual, highly amusing.

Young Charley Harris shall have great credit for the style in which the piece has been put on the stage, as too shall Mr. John D'Auban, who has arranged the incidental dances. Since the first night there has been a liberal use of the pruning-knife.

"Funny Folks" Sep 3. 1881.

THE OLYMPIC "CLAUDE DUVAL"

There is good matter for dramatic treatment in the life of *Claude Duval*, the ladies' highwayman as he was called, probably because he had such a high way with the ladies. The version at the Olympic is smart, and Claude robs his victims to a pretty tune—to several pretty tunes, in fact. The hero is dashing personated by Mr. Celli, who is appropriately chosen for the rôle of the (bether pronunciation!) Celli-brated hero. He appears on horseback, to show that a knight of the road rode; but he does not sing on that fiery charger, who scrambles over the stage "four feet to all the winds of heaven." It is certainly better that he should "stand and deliver" what he has to say and sing. Not that we suppose he would follow the example of the libretto and fall off towards the end. The music is the best part of the work. Some of it is charming, and that which is suggestive of other composers still vindicates by its treatment the Judgment of Solomon. Unfortunately the most popular song reminded us all along of "Eliza." The scenery is good; the girls pretty. On the whole, this Claude is a commendable work of art, rich in colour, and well mounted. We hope it will be found also satisfactory in *drawing*.

"Judy" Sep 7th 1881.

I don't know much about *Claude Duval*, which, when you have heard that I have in times past manufactured quite half a dozen books about him, may perhaps surprise you; but it was chiefly from the pages of one of the most delightful romances ever written—*Whitefriars*—that I gathered most of my facts, and I am rather afraid those facts are not to be relied on. According to the author of that work, DU VAL was entrusted with the safe escort of the youthful hero to a college in Saint Omer, where Master TITUS OATES, of Popish Plot memory, was then sojourning. (By the way, I went to the same school as TITUS, only more recently, you know.)

According to all CLAUDE's historians, he was a deuce of a fellow—a dashing highwayman, a ladies' highwayman, and "Hurrah for the Road" was one of his favourite toasts and sentiments. He has been the hero of goodness only knows how many hundreds upon hundreds of penny numbers, and one lies open before me from which I quote a description of his personal appearance. "A profusion of glossy black hair, in natural wavy masses, descended nearly to his shoulders, and, as he shook it back from a brow which was certainly one of the finest, the smile that sat upon his lips was irresistibly engaging. 'It is he! it is

he!' cried LUCY EVERTON with a shriek of joy. 'I know him now! It is he, and I am saved!'" The gallant fellow was evidently real toffy to Miss EVERTON. When at last he was hanged at Tyburn on the 21st



CLAUDE DUVAL, THE DASHING HIGHWAYMAN.

of January, 1669, in the twenty-seventh year of his age, it was "to the great grief of the women," and he had a flambeaux procession, and was buried in the centre aisle of Saint Paul's, Covent Garden. Ah, why have dashing highwaymen gone out of fashion? Thank Heaven, though, we have Mr. CELLI at the Olympic (physically) the very spit of the famous CLAUDE, and him you must go and see. Had I been Mr. STEPHENS, I don't think I should have treated the story quite the same way. I would somehow have got in the Merry Monarch, and ROCHESTER,



IN THE HOUR OF HIS TRIUMPH.

and Colonel BLOOD, and TITUS, and SAUCY NELL most certainly; and CLAUDE should have robbed the King, as I believe he did; yet, take the work as it is, it seems to me to be about the right sort to please a very large portion of the public, and I expect there is "money in it." So when Mr. STEPHENS made his bow, I cried "Bravo!" and clapped my hands together.

Claude Duval week;

That is written me," and can't g



OLYMPIC.—A (what unambitious li



OLYMPIC.—"ALL IS DARK ABOUT ME!"

veloped, while the son



OLYMPIC.—THE

Mr. Solomon's music, w and individual, with plen always cheerful, and as far trivial; the choruses are the orchestra seems to be able skill. "There's not a for Claude Duval," has a sure to gain the popular v make us wish it hadn't! end of the first act is a cle style. By the way, this n better for a few introductory as it is, to any one unacqu lition it must seem merely a dnce, as it is impossible sung.

"Fun" Aug 31st 1881.

Claude Duval was most successfully produced at the Olympic last week:

And I've this opinion strong enough
Of Claude Duval, Claude Duval,
That you'll find the run is long enough
Of Claude Duval, Claude Duval.

That is written to a bit of one of the tunes I've "carried away with me," and can't get rid of at any sacrifice. More about it all next week.

"Fun" Sep. 7th 1881.



OLYMPIC.—A (FORTUNE) TELLING SCENE.

what unambitious lines of the ordinary opera-book.

THE most striking thing in connection with the very successful production of the romantic and comic opera, *Claude Duval*, at the Olympic, is the remarkable luck of Mr. Stephens in his coadjutor, his manager, and the exponents of his characters. The music of the piece is capital, the mounting is most liberal and tasteful, and the performers, for the most part, first-rate; but the plot and incidents are of a completely conventional character, while the dialogue seems modelled on the some-



OLYMPIC.—"ALL IS DARK ABOUT ME!"

veloped, while the songs are well written, as far as I could hear.

Frequently recurring "demmes" (not only those uttered by Mr. Fred Solomon as Blood-red Bill, many of which are doubtless his own property) and the "high falutin" language of the hero and the heroine, and their adherence with strictly grammatical accuracy to the second person singular when addressing each other, is rather a scanty supply of humour (even if the latter is so meant—which I doubt) for a play which is proudly labelled "comic;" at the same time it must be said that, when the dialogue of the second and third acts is cut down to the proportions of the first (as I daresay it is by this), it will possess the merit of being a lucidly told story steadily developed, while the songs are well written, as far as I could hear.



OLYMPIC.—THE FIRST ACT ENDS—ALL IN A MINUTE.

Mr. Solomon's music, while striking into no new paths, is both tuneful and individual, with plenty of backbone; it is always cheerful, and as far as I can judge, never trivial; the choruses are very harmonious, and the orchestra seems to be handled with considerable skill. "There's not a prison strong enough for Claude Duval," has a taking tune, which is sure to gain the popular voice, and eventually make us wish it hadn't! The minuet at the end of the first act is a clever piece in a higher style. By the way, this minuet would be the better for a few introductory words in dialogue; as it is, to any one unacquainted with the tradition it must seem merely an ordinary incidental dance, as it is impossible to follow the words sung.



OLYMPIC.—A NICE DOLLY.

Mr. Celli appeared to great advantage as Claude: his rich voice and consummate skill afford a treat but seldom met with, and he acts with a self-contained quietude which is very pleasant. Miss Hood and Mr. Power, to judge from the expression of their faces (the gentleman's in particular), performed under a deep sense of personal injury, and, although the latter sang sweetly enough, some of the songs of the former went flat in more senses than one. I've no doubt this was a passing defect, however, and that Miss Hood's voice has "come round" again all right—besides, she sang a song about "lilies" and her share of "Across the Sea in Normandie" very prettily. Miss Coveney acted with much spirit, and Mr. Arthur Williams played the small part entrusted to him with commendable discretion.



OLYMPIC.—A STRIKING HAT-ITUDE.

A little modesty and self-repression would improve Mr. Fred Solomon's Blood-red Bill, as he was rather forcibly reminded by the audience on the first night; I trust he has taken the lesson to heart, and reflected that a man may be a good low comedian without being the prominent figure in every scene, and a real Solo-man without having all the solos!



OLYMPIC.—THE BLANDE AND THE BLATANT.

The rest of the cast was very efficient, especially Miss Edith Blande though with nothing particular to do; but a special word of commendation must be given to the chorus: the voices are well chosen—full and true—and their portion of the music was given with a firmness and precision I have never heard excelled. M. Pilotell has designed the dresses with admirable taste, and, in my opinion, it will be long ere *Claude Duval* "takes to the road" in a departing sense.



OLYMPIC.—THE LADY'S BOWER.

→ THE DRAMA. ←

[Any communications relative to this department should be marked outside "The Drama."]



CLAUDE DUVAL

LAUDE DUVAL, the new and original romantic and comic opera in three acts, at the Olympic, was produced on Wednesday, the 24th ult., by Messrs. H. P. Stephens and Edward Solomon. Comic opera, thanks to Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan, is an increasing taste of the British theatre-goers. It is in any case better than the inane nonsense and music hall songs that have lately passed for burlesque,

and as long as there is a demand for this kind of entertainment, there will doubtless be purveyors of the article. But Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan having started the fashion, all the subsequent comic operas will be gauged and compared with the works of these masters in the art. We have had first-rate articles provided for us at the outset, and now we always look for something equally as good, but alas! not always with success. This last addition to the list of comic operas must be admitted by all to be an unequal work; the libretto by no means comes up to the standard of the music which is by far the very best Mr. Solomon has given us as yet. In many instances it is very good, and yet when you leave the theatre there is only one or, at most, two airs that strike you and ring in your ears for any time afterwards. Mr. Stephens has chosen a capital subject for his theme, but he has not told his story as clearly as he might have done, and the entrances of several of the characters are awkward and ill-planned; there is also a decided lack of the comic element. Original and romantic the opera doubtless is, but the comic element is conspicuous by absence. Certain jokes and sayings are delivered, which are intended to be funny, but the laughter for the most part is on the stage, and not in front of it. The piece is splendidly mounted, and the scenery, especially in the last act, deserves high praise. M. Pilotell, whose drawings are so well known to my readers, must be congratulated most heartily on the good taste and beauty he has introduced into the various dresses he has designed. I doubt if there is a theatre in London where the supernumeraries are at

the present time so daintily clad. There is one thing that might be improved, and that is, the stage is too crowded in the first act, and the picture is consequently confused. The story, what there is of it, may be described as follows: Charles Lorrimore, an outlaw, is taken prisoner by Claude Duval's band, and is liberated by the leader in return for his having saved his life in a brawl in London some time previously. McGruder, his sister, and niece also become the highwayman's prisoners, and are released on the niece consenting to dance a measure with the gallant thief; and then an attempt is made to reproduce Frith's well-known picture. The second act takes place before the gates of McGruder's house, and here Lorrimore, led by his passion for Constance, McGruder's niece, comes, and is only saved from arrest for high treason by Claude Duval, who is staying with the McGruders under an assumed name, taking his place, and suffering himself to be arrested in his place. In the third act we are introduced to the interior of McGruder's house, and here Lorrimore, who has not learnt prudence by his former experience, again appears, and also Claude Duval, who has escaped from his captors. He is able to do Lorrimore a further good turn by restoring to him certain deeds stolen by his lieutenant from McGruder's chest, which make Lorrimore the owner of the mansion in place of McGruder. There is a slight underplot. Claude Duval falls in love with Constance, but, finding that she loves Lorrimore, he at once retires, adding yet one more to the debts that young man owes him. As the highwayman, Mr. F. H. Celli was as good as it was possible to be. His first entrance was capital, and took the house by storm, and he never once lost his hold upon his audience. He was the ideal knight of the road to the life.



Page



COURTIER

His singing, too, was particularly good, and he spoke his words so that they could be heard all over the house. Mr. George Power had a thankless task in the colourless part of Lorrimore. All he had to do was to make love on the sly and receive benefits from his friend. Mr. Arthur Williams was very good as the brainless idiot, Sir Waffle Waffle; his one song was most clearly and capitally sung, and received a well-merited encore. By his cleverness he succeeded in provoking a hearty laugh. Mr. C. Ashford was well made up as Martin McGruder, but the part presented but few opportunities for the exercise of his comic talent. Mr. Fred Solomon worked hard as Blood-red Bill, Duval's lieutenant; his make-up was funny and striking. Boscatt and Captain Harleigh fell to the lot of Mr. Harold Russell and Mr. Lewmane. Miss Marion Wood acted and sang very prettily as Constance. In the first act she was dressed exactly as the lady in Frith's picture; in the next she wore a short dress of white satin, with an embroidered border of flowers and leaves, decidedly pretty, while in the last act she appeared in a magnificent costume of white satin and gold. Miss Edith Bland had little to do as the other niece Rose. Her dress in the last act was a particularly tasteful one of purple flowered satin. Miss Harriet Coveney was very funny as Mistress Betty, McGruder's sister; it was a



Miss Hood

part of the kind that has of late frequently fallen to this clever lady's lot, and she made a good deal out of it. Dolly, the servant, was played with plenty of spirit by Miss Nellie Sanson. A ballet of village maidens in the second act was remarkably pretty. Mr. Solomon's music is bright and tuneful, but he has introduced too much of the same rhythm, and this tends to a slight sense of monotony. The best features in the first act are the girls' chorus, Claude Duval's song, and the finale. Claude has another good song in the second act. There is also a pretty valse in the third act. The opera would bear compression.



Miss Hood

(CLAUDE DUVAL)



Grace Morahan

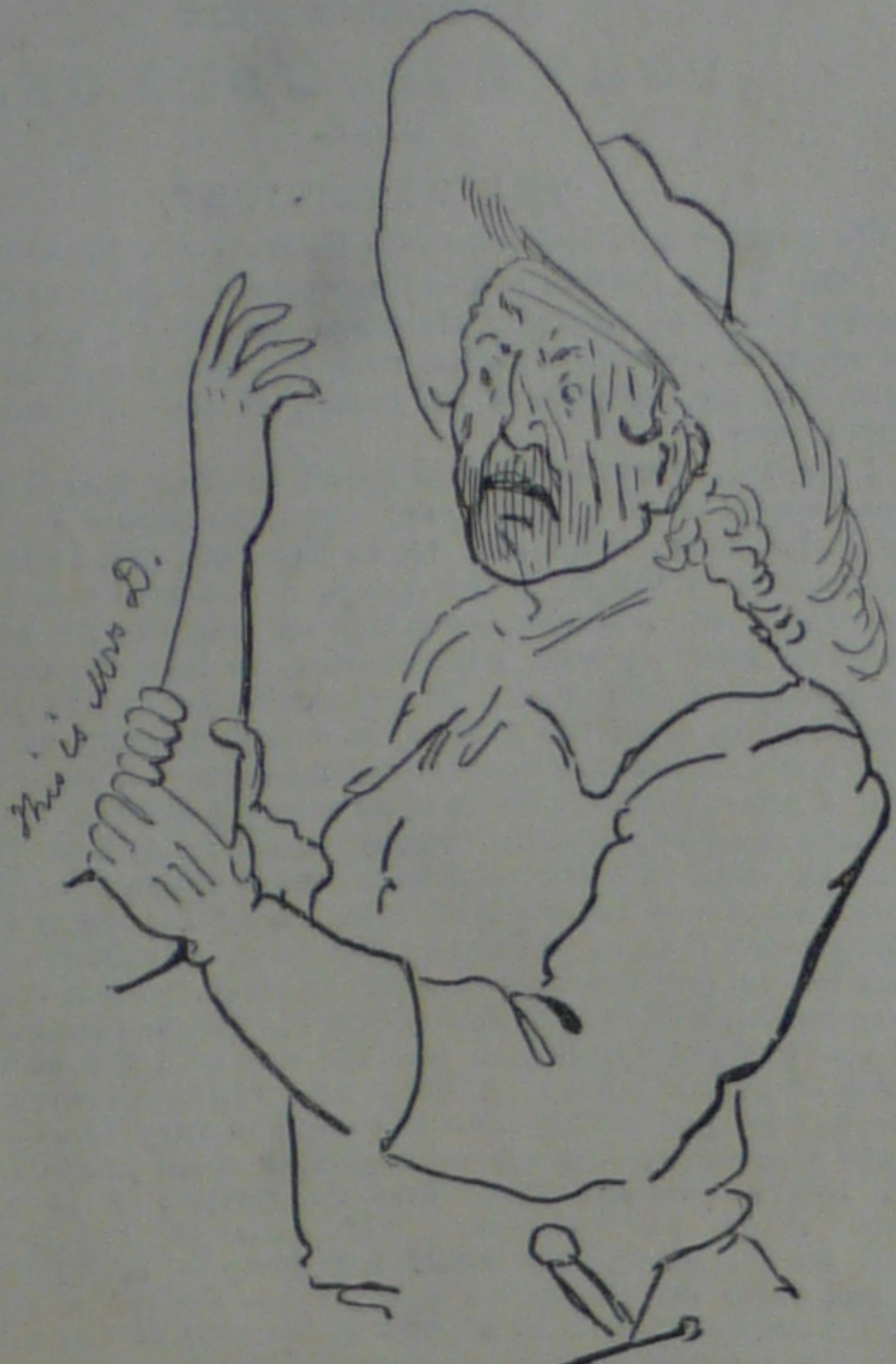
John Swan

"CLAUDE DUVAL."

MESSRS. STEPHENS AND SOLOMOY'S later joint work has not at once obtained the same measure of success as their former essay, *Billet Taylor*, but it is stated that its popularity is improving. If the mounting, and the acting in more than one instance, were the only requisites for a run, the piece should certainly not prove a failure. Our artist has reproduced a few of the incidents, which show the variety and grace which mark some of the details. Mr. Celli, on his first entrance, is the central subject. The other groups introduce Messrs. Fred Solomon, Arthur Williams, George Power, Charles Ashford, Miss M. Hood, Miss E. Blanc, Miss H. Coveney, and others of the company in situations which will be recognised. The garland scene at the foot of the picture is one of the prettiest we remember.

OUR CAPTIOUS CRITIC.

On Wednesday, the 24th of August, the Olympic Theatre had its capabilities of accommodation tested to the very utmost. The new manager, Mr. Michael Gunn, with love of headlong hospitality so common to the Irish, the stately Cobbe and the busy Selby had their hands quite full in front of the house finding accommodation for the overflow of visitors, for everybody was anxious to witness the most recent efforts of the author and composer of *Billee Taylor*. The fortunes of the Olympic Theatre, which have not been very brilliant of late years, now passing into the hands of a manager proverbial for his luck, were a point of interest to many. Chairs were plentifully introduced in the wider spaces of the stalls, and at eight o'clock every available inch of space was filled. The



Fancy portrait of Claud Duval

house had a pleasant, friendly appearance, the prominent places being filled by persons who are for the most part interested or connected with art and the drama. Of course there were a few "dead heads" (including myself) placed here and there, but the general aspect of the audience was that of a critical one. At eight o'clock, too, Mr. Solomon, marvellous in the matter of shirt-collar and cuffs, took his place in the orchestra and waved a commencement to the overture. The curtain went up, revealing a highly picturesque scene of Newmarket Heath. The audience is now well settled down for the serious business of enjoying itself. Mrs. John Wood is up there in a box, looking as brilliant and young as ever, and just below her are the Love-days, all but "George," who is showing Toole in the country. They are the guests of Mrs. Gunn, who looks not a whit anxious, for well she knows that Michael "always is right." On the other side of the house is Miss Ada Cavendish, fresh from American triumphs, down in the stalls. The talent of the press is overflowing—with, here and there, as I have said, exceptions; one exception is a lady, who wields a huge round fan, consisting of a circular frame trimmed with lace and covered with huge and brilliant artificial flowers. This is doubtless a very valuable



A respectable Abstractionist

and desirable structure, but it ought to have a theatre all to itself alone. Happy were those people who sat before it and were not blessed with eyes in the backs of their heads. Those sitting behind it or to the side of it could not help having their attention arrested by it, as it waved to and fro in the grasp of its indefatigable owner. There is Herbert Standing just run in to see what sort of part has been fitted up for his little brother Celli; and here is D'Oyley Carte, just in time to enjoy the absurd imitation of the carriage breaking down, which is performed by a carpenter at the side wing. Or was "Charlie" Harris responsible for it, I wonder? The stage is picturesquely arranged, but there seemed to me to be a little overcrowding of it, especially when the village maidens joined the highwaymen, who are impersonating gipsies. Now then, Mr. Stephens, where is your humorous view? Here is an opportunity for some good gipsy "lingo."

You ought to have thrown us in a little more of that. Surely, Mr. Romano, who has been watching your interest from the back of the stalls since long before the curtain went up, could have coached you in "Romany" for the occasion. Mr. George Power makes a very feeble but melancholy impression which is not much relieved by the humour of Mr. Fred Solomon—with whom a word anon. It was not until Mr. Celli strode on that one could very well say what would happen, and what did happen was, that he took the whole business upon his brawny shoulders and dragged it out of danger. Very capital was the finish of Act 1, when the curtain goes down upon Claud Duval stepping a measure with the fair lady who has been benighted



A student of "Romany"

with her aunt and miserly uncle—the Uncle, played by Mr. Ashford, who was a little bit too natty and nice in his make-up for a miser of the name of McGreuder. The Aunt was fortunate in the hands of Miss Harriet Coveney, whom I was glad to see looking nothing the worse of her recent cab accident. And now, Mr. Fred Solomon, I may tell you that from my point of vantage I was able to glean pretty accurately the general opinion of the audience as to your performance, and I must say that I perfectly agreed with their sentiments on the matter. You had a very narrow escape of being peremptorily

sary, when making love to an elderly gentlewoman, to give vent to a disgusting noise with your nose. Take example by Arthur Williams, who plays but an inferior part in the opera—indeed, a part originally unworthy of him, until, as a true artist, he raised it into excellence. I think the author might have done a little more for Messrs. Williams and Ashford in the matter of parts; but there is a dead level and lack of humour in the whole matter that is a thing for wonderment, considering that same hand wrote *Billee Taylor*. Mr. George Power was painfully nervous when he changed cloaks with Celli, and put the one he received on like a lady's shawl. Miss Marion Hood also suffered visibly



The cloak of Celli falls upon Mr. George Power - but social fit.

from "first-nightishness." Little Miss Nellie Sanson, with her robust ankles, did not seem much affected in this way, nor did the stately Edith Blande, who deserves a better part. Hodge and Podge were beautifully loutish in the hands of Messrs. Goldie and Cooper Cliffe—is this last name a twisting of Clifford Coope, and are you a relative of that admirable veteran comedian, Mr. Cliffe? I expect by this time that *Claude Duval* has been judiciously pruned, that the nervous ones have regained their composure, the low comedian has toned down, and that Mr. Celli now receives some real assist-



"Both author and composer were enthusiastically called before the curtains" vide Daily Paper

stopped in your mad career of what was intended for fun. I do trust by this time you have toned down the exuberance of your high spirits. If not, take it from me in the most friendly manner that London is not a provincial town in the mining districts, and that opera-bouffe, or comic opera, or whatever your brother and Stephens may be pleased to designate *Claude Duval*, is not a rough-and-tumble pantomime; nor is it neces-

ary in his manful efforts to pull it through. The opera is musical all through, but there are no airs to carry away equal to those of *Billee Taylor*. Stephens is very clever, so is Solomon, but I don't think there is any cause for Gilbert and Sullivan to tremble yet—at the same time there is every reason to believe that Mr. Gunn has opened the Olympic with a comic opera that will prove popular and successful.

Whistler Lectures.

Ladies Bazaar. Jan. 21. 85.

Mr. Whistler will shortly commence a series of lectures, and everyone has been asking "when and where." Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, will be the venue of the first oration, I believe. The lectures will certainly attract everyone in town, and are sure to be worthy of an attentive hearing. Those who have met Mr. Whistler in society know that he is one of the most amusing of companions, and that his *bon-mots* are unique. Putting eccentricity aside, the nocturne painter is certainly capable of holding an audience for an hour or two. If Mr. Oscar Wilde can make a hit, Mr. Whistler need not doubt his success on the platform.

