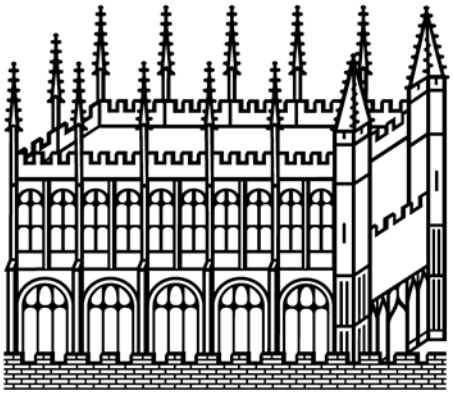

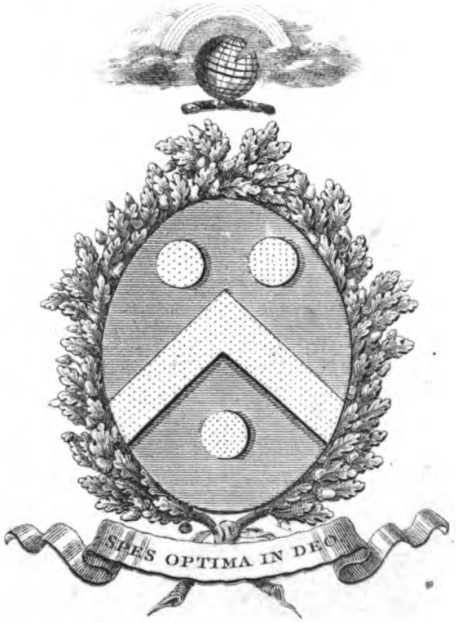


*John Thomas Hope.*

THE

# MAGIC LANTERN;

OR,

## *SKETCHES*

OF

## *Scenes in the Metropolis.*


" My Magic Lantern holds to view,
Of fools, a crowd; of wise, but few."

*Anon.*

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*LONDON:*

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

*In presenting these trifles to the Public the Author thinks a preface unnecessary: if the little Volume has any merit, a discerning public will discover it; but, should it be deemed unworthy any portion of favor, a Preface would not retard its progress to oblivion.*

"For thee, my little book, I feel no dread,
The chances are---thou never wilt be read."

*Preface to* **The Incendiary.**

# THE

# AUCTION

## ERRATA.

Page 11, Line 19, for *roaster* read *roster*.
14, do. 3, dele *his*.
29, do. 17, for *piguante*, read *piquante*.
46, do. 20, for *in to*, read *into*
47, do. 2, for *actions*, read *ashes*.
49, do. 10, for *names*, read *name*.
do, do. 22, for *renders*, read *render*.
62, do. 8, for *others*, read *other's*.

There are few occasions that, in a greater degree, furnish food for reflection, or indeed, more powerfully excite it, than an Auction; and, I am grieved to say, few that can show us our fellow beings in a less favourable point of view.

THE

# AUCTION.

PASSING, a few days ago, through one of the fashionable squares, I was attracted by seeing a bustling crowd around the door of one of the houses; and, on enquiry, I found that it was occasioned by an Auction.

Curiosity induced me to enter, and my mind soon became deeply engaged in the scene around me.

There are few occasions that, in a greater degree, furnish food for reflection, or indeed, more powerfully excite it, than an Auction; and, I am grieved to say, few that can show us our fellow beings in a less favourable point of view.

Each person is eager in the pursuit of some article that pleases his fancy, and seems to think of self alone.

The mansion that I was now in, had lately been the residence of a family of distinction, and bore evident marks of good taste.——The furniture was rich and elegant, and chosen with a view to use as well as ornament:—the pictures were the *chef d'œuvres* of the best masters; and a library of well-chosen books, with globes, fine maps, and all the aparatus for astronomical and geographical studies, marked the intellectual pursuits of the late possessors.

The morning room of the female part of the family next excited my attention:—here were all the indications of female elegance and female usefulness—the neat book shelves, stored with the best authors; the writing table, with all its appendages; the drawing table, on which the easel and pencils still rested, and the harp and piano-forte, with the music books still open, all spoke the refined taste and avocations of the owners of this room, and how sudden had been the ruin that had expelled them from it.

Some pictures, with their faces turned to the wall, were placed in a corner of the room, and curiosity induced me to examine them. I found them to be coloured drawings, admirably executed, and evidently portraits:

on examining them more closely I discovered that some of the accompaniments were copies of parts of the furniture now before me: one of the drawings represented two very lovely girls performing on the harp and piano-forte, and never did I behold a sweeter personification of a duet, "Both warbling of one song, both in one key ; as if their hands, their sides, voices, and minds had been incorporate." Another represented a most animated, intelligent looking girl, reading to one who was drawing, and whose countenance, though pale and languid, was expressive of genius and sensibility. Here then, thought I, are the late actors in this domestic scene ; and, as I gazed on the sweet faces before me, my interest became excited to a painful degree.—Imagination pictured those delicate looking females driven from their home, stripped at once of all the elegancies of life, and sent to brave a world, the hardships of which they were now for the first time to learn. I saw them cling to each other in an agony of affection—I saw the last looks of parting sorrow which they cast on this scene of happy hours for ever gone by ; and I saw the efforts they made to compose their tearful countenances, and to regain some portion of fortitude, while with hurried steps, as if afraid to trust themselves with another parting glance, they left the

apartment. My heart bled at the picture which my fancy had painted, and I hastened into the room where the sale was going on, to lose the poignancy of my emotions.—Here every thing presented a contrast to the quiet scene that I had quitted. Noise, bustle, and confusion on every side:—here was a group of fashionables, male and female, whose bows of recognition, and smiles and whispers, betrayed that they were more occupied with each other than with the Auction. At another side was a set of elderly ladies, whose scrutinising glances, and airs of satisfied self-importance, were expressive of their conscious superiority. Next to these were some gentlemen, of a certain period in life, who had left their clubs to look in at the sale, and whose sapient looks and whispers declared them well accustomed to such scenes. The rest of the crowd was composed of brokers, and dealers in *bijouterie*, who evidently wished the fashionables away.

Desirous of losing the painful impression left on my mind, I mingled with the crowd, and seeing a very beautiful fillagree box put up for sale, which I thought likely to attract the notice of the ladies, I sauntered round, and took a station close to a group of the youngest, who were chatting with some young men of fashion. The insipid countenances, starched neck-

cloths, and compressed waists of the latter bore evident symptoms of their belonging to the effeminate race which has, for the last few years, been known by the appellation of *Dandy* or *Exquisite*.

The box, as I anticipated, soon attracted their attention, and, "O dear, how pretty!" "How very elegant!" "How monstrous charming!" with innumerable other ejaculations of admiration, were all uttered with great animation, and at nearly the same moment, by the ladies; while their attending beaux, between a languid smile and a suppressed yawn, merely said "Do you think so?" "Is it so very pretty?" or, "Do you wish to bid for it?" "O dear, no, I dare say it will go off horribly dear; and I have spent all my money at Jarman's, where I bought the most exquisite piece of china that ever was seen. To be sure it was immensely dear, but it is such a love, that there was no resisting it: besides, I know Lady C—— will die with envy at my getting it, and I do so love to make people envious." This good natured sentiment extorted a smile of languid admiration from the beau, who rejoined, "If it gives you pleasure to excite envy, you must often enjoy that gratification, as all womankind must be ready to expire with envy whenever you appear."——"Oh! you flattering creature, you don't

really think so," was the lady's reply. I observed her female companions attentively listening to the dialogue, and regarding each other with significant nods and glances, not a little expressive of the passion which she had declared her wish to excite. Here, thought I, is the train laid for future scandal; and, perhaps, for future misconduct. This giddy young woman will go away with feelings of gratified vanity, at the compliments paid to her, and complacency towards the individual who administers the adulation; and the gentleman, having seen the pleasing impression which his flatteries have made, will probably follow up his advantage by repeating them, when he meets her at some fashionable rout in the evening. Thus this silly flirtation, commenced in folly, and pursued through idleness, may end in the dishonor of this thoughtless woman, and entail misery and disgrace on an honorable family, and on innocent children.

