

at the southern extremity it is full 100 feet broad, and seventy or eighty feet high, and the *coup d' œil* from this end is truly magnificent. Its direction is not exactly straight, for at a short distance from the northern entrance, it inclines slightly to the right, and subsequently resumes its straight course. The channel of the creek runs through the archway, but I should think, that unless it be immediately after heavy rains, there can seldom be much water in it.

Almost close to the entrance, at the north end, is the mouth of a passage, making nearly a right angle with the main archway, in an easterly direction. This, for about the distance of 100 feet, is broad and lofty, after which it gradually contracts, until at the distance of seventy or eighty feet more, it is terminated in a low archway, about two feet high. The latter portion of this passage abounds in handsome stalactites, and upon our creeping through the archway at its extremity, we found ourselves in a spacious apartment, the most prominent feature in which are two massive stalagmites, resembling a pulpit and a tomb. I should think that the roof of this cavern must be near the outer surface of the rock, for upon going up a steep ascent on the right, I saw roots of grass hanging down from the fissures in the rock. There were the remains of a fire which Mr. Davidson had made, he being unprovided with the means of obtaining a better light.

Having, however, torches with me for the purpose, I examined the cavern throughout, and I could not discover any outlet but the one by which we had entered.

After quitting the passage, we continued our search, and not many yards further down the grand archway, on the same side of it, we found a second cave, but not of very large dimensions, and about the centre of the tunnel, on the opposite side, another long passage of 500 or 600 feet in length, which also gradually contracting, terminated in a narrow arch, opening to another cavern, lofty, but not large, in which the roots of grass were also visible.

Parallel to this is another long passage, separated from it by a stone partition, through two low apertures in which it is approached. These caverns had escaped the notice of Mr. Davidson, and in all probability had never before been visited by any human beings. The bats were very numerous, and appeared to be much annoyed at our intrusion.

In one of the upper galleries, (if I may so say), on the eastern side of the grand archway, there is, what we took to be the mouth of another passage. This, however, we were unable to explore, inasmuch as we had no means of ascending; and, moreover, the evening was fast drawing in upon us, and warned us to return homeward.

Wombats must be very numerous, for we saw their holes in every direction.

March 27, 1843.

ON reading certain beautiful lines, addressed to an "Echo on the Banks of the Hunter," written by Charles Harpur, and published in the *Australasian Chronicle*, of the 14th March, 1843.

BY HENRY HALLORAN.

And I in early youth had hopes as deep,
 That fame, fair vision! would be one day mine;—
 That manly hearts would burn, and bright eyes weep,
 Moved by the magic of an art divine,
 Which I rejoiced to learn, and still am proud to keep.

And tho' no longer phantom-led as then,
 But bless'd with all that I can well desire—
 I still delight to move my fellow-men;—
 With generous thoughts to bid their hearts aspire;
 Vain is all other fame, which pencil wins, or pen.

For let thy mental eye, with backward gaze,
 Pass over even a century of time,
 And deem how many gave their nights and days,
 To the sweet breathings of impassioned rhyme,
 And all for this loved hope, which still alas! betrays.

I see their young eyes flashing with delight,—
 I see the inspired youth, the adoring lover,
 With hopes of love and poesy, most bright;
 And mentally, I read their fond words over,—
 Now lost within the past, as in the depths of night.

We are deluded by this hope of fame—
 It is a false, tho' much desired good:—
 A far more generous and more holy aim,
 Is to impress the living multitude,—
 Awakening in their souls, great thoughts, to burn like flame.

Yes, this should be our aim, nor ill repaid,
 To make men feel how great the gift of life;
 How sacred human rights—too oft betrayed;
 How vain and cruel is all war and strife;
 And that the soldier's course is oft a murderous trade.

To teach how worthless is the common quest,
 Of Wealth and Station—even the pride of birth;
 To shew them that the Poor may still be bless'd,
 May raise his head above the kings of Earth,—
 If he, of moral greatness, feel himself possessed.

To teach them what a blessing Freedom is—
 Freeing the soul from chains, more hard to bear
 Than those which wound the flesh:—to teach them this,
 And that it spreads it's bright arms everywhere,
 Raising the oppressed and weak from misery's deep abyss.

To teach them what Love is—the essential part,
 Of Christian Charity—which suffers long,
 Which heals the wounded, binds the broken heart,
 Which cannot do, and will not sanction wrong,
 Which makes a fragile child, e'en as a giant strong.

The might of Conscience, and of Truth the power,
 The majesty of Virtue to unfold:—
 To cherish these e'en to our dying hour;—
 For mortals fashioned in a heavenly mould,
 Can have no brighter, and no higher dower.

