

restored to his part—all testify to the exhaustive pains which have been expended upon the rehearsals of the comedy. But the representatives of Rosalind and Celia, of Orlando, Touchstone, and the exiled Duke, seem, for different reasons, unable to fulfil the highest requirements and possibilities of "As You Like It." The airy grace, the sunny brightness, and, in fact, much of the poetry of the play are missed. It interests only as a far inferior creation might interest, and it hardly charms at all. Mrs. Kendal's impersonation, like that of her husband, remains very much what it was at the Opéra Comique in 1875. Frank, vivacious, and keenly intelligent, easy in movement and confident in expression, it is in many ways just such an assumption as we should expect from a practised actress fairly entitled by her varied experience and her position to follow in the footsteps of Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Woffington, and other "leading ladies" of bygone days. But admirably though many of the lines are spoken—especially those which have an undercurrent of feminine sarcasm—the actions of this Rosalind do not seem inspired by any natural girlish impulse. She lacks youthful spontaneity, and she is apt to take too serious a view of the whole escapade, as she shows in the earnest emphasis with which she asks Celia, "What shall I do with my doublet and hose?" Mr. Kendal, for his part, makes of Orlando a sufficiently manly and pleasant fellow, but falls very far short of the standard of poetic grace attained by Mr. Kyrle Bellew in the revival of the comedy at the Imperial five years ago. His delivery of blank verse, too, has hardly more music than that achieved by Mr. J. F. Young in his dull embodiment of the Duke, or by Miss Linda Dietz in her miming Celia. The work of these players is careful and conscientious, but it is obviously not that for which they are best suited. Of Mr. Hare's Touchstone it is perhaps hardly fair to form a finite estimate; though he, like other actors, must be judged by what he does and not by what he intends. The first Shakspearian effort by a comedian of Mr. Hare's well-deserved reputation must necessarily be a nervous one, particularly if in his study of a difficult part he has been distracted by looking after the studies of others. Be the cause, however, what it may, it is certain that Mr. Hare's execution on Saturday night did scant justice to his conception, which is evidently that of a clown who is an educated gentleman, full of whims and quaint conceits, rather than a professional buffoon aping the acquirements which he does not really possess. Such a reading of the part must inevitably miss the broad rich humour associated with it by all who remember the late Mr. Compton's inimitable performance. But it might well prove almost as effective in another way—by its alert readiness of speech and its keen appreciation of verbal wit. Before it can do so, however, the player must be much more at his ease and must avail himself of his many humorous resources with more assurance. This he will doubtless do long before the close of the run which the brilliant revival seems sure to have, if we may judge from the favourable reception accorded to it by the eminently representative audience attracted to its first night.

#### AULD LICHT COURTSHIP.

WITH the severe Auld Lichts the Sabbath began at six o'clock on Saturday evening. By that time the gleaming shuttle was at rest, Davie Haggart had strolled into the village from his pile of stones on the whunny road; Hendry Robb, the "dummy," had sold his last barrowful of "resatzy (resiny) roots" for firewood; and the villagers, having tranquilly supped and soused their faces in their water-pails, slowly donned their Sunday clothes. This ceremony was common to all; but here divergence set in. The grey Auld Licht, to whom love was not even a name, sat in his high-backed arm-chair by the hearth, Bible or "Pilgrim's Progress" in hand, occasionally lapsing into slumber. But—though, when they got the chance, they went three times to the kirk and taught willingly in the Sabbath school—there were young men in the community so flighty that, instead of dozing at home on Saturday night, they dandered casually into the square, and, forming into knots at the corners, talked solemnly of women.

Not even on the night preceding his wedding was an Auld Licht ever known to stay out after ten o'clock. So weekly conclaves at street-corners came to an end at a comparatively early hour, one coebs after another shuffling silently from the square until it echoed, deserted, to the "toon hoose" clock. The last of the gallants, gradually discovering that he was alone, would look around him musingly, and, taking in the situation, slowly wend his way home. On no other night of the week was frivolous talk about the softer sex indulged in, the Auld Lichts being creatures of habit to whom smiling on a Monday was impossible. Long before they reached their teens they were earning their keep as herds in the surrounding glens or filling "pirms" for their parents; but they were generally on the brink of twenty before they thought seriously of matrimony. Up to that time they only trifled with the other sex's affections at a distance—filling a maid's water-pails, perhaps, when no one was looking, or carrying her "wob" at the recollection of which they would slap their knees almost jovially on Saturday night. A wife was expected to assist at the loom as well as to be cunning in the making of marmalade and the firing of bannocks, and there was consequently some heartburning among the lads for maids of skill and muscle. It was on one of these sedate Saturday evenings, in the dimly lit square, that Eppie Forsyth was objected to as "ower sma." "Ay," her affianced said, with a chuckle, "Eppie's wee; but she's an auld tid." The Auld Licht, however, who meant business seldom loitered in the streets. By-and-by there came a time when the clock looked down through its cracked glass upon the grass-grown square and saw him not. His companions, gazing at each other's boots, felt that something was going on, but made no remark.