From these ruminations I was disturbed by the lisping accents of another party of fashionables, "Do you go to Lady D——'s ball to night?" enquired a listless looking young man, of an affected sickly looking young lady;—"I'm not quite sure (was the answer) for Lady D——'s balls are, in general, so dull, that I don't much fancy going to them; I am to look in at

Mrs. C——'s, and the Marchioness of L——'s, and if they offer nothing very tempting, I may go to Lady D——'s. By the bye, *apropos*, of balls—what very pleasant ones we have been at in this house; poor Mrs. B—— will give no more balls; for, I understand, they are quite ruined. Well, I declare, now that I think of it, I am very sorry; for there are so very few people that give pleasant balls." Here the conversation became general, each of the ladies, young and old, mingling their voices:—"Well, I must say, I always thought how it would end," says one. "What a very conceited woman Mrs. B—— was," cries another. "Yes, and what fuss people made about the beauty and accomplishments of the daughters." observes a third. "I (said a pale sickly looking girl) could never see any beauty in them; and I am sure they wore rouge and pearl powder." "They gave devilish good dinners though, (said one of the beaux) and I must do B—— the justice to say, that he had one of the best cooks in London." "Yes, and he gave capital claret," rejoined another. "I thought his white hermitage better than his claret," said a third; while another exclaimed, "Well, give me his hock in preference to all his other wines, for that was *unique*." "I hope G—— will buy B——'s wines; as he gives

such good feeds: his is the only house in town where you may rely on finding a perfect *suprême de volaille;* or where you get *cotèlettes des pigeons a la champagne.*" "Oh! but (remarked the first speaker) G——'s cellar is not nearly so cool or well arranged as B——'s, and the wine may get injured." "There won't be time enough for that, for G—— can't last long; he will be done up in a short time," was the reply. "I did hear some hint of that," said another. "It's a fact, I assure you, I had it from his lawyer," said the first speaker. "Well, G—— is a monstrous good fellow, and we must dine with him very often, that the wine mayn't be spoiled, before he is done up," said one of the *Exquisites;* which friendly intention they all expressed their willingness to carry into effect. "Have you any idea what is become of B——?" interrogated one of the party. "I did hear something, that he was in the bench; or gone to France: but (yawning) I really forget all about it." "I intend to bid for his curricle horses at Tattersal's." "And I (said another) will buy his Vandyke picture." "What, do you like pictures?" said a third. "O, no; I have not the least fancy for them; indeed I don't know a Titian from a Vandyke: but one must have pictures, and I know that R——, who is a judge in things of

that sort, wants to have this, and I am determined he sha'n't," was the reply of the intended purchaser of one of the *chef d'œuvres* of Vandyke.

A young man of the party, who had hitherto been silent, and in whose countenance good nature and silliness strove for mastery, remarked that "it was a pity that people who gave such good dinners were so soon ruined." "A pity! (replied another) no, no; give me a short campaigne, and a brisk one; for let the dinners and wines be ever so good, one gets so tired of seeing always the same faces, and the same kind of dishes: for if a dinner giving man holds out many seasons, he gives so often the same sort of dinners, and the same set of men, that it at last becomes as tiresome as dining at the mess of the Guards. Believe me, there is nothing like a fresh start; and no man, at least no dinner giving man, should last more than two seasons, unless he would change his cook every month, to prevent a repetition of the same dishes, and keep a regular *roaster* of his invitations, with a mark to each name, to prevent people from meeting at his house twice in a season." "Would it not be better to cut his acquaintances every month, instead of his cook, particularly if he once got a perfect artist? Who is it that would not give up all his acquaintances, rather than part with such a cook as

*Monsieur Ude?*" All the party agreed in this sentiment, but the silent young man observed, that "Carrying it into practice might be attended with disagreeable consequences; for some men are so ridiculous, that if you take it into your head to cut them, they call you out, and nothing but a duel or an apology remains."

While this edifying conversation was going on, the elderly ladies were all haranguing on the follies, errors, and extravagancies of Mrs. B——; and the young ones were decrying the looks, accomplishments and manners of the Misses B——. Each article of ornament or *virtu* that was exhibited for sale elicited fresh sarcasms from the acquaintances of the unfortunate B—— family, who appeared to exult in the misfortunes of those for whom they once professed a regard.

I left this fashionable party, disgusted with their want of feeling, and took my stand near some elderly gentlemen, who were examining with attention a catalogue of the sale, and marking the articles for which they intended to bid.

One sapient looking gentleman observed, that Mr. B——, though foolish and extravagant in some things, had considerable taste and judgment in others;—for instance, his books were all well chosen and well bought; he has two capital Wynkyn de Words, and

three fine Caxtons; and those Elzevirs that he got last year were a great bargain: I think he gave only six-hundred for the set, and I would gladly give two-hundred more. I have the Delphin edition of the Classics and the Variorum, and I am determined to have the Elzevirs." "His busts too are very fine (exclaimed another) and were bought for a sum much under their value. His Socrates is inimitable; I am determined no money shall keep it from me." "For my part (said a third) I like his statues better than all. What can be finer than his Venus by Canova, except it be the Nymph, by the same divine master? That I will bid for." "Give me B——'s pictures (said a fourth); for they are exquisite, and I shall not envy you the possession of all his other treasures. That portrait of a lady, by Hans Holbein, is charming; and I am convinced that picture of a young man is by Titian, though some of our connoisseurs have doubted it: then his Snake in the Grass, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, is full of beauty and feeling; and that group, so exquisitely coloured and so true to nature, could only be produced by the inimitable pencil of a Lawrence. The two Claude Lorraines, and one of his Vandykes, I am determined on having." "I am surprised (observed a fifth) how you can look at the oil pictures, when those

divine miniatures by Pettitot and Zink are present:—they are indeed beautiful." The first speaker now observed, that "Had B—— confined himself to his books, he would not have been blamable." "Or to busts (said the second), for that is a rational taste." "I differ from you (said a third) statues are the only things worth collecting." "No, no! pictures, pictures, are alone worthy the attention of a man of true taste."—

Here all the voices became clamorous, each giving the preference to the objects of his own pursuit, and decrying those of the others, with no small degree of acrimony and ill-nature. I left them, with feelings very similar to those excited in my mind by the fashionables; and with more of anger than a Christian ought to feel, I exclaimed, "And this is an Auction! a scene so often the resort of the old and the young, the grave and the gay, where human beings go to triumph in the ruin and misery of their fellow creatures; and where those who have partaken of the hospitality of the once opulent owner of the mansion, now come to witness his downfal, regardless of his misfortunes, or else to exult in their own contrasted prosperity. Never were mankind so low in my estimation; and I was hurrying from this scene of heartless selfishness, when I perceived two females engaged in conversation, whose

looks were expressive of the sympathy which they felt in it.

On approaching nearer, I heard the names of the Misses B—— pronounced in accents so full of pity and affection, that I paused to listen to the conversation. One of the females, whose appearance bespoke her to belong to the upper class of society, observed, in reply to an enquiry of the other, that "The B—— family were all at her house, and perfectly reconciled to their misfortunes; that she hoped enough would remain, after paying the creditors, to enable the family to enjoy the comforts of life, in some retired country residence: that the Misses B—— only regretted their change of fortune as dreading its effects on their parents, and as abridging their means of assisting their fellow creatures," Here the emotions of the other female became uncontrolable, and while the tears trickled down her cheeks, she exclaimed, with a fervency that displayed the sincerity of her feelings, "Oh! bless them, bless them; well I know their goodness: they found me out when oppressed by affliction and poverty; despair had nearly overwhelmed me, and I thought Pity and Benevolence had fled from the earth. They relieved my wants with a liberal hand; but Oh! what is of infinitely greater importance, they recon-

ciled me to my fellow beings, and to my God. That I now live, and pursue a course of usefulness and industry, I owe entirely to their humanity; I shudder at reflecting on the fearful crisis to which poverty and despair had reduced me, when those amiable and excellent young ladies found me out. By their assistance I am now not only above want, but have a trifle to assist the unfortunate, and I came here to purchase some of the furniture of their own private apartments, which I know they valued from their childhood, in order to have it sent to their future habitation, as a trifling memorial of a gratitnde that can end only with my life. But, alas! I am too late, for the auctioneer's clerk has told me that the furniture of their rooms, together with their clothes, books, and musical instruments, are all bought in by a friend; so that I am deprived of this opportunity of proving my gratitude. I have one more effort to make—they will want a domestic, and no where can they find a more attached one than myself. The life which they have preserved shall be devoted to their service."

The expression of the speaker's countenance became radiant with gratitude and benevolence, and the soul beaming smile of approval with which the other regarded her, as by a gentle pressure of the hand, she marked her heart-felt sympathy, made its way to mine.

I longed to press both within my own; but this the usages of society forbade.