It has been lately whispered abroad that Mr. Whistler will shortly commence a series of lectures, and everyone has been asking "when and where." We have heard, on the authority of the eccentric artist himself, that Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, will be the *venue* of the first oration. These lectures will certainly attract everyone in town at the time of their delivery, and are sure to be worthy of an attentive hearing. Those who have met Mr. Whistler at dinner or in his studio know that he is one of the most amusing of companions, and that his *bon-mots* are well worthy of repetition. Putting eccentricity and assumed egotism aside, the nocturne painter is certainly capable of holding an audience for an hour or two. If Mr. Oscar Wilde can make a hit, Mr. Whistler need not doubt his success at the lectern.

Last Morning News 2/2/85

A dyspepsical grumbler has written to the papers complaining that he posted a letter in London the other afternoon, which was not delivered in Woolwich until the next morning, instead of the same evening. He had better exchange ideas as to the merits of our Post Office with Messrs. Tschurgow and Co., located at Vladivostock, who received last week a postal parcel sent them by post from Moscow in 1880.

Mr. Nocturne Whistler, dry printer, painter, and, I believe, poet, is to originate a mysterious entertainment on the evening of February 20th, which, with his usual eccentricity, is entitled "Mr. Whistler's Ten o'Clock." The "show" is to come off at the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, and will be nothing if not original. A report also reaches me, that the popular "Jemmy" is to start on a lecturing tour. Apparently, everybody intends to lecture. Oscar Wilde and Mr. Sala have already taken to the platform, which is to be strengthened by such celebrities as the celebrated "arrangementist" and Mr. F. G. Burnand.

Mr. Whistler is to be the newest apostle of culture for the United States. He is to deliver an art-lecture at Prince's Hall on the 24th, and if it is successful he is to go *en tour* with it. He is not to write another one, but to deliver the same lecture all through the States. No doubt it will be an amusing lecture, for Mr. Whistler has the reputation of being an excellent *raconteur*. The Americans are fortunate—they got all our follies now before we have had time to wear them threadbare. They have seen Oscar and survived; it remains to be seen what they will think of Jimmy.

ZENGARA.

County Gentleman. 31/1/85.

There has been a very large inquiry at the libraries for tickets for Mr. MacWhistler's Ten O'clock. A great number of correspondents appeal to me for information about the function. I know all about it, as you may have guessed. But it would be a breach of confidence were I to tell you all. Visitors will be expected to wear clothes, but it is not essential that sealskin jackets trimmed with tails should be sported. Children in arms, as I have said already, will not be admitted, and everyone is expected to bring his own mug. Peers in overcoats trimmed with astrachan will be admitted at half price at eleven o'clock. No charge will be made for programmes, and anyone accepting fees from visitors will be instantly dismissed.

* * * * *
Mr. McWhistler were he a reformer would have called his function a Twenty-two O'clock. It is never too late to mend, and would not the curiosity of the vulgar be still further awakened were the appellation changed. It seems that we are going to change the time of day. It is said that certain railway companies are soon to have their time-tables compiled on the new system. And a precious muddle we shall be in for some time. What with new clocks, a new electorate, new constituencies, and the several new adjectives, it will be necessary for us all to go to school again to learn where we are and whither we are wending.
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American Register Paris. 13/1/85.

Mr. Whistler will shortly commence a series of lectures, and everyone has been asking "when and where." Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, will be the venue of the first oration, I believe. The lectures will certainly attract everyone in town, and are sure to be worthy of an attentive hearing. Those who have met Mr. Whistler in society know that he is one of the most amusing of companions, and that his *bon-mots* are unique. Putting eccentricity aside, the nocturne painter is certainly capable of holding an audience for an hour or two. If Mr. Oscar Wilde can make a hit, Mr. Whistler need not doubt his success on the platform.

St. James Gazette. Feb. 2. 85.

It is said that nearly all the tickets have been sold for Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'Clock" at the Prince's Hall, on the 20th of February.

"World" Sanj. 14th. 1885.

The artistic event of the opening season will, of course, be Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'Clock," as that *raffiné*, who delights in mystification, calls his contemplated mystery in Prince's Hall, which, it is now announced, is to take place, as I had supposed, on the 20th of next month.

What a capital hour, to be sure, has he chosen for bringing us all together, and how strange that no one should have thought of it before! By ten o'clock in the evening every one will have dined, the men will have had their coffee with the cigarette *de rigueur*, and in excellent humour; all London will be ready to listen to the last "new thing."

"The Artist" Feb. 2. 85.

Feb. 20—Mr. Whistler's 10 o'clock, at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly.

Mr. Whistler is to have his "ten o'clock" this month. Talking of the hero of the mustard-pot arrangements reminds us of a good story. When Mr. Whistler was leaving the White House in Chelsea, he put over his doorway, with that combination of wit and daring which is his characteristic, the following legend:—"Unless the Lord build the house their labour is but vain who build it. E. W. Godwin, F.S.A., built this one."

Pictorial World. Jan. 22. 85.

Mr. Whistler's "ten o'clock" at the Prince's Hall on February 20th will be "a feature." Mr. Whistler will deal with symphonies and harmonies and the etching needle in the vernacular, and not with pigments and acids.

"Age" Feb. 8. 85.

"WHISTLE-B, I'll come to you, my lad," at the Prince's Hall, 20th February, ten o'clock sharp.

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"Court Journal." 9/2/85

Sheffield Indep. 14/2/85

Mr. Whistler will shortly commence a series of lectures, and everyone has been asking "when and where." Prince's Hall Piccadilly, will be the venue of the first oration. The lectures will certainly attract everyone in town, and are sure to be worthy of an attentive hearing. Those who have met Mr. Whistler in society know that he is one of the most amusing of companions, and that his *bon-mots* are unique. Putting eccentricity aside, the nocturne painter is certainly capable of holding an audience for an hour or two.

The secret of Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock" has been successfully kept. I have not met any one who even pretends to know what the funny man of artistic society is going to do. I have met several who, personally invited by James to go, have accepted under the impression that this was an invitation in the ordinary sense of the term, and have found that they were expected to pay half a guinea for a ticket. Whistler is, in truth, with all his eccentricity, an exceedingly shrewd man of business. The very mystery with which he surrounded his new enterprise is potent in the sale of tickets. People are convinced of two things, that whatever it is it will be funny (Whistler is funny to look at, if he never opens his mouth), and secondly, that "everybody" will be there.

The mystery as to the nature of Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock" remains unbroken, and the curiosity grows in intensity. I am told that only four people are in the secret, and that they have departed into the country to escape the brunt of cross examination to which they were exposed. I hear of a misconception which it may be well to set right. "Our James" sent out among his friends a number of intimations of the function, which, I gather, some people are regarding as invitations. They are in error, and must fortify themselves with tickets, if, indeed, any are left, should they desire to be present.

"World" Feb. 19th. 85.

"Youth" Feb. 12. 85.

Whatever mischief the mystery of Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock" may portend, I hear that his "scalped and disfigured ones," as their arch-enemy calls some of our most prominent writers upon art, will not put in an appearance at all on the night of the 20th.

Western Times Feb. 14. 85.

The secret of Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock" has been successfully kept. I have not met anyone who even pretends to know what the funny man of artistic society is going to do. I have met several who, personally invited by James to go, have accepted under the impression that this was an invitation in the ordinary sense of the term, and have found that they were expected to pay half a guinea for a ticket. Whistler is, in truth, with all his eccentricity an exceedingly shrewd man of business. The very mystery with which he surrounds his new enterprise is potent in the sale of tickets. People are convinced of two things, that whatever it is it would be funny (Whistler is funny to look at, if he never opens his mouth), and, secondly, that "everybody" will be there.

"Pictorial World." Feb. 12. 85.

Every one is now talking about the lecture which Mr. Whistler is to give on the 22nd inst. in St. James's Hall. The lecture is to be begin at 10 p.m.—a sensible time, if the usual dinner-hour be taken into consideration; but then there is generally a grain of reason in Mr. Whistler's eccentricities.

"Orange Blossoms" Feb. 12. 85.

Mr. Whistler is to be the new apostle of culture for the Americans. He is to deliver an Art lecture over here at Prince's Hall first, and, if it is successful, he will go all through the States with it, treading closely in the steps of Mr. Oscar Wilde. No doubt the lecture will be very entertaining, but one cannot help wishing Mr. Whistler would stop at home and etch. It is almost a pity he ever took to colour. There was no one to equal him at all in etching, with the exception of Mr. Seymour Haden.

"Age" Feb. 14. 85.

The Society of Painter Etchers will hold a six weeks' show in the Dudley Gallery from the end of May to the beginning of July. All forms of engraving on metal are eligible for admission, subject to the approval of the council. The next art rage in London after Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock" at the Prince's Hall on the 20th instant will be Messrs. Agnew's Exhibition in the Egyptian Hall of Munkacsy's great picture, "Calvary."

"Queen" 14. 2. 85.

On Friday, the 20th inst., Mr. James W. McNeill Whistler will inaugurate his "Ten o'clock." We are a little puzzled what else to call it, whether entertainment, lecture, or monologues. The first is too frequently applied to what is far from entertaining, the second has, to English ears, a didactic ring, and the third has been laughed at in Paris ever since M. Francois Sarcey, in a humorous attack on M. Coquelin the younger, wrote "Nature has made you an actor! You have made yourself a monocoquologist!" Mr. Whistler has, we understand, converted his audience at "ten o'clock" in the evening because he thinks they will like to eat their dinner in comfort before listening to his wit and wisdom.

"County Gentleman" Feb. 14. 85.

There is to be much done in town next week, I can tell you. At Christmas-time there was a brief whirl of gentle festivity, and one was drenched with cards; but engagements for next week are extensive and peculiar. There are to be two smart weddings and a high art christening. On Wednesday there will be functions of a political flavour, and on Thursday legislators will gather at Westminster. Friday brings Mr. Whistler's Ten o'clock, and there the best families will be permitted to mingle with each other at ten shillings per member. Beyond these things there is Mrs. Longshore Pott's lecture at the St. James's Hall. One must hear this lady, but to gain admittance to her presence is a serious undertaking. I shall have to disguise myself in female attire before I can hope to get inside.

"Topical Times" Feb. 14. 85.

Mr. James McNeill Whistler, who is nothing if not eccentric, has lately issued huge cards, couched in most dubious terms, inviting people to be present at what he terms his "Ten o'clock," on Friday the 20th inst., at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. Many people who have been placed in receipt of these peculiar advertisements are under the impression that they are cards of invitation, and have lifted porters to carry the cards to the rendezvous on the night mentioned. Bitter will be their disappointment, however, on finding that they cannot obtain admittance without payment. I should strongly advise them, however, not to let their chagrin get the better of them, but manfully, or womanfully, as the case may be, to pluck down the pieces and go in. It is part of Mr. Whistler's policy to base his proceedings on the motto that "The science of wit

All you who have no place to put your heads on Friday night had best go to the Whistler Ten o'clock. I would not ask you to go on any other ground, for the point of the performance may be lost upon you. The cultured of Tite-street will muster in force, but the majority of folk look at their half guineas and put them in their pockets again. Last week we were told that seats were not to be had for love. Judging from the enlarged advertisements which have been issued since then, I should say that Mr. Whistler, Mr. D'Oyly Carte, and whosoever else are concerned would be glad to part with a few for money. I have not heard of any orders being about, so the most decorative of theatrical first-nighters are not likely to be present.

I am looking forward to Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock." "Jimmy" is too much a man of the world to call his fellows together unless he gives them money's worth. I hope to describe the affair next week.

St. Stephen's Review Feb. 21. 85.

Orange Blossoms. 19. 2. 85.

Mr. Whistler still keeps up the mysterious character of his 'Ten o'clock,' which is to come off to-morrow evening (Friday), and nobody has as yet been let into the secret. There has been a great demand for tickets, so even if the eccentric draughtsman succeeds in disappointing his friends, he can console himself by the reflection that he has not failed in arousing as much curiosity as of yore concerning himself and his doings, and that he will net a tidy little sum thereby.

is surprise." I therefore studiously abstain from telling you what the entertainment will be, although I am "in the know." Whether Mr. Whistler will stand on his head, sing songs, recite, lecture, draw caricatures, or what not, depends upon it his audience will be fully satisfied with the result. I will not spoil the pleasure of expectation by anticipation, so simply say to you, one and all, "Go and see for yourselves, and you will be fully repaid."

MR. WHISTLER'S "TEN O'CLOCK."

With characteristic originality Mr. James W. McNeill Whistler elected to begin his "Ten o'clock" lecture on a Friday, and last evening, somewhat before the appointed hour (chosen with a view to letting the audience dine comfortably); Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, was filled with a compact array, including many distinguished in art, literature, and science.

Mr. Whistler's lecture is distinctly a surprise. We expected, as a matter of course, wit, humour, and neat epigram. We got these and a great deal more in the shape of coherent argument and distinct aim. His discourse is studded with epithets and sentences adorned with a *curiosa felicitas* peculiarly his own. As a "preacher" on art he deprecates from the outset of his discourse the tone in which such subjects are too frequently handled. The commonplace world endowed with "efficient effrontery" no longer reverently approaches Art as a dainty goddess, but "chucks her under the chin" with a familiarity indicating "the lowest stage of intimacy." This state of things has filled "the preacher with rebellion against senseless intrusion," and tempted him to proclaim the grandeur and remoteness of the goddess "occupied with her own perfection, and that of her chosen children, like Rembrandt, Paolo Veronese, Velasquez, and the sculptors of the Elgin Marbles." Her prophets and exponents are "filled with the poetry of science," not to be confounded with the sentiment often mistaken for poetry. The nobility of any action depicted should never be "hopelessly linked" with the method in which it is delineated or artistically expressed. Another error, *crede Whistler*, is that there are supposed artistic periods. There are no specially artistic periods. There never was one from the date when the savage traced the first design with a burnt stick upon a gourd to the "two-pronged fork of Queen Anne." Men went on with their work from age to age, from the burnt stick or diaper period till the "power of creation—the hairloom of the artist—was developed."

In the days of the *artifex* "the amateur was unknown; the dilettante undreamt of." The man did his work with such insight as he was endowed withal. From time to time came one "on whom the gods had set their mark." But in the course of ages arose strange forms. There sprang into being a new class who saw their account in the exploitation of shams. The public, sometimes ready to be deluded, took

to themselves this abomination. The artist went, and the manufacturer took his place. Art was relegated to the curiosity shop. One of the functions of the true artist is to "pick and choose," for merely to transcribe Nature as she is would be like "sitting on the pianoforte in order to produce a tune." In an artistic sense "Nature is very rarely right. Seldom does she succeed in producing pictures," and sometimes she is guilty of "a very foolish sunset." But Nature, Mr. Whistler confesses, has her happy moments, when, for instance, the whole vast City of London seems to hang in the heavens, "when grace is wedded with dignity" or colour is expressed in "the citron wing of the butterfly"—Mr. Whistler's cognizance by the way. Through the brain of the artist the scattered beauties of Nature pass "as through a last crucible," with such result that the "Venus of Melos is more perfect than any woman that ever lived." It was hardly to be expected that Mr. Whistler would let his favourite victims the critics escape. "The unattached writer," he holds, "has become the middle-man of art," but instead of bringing art and mankind closer together "has widened the gulf" between them. What does the so-called critic mean when he says of a painter, that "he fails utterly," or that his picture is "mere execution"? Of what value is the revival of old criticisms or the supposed learning of experts to whom "a date is an accomplishment, a hallmark, a success"? On such matters dilates the "sage of the University learned in all things 'save his subject.'" Much mischief has arisen from Art having been "foolishly confounded with education," a crass blunder, for it is no reproach to any human being that "he should have no eye for painting, no ear for music." At this moment the world is oppressed with an "incubus of art" pervaded with "an unspoken sympathy which is vulgarity." Through the length and breadth of the land "the dilettante stalks abroad, the amateur is loosed." In the course of a brilliant peroration, Mr. Whistler pointed out that "Art, always rare, has no correlation with national growth, but seeks the artist alone at Nankin or at Madrid, by turns inspires the potter or dips the Spaniard's brush in light and air, and shrinks from being vulgarised for the delectation of the bagman and the critic."

During his brilliant harangue Mr. Whistler was frequently interrupted by a ripple of laughter or a hearty round of applause from the crowded audience whose interest and amusement never slackened for an instant.

MR. WHISTLER'S "TEN O'CLOCK."

The carefully and well-kept secret of Mr. Whistler's purpose in asking the public to meet him last night at the hour of 10 o'clock in the Prince's-hall, Piccadilly, was revealed in the first sentence which he addressed to the fashionable audience who had assembled in the expectation that the eccentric genius of the artist would find them amusement for an hour. Their faith was not misplaced.

Mr. WHISTLER intimated to his audience that the subject of his address was "Art." This had of late, he said, become, as far as much discussion and writing can make it, a sort of common topic for the tea-table. Under many disguises an affectation of art has been adopted into modern social affairs and regarded as a phase of art. Art has naught in common with such practices. She is a goddess of dainty thought, reticent of habit, abjuring all obtrusiveness, proposing in no way to better others. She is, withal, selfishly occupied with her own perfection only, having no desire to teach; seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times; as did her high priest Rembrandt when he saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were not Greeks; as did Tintoret and Paul Veronese among the Venetians, while not halting to change the brocaded silks for the classic draperies of Athens; as did, at the Court of Philip, Velasquez, whose Infantas, clad in inesthetic hoops, are as works of art of the same quality as the Elgin marbles. No reformers were these great men, no improvers of the ways of others. Their work was completely severed from that of their fellow creatures, with whom sentiment is mistaken for poetry, and for whom there is no perfect work that shall not be explained by the benefit conferred upon themselves. Humanity takes the place of art. Beauty is confounded with virtue, and before a work of art it is asked—what good shall it do? Dealing with varieties of notions resulting from such estimation of art, Mr. Whistler announced that there never was an artistic period, there never was an art-loving people. To this assertion succeeded a fascinating view of the uprising of the first artist, in passages such as the following:—"In the beginning men went forth each day, some to do battle, some to the chase, others, again, to dig and delve in the field; all that they might gain and live, or lose and die; until there was found among them one differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd. And presently there came to this man another, and in time others of like nature, chosen by the gods, and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned from the moistened earth forms resembling the gourd, and with the power of creation, the hairloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of nature, and the first vase was born in beautiful proportion."

Then came the designing and making of houses and couches and tables, and the people lived in marvels of art, and ate and drank out of masterpieces, because there was nothing else to eat and to drink out of. Centuries passed, until a class arose who discovered the cheap, and foresaw fortune in the facture of the sham. Then sprang into existence the tawdry, the common, the gawgaw. The taste of the tradesman's planted the science of the artist. The artist's occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and huckster took his place. The people this time had much to say in the matter. Passing to a different topic, Mr. Whistler dwelt upon the assertion that "Nature is always right" and pronounced its fallaciousness from the artistic point of view. In this connexion he gave a sort of word-painting of his nocturnes and symphonies, to the effect that "Nature has for once sung in time, she sings her exulting to the artist alone; to him are her secrets unfolded, scientifically understood by him, is she ever his resource and always at his service. In antithesis to this, Whistler sketched the attitude of what he called the "unattached writer," who has become the middleman in the matter of art. Another set of persons claiming to associate themselves with art he defined as sombre of mien, and with the wisdom of books, who frequent museum burrow in crypts, collecting, comparing, compiling, editing, contradicting, and discovering the picture by the on the back. Then there was the preacher upon appointed, impressive, important, shallow, defiant, tressed, desperate, crying out in vain, and cutting him while the gods hear not. Notwithstanding this message for the supposed service of art, with the man and not the multitude are her intimacies; and in the book of life the names inscribed are few—scant indeed the list of those who have helped to write her story of love and beauty. Mr. Whistler treated with banter the cant of despair as to the condition of art at present as compared with its state in the past, deeming that all is well as it ever was, and finally arguing that we have then but to wait until, with the mark of the gods upon him, there comes among us again the chosen who shall continue what has gone before, satisfied that, even were he never to appear, the story of the beautiful is already complete, shown in the marbles of the Parthenon and depicted with the birds upon the fan of Hokusai, at the foot of Fuji-hama.

PICCADILLY HALL.—It was at "Ten o'clock" last night that Mr. Whistler commenced at this hall an address for which the hour was made oddly enough to serve as title. The speaker's theme was Art, its past history, ancient and modern. He passed in rapid review, indulging on the way in humorous sallies and reflections more or less philosophic, and concluding with remarks upon its present condition and future prospects. In the course of his lecture, which at times was but imperfectly audible, he aimed some sharp arrows at amateurs, aesthetes, and the votaries of the realistic school, observing, with reference to the doctrines inculcated by the last-named painters, that to tell an artist to take nature as she is, is like telling a musician to sit upon his piano. Mr. Whistler also took occasion to dilate upon the rules of sound judgment in art, as well as upon the injuries which had resulted to public taste from a disregard of those rules. He bestowed many of his most poignant sarcasms upon the "unattached writers," whom he described as the middle-men of art. There was a large and brilliant audience, at whose hands the lecturer experienced a very favourable reception.



"TEN O'CLOCK."

difficult, part. Mr. LYONS was a good Jew, but he must change new pocket-book; and the servants at Charles' wine party should give champagne to the guests as well as their master, and need not lift the glass from the table. The house was full on the first night, and Mrs. LANGTRY and Mr. FARREN were more than once called in front, as also was Mr. COOHLAN.

in the kitchen
Stove
Fender
Fire
Tea
Dog
Tile
Coal
Caster
Electro
Kitchen Utensils
Orders of 25
in England and
Lamps and Oil
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Every kind of
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Age 15. 2. 85.

PEN AND PALETTE. A CHAT ABOUT BOOKS AND PICTURES.

Quinn a show of evening primroses blossom'd and bloom'd at the Prince's Theatre on Tuesday night, Mother Hubbard cloaks were the fashion. Here and there you discovered one piebald over, in embroidery work, with daisies, others were made of Venetian stuffs, decorated with pressed sixteenth century designs, very handsome and very rich. Men were in the minority. Ladies made up at least two-thirds of the audience. But then you know it was *The School for Scandal*, and this may account for much that happened on that night. The dresses, to a large extent, were sombre, black predominating. It made one think that many had come to bury their old friend and playmate "Scandal." Lady T. remarked that the décolleté rage still held its own. Daffodils, narcissuses, and white hyacinths laid on a bed of maiden-hair fern were chiefly worn, both as shoulder bouquets and trimmings for the hair. Even "the gods" that haunted the upper parts of the house, with their war-whoops, were not divine, but scowled down over the boxes, in Muller-cut-down hats and cut-away coats, in no pleasant temper at the long wait that preceded the performance. Punctuality is not an indulgent mother, but in the case of a new play she is a good nurse. Lady T. hopes Mrs. Langtry will keep this in mind. We quite agree with Lady T. that there was a want of harmony between the staging and dressing of the play. The scenery was too light in colour, and the dresses lacked richness. Prettiness was apparently aimed at; and possibly in a small house the desired effect might have been obtained. But on the wide and open stage of the Prince's it was frittered away. There was no concentration. If light coloured dresses were desirable, then the scenery should have been deep toned in rich reds, browns, or yellows. And *vice versa*, if the dresses were rich and wealthy, then the predominating colours of the stage sets should be towards whiteness. On a large scale you must, if you want effect, work for contrasts and not for harmonies. Lady T. was perfectly correct in saying that Worth had made perfect fits for Mrs. Langtry. The dresses are pretty, certainly; but they are rather the kind of costume for a fancy dress ball than for representations in a classic comedy. James was there. You know who Lady T. means? Whistler. Yet it was not an exhibition of harmonies or a "ten o'clock" symphony. Nevertheless we looked up his dictionary for our description. Mrs. Langtry made her appearance as Lady Teazle in pea-green and pink and a white robe, at the fall of the curtain she found harmony in a white satin skirt, embroidered with roses, a delicate snuff-coloured jacket lined with crimson and silk, a head-dress designed after the last century, and a walking staff that might have been useful in past generations. There was no *encore*, and the curtain fell flat. Sir Peter, made up as a study in plum colour and white satin, studded with roses. Sir Benjamin Backbite was decked out in pink. Joseph Surface appeared as a study in purple and grey, and at the end of the play, as a nocturne in peacock blue and old gold. Joseph Surface told as an item in sky blue and a waistcoat of roses. Crabtree represented rather a crabbed symphony in green and silver. Rowley was a brown study. Sir Oliver much the same. Maria was a pearl in white. Mrs. Candour was not a mist in shot silk or a symphony in pink and yellow. Lady Sneerwell aimed at being a harmony in pea green and black; and the bandmen, of course, were decked out in the usual nocturne of black and white. The whole was a disappointing performance, but it may improve.

