

# ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

[THE EDITOR IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY CORRESPONDENTS.]

## MISS MARY GANNON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ERA.

SIR,—The brief obituary notice of Miss Mary Gannon, in the New York correspondence of last week's *Era*, ended with this sentence:—"She has long been connected with Wallack's Theatre, and was ever a favourite with our Theatre-goers." Perhaps you will allow me to add a few lines to this tribute to the merits of an actress to whom any words of praise would do scant justice.

Miss Gannon was not only a favourite with American Theatre-goers, but she was unquestionably the best actress in her line in the United States. Now that she is gone there is nobody to take her place, just as there was nobody to compete with her while she lived. Miss Mary Gannon was to the New York Stage what Miss Marie Wilton is to the London Stage, and you can, therefore, readily imagine why her loss seems irreparable.

Years ago, at Mitchell's Olympic, Miss Gannon, who was then a young, slender, beautiful woman, charmed the town with her burlesque singing, acting, and dancing; but it is not as a burlesque actress that she will be remembered. As she grew older her talents ripened and mellowed until she was without an equal in the young girls of the old comedies, or the coquettish widows of more modern plays. About all her impersonations there was a quaintness, a piquancy, and above all, a naturalness, which no other American actress in that line of business could ever rival, and which Miss Marie Wilton alone, upon the London Stage, is able to equal. Indeed, the styles of these two ladies were so nearly the same that the comparison is quite justifiable.

I believe that Miss Gannon, like most of the actresses upon the American stage, was an Englishwoman by birth; but her theatrical reputation belongs entirely to the United States. Eclipsed in burlesque by Mrs. John Wood, in high comedy by Mrs. John Drew and Miss Laura Keane, and in serious characters by Mrs. John Sefton—the only American actresses who were remarkable for the same naturalness of manner—Miss Gannon adopted a class of parts entirely distinct from any of those mentioned, and made them peculiarly her own. No one could deliver a bit of equivoque like Mary Gannon; none could so well simulate the arch simplicity of sweet sixteen or the knowing innocence of young widowhood; none could so well render a small part important by constant by-play and careful attention to minute details; none could so charmingly give a word a double meaning by the look or gesture which accompanied and emphasised it.

Of course, the New York audiences petted Miss Gannon, but they were never able to spoil her. She remained till the last a most conscientious *artiste*, who valued her work for its own sake as well as for the effect which it produced upon the public. She was a favourite with all Theatre-goers, as your correspondent states; but she was also a favourite with all actors and actresses. The whole Profession cordially appreciated her remarkable talents, and sincerely esteemed her for the warm, womanly heart which showed itself in all that she did, on or off the stage. It is not enough to say that she had not a single enemy; the truth is that no one could know her without becoming her friend. She has died too soon for the Theatrical Profession in America, which can ill spare so distinguished and admirable a member, and too soon, also, for her own reputation, which, increasing with every new part she impersonated, seemed still far from its legitimate culmination.

I have the honour to remain, &c., STEPHEN FISKE.

London, March 17th, 1868.

## "A Hero of Romance."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ERA.

SIR,—With regard to the drama, entitled *A Hero of Romance*, produced at the Haymarket Theatre, permit me to make the following remarks.

The original French drama, by Octave Feuillet, was adapted for the American stage by Messrs. Edwards and Lester Wallack, and entitled *The Romance of a Poor Young Man*; the part of Manuel, rechristened in the Haymarket version Victor, being sustained by Mr. Wallack. Now, *The Romance of a Poor Young Man* and *A Hero of Romance* are, with a very few trifling exceptions, the same; but in answer to a call for the author, or adapter, on Saturday night, Dr. Westland Marston appeared before the curtain, and the audience naturally gave him credit for the adaptation. Beyond altering the names of all the characters, without any apparent reason, and adding a few lines at the commencement of the third *tableau*, I am curious to know what claim the author of *Strathmore*, *The Favourite of Fortune*, &c., can lay to the production. All the most successful lines belong to the American version, and are almost word for word the same. The piece is, I believe, published by Mr. French, of New York.

"Shall we not believe books in print?"

I am, Sir, your obedient servant, "THESPIS."

## Royal Colosseum Theatre and Opera House, Glasgow.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ERA.

SIR,—An advertisement appeared in *The Era* of yesterday (on the fourth column of the first page) constructed and evidently calculated to do me serious injury in the eyes of the Profession; said advertisement being to the effect that Edward Ryan, calling himself therein a scenic artist, had—"in consequence of a misunderstanding with me"—withdrawn his services from "The Royal Colosseum Theatre." This advertisement could not have been written later than Thursday, the 12th, and up to that time—in fact, up to the present—I have had no misunderstanding with him; and if he withdrew his services so early as that date, he nevertheless came to the treasury on Saturday, the 14th, and received his full salary up to that date, as if he had been honestly working for it.