I enquired of a bystander the name of the lady, and on referring to the auctioneer, he disclosed to me in confidence, that she was the purchaser of the furniture, books, clothes, &c. &c. &c. of the Misses B——, and had given directions to have them all sent to a residence which she has presented to them.

My feelings glowed with delight at finding two such instances of benevolence; and I exclaimed with warmth, "Thank heaven all goodness has not vanished from the earth! The virtues of those two amiable women have reconciled me to my species; and I find that even the selfish vortex of an AUCTION cannot ingulph true virtue."

# THE

# PARK.

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"In Fashion's Ring, behold us drive,
The most unthinking fools alive."

*Old Song.*

HAVING a visit to pay in Piccadilly last Sunday, and finding my friend from home, the crowds of well-dressed pedestrians that almost impeded my way, moving towards the Park, tempted me to stroll into that gay *rendezvous* of fashionables, as well as unfashionables; and I entered, though not without some difficulty, the gate at Hyde Park Corner.

Those who have passed through Hyde Park, on a

fine Sunday, towards the end of May, can alone form an idea of the gay scene that presented itself to me.

Carriages, of every description, from the splendid *vis-a-vis* and elegant chariot, down to the vulgar city coach and more vulgar gig: next to the well-appointed curricle followed a shabby hired whisky; while the *cabriolet*, with its *Dandy* driver, was contrasted by its next neighbour, a vehicle partaking the joint qualities of a taxed-cart and Irish jaunting-car, conducted by a butcher-like looking man, accompanied by a large female, whose cheeks might in colour out-vie his primest ox beef.

In the drive, which is now considered the fashionable one, and for which I can assign no other reason than its being the most disagreeable part of the Park, the crowd of equipages from Hyde Park Corner to Cumberland Gate, is so great, that carriages are sometimes detained stationary for half an hour at a time; while the promenade, at each side, is a moving mass, in which hats and bonnets, with occasional peeps of pretty faces, are alone visible. Each person that you meet complains of the heat, and the dust, and the crowd, but still perseveres in giving this side of the Park the preference, to the cool and more agreeable one near the Serpentine river; or the still more delightful umbra-

geous walks in Kensington Gardens: surely this preference is a convincing proof of the influence of fashion, which we daily see demanding fresh sacrifices of taste and comfort from her votaries. The equipages do not present a more striking difference to each other than do the persons who occupy them.—In the splendid *vis-a-vis*, with its emblazoned coronet and supporters, sits, or rather reclines, the pale and simply-adorned woman of fashion, the langour of whose countenance exhibits the ravages of crowded rooms, and late hours, and who enters into this scene to kill an hour on this dullest of all days, according to fashionable phraseology. Her coachman, with his knowing white wig and rich livery, seems conscious of his and his owner's superiority, and regards the other carriages with apparent contempt; while the footmen, with all the impertinent *non-chalance* so peculiar to the servants of the great, are exchanging smiles of recognition with their acquaintances, and making their observations on the scene around them. Next follows the gaudy, but ill-appointed coach of some citizen, crowded almost to suffocation with his fat and flashy wife, and rosy cheeked smiling daughters, whose bonnets look like beds of tulips, and whose white handkerchiefs, applied frequently to their foreheads, mark, in spite of their smiles,

the *yielding softness* of their nature, and shew them to be in the *melting mood.* This is succeeded by the *smart turn-out* of some pretender to fashion, who desired to have a carriage exactly like Lady H * * *'s, but wished to have a *little more* brass on the harness, and more fringe on the hammer-cloth:—the coach-maker has been most liberal of both, and the poor would-be fashionable sits perfectly happy, fancying that the smiles with which the gazers regard her gaudy equipage, and ill-drest self, proceed from pure admiration. The Lord Mayor's coach, with all the paraphernalia of mayoralty finery, next fills up the line, while the smug faces of my Lord and Lady, with their offspring, the embryo Lord Mayor or Lady Mayoress, form a group that might be painted as a personification of

"Oh, the roast beef of Old England!"

so visible are its nutritious effects on their countenances.

A brown landaulet with red wheels now advances, the wretched horses of which, seem scarely able to bear the weight of plated harness under which they are literally bending; and, as if to increase their misery, the shabby *rattle-trap* is filled by a group that would re-

quire the pencil of Hogarth to paint:—in the centre sits an elderly gentleman, whose rubicund cheeks, fiery nose, and blue-black wiry locks and whiskers give him a striking resemblance to the Saracen's Head, as pourtrayed on stage coaches. On each side of him sits a comely sultana-looking dame, large, languid, and listless, affecting all the easy negligence of high *ton*, which is ludicrously contrasted by the absurd vulgarity of the carriage, and the whole set out. Five smiling babes, the images of their blushing sire, arranged in picturesque attitudes, complete the party within; but what pen can do justice to the coachman and footman! The thread-bare broad-cloth livery, that was once white, faced with a colour meant to be scarlet, but much less vivid than the old gentleman's countenance, made for men of tall stature, and now worn by such as are of comparatively dwarfish size, hired on job for a few weeks; the hats turned up all round, and totally bereft of the beaver that once covered them, strikingly evince the love of shew struggling with the parsimony and inherent vulgarity of the master. This *turn out* excites universal derision, and the *Dandies* declare that it must belong to some East India or Dublin Castle dubbed knight, who has tempted one of the fair dames by his side to become his wife, for the pleasure of heing called *My Lady*.

The elegant curricle, driven by its more elegant owner, the beautiful Lady F***, now follows, and attracts all eyes, while this lovely female *Phaeton*, enveloped in capes and veils, scarcely deigns to shew a portion of those beauteous features, that have never been seen without exciting admiration. The fashionable and fascinating Lady S. H. *** rolls along in her tasteful and splendid carriage, reclined in a corner of it, and covered by a transparent veil; while the crimson silk blinds, half drawn down, shed not "a dim religious light," but love's own rosy hue, over her faultless figure; and admiring *Dandies*, with uncovered heads, mark by their low bows, the profound feeling which she excites.

Here may be seen the "Gallant gay Lothario," perhaps still more generally known, as "Romeo," driving his car, which, alas! is no longer a triumphal one, being hailed by smiles of derision and contempt, instead of applause, whenever he makes his appearance in it. Its luckless owner sits elate, with head awry, and neck extended, looking round to meet the glances of admiration which he fancies he excites. Next to this fantastic vehicle follows the family coach of Mr. ***, the plain substantial elegance of which, marks the good taste of its possessor; while the lady-like demeanour of his wife, and the cheerful ingenuous countenances of

his children, who accompany her, bespeak a well-ordered and happy family.

The line of carriages is now broken by a tilbury, driven by a city *Dandy*, who has chosen the Park to make his *debut* in as a whip: the horse becomes restive, and the want of skill in his driver, excites the ridicule of his more dextrous brothers of the whip: the tilbury is entangled in the wheel of a coach, which causes a general stoppage, while heads are seen emerging from the windows of all the carriages round, anxious to ascertain the cause of delay; and the ladies in the next carriage are between alarm and anger, almost unintelligibly vociferating from the windows to their servants to let them out; while their terror only seems to increase the merriment of the surrounding crowd, and to give fresh impetus to the unfortunate *Dandy*, who is *malgré* the advice of all the by-standers, with one hand reining back his impetuous steed, and with the other urging him on by applying the whip.

Next advance a male and female equestrian, who are apparently as little skilled in the riding, as the luckless *Dandy* is in the driving school:—the horse of the lady becomes frightened at the crowd, and the lady more than participates in his alarms; while her *cavalier servant* is so occupied in endeavouring to restrain the

ardour of his own charger, that he can afford her no assistance, and her distress is heightened by hearing the peals of laughter all round her, and seeing the ridicule which her situation excites. But, as if to redeem the female name from the imputation of want of skill in horsemanship, the pretty and graceful Lady G * * *, and the lovely Mrs. F. S** are seen darting along like meteors; while the perfect command that they evidently possess over their coursers, and the easy elegance with which they manage them, can alone quiet the alarms the spectators would otherwise feel at the velocity with which they move.

To these succeeds a mighty host, including Peers, Commoners, the things y'clept *Dandies*, Citizens who ride their own bits of blood, and Apprentices who hire them for the day, and bestride them as they would their counters.—But vain would be the attempt to describe, or even to enumerate half the beauties, would-be beauties, fashionables, and apers of fashion, that are seen mixed up in the motley group of citizens, country folks, and trades-people, that figure in the Park on a fine Sunday, when every vehicle is put in requisition.

