

ALL ABOUT WOMEN.

An ex-actress denounces the nude drama—a brief at the Broadway—Oliver Logan's latest performance—Severe arraignment of the new led drama.

From *Parade's Monthly for July*.

There were always great evils attaching to the theatrical profession. I have always deplored them deeply. Some of them I have made the theme of previous magazine articles. No one who has read my articles will say that I have not earnestly defended the theatrical profession, in spite of these evils, at the same time that I said, honestly, how I loathed them. In this feeling of a large class of people who were, like myself, bred to the stage, but who could not shut their eyes to the evils which have grown it. Within a few years these evils have grown to appalling dimensions. Decency and virtue have been crowded from the ranks by indecency and licentiousness. A coarse rage for nudity has spread in all our theatres until it has come to be the ruling force in them. Seeing this truth, I have shuddered at it. Seeing its effects, I have mourned over them. In every place where I have spoken of the stage I have denounced this encroaching shame, but I have always coupled with denunciation of its defense of the drama. At the Woman's Suffrage Convention in New York, on May 1, I denounced this thing again, but, as I was not speaking at length upon this subject, but only touched upon it in passing, and by way of illustration, I did not, as usual, defend the drama. At once there rose so wild a yell as all the heads from heaven that fell were furious at my course. Certain portions of the press attacked me, and accused me of slandering the profession to which I once belonged. Anonymous letters poured in upon me at the office of the Authors' Union in a sort of flood, vilifying me, upbraiding me, covering me with coarse and gross revilings. I was asked to explain such base conduct. It was demanded that I should take back my rash and reckless statements. I was requested to remember that I had once been very glad to think well of the theatrical profession. How dared I say I could advise no honorable woman to turn to the stage for support?

Turning the matter over in my mind carefully, I have come to the conclusion that I have in my hands an opportunity for doing a great deal of good by the simple course of making my defense. And I conclude also that my testimony in this matter has peculiar weight, as coming from one who is of a dramatic family, and may be presumed to speak from close and immediate observation, if not from experience. This is true. Though for years I have not played a part in a theatre, I have not been altogether separated from association with its people. The ties which bind me to these people are strong and close. I never expect to sever them wholly; but they shall not prevent me from giving my allegiance to the cause of morality, virtue, honor, and integrity, though, as a consequence of this, the theatrical heavens fall.

They curse of the dramatic profession, for which editors, critics, authors, and managers struggle to find a fitting name, is my general theme in this article; which is, at the same time, my defense against the charge of slandering the dramatic profession.

What the *Tribune* calls the Dirty Drama, the *World* the Nude Drama, the *Times* the Leg Drama, and other journals various other expressive adjective styles of drama, I call the Leg Business, simply.

Does any one call the caperings of a tight-rope performer the Aerial Drama—the tricks of an educated hog the Porcine Drama?

There is a term in use among "professionals" which embraces all sorts of performances in its comprehensiveness, to wit:—The Show Business.

In this term is included every possible thing which is of the nature of an entertainment, with these three requirements:—1. A place of gathering. 2. An admission fee. 3. An audience.

This remarkably comprehensive term covers with the same mantle the tragic Forrest, when he plays; the comic J. Person, when he plays; the eloquent Rachel, when he lectures; and the sweet-voiced Parpa, when she sings. Men also covers with the same mantle the wandering juggler, who balances feathers on his nose; the gymnast, who whirls on a trapeze; the danseuse, who interprets the poetry of motion; the clown, who cracks stale jokes in the ring; the performer on the tight-rope, the learned pig, and the educated monkey. Therefore, it includes the clog-dancing creature with yellow hair and indecent costume.

All these things being included in the show business, you see it is almost as wide a world as the outer world. It must be a very wide world which should include Mr. Beecher with the learned pig.

It must be a very wide world which should include Rachel, Bistori, Janaschek, and Lander with the clog-dancing creature of indecent action and attire.

But by as good a right as you would call Mr. Beecher and the learned pig performers in the intellectual sphere, you would call Janaschek and the clog-dancing creature interpreters of the drama.

