

THE THEATRE  
IN MONTREAL  
PRIOR TO CONFEDERATION



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A History of the Theatre in Montreal  
Prior to Confederation



A HISTORY OF THE THEATRE IN MONTREAL  
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CHAPTER I

THE EARLY THEATRE IN QUEBEC

Any history of the theatre in Montreal would be quite incomplete if a brief chapter were not devoted to the early theatrical history of the city of Quebec. Quebec is the older city, and according to available information, social life developed there before it did in Montreal. This was owing, in a great measure, to the fact that it was the residence of the Governor of the Colony, and a semblance to European court life was maintained. The young military men were interested in plays, and were encouraged to produce them.

The Quebec Gazette, the first bi-lingual newspaper of the town, gives one interesting news of the events of that period. In a brief remark under the heading of Advertisements for Thurs. Jan. 11th, 1781, one reads that: "On account of the Queen's Birth Day, the Quebec Concert is put off to Monday, the 22st. Instant.



About a year later (Jan. 24th, 1782) the public was informed: "The Quebec Concert to be on Thursday next the 31st. of January, and to continue every fortnight - the Rooms to be opened for the reception of the Company, at 7 o'clock." No programmes were printed in the newspaper, so the items of the concert are left to the imagination.

Amateur theatricals contributed much merriment and pleasure in the busy town. One of these groups was called The Canadian Young Gentlemen. Judging from the editorial in the Quebec Gazette for March 10th, 1791, the players were popular among the greater personages of the colony, and even the critic is kindly to them in his remarks concerning the young actors. He said: "On Wednesday the second instant, (2d.inst.) the Canadian young Gentlemen closed their Theatrical Campaign, with the Comedy of the Barbier of Seville. They were honored with the presence of General Clarke and a numerous and brilliant assembly of Ladies and Gentlemen both English and Canadian. If it be considered that the errors of these young Gentlemen are purely the result of nature; barely their own ideas of characters and things, unassisted by example or any previous acquaintance with stage artifice; if to this be added



the scantiness of their wardrobe, scenery, decorations and stage, we think it will be doing them no more than justice to say they were the sack with ease, humour, and even with eclat. As they were pleased to entertain the public gratis, we can do no less on the part of the public than to make this small acknowledgment. The editorial, however brief, answers several questions. It proves that amateur plays were a welcome diversion, and that the actors were amateurs in every sense of the word. Their acting was imperfect, their costumes and properties as is usually the case with amateurs, very few. A blithe and happy feeling must have reigned among the performers as well as the audience.

Every person who attends the theatre has had the painful or unhappy experience of sitting too near noisy or unmannerly people. It seems that as early as 1792, some ardent lover of the theatre was exceedingly annoyed at a Quebec concert. He wrote a complaint to the local paper, and this result appeared in the issue for Thursday, January 19th, 1792: "A subscriber to the Concert hopes that the Managers will give themselves some trouble in the future to prevent the confusion and noise that prevailed last concert



night, by a number of gentlemen talking loud through the music -- If there are any rules for the concert they surely require silence during the performance. If there are no rules, it is high time that some should be formed to preserve decorum. And till rules are formed it may be recommended to those gentlemen who distinguished themselves so loudly last concert night, not to be ashamed to imitate the example of His Excellency Lieutenant Governor General Clarke and His Royal Highness Prince Edward."

Musical programmes were another source of entertainment at Quebec. Then benefit concerts of every description were frequently given. The object of the benefit might be the actor or artist himself, the owner or manager of a theatre, or perhaps some work of charitable nature. It was on Thursday, February 2nd, 1792, that the following notice appeared: "Several Ladies and Gentlemen being desirous to hear the Harp, Mr. Jouve has the honour of informing the public, that he will give a Vocal and Instrumental Concert for his own benefit, in which he will play on the said instrument and the French Guitar. Those Gentlemen and Ladies who will please to honor him with their attendance may get tickets from him at the house of



Mr. Parent the Baker, Ste. Genevieve Street opposite the Governor's Garden. The price of each ticket is three shillings. Notice will be given of the day and place of the concert."

During the same year a Subscription Theatre flourished. Several concerts were given and attempts were made to satisfy the varied tastes of the audiences. The programme for Tuesday, March sixteenth consisted of The Comedy of the Wonder, and the dramatic Satire of Lethe.

Wherever and whenever theatrical art flourished, its sponsors meet with great obstacles that must be overcome by their ingenuity and perseverance. The early theatre in Québec was no exception to this fate. The following enlightening information appeared in the Quebec Gazette for Thursday, March 29th, 1792. It was headed by the brief word Theatre - and was as follows: "The gentlemen who have undertaken the management of the Theatrical subscriptions, beg leave to inform the subscribers that having called in all the bids for work and materials they find the expenses already incurred amount to 20 £ more than the subscription they therefore propose to those subscribers who chuse to add one Dollar to the subscription for which another play will be given.- The



Clothes, Scenes and Carpenters wrought materials, which formed a great part of the expense, will be taken particular care of that the present subscribers may the next Winter have the benefit of them.- Those gentlemen who chuse to make this addition to the subscription are desired to send for their Tickets at Major Watson's on Friday and Saturday next as it will be necessary in the beginning of the next week to fill up the subscription, should any of the present subscribers decline this proposal.- Those Gentlemen who have got their Tickets will please to send them in on their assent to this addition.\*.