All is now alarm and confusion, for the tilbury driver, with his restive horse, again appears, and now

excites more anxiety than he formerly did merriment, for his vehicle being disentangled from the coach, and his horse feeling the restraint removed, sets off with a rapidity that spreads terror all around.--Nothing is to be seen but horses plunging, and drivers and equestrians all endeavouring to avoid the dangerous contact. The same crowd that a few moments before laughed at the disasters of this luckless whip, and enjoyed the alarm of the male and female equestrians, are now loud and sincere in their expressions of compassion at the dangers to which the former is exposed, and, with looks full of sympathy, are hastening to see the result, or to offer their assistance, when it is ascertained that the horse has been stopped in his career, and that no serious accident has occurred.

A few paces from the scene of the last disaster, a crowd is assembled to witness the restoration of a fat elderly gentleman to his seat on horseback, from which he had been thrown by the plunging of the animal.

In the fall, he had lost his hat and wig, and the poor man, though not hurt, has been so terrified, that the big drop rolls from his forehead to his cheek, which, mingled with the dust with which he is plentifully covered, gives him a most ludicrous appearance; this is not a little heightened by the servant, who is

shaking the dust from his master's wig with one hand, while he is brushing his coat with the other.

Fright, shame, and indignation, are mingled in the old gentleman's looks, and the servant, who is one of the old school, is reproaching the crowd for their unfeeling conduct and rude jokes at his master's misfortune.—Having devoted so much of my attention to the Drive and equestrians, I now turned some portion of it to the pedestrians, and here I was no less amused.—Amidst the crowd, I distinguished some of the legislators of our land lounging along, carelessly nodding to each other, and casting enquiring glances at every youthful female face, and every well-turned ankle.

Being freed from their attendance on their respective Houses of Parliament, they are enjoying their holiday most rationally, by leaving their clubs for an hour or so, to criticise on and admire the female attractions of the Park.—While others have looked in on their return from their favourite Sunday rendezvous, "Tattersall's," to see who is in the Park, or to talk over their bets for "the Derby" and "the Oaks."—"White's *beau* window is at four o'clock on a fine Sunday, as vacant as are the countenances of most of its frequenters, who are here seen sauntering up and down, evidently *ennuied* by the unusual exertion.

"Brooks's" Menagerie is as empty as Exeter-'Change on the Sabbath, and her bustling members may here be seen in deep chat, anticipating the debates of the coming week.—"Boodle's" also sends forth her sober, sedate-looking *elders*, to this scene of vernal gaiety, while the less *recherchés* "Watier's," "Arthur's," and "Cocoa-tree," with the universal UNITED service club, the *Munchausen* or "Traveller's Club," and the "New Union," pour forth their shoals, the members of all of which are as different and distinct in their air and appearance as in their habits and modes of life. They have but one or two feelings in common, which are those of finding time hang very heavily on their hands, thinking very highly of themselves individually, and fancying their own club decidedly superior to all the rest.

Milliners, dress-makers, and their pretty *piquante* looking apprentices, the two former in the newest and most expensive fashion, and the latter in an economical but fanciful abridgment of it, are here enjoying their *day of rest*, by promenading up and down this crowded walk from three till half-past six, displaying their pretty faces and smart dresses, to the envy of their rival female friends, and to the admiration of men of fashion, and ogling *Dandies* of every class.

A few women of fashion may be occasionally seen in this walk; but, as if ashamed of its vulgarity, they generally adopt the *incognito* of a large bonnet and veil, and carefully avoid recognizing their male acquaintance, who are too often seen escorting ladies whose reputations are not so fair as their faces sometimes are, and who walk the streets on week days, and the Park on Sundays.---I stopped a few minutes to speak to my old friend B***, and saw him bow very coldly to two ladies, whose painted faces and scanty drapery conveyed an impression not very advantageous to their purity; and even the smart livery, cocked hat, and long cane of their footman, failed to give me a better opinion of them. On questioning my friend, he told me, that not to know Lady *** "argued myself unknown," for that she and her *unmarried* sister are as well known as Hyde Park itself.

Ladies' maids, in the *outré* cast-off finery of their mistresses, and aping all their mincing paces and airs of fashion, with pretty nurse-maids, more attentive to the passing beaux than to their infantine charge, formed a considerable portion of the pedestrians.

Disgusted with this *melange*, and wishing to enjoy a little quiet, and fresh air, I crossed the Park, and walked along the retired part, known by the appella-

tion of the Lovers' Walk.---Here, thought I, I am at last escaped from that motley crowd; once more I breathe a pure atmosphere, untainted by the breath of vanity and folly, and free from the overpowering mingled gales of Otto of Rose, Odour of Jessamine, Eau de Portugal, and Huile Antique.

Here I shall see only sober mortals like myself, who come for the purposes of air and exercise, and who, like me, wish to avoid the contamination of the Vanity Fair, at the other side of the Park.---"Well," I exclaimed, "I am glad to find there are some sensible people left in the world;" and my self-complacency was increased, when I saw a handsome carriage drive up, escorted by a gentleman on horseback, who handed from it a very lovely woman, fondled the babe that was left in the carriage with its nurse, with all the seeming affection of a parent, and then drawing the arm of his fair companion through his own, and still holding her pliant hand in his, walked gently along. The youth and visible affection of this handsome pair, gave me pleasurable emotions, and I was still more gratified by meeting three or four similar couples, all equally occupied with each other.---The equipages, but more than all, the air of elegance visible in these turtles, impressed me with the belief, that they were persons of

rank and fashion, and I was delighted at finding so many instances of domestic felicity in the higher classes of society; but, alas! this sweet scene of connubial bliss was quickly dissipated, for my friend C*** happening to ride past, observed me, and, giving his horse to his servant, soon joined me. I was on the point of expressing the pleasure I had experienced, in witnessing so many proofs of conjugal happiness, when my friend suddenly exclaimed, "It is too bad; it really is too bad."—That couple who are this moment turning so abruptly from us, are the sixth pair of lovers that I have seen within the last ten minutes.—The ladies are all married, and mothers; their husbands, good, honourable, unsuspecting men, who believe their worthless partners to be, at this moment, at evening service, or occupied in paying friendly visits: some of the lovers, who are husbands and fathers themselves, are anxious to avoid publicity, and the others belong to that worthless race, known by the appellation of *Dandies*, who are more desirous to draw observation to their gallantries than to screen their guilty mistresses from scandal. I saw the tilbury of one of them standing by the carriage of the lady whom he was escorting; his groom, and her coachman and footman, were passing their coarse jokes on the apparent *tendresse* of his

master and their mistress, and laughing at the credulity of the abused husband, while the gallant takes care to conduct his silly and worthless companion to the most exposed part of the walk, and to press her hand, and use all the freedoms that can lead the world to believe their guilt. My friend then mentioned the names of some of the parties, and I was shocked at finding the delinquents to belong to some of the most respectable families in the kingdom.

All my satisfaction and pleasure at the fancied domestic happiness which I had witnessed, was, in a few minutes, dashed to the ground; and, in its place, vice, depravity, and duplicity, "reared their horrid heads before me."

I turned from this scene with still greater disgust than that with which I had left the crowded promenade, and gave way to the reflections that intruded themselves on my mind.—"Am I indeed," (I mentally exclaimed), "in the capital of a Christian country, celebrated over all the world for its morals, its religion, and the virtues of its inhabitants, and is it thus the Sabbath is passed! I am no enemy to innocent recreation, and have no objection to permitting a part of this day to be devoted to healthful exercise and cheerful society; but let those who would call me

a morose old Cynic for finding fault with what are generally termed innocent amusements, pause awhile, and, with me, reflect on the scene which we have this day witnessed, ere he accuse me of want of charity, or downright methodism. Let me ask, what are the inducements that have this day filled the Park with such multitudes? Not the desire of air or exercise, because both could be enjoyed in much greater perfection in any other outlet than in this crowded, heated, aud dusty scene. No: vanity, idleness, or some still greater vice, has led them hither. Many of the splendid equipages this day exhibited, the expenses of which, may have involved their extravagant owners, might never, perhaps, have been built, except for the wish of showing them in the Park; but the evil does not rest here.--- The lady, who comes to display her elegant carriage in the Park, is but too apt to display her elegant self; her vanity, gratified with the admiration that both may excite, begets a self-complacency most dangerous to her unsettled and wavering principles; aud the beau who handed her from the Opera the night before, is so sure (*purely by chance*) to meet her in the Park next day, and both having nothing else to do or to think of, are so glad to meet, that the check-string is pulled, and they cannot part until they have at least talked

over the exquisite *ballet* and the divine *Noblet*. If the mischief ends here, it is well; but from such beginnings, many a fair and titled belle may date her ruin, and many a noble family its disgrace.