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Daily Telegraph. Feb. 21. 85.

MR. WHISTLER'S "TEN O'CLOCK."

Punctually at ten o'clock as fashionable, as literary, as amiable, and as artistic an audience as London could muster arrived at the doors of the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly—to find that there was no admittance. It would not have surprised any one if the well-advertised scheme had turned out what Englishmen regard as a hoax, or what is vulgarly and expressively described as "a sell." Mr. James Whistler is an amiable eccentric, who is tacitly allowed to anticipate even the First of April. Ultimately the puzzled attendants were induced to collect their wits, and aggravated society filed into a cold and dead white hall to find a huge platform, a small table, and a solitary water-bottle. The spirits of the assembly sank from that moment. From Mr. Whistler anything might have been expected—a burlesque, a breakdown or a comic song. But surely his eccentricity would not carry him so far as to deliver with malice prepense a serious dissertation on art. Alas! it was only too true, and when the various factions, Philistine and philandering, had settled down to smile or scowl, as the spirit moved them, a jaunty, unabashed, composed, and self-satisfied gentleman, armed with an opera hat and an eye-glass, plunged into the history of art in confidence and cold blood. When the matter of Mr. Whistler's lecture is fairly printed on Dutch hand-made paper, with a "river of margin," and the latest eccentricity in type, signed, of course, with the immortal butterfly, it will be time to criticise what appears at the outset to be an undigested mass of pretentious platitudes and formulated fallacies. Easy and eloquent as was the lecturer, he has yet to learn the art of the *poseur* on the platform. Voice is the first essential; persuasion is the next. The witty phrases, the extravagant epigrams, and the plausible paradoxes that may sound vastly well when delivered in a snug smoking-room, are wholly lost in that vast white desert known as the Prince's Hall, in Piccadilly. To put it plainly, Mr. Whistler could not be heard by nine-tenths of his audience, and it is an open question whether his philosophy or his ethics were worth half the intelligent attention bestowed on them. For a quiet hour, undisturbed by any voice save from some deaf old gentleman to speak out, he "rambled on." His lecture had neither beginning, middle, nor ending. It was wild, witty, and incoherent. He attempted with rosy rhetoric to sketch the beginning of art, but he left the aim and end of it in a hopeless fog of mellifluous metaphor and vacillating verbiage. He had much to say in patronage of nature, and much more in depreciation of modern criticism. He knocked everything down, and set nothing up. He was cynical at the expense of the amateur, the tyro, and the enthusiast. He created merriment when he talked of the man who "files the fifteenth century and pigeon-holes the antique," and caused that same kind of iconoclastic excitement as when a smart dinner-table egoist proclaims faith a fraud and Shakespeare a sample of sentimental silliness. Mr. Whistler, like all preachers, was safe in the stronghold of his own pulpit. He had the talking all to himself. He was so far an autocrat on this occasion that there was no reply. Courtesy for the moment silenced the condemnation of the critics, for whom he has such a hearty contempt. It may be that art is what Mr. Whistler represents it to be, that nature will for the moment accept his patronage, that amateurs will be abashed at his strictures, that the fair sex will falter before his withering ridicule, that the writers on art will amend their style on the recommendation of one who has scarcely proved his power as a director of literary composition, and that the art-progress of the nation to which the lecturer has attached himself will totter at the tremendous influence of his "ten o'clock." But on the whole we are inclined to think that when the entertainment is well slept over and carefully digested it will be forgotten as a serious counterblast against folly and Philistinism, and remembered only as the eccentric freak of an amiable, humorous, and accomplished gentleman.

Age. Feb. 22. 85. 3/2/85

MR. WHISTLER'S "TEN O'CLOCK."

His Protest Against the Amateur, the Bagman, and the Critic.

"I SHOULD not be at all surprised," said a nervous friend of mine, "if there is not a dynamite scare at Prince's Hall on Friday night. The audience is likely to be so respectable that it will be a magnificent opportunity for an explosion." But not a pop-gun was heard, only a funeral note ran round the walls. Mr. Whistler appeared in evening dress—supported by a "crush hat," an eye-glass, a ricketty table, a bottle of water, and a tumbler, a roll of manuscript, a thousand eyes, and about five hundred pairs of ears. Under cover of this collection, a quarter of an hour late, Mr. Whistler made his *début*. He did not say, "You are entirely welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to my little picture shop." But, like a modest maiden, he simpered a note of abnegation, and made an apology for his appearance on the platform. Then Mr. Whistler told his audience that, "art is too long to be chucked under the chin," "she is a goddess of habit seeking in all the beautiful." A discovery, forsooth! "Humanity takes the place of art, and good taste the beauty that elevates." The multitude, the lecturer implied, only supply the "browns" that decorate. Fifteenth century art, Mr. Whistler has discovered, was engraved in the multitude; and that now we call for the ungainly. The audience were not enlightened as to whether or no the first artist was Adam and his drawing board the sands of Eden. But Mr. Whistler's researches into prehistoric times lead him to think that the first genius of line was a dweller in tents—not an amateur. His paint box was a burnt stick and his sketching ground the surface of the globe. Another note of the lecturer was that there has never been an artistic period. But he thinks the Greeks had the best of it. In the days of the *artifex*, the audience learnt, that the amateur was unknown and the *dilettante* undreamt of. Man did his work with such insight as the gods imbued him with. Now and then there was one on whom the deities set their mark. But as time journeyed on shams got into the picture shops. The artist went, and the manufacturer took his place. Art was relegated to the curiosity shop. One of the true functions of the artist, Mr. Whistler said, was to "pick and choose. Nature is very rarely right. Seldom does she succeed in producing pictures," and sometimes she is guilty of producing "a very foolish sunset." London, Mr. Whistler came to the conclusion, is happy in her fogs. By the bye, in this part of his lecture Mr. Whistler ventilated the fact that Apollo, and not Achilles, was thick heeled. Having finished off the history of art in five-and-thirty minutes, Mr. Whistler discoursed on the beauty of the butterfly, and played at Hudibras with the unattached writer, presenting the critics with a bunch of prickles in full bloom. Mr. Whistler drew his sermon—not a brilliant essay—to a close by informing his audience that at this moment the world is oppressed with "an incubus of art," pervaded with an unspoken sympathy which is vulgarity. Up and down the world and in and out the parlour, to Mr. Whistler's grief, the *dilettante* stalks, and the amateur is loosed. Mr. Whistler concluded by remarking that "Art, always rare, has no correlative with national growth, but seeks the artists at home, at Nankin, or at Madrid, by turns inspires the potter, or dips the Spaniard's brush in light and air, and shrinks from being vulgarised for the delectation of the bagman and the critic." Next time Mr. Whistler has a "Ten o'clock," we would advise him to bring a speaking trumpet, and talk a lesson in monosyllables. A good many of Mr. Whistler's ideas were kept to himself. The audience failed to catch his sentiments. They were uttered in such a small still voice.

History is always repeating itself. Art is generally Ward once said, "I like music—I can't sing. I am a singer I am not a success. I am sadder wife would have I sing. So are those who hear me. They sadder even than I." What says Mr. Whistler?

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper at the bottom of the page, including the number "24" and some illegible scribbles.

"St. James Gazette" Feb. 21 85

MR. WHISTLER'S TEN O'CLOCK.

FEW if any of the audience who crowded Prince's Hall last night, to listen to the message with the delivery of which Mr. Whistler had mysteriously announced himself to be commissioned, credit the lecturer beforehand with the remarkable powers of oratory which he showed that he possessed. True, he committed the essential sin—or rather omitted the essential virtue—in public speaking, for he was audible only to a part of his audience; but that is a fault which can be cured, and the grace and dramatic aptitude of his delivery left nothing to be desired.

A great deal of ingenuity had been exercised as to what Mr. Whistler was going to say. Let us therefore lose no time in informing our readers that his discourse consisted of three parts. The first was a history of art; the second was an estimate of the present condition of art (chiefly, we imagine, in this country); the third was an attack upon two classes of persons—those concerned in the practice or contemplation of art who are not aesthetes, and aesthetes. "But what remains?" the simple-minded may ask. Mr. Whistler remains. The third, or militant, part dragged a little once or twice; but the bulk of it, and the whole of the first two parts, were so brilliantly studded with paradoxical epigram as to make the lecture thoroughly delightful to everybody who could hear it.

The history of art, according to Mr. Whistler, is to the following effect. In old times men went out hunting, and succeeded and lived, or failed and died, according to circumstances. Then it occurred to somebody to sit at home among the women and scratch in the dust with a stick. He was the first artist. After a while he took clay and moulded a vase. It was a great improvement on nature, which is a meaner thing than art. It was, in fact, a masterpiece. When the hunters came home they drank out of it, for a very good reason. "They ate and drank out of masterpieces, because there was nothing else to eat and drink out of." In that simple time all men used beautiful things without knowing it or troubling their heads about it. But suddenly somebody was possessed by the idea of "the cheap." Then they made base imitations which were not beautiful at all, and ate and drank out of them. At the same time their attention was aroused, and they began to consider whether the imitations were beautiful or not. They were not beautiful, but they thought they were; and the deception has gone on ever since. Then people took to manufacturing, and "then arose Birmingham and Manchester; and art was relegated to the curiosity-shop." Here ended the first part.

The second part treated of the present condition of art, and of what is erroneously supposed to be art. Most people think nature is art; and they are quite mistaken. Nature is rather vulgar. Nature contains all the elements of art, just as a keyboard contains all the sounds requisite for music. So people think that by "letting everything go in" (as Mr. Trevelyan would say), by painting details and blades of grass, they will get art. This is a delusion. "For the artist to paint nature as he sees it, is as if the musician attempts to make music by sitting on the piano." The time when you may paint nature is when you cannot see it—that is to say, when it is hidden by a river-fog. If you paint what you see then, you get fairyland, and various other things which are not nature; and then you may be an artist. Therefore people are wrong, and artists (if there are more than one) have the joy of art all to themselves.

Then came the attacks. The first foe of art is "the unattached writer." He treats of art from a literary, and consequently a wrong, point of view. He is of several kinds—from the newspaper critic to the student "from one of the universities" who "files the fifteenth century and pigeon-holes antiquity." In all his kinds he was exposed and scathed, to the great delight of the audience; and we trust it will do him good. The second foe is the aesthete. Some aesthetes may have flattered themselves that Mr. Whistler was going to vindicate their claim to existence. If so, they were cruelly undeceived. The artist likes women to be "dainty." The aesthete makes them like "signposts to vulgarity, with the hawker's rags

tering in ungainly folds from their shoulders." In fact, aesthetes, besides being the apostles of decay, are vulgar; and there is an end of them. Art is the possession of the few. The many can never know anything about it. Not for them have the artists who have, occasionally, condescended to appear, made "the living figures glow within their frames [here Mr. Whistler's enthusiasm carried him away into the art of making blank verse] and stand on their legs." Let the people wallow in their blissful ignorance, and let the artist, when there happens to be one, chuckle to himself in the midst of the atmosphere of impenetrable thick-headedness by which he needs be surrounded. A comfortable doctrine: because it leaves no room for amendment, or searchings of heart, or strivings after the unattainable. We are not even obliged to thank Mr. Whistler to be an artist unless we like, and it makes not the difference whether we do or not.

That question is whether the present Government are to allow their agents on the spot to precipitate a war which would be a catastrophe for civilization throughout the East. We have said quite frankly that we do not think M. LISSAR's principles are unreasonable, and if they were embodied in a preliminary agreement, for defining the precise details of their application. But the more important is it to represent to the Russian Government the more important move by the Russian troops on the frontier endangers a collision with the Afghans, from which war would almost inevitably result. Of course, if the Afghans have been advancing again so as to take up a threatening position on the Russian flank, that is another matter. But as yet nothing has been heard of that. All that is known is that an apparently well authenticated report has reached the Government that the Russians have made a further advance, and are now so close to Penjdeh that at any moment there may be a collision between their advanced posts and the Afghan garrison of that town. We do not for one moment believe that the Russian Government wish to force us into a war, or that they would regard as other than a great calamity even the minor evil of a war with Afghanistan. But if they wish to avoid that eventuality, why do they not order General KOMAROFF to halt? If they allow him to advance in this fashion they will destroy the last hope of friendly relations between the two countries, and bring into office the party whose one idea of foreign policy is that of inveterate hostility to Russia. It would hardly be worth the Emperor's while to instal General KOMAROFF in Penjdeh at the price of establishing Lord SALISBURY in Downing-street.

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LAST night, at Prince's Hall, Mr. Whistler made his first public appearance as a lecturer on art, and spoke for more than an hour with really marvellous eloquence on the absolute uselessness of all lectures of the kind. Mr. Whistler began his lecture with a very pretty *aria* on pre-historic history, describing how in earlier times hunter and warrior would go forth to chase and foray, while the artist sat at home making cup and bowl for their service. Rude imitations of nature they were first, like the gourd bottle, till the sense of beauty and form developed, and, in all its exquisite proportions, the first vase was fashioned. Then came a higher civilization of architecture and arm-chairs, and with exquisite design, and dainty diaper, the useful things of life were made lovely; and the hunter and the warrior, who were tired and when they were thirsty drank from the bowl, and never cared to lose the exquisite proportions of the one, or the delightful ornament of the other; and this attitude of the primitive anthropophagous Philistine formed the text of the lecture, and was the attitude which Mr. Whistler entreated his audience to adopt towards art. Remembering, no doubt, many charming invitations to wonderful private views, this fashionable assemblage seemed somewhat aghast, and not a little amused, at being told that the slightest appearance among a civilized people of any joy in beautiful things is a grave impertinence to all painters; but Mr. Whistler was relentless, and with charming ease, and much grace of manner, explained to the public that the only thing they should cultivate was ugliness, and that on their permanent stupidity rested all the hopes of art in the future.

The scene was in every way delightful; he stood there, a miniature Mephistopheles mocking the majority! he was like a brilliant surgeon lecturing to a class composed of subjects destined ultimately for dissection, and solemnly assuring them how valuable to science their maladies were, and how absolutely uninteresting the slightest symptoms of health on their part would be. In fairness to the audience, however, I must say that they seemed extremely gratified at being rid of the dreadful responsibility of admiring anything, and nothing could have exceeded

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Handwritten notes: 2/25/85, 76, 25, 85

THE GAZETTE

newspaper and Review.

FEBRUARY 21, 1885.

Price One Penny.

essential to their existence. If Russia should give way on this point before a year was out we should probably discover that in yielding to our pressure she had made a similar mistake to that which she had already made in yielding to our objections to the preliminary settlement of general principles. That, however, is beside the present question.

That question is whether the two Governments are to allow their agents on the spot to precipitate a war which neither nation desires, and which would in truth be a catastrophe for civilization throughout the East. We have said quite frankly that we do not think M. LESSAR'S principles are unreasonable, and if they were embodied in a preliminary agreement, Sir PETER LUMSDEN and General ZELENOY might well set about defining the precise details of their application. But the more entirely we agree with M. LESSAR'S proposals the more important is it to represent to the Russian Government that a single forward move by the Russian troops on the frontier endangers a collision with the Afghans, from which war would almost inevitably result. Of course, if the Afghans have been advancing again so as to take up a threatening position on the Russian flank, that is another matter. But as yet nothing has been heard of that. All that is known is that an apparently well authenticated report has reached the Government that the Russians have made a further advance, and are now so close to Penjeh that at any moment there may be a collision between their advanced posts and the Afghan garrison of that town. We do not for one moment believe that the Russian Government wish to force us into a war, or that they would regard as other than a great calamity even the minor evil of a war with Afghanistan. But if they wish to avoid that eventuality, why do they not order General KOMAROFF to halt? If they allow him to advance in this fashion they will destroy the last hope of friendly relations between the two countries, and bring into office the party whose one idea of foreign policy is that of inveterate hostility to Russia. It would hardly be worth the Emperor's while to instal General KOMAROFF in Penjeh at the price of establishing Lord SALISBURY in Downing-street.

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"P. L." Feb. 21. 85.

Morning Advertiser. 21/2/85. Evening Standard 21/2/85.

Freeman's Journal. 21/2/85

MR. WHISTLER'S TEN O'CLOCK.

Mr. McNeil Whistler, an artist with a certain kind of reputation, has for some weeks or months past advertised a "Ten o'clock" at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, and speculation has been rife amongst the curious as to what kind of an entertainment a "Ten o'clock" was likely to be; but having regard to the fact that the price of the tickets was half a guinea, there could be little doubt that, whether it was to be dramatic, musical, or artistic, it would be eminently select. Eggs, according to the proverb, are close things, but the cracks come out in due course, and so Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock" has come and gone. The momentous event took place last night, Prince's Hall was three-parts full, and the audience included many celebrities in the fashionable, artistic, and musical world. At a quarter past ten Mr. Whistler came on to the platform alone, unattended even by a chairman, and at once began to talk, and his theme, as might be guessed, was art. He had no notes of any kind, and spoke at first in so low a tone that at the back of the hall, where the members of the Press were courteously placed, scarcely a word could be heard. His manner, however, showed clearly enough that he thought he had a mission, and that, should the heavens fall, he must perform it resolutely. Accordingly he persevered in unwinding his discourse, oblivious of the cries of "Speak out," "We can't hear you," and so forth, which now and again arose from the back of the hall. As he proceeded he raised his voice a little and a complete sentence could occasionally be heard. To say to the painter that nature is to be taken as she is; he remarked, is to say to the musician that he must sit on the piano. Laughter, of course, followed this exasperatingly funny sentence. Nature is very rarely right; it might almost be said that she is usually wrong. Mr. Whistler proceeded to attack the "unattached writer" who had become the middleman in the matter of art, and whose influence, while it had widened the gulf between the people and the painter, had brought about a complete misunderstanding as to the aim of a picture. To him a picture was more or less a hieroglyph. It was considered absolutely from a literary point of view, and the writer dealt with it as with a novel, a history, or an anecdote. He praised for virtues the painter would blush to possess, while the great qualities which went to distinguish the one work from a thousand had never been seen at all. That this was so we could make sure by looking back to old reviews of past exhibitions, and reading the flatteries lavished upon men who had since been forgotten, and upon whose works the language had been exhausted in rhapsodies that left nothing for the National Gallery. To these writers a mountain was synonymous with height, a lake with depth, the ocean with vastness, the sun with glory; so that a picture with a mountain, a lake, and an ocean, however poor in paint, was inevitably described as lofty, vast, and glorious. Another class of writers, wise with the wisdom of books, frequented museums, collecting, compiling, classifying, contradicting. Experts these with whom a date was a satisfaction and a hall-mark of success. These men catalogued the fifteenth century and pigeon-holed the antique. Such are samples of the artist-lecturer's style, culled here and there at random, for hearing anything like consecutive sentences at the back of the hall was out of the question. Mr. Whistler speaks without hesitation, with a fluency in fact surprising in one who is unaccustomed to the public platform. He says at times hard things and smart things, and occasionally soars aloft into the region of poetry. Some of his passages bear evidence of careful and intelligent study. The audience frequently applauded his nicely-turned sentences, laughed at his quaint sayings, and appeared to enjoy the no longer mysterious "Ten o'clock." To the application of the eagle's "noisy fools" there was last night at least one remarkable exception, and that gentleman stood on the platform.

Mr. WHISTLER last night called his friends and acquaintances together—and everyone has acquaintance at least with the works of this eccentric genius—and made an address, which added new complication to the vexed question, "What is true art?" Mr. WHISTLER began quite at the beginning of things, at the times when men lived what is understood as a primitive life—a little husbandry, a good deal of hunting for the sake of food and clothing, with intervals of war. There was in these days, the lecturer declared, a man, and afterwards other men came to him, who cared for none of these pursuits. He stayed with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick on a gourd. Why did he do this? it may be asked; and the replies would be various. The soldier and sportsman would talk about effeminate milksops, but Mr. WHISTLER, who is an artist, explains that his friend with the burnt stick was "chosen by the gods." So by degrees the first vase was born in beautiful proportion, and men ate and drank out of masterpieces because there was nothing else to eat and drink out of. Mr. WHISTLER was a little hard upon Nature, on whose slovenly suggestions it is the business of Art to improve, though now and then Nature "sings in tune," and the artist who scientifically understands the song sets it down on his canvas. The notion that Nature is the artist's ideal, Mr. WHISTLER scorns. Who is to settle when Art is true, when Nature has sung in tune, and whether the man to whom she sings has caught the truth of her song, Mr. WHISTLER did not explain; and these are points on which that portion of the world which believes itself to be Art-loving desires some authoritative information.

Globe. 21/2/85.

MR. WHISTLER ON ART.

In presence of one of the most brilliant, fashionable, and representative audiences of the season, Mr. Whistler gave yesterday, at ten o'clock, at the Prince's Hall, an hour's address upon art and criticism. It is probable that the lecture will appear in print either in the shape of a magazine article or a pamphlet. Should it do so an opportunity of pronouncing upon its merits better than is now afforded will arise. A considerable portion was inaudible, and the gaps in continuity due to this cause rendered exceptionally difficult the task of arriving at an accurate judgment. Flashes of amusing paradox and satirists of characteristic cynicism elicited much mirth from the audience, and the whole was a success. The chief subjects of banter were the arrogance and imbecility of criticism and the vulgarity of public taste; the amateur and the dilettante being the chief objects of Mr. Whistler's good humoured ridicule. Not difficult was it sometimes to individualise the unnamed writers against whom the lecturer fulminated. As a novelty in its way the occasion inspired much interest, and if the opinions advocated were not always convincing, it is doubtful if Mr. Whistler's primary intention was to convince.