To let "Managers of Theatres and Large Concert Halls" understand the matter thoroughly—*my Manager found it necessary to give Ryan his notice on Saturday, the 7th inst.* Doubtless he can give a reason for so doing. I can, therefore, see no reason for Ryan's mis-statements.

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It is quite true that there is a deep-set conspiracy against my endeavours as a Theatrical Manager—which the public of Glasgow are seeing through more and more every day—and the great and increasing patronage which I am proud to acknowledge I am receiving, is a proof of the futile efforts of the "vigilant committee" who have been working against me.

I would respectfully request that the "Profession"—for that is the stream at present under process of pollution—would not listen to unauthenticated reports, but keep in view the fact that I have spent over £30,000 in the erection of a Theatre second to none in the empire; that it was half built before my old Concert Hall premises were taken as a Theatre; and that I am, therefore, not to be considered as having started opposition to any one.

It must be in the remembrance of many that I received the same kind of opposition when I first started the old Milton Colosseum Hall—that I met with a repetition of the same jealous, ill-will feeling when I opened the Scotia Music Hall. Yet it must be admitted that I have been the most healthful impetus the Concert Hall business ever received in Glasgow. And without egotism I hope to make as positive a change for the better in the Theatrical business, if I am spared. I am the public's obedient servant,

JAMES S. BAYLIS, Proprietor.

Glasgow, March 16, 1868.

MR. EDITOR.—SIR,—In a notice last week in *The Era* referring to Miss Marie Wilton's company and *Caste*, the name of Miss Bessie Harding is mentioned as playing Esther and Polly Eccles, the former being represented by my daughter, Miss Ada Dyas, from the commencement of the tour up to the present time. I am, faithfully yours, EDWARD DYAS.

MR. EDITOR.—SIR,—We regret to see in your paper the distress of the old Messenger, Vincent, of her Majesty's Theatre, and beg to enclose 5s. for him—if you will kindly receive it for him. Trusting your notice will cause others to remember him, we are, Sir, your obedient servants, RICHARD and JOHN SLACK, 336, Strand.

MR. EDITOR.—SIR,—Will you kindly acknowledge in *The Era* the following sums in aid of Deulin Johnson:—H. T. Arden, Esq., 5s.; J. Raymond, 2s. 6d.; J. Carena, 2s.; E. Dean, 2s. 6d.; total, 12s. Truly yours, J. MILANO.

MR. EDITOR.—SIR,—There being a report, in your last issue, of the first appearance, in Dublin, of a Mr. Conway Brown, Negro comedian, &c., I beg the favour that you will let it be known that I am still engaged as Leader and Musical Director at the Victory Music Hall, Aldershot. Yours, &c., J. CONWAY BROWN, Aldershot.

MADLE. MARIOT DE BEAUVOISIN'S CONCERT.—This clever young pianiste and pupil of Mr. Benedict will give a grand evening concert, at the Hanover-square Rooms, on Tuesday next. Madlle. De Beauvoisin's concert will be of a highly interesting nature, for, in addition to her own brilliant performances on the pianoforte, the vocal and instrumental responsibilities will be sustained by a large party of celebrities. Mr. Benedict's name appears as one of the Conductors of the concert, and in this office he is associated with Messrs. Frank Mori and G. B. Allen. Miss Robertine Henderson, Madlle. Angelina Salvi, Miss Palmer, and Mesdames Laura Baxter and Florence Lancia, with Messrs. Leigh Wilson, Wilford Morgan, Winn, F. Chatterton, C. Harper, Viotti Collins, Hutchins, Barrett, and G. Tyler will combine in carrying out the programme.

EXETER HALL.—Mendelssohn's *Walpurgis Night* will be performed, for the first time in Exeter Hall, on Wednesday, the 25th, by the National Choral Society, under the direction of Mr. G. W. Martin. Mr. Santley will take the part of the Druid Priest. The band and chorus will number 700. The *Walpurgis Night* is little known in England; it is, nevertheless, one of the gifted composer's best works. Handel's *Acis and Galatea* will form the next part of the Concert; Mr. Santley singing "O ruddier than the cherry."

OFFENBACH'S opera, *The Grand Duchess*, is to be revived at Easter, with Mrs. Howard Paul and Mr. Harrison, the tenor, in the principal parts.