The competition in equipages, so injurious to the higher classes, is even still more so, to the middling. It engenders in them a passion for dress and idleness, and extravagance succeeds extravagance. Their attendance at divine worship is often given up, because it may interfere with the Park hours; and the expense of the dress to be worn there, leaves its wearer too poor to assist her fellow-creatures. The milliner must charge an extra price for her finery, and practise additional imposition, to enable her to sport the elegant pelisse and bonnet with which she adorns herself for the Park, and her pretty but thoughtless apprentice is so charmed with the admiration which she excites, and so anxious to appear in a still smarter dress, in which she thinks she will achieve additional conquests, that she falls an easy prey to the first designing libertine who marks her for his victim.

The young and unthinking *Dandy* is attracted by a sort of *eclat* attached to ladies of a certain class, and seeing them noticed by men, whom, from their station and age, he thinks worthy of imitation, he follows the

bad example, loses the sense of shame that before restrained him, and forms connexions that often entail on him the most pernicious consequences.

The evils inevitably resulting from the scenes which I had witnessed in the Lovers' Walk, now recurred to me.---I fancied these women returning home to their unsuspecting and duped husbands, probably putting on the semblance of affection, the better to conceal their deception; every word of kindness uttered by husband or wife, commented on by the servants, who are in the secret of the evening walk, and who are exchanging glances of admiration at their mistress's talent at dissimulation; or, perhaps, viewing with pity the confiding victim of her arts.

In what a situation do those wretched women place themselves and their husbands! If they are not lost to every feeling of honor, bitter must be the pang which they experience at every fresh proof of affection or confidence shewn them by their unsuspecting partners. They must live in a state of perpetual dread of discovery; and should they be so hardened as to be fearless of this, yet their pride, and what woman ever was known to be without pride? must be exposed to continual mortification from observing the perfect understanding which their servant shave of their misconduct.

I will not dwell on this painful picture; I will not add to it the infamy and disgrace of the guilty wife, or the probable death of the lover or husband, caused by the detection of her guilt:—no, the reader's mind will supply all that I have omitted; and if the perusal of these thoughts should lead any of my fellow beings to reflect on the waste of time in spending the Sabbath as I have described, I shall not have written them in vain.

THE

# TOMB.

"Alas! unheedful of their doom,
With hurrying step they seek the Tomb."

*Anonymous.*

Of all the exhibitions that attract the lounger, in this overgrown metropolis, few present a more interesting study to the reflecting mind, or a more entertaining scene to the lovers of character, than the Egyptian Tomb.

The period in which this excavation was formed is so remote, that its history is involved in an obscurity which

adds to it still greater interest, and brings to the mind a thousand reflections on the vanity of all human efforts to force the natural course of events; it forms an admirable subject for the philosopher to contemplate, and illustrates the ever varying scenes of this mutable world: while the crowds of busy triflers, and listless loungers, that hover round, furnish ample food for amusement to the lovers of eccentricity and character.

Little could *Psammis*, whose Tomb this is supposed to be, have imagined that, after a lapse of about two thousand five hundred years, the exact model of his Mausoleum would be exhibited in a capital, which, when this Tomb was formed, did not exist. Psammis flourished about six hundred years before Christ, and was successor to Pharaoh Necho.

After mounting a steep and dark stair-case, the first sentence we heard was uttered by a lady, who exclaimed, "O dear, how hot the Tomb is!" and another remarked, "That there was not light sufficient to see the gods." The groups scattered round, formed a striking contrast to the scene itself:—at the entrance were two large animals, of the Sphinx species, formed of granite, with lions' heads, and between them was seated an elderly man, in the act of masticating tobacco, whose countenance bore a strong likeness to them. Two or three

fine young women, simply but elegantly attired, with their graceful attitudes, and undulating draperies, formed an agreeable contrast to the stiff and disproportioned forms of the grotesque Egyptian female figures.

A party of school boys were amusing themselves by discovering likenesses to each other, in the monstrous deities displayed on the wall; and a governess was answering the enquiries of her young pupils, "If there ever existed men with lions', apes', and foxes' heads?" by sententiously reading extracts from Belzoni's Description, not a word of which the little innocents could understand. One old lady remarked, that "The Tomb was not at all alarming when people got used to it;" and another said, it made her melancholy, by reminding her of the death of her dear first husband, the worthy Alderman, to whose memory she had erected a very genteel one." Two vulgar looking old men declared their conviction that "It was all a hum, for had there been such a place, Lord Nelson would have said *summut* about it, in his dispatches;" and another person of the same class, said that, "For his part, he did not like foreigners; and why did no Englishman ever find out this *here* place? he should not wonder if, in the end, Mr. Belzoni, or whatever his name is, was found out to

be like that Baron who wrote so many fibs." The first speaker observed that, "Any man, who would go for to say, as *how* men had apes' faces (though his own bore a striking likeness to one) would say any thing."

A gentleman, who appeared to be a tutor, and two young lads, were attentively examining the model, and comparing it with Belzoni's Narrative; and the questions they asked, and the observations which they made, shewed a spirit of enquiry and intelligence pleasing to witness; while his answers, full of good sense and information, marked how well qualified he was to convey instruction.

"The tomb levels all distinctions," though a trite observation, is one, the truth of which has never been doubted; and, if it were, a visit to that of Psammis would convince the most incredulous: for here persons of all ranks meet, and jostle each other with impunity. The fine lady who holds her *vinaigrette* to her nostrils, and remarks to her attending beau "What a dreadfully shocking place it is;" and that "there is not a single person of fashion there," is elbowed by a fat red faced woman, who looks like the mistress of a gin shop, and who declares to her spouse that, "She would give a shilling for a glass of aniseed; for looking at *them there* mummies has made her feel so queerish."

An old lady, and her two grand-daughters, are examining the Pyramid; the old lady has got on a pair of spectacles, and is, with evident labour, endeavouring to decypher a page of the Description; but, unfortunately, she has got at a wrong page, and having puzzled herself for some time, at last, gives up the task in despair; and in answer to one of the children's questions of "Grand-mama, what is a Pyramid?" the good old lady replies, "Why, a Pyramid, my dear, is a pretty ornament for the centre of a table, such as papa sometimes has instead of an epergne."

A simple looking country girl is remarking to her companion that, "This is not a bit like a tomb;" for that she has seen many, but they were all quite different, being small and much of the shape of a large trunk, or else they were head stones; and all had 'Here lies the body,' or some such thing on them, with cross bones, death's heads, and hour glasses."

Two ladies of fashion now enter, attended by two *Exquisites*, or *Dandies* of the first class, and their exclamations of "What an odd place!" "O dear, how disagreeable the smell is!" attract the notice of the fine lady before mentioned, who has been engaged in a flirtation with her beau for the last half hour; they now recognize each other, and the languid "How d'ye do?

I'm delighted to see you; how very funny that we should meet in the Tomb!" are uttered at once by all three: and one of the *Exquisites*, who appears to be of the sentimental cast, takes this opportunity of lisping out that, "The presence of such divinities converts the Tomb into a heaven." A vulgar looking man, who has been listening to their chit-chat, and eyeing them with derision, whispers, but in audible accents, to his wife, a pretty modest looking woman, "My eye! did you hear what that *there* young pale faced chap said to *them there* painted women, about going to heaven?—They don't seem to have any more chance of that sort of place, than they have thoughts of it just now." The wife gives him an imploring look to be quiet, and whispers, that she believes the ladies are no better than they should be, by their bold looks, and loud speaking, and urges him to go to the other side.

Two intelligent lady-like looking women now attracted my attention, and I paused to listen to the observations they were making;—one of them remarked that, the coincidence between sacred and profane history, which this wonderful excavation presented was most striking; and that a close investigation of it, might elucidate many passages in both, that had hitherto been enveloped in mystery. She illustrated her observations

by quoting several passages from Herodotus, which perfectly agreed with some parts of the Bible, and observed the great utility to be derived in historical researches, from the light thus thrown on them, by the discovery of such stupendous and magnificent monuments of antiquity. Her friend agreed with her, and remarked that, not only in a historical, but in a moral point of view, such discoveries were of vast importance; for the specimens now presented to us by the enterprising Mr. Belzoni, bear irrefragable proofs that many arts flourished in the æra in which those monuments were formed, the existence of which we had supposed to be of a much later date; and the vanity of man, who is buoyed up by a belief that the arts and inventions found among civilized nations, have been, for a series of years, in a progressive state of improvement, must receive a chastening lesson, by seeing the perfection which many of the arts had attained nearly three thousand years ago; and how comparatively slow their progress has been up to our time.