Professor Ruskin's denunciations have done much towards making Mr. Whistler and his style of art known to the public. Mr. Whistler himself had just added a contribution to the same effect. He recently conceived the idea of giving a "ten o'clock," and for the past three weeks society in London has had in its frivolous moments consented to perplex itself with the puzzle, "What is Mr. Whistler's ten o'clock?" Advertisements in all the daily papers invited the inquisitive to come and satisfy themselves to-night at the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. Was it to be a spiritualistic seance? Would it merely be an exhibition of Mr. Whistler's own paintings? Could it be possible that Mr. Whistler had quietly taken up Damiani's challenge for £1,000 which Mr. Labouchere had declined, or was it all a joke? The tickets of admission gave no clue whatever, and to heighten the perplexity they bore a mysterious emblem which had some resemblance to the study of a dying snowdrop in deep black. Whatever the conception was Mr. Whistler himself was to make it plain at ten o'clock, and carriages, the advertisements announced might be ordered for eleven. I strolled over to Piccadilly from the House of Commons shortly after ten o'clock and found the Prince's Hall, which was crowded, a scene of fashion, and, I may add without exaggeration, of beauty too, for the ladies constituted two-thirds of the audience. The platform was occupied by a tall slight figure attired in ordinary evening dress, ornamented by a mass of dark, curly hair, provided with an eyeglass for the right optic, and without the orthodox flower in the button hole. This was Mr. Whistler. He was standing erect, with his hands, which were behind his back, grasping an opera hat while he was making known his opinions, and these opinions were being received with repeated rounds of laughter and seemingly derisive applause. Mr. Whistler's "ten o'clock" was nothing more than a lecture upon "art"—the art of himself and a select few—and a diatribe against the multitude, "the antiquated mob of mediocrity," who fancies it knows something about art, and also against all others who would dream of imparting it to the people. As truth was before man from the beginning, so art is limited to infinite, and could not progress. With men and not with multitudes were her interests, and in her book, the names inscribed were few. The courted by a horde of pretenders, she knew them not. The dilettanti, the amateurs, the writers upon art, "middlemen in the matter of art, whose influence widens the gulf between the people and the painter, and for whom a picture is neither more nor less than a hieroglyphic or simple story"—these and many others were passed in review and denounced. Ridicule was also aimed at certain "experts," who, he said, "reduce art to statistics," and for this purpose "file the 15th century and pigeon-hole the antique." Nature, he declared, contains the elements in form and colour for all pictures, as the keyboard contains the notes of all music. Saying to the painter that nature is to be taken as she is, was like saying to the player of music that he is to sit upon the piano. That "nature was always right," was an assertion not capable of being proved, but nevertheless readily accepted. Nature is very rarely right, and to such an extent was this true it might be said that nature is generally wrong. The lecture, as a whole, was not a bad extravaganza, but I fancy Mr. Toole would have played it better.

County Gentleman. 21/2/85.

Sheffield Independent. 21/2/85.

I am now about to start for Prince's Hall to attend Mr. Whistler's Ten O'clock. In an hour the mystery on which the eyes of Europe are centred will be pricked. And I dare say before these lines of mine reach the eyes of inquisitive mankind you will be in possession of a full and particular account of the proceedings supplied by the owls of the morning press. But of the rejoicing that is to follow the function proper these daily journals will have no account, so you had best make inquiries. You who are in town to-morrow. The tickets did not go off so freely as "Atlas" led us to suppose. There are folk who consider ten shillings too much for a Ten O'clock. But I assure you that you cannot get a good one for less.

In confirmation of a paragraph in this correspondence last week, the World writes:—"The mystery as to the nature of Mr. Whistler's 'Ten O'clock' remains unbroken, and the curiosity grows in intensity. I am told that only four people are in the secret, and that they have departed into the country to escape the brunt of cross-examination to which they were exposed. I hear of a misconception which it may be well to set right. Our James sent out among his friends a number of intimations of the function, which, I gather, some people are regarding as invitations. They are in error, and must fortify themselves with tickets (if, indeed, any are left) should they desire to be present." By the time this is in print the important mystery will have been solved, but, I think, not in the presence of many of "James" friends who believed they had been invited, and found that the canny eccentric was really touting for half guineas.

Sunday Times 22/2/85

Dramatic Review 22/2/85

MR. WHISTLER'S TEN O'CLOCK.

The following extract from an account written by Mr. Oscar Wilde of the above artistic event appeared in yesterday's Pall Mall Gazette:— Last night, at Prince's Hall, Mr. Whistler made his first public appearance as a lecturer on art, and spoke for more than an hour with really marvellous eloquence on the absolute uselessness of all lectures of the kind. Mr. Whistler began his lecture with a very pretty *aria* on pre-historic history, describing how in earlier times hunter and warrior would go forth to chase and foray, while the artist sat at home making cup and bowl for their service. Rude imitations of nature they were first, like the gourd bottle, till the sense of beauty and form developed, and, in all its exquisite proportions, the first vase was fashioned. Then came a higher civilisation of architecture and arm-chairs, and with exquisite design, and dainty diaper, the useful things of life were made lovely; and the hunter and the warrior lay on the couch when they were tired, and when they were thirsty, drank from the bowl, and never cared to lose the exquisite proportions of the one, or the delightful ornament of the other; and this attitude of the primitive anthropophagous Philistine formed the text of the lecture, and was the attitude which Mr. Whistler entreated his audience to adopt towards art. Remembering, no doubt, many charming invitations to wonderful private views, this fashionable assemblage seemed somewhat aghast, and not a little amused, at being told that the slightest appearance among a civilised people of any joy in beautiful things is a grave impertinence to all painters; but Mr. Whistler was relentless, and with charming ease, and much grace of manner, explained to the public that the only thing they should cultivate was ugliness, and that on their permanent stupidity rested all the hopes of art in the future. The scene was in every way delightful; he stood there, a miniature Mephistopheles mocking the majority! he was like a brilliant surgeon lecturing to a class composed of subjects destined ultimately for dissection, and solemnly assuring them how valuable to science their maladies were, and how absolutely uninteresting the slightest symptoms of health on their part would be. In fairness to the audience, however, I must say that they seemed extremely gratified at being rid of the dreadful responsibility of admiring anything, and nothing could have exceeded their enthusiasm when they were told by Mr. Whistler that no matter how vulgar their dresses were, or how hideous their surroundings at home, still it was possible that a great painter, if there was such a thing, could, by contemplating them in the twilight, and half-closing his eyes, see them under really picturesque conditions, and produce a picture which they were not to attempt to understand, much less dare to enjoy. Then there were some arrows, barbed and brilliant, shot off, with all the speed and splendour of fireworks, at the archaeologists, who spend their lives in verifying the birthplaces of nobodies, and estimate the value of a work of art by its date or its decay, at the art critics who always treat a picture as if it were a novel, and try and find out the plot; at dilettanti in general, and amateurs in particular, and (*O men culpa!*) at these reformers most of all. "Did not Velasquez paint caricatures? what more do you want?" Mr. Whistler's lecture was, like everything that he does, a masterpiece. Not merely for its clever satire and amusing jests will it be remembered, but for the pure and perfect beauty of many of its passages—passages delivered with an earnestness which seemed to amaze those who had looked on Mr. Whistler as a master of persiflage merely, and had not known him, as we do, as a master of painting also.

MR. WHISTLER'S "TEN O'CLOCK."

Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock" was not even a good practical joke. Theodore Hook would have blushed to perpetrate it. Had he summoned his friends to look at a collection of his own pictures, or sat down on the platform and played the banjo, or danced a break-down, or explained the mysteries of canvas-back ducks, green corn and terrapene, or even had he cleverly collected all that is best and most beautiful in London society, and then put up Oscar Wilde (to lecture on æstheticism, all would have been well. But a serious diatribe on Philistinism, and a full eulogium on art, was more than anyone bargained for from James McNeil Whistler. The lecture, such as it was, many found weary in the extreme. The lecturer cannot lecture. His voice resembles the squeak of a mouse behind a wainscot. He drops it at the end of every sentence, as all amateurs do, and most inexcusable fault of all—it was dull. It may be considered eccentric to ridicule art progress in this country at a time when not a provincial centre is without its art centre. When every chair we sit on, every wall paper we look at, every chintz we examine, can boast, it may be considered clever to scorn sunsets, just as Oscar Wilde patronised the Atlantic Ocean. But it is a poor and wearisome jest after all. Mr. Whistler is a clever, but a disappointed man. He is indignant at Ruskin, and has bottled up his scorn in an uninteresting lecture. He has got the ear of half-hearted admirers in a cynical and superficial age. In a metropolis seething with irreverence and addition. But the art work of this country will thrive, and men like Ruskin will be remembered long after Mr. James Whistler and his ten o'clock are buried in oblivion. Lucky for his audience that Mr. Whistler wholly failed in persuasive power, and could not deliver his carefully prepared and specious rhetoric, or this essentially silly and illogical age might have accepted for truth what was utterly fallacious and false. Mr. Whistler's ten o'clock was a joke, but a bad one. In no other country would such a sorry jest have been permitted. As Artemus Ward used to say, "And when I showed that picture, they throw things at me." Mr. Whistler was saved by the crassness of his accomplished audience. They smiled, and passed on.

York Herald 22/2/85

Mr. Whistler made a handsome sum of money by his entertainment, and procured a certain amount of applause from his personal friends, he has not added to his reputation. Happily, there were those at the Prince's Hall who did not go to cheer, and have no hesitation in stating that the majority of persons who heard Mr. Whistler's lecture on Art came away bitterly resentful. There were some who said that they had been done out of ten shillings to listen to a pack of rubbish, and there were others who though admitted without payment, declared that their time had been wasted. Mr. Whistler is, in spite of his eccentricities, clever; but, whatever Mr. Oscar Wilde may urge, he has not the gifts of a popular lecturer. Moreover, a lecture was never expected from him. Most of the people who paid half-a-sovereign to enter the Prince's Hall at ten o'clock in the evening expected to be amused, not to be bored. Mr. Whistler will not venture to repeat his audacious experiment.

Nottingham Evening Standard

Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock" was shrouded in mystery even to the last moment. The advertisements gave no clue to the exact nature of the entertainment, public curiosity failed to fathom it, and even in circles of the elect utter ignorance prevailed. The consequence, of course, was that an audience, numerous as well as very select, assembled in Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, and as no programme had been issued a perpetual hum of expectancy was heard till the moment of the apostle's appearance on the platform. That the employment of all this secrecy was justified in the result can hardly be admitted, and by resorting to such quack measures for securing an audience Mr. Whistler certainly does not weaken the hands of his enemies. Touching the "Ten o'clock," however, it speedily became apparent on Mr. Whistler making his appearance that the apostle was simply going to talk, and the audience scarcely stood in need of the information vouchsafed at the outset to the effect that the talk was to be about art. To say that Mr. Whistler was sincere in all he uttered would not be paying him a compliment. He is nothing if not eccentric, and many of the views he propounded were propounded—it is only charitable to suppose—not because they contained much truth in them, but because they were calculated to maintain Mr. Whistler's reputation as a master of the grotesque in idea and language as well as on canvas. Mr. Whistler's views on art are not such as would find acceptance with the million. In Mr. Whistler's opinion "the million" is the natural enemy of art—a monster who sometimes in the shape of the amateur, and sometimes in the shape of the dilettante or the critic "chucks her under the chin" instead of reverently approaching her as a dainty goddess. Exaggerated, however, as was Mr. Whistler's, out, the lecture.

Yorkshire Post 23/2/85

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Liverpool Mercury 23/2/85

Mr. Whistler excelled himself last night. He asked people to come to a mysterious meeting, which he called his ten o'clock. When he got them there in full evening dress after dinner, he gave them a lesson on art. It was the most amusingly amazing performance ever witnessed. With the most perfect sang froid, Mr. Whistler managed to make out historically, philosophically, and socially that the only people who ought to enjoy art were artists. He was epigrammatic, paradoxical, eloquent, but he sustained his theme. He kept it up to the end. He was the real true artist, and therefore the only prophet of art. James McNeill Whistler is the real man of the age. He did not blush to prove it. He gloried rather in his consciousness that he was alone as a genius in the world. He has been capped, however. Such glory cannot remain unchallenged. Mr. Oscar Wilde appears in the Pall Mall to-night, insisting that the painter is not the greatest artist. Who is it that is the supreme artist, then? Surely the poet. Poe and Bodelaise are instanced as the really great ones of the earth; and I can imagine that as he wrote the lines Mr. Oscar Wilde looked up in his room, and, his eye lighting on a parchment and gold bound copy of certain immortal works, exclaimed, "I also—I am a poet."

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Weekend Daily News 23/2/85. Liverpool Daily Post 23/2/85.

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Mr Whistler intimated to his audience that the subject of his address was "Art." This had of late, he said, become, as far as much discussion and writing can make it, a sort of common topic for the tea-table. Under many disguises affectation of art has been adopted into modern social affairs and regarded as a phase of art. Art has naught in common with such practices. She is a goddess of dainty thought, reticent of habit, abjuring all obtrusiveness, proposing in no way to better others. She is, withal, selfishly occupied with her own perfection only, having no desire to teach; seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times, as did her high priest Rembrandt when he saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were Greeks; as did Titoret and Paul Veronese among the Venetians, while not halting to change the brocaded silks for the classic draperies of Athens; as did, at the Court of Philip, Velasquez, whose Infantas, clad in immetalic hoops, are works of art of the same quality as the Elgin marbles. No reformers were these great men, no improvers of the ways of others. Their work was completely severed from that of their fellow creatures, with whom sentiment is mistaken for poetry, and for whom there is no perfect work that shall not be explained by the benefit conferred upon themselves. Humanity takes the place of art. Beauty is confounded with virtue, and before a work of art it is asked—what good shall it do? Dealing with varieties of notions resulting from such estimation of art, Mr Whistler announced that there never was an artistic period, there never was an art-loving people. To this assertion succeeded a fascinating view of the uprising of the first artist, in passages such as the following:—"In the beginning men went forth each day, some to do battle, some to the chase, others, again, to dig and delve in the field; all that they might gain and live or lose and die; until there was found among them one differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd. And presently there came to this man another, and in time others of like nature, chosen by the gods, and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned from the moistened earth forms resembling the gourd, and with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of nature, and the first vase was born in beautiful proportion." Then came the designing and making of houses and couches and tables, and the people lived in marvels of art, and ate and drank out of masterpieces, because there was nothing else to eat and drink out of. Centuries passed, until a class arose who discovered the cheap, and foresaw fortune in the facture of the sham. Then sprang into existence the tawdry, the common, the gewgaw. The taste of the tradesman supplanted the science of the artist. The artist's occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and huckster took his place. The people this time had much to say in the matter. Passing to a different topic, Mr Whistler dwelt upon the assertion that "Nature is always right," and propounded its fallaciousness from the artistic point of view. In this connection he gave a sort of word-painting of his nocturnes and symphonies, to the effect that when Nature has for once sung in tune, she sings her exquisite song to the artist alone; to him are her secrets unfolded, and scientifically understood by him, is she ever his resource and always at his service. In antithesis to this, Mr Whistler sketched the attitude of what he called the "unattached writer," who has become the middleman in this matter of art. Another set of persons claiming to associate themselves with art he defined as sombre of mein, and wise with the wisdom of books, who frequent museums and burrow in crypts, collecting, comparing, compiling, classifying, contradicting, and discovering the picture by the stain on the back. Then there was the preacher upon art—appointed, impressive, important, shallow, defiant, distressed, desperate, crying out in vain, and cutting himself while the gods hear not. Notwithstanding this machinery for the supposed service of art, with the man and not with the multitude are her intimacies; and in the book of her life the names inscribed are few—scant indeed the list of those who have helped to write her story of love and beauty. Mr Whistler treated with banter the cant of despair as to the condition of art at present as compared with its state in the past, deducing that all is well as it ever was, and finally arguing that we have then but to wait until, with the mark of the gods upon him, there comes among us again the chosen who shall continue what has gone before, satisfied that, even were he never to appear, the story of the beautiful is already complete, hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon and brodered with the birds upon the fan of Hokusai, at the foot of the Fusi-hama.

For some little time past that eccentric person, Mr. James W. M. Whistler, has kept the intellects of London in suspense by the announcement that on a Friday evening he would give a "ten o'clock" at the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. What the "ten o'clock" would consist of no man knew and no man ventured to guess. He of the butterfly signature is like Professor Blackie. If he danced a jig or preached a new gospel, none would be astonished. It turned out, however, on Friday night last that Mr. Whistler deigned to entertain his audience—a compact array of representatives of art, literature, and science—with his views on "Art." According to the summaries of this discourse printed by our London contemporaries, the doctrines expounded were truly Whistlerian. Art, he says, has no desire to teach, to improve humanity. "She is selfishly occupied with her own perfection." Furthermore, the lecturer impugned the accuracy of Nature, who, he said, is "rarely right," seldom succeeds in producing pictures, and is sometimes guilty of "a very foolish sunset." An interesting passage is Mr. Whistler's theory of the birth of art. "In the beginning men went forth each day, some to do battle, some to the chase, others, again, to dig and delve in the field; all that they might gain and live, or lose and die; until there was found among them one differing from the rest. These pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd. And presently there came to this man another, and in time others of like nature, chosen by the gods, and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned from the moistened earth forms resembling the gourd, and with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of nature, and the first vase was born in beautiful proportion. Then came the designing and making of houses and couches and tables, and the people lived in marvels of art, and ate and drank out of masterpieces, because there was nothing else to eat and to drink out of. Centuries passed until a class arose who discovered the cheap, and foresaw fortune in the facture of the sham. Then sprang into existence the tawdry, the common, the gewgaw." Mr. Whistler's lecture will, of course, be published. It will be more than curious to note if Mr. Ruskin will condescend to notice it; and if he does, in what fashion he will treat the artist who makes sport of Nature's sunsets, declares that the "Venus of Melos is more perfect than any woman that ever lived," and delivers his lectures at ten o'clock, an hour when Ruskin would have all honest folk fast asleep, in obedience to Nature's laws.

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Mr Whistler intimated to his audience that the subject of his address was "Art." This had of late, he said, become, as far as much discussion and writing can make it, a sort of common topic for the tea-table. Under many disguises affectation of art has been adopted into modern social affairs and regarded as a phase of art. Art has naught in common with such practices. She is a goddess of dainty thought, reticent of habit, abjuring all obtrusiveness, proposing in no way to better others. She is, withal, selfishly occupied with her own perfection only, having no desire to teach; seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times, as did her high priest Rembrandt when he saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were Greeks; as did Titoret and Paul Veronese among the Venetians, while not halting to change the brocaded silks for the classic draperies of Athens; as did, at the Court of Philip, Velasquez, whose Infantas, clad in immetalic hoops, are works of art of the same quality as the Elgin marbles. No reformers were these great men, no improvers of the ways of others. Their work was completely severed from that of their fellow creatures, with whom sentiment is mistaken for poetry, and for whom there is no perfect work that shall not be explained by the benefit conferred upon themselves. Humanity takes the place of art. Beauty is confounded with virtue, and before a work of art it is asked—what good shall it do? Dealing with varieties of notions resulting from such estimation of art, Mr Whistler announced that there never was an artistic period, there never was an art-loving people. To this assertion succeeded a fascinating view of the uprising of the first artist, in passages such as the following:—"In the beginning men went forth each day, some to do battle, some to the chase, others, again, to dig and delve in the field; all that they might gain and live or lose and die; until there was found among them one differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd. And presently there came to this man another, and in time others of like nature, chosen by the gods, and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned from the moistened earth forms resembling the gourd, and with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of nature, and the first vase was born in beautiful proportion." Then came the designing and making of houses and couches and tables, and the people lived in marvels of art, and ate and drank out of masterpieces, because there was nothing else to eat and drink out of. Centuries passed, until a class arose who discovered the cheap, and foresaw fortune in the facture of the sham. Then sprang into existence the tawdry, the common, the gewgaw. The taste of the tradesman supplanted the science of the artist. The artist's occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and huckster took his place. The people this time had much to say in the matter. Passing to a different topic, Mr Whistler dwelt upon the assertion that "Nature is always right," and propounded its fallaciousness from the artistic point of view. In this connection he gave a sort of word-painting of his nocturnes and symphonies, to the effect that when Nature has for once sung in tune, she sings her exquisite song to the artist alone; to him are her secrets unfolded, and scientifically understood by him, is she ever his resource and always at his service. In antithesis to this, Mr Whistler sketched the attitude of what he called the "unattached writer," who has become the middleman in this matter of art. Another set of persons claiming to associate themselves with art he defined as sombre of mein, and wise with the wisdom of books, who frequent museums and burrow in crypts, collecting, comparing, compiling, classifying, contradicting, and discovering the picture by the stain on the back. Then there was the preacher upon art—appointed, impressive, important, shallow, defiant, distressed, desperate, crying out in vain, and cutting himself while the gods hear not. Notwithstanding this machinery for the supposed service of art, with the man and not with the multitude are her intimacies; and in the book of her life the names inscribed are few—scant indeed the list of those who have helped to write her story of love and beauty. Mr Whistler treated with banter the cant of despair as to the condition of art at present as compared with its state in the past, deducing that all is well as it ever was, and finally arguing that we have then but to wait until, with the mark of the gods upon him, there comes among us again the chosen who shall continue what has gone before, satisfied that, even were he never to appear, the story of the beautiful is already complete, hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon and brodered with the birds upon the fan of Hokusai, at the foot of the Fusi-hama.

Weekend Daily News 23/2/85

MR. WHISTLER'S "TEN O'CLOCK."

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'Clock" has resulted in a most interesting discourse upon art which must take a prominent position amongst the various addresses and dissertations which have been given in this country. A very large and fashionable audience filled the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, on Friday evening, little expecting to hear a closely reasoned and lucid exposition of the relations between the artist, his work, and the people in general. Walking on to his platform—without notes in his hand—Mr. Whistler, after the applause which greeted him had subsided, asked for indulgence and sympathy for venturing to speak upon art, which has of late become, as far as much discussion and writing can make it, a sort of common topic for the tea-table. But, he went on, Art has been maligned—for she is a goddess of dainty thought, reticent of habit. Selfishly occupied with her own perfections only, she seeks and finds the beautiful in all conditions and in all times, as did her high priest Rembrandt when he saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented that its inhabitants were not Greeks, as did Titian and Paul Veronese among the Venetians, while not halting to change the brocaded silks for the classic draperies of Athens. No reformers were these great men—no improvers of the ways of others. Their productions alone were their occupation. They were filled with the poetry of their science, and they saw in the development of their work that real beauty which to them was as much a matter of certainty and triumph as is to the astronomer the verification of the result foreseen with the light given to him alone. But nowadays sentiment is mistaken for poetry, and no work of art is complete unless it be explained by some benefit which it may confer upon its spectators. Humanity thus takes the place of art, and God's creations are excused by their usefulness. Beauty is confounded with virtue. People look through a picture to find, if they can, some human fact which shall or shall not from a social point of view benefit their mental or moral state. Mr. Whistler dilated upon certain popular fallacies in regard to art and the supposed "rightness" of nature for artistic purposes. He gave a charming description of the uprising of the first artist and how his work was uninfluenced by outside opinion or demand. People used what the artist produced without questioning. Then he passed to the time when, after the artist's productions had been carried about and had become universal in usage, a class of ingenious people invented the cheap, and foresaw fortune in the facture of the sham. In this condition the artist's occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and huckster took his place, and the people had now much to say in the matter. A beautiful description of the effects of evening mist quite moved the audience, as did the climax of Mr. Whistler's arguments in regard to Nature. The artist was her son and her master—her son in that he loves her, her master in that he knows her. Then followed a picture of the production of the "Artist's Masterpiece," which surpasses in perfection all that has been contrived in nature. The gods stand by and marvel, and perceive how far away more beautiful is the Venus of Melos than was their own Eve. Of the unattached writer on art Mr. Whistler had much to say, describing him as the middleman in this matter of art. Another set of persons claiming to associate themselves with art he defined as sombre of mien and wise with wisdom of books, who frequent museums and burrow in crypts, collecting, comparing, compiling, classifying, contradicting—experts these for whom a date is an achievement, a hall mark, a triumph. Careful in scrutiny are they and conscientious of judgment, establishing with due weight unimportant reputations, discovering the picture by the stain on the back, testing the torso by the leg that is missing, filled with doubts on the way of that limb, disputatious and dictatorial concerning the birthplace of inferior persons, speculating in much writing upon the great worth of bad work. True clerks of the collections, they mix memoranda with ambition, and, reducing art to statistics, they file the fifteenth century and pigeon-hole the antique.