To teach Religion, not as some now teach—
 Making it foul with abject hopes and fears,
 But a bright guide, thro' whom, we *all* may reach
 The presence of our God, altho' in tears,
 And which e'en now yields balm to heal the woes of each.

To teach to men the dignity of Man—
 The Child of Progress, and the Son of God—
 The Heir of Heaven—who, tho' a narrow span,
 He seem to fill on earth—and bear the rod
 Of suffering—is yet a God, in the Almighty's plan.

To lead them thence, meekly to contemplate
 The "Father of our Spirits," the Supreme,
 The Invisible God, Eternal, Great;—
 Until this Prime Idea, brightly beam
 Like sunlight o'er the souls, alas! now desolate.

If such should be our life's devoted aim,
 Why heed the issue, or the conflict shun?
 What tho' we should not compass human fame?
 There is a brighter guerdon to be won;
 Such is the path I choose, it cannot lead to shame.
 These were dim murmurs in my soul of yore,
 Without an echo in the Visible round:
 But now from the Invisible, even more and more,
 I hear their echo's silver shafted sound—
 They fill my soul with joy, until my eyes run o'er.

March, 1843.

THE COMET.

BY HENRY NEELE, ESQ.

O'er the blue heavens—majestic and alone—
 He treads, as treads a monarch towards his throne!
 Darkness her leaden sceptre lifts in vain,
 Crushed and consumed beneath his fiery wain;
 And night's swarth cheeks, pained by his gazing eye,
 Blush, like Aurora's, as he passes by!
 See, how the countless hosts of heaven turn pale,—
 The blood-red cheek of Mars begins to fail,
 Bright Berenice's shining locks grow dim,
 Orion changes as he looks on him,
 And the stern Gorgon on his brightness rests
 Her stony eyes, and lowers her snaky crests!
 In breathless wonder hushed, the starry choir
 Listen, in silence, to his one bold lyre;
 Save when its lingering echoes they prolong,
 And tell, to distant worlds, the wonderous song!—
 And *what* that song, where numbers fill the ears,
 With admiration, of surrounding spheres?
 "Honour and adoration, power and praise,
 To Him who tracks the comet's pathless ways;
 Who, to the stars, has their bright courses given,
 And to the sun, appoints his place in heaven;
 And rears, for man, a mansion more sublime,
 Not built by hands, nor doomed to stoop to time,
 Whose strong foundations, unimpaired, shall stay,
 When suns, and stars, and worlds, — and all things pass away!"

F R E D O N I.

[CONTINUED.]

ACT II.

SCENE III. *The Gardens before FREDONI'S Palace.* Enter LORENZO and ALBERTI.

LOR. Well!—here we are before Fredoni's halls,
 And if mine eyes have not forgot their gift
 I saw that curious, plotting knave, Thomaso,
 Running as quick, and looking as amazed
 As if the fiend himself were after him!—
 In truth, I fear that there is something wrong.

ALBERTI. Tush! my friend, there's nothing can be wrong.

LOR. No!
 How knowest thou that?—credit me, my friend,
 That he who studies human nature much
 Can from the simplest things infer the most.
 'Tis not the bluster of the loudest tongue
 That tells the deepest truth! Alberti,
 In age we are as father is to son—
 Ee'en wer't thou older thou might'st be, my child:
 Thou lov'st me as a brother—that's thy feeling!
 But mine is still more sacred!—I've no friends,
 No one whose blood doth corporate with mine own,
 No relation, however distant—none!
 This confession will solve the mystery
 Of my love to thee. When I first saw thee,
 Thou wert a puny child; yet in that child
 I saw the seed, which well matured, would make
 A noble man; with heart as free and soft
 As the sweet breezes which we now inhale
 From off these beds of flowers. Ay! Alberti,
 I've watched thee as you grew to man's estate,
 And I've enjoyed, laughed at your little sports,
 And thank'd my God that I had heart to do so!
 Years pass'd and pass'd—but still wert thou the same,
 Till thou had'st come to that maturity
 Which did pronounce thee man!

ALB. My dearest friend,
 My tongue cannot express my gratitude to thee!

LOR. I want it not—that look of your's, dear boy
 Speaks twenty thousand volumes! God has placed
 Upon the visages of all good men
 His holy mark, no man can it mistake:—
 It is the ruffian's terror, and the good man's love.
 The eye that beams with virtue's own pure light,
 The quiet proud brow of conscious dignity,
 The upright bearing, and the noble mein,
 Which to the veriest peasant gives a grandeur
 Princes might envy—but not obtain!
 But—stay, Alberti—some one comes—'tis he—

ALB. Who?