How, then, does it happen that, in attacking these yellow-haired ruddies, I am compelled to say that they disgrace the dramatic profession?

In this wise:—These creatures occupy the temples of the drama; they perform in conjunction with actors and actresses, on the same stage, before the same audience, in the same hour. They are under the same management, and take part in those nondescript performances which are called burlesques, spectacles, what you will. They carry off the chief honors of the hour; their names occupy the chief places on the bills; and, as I said in my speech at the equal-rights meeting at Steiny Hall, they win the chief prizes in the theatrical world.

A woman who has not ability enough to rank as a passable "walking lady" in a good theatre, on a salary of twenty-five dollars a week, can strip herself naked, and be thus qualified to go upon the stage of two-thirds our theatres at a salary of one hundred dollars and upwards.

Clothed in the dress of an honest woman, she is worth nothing to the manager. Stripped as naked as she dare—and it seems there is a little let when so much is done—she becomes a prize to her manager, who knows that crowds will rush to see her, and who pays her a salary accordingly.

That they need explanation after all; no complete is perversion of everything pertaining to this theme that the very language is beggared of its power of accurate expression. To sing:—Yes, but not to sing as Parpa sings, nor such songs as she sings. The songs in demand in this sphere are vulgar, senseless—and, to the most triumphantly successful, should be capable of indecent constructions, and accompanied by the wink, the wriggle, the grimace, which are not peculiar to virtuous women, whatever else they are. The more senseless the song, the more utterly it is idiotic drivel, the better it will answer in the absence of the baser requisites. Here is a specimen:—

"Little Ho-beep, she lost her sheep, And don't know where to find her; Look for her some other time, And fetch her tail behind her."

A simple nursery song; and if men were babies, innocent and harmless in itself; but men are not babies, and the song is not sung in a simple or harmless manner, but with the wink or the idiotic stare that means a world, and sets the audience into an ecstatic roaring.

To jig: Let no one confound jig-dancing with the poetry of motion which is illustrated by a thoroughly organized and thorough-bred body of ballet-dancers. Ballet dancing is a profession by itself, just as distinctly, as is singing in opera. A danseuse like Fanny Ellsler or Isadora, or, to come to the present moment, like Morlaechi, is no more to be ranked with these mad jiggers than an actress like Mrs. Lander is. The ability to jig is an accomplishment which any of these nude creatures can pick up in a few weeks. A danseuse, who has any claim whatever to the title of *artiste*, must be bred to her profession through years of toil and study. In this country the ballet proper has had little illustration. Yet it is a branch of art—not the noblest art, it is true; but, by the side of the jiggling woman, almost rising to dignity.

To play on certain musical instruments:—These instruments should be such as to look queer in a woman's hands—such instruments as the banjo and the bugle. Now, I am not saying that the ability to strum silly songs, or jig, or to play the banjo in itself disgraces a man, however little it may entitle her to my esteem. I am only calling attention to them as valuable aids to the nude woman in her business, and letting you judge whether they give her any right to the name of *artiste*. You, no doubt, will at once remark that these accomplishments have hitherto been peculiar to that branch of the show business occupied by the negro minstrel. But in the hands of the white woman, these accomplishments amuse without disgusting us. They are not wedded to bare legs, indecent wriggles, nor suggestive feminine leers and winks; nor is there a respectable minstrel band in the United States to-day which would tolerate in its members the *giggles* and *giggles* which I have about the stage of some of the largest temples of the drama in this city. The minstrels would not dare utter them. Their halls would be vacated and their business ruined. It requires that a half-naked woman should utter these ribaldrous innuendoes before our fastidious public will receive them unrebukingly.