The audience keenly enjoyed the admirable badinage applied to the aesthete and those of mournful expression wearing untidy garments of dingy tones. In Mr. Whistler's peroration occurred some

this is Mr. Whistler from top to toe. His cynicism is not unnatural, for in spite of unbounded cleverness he still remains one of the great unaccepted; be whether cynical or flippant, he is extremely amusing, so let us be thankful for him, and entreat him to lecture again. "It may be that art is what Mr. Whistler represents it to be, that Nature will for the moment accept his patronage, that amateurs will be abashed at his strictures, that the fair sex will falter before his withering ridicule, that the writers on art will amend their style on the recommendation of one who has scarcely proved his power as a director of literary composition, and that the art-progress of the nation to which the lecturer has attached himself will totter at the tremendous influence of his 'Ten o'Clock.'" Yes, certainly; all this may be: but we fear that most people are of a contrary opinion. For, after all, art must have a moral basis, and the artist must shew a clear and intelligent purpose.

Mr. Whistler excelled himself last night. He asked people to come to a mysterious meeting which he called his ten o'clock. When he got them there in full evening dress after dinner, he gave them a lesson on art. It was the most amusingly amazing performance ever witnessed. With the most perfect sang froid Mr. Whistler managed to make out historically, philosophically, and socially that the only people who ought to enjoy art were artists, and that the only artist worthy of the name was a painter of fogs and rain who he indicated but did not name. His genial impudence charmed the audience. He was epigrammatic, paradoxical, eloquent, but he sustained his theme. He kept it up to the end. He was the real true artist, and, therefore, the only prophet of art. James McNeil Whistler is the real man of the age. He did not blush to prove it. He gloried rather in his his consciousness that he was alone as a genius in the world. He has been capped, however. Such glory cannot remain unchallenged. Mr. Oscar Wilde appears in the Pall-Mall to-night insisting that the painter is not the greatest art. Who is it that is the supreme artist then? Surely the poet. Poe and Bandelaire are instances as the really great ones of the earth; and as he wrote the lines Mr. Oscar Wilde looked up in his room, and, his eye lighting on a parchment and gold bound copy of certain immortal works, exclaimed, "I also, I am a poet." The Scotch painter is no match in impudence and self-glorification for the Irish poet. He should retire at once.

capital passages, such as, "Scant indeed the list of those who have helped to write the story of the love and beauty of Art. From the sunny morning when, with her glorious Greek relighting, she yielded up the secret of repeated line, as, with his hand in hers, together they marked in marble the measured rhyme of lovely limb and draperies flowing in unison, to the day when she dipped the Spaniard's brush in light and air and made his people live within their frames and stand upon their feet, ages had gone by, but few had been her choice—Countless indeed the horde of pretenders, but she knew them not." And again, "We have then but to wait until with the mark of the gods upon him there comes again the chosen who shall continue what has gone before, satisfied that even were he never to appear the story of the beautiful is ever complete, hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon and brodered with the birds on the fan of Hokusai at the foot of Fusi Yama."

The foregoing extracts will suffice to show that in Mr. Whistler's estimation artists—that is, the masters alone—are the fewest of the few, and that true art is not a matter in which the many can participate. The masterly treatment of his subject, inwrought with poetry, flashing satire, and daring wit, completely held the attention of the audience. The success of Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'Clock" was indeed unquestionable, not only as a rare entertainment, but as a most unexpected revelation of serious and scientific work from a man who previously has been popularly regarded as eccentric and incomprehensible.

MR. JAMES W. McNEILL WHISTLER, the eccentric painter whom Mr. Ruskin, with crushing and most uncomplimentary adjectives, described as flinging his pot of paint in the face of the British public, has been making fun for a crowded audience, "as fashionable, as literary, as amiable, and as artistic as London could muster," at the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. The whole thing appears to have partaken of the nature of a sell Mr. Whistler advertised a Ten o'Clock. People went in crowds expecting a novel artistic entertainment, and found that they had been inveigled into hearing a lecture on art. "From Mr. Whistler," says one humorously irate critic, "anything might have been expected—a burlesque, a breakdown, or a comic song. But surely his eccentricity would not carry him so far as to deliver with malice prepense a serious dissertation on art. Alas! it was only too true, and when the various factions, Philistine and philandering, had settled down to smile or scowl, as the spirit moved them, a jaunty, unabashed, composed, and self-satisfied gentleman, armed with an opera-hat and an eye-glass, plunged into the history of art in confidence and cold blood." The discourse appears to have been an eminently characteristic one. Mr. Whistler is not generally accepted either as a representative artist or as an exponent of any principles of art save those which a very small number of very gifted people are able to discover on Mr. Whistler's own canvas. Consequently, his auditors could scarcely have expected to be instructed. For entertainment, no doubt, they looked, and this, after a kind, they seem to have extracted from the lecture. Mr. Whistler snubbed and patronised Nature in alternate sentences. No true artist would think of attempting to transcribe Nature as she is, which would be like "sitting on the pianoforte in order to produce a tune." Nature sometimes is guilty of "a very foolish sunset"; hence nature must be "arranged" after the manner of Mr. Whistler. Poor Nature, however, "has her happy moments," when, for instance, the whole vast City of London seems to hang in the heavens, when grace is wedded with dignity or colour is expressed in the citron wing of the butterfly." But, on the whole, she is "very rarely right in an artistic sense," and not to be accepted as a generally trustworthy guide. Here and there, amid brilliant flippancies and light impertinences on art, artists, and art critics, we come upon such dainty passages as this: "In the beginning men went forth each day, some to do battle, some to the chase, others, again, to dig and delve in the field; all that they might gain and live, or lose and die; until there was found among them one differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd. And presently there came to this man another, and in time others of like nature, chosen by the gods, and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned from the moistened earth forms resembling the gourd, and with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of Nature, and the first vase was born in beautiful proportion." Not a great deal in it, perhaps, but charmingly expressed; only there are not many such bits in the lecture. The preacher upon art, "appointed impressive, important, shallow, defiant, distressed, desperate, crying out in vain, and cutting himself while the gods hear not," came in for some very hard knocks, but fared no worse than the "unattached writer, who has become the middleman in this matter of art," nor than the "manufacturer and huckster," who is allowed from time to time to usurp the true artist's place. Pretty nearly every description of modern criticism came in for its share of depreciation at the hands of the lecturer, who knocked everything down and set nothing up. But

World. 25/2/85.

A WHISTLER FOR THEIR SUPPER.

A fortune in Black and Blue.
 O JAMIE, O James, O Jacobus,
 O butterfly radiant and rare,
 Who summonest critics from low 'bus,
 Proud brougham, and cabriolet fair,
 Through the terrible ten-o'clock air
 To saloons that are draughty and lofty,
 Who, fluttering, summonest softy
 And sage to the lecturer's chair,
 Ah, riddle us why they were there;
 Say, was it a jest but to probe us,
 Or penance and Lenten despair?

What went they to see—postaster
 Prig, epicurean, and wit—
 A master that brooks not a master?
 At whose feet 'tis digestive to sit,
 One whose words like his colours will flit
 From high lights of a paradox sparkling
 To the depths of a mystery darkling;
 Did they look for a "palpable hit,"
 For a twitted one ready to twit,
 For a David who slings his disaster
 At the Philistine critic and cit?

Euge! James; it is well with surprises
 To baffle a paltering band,
 And to banish whate'er vulgarises
 The palette or taste from the land.
 Rumour cries that escape has been planned
 E'en from Tite Street—that nurse of the Muses;
 By a purist who gaily refuses
 To dwell where our Oscar, grown grand,
 May scan him and needs must be scanned
 To the detriment dire of sunrises
 Old-golden by Battersea's strand.

Notts Evening Post. 24/2/85

Many of the ladies at Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'Clock" were superbly dressed, and some, such as Mrs. Cornwallis West, wore splendid jewels. She and her husband were by no means in the first flight as regards their seats; near them, also comfortably out of hearing, were Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, Colonel Edis, and Sir Charles and Lady Mills. More favourably fixed were Lord Wharnccliffe, Mr. Poynter, R.A., Mr. J. E. Boehm, R.A., Mr. and Mrs. George Lewis, Lord Rowton, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Wilde, and Mr. Hollingshead. Sir Arthur Sullivan listened with composure to descriptions of symphonies and nocturnes which he wot not of. Dr. Morell Mackenzie's services were available had Mr. Whistler given thought to the matter, and so was the fraternal sympathy of Mr. George Grossmith. Lord Dunraven, Captain Weldon, Mr. and Mrs. Boughton, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Hart, Mr. Archibald Forbes, Mr. Henry Calcraft, Lady Randolph Churchill, Mr. Corney Grain, Mr. E. F. S. Pigott, Sir Julius Benedict, Mr. and Mrs. F. Jeune, Mr. Pellegrini ("Ape"), Mr. Leslie Ward ("Spy"), were only a few of the gay and giddy throng.

Leicester Daily Post 25/2/85

Mr. Oscar Wilde wrote a pungent and humorous article in the *Pall Mall* on Mr. Whistler's extraordinary "ten o'clock" lecture on art. It was an appreciative article, and concluded with an expression of Oscar's opinion that Mr. Whistler was a very great man, "an opinion in which, I may add, Mr. Whistler himself entirely concurs." Mr. Whistler thus thanks his friend: "Oscar,—I have read your exquisite article in the *Pall Mall*. Nothing is more delicate, in the flattery of 'the Poet' to 'the Painter,' than the naïveté of 'the Poet' in the choice of his painters—Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche! You have pointed out that the painter's mission is to find 'le beau dans l'horrible,' and have left to the poet the discovery of 'l'horrible' dans 'le beau!'" This is what Mr. Wilde says in response: "Dear Butterfly,—By the aid of a biographical dictionary, I made the discovery that there were once two painters, called Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche, who rashly lectured upon Art. As of their works nothing at all remains, I conclude that they explained themselves away. Be warned in time, James: and remain, as I do, incomprehensible. To be great is to be misunderstood.—*Tout à vous, OSCAR.*" Now, Whistler is good, but Oscar is undeniably better.

Mr. J. G. Rowland

West. Morning News. 25/2/85

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Notts Journal 25/2/85

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World. 25 / 12 / 85

OUR TEN-O'CLOCK TEACHER.

Mr. Whistler's latest enterprise has scored a great success. In a dyspeptic generation there is one point on which all are agreed, disciples and scoffers alike, and this is that it is not lawful to play pranks with digestion and to make dinner a movable feast for the sake of going forth to listen to the untimely voice of one crying in the wilderness. Hence it happens that lectures have come a byword, and their audiences proverbial. Famished rows of suburban starvelings usually greet the glance of the prophet who climbs the platform, prepared to mouth it and to maunder on for two, or even three, mortal hours. Such was not the congregation that welcomed our latest lecturer on Friday night. The familiar butterfly had gone round summoning all whom it might concern to an entertainment, or a ceremony, or a spectacle, the nature of which was said to be a profound secret. However, "ten o'clock" had a comfortable sound, and suggestive of dinner digested and not scampered through; so the appointed hour saw assembled in Piccadilly a most distinguished company, in which unknown and unfamiliar faces were in small proportion.

Those who came to scoff remained to listen meekly, and those who had expected feats of the acrobat or of prestidigitation were doomed to disappointment in the opening words which announced that Ecclesiastes was the part which Mr. Whistler had to play, and the degradation of art his text. "Art is upon the town," sighed the preacher, "to be chucked under the chin by every passing gallant;" and then he proceeded to "go for" the false prophets who have thus brought the very name of the beautiful into disrepute. Before long it is hoped that this sermon will have been again heard in the land, and subsequently perchance it will be also given to the world in the brown-paper covers which have in time past contained so much to drive critics to despair. Even then, when the homily is read in completeness, there will be wanting the inimitable manner in which each sentence was made, and every paragraph ended with an epigram, which of itself tickled from its unexpectedness.

There was one fault to be found with the lecture it was that it contained so many good things. When it is published in the brown-paper garment aforesaid, it might pass for one of those volumes of mince meat which disciples nowadays give to the world as specimens of the "wit, wisdom, and tenderuess" of their masters; or it might be sliced into three hundred and sixty-five sections, and labelled the James McNeill Whistler Birthday Book. Here is a passage that would befit the anniversary of the foundation of the Hellenic Society: "Art seeks and finds the beautiful in all conditions and in all times, as did her high-priest Rembrandt when he saw the picturesque grandeur in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were not Greeks." And here an apt quotation for the birthday of more than one professor of eclecticism: "So Greece was in its splendour, and Art reigned supreme, and there was no meddling from the outsider. The mighty warrior would no more have ventured to offer a design for the temple of Pallas Athene than would the sacred poet have proffered a plan for constructing the catapult." A column might be filled with these sprightly aphorisms, but two more quotations must suffice: "To say to the painter that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player that he may sit on the piano." And again: "The dignity of the snow-capped mountain is lost in distinctness, but the joy of the tourist is to recognise the traveller on the top."

The successor of Velasquez is nothing if not audacious, and the lecturer did not only direct his shafts beyond the limits of his audience, but showered them down even on some of those who for an hour sat at his feet. It was bold to tell the cultivated that the palmiest days of Greece were when "the amateur was unknown and the dilettante undreamed of;" it was refreshing to see the preacher glow as he let out at the moribund school of aestheticism. "Shall this gaunt, ill-at-ease, distressed, abashed mixture of *mauvaise honte* and desperate assertion call itself artistic?" With much adroitness he had anticipated that his feast would be graced by some of the fairest of their age, and so the audience was all with him and "the thick-heeled Apollos" nowhere when he proclaimed, "Know then, all beautiful women, that we are with you: pay no heed, we pray you, to the outcry of the unbecoming—this last plea for the plain."

Mr. Whistler's last venture must not be treated lightly as a gigantic joke, though his never-failing humour divests his deepest thrusts of all malice. The sage of the Universities did not go unspared—"filled with wrath and earnestness, torn with much teaching, having naught to impart;" yet it is rumored that before the year has grown very old his voice will

be heard in one of our ancient seminaries of sound learning, even where an altar is reared to the unknown goddess, "sub invocatione Slade;" and it is said that he will speak as one having authority at the instance of the high-priest himself. It is to some purpose that Mr. Whistler has discovered that a single hour suffices to set at naught the Scribes and the Pharisees.

Many of the ladies at Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock" were superbly dressed, and some, such as Mrs. Cornwallis West, wore splendid jewels. She and her husband were by no means in the first flight as regards their seats; near them, also comfortably out of hearing, were Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, Colonel Edis, and Sir Charles and Lady Mills. More favourably fixed were Lord Wharnclyffe, Mr. Poynter, R.A., Mr. J. E. Boehm, R.A., Mr. and Mrs. George Lewis, Lord Rowton, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Wilde, and Mr. Hollingshead. Sir Arthur Sullivan listened with composure to descriptions of symphonies and nocturnes which he wot not of. Dr. Morell Mackenzie's services were available had Mr. Whistler given thought to the matter, and so was the fraternal sympathy of Mr. George Grossmith. Lord Dunraven, Captain Weldon, Mr. and Mrs. Boughton, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Hart, Mr. Archibald Forbes, Mr. Henry Calcraft, Lady Randolph Churchill, Mr. Corney Grain, Mr. E. F. S. Pigott, Sir Julius Benedict, Mr. and Mrs. F. Jeune, Mr. Pellegrini ("Ape"), Mr. Leslie Ward ("Spy"), were only a few of the gay and giddy throng.

Whitehall Review 26/12/85

Mr. Whistler's "ten o'clock tea" was a great success on Friday night. All that was pretty, witty, artistic, æsthetic (if we have any æstheticism still lingering among us), dramatic, and poetic, turned up to listen to the utterances of the master, as the disciples of Mr. Whistler's apostleship love to call their leader. It was, perhaps, a little unfortunate that Mr. Whistler could not have given his lecture a couple of days earlier, before the Parliamentary session began. By not doing so he deprived his picturesque audience of that admixture of the political element without which no London assemblage can very well be considered to be complete. The gay and lively crowd which assembled at Mr. Whistler's call on Friday night would have been rendered more representative and more characteristic by the admixture of a Cabinet Minister or two, some leaders of Opposition, the leaders of the Fourth Party, a handful of Radicals, a cross-bencher, and even a selection of the terrible Third Party. This, however, was impossible. But we must say that neither Mr. Whistler nor his audience appeared in the slightest degree to miss from their midst either Mr. Gladstone, Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir Henry Wolff, or Mr. Parnell. There were—which was far better—a great many pretty women in pretty dresses, no one of which, we feel sure, either Mr. Whistler or any of the males of his audience would have exchanged for all Downing Street, and the whole body of Privy Councillors to boot. There were, it is true, one or two reasons for wondering that the Prime Minister did not honour Mr. Whistler's "ten o'clock tea" with his presence. In the first place, the Prime Minister, as we all know, is an art student—in a certain sense, an art critic—a bad art critic, no doubt, but a better art critic than a statesman. There was, further, a magnificent opportunity for the Prime Minister, by appearing in public on the night of the announcement of the death of General Stewart, of repeating his performance of the previous week at "The Candidate," on the night when the news of the death of General Gordon arrived. This is one more of the many opportunities which our Prime Minister has lost.

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Croydon Times 25/2/85

"Jimmy Whistler," as his familiar call him, made his promised appearance in Prince's Hall at the something which was only known as "Ten o'clock." The something turned out to be a lecture, and the lecture turned out to be precisely what Mr. Whistler's painting is—a singular compound of sense and nonsense. The hall was about three parts full, and the audience seemed to be as divided in opinion of the lecture as people are about the lecturer's pictures. Half of them swore it was the brilliancy of genius; half of them declared it was the audacity of bosh. Both parties had reason for their very contrary verdicts. A good deal that Mr. Whistler said was true enough; a good deal was rank nonsense. I can understand Oscar Wilde being disappointed at the Atlantic; but Whistler rebuking Nature for being so slovenly in her business, especially in the matter of sunsets, is a trifle ahead of my poor comprehension. Still the audience laughed heartily, and certainly had an hour's entertainment. Mr. Whistler poses as an eccentricity. This is always a very paying game. It has paid him as a painter, and I make no question it will pay him as a lecturer, in which he abuses Nature, whips the critics, and genially runs amuck at ideas and things. And if on canvas and at his "Ten o'clock" he is eccentric, so in both he is clever. The inevitable result is that some sit at his feet with all the fervour of discipleship, while others dub him a charlatan.

Mouth 26/2/85

Mr. Whistler is certainly a universal favourite. Last Friday the Prince's Hall was crowded with literature and fashion. There were lords and ladies, beauties and their attendant "beasts," painters and poets, all who know about art, and all who thought that they did. "What is Jimmy going to say?" "Is it a joke?" "Is he going to laugh at us?" "Is he going to abuse us?" were the remarks made on all sides. At last "Jimmy" appeared on the stage. He stood for a few moments contemplating the audience and taking stock of it. Then he began. At first he was almost inaudible, but as he warmed to his work his voice became louder, and he was distinctly heard, even by those on the back benches. There was none of the mincing affectation of the lecturers who prate of an art they know nothing about. His sentences were clear-cut, and his words well chosen. He managed at once to interest and to amuse. He was quaint, curious, and Whistlerish. If I might venture to criticise, I should say that he failed in his gestures, for his right arm worked up and down like a pump-handle: he ought, too, to learn not to drop his voice at the end of his sentences. With practice, also, he will understand that audiences never applaud where the speaker expects them to. Every now and then he paused when he thought that he had made a point, whilst, at other times, he hurried on when his audience wished him to stop in order that they might applaud. I need not refer to what he said, for it has appeared already in the daily papers. His lecture, however, was a genuine success, and all seemed delighted with "Jimmy."

Orange Blossoms 26/2/85

Mr. Whistler's 'Ten o'clock' attracted, as, of course, everybody knew it would, most of the beauty and the talent that one is accustomed to see on 'first nights' at the most fashionable theatres. The worst feature of the business was that more than half the audience could not hear what the lecturer was talking about, and probably more than half of the half that did hear didn't understand. Amongst the gay assemblage which now listened, or pretended to, with rapt attention, and now kept up a buzz of presumably brilliant small talk, were to be seen Lord Whamcliffe, Mrs. Cornwallis West (covered with jewellery), Mr. Alfred de Rothschild, Sir Charles and Lady Mills, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Wilde, Lord Rowton, Lady Randolph Churchill, Mr. Poynter, R.A., Lord Dunraven, Dr. and Mrs. Morell Muckenzie, Mr. Archibald Forbes, Corney Grain and Grossmith, 'Ape' and 'Spy,' Sir Arthur Sullivan, and many others too numerous to mention. Mr. Whistler was very eloquent and sweeping in his assertions. Oscar Wilde declares that he looked like 'a miniature Mephistopheles mocking the majority,' an alliterative sentence which must have given the apostle of sweetness and light many an anxious hour to elaborate.

Some of the papers seem to have gone out of the way to take 'our only James' *au sérieux*. Personally, I believe, the whole affair was a 'try on' on the part of the accomplished artist, to see how far the public, who have swallowed his nocturnes and harmonies, would swallow the flowers of his oratory. If some of his epigrams last Friday night may be taken as a fair sample of his conversational powers, we must put him down as a brilliant speaker, as well as a clever draughtsman, only recollecting that in both capacities he likes to play the fool with a too easily gulled public. Perhaps, after all, the greatest humbugs are those who are taken in, and yet pretend to be widest awake of any.

Taken from a critically analytical point of view, Mr. Whistler's teaching amounts to this: (1) Common people must not admire beautiful things—it is impertinent; besides, they don't know what is beautiful. (2) The main thing to be cultivated is ugliness; the future of Art depends entirely upon the stupidity of the public. (3) Nature is usually wrong; for instance, she is frequently guilty of 'a very foolish sunset.' (4) Critics, in common with amateurs and *dilettantes*, should be—consigned to oblivion; hanging is too good for them. (5) There is but one true school of Art, and Velasquez and Mr. Whistler are its prophets. (6) It is really high time for Mr. Ruskin to take a back seat.

In Mr. Whistler's lecture occurs one of those delightful sentences which may have many meanings or none. Here it is: 'The dignity of the snow-capped mountain is lost in distinctness, but the joy of the tourist is to recognise the travellers on the top.' This is the sort of sentence that gives me joy unspeakable. It has a smack of Tupper, and also of the Proverbs of Solomon, but its dignified haziness is wholly Whistlerian. After much cogitation I have decided on two possible meanings. First, a wild washing-day of grays and yellows is the only true art, and ordinary people who want some 'story' in a picture are Goths, Vandals, and Philistines. Secondly, a picture must have some human interest, or nobody will care about it. These two inter-

pretations certainly cancel and contradict each other, but then that is the charm of such mystic utterances. It will be observed that everything turns on whether the word 'tourist' is or is not a term of reproach. Judging from Mr. Whistler's usual way of looking at his species, I venture to guess that my first rendering is the right one.