LOR. Fredoni—let us retire—'tis strange!

Something is wrong, his face is pale as death,
And the deep working of his noble brow
Betokens feelings of no common kind.

(*They retire into the garden.*)

Enter FREDONI, from the Palace.

FRED. My heart is like a furnace—it doth burn—
Burn like a living hell within my breast!
There's outraged pride—ambition blasted—
Affection turned to curses, and repentance,
The sinner's only hope—e'en it is dead;
My brain swims round, madness possesses me,
What can—what shall I do—tell me, fate?
For my poor senses can instruct me nothing!
(*Throws himself on the ground.*)

Enter PAULO.

PAULO. Fredoni!—what!—unmann'd again—for shame!

FRED. (*rising*) Paulo! is't thee—I did not know thee, oh!
Do not blame me, father!—my heart doth crack
E'en like a pine upon a blazing fire.
If thou but felt'st what I now feel—but that
Thou can'st not do! Father, my heart doth burn!
One form alone doth now possess mine eyes,
And though most beautiful, seems to curse me!
It is my child, my lost, lost child!

PAULO. My son!—

FRED. Son!—son!—call me not thy son!—if the grave
Could ope' its ponderous jaws, and send him forth
That could alone so name me—I'd be glad!
Methinks my heart would burst as I did kneel,
Repentant to his sacred form! The curse!
The curse of parricide is now upon me—
I'm as a straw borne by the whirlwind—
Toss'd, and turn'd, and torn, and yet no refuge,
No resting place—even death itself
Cannot afford me that!—

PAULO. Fredoni—calm thyself,
Those ravings are both childish and unmanly—
Unworthy of the noble race thou spring'st from!

FRED. (*Starting and gazing wildly around.*)
Who spoke? Great God that voice!—

PAULO. 'Twas I did speak;
Why dost glare around as if some shadow
Passed before thine eyes, whose form was fearful?
Speak Fredoni—answer me.

FRED. Did'st not hear
That voice?

PAULO. No one spake save I!

FRED. Ha!—indeed!—
Ah! I have heard that voice in other days,
When I indeed was not the man I am.
I've heard it when a child—that stern, that proud
Commanding tone!—friar, it was my father's voice!

PAULO. Thy brain wanders—let me lead thee hence,
Thou art unwell?

FRED. I have endured enough
To make an angel mad!—I am better now.
'Twas but the agitation of a moment,
The strong effusion of insulted pride!

PAULO. Insulted pride! what means my son by that?
Pride—proper pride, can never be insulted.
Its stern foundation is on virtue's rock,
Firm set, immutable! Heaven itself
Has stamped it with its impress, and made it
In its honesty, invincible; Yes!
As the lapidary can cleanse the jewel,
And by his craft destroy the crust that hides
The gem. So virtue can a praise bestow,
The consciousness of which, acts as a charm
Which can destroy the deepest haze which would
Eclipse its light!

FRED. Thou speak'st well good friar,
But when thou hear'st what I have to repeat,
Thou'lt say I have a cause for wretchedness
As great as e'er afflicted man!

PAULO. Tell me that cause?
I do not wish my friend that thou should'st say,
Even in confidence to me, a tale
That thou would'st rather bury in thy breast;
But if thou wilt put so much trust in me,
Make me thy confident, and tell me all.
Believe me Signor thou shalt ne'er repent it,
I will advise thee well—harm thee I would not.

FRED. Father, I know thou always wert my friend,
I have still felt it—aye! in my deepest heart,
And oft my cheek has burned with very shame
When I have thought, I had a good man's love,
As I well know thou art. But to my tale—
Friar, 'tis a fearful thing to put in form
Those words whose meaning doth disgrace the tongue
Which utters them—yet—still it must be done,
And I will do it! tho' my heart strings crack!
Thou rememberest father, that fearful man
Thou saw'st with me this morning?

PAULO. I do well.
'Twas the gambling cut-throat, called Rugerio—
That was his name, I think—well, what of him?

FRED. He has dared—my brain burns like molten lead,
And my parched tongue can scarce give utterance
To the degrading truth! He has dared to ask—

PAULO. What?—do not tremble so—what has he dared?

FRED. Demand my daughter's hand!

PAULO. (*furiously.*) Man, thou dost lie!
Or if thou speakest the truth thou'rt worse than liar!
Where was thy sword when these words met thine ear?
Where was thy pride—thou prat'st of pride, e'en now,
Yet did not launch thy sword into the heart
Of the base slave that did insult thy house!