To what branch of the show business, then, do these creatures belong? I answer—to that branch which is known by the names of variety show, concert saloon, music hall, and various other titles, which mean nothing unless you already know what they mean. No one in the show business needs to be told what a variety show is. It certainly is not a theatre. Until the reign of the Nude Woman, set in, variety halls were the resort of only the lowest and vilest, and women were not seen in the audience. The Nude Woman was sometimes seen upon the stage, but she was only one of a large variety of attractions—she was a luxury longly relished by the low and vile who went to see her; but only permitted to exhibit herself economically, for fear of cloying the public appetite. Delicate caution! but how useless, her later career in our theatres has shown. There she is exhibited ceaselessly for three hours, in every variety which an indecent imagination can devise. When the *Black Crook* first presented its Nude Woman to the gaze of a crowded audience, she was met with a gasp of astonishment, at the contrary which dared so much. Men actually grew pale at the boldness of the thing; a death-like silence fell over the house, broken only by the clapping of a band of *cloqueurs* around the outer aisles; but it passed; and, in view of the fact that these women were French ballet-dancers after all, they were tolerated.

By slow and almost imperceptible degrees this shame has grown, until to-day the indecency of that exhibition is far surpassed. These women were ballet-dancers from France and Italy, and they represented in their nudities and demons. In silence they whirled about the stage; in silence trooped off. Some faint odor of idealism and poetry rested over them. The Nude Woman of to-day represents nothing but herself. She runs upon the stage giggling, trots down the foot-lights, winks at the audience, rattles off from her tongue some stupid attempts at wit, some twaddling allusions to Sorosis, or General Grant, or other subject prominent in the public eye, and is always peculiarly and emphatically herself—the woman, that is, whose name is on the bills in large letters, and who considers herself an object of admiration to the spectators. The sort of ballet-dancer who figured in the *Black Crook* is paralleled on the stage of every theatre in this city, except one, at this time. She no longer excites attention. To create a proper and profitable sensation in the breast of man, she no longer utters anything. Something bolder must be devised—something that shall utter its eddies and outstrip her. Hence, the Nude Woman of to-day—who outstrips her in the broadest sense, and, as if it were not enough that she should be allowed to go unblinded and unrottened, she must be baptized with the honors of a profession for which Shakespeare wrote. Managers recognize her as an actress, and pay her sums ranging from fifty to a thousand dollars a week, according to her value in their eyes. Actresses who love virtue better than money are driven into the streets by her, and it becomes a grave and solemn question with hundreds of honorable women what they shall do to earn a livelihood. I say it is nothing less than an insult to the members of the dramatic profession, when these nude women should be classed among the actors, and hold possession of the majority of our theatres. Their place is in the concert saloons or the circus tents. Theatres are for artists.

A friend said to me the other day that it was inconsistent in me to find indecency in women exposing their persons, when men constantly do the same—that, as an honest exponent of woman's rights, I ought to see no more immodesty in a woman dancing a jig in flesh-colored leggings than in a man performing a circus feat in the same costume. I reply that I think such are indeed in both sexes. Yet, nevertheless, a woman a thousand times more indecent than a man, for the simple reason that the costume of the sexes in every day life is different.

To ignore this fact is to just wilfully shut

one's eyes to a reasonable argument. Women in society are all the lower part of their bodies dripping—and for good and sufficient reasons, which no man, who has a wife or mother, should stop to question. But set this aside, Circus men, who strip to the waist in this fashion, don't claim to be actors. Now I come back to the words I said at the Woman Suffrage Convention. They have been variously reported by the newspapers. They were exactly as follows:—

"I can advise no honorable, self-respecting woman to turn to the stage, with its demoralizing influences which seem to be growing stronger and stronger day by day; where the greatest rewards are won by a set of brazen-faced, clog-dancing creatures, with dyed yellow hair and padded limbs, who have come here in droves from across the ocean."

I have been astonished and pained at the extent to which the meaning of these words has been distorted. The press and my anonymous letter critics seem to be agreed in taking the view that I attack, in these words, the profession in which I was reared, and all my family. Some of the letters sent me go on to say that, by encouraging me to go on only others are from actors and actresses, seeking to dissuade me—not always in gentle language. The first letter on which I lay my hands—so gross in its language that I suspect it to be from one of the nude women themselves—says:—"You were, no doubt, satisfied with the stage so long as it paid. Now, don't swear at the bridge that carried you over." Perhaps this person, being new to the country, thinks it is true, as a newspaper once said, that I was formerly a ballet-girl.