Art. World 26/2/85

Times 27/2/85

Building News 27/2/85

MR. WHISTLER is going to put his twenty-two o'clock into print. We fancy the little essay will be more entertaining in brown paper than when it was listened to in the Prince's Hall on Friday night. Of course "everybody" was there, and everybody that was not deaf was in raptures. It was a telling tin-trumpeting of history, criticism, and science—a sort of old curiosity shop of ideas. A good deal of electro-plate, bunkum, and bombast. Nevertheless, many ideas told, and Mr. Whistler is to be congratulated, if not as a success, at least as being very far removed from failure. Some of the pretty things Mr. Whistler said are worth noting:—The world, Mr. Whistler implied, endowed with "efficient effrontery," no longer worships at the shrine of art, but "chucks the dainty goddess under the chin," with a familiarity indicating "the lowest stage of intimacy." There never was a period of art is the lecturer's impression. But the Greeks were happy "in their palaces," and artistic among "their pots and pans." Mr. Whistler's idea is that "Nature is never correct. To say to a painter that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player that he may sit on the piano." Another Whistler note in the same key was that the dignity of the snow-capped mountain is lost in distinctness, but the joy of the tourist is to recognise the travellers on the top. "The university sage," Mr. Whistler informed his hearers, "is learned in all save his subject." At this moment the lecturer has discovered that the world is suffering from an "incubus of art," overflowing with "an unspoken sympathy, which is vulgarity." Everywhere in Mr. Whistler's paradise he is driven to say, "The dilettante stalks" and "the amateur is loosed." "Art always rare," Mr. Whistler told his hearers, "has no correlation with national growth, but seeks the artist alone at Nankin or at Madrid, by turn inspires the potter or dips the Spaniard brush in light and air, and shrinks from being vulgarised for the delectation of the bagman and the critic." After hearing the peroration, we would see dear old Horace Smith, "a lecturer's fame is more easily caught than kept. If you do nothing you are forgotten, and if you lecture and fail, your former successes are thrown in your teeth. He who has a reputation to maintain has a wild beast in his house which he must constantly feed, or it will feed on him."

Evening News 27/2/85

Mr. Whistler's lecture is to be printed and published—whether for "gratis circulation" or otherwise I have not yet heard.

MR. WHISTLER'S "TEN O'CLOCK."

The carefully and well-kept secret of Mr. Whistler's purpose in asking the public to meet him last night at the hour of 10 o'clock in the Prince's-hall, Piccadilly, was revealed in the first sentence which he addressed to the fashionable audience who had assembled in the expectation that the eccentric genius of the artist would find them amusement for an hour. Their faith was not misplaced.

MR. WHISTLER intimated to his audience that the subject of his address was "Art." This had of late, he said, become, as far as much discussion and writing can make it, a sort of common topic for the tea-table. Under many disguises an affectation of art has been adopted into modern social affairs and regarded as a phase of art. Art has naught in common with such practices. She is a goddess of dainty thought, reticent of habit, abjuring all obtrusiveness, proposing in no way to better others. She is, withal, selfishly occupied with her own perfection only, having no desire to teach; seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times; as did her high priest Rembrandt when he saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were not Greeks; as did Tintoret and Paul Veronese among the Venetians, while not halting to change the broad silk for the classic draperies of Athens; as did, at the Court of Philip, Velasquez, whose Infantas, clad in inæsthetic hoops, are as works of art of the same quality as the Elgin marbles. No reformers were these great men, no improvers of the ways of others. Their work was completely severed from that of their fellow creatures, with whom sentiment is mistaken for poetry, and for whom there is no perfect work that shall not be explained by the benefit conferred upon themselves. Humanity takes the place of art. Beauty is confounded with virtue, and before a work of art it is asked—what good shall it do? Dealing with varieties of notions resulting from such estimation of art, Mr. Whistler announced that there never was an artistic period, there never was an art-loving people. To this assertion succeeded a fascinating view of the uprising of the first artist, in passages such as the following:—"In the beginning men went forth each day, some to do battle, some to the chase, others, again, to dig and delve in the field; all that they might gain and live, or lose and die; until there was found among them one differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd. And presently there came to this man another, and in time others of like nature, chosen by the gods, and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned from the moistened earth forms resembling the gourd, and with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of nature, and the first vase was born in beautiful proportion. Then came the designing and making of houses and couches and tables, and the people lived in marvels of art, and ate and drank out of masterpieces, because there was nothing else to eat and to drink out of. Centuries passed, until a class arose who discovered the cheap, and foresaw fortune in the failure of the sham. Then sprang into existence the tawdry, the common, the gewgaw. The taste of the tradesman supplanted the science of the artist. The artist's occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and huckster took his place. The people this time had much to say in the matter. Passing to a different topic, Mr. Whistler dwelt upon the assertion that "Nature is always right," and propounded its fallaciousness from the artistic point of view. In this connexion he gave a sort of word-painting of his nocturnes and symphonies, to the effect that when Nature has for once sung in tune, she sings her exquisite song to the artist alone; to him are her secrets unfolded, and, scientifically understood by him, is she ever his resource and always at his service. In antithesis to this, Mr. Whistler sketched the attitude of what he called the "unattached writer," who has become the middleman in this matter of art. Another set of persons claiming to associate themselves with art he defined as sombre of mien, and wise with the wisdom of books, who frequent museums and burrow in crypts, collecting, comparing, compiling, classifying, contradicting, and discovering the picture by the stain on the back. Then there was the preacher upon art—appointed, impressive, important, shallow, defiant, distressed, desperate, crying out in vain, and cutting himself while the gods hear not. Notwithstanding this machinery for the supposed service of art, with the man and not with the multitude are her intimacies; and in the book of her life the names inscribed are few—scant indeed the list of those who have helped to write her story of love and beauty. Mr. Whistler treated with banter the cant of despair as to the condition of art at present as compared with its state in the past, deducing that all is as well as it ever was, and finally arguing that we have then but to wait until, with the mark of the gods upon him, there comes among us again the chosen who

shall continue what has gone before, satisfied that, even were he never to appear, the story of the beautiful is already complete, hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon and brodered with the birds upon the fan of Hokusai, at the foot of Fusi-hama.

MR. WHISTLER ON ART

UNDER the whimsical title of "Ten O'Clock," Mr. James Whistler convened a meeting at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, on Friday night, when he announced that he proposed to address his audience on the subject of "Art." This had of late, he said, become a common topic for the tea-table. Under many disguises an affectation of art had been adopted into modern social affairs, and regarded as a phase of art. Art had naught in common with such practices. She was a goddess of dainty thought, reticent of habit, abjuring all obtrusiveness, proposing in no way to better others. She was, withal, selfishly occupied with her own perfection only, having no desire to teach; seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times; as did her high priest Rembrandt when he saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were not Greeks; as did Tintoret and Paul Veronese among the Venetians, while not halting to change the broad silk for the classic draperies of Athens; as did, at the Court of Philip, Velasquez, whose Infantas, clad in inæsthetic hoops, are as works of art of the same quality as the Elgin marbles. No reformers were these great men, no improvers of the way of others. Their work was completely severed from that of their fellow creatures, with whom sentiment was mistaken for poetry, and for whom there was no perfect work that should not be explained by the benefit conferred upon themselves. Humanity takes the place of art. Beauty was confounded with virtue, and before a work of art it was asked—what good would it do? Dealing with varieties of notions resulting from such estimation of art, Mr. Whistler announced that there never was an artistic period, there never was an art-loving people. In the beginning, he added, men went forth each day, some to do battle, some to the chase, others, again, to dig and delve in the field; all that they might gain and live, or lose and die; until there was found among them one differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd. And presently there came to this man another, and in time others of like nature, chosen by the gods, and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned from the moistened earth forms resembling the gourd, and with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of nature, and the first vase was born in beautiful proportion. Then came the designing and making of houses and couches and tables, and the people lived in marvels of art, and ate and drank out of masterpieces, because there was nothing else to eat and to drink out of. Centuries passed, until a class arose who discovered the cheap, and foresaw fortune in the failure of the sham. Then sprang into existence the tawdry, the common, the gewgaw. The taste of the tradesman supplanted the science of the artist. The artist's occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and huckster took his place. The people this time had much to say in the matter. Passing to a different topic, Mr. Whistler dwelt upon the assertion that "Nature is always right," and propounded its fallaciousness from the artistic point of view. In this connection he gave a sort of word-painting of his nocturnes and symphonies, to the effect that when Nature has for once sung in tune, she sings her exquisite song to the artist alone; to him are her secrets unfolded, and, scientifically understood by him, is she ever his resource and always at his service. In antithesis to this, Mr. Whistler sketched the attitude of what he called the "unattached writer," who has become the middleman in this matter of art. Another set of persons claiming to associate themselves with art he defined as sombre of mien, and wise with the wisdom of books, who frequent museums and burrow in crypts, collecting, comparing, compiling, classifying, contradicting, and discovering the picture by the stain on the back. Then there was the preacher upon art—appointed, impressive, important, shallow, defiant, distressed, desperate, crying out in vain, and cutting himself while the gods hear not. Notwithstanding this machinery for the supposed service of art, with the man and not with the multitude are her intimacies; and in the book of her life the names inscribed are few—scant indeed the list of those who have helped to write her story of love and beauty. Mr. Whistler treated with banter the cant of despair as to the condition of art at present as compared with its state in the past, deducing that all is as well as it ever was, and finally arguing that we have then but to wait until, with the mark of the gods upon him, there comes among us again the chosen who

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Leicester Chron. 28/2/85

Many accounts have been printed of Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock," and all as far as I have seen have successfully hidden the fact that it was a failure; that is to say it was a failure from the point of view of the audience. For Mr. Whistler it was a great success, since every seat was occupied, and every seat, with out a single exception it is said, represented half a guinea. The fact of the matter is that beyond the first four rows of benches the lecturer was absolutely inaudible. In private conversation he has not the clearest form of enunciation. When it came to reading manuscript the position of people anywhere near the back of the room was hopeless. But there has not been loud complaint. The room was pleasantly lighted, "everybody" was there, and nearly everybody knew everybody else. It was rather the thing to go, and those who did not catch the string of smart impertinences and strained efforts at epigram which made up the performance were content to know that they did not miss much. Whistler is undoubtedly a witty man. One or two of his sayings really and honestly flashed forth in conversation have from time to time been recorded with due appreciation in this column. But the effort to provide witty sayings that would last over an hour was too much for him, and he gave instead of the true metal handful of showy glittering coins which had not the true ring about them. However, everyone was pleased, "James" with his half guineas, and the audience with themselves and each other.

Citizen 28/2/85

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Sur theatrical Programme 28/2/85

Mad - Surrey Times

Sheffield Indep 28/2/85

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SOME of the papers seem to have gone out of the way to take our James *au sérieux*. Personally, I believe, the whole was a "try on" on the part of the accomplished artist, to see how far the public, who have swallowed his nocturnes and harmonies, would swallow the flowers of his oratory. After some of his epigrams last Friday night we must put him down as a brilliant speaker, as well as a clever draughtsman, only recollecting that in both capacities he likes to play the fool with a too easily gulled public. Taken from a critically analytical point of view (how like you that phrase, James?) his teaching amounts to this: (1) Common people must not admire beautiful things—it is impertinent; besides, they don't know what is beautiful. (2) The main thing to be cultivated is ugliness; the future of art depends entirely upon the stupidity of the public. (3) Nature is usually wrong; for instance, she is frequently guilty of "a very foolish sunset." (4) Critics, in common with amateurs and *dilettantes*, should be—consigned to oblivion; hanging is too good for them. (5) There is but one true school of Art, and Velasquez and Mr. Whistler are its masters. It is really high time for Mr. Ruskin to take a back seat.

Westminster & Chelsea News 28/2/85

Mr. Oscar Wilde wrote a pungent and humorous article in the *Pall Mall* on Mr. Whistler's extraordinary "ten o'clock" lecture on art. It was an appreciative article, and concluded with an expression of Oscar's opinion that Mr. Whistler was a very great man, "an opinion in which, I may add, Mr. Whistler himself entirely concurs." Mr. Whistler thus thanks his friend: "Oscar, —I have read your exquisite article in the *Pall Mall*. Nothing is more delicate, in the flattery of 'the Poet' to 'the Painter,' than the *naveté* of 'the Poet' in the choice of his painters—Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche! You have pointed out that the painter's mission is to find 'le beau dans l'horrible,' and have left to the poet the discovery of 'l'horrible' dans 'le beau!' " This is what Mr. Wilde says in response: "Dear Butterfly, —By the aid of a biographical dictionary, I made the discovery that there were once two painters, called Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche, who rashly lectured upon Art. As of their works nothing at all remains, I conclude that they explained themselves away. Be warned in time, James: and remain, as I do, incomprehensible. To be great is to be misunderstood. —*Tout à vous, OSCAR.*" Now, Whistler is good, but Oscar is undeniably better.

teurs will be abashed at his strictures, that the fair sex will falter before his withering ridicule, that the writers on art will amend their style on the recommendation of one who has scarcely proved his power as a director of literary composition, and that the art-progress of the nation to which the lecturer has attached himself will totter at the tremendous influence of his "Ten o'clock." Yes, certainly; all this may be; but we fear that most people are of a contrary opinion. For, after all, art must have a moral basis, and the artist must show a clear and intelligent purpose.

MR. JAMES W. McNEILL WHISTLER, the eccentric painter whom Mr. Ruskin, with crushing and most complimentary adjectives, described as flinging his pot of paint in the face of the British public, has been making fun for a crowded audience, "as fashionable, as literary, as amiable, and as artistic as London could muster," at the Princes Hall, Piccadilly. The whole thing appears to have partaken of the nature of a sell. Mr. Whistler advertised a "Ten o'clock." People went in crowds expecting a novel artistic entertainment, and found that they had been inveigled into hearing a lecture on art. "From Mr. Whistler," says one humorously, "any critic, 'anything might have been expected—a burlesque, a breakdown, or a comic song. But surely his eccentricity would not carry him so far as to deliver with malice prepense a serious dissertation on art. Alas! it was only too true, and when the various factions, Philistine and philandering, had settled down to smile or scowl, as the spirit moved them, a jaunty, unabashed, composed, and self-satisfied gentleman, armed with an opera-hat and an eye-glass, plunged into the history of art in confidence and cold blood." The discourse appears to have been an eminently characteristic one. Mr. Whistler is not generally accepted either as a representative artist or as an exponent of any principles of art save those which a very small number of very

gifted people are able to discover on Mr. Whistler's own canvas. Consequently, his auditors could scarcely have expected to be instructed. For entertainment, no doubt, they looked, and this, after a kind, they seem to have extracted from the lecture. Mr. Whistler snubbed and patronised Nature in alternate sentences. No true artist would think of attempting to transcribe Nature as she is, which would be like "sitting on the pianoforte in order to produce a tune." Nature sometimes is guilty of "a very foolish sunset"; hence nature must be "arranged" after the manner of Mr. Whistler. Poor Nature, however, "has her happy moments, when, for instance, the whole vast City of London seems to hang in the heavens, when grace is wedded with dignity or colour is expressed in the citron wing of the butterfly." But, on the whole, she is "very rarely right in an artistic sense," and not to be accepted as a generally trustworthy guide. Here and there, amid brilliant flippancies and light inaptitudes on art, artists, and art critics, we come upon such dainty passages as this: "In the beginning men went forth each day, some to do battle, some to the chase, others, again, to dig and delve in the field; all that they might gain and live, or lose and die; until there was found among them one differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd. And presently there came to this man another, and in time others of like nature, chosen by the gods, and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned from the moistened earth forms resembling the gourd, and with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of Nature, and the first vase was born in beautiful proportion." Not a great deal in it, perhaps, but charmingly expressed; only there are not many such bits in the lecture. The preacher upon art, "appointed impressive, important, shallow, defiant, distressed, desperate, crying out in vain, and cutting himself while the gods hear not," came in for some very hard knocks, but fared no worse than the "unattached writer, who has become the middleman in this matter of art," nor than the "manufacturer and huckster," who is allowed from time to time to usurp the true artist's place. Pretty nearly every description of modern criticism came in for its share of depreciation at the hands of the lecturer, who "knocked everything down and set nothing up." But this is Mr. Whistler from top to toe. His cynicism is not unnatural, for in spite of unbounded cleverness he still remains one of the great unaccepted; but whether cynical or flippant, he is extremely amusing, so let us be thankful for him, and entreat him to lecture again. "It may be that art is what Mr. Whistler represents it to be, that Nature will for the moment accept his patronage, that ama-

Many accounts have been printed of Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock," and all, as far as I have seen, have successfully hidden the fact that it was a failure, that is to say, it was a failure from the point of view of the audience. For Mr. Whistler it was a great success, since every seat was occupied, and every seat, without a single exception it is said, represented half a guinea. The fact of the matter is that beyond the first four rows of benches the lecturer was absolutely inaudible. In private conversation he has not the clearest form of enunciation. When it came to reading manuscript the position of people anywhere near the back of the room was hopeless. But there has not been loud complaint. The room was pleasantly lighted, "everybody" was there, and nearly everybody knew everybody else. It was rather the thing to go, and those who did not catch the string of smart impertinences and strained efforts at epigram which made up the performance, were content to know that they did not miss much. Whistler is undoubtedly a witty man. One or two of his sayings, really and honestly flashed forth in conversation, have from time to time been recorded with due appreciation in this column. But the effort to provide witty sayings that would last over an hour was too much for him, and he gave, instead of the true metal, handfuls of showy, glittering coins, which had not the true ring about them. However, every one was pleased, "James" with his half guineas, and the audience with themselves and each other.

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Theatrical Programme 28/2/85

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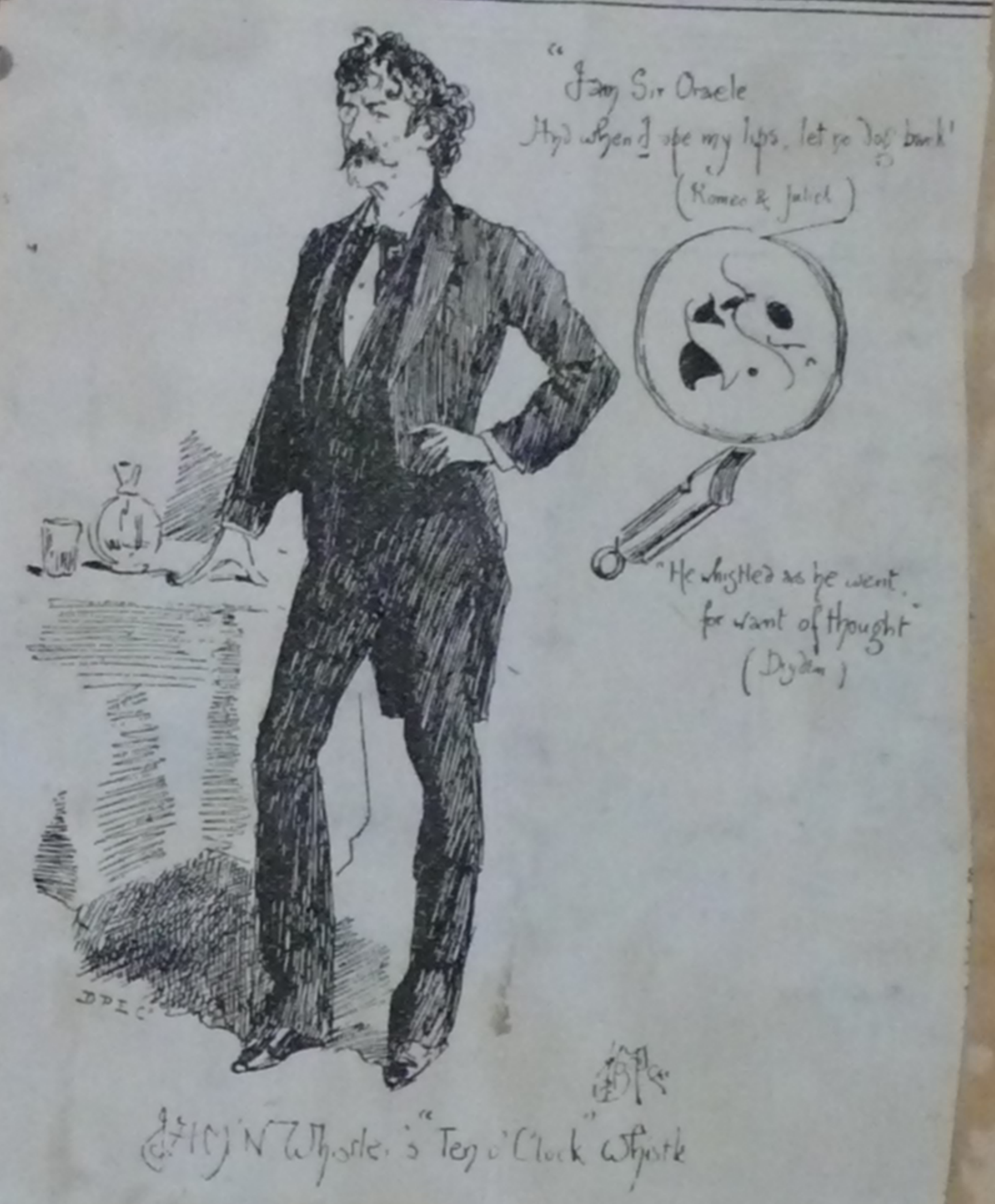
Punch. 28/2/85

MR. WHISTLER'S TEN-AND-SIXPENNY O'CLOCK.
OUR JEMMY'S Ten o'Clock promises to go like one o'clock. The style of his One Hour's Sermon is something between a *Touchstone* and an inspired Prophet, or, at all events, of a well-versed Scripture-Reader. He is never for one moment a "Dismal JEMMY." He certainly "scored" at the Prince's Hall, and, as Mr. WHISTLER hates being indebted to anyone, he paid off several old scores at the same time. A certain proportion of the crowded audience had evidently come in the expectation of seeing the MCNEIL stand upon his head, but they were disappointed; the historic white lock remained uppermost, and JAMES, firmly planted on his feet, delivered many well-aimed thrusts with the keen rapier of epigrammatic satire. The Lecturer had his MCNEIL fling,—a well-executed *pas seul*,—at the Amateur and the Critics, and finally came down heavily, that is, by comparison, on the *Aesthetes*, who, we should have thought, were, by this time, hardly worth the trouble of setting on their feeble legs merely for the fun of knocking them down again. In this Lecturing Mr. JAMES WHISTLER is "Real JAMES" and not The Pretender. His theories on Art and Nature may be debateable, but his power of epigram is undoubted.

Contracte 15. 2. 85

The "Whistler Ten O'Clock" was not, I think, an absolute boom. The device was invested with that quality which asserts itself in James's pictures, and which in English is called impudence. To be convinced that the scheme brought its designer a few guineas would bring relief to me, for I am under the impression that this was its primary object. Times have not been very grand with Mr. Whistler lately, I fancy; and although people have the same honest determination to pay for their whistle that they have always had, they have not paid for Whistlers to any great extent. Nocturnes and harmonies have been a drug in the market. * * *

LADY'S PICTORIAL.



A GREAT many fair women and distinguished men flocked to Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, last Friday night, eager for the new sensation promised them at Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'clock." Was the eccentric artist going to sketch, to pose, to sing, or to rhapsodise? No one knew, and everyone was on the tiptoe of expectation. What he did do when the doors were opened and the audience seated, was to talk, and that very glibly, though for the most part inaudibly, for at least an hour. The policy he preached was *nil admirare*, the cult he held up to reverence was that of ugliness, and the gift on which he congratulated the world was permanent stupidity. No one, however, seemed to be offended or even surprised; perhaps no one took the lecture very much in earnest. To Mr. Whistler all things are permitted, and no one would any more think of laying his strictures to heart than of breaking a butterfly on a wheel. The tickets were fairly high-priced, and those who so eagerly bought them had at least the satisfaction of knowing that they had paid for their whistle."