"To how many reflections do these shrivelled remains of poor frail mortality, give rise," said one of the ladies, pointing to the mummies,—'What pains must there have been taken to have preserved them for so immense a lapse of time, even in their present

state, and how small is the triumph of human art over decay, when this is all it can accomplish.—To look at those poor grim shades, and to reflect that they once had passions, affections and frailties, like our own; that those empty sockets, once contained eyes that have sparkled with pleasure, flashed with anger, and beamed with tenderness, on some loved object; that from their lids, the tear of sympathizing pity, or sorrow, has often stolen: and that, when dimmed by death, some loved, and loving hand, has, with 'love's own tender care' gently closed them; little deeming that this cherished face, would ever again be unveiled to human sight; or, that in centuries after, in a foreign land, it would be exposed to the gaze of thousands, who would view it as a subject of curiosity or speculation.—Who, that has that yearning regard to the ashes, which once formed the object of his affection, a regard so natural to mankind, can view those grim countenances, and regret that the art of embalming has fallen in to disuse.—Better that the worm should not be defrauded of its prey, and that the dust of those whom we loved, should mingle with its kindred earth, than that the triumph of 'The king of terrors' should be exposed to the unpitying, and unthinking view of strangers. What patriot that appreciated their

worth, could bear to think, that the honoured remains of a Fox, or a Pitt, whose ashes are endeared to us by so many proud recollections, were to be hereafter borne from their native shores: and yet, short-sighted and vain mortals as we are, the day may come, when their existence, or that of the Abbey that inurns them, may be as problematical as the scite of Babylon."

They now directed their attention to the model of the pyramid, and commented on the several writers who have been of opinion that the pyramids were built before the flood; and the probable conjecture, that they were erected to gratify the pride, or satisfy the superstition of the Egyptian monarchs. One stated that Mr. Volney derives the word pyramid, from *bour-a-mit*, a cave of the dead; and the uncertain basis, on which every conjecture, relative to those stupendous buildings, must rest, gave rise to several admirable reflections from both ladies, on the instability of all sublunary grandeur, which they concluded, by observing, that these gigantic monuments, erected to perpetuate the memory of the monarchs, have not been able to rescue even their names from oblivion.

The party of fashionables now approached, and one of the ladies exclaimed "Do pray let us leave this tiresome stupid place, where there is not a single thing

to be seen worth looking at, and where the company is so intolerably vulgar. I really fancied it was a fashionable morning lounge, where, one would meet every soul worth meeting in town, for, as to looking at a set of Egyptian frights, it never entered into my head; I have not heard of Egypt, since my governess used to bore me about it when I was learning geography; and as to tombs and pyramids, I have a perfect horror of them." Another of the ladies observed, that she "hated every thing Egyptian, ever since she had heard of the plagues." And the third, begged, that "in decrying Egypt, and its productions, they would except Egyptian pebbles, which were beautiful, and took an exquisite polish."

"Oh! pray do look at the female ornaments, exclaimed one of the ladies, did you ever see such horrid things? Only fancy any woman of taste wearing them: well, I declare those same Egyptians must have been dreadfully vulgar, and the women must have looked hideously when adorned in such finery. How surprised they would have been at seeing Wirgman's beautiful trinkets, or the sweet tasteful jewellery at Howel and James's." "I have always thought," replied one of the *Exquisites*, "these lines in Shakspeare very absurd, where he says

"Loveliness,
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
But is, when unadorned, adorned the most."

For no fine *woman* ever looks half so well, as when she wears diamonds, or other valuable ornaments.' 'I agree with you in opinion', answered the other beau; 'but I am sure the quotation you have used is not to be found in Shakspeare," 'I will bet you five *guineas* it is,' said the first; and, said another, 'I will bet ten that neither of you name the poet from whose works it is taken.' The first *Exquisite* adheres to his original statement, that the lines are Shakspeare's: and the second declares his perfect conviction that they belong to Goldsmith. The ladies are called on for their opinions, and each of the three in turn, names, "Darwin" "Moore" and "Byron" as the author, though they profess to have forgotten the particular poem in which the verses occur.---At last, the whole party agree to refer the wager to the decision of the Hon. Gen. P--pps, whose perfect acquaintance with the works of the immortal bard, and knowledge of all the poets, renders him so competent to the task. Having the pleasure of knowing the General well, I could not forbear laughing, as I fancied the group exposing their ignorance to him, and his astonishment that in

our enlightened age, such ignorance could exist: while with all the *bon hommeism* and good breeding, for which he is so distinguished, he takes down from his book shelf "The Seasons."

Some young people attended by their mother, a very showy dressed woman, with many indications of vulgarity in her appearance, now stopped before the ruins of the temple of "Erments" and one of the children asked her "what place the water before them was meant to represent." The mama replied, she "believed it was the Red Sea, or some such place," but recommended them not to ask questions, as it would lead people to think them ignorant." This sapient answer seemed very unsatisfactory to the children, who having expressed their annoyance, were promised a copy of the Description, provided they would not look at it until they got home, as mama was in a hurry.

A lady next us, enquired if "Egypt was near Switzerland?" and was informed by her friend that it "was near Venice." The ignorance displayed by the greater part of the visitors of the Tomb, on historical, geographical, and chronological points, was truly surprising, and the perfect apathy evinced, was even more so. It was plain that they came to the Tomb merely

to pass away an hour, or in the expectation of meeting their acquaintances; but as to feeling any interest in the scene before them, or drawing any moral inference from it, they seemed as little inclined, as if they had been in the round room of the Opera House on a crowded night. Wrapt up in their own self-satisfied ignorance, the works or monuments of antiquity boast no attraction for them; and strange to say, the metropolis of a country that professes to surpass all others in civilization and morals, presents, in some of its inhabitants, examples of ignorance and want of reflection, scarcely equalled in any other part of the civilized world.

# THE

# ITALIAN

# OPERA.

"To Opera, Ball, or Play, they go
To kill Dull Time, their greatest Foe."

*Prol. to "Fashionable Follies."*

This place of fashionable amusement having now re-opened with some portion of its pristine splendour, and consequently being likely to become not only a place of frequent resort, but a topic of frequent conversation, it may be worth while to enquire into its merits, and the effects which it is calculated to produce on society.

I might be accused of illiberality were I to point out the seeming improvidence of importing foreigners, at a vast expense, to furnish an amusement that might be obtained at a much cheaper rate from native per-

formers; this point however, I shall leave to the consideration of some person better skilled in the science of economy than I am, or less fastidious with regard to the system of training up English women in a school, where *display* is more attended to than *delicacy;* but, if we must have a *ballet,* and nothing short of indecent exhibitions can please us, let the performers, at least the the female part of them, belong to any country but our own.

It has often been considered an extraordinary circumstance, that any nation could not only tolerate, but even make great pecuniary sacrifices, to encourage a species of dramatic representation, given in a language with which they are almost entirely unacquainted; and though the lovers of music may in their partiality for the Italian school, which I admit possesses many charms, give the preference to Italian operas, and think that their music better accords with that soft language of love, than it could with our less harmonious tongue; yet, until we can be brought to prefer sound to sense, many will be found, who would wish those dulcet strains wedded to some good poetical composition in our native language. A fine air may be an excuse for the introduction of a song in the most interesting part of an opera, yet most people will admit, that the recitative is not only tiresome by its monotony, but,

that in a serious opera, it throws an air of burlesque over the most grave scenes, to hear a murder or a conspiracy rehearsed in exact time with the fiddles in the orchestra.

Mr. Addison seems to have been aware of the absurdity of having dramatic representations in a foreign language, by writing his opera of Rosamond, and I wish his example had been followed; for, in spite of the present passion for superfluous ornament in singing, it would have been impossible, I think, to have frittered away the sense of a verse, written by such an author, for the sake of the finest shake or quaver that the most finished of our singers ever produced. Never do I hear one of those wonderful efforts of the human voice, without recalling to memory the expression used by Dr. Johnson, on hearing a young lady perform a most complicated and scientific piece of music. At the conclusion of the piece her friends dwelt on the difficulty of the performance, and complimented her on her success; when Johnson observed, "I grant it was difficult; but I wish it had been impossible."