Hitherto I have only laughed at this story, as on a par with that of the person who thought me a daughter of the negro preacher Loguen, or that of the "dress reform" scarecrow who believed me "formerly a ballad songstress." I laugh at it no longer. I answer, in all events, that I never was a ballet-girl, nor ever a jig-dancer. It is true that I was once a member of the theatrical profession; so were my father and my mother; so were my five sisters; but I say with pride never was there a Logan who sought any connection with the stage save in the capacity of a legitimate player. There were no nude women on the stage in my father's day. Such exhibitions as are now made on the stage of many leading theatres were, in his day, confined to that branch of the show business known as the *model artists*—another perversion of words; but most people know their meaning in their present acceptance. Across this infamous bridge no Logan ever walked. And, one by one, every member of my family has left the stage behind until, at this writing, not one remains upon it, though of their number, there are seven still living who have trod the boards.

I take up next an anonymous letter, dated at Boston, and signed, "A Sister Member of the Profession." The writer says she is a respectable actress, and professes to be ignorant that gross evils prevail in the theatrical world. She refers to my letter in the *New York Times*, and asks at what theatre such questions were ever put to an applicant for employment.

In my letter to the *Times*, I said:—"I referred the other night to decent young women who are not celebrities—merely honest, modest girls who have parted with their not very valuable heritage of the stage, and who find it difficult to obtain any other employment, being uneducated for any other. When these girls go into a theatre to apply for a situation, they are met by the questions of managers as expressed in the following questions:—

- "1. 'Do you have dyed yellow hair?'"
"2. 'Are your legs, arms, and bosom symmetrically formed, and are you willing to expose them?'"
"3. 'Can you sing brassy songs, and dance the can-can, and waltz at the same time, and give utterance to disgusting half words, which mean whole actions?'"
"4. 'Are you acquainted with any rich men who will throw a few dollars at you, and keep about dubious rumors concerning your chastity?'"
"5. 'Are you willing to appear to-night, and every night, and the glare of gaslights, and before the gaze of thousands of men, in this pair of satin breeches, ten inches long, without a vestige of drapery or situation, and to have your questions asked?'"
"6. 'If you can answer these questions affirmatively, will you give us a situation; if not, there's the door.'"

At nothing have I been more astonished than at the manner in which this letter has been received by certain "professionals." It is not necessary, I suppose, to give, with the accuracy of a criminal trial report, the exact questions which pass between managers and actresses who seek for employment. Their purport is unmistakable. Take this one—which was asked a beautiful and modest young woman whom I have known for years, an actress by profession, who was quietly edged out of her last situation because she carried decency and womanly reserve too far in the presence of an audience which cheered to the echo the nude creatures who trod the same stage with her:—"Are you up in this style of business?"

This question needed no interpreter—for the manager pointed, as he spoke, to one of the members of his company, photographed in an immodest attitude, with her legs clad in a pair of silk breeches, and her bosom in a tight-fitting breech-bodice, richly embroidered. She was not "up in" this sort of business; she sought employment as an actress; there was none for her, and she went away, to apply with like results at other theatres.

She sought employment as a respectable actress at fifteen or twenty dollars a week. She would have refused \$500 a week salary to do what the Nude Woman does. If the above instance does not indicate managerial requirements sufficiently, take these statements from managerial lips:—"Devil take your legitimate drama! I tell you, if I can't draw the crowd otherwise, I'll put a woman on my stage without a rag on her."

Said a manager of this city in the hearing of a dozen people, and the disgusting remark was blurted out from his mouth to me, as if it had been wit. A proprietor of one of the theatres above named, where a legitimate play was running without paying expenses, rubbed his dry old hands together and said:—"Ah! we must have some of those fat young women in this piece to make it draw."