Modern Society 28. 2. 85

By a happy chance I was prevented from becoming a victim, last week, to Mr. Whistler's ingenuity. But others, less fortunate, who cheerfully paid their half guineas in the belief that the mysteriously advertised "Ten o'Clock" was to reveal some new triumph in eccentricity, travelled to Prince's Hall only to be treated to nothing more *bizarre* or *outré* than a general dissertation on art from the lips of the white-tufted artist. They had expected a surprise, but certainly not one of this sort; and licensed jester Mr. Whistler may be, it will be a very long time I fancy, before people will have sufficiently forgotten this delicious little "sell" to be beguiled into parting with their gold pieces to him, or anyone else without knowing before and what they are to get in return for them. Everybody likes his money's worth, and is not prepared to accept artistic platitudes when he has paid for eccentricity.

Punch. 28. 2. 85.

THE BUTLERS OF GREAT MEN.

(Interviewed by Our Own Back-staff Representative.)

No IV.—AT MR. JAMES McNEIL WHISTLER'S.

"WELL, I never did—who would have thought to see you? Well I am surprised," were the words that greeted me as I arrived at the Chelsea residence of Mr. WHISTLER (kitchen entrance, of course).

"Wait a bit," continued he, "the Boss is out, as usual, so I'll let you in the front door." In half a minute more I was standing in the peculiarly coloured and particularly bare hall of the great Artist. Having somewhat recovered my surprise at seeing TOM STROPPING, whom I used formerly to know as a hairdresser's assistant in the Old Kent Road, I said, "What are you doing here?" TOM replied, "I'm Mr. WHISTLER'S Butler."

"I could have fallen with astonishment into the hall seat, if there had been such an article of furniture present, but there wasn't." "Then you have given up cutting, shaving, and barbering generally?" I asked.

"Oh, no, I have given it up publicly—not privately. I'm Mr. WHISTLER'S Barber as well as his Butler. It's no *sinecure* appointment either. You would not believe it possible the trouble I have to prevent his white look getting black and his black hair getting white."

"Oh! I quite believe you," I said sympathetically, and then asked, "Is the Butler's work hard?" "Oh, dear no," was the answer, "that's the easiest part of the lot. You see—he never has any company. He drinks very little wine. He laid down a bottle of Gilbey the week before last, and it has not been opened yet. He has most of his meals out. He is a great favourite in Society, and is seldom here."

"But how is it he is not at work on such a beautiful bright sun-shiny day as this? One would think an Artist would give a few years of his life for a day like this to paint by." To my inquiry TOM burst into a loud fit of laughter. As soon as he could check himself, he said, "Bless you, he don't want bright lights, or north lights to get his peculiar effects?"

"Then what lights does he want?" "Rush-lights," was the response. "He don't want 'em still, either. Many a time I have had to stand waggling to and fro a rush-light with a long wick in order to get movements of shadow on the wall. There's no doubt he do get some very jumpy results too." I mused a while, as is my wont, and said to TOM STROPPING, "I'm sorry I never saw his greatest works."

TOM said, "My boy, better late than never." I did not comprehend the application of the remark at all, and was ruminating whether I should say anything or not, when Mr. WHISTLER'S Hairdresser and Butler said, "Come and see them."

I was "flabbergasted," as a vulgar person would say. TOM said—"Don't be surprised. WHISTLER'S greatest works have never left his studio, and are not likely to do so." I was then escorted to the Studio—a charming place, elaborately decorated with one peacock feather fan, and two LIBERTY'S Japanese plates. I saw several of the great Artist's most celebrated works have not been educated up to them."

"Ah!" the Butler replied, "many people observe that. There is a mystery about them—and I will solve the mystery to you. But come and see the kitchen first." We proceeded to the kitchen, which was elaborately decorated in the same way as the studio, namely, one more fan (cheaper, of course, than the other) and two plates (ordinary) on the kitchen-dresser. There was also a pair of "white ducks" over the back of a chair in front of the fire. I was told that they were being aired, as the "Boss" meditated wearing them a little earlier this Spring than usual. It was getting rather late in the afternoon, and a continuation of double-knocks kept shaking up the front-door. I heard the distant voice of the Butler, after he left me, saying, "Not at home" to the Dukes, Duchesses, Bishops, and Tax-Collectors, &c., who were paying fashionable calls. I thought it time to leave, so made my way to the area-steps.

"Tom," I said, "tell me the mystery about these pictures." "Certainly, my boy," he replied, "besides being Mr. WHISTLER'S Butler and Hairdresser, I'm his Model for everything. I sat for the 'Portrait of a Lady.' I have sat for no end of Trunks of Trees and 'Harmony in Green' (a Manchester purchase); I sat for the Crystal Palace Fireworks ('Fog in Smoke'); and, lastly, but not leastly, I always sit for that butterfly-bottle signature in the corner of all his pictures."

I asked one more question—"Does he make much by these pictures?" "No," replied TOM. "He relies entire upon the sale of his very smart and clever Catalogues. He looks forward to a success from his 'Ten o'Clocks'; and if they don't answer, he is going to try (so he tells me) a 'Twenty-two o'Clock.'"

Higaro. 28. 2. 85.

SOME of Mr. Whistler's friends avowedly anticipated that his "Ten o'Clock" would prove to be nothing more than a Whistlerian joke.

Sporting Times. 28. 2. 85.

ARTHUR ROBERTS' QUARTER-PAST NINE O'CLOCK.

EVERY week now it is the fashion for the foremost teachers of the age to gather at their feet their favourite disciples and to impart to them words of light and wisdom. Last Friday James Whistler assembled hundreds of lunatics in the Prince's Hall; the following Thursday all that are good and pure and anxious for a higher and a better life fell down and worshipped the god of their idolatry, their well-known Arthur Roberts; and next week Professor Wingfield's Performing Dogs take a benefit at Harwood's Palace of Varieties. These are, indeed, symptoms of a sound and healthy taste in an age otherwise characterized by shams and hollowness.

THE Prince of Wales and the Grumbler, peers and poets, pigs and pedants have all gone to see what the Kauffdrop calls *Lucresia and Lucresia*, on which lady she wastes no compassion, at the Princess's, which leaves the Comedy open to all the toney playgoers. When in the front row there beams on her beloved Arthur, our only Angelica; when, seated near her, are the Wicked Nobleman and Black-Eyed Susan; when J. E., who is learning Roberts' songs in order to indict them on his suffering friends, is only saved from Blotter's wrath by the Blackberry Bush; when, immediately behind, sits Mr. Buddha, pinker than ever; Derby, who is all phantly to the Punjab, having seen the *Lake Matrimonial News*, in which a lady wanted a husband advertised that she was left a widow at the age of eleven; John, of the Court, calm and mysterious; Alec Henderson, anxious to see a company of whom he has heard so much, and his Lordship, a Thug,

cardross, and when, further on in the same row, Joe Davis represents the Turf, Dicky the Driver, the Road, and Crocker, financial opulence; no one can complain of the toidness of the audience. In addition, junior members of the Burnand family are attending to the morality of the stage, and Horace Vowler's eyeglass is as tasty an ornament as any of Duffies'. Jane is seeing the piece from the calm seclusion of the ladies' cloak-room, but the Kid is radiant in the stalls; Miss Lingard smiles approval from a box, and most beautiful of beautiful women, Florence St. John, adorns the stalls, and inspires envy by the thought of the smallness of her dress-maker's bills.

It is rather a mistake, this revival of old pieces such as *Hamlet* and *Othello* and *The Hunchback* and *Nemesis*, for they recall the days when we were all little and good, and had no cares and owed no money; and *Nemesis*, it must be confessed, falls flat. Marcus is as good as ever he was in the old Strand days, and the garden scene makes us laugh as we did then; but the rest would be terrible were not our master seilom off the stage. And what a master he is! Avant, Whistler! away, Barrett! we only want our Arthur. His singing of "The Troubadour" and "S'm other Evening" (which I heard sixteen times at Romano's afterwards from his disciples), stamp him as the greatest comedian on the stage. And then his aphorisms! How his audience dwell on them! Take this for example: "Ah, I should like to have you as a marker at spoof." Here, indeed, are a life's teachings! The curtain falls, and not a hand is given, the perambulating eloque being also elsewhere; but as we file out one of the faithful, some other than Dicky the Driver, exclaims: "This is the best piece I have ever seen; it is all Arthur Roberts!"



am inclined to think, indeed, that when it turned out that he, after all, had duly delivered more or less inaudibly an almost wholly impertinent lecture, some of the audience rather resented so prompt a disclaimer. It is a pity that this latest high priest of art did not, in the style of the "Lightning Caricaturist" of the music hall, paint a "symphony" or still better a "nocturne" in full sight of his audience. He preferred to limit his exertions to a general attack on everything and everybody, tempered by indirect praise of himself. The public sat it out good-humouredly enough, and it is certain that at least one present, Mr. Oscar Wilde, was edified. Whether they will purchase any more "Ten o'Clock" "Whistleriana" is open to considerable doubt.

Mary "Ten o'Clock" fully his was a Mr. Whistler it is occu matter is lecturer w he has no come to r where new has not been lighted, "know every those who and strain formance w much. W two of his, a compensation due apprecia witty s'f'ing for him, an showy glitche them. H his had gra each other.

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Queen. 28. 2. 85.

Vanity Fair. 28. 2. 85.

MR WHISTLER'S TEN O'CLOCK.

ALL eight o'clock dining London—social, artistic, literary—assembled on Friday, the 20th inst., at the Prince's Hall, to hear Mr Whistler's ten o'clock lecture. Ladies appeared en grande tenue. Diamonds flashed, satins gleamed. As the hour drew near, and the hall grew more and still more crowded, these bright adornments were crushed out of all due place for their display; yet the good humour of the audience was unclouded. There was a subdued air of excited and pleased anticipation. It was "so like Whistler" to have chosen such an hour for his lecture; it was still more Whistlerian to keep the audience waiting after ten o'clock had struck. At last the painter of "symphonies" and "harmonies" stepped upon the platform, and was received with the welcome a jaded generation gives to the provider of a new sensation. Mr Oscar Wilde has described Mr Whistler's appearance on that eventful evening as that of "a miniature Mephistopheles mocking at the majority." Our readers may accept the description as suggestively correct. The miniature Mephistopheles was not apparently audible at some distance, for injunctions to him to "speak up" began ere long to proceed from the body of the hall. The occupiers of front seats, however, enjoyed, without the disadvantage of gaps in its continuity, a discourse fraught with cynicism and paradoxes, yet suggestive, occasionally serious, and at times truly eloquent. The chief themes of Mr Whistler's unsparing banter were the arrogance and

ignorance of critics, and the vulgarity of public taste. His humorous onslaught upon amateurs and dilettantes was apparently relished by an audience belonging essentially to an age of amateurs.

His hit at the archaeologists, "wise with the wisdom of books," who "discover a picture by a stain on its back," were as brilliant and incisive as those launched against "preachers upon art" and upon "improvers of the ways of others," "dress reformers" included. Tintoret and Paul Veronese among the Venetians did not halt "to change the broaded silks for the classic draperies of Athens;" the Infantas of Velasquez, "clad in inasthetic hoops," are as works of art of the same quality as the Elgin marbles. Among the happy things said by Mr Whistler, was his suggestive sketch of the pre-historic artist, the first man who, differing from his fellow men, caring not for the chase or the foray, "stayed by the tents with the women and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd," and the transition of feeling from this nebulous rise of art to that "when the taste of the tradesman supplanted the science of the artist." Much amusement greeted Mr Whistler's indictment of Nature as being by no means "always right," and being occasionally guilty of a very foolish sunset, "and almost always of overcrowding details." This was followed by a passage of singular charm, a sort of "symphony" or "nocturne" in words, where Mr Whistler described the artistic value of dim twilight and dawns, of moments when "the vast city seems to hang in the heavens." "Through the brain of the artist," said the lecturer, the scattered beauties of Nature pass "as through a vast crucible." We must not omit the barbed arrow shot by the great impressionist at the realistic school. Merely to transcribe nature as she is, resembles "sitting on the piano to produce a tune." Mr Whistler's peroration was a brilliant banter against the cant of despair as to the condition of art in the present; and the assertion, that were no artist with "the mark of the gods upon him" to appear again, the story of the beautiful is already complete, "hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon, and brodered upon the face of Hokusai at the foot of Fusi-Hama." Many of the ladies present were superbly dressed.

Westm. Times. 28. 2. 85.

Many accounts have been printed of Mr. Whistler "Ten o'clock," and all, as far as I have seen, have success-fully hidden the fact that it was a failure, that is to say, it was a failure from the point of view of the audience. For Mr. Whistler it was a great success since every seat was occupied and every seat, without a single exception it is said, represented half-a-guinea. The fact of the matter is that beyond the first four rows of benches the lecturer was absolutely inaudible. In private conversation he has not the clearest form of enunciation. When it came to reading manuscript the position of people anywhere near the back of the room was hopeless. But there has not been loud complaint. The room was pleasantly lighted, "everybody" was there, and nearly everybody knew everybody else. It was rather the thing to go, and those who did not catch the string of smart impertinences and strained efforts at epigram which made up the performance were content to know that they did not miss much. Whistler is undoubtedly a witty man. One or two of his sayings really and honestly flashed forth in conversation, have from time to time been recorded with due appreciation in this column. But the effort to provide witty sayings that would last over an hour was too much for him, and he gave instead of the true metal handful of showy glittering coins which had not the true ring about them. However, everyone was pleased, "James" with his half guineas, and the audience with themselves and each other.

MR. WHISTLER SPEAKS.

IT was a brave audience of quality and high degree that waited for the coming of Mr. Whistler on the Prince's Hall platform even as the Israelites awaited the descent of Moses from Sinai. Like unto Moses in one respect—Mr. Whistler decidedly was when he appeared—for he brought with him assorted epigrammatic commandments, of which the chiefest seem to be that no man should make any graven image or the likeness of anybody in or out of London save only James McNeil Whistler. He differed in appearance from the great Lawgiver of the Desert, inasmuch as Moses is habitually represented with two horns, and Mr. Whistler had only one rising from the over-arching brow that poured defiance on the Philistines and simultaneously struggled with his eyeglass. It was a striking scene. The British Lion and this agile Unicorn fought for the crown of criticism, and some papers have given the Unicorn white bread, others brown.

Speaking at first too low, the anti-lecturing lecturer gradually warmed himself and his audience into enthusiasm as he scattered his pretty paradoxes and glittering conceits by handfuls through the hall. His pose as a pearl-caster before a fashionable and critical audience was sometimes that of a gallant game-cock; sometimes—especially when he presented to us his "feather edge"—that of a practised duellist. His points were all well made. The joy of the tourist at recognising the traveller on the top of the mountain; the "player sitting on the piano;" the slovenly sunsets that poor Dame Nature occasionally tries to sneak into her skies (when she foolishly thinks that Mr. Whistler is not looking); the annihilation of æstheticism, the impaling of the amateur, and the gallant appeal to the beauties in the stalls, were given with diverting solemnity; and their effects were duly and properly waited for, with the ease of a practised raconteur and the self-possession of a skilled comedian.

At times the little black silhouette that flitted before the white pillars spake many words of wisdom worthy of thoughtful consideration; and his sketch of the first artist—the original prehistoric Whistler, who "remained in the tents with the women" (gallant again!) and produced charcoal chiaroscuro effects on a gourd for their delectation and his own—was a brilliant bit of imaginative description. With the central and cardinal notion of the whole happy harangue—the differentiation of "the artist" from his fellows—we agree. That the "artist" is only a gourd-decorator or a nocturne-splasher we cannot admit.

"We are the music makers, we are the dreamers of dreams," sang poor Arthur O'Shaughnessy, to whom the poet was the true artist.

"The rest may reason and welcome, 'tis we musicians know," said Browning's Abt Vogler, as he pondered over "the musical instrument of his invention"; and Carlyle, who sneered at the "infinite smearings" of the men of the paint-pot; and Thorwaldsen, who hewed out for himself a valhalla of stone gods and goddesses in his Northern home; and those who build temples, and songs, and dramas, and stories—shall we add the celebrity in Paris who tousles up my last Lady Teazle's dresses?—all say "We, too are artists." Has Mr. Walter Besant laboured in vain to show that fiction is also an Art? However let us not attempt to fluff the dainty dust-plumes from the quivering wings of our delicate butterfly. He is always joyous, and even his piercing shafts strike only as sunbeams may fall and splinter themselves on the stolid rocks of Saxon sense. Let him paint on, in his own swift, subtle, sensitive fashion. We must yet adventure a word for that most misused, most misunderstood, most abused, and most long-suffering of all animals now alive on the face of the globe—the dear old amateur. Actors abuse him, although he is their most persistent patron; musicians mock at him, though it is he—more frequently she—who buys up countless quires of "Lost Chords," mines of "Golden Love," and cargoes of "Wooden Shoes." Amateurs of Art have been known to purchase pictures, let us venture to assert; and in short, the amateur is the basis of all Art appreciation, without which the artist's labour would be but in vain. Even that primæval Whistler who occupied his time in disfiguring his friends' cups and platters—I mean, turning them into "masterpieces"—when he ought to have been out fighting or planting potatoes, must have had an appreciative audience of some kind. To his lawful descendant I suggest that he should not be too rough on those sympathetic "ladies in the tent."

ARTISTS AND CRITICS.

IT would seem as if Mr. WHISTLER's ambition was to be able to give occasional surprises to the public. He knows that novelty is a quality which is much esteemed in London, and by providing it he has often deserved such gratitude as a certain class of people can bestow. The lecture which was given on Friday night in last week was the latest of the surprises. It was believed that Mr. WHISTLER could do a great many clever things, but as his patrons are not much given to reasoning, it was not anticipated that the artist could compose and deliver a most captivating address. The effect of it was heightened by the use that was made of time as an accessory. Lectures are common enough in London, but to hear a lecturer commence at ten o'clock at night is one of those remarkable events which society treasures. A delicate compliment had been offered, and was appreciated as it deserved. It mattered little what was said, the Hour and the Man were the attractions. To the artist's friends there was nothing extraordinary about the affair. They were aware that when he is in the mood Mr. WHISTLER can talk of art in a way that would make the fortune of an Academy professor, and that his occasional remarks exhibit a subtlety which corresponds with what is seen in his etchings.

A work of Mr. WHISTLER's would be nothing if not original, and the disregard of conventional rules in the Piccadilly lecture was enough to make the great BLAIR send an angry remonstrance from Elysium. Recognition was, however, made of a fashion that is now quite common among lecturing folks in going back to prehistoric ages. It was delightful to hear the rebuker of those prosy archaeologists who seek for knowledge in museums and crypts instead of allowing their fancy full play, unfolding his researches among primitive peoples. But it would be too great a shock to a fashionable company to allude to the cave-dwellers, who were in the habit of scratching portraits on the bones which they had just gnawed, and accordingly Mr. WHISTLER gracefully began with the tent period. If it is not more definite than other men's starting-points, it had the advantage of suggesting to young ladies a happy time when the world went a-gipsying. We are henceforth to suppose that on one of those days, when the tent-dwellers had gone forth to their respective, if not respectable, avocations, a certain light and airy savage remained behind "with the women," and inspiration having come to him he produced a symphony for them by means of a gourd and the piece of stick which served for a poker. He traced strange devices just as readily as if he possessed a plate and a needle. When those who went forth returned no objection was raised about the fellow's idleness and his spoiling a gourd. They were as much charmed as if they had been in the habit of paying shillings to Bond Street Galleries. The biting of lines in gourds became popular, and it was found pleasanter to pass away the time in art work than to run the chance of being knocked on the head by Philistines whose gourds remained as Nature made them. When the gourds were exhausted there was a likelihood that the artists would have to "go forth," but inspiration came once more to their aid. They took lumps of clay and made them into gourds, and their descendants might have been employed to this day in the same manner (or at least until the clay was exhausted) if it had not been discovered that Nature was slovenly in her contours, and that art-pottery, which might be more worthy of bearing the strange devices than a gourd, was indispensable. Beautiful vases forthwith came into existence, and they were the forerunners of couches, and tables, and knickknackeries, for which room was found in a tent with as much ease as additional families are accommodated in seaside lodging-houses.

Happy would it have been for the world if it went on so harmoniously, but in course of time art-enemies arose whose wickedness was displayed in producing the strange devices at a cheap rate. The gourds were no longer considered as masterpieces, to which one might hope to live up, but as materials for "squash." The artist's occupation went forth never, perhaps, to return, and in place of it appeared the craft of the manufacturer, the huckster, the critic, the middleman, the preacher, the archaeologist, and the unattached writer. Nevertheless, Mr. WHISTLER was not without a little hope that the gods would send an artist occasionally to enjoy himself at the river side, and to accompany the morning in its early walks.

Mr. WHISTLER may appear to be freakish, but just as he has a reason for the slightest touch of colour he puts on a canvas, so there is a theory in his lecture for which much can be said. It is the relation between the artist and the public, or rather such among the latter as assume the office of criticism. If we understand his allegory, it has been Mr. WHISTLER's desire to suggest that the artist is an inspired being, and should be respected accordingly. We have authority that is not to be questioned for the belief that the Gentiles "are a law unto themselves." May we not without irreverence apply it, and say that the artist is a law unto himself? When an artist—call him painter, sculptor, architect, poet, or dramatist—expends his thought on a work, is it not reasonable to suppose that he has produced something which is the result of definite laws, although everybody may not be able to trace the influence? The poem or the building will have unity; it will be the expression of its creator's thought at the time; but it is absurd to suppose that a critic will in all cases be able to follow the thought by a glance. The artist himself is not always able to recall the motives under which he acted in producing his work. He is compelled to let it speak for itself. GOLDSMITH could not explain the meaning in which the word "slow" is to be taken in the first line of "The Traveller," and, in consequence, it was supposed that he was only part author of the poem. But readers who have no need to make capital out of imaginary defects have found no difficulty in the interpretation of the word. Another word could not be substituted for it without injury to the poem. The experiment has been tried by BENTLEY and a second critic to amend the greatest poem in the English language; but what they have perpetrated has shown that they were unable to comprehend the poetry of "Paradise Lost." SCOTT proposed to add a verse to one of BURNS's songs, and produced most wretched doggerel. The amendment of a work in one of the fine arts offers even greater difficulty. In burning the lines on the gourd (to return to Mr. WHISTLER's allegory) the artist was far in advance of the men who afterwards stood around the vessel, and it will hardly be said that in our day the critics are wiser and more skilful than the artists they judge.

The conditions under which criticism is conducted at the present time are a sort of guarantee of imperfection. Apparently it is not considered necessary to devote much time to the work. The Royal Academy by its practice maintains that there is not the least difficulty in examining a couple of thousand of paintings, statues, drawings, etchings, designs, enamels, in a single day—for that is the time assigned officially to the critics. It is not to be wondered if the public, conductors of journals, and the critics come to the conclusion that the Academicians may be right, and that the most impartial criticism is that which is produced by going over works at the rate of three hundred an hour. Even with unrestricted time it is difficult to insure criticism of any worth, owing to impartiality being very rare. A writer who has practical knowledge of painting, sculpture, or architecture (and no others are qualified for critics) is likely to have a pet style which becomes a sort of standard and interferes with his justness of view. In spite of his knowledge and extreme honesty of purpose, Mr. RUSKIN would be called one-sided in his "Notes" on his exhibitions, and although no one would suppose that Mr. FERGUSSON had anything to gain by an opinion, it would be believed with difficulty that he was an eligible assessor in a case where Gothic designs were opposed to Italian or Classic. Artists of all kinds are not to be regarded as safe judges of one another's works, and when they do condemn they are more unsparing than the bitterest newspaper critics.