A month ago, passing through the shabby familiar village, I brushed against a withered old man tottering down the street under a load of yarn. It was piled on a wheelbarrow which his feeble hands could not have

raised but for the rope of yarn that supported it from his shoulders; and though Auld Licht was written on his patient eyes, I did not immediately recognize Sanders Whamond. Years ago Sanders was a sturdy weaver and fervent lover whom I had the right to call my friend. Turn back the century a few decades, and we are together on a moonlight night, taking a "short cut" through the fields from the farm of Craigie-buckle. Buxom were Craigiebuckle's "dochters," and Sanders was Janet's accepted suitor. It was a muddy road through damp grass, and we picked our way silently over its ruts and pools. "I'm thinkin'," Sanders said at last, a little wistfully, "that I might hae been as weel wi' Chirsty." Now Chirsty was Janet's sister. Ah me! heavy "wobs" have taken all the grace from Janet's shoulders this many a year, though she and Sanders go bravely down the hill together. Unless they pass the allotted span of life, the "poorhouse" will never know them. As for bonny Chirsty, she proved a flighty thing, and married a deacon in the Established Church. The Auld Lichts groaned over her fall, Craigie-buckle hung his head, and the minister told her sternly to go her way. But a few weeks afterwards Lang Tammas, the chief elder, was observed talking with her for an hour in Gowrie's close; and the very next Sabbath Chirsty pushed her husband in triumph into her father's pew. The minister, though completely taken by surprise, at once referred to the stranger, in a prayer of great length, as a brand that might yet be plucked from the burning. Changing his text, he preached at him; Lang Tammas the precentor, and the whole congregation (Chirsty included), sang at him; and before he exactly realized his position he had become an Auld Licht for life. Chirsty's triumph was complete when next week, in broad daylight too, the minister's wife called, and (in the presence of Betsy Munn, who vouches for the truth of the story) graciously asked her to come up to the manse on Thursday, at 4 P.M., and drink a dish of tea. Chirsty, who knew her position, of course begged modestly to be excused; but a coolness arose over the invitation between her and Janet—who felt slighted—that was only made up at the laying-out of Chirsty's father-in-law, to which Janet was pleasantly invited.

When they had red up the house, the Auld Licht lassies sat in the gloaming at their doors on three-legged stools, patiently footing stockings. To them came stiff-limbed youths who, with a "Blawy nicht, Jeanie" (to which the inevitable answer, "It is so, Cha-ries"), rested their shoulders on the doorpost, and silently followed with their eyes the flashing needles. Thus the courtship began—often to ripen promptly into marriage, at other times to go no further. The smooth-haired maids, neat in their simple "wrappers," knew they were on their trial and that it behoved them to be wary. They had not compassed twenty winters without knowing that Marget Todd lost Davie Haggart because she "fittit" a black stocking with brown worsted, and that Finny's grievance relinquished Bell Whamond on account of the frivolous flowers in her bonnet: and yet Bell's prospects, as I happen to know, at one time looked bright and promising enough. Sitting over her father's peat-fire one night gossiping with him about fishing-flies and tackle, I noticed the grievance, who had dropped in by appointment with some ducks' eggs on which Bell's clockin hen was to sit, performing some sleight-of-hand trick with his coat-sleeve. Craftily he jerked and twisted it, till a paper bag of peppermint lozenges gradually appeared to view. This he gravely slipped into the hands of the maid of his choice, and then took his departure, apparently much relieved. Had not Bell's light-headedness driven him away, the grievance would have soon followed up his gift with an offer of his hand. Some night Bell would have "seen him to the door," and they would have stared sheepishly at each other before saying good night. The parting salutation given, the grievance would still have stood his ground, and Bell would have waited with him. At last, "Will ye hae's, Bell?" would have dropped from his half-reluctant lips; and Bell would have mumbled "Ay," with her thumb in her mouth. "Guid nicht to ye, Bell," would be the next remark—"Guid nicht to ye, Jeames," the answer; the humble door would close softly, and Bell and her lad would have been engaged. But, as it was, their attachment never got beyond the peppermint-lozenge stage, from which, in the ethics of the Auld Lichts, a man can draw back without loss of honour, in certain circumstances. It finds its counterpart, perhaps, in the "He held her hand a moment longer than was absolutely necessary" of a more elevated and refined society; certainly it precedes the engagement ring. The only really tender thing I ever heard an Auld Licht lover say to his sweetheart was when Gowrie's brother looked softly into Easie Tamson's eyes and whispered "Do you swite (sweat)?" Even then the effect was produced more by the loving cast in Gowrie's eye than by the tenderness of the words themselves.

These courtships were seldom of long duration; indeed, the wooing was occasionally the work of an evening, as in the remarkable case of Sam'l Todd. Sam'l met Tibbie Allardice for the first time about four in the evening, "speired" at seven, and had her installed legal mistress of his house at the end of the following week. Toothache was the common enemy that brought these young people together, Sam'l having had no rest until he tried Tibbie's cure. She said to the sufferer, "Ye maun keep poorin' at cauld water into yir mooth for the maiter o' twa oors." Sam'l sat him down by the edge of a well, and diligently followed her directions. When the toothache had been assuaged, he gratefully repaired to her home and laid himself at her feet. Sam'l was generally held to have brought toothache into the village, the oldest inhabitant being unable to recall a precedent; and for all future cases Tibbie's treatment was the only cure. Twice Tammas Gowrie, whose cottage was on the other side of the whunny-hill, visited Meggy Cable at an interval of a month, and on both occasions found her patiently doctoring herself at the well. "Nae better yet, Meggy?" asked Tammas anxiously the second time, evidently thinking she had been pouring water into her mouth since he last saw her. Perhaps it was her patient sufferings that affected him to the "speirin" point, for soon afterwards Meggy had to change her wells. There were few obstacles in the way of matrimony in those days. The Auld Licht swain merely sauntered up to the manse on the morning of the wedding, informed the minister—who could, if he liked, put his veto on the proceedings—of his proposed change of condition, and sauntered home again.