In the autumn of the same year, the residents of Quebec were entertained by a company of performers under the direction of a Mr. Del Vechio. On Thursday, October 25th they announced they would present: "A Variety of the most curious Feats of Activity. Young Hercules will exhibit a great number of new feats of Tumbling, and attitudes on the Slack Rope, &c - A number of trained dogs will do everything as directed by words only, and go through an astounding variety of exercises, as is explained more at length in the handbills." The notice is very similar to items of a modern vaudeville act. The performance took



place at Franks' Tavern and tickets for "first places" cost 2/6, while those for "second places" were 1/6. Children paid half the customary prices.

In 1792, several subscription concerts were given in Quebec. Some examples of the programmes offered are of interest. The concert on November 15th consisted of the following: Act First - New Overture Pleyel Song, Dr. Arnold - Concerto, 5th. of Avison, opera 4 - Concertante, clarinett and basson, Devienne. Act Second - Haydn's Grand Symphony in D - Quintett, (two violins, two tenors and violincello) Pleyel - Glee (Hark! the hallow woods resounding.) four voices from the opera of Robin Hood.- New Finale Gyrowetz. The programme for December 13th was: Act First - New Symphony Gyrowetz - Song Bach - Overture to Saul - Handel - Divertissement Concertans - Violin, Oboe. - Tenor and Violincello Obligato - Pleyel - Act Second - New Symphony Pleyel - Song, Reeve - Quartett Flute, Violin, Tenor and Violincello Pleyel - Glee - Hark the lark - Dr. Cook - Overture to Artenernes Arne. During the winter of 1792 French plays were given. The Quebec Gazette of Thursday, December 20th announced: "The Subscribers to the Canadian Theatre are informed the Play called L'Avare, and the Farce called Les



Precieuses Ridicules, will be performed on Friday next the 28th inst." The postscript read: "The gentlemen are requested to take St. Johns Street in going, and that of St. Stanislaus in returning, to prevent the confusion and accidents which the rencounter of carioles may occasion." This indicates very clearly that even in those early times, traffic problems existed.

Examination of old notices of the theater in Quebec shows that the programme frequently consisted of a play and a farce. The Quebec Gazette made favourable comments on amateur performances, as shown by this criticism of January 8th, 1824. "We were gratified on Monday evening last with a Performance, by amateurs among the Military Gentlemen and one or two Civilians, of Colman's Heir at Law, followed by the Farce Is the Alive?, for charitable purposes. The Performance, taken in the whole, did all concerned the greatest credit. We were particularly pleased with the characters of Lord Duherly, Dr. Pangloss, Steadfast and Dick Dowlass - a Prologue written for the occasion, it is said, by Dr. Fisher, was spoken. His Lordship the Governor in Chief, His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, and most of the principal families of the City were present. The House was extremely

crowded, and we understand the Receipts amounted to about 105£, which will afford a considerable sum in aid of the poor." Incidentally, this is one of the earliest references to benefit concerts given in Canada.

The editors of the paper always showed an interest in the local theatre. A new theatre was needed, and on January 15th, 1824, they announced; "We have heard it stated that some of the most respectable Gentlemen of this City are about to propose a plan for the erection of a new Theatre upon a large scale. The little comfort and the danger, owing to the dilapidated condition of the present one, as well as the absolute want of room on any performance of a popular character, added to the great risk to the lives of the audience in case of fire, render this extremely desirable. Besides, as things now stand there is no inducement to the collection of proper scenery, dresses, and other objects of utility or ornament which there would certainly be if a good and permanent Theatre were erected. The great mass of the people is now also excluded, by the high prices charged, and independent of not contributing their mite to the relief of the poor at charitable performances, they lose also the advantages which a well regulated stage offers, by



exhibiting in an entertaining manner the rewards of and incentives to virtue, the ruin attendant on vice, or the ridicule of the follies and vanities of mankind.

We were happy to find that as large a sum as 50£ was afforded for charitable purposes out of the proceeds of the last performance. Then, even as now, editors of newspapers urged the public and tried to stimulate interest in an adequate play-house. Further notices appeared concerning the new theatre. It was on February 3rd. that this note was inserted: "The Public are informed that a Subscription List is open at the Quebec Bank, Quebec Fire Office, and Garrison Library, for the purpose of erecting a New Theatre within this city; and that as soon as one hundred shares of 25£ each shall have been subscribed, a general meeting of subscribers will be called upon to decide upon a scite and take into consideration the Plans and Estimates of the Building which will then be submitted to them." Apparently the entire community enjoyed the theatre and were eager to improve its resources.

Meanwhile, groups of amateur players were active in Quebec. One company was called "Canadian Amateurs," and another the "Garrison Amateurs." Usually their performances

*Wherever his friends saw*

were given for the benefit of the poor in the city. The plays these amateurs produced indicate how versatile and courageous they were. For example, during 1824 the Canadian Amateurs