A real lover of music, would I am persuaded, seldom enter the pit of the Opera, and the boxes never, unless indeed the fair sex were banished from both. A murmur of voices never ceases in the first, and in the second, even in the midst of the most exquisite solo

or duet, you are deafened by the shrill repetitions from the ladies, of, "how very fine," "quite charming," "this passage is divine," and "Ronzi de Begnis, or Camporese is enchanting," precluding the possibility of distinguishing a single note of either; as the dear sex think it quite sufficient to give their applause to the music, without giving their attention. Indeed this feeling seems to pervade the greater proportion, if not the whole of the audience; for, in the finest part of an exquisite quartette, admirably executed, the applause has sometimes been so loud as to interrupt the performance, which has been drowned in noise, and the lovers of music have lost the dulcet notes which they came prepared to enjoy.

The unfortunate occupiers of pit boxes, if they have any "music in their souls," must be indeed objects of compassion. They are nightly regaled by over-hearing dialogues in the pit about "Melton Moubray," the "last day's hunt," the "House of Commons," the legs of the dancers, and other topics equally interesting, which are discussed in tones sufficiently audible to interrupt harmonious sounds of every kind.

At the Opera, the object both in music and dancing appears to be to astonish, rather than to delight. The songs are given in a style of redundant ornament, that

bids defiance to simple harmony, and that must shock the ears of every unsophisticated lover of music; and the dancing is much more like what we should fancy at a rehearsal behind the curtain, to keep the limbs and muscles in pliancy, than a performance exhibited to an audience, composed of the inhabitants of the most enlightened metropolis in Europe. The *Pirouette* which is the favourite feat of agility, and which is practised every ten minutes during the course of the *divertissement* and *ballet*, is not only a most indelicate, but a most ungraceful movement. Can any thing be more opposite to all our ideas of delicacy, than a female turning round with the velocity of a whirligig on one leg, and elevating the other until her person is exposed to a degree, that outrages every feeling of decency, and obliges all the feminine part of the audience, at least all the modest part, to withdraw their eyes, and avoid those of the gentlemen, whose libertine glances, offended modesty, at such a moment, shrinks from encountering.

This exhibition is no less ungraceful than indelicate, for the most finished dancer will find it utterly impossible to maintain a graceful appearance during the performance of such a movement. The preparation for it is absolutely absurd, and the sort of prelude to

the commencement is much more like the rude gambols of a school-boy than the elegant evolutions of a votary of Terpsichore; while the unblushing effrontery with which it is effected, and the demand made for applause by the look and attitude of self-complacency with which it is concluded, render it no less ungraceful than disgusting. The tumultuous plaudits that follow, are always proportioned to the exposure made, and when they are most loud, if we happen not to be attending to the stage, we may conclude that a more than ordinary exhrbition has taken place. The Ionian dance, so decried for its immorality, might have been more voluptuous, but could not have been more indecent than those which we see practised twice a week at the Opera, to the most refined spectators that London can boast; and I have often marked the suffused cheeks and downcast eyes of a youthful female, as shrinking from the public gaze, she sought concealment during the *Pirouette;* while her blushes spoke eloquent reproaches to the unthinking parents who had exposed her to such an exhibition,---an exhibition at variance with every lesson of female propriety which she has hitherto received.

Having now taken a cursory view of the performance, it is time to notice the audience, who are attracted

to this scene by various motives. The fine ladies come to see, and to be seen; to excite admiration, and to flirt; and for the latter objects there are worse situations in the world than an Opera box. The exhilaration of spirits produced by the lights, the company, the music, and the *chaste performances* of the dancers, with the self-complacency occasioned by gratified vanity, all tend to increase the natural vivacity of females, until it approaches levity. The desire of being well attended by beaux, which is a desideratum of no small importance with the ladies to whom I allude, renders them not only more accessible to their male acquaintances, but absolutely induces them, if they have it not naturally, to assume a levity, as an attraction. A fashionable belle of the present day would think her distinction on the wane if her box were half an hour without at least two beaux; and, alas! the degenerate men of our time are so idle, careless, and inattentive, that they require to be amused, instead of being, as formerly, the amusers; and, therefore, the ladies are compelled to hold out the inducements of dinners, suppers, fashionable notoriety, and flirtation, to ensure their attendance.

Mortified is the luckless woman who sits in her box, *vis-a-vis* to some female friend, without a single

male, unless, indeed, it be her husband, who is considered as nobody, and on whom she occasionally vents her ill-humour, by sour looks and silence. Every noise at the door of her box causes her to turn her head that way, in the hope of a visitor, and each disappointment increases the moodiness of her countenance, and the asperity of the few observations which she makes.

At length the door does open, and for the second that is occupied in withdrawing the curtain inside of it, her heart beats with a quicker pulsation, and her spirits are excited into a tremulous agitation, between fear and hope, though the latter is predominant, when a well-arranged head appears, and, in the instant of appearance, the gentleman apologizes for intrusion, having mistaken her box for the one next it. This disappointment renders her doubly irritable; she dwells with acrimony on the excessive stupidity of the horrid man, whom she accuses of not knowing how to read, as her name being on her box in legible characters, ought to have saved her from such a bore, and vows that she will report the box-keeper's inattention to Mr. Ebers.

To increase her humiliation, she sees the boxes of her more fortunate acquaintances inundated with beaux, and sees, or fancies that she sees, the looks of superiority and triumph with which they point their

glasses at her, as they mark her deserted state.---Irritated almost beyond her power of endurance, she half resolves to give up the Opera, and more than half hates and envies her female acquaintances, when again the door of her box opens, and a man of fashion, who had never before appeared half so attractive, enters. In a moment her whole appearance is metamorphosed: moody looks are exchanged for sparkling eyes and fascinating smiles; sprightly repartee, and animated conversation, are substituted for sullen silence, or peevish remarks; and even the husband, if he remains, enjoys a portion of the sunshine, for he is addressed with politeness, if not with kindness. The lady restored to complacency, is, with the amiability so natural to the sweet sex, anxious to diffuse it all round; and the husband, good easy man, feeling the effect is not much inclined to trouble himself in tracing the cause of his wife's recovered spirits, but pleased at the relief which the visitor has given him, with good natured cordiality, invites him to his house.---This unthinking husband does not reflect, that his liberality in indulging his wife with a box at the Opera, which is a very expensive gratification, instead of proving a source of enjoyment to her, that would entitle him to her gratitude, arms her with weapons, to wound herself and

him, by placing her in a situation that excites her vanity, which, whether *gratified*, or *mortified*, is equally liable to militate against his repose, either by undermining her principles, or by irritating her temper.

In many a box may be seen ladies who go to the Opera to meet their lovers; this is generally arranged by two ladies who have a perfect understanding of each others views, but who either affect ignorance, or else with well bred ease, mutually accommodate each other; they have a partnership in the box, and by this means a very delectable quartette is formed, each lady being solely occupied by her own part in the performance; and each giving by her presence the appearance, at least, of propriety to the arrangement, as a *tete a tete* might occasion remarks, and would shock their ideas of decorum.

Some ladies go to the Opera, merely because having a box is considered as a necessary appendage of fashion; and having incurred the expense, they go night after night for want of something to do, and because other people go.

Mothers go to show their unmarried daughters, who are placed in front that they may be seen to the best advantage, while mama sits in the back ground, an anxious observer of all the men who look at, or

approach her daughters, and occasionally manœuvres to secure such as she thinks would be suitable matches, to hand the young ladies to their carriage. If she succeeds in getting an attendant for each daughter, it is amusing to see with what matronly dignity she struts through the Round Room, throwing her glances round to discover all her acquaintances, and particularly those who, like herself, have daughters on hand; and if they happen to be dependent on papa, a brother, or some old married man, who, out of compassion, volunteers to take care of them, she bows to them with more than her accustomed warmth; or perhaps with more good nature, or at least the semblance of it, wishes that one of her sons, were present to offer his services to them, as it is difficult for *one* gentleman (with an emphasis laid on *one*) to assist so many ladies.