FRED. Again! that dreadful sound!

PAULO. Thine eyes are fixed.
And 'stead of blushing, thou art deadly pale.

FRED. The air seems pregnated with the curse which haunts
 A wretch so lost as I am—Friar, I'm not the man
 Can e'er deserve the words that fell from thee.
 Thy office should be mercy, and not blame;
 Since I have erred—I have been punished for it;
 Not the most poor, most abject galley slave,
 Who at the everlasting oar, is forced
 To tug and strain, without one beam of hope,
 One star, however distant, to relieve
 Or give a prospect of some future day,
 When his sad toils must cease—none but the grave,
 The thought of which is e'en more terrible
 Than life itself! Not he has ever felt
 What I've endured! Thou say'st I should have stabbed
 Him as he stood before me—would I not?
 But no! My hand's embued with human blood
 Too much already!

PAULO. What said'st thou to him?
 What answer did'st thou make?

FRED. None—not a word,
 Since thou didst see him, I have not been cursed
 E'en by the shadow of his countenance:
 'Twas to my child herself that he did speak.

PAULO. What!—to Therese?

FRED. Aye! even to her, poor girl.
 He did not tell me of't—it did crush her,
 Her chaste, proud spirit has received a blow
 Which time itself cannot eradicate.

PAULO. This is terrible—say, where is she now?

FRED. In bed—insensible!

PAULO. 'Tis right she should!
 I love her well for that! Noble girl—
 She never to the end forgot she was
 The last, sole scion of Fredoni's house!

FRED. Friar, spare me! I know not how it is,
 But thy voice makes my blood chill in my veins,
 As if a voice from out the sepulchre,
 In fearful accents, told my awful deed!
 Father, I am faint—my limbs can scarce support me!

PAULO. Come let me lead thee in—lean upon me
 And know, that with the grace of Heaven
 I'll lead thee safely through this labyrinth
 Brought on thyself by thy improvidence.

FRED. God grant you may; but I cannot believe it!

Exeunt into Palace, FREDONI leaning on PAULO.

Re-enter ALBERTI and LORENZO.

LOR. My worst fears are confirmed!—there's something wrong.
 I never saw the Marchese so oppressed
 Before.

ALBERTI. 'Tis very strange, he seemed convulsed
 With deepest agony.

MUSIC.

WE have received a copy of a simple but pretty new song, entitled "The Irish Volunteers;" dedicated to Captain M. C. O'Connell, H. M. 28th Regt.; the words of which, by Mrs. E. H. Dunlop, have been happily adapted to an air "composed for, and adopted by, the most extraordinary military body ever organized in any country—The Irish Volunteers, a force of 150,000 strong; self-constituted, self-supported, and effectively disciplined, comprising in its members nearly all the rank, influence, and wealth of a kingdom."

We shall always be glad to render all the assistance in our power to the furtherance of any enterprise, tending to the advancement of the liberal arts, in Australia; and we beg to call the attention of our readers to a notice in our advertising sheet, of a New Historical Opera, written and composed in the colony: author, Charles Nagel, Esq.; composer, I. Nathan, Esq.; which is intended to be published almost immediately. What the merits of the work may be, we are, of course, unable to say, but the object is, at least, highly commendable, and deserving of every encouragement at the hands of the public.

THE DRAMA.

LATE London critics tell us that the state of society in Australia must militate against any prospect of its sustained patronage or appreciation of the drama. To prove this bold assertion, they refer to Mr. Wyatt's recent visit to England, and cite his "managerial selections from the purlieu of Stepney and White-chapel" as illustrations of our social and intellectual influences; and—as a contemporary has aptly observed—kindly intimate their desire to school us in the alphabet of taste, at a time when we are tolerably proficient in our accident. In truth these London critics are widely astray in this matter, for the progress of taste in New South Wales illustrates in many ways the progress of taste in England. The alleged incompetency of our social condition is an incompetency only of degree; and even that we have boldly struggled against. The political, commercial, and social difficulties of our condition have been unable to prevent our taste from keeping honorable pace with that of the mother country; for so closely are we connected, that the phases of mind in our community, so far as they represent its general character and intellectual position, are but modified repetitions of its phases in England. We can afford to slight the shafts which are so easily parried; and to laugh at *cockney* nonsense which is, of itself, a negation; nothing coming of it, for it is nothing.