I go down to Boston for a moment, where lives this anonymous letter-writing actress, who is so singularly ignorant of what is passing about her, to mention the rumor which was set afloat by a manager of a certain one of the blonde nudities, to the effect that she was once the mistress of the Prince of Wales. This manager deemed it to his interest to keep this vile story afloat. He gave an added plausibility to the creature, who nightly wriggled about his stage in a dress of silk which fitted her form all over as tightly as a glove.

I stay in Boston long enough to note that, in the late Workingwomen's Convention there, a lady related the trials of a young friend of hers, who went upon the stage and endured insult and wickedness from managers. The same lady corroborated my own observations, with the statement that managers look upon the girls they employ as women of the town.

My anonymous "sister member of the profession" has been fortunate beyond most actresses of this period, in coming in contact with nothing of this sort. I respect the theatre in its present, I respect the actor who is an artist, even the

harmless clown of the pantomime, who makes us laugh without offending decency. That I love so many good and lovely women who are actresses is my chief reason for deploring the reign of a class of women who are neither good nor lovely, but coarse, indecent, painted, padded, and dyed.

If it were possible to treat the Nude Woman question, and leave the nude woman herself out of it, I should be glad to do so. I am the last to wish to give pain to any person; but, in the path of clear duty, there is no choice. When it becomes a question between suffering, struggling virtue, and vice which rolls in luxury and gathers unto itself wealth by the sheer practice of its wickedness, no woman who loves honor in her sex can hesitate as to the course to be taken.

The spirit of most of the anonymous letters I have received is one which might well cause me to hesitate in the path I have chosen, if fear were stronger in me than principle. But neither the sneers of low-class newspapers nor the threats of anonymous correspondents shall have weight with me. I see no other way to effect a cure of this Nude Woman evil but to make it odious. To that end I shall do what in me lies. This article is but a beginning. I shall not cease to combat the encroachments of the Nude Woman upon the domain which should be occupied by true artists, and by virtuous men and women.

Firm in the belief that this indecent army can be routed, I call on all honorable souls, both in and out of the profession, to stand by my side and strike hard blows. We shall get hard blows in return, no doubt, but poor indeed must be the capacity of that warrior who cannot hold his own against the cohorts of the Nude Woman. Whatever falls on my head in consequence of my words, I promise to give thrust for thrust. I do not fear the issue. "Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just."

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NOTICE.—The SEMI-ANNUAL INTEREST on the Funded Debt of the City of Philadelphia, due July 1, 1869, will be paid on and after that date, at this Office, by order of the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund.

JOSEPH N. PERIOL, City Treasurer.

CITY TREASURER'S OFFICE.—PHILADELPHIA, June 1, 1869.

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NOTICE TO STOCKHOLDERS.—The Board of Directors have this day declared a semi-annual dividend of FIVE PER CENT. on the capital stock of the Company, clear of National and State taxes, payable in cash on and after May 30, 1869.

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BANK REPORTS.—ABSTRACT OF REPORT OF CONDITION OF THE NATIONAL BANK OF THE REPUBLIC OF PHILADELPHIA, made to the Comptroller of the Currency, as shown by its books at the close of business on the 18th day of June, 1869.

Table with columns: RESOURCES, LIABILITIES. Rows include Loans and Discounts, United States Bonds, Cash Assets, etc.

RESOURCES.—Loans and Discounts, \$1,288,374 35; United States Bonds deposited with the Treasurer of United States, 600,000 00; Bonds on hand, 121,121 10; Real Estate (productive), \$2,058,450 45; Legal-tender Notes, Coin, and Certificates, 360,200 00; National Notes, 21,718 90; Fractional Currency and Stamps, 618 82; Premiums, 9,230 00; Due from other Banks, 271,750 99; Total, \$3,042,200 00.

LIABILITIES.—Capital Stock, \$1,000,000 00; Circulation, 475,000 00; Deposits, 1,501,200 00; Profit and Loss, 35,717 10; Total, \$3,042,200 00.

PHILADELPHIA, June 18, 1869. 619 sixth st

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