This kindness does not impose on the other party, who, from a sympathy of feeling on this point, know how to appreciate it, and while simpering and replying "you are very good, I am sure," "thank you, we shall do very well," lay up in their minds a memorandum to re-pay this implied sarcasm, the first opportunity. Should the fortunate mama in her progress to the carriage meet any

*married* Belles that she thinks likely to have designs on the Beaux, whom she has pressed into attendance on her daughters, she eyes them askance with ill concealed dislike, and seizes the first occasion that offers, to express her censure at "the improper conduct of Lady ---- and Mrs. ---- who, though they are tolerated in society, are really not fit acquaintances for persons who have any respect for propriety." She then makes observations, which are purely disinterested, on the gross want of delicacy of ladies of fashion making young men subscribe to their Opera Boxes, so that a lady, who is not troubled with any of the old fashioned feelings of pride or delicacy, may (by enlisting, or more properly speaking, pressing five gentlemen into a partnership in her box, making them pay *fifty guineas* each for their tickets, though they could get an admission for the season for less than half that sum,) sit in her box for the same price, and unblushingly have her name on the door, as if the whole expense were defrayed by herself, and as unblushingly *dun* her forced subscribers for their shares, furnishing at once an instance of meannesss and love of shew.

A frequenter of the Opera will soon distinguish the casual occupiers of a box from the owners. The

dress, the air of self-possession and ease, with which the latter enter, and present themselves in the front of their boxes; a little premeditated bustle in opening and shutting the door, drawing and undrawing the curtain, and moving the chairs, attract the attention of the audience to their boxes, and they support the staring and levelling of glasses pointed at them, with a well bred *nonchalance* that shows them well accustomed to it; while those who hire a box for the night, enter it with an appearance of *mauvaise honte* that keeps them back for the first five minutes after their entering, and when they do come forward, their flushed faces mark the dread which they feel at encountering the eyes of so great a crowd of spectators, and their over dressed heads shew how much trouble they have taken to adorn themselves for the unusual exhibition.

During the last season it became customary for ladies of respectability, to sit occasionally in the pit, and its less reputable female frequenters were rarely seen there, or, if visible, were *dressed*, and conducted themselves with a propriety that rendered their vicinity innoxious. This was a point long desired, and afforded a great relief to the occupiers of pit boxes, who were often shocked at the conduct to which they were unavoidable witnesses. It was also very desirable that

modest females, who either could not afford, or did not wish to incur, the extravagant prices of boxes, might enjoy the Opera in the pit; but alas! I fear the rudeness and ill-breeding of the gentlemen of the present school, will prove as effectual a barrier to ladies frequenting the pit, as their dread of encountering improper females formerly did.

It is really disgusting to witness the treatment which they receive there, and a woman must have the confidence of a *guardsman* who would brave it a second time.—If the female is young and pretty, every glass of every Fop in the alley and pit is levelled at her, and the freedom with which her attractions are commented on, must be most offensive to delicacy; if she is ugly, or old, she is sure to be quizzed, laughed at, and stared at; and this our modern *Dandies* call good fun.

I can fancy none of the minor miseries of human life, to exceed that of a modest, timid woman, endeavouring to get through Fops' alley, to or from the pit, on a crowded night: the party to which she belongs is probably composed of two or three ladies and one gentleman, who leads them; the others must struggle through the crowd, pressed upon at each side, and encountering the ridicule of all the men seated on the

side seats of the pit, who frequently permit ladies to stand in the alley for half an hour without moving to offer them a seat. Well might it be said here, "pretty usage for the fair sex,"---but so it is; and if one of the neglected sex should drop a flower from her tresses, or drop a shawl or reticule, instead of a thousand beaux leaping from their seats to assist her, the disaster occasions merriment and unrestrained laughter from all around.

I have seen a group, consisting of a country squire, his wife, and three bouncing daughters, attended by a young neighbour, the lover of one of the ladies, enter the pit of the Opera, fresh from their rural home, and smelling of vernal sweets.---The old Squire a perfect picture of the good old times, and his wife adorned in the showy finery of Cranbourne Alley; the daughters with cheeks looking "like strawberries smothered in cream," and heads covered with roses, as if Flora herself had showered them, so great was the profusion: the lover decked in the fashion of four summers gone by, and apparently as alarmed at the crowd around him as his female companions. Their entrance excites a general sensation among the Beaux; the bluff looks and angry frowns of the Father, and the alarm and shame visible in the countenances of the

females, fail to check the rude staring and supercilious smiles with which they are regarded: their increased embarrassment only serves to excite fresh ridicule, and this inoffensive and respectable family, who came full of the anticipation of pleasure, find themselves exposed to treatment equally new and mortifying; and their whole evening is poisoned by the shame and annoyance which they feel.

No nation talks so much of good breeding as the English, and certainly in the aggregate, none practises it so little. We talk of the excessive *politesse* of the French, and dwell with self-complacency on our superior ease of manners. But let a female of any country visit any of the places of public amusement in Paris and in London, or be placed in any awkward *tracas* in each, and she will find a marked difference in their conduct. A Frenchman would see nothing to laugh at, in the embarrassment that would afford so much mirth to one of our countrymen, but would immediately offer his assistance: daily observation furnishes us with examples of what the behaviour of an English man would be on such an occasion.---I grant that the English may know good breeding; but the French practise it.

Having given a faint sketch of the Opera, I shall

finish the Evening's amusement as is generally done, by taking a station for ten minutes in the Round Room, where fashion and folly, so often used synonymously, hold divided empire.---The votaries of the former are distinguished by an air of supercilious flippancy and effrontery, and by an apparent forgetfulness that they are in public, or that the room contains more than come within the circle of their acqaintance ; all without that circle, must be *no bodies*, and consequently are either unnoticed, or else stared at, with an intrepid rudeness only to be acquired by ladies of high *ton*. How often have I seen a lady-like, sensitive woman, shrinking beneath the fixed gaze of some Dames of fashionable notoriety, on whom her apparent timidity has impressed the conviction of her being *nobody*.

The Votaries of Folly may be known by an appearance of *assumed ease* and high airs, that are evidently a clumsy imitation of fashion ; and the excessive pleasure which they express at meeting all their dear friends, marks their anxiety to show the extent of their acquaintance, as a proof of their importance. Next to these follows a host of " Citizens of credit and renown," dressed in substantial finery, "the best of every thing."---Rich satin, trimmed with fine point, and Mechlin laces ; ornaments in jewellery, making up in

magnitude what they want in taste, and looks of conscious superiority cast at the less expensive decorations of a Dutchess or Marchioness, show that wealth, and the display of it, are the primary objects with them.—Young ladies bending beneath the weight of artificial flowers, with bare foreheads, and as bare bosoms, are holding animated conversations with some dear Mr.——— of the Guards, while mama in vain tells them that the carriage has been announced; and some antiquated spinsters are with up-turned eyes, wondering at the levity of the young ladies of the present day, and are expressing their surprise that any man can be pleased with it. Various groups may be seen passing, some muffled as if going to brave a Siberian winter, and others airily clad, as if they were beneath Italia's unclouded skies.—Lady ———'s carriage is echoed and re-echoed from the stairs, but the Lady is too much occupied with some dear agreeable man, to attend to the intimation, while many persons, anxious to get away, are detained by her carriage preventing the approach of theirs.

On descending the stairs, the horrors of gas are often experienced, as the smell is generally most offensive; and the passages, are frequently left "in darkness visible," owing to the going out of the inflammable air, so

that ladies have to encounter the disgusting contact of "The *Gentlemen* of the *Shoulder-knot*," who are ranged along each side of the passage, leaving but a very narrow line in the centre for persons to pass. Having escaped from the infectious atmosphere of Footmen and Bow Street Officers, a lady is exposed to fresh disasters in endeavouring to reach her carriage.---Link-boys are shouting at every side; Coachmen quarrelling, swearing, and whipping their horses, regardless of the fracture of the vehicles or the inconvenience of the owners. Horses are plunging, pannels driven in, ladies screaming, and footmen vociferating, and after sitting in a state of tremulous alarm for ten or twenty minutes, she gets away with probably her health impaired by having caught a severe cold, and her temper irritated by her carriage being injured.---So ends the Saturday Evening's amusement, purchased at a heavy expense, and furnishing an *admirable preparation* for the Sabbath on which it has infringed.---I would ask the frequenters of this fashionable scene if their expectations of pleasure are realized, and if on their return to the quiet of home, the languor and fatigue that succeed feverish excitement and late hours, permit their enjoying that calm sobriety of mind, that a rational and thinking

being would wish to experience on retiring to his pillow, or as preparatory to the performance of the duties of the coming sacred day.