But after all, what is the use of the best criticism? An error in a book is remediable by means of printer's types when the hour arrives for a second edition, but how many imperfections have been rectified in pictures, statues, and buildings after critics' eyes have grown tired in seeking for them? Gallons of ink have been expended in pointing out the imperfections of the pepper boxes at Trafalgar Square, but they still remain in their old positions for the amazement of foreigners. Living artists who exhibit at the Academy appear to be as obdurate as railway directors to the suggestions which have been offered to them. Mr. WHISTLER has been condemned ever since his figure of a piano-player was hung in the Academy, and, in consequence, is one of the most popular of artists. The men who have suffered most by partial ignorance and flippant criticism are architects.

Criticism, good, bad, and indifferent, will however continue as long as it expresses with tolerable accuracy the opinions of the public in general. People also like to be spared the trouble of thinking, and it is not every one who has his history and science always at command, although he is sure to be an infallible judge of colour and form. It may be worth knowing that the grapes which are seen on the outside of a house are only to be found within vineries, that there is authority to show that a red feather in a cap should have been white, or that a coat should have a button less than is painted. But taking all things into account, we doubt if, with the exception of architects, criticism has done much to lessen the reputation to which an artist is entitled by his works.

Sportsman 28. 2. 85.

My column closed too late last week for me to spare more than a word for Mr James M'Neil Whistler's "ten o'clock" function. Everybody was there—lords and ladies of high degree, and persons of more than qualitee. Mrs Cornwallia West wore in her hair a row of upright feathers, fastened over the ear with a diamond brooch, which gave her a curious one-sided, cockatoo kind of appearance, if the simile be considered gallant enough. Feathers, indeed, were the only wear, and left the impression on the unregenerate masculine mind that every fair dame present, if she liked, could spread her wings and fly away.

Whistler, with the historical white lock well to the forefront, began his lecture at 10.20, pitted poor Nature's blundering sunsets, and intimated, in a brilliant passage, that the most artistic object in the world was a London warehouse seen through a mist. We were spared any reference to gutters as the source of perpetual loveliness, or to unripe cucumbers as the true sources of tenderness in colour. Pierced through and through with paradox and epigram, the talk came to an end at 11.15, leaving perhaps the more thoughtful laughing at most of what had been said.

In one way, the ten-and-sixpence per seat function was wonderfully successful. It has rehabilitated and made fashionable the ancient lecture, and added a new amusement to a world by no means full of fun after dinner. To be able to go between coffee and cigar time, and an adjournment to Bedfordshire, and hear a smart hour's talk, even if it be all fireworks and fancy, is a boon in a capital like ours, where theatres cannot always charm nor concerts do aught but weary.

Mr. Whistler's Ten o'clock.

MR. WHISTLER'S American experiences have taught him the art of "bold advertisement." For many weeks large cards bearing the sign of the mystic butterfly have been distributed by Mr. D'Oyly Carte amongst the libraries. The date, too, was cleverly fixed for the advent of "Society" to London. Hence, on Friday night of last week the Prince's Hall was fairly filled with the holders of half-guinea tickets.

Unless Mr. Whistler means to publish his diatribe against the critics and "unattached writers," most of his good things will be lost to the world. Members of the Press were placed in the twentieth row of the stalls, and Mr. Whistler's voice was almost inaudible at that distance. The genial critic of the *Morning Post* and myself sought a vantage-ground on some steps nearer to the platform, and by dint of much listening I managed to hear more than my fellow-pressmen. Mr. Whistler appeared alone on the large bare platform. He had a packet of notes with him, from which he but rarely refreshed his memory, and having learned his speech off, he was wound up, and spun it out. Mr. Whistler can lay no claim whatever to dramatic ability. His *bon-mots* and epigrams are dropped out without any effort at effect, and his voice is too weak for so large a hall.

Attired in faultless evening dress, and carrying his notes and operahat, Mr. Whistler made his entry, and commenced his lecture. He went back to the days of barbarism to trace the growth of art and artists: the latter, it appeared, by the aid of a burnt stick traced objects of beauty, until by slow degrees articles of beauty were shaped, and men ate and drank out of masterpieces because—there was nothing else to eat or drink from!

But art has deteriorated and been brought to its lowest stage. In Greece it reigned supreme, not by election, but by force of fact. Yet in these later times the taste of the tradesman ruled: the manufacturer came to the front, who foresaw fortune in the fashioning of the sham, and their class took to them because they were after their own heart, and they have lived in them ever since.

The occupation of the artist was gone, and the huckster and manufacturer ruled in his stead. Birmingham and Manchester took the place of art, which was relegated to the curiosity shop. Mr. Whistler then indulged in a sneer at the "foolish sunset," which men admire, and contrasted it with the admiration of the true artist for scenes of night which ordinary toilers never look at. Tall chimneys, warehouses, and the surroundings of an ordinary night-scape are to him a joy, and he loves it as he does the citron pinion of the pale butterfly, and these things enable him to produce that wondrous thing the masterpiece.

Mr. Whistler's best epigrammatic fireworks were, however, reserved for the critics. Some of these are too good to be lost, and none of the daily press have produced them, owing, I suppose, to the inability of members of the press to hear.

"Why," asks Mr. Whistler, "should artists have criticism thrust upon them after centuries of indifference to it; and that, too, by the blind?" For some time past, in his opinion, the "unattached writer" has become the middleman of art. He looks upon it as a hieroglyph, and only from a literary point of view, and as a means to an end. He finds poetry only where he would find it if he were transcribing the event. The painter's poetry of colour, form, harmony, are completely lost on him. He cannot see the nobility of thought of the artist in his work, but praises virtues in the picture which an artist would blush to own. In his "literary" description the real beauties have never been shown at all. This is proved by searching reviews of past pictures, the painters of which are forgotten, but whose works were praised with a lavishness which left nothing for the National Gallery. Another class of ignorant art critics are those who frequent museums, classifying, cataloguing, and compiling, and who establish with due weight a reputation, and who will guarantee a picture by a stain on the back, and test a torso by a missing limb! Speculating in much writing, they reduce art to statistics, and file the 15th century and pigeon-hole the antique. Torn they are with much teaching, having naught to impart, they foolishly confound art with education; and the eloquence of the ignorant and the zeal of the amateur proclaims this doctrine.

These samples of the lecturer's style will suffice to prove that many of his sayings were smart, and bear evidence of thought. The alliterative briskness of the sentences were frequently applauded, and many of them were catching, if not sound.

The last sentence may be taken as an example. It sounds smart, and means—well, that Mr. Whistler's dress clothes are not bought from a hawker, and do not hang haphazard from his shoulders! And yet I saw many critics present habited as artistically as himself—if evening dress can be artistic. Some of these smart sayings I have heard from Mr. Whistler in private. His admiration of the beauties of night scenes, his contempt for the businesslike and commonplace critic, his views of the artist's heaven-born aspirations and thoughts, &c., all this is familiar to those who know anything of the Whistlerian doctrines. Whether it

is worth half a guinea to hear Mr. Whistler for an hour—or not to hear him after paying—is a question I shall not try to answer. I feel justified in saying that I think it was more with the view of seeing what the mystery was than to be instructed in art that brought together so fashionable a gathering. I cannot help agreeing with a morning contemporary that, with regard to Carlyle's saying ending with "mostly fools," it can in no way apply to the clever little gentleman on the platform, who must have netted a nice little sum by his hour's glib talk. He appeared to be enjoying himself. A large number of his audience did not.

Mopical Times 28.2.85.

Mr. James McNeil Whistler, eccentric humourist, brought off his practical joke on Friday, the 20th, at the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. Nobody knew what to expect on entering the cold white sepulchre selected for the occasion, consequently as people filed in by twos and threes, a sort of subdued atmosphere of mingled curiosity and coldness, partaking of a mixture of a wedding and a funeral gathering, pervaded the dimly-lighted hall.

By a quarter-past ten, fifteen minutes after the advertised time, the auditorium was more than fairly filled by a heterogeneous *mélange* of somebodies and nobodies of the metropolis, interested—or liking to be thought to be interested—in affairs associated with the *soi-disant* artistic world. They were all there, from the æsthetic Mr. Oscar Wilde, all hat and happiness, to the practical Mr. William Holland, all moustache and misery.

I have neither space nor inclination to attempt to criticise Mr. Whistler's lecture, for such the entertainment proved to be, at any length. That it was undeniably clever goes without the saying, coming as it did from the intellect of Mr. Whistler; that it was eccentric naturally follows for the same reason; that it was, in parts, brilliant and amusing is also what I expected; but that any part of it should have been dull, as the latter quarter of an hour was (ask Sir Julius Benedict, who slept serenely through the last half of the lecture), was the last crime of which I should have thought Mr. Whistler would have proved guilty. The amiable lecturer wants practice in speaking; he lost many admirable points by dropping his voice persistently at the end of his sentences. Again, the hall was far too large for his oratorical powers; consequently, a very great, if not the major portion of his audience could not hear one half of what he said. I hope Mr. Whistler will publish the lecture, as there was much that was peculiarly happy and epigrammatic that I, amongst others, would like to become more familiar with. From an artistic point of view, I don't suppose Mr. Whistler did himself any harm, and, from a commercial point of view, I have no doubt the results exceeded the most sanguine expectations, both of himself and of his exploiter.

Bradford Observer. Mar 7. 85.

I deeply regretted not having responded to the invitation I had to listen to Mr. Whistler's lecture on art, which took everybody by surprise as he delivered it, for no one knew that amongst his many and eccentric gifts he possessed that of eloquence. His private reputation, however, was highly amusing, and his tirade on the utter uselessness of lectures generally, and how excellent a soil was formed by ignorance and stupidity for the growth and development of art, took one's breath away to listen to, nearly as much as his own pictures do in contemplation. Oscar Wilde, whose life is spent in trying to make all things beautiful, according to his own ideas, disagreed with him entirely, of course, and we had a long discussion on the difference between an artist and a painter. The poet, said Oscar, is the supreme artist, and to the poet only are known all the mysteries of colour, form, and music. So we argued and chatted, and politicians, with their red ribbons across their breasts, and glittering silver stars on their coats, were drawn away from grave and serious subjects, to take part with or against the "miniature Mephistopheles mocking the majority."

Artist. March. 85.

Ladies Pictorial 7. 3. 85.

FROM MONTH TO MONTH.

CONSIDERING the "hard times" is a phrase with which many—aye, nearly all—the reports of sales at the exhibitions now open come to us. Despite this, the Institute of Painters in Oil Colours has a fair meed of encouragement to chronicle. In other quarters, too, there is some life, and considerable promise. The proprietary galleries are opening thick around us, and much excellent art work is now to be seen in Piccadilly—where the Dudley has come in for some rough handling—and its neighbourhood.

Full of vigour as this section of art adventure has been, the "uses of the recess" have not alone been confined to the political stump-orator. A brave bevy of art exponents has made merry and sad with congratulation and with lamentation the hearts of eager and—as at the Prince's Hall—straining listeners. Mr. Whistler may, we think, take first rank as the most successful flutterer of the æsthetic dove-cot, whilst Mr. Hamo Thornycroft has been eloquent on the value of small sculpture in the decoration of a modern house, but did not tell the man of moderate income where statuettes, at once cheap and good, can be obtained. Mr. C. E. Leland, too, has discoursed heartily on the "adomning" nature of shams, and Mr. Ruskin's private secretary, Mr. Haité, and the Duke of St. Albans had each something of interest to impart. The powers of illustration as a public instructor led Mr. Newton to encourage the students of the Nottingham school of art to prepare for a market by no means at present ill-supplied, and Prof. Kerr essayed the dangerous task of prophesying the future of English architecture. This, and much else, has been pouring with unceasing flow into the sea of human understanding during the last few weeks, and a like quantity is still to come. We can but hope to note the ripple on the surface of this vast sea.

The union of French and English—the cooperation of M. Ernest Chesneau and Mr. Ruskin—has produced another of the "monuments which do supreme honour to the mind of man." There is one passage in the "English School of Painting" which, whilst flattering to our national pride, sounds a note of alarm. "Here is," says Mr. Ruskin, in his altogether admirable preface, "this acute and kindly Frenchman assuring us that we have some mettle of our own, and interpreting to his own countrymen some of the insular merits of a school which hitherto has neither recommended itself by politeness, confirmed itself by correctness, nor distinguished itself by imagination." Such, indeed, may be some consolation to those who feel keenly the want of recognition that has characterised foreign estimate of our English "school," but to others there is no less a suggestion of danger. The moment English art can be gauged by the hard and unbending rules of a "school" its very existence is threatened. The independence of each particular unit gives freshness, unconventionality, and local colouring to a mass which, when reduced to the dead level of a "school," would vanish. The French "school" has much in it that is excellent, but it is retrograding. It is but the expression of the retrogressive character of the nation. There, we fear, is to be found too much "school."

I HAVE not read anything so good for a long time as Mr. Oscar Wilde on Mr. James Butterfly Whistler. The lecturer agreed in many things with the lecturer, but not in all. The Butterfly asserts, what has many times been asserted before, that an artist finds beauty in ugliness. Oscar admits the fact, but denies that charming people should be condemned to live with magenta ottomans and Albert blue curtains in their rooms in order that some painter may observe "sidelights on the one and the values of the other." But if the painter must have his sidelights and his "values" (what are they?), surely some colour-blind people might be found who could bear with the magenta and Albert blue for the sake of such an artist as James Butterfly.

Bristol Mercury. 7. 3. 85.

I deeply regretted not having responded to the invitation I had to listen to Mr. Whistler's lecture on art, which took everybody by surprise as he delivered it, for no one knew that amongst his many eccentric gifts he possessed that of eloquence. His private repetition, however, was highly amusing, and his tirade on the utter uselessness of lectures generally, and how excellent a soil was formed by ignorance and stupidity for the growth and development of art took one's breath away to listen to, nearly as much as his own pictures do in contemplation. Oscar Wilde, whose life is spent in trying to make all things beautiful, according to his own ideas, disagreed with him entirely, of course, and we had a long discussion on the difference between an artist and a painter. The poet, said Oscar, is the supreme artist, and to the poet only are known all the mysteries of colour, form, and music. So we argued and chatted, and politicians, with their red ribbons across their breasts and glittering silver stars on their coats, were drawn away from grave and serious subjects, to take part with or against the "miniature Mephistopheles mocking the majority."

Esch & Mart. 6. 3. 85.

The most verbatim report of Mr. Whistler's 10 o'clock which we have met with, is in the *Artist*. It reads amusingly, but naturally loses much for want of Mr. Whistler's caustic, if not cynical, utterance. Many of the lecture's sentences will become proverbial, as they are confined to an epigram, and are true, or of that half-truth nature which it is so much more entertaining to deal with than strict truth. Other lectures on art are shortly touched upon, and "From Month to Month" embraces more than usual. Within its scope and price the *Artist* is a wonderful and most useful little periodical.

Stegness Herald. 6/3/85.

At Mr. James Whistler's famous "Ten o'clock," the æsthetic division were well represented. Mrs. Cornwallis-West wore a novel head-dress, which would have been at once the delight and envy of any Cherokee chief. Unlike the aborigines of the Far West, however, Mrs. Cornwallis-West did not place her feathers in the middle, but at the side of her pretty head, and fastened them there with a jewel brooch. The effect was charming.

Pall Mall Gazette. 5. 3. 85.

Mr. Whistler will deliver his lecture on art before the University Art Society in the Theatre Royal, Cambridge, on Wednesday next.

Globe. 2/3/85.

ENCOURAGED by the success of his first attempt, Mr. Whistler intends, we hear, to redeliver his "ten o'clock" lecture on art, probably at a more reasonable hour, and to a more popular audience. It will be interesting to know what the common, vulgar people who give art a *raison d'être* by their fondness for the ugly, think of the "foolish sunset" theory.

MR. WHISTLER'S TEN O'CLOCK.

Mr. Whistler must have felt flattered by the large and distinguished audience which had assembled to his lecture on Friday, February 20. Whatever may have been each one's object in coming, whether interest in the lecturer, or from fashion, or from curiosity to hear how the painter of extraordinary pictures would lecture, few, we think, imagined that they would hear strange ideas, dressed in such wonderful language, told with singular force and humour, and sparkling with such wit and epigram.

But whatever might be the motives for coming, the attention of the audience was rivetted by the first few sentences, and testifying repeatedly by hearty laughter and heartier hand-clapping its continued interest, it listened with unflagging earnestness until Mr. Whistler made his final bow and retired. And yet many towards the end of the hall could catch but few of the speaker's utterances. At the early part of the evening many were the exclamations of "Speak up," and once, when Mr. Whistler, beginning a fresh period, held up his hand and commenced in a solemn tone, "Listen," a despairing voice from a back seat murmured, "We are, but we cannot hear a word."

Mr. Whistler commenced by sternly denouncing the attitude of society towards art, which had become a sort of commonplace topic for the tea table, was chucked under the chin, and altogether treated in far too familiar a fashion. People had been told they should love art and live up to it, and that their homes had been decorated and their walls covered with paper, until with bewildered doubts and many discomforts they resented such intrusions, and would cast out the false prophets who had brought the very name of the beautiful into derision. Art had nothing in common with such practices, she was occupied in her perfection, and had no desire to teach, but sought and found the beautiful in all conditions and in all times. Her high priests required not to alter their surroundings; their world was completely severed from that of their fellow men, with whom sentiment was mistaken for poetry, and for whom there should be no perfect work which should not be expressed by the benefit conferred on them. They looked not at but through a work of art to some human faculty, and humanity took in their minds the place of art.

Then followed a poetical history of art. There never was and never had been an artistic period. In the beginning men went each day some to the battle, some to the chase, some to dig and delve, until there was found among them one differing from the rest, attracted not by the pursuits of the others, but remaining in the tents with the women and he chasing strange devices on a bowl, produced a masterpiece, and was the first artist. And when the people returned from the field, and the chase, and the battle, they drank from the bowl, not from choice or from the knowledge of its beauty, but because there was no other. Then in time other artists arose and worked, until the vase was produced, and in time the artificer built beautiful houses and palaces, filled them with furniture, and people lived in and ate and drank out of marvels of art—because there were no bad houses to live in, no other articles to use—and the people had no voice in the matter.

Then Greece was in its splendour, and Art reigned supreme by force of fashion, not by invention, and

there was no amateur, and the dilettanti was unknown. And history rolled on; civilisation followed conquest, and art treasures were carried widely into other lands, scattered among many nations, and the people used these works of art, until there arose a new class who discovered the cheap, made fortunes by spreading the sham, and the statesman and the slave took to themselves the abomination that was tendered, and preferred it, and have lived with it ever since; and the artist's occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and the huckster took his place. This time the people had much to say in the matter, and Birmingham and Manchester arose, and art was relegated to the curiosity shop.

The lecturer next touched upon the artist's work. Nature contained eloquence, form, colours for all harmonies, as the key-board contained notes for all tunes, but the artist would choose with sense those elements that the beautiful might result, as the musician gathered his notes and formed his chords. To say to the painter that he should paint Nature as she is would be to tell the player to sit upon the piano. Nature was rarely right to such an extent that it might be said Nature was usually wrong; and so a careful selection must be made. Holiday makers would view with rapture the Crystal Palace glittering beneath a cloudless sky, while the artist would sadly turn away his head. The tourist, in the dignity of a snow-clad mountain at sunset, would be occupied in trying to recognise the person on the top; and when the evening mist had clothed the riverside as with a veil and the warehouses were as palaces in the night, and the whole city hung in the heavens, then the working man and the cultured one turned home and Nature sang to the artist alone. And he was her son, in that he loved her; and she was his mother, in that he knew her, and to him alone were her secrets unfolded. It was for the artist to take from nature the refined, subtle essence of that which the gods began and left him to carry out; and the gods stood by and saw how far more beautiful was the Venus of Milo than was their own Eve.

Mr. Whistler next proceeded to deal with various classes of critics. The unattached writer had become the middleman in art matters, and while he had widened the gulf between the people and the painter, had brought about the most complete misunderstanding as to the painter's aims. A picture to a writer was a hieroglyphic, a symbolised story which was to be construed from a literary point of view, and while he dealt with it as he would with a novel, a history, an anecdote, he degraded it by supposing it a method of bringing about a literary climax, by attempting to translate the canvas on to paper. All this might be, and generally was brought about by a very poor picture indeed, for he could not understand in a work of art the imagination that should have put colour and form into such harmony as had produced the whole. So in old reviews on pictures now altogether forgotten had been written rhapsodies that left nothing for the National Gallery. A mountain to these gentlemen was synonymous with height, a lake with depth, the ocean in vastness, and if a picture, however poor it might be, contained a lake, a mountain, and an ocean, it must be lofty, vast, infinite, and glorious. Then there were experts wise, with the wisdom of books, who frequented museums, collecting, compiling, classifying, contradicting, careful in scrutinising, discovering the picture

by the date on its back, testing the accuracy by something that was missing, dictatorial upon the birthplace of inferior persons, particular in much writing, the great worth of bad works, who filed the 15th century and pigeon-holed antiquity. Then, too, there was the preacher strolling in high places, sage, learned and with much experience, exhorting, denouncing, directing, filled with wrath and earnestness, torn with much teaching, impressive, importunate, shallow, defiant, distressed, desperate, crying out, and cutting himself, while the gods looked on.

It was a strange thing to see a lecturer eloquently denouncing in these terms his audience, for his audience was essentially composed of amateurs, experts, writers. It was, as Oscar Wilde wrote in a recent issue of the "Pall Mall," "a miniature Mephistopheles mocking the majority." Yet it was a stranger thing to hear the audience so denounced warmly greeting each brilliant adjective, each sharp sally, with hearty laughter and applause.

As soon as silence allowed him, Mr. Whistler continued: Art must not be confounded with education; it was no reproach for the most finished scholar to be without eyes for painting, or ears for music. Then came a solemn warning against the interference of the outside world with art. All efforts to make art universal must fail, and it was right that it should be so. So let him (Mr. Whistler) lift from their shoulders the incubus of feeling that they need be concerned for art. At present the dilettanti stalked abroad, the amateur was loose, the aesthete was around them. The last was a false prophet with his gloom, pomp, and solemn silliness, but art was glad and went with joy and dreaded no exposure. And let all beautiful women know that artists were with them, for their own instincts were nearer the truth. As to their apparel, costume was not dress, and let them not be dictated to by Aesthetes, who were not masters; they had invented nothing; from their shoulders hung the garments of the hawker; they were only fit to be set up as a warning of the disastrous effect of art on the middle classes. On the present and future of art no anxiety was to be expended. "Art is limited to the Infidel, and beginning there cannot progress." The artist had still the same tools as in the beginning of things. Art could not fail, but if all people and nations were wiped from the face of the earth, art would live; and therefore should all weary weight of responsibility for art be cast aside, for in no way could it be helped or impeded. She would seek for the artist perhaps in Nankin or Madrid; where he was art remained lovely and fruitful, and when he died she took her flight, refusing to be consoled. She was not for the multitude, but for the man, and scorned the countless hordes of her pretenders. And so must we wait until there came again among us one on whom the gods had set their mark, and if he came not then we still might be content.

What is one to say of this strange teaching, or, indeed, should one criticise it at all? Should not Mr. Whistler's theory as to a picture be applied also to his lecture, and should we not then take it that we must not attempt to criticise it, nor to understand it, but simply to listen to it, with no intellectual effort; enjoying its harmonious language, its well-turned phrases, and laughing at its brilliant wit and terse epigram.

F. L. C.