Having thus disposed of our London critics, and their notions of our drama, we will turn to the more pleasing duty of contemplating its actual progress amongst us; a duty which yields us the highest gratification, as marking an epoch in the history of the colony, and directly conducive to important results.

The advance of refinement and civilization in a young colony is correlative to the advance of its drama; for the instruction afforded in the theatre is of a vivid and practical character, appealing to the imagination, as well as to the reason; not merely tracing its lessons on the mind, but branding them into it; and teaching ennobling truths, which can be taught in no other manner with the like success. Not by logic and argument does it work, but more surely and more clearly does it unfold its truths; for its empire lies in that region where logic and argument cannot enter; in that region where poetry abides, in whose presence falsehood must never come, consigned to utter darkness by that glorious light which is at once the spring and the limit of all true knowledge.

With such a notion of the Art, it were a strange inconsistency did we show ourselves lax in observing its progress. We confess that the "*errors of judgment*" with which the London Aristarchi have twitted us, did at one time fill us with doubt and foreboding; but COMPETITION produced activity and life, where *monopoly* would have allowed sluggishness to reign. Thus, on a small scale, was exhibited the force of the philosophical axiom, that the balance of intellectual

influence is as important as the balance of political power, and that the latter is valuable principally, because it tends to maintain the former.

In our last number we adverted to the improved prospects of our stage, consequent on the entrance of Mr. Simmons into the arena, and we are now happy to say that our prognosis of his success promises to be realised by the energy with which he is accomplishing his design. In the synopsis of his arrangements he has summoned all the available resources of the Art, and whether in the minutest finish on the canvass of the painter; on the lips of the actor; or under the fingers of the musician; he is preparing to embody its spirit in power and in mastery. He has wisely remembered, that however great the gifts of the dramatist, the talent of the actor, or the genius of the musician, it is not from these alone that the indelible charm of the drama is derived; but that the grace of the structure impresses the imagination of the audience almost as much as the eloquence and the pathos of the dramas represented within its walls. The interior design and decoration of the City Theatre most forcibly illustrates the truth of these remarks, for not only is the eye delighted with the beauty of the embellishments, but the mind is charmed with classical associations, and all the undying interest of dramatic recollections. The proscenium presents us with a choral band, 'advancing to the Lydian melody—here, with the staid and sober gravity of the gymnopædic movement—there, with the wanton steps and mimic action of the light and joyous hyporcheme. We can almost fancy that the glorious sounds from their Æolic lyres are floating on our ears, and that we can catch the votive lay with which the arch-leader of the festal group is invoking the dwellers on the Cephisian waters—

“ Daughters of heav'n; Aglaia, thou
 Darting splendours from thy brow;
 With musical Euphrosyne;
 Be present. Nor less call I thee,
 Tuneful Thalia, to look down
 On this joyous rout, and own
 Me their bard, who lead along,
 For Asophicus, the throng
 Tripping light to Lydian song!”—

Thus is the mind attracted to the specific age of lyric poetry which, terminating with Pindar, led to the Ode, by a transfusion through the elegies of Callinus and Tyrteus—the Ode, itself, giving birth to that histrionic chorus, which finally ended in the regular drama. We thus pass to the 'Persians' of Æschylus (the earliest theatrical piece we know of) and, in our reminiscence of his first dramatized ode, we are naturally led onwards to the splendours of Sophocles and Euripides, where all the constituents of the Greek Tragedy at length met united and became vocal. But our Pythian raptures assume a nearer and dearer tone, for turning towards the drop cloth of the *Theatridium*, we behold a vision of Olympus, wherein amidst empyrean fire, a spirit, in the aerial embodiment of Poetry, is guiding the mysterious mechanism by which our own SHAKESPEARE organized his dramas, and gave life and individuality to his sublime creations. From the deep shadowy caverns of the foreground the mystic forms arise, and to the immortal bard reveal their mighty secret; the life-giving fire that slumbers in it is called forth, and the glorious mysteries are enamelled into beauty in the poet's spirit.

It will be readily conceived by our readers that to carry out this lofty idea in execution, must be the touchstone of the painter's skill, and most cordially do we award to Mr. Dennis the highest praise for his classical design, and for its masterly performance. As a work of art this drop cloth will be hailed with pride by all those who agree with our propositions in regard to the progress of taste in Australia, and thus can we in our appeal—earnest and full of meaning as it is—proudly point from our assertions to our works.

The mechanical aids of this beautiful design are extremely good, and as they glide from the mystical to the real, from the past to the present, they will address the more popular feelings of the audience. A massive gilded frame surrounds the Shakespearean vision, in which are introduced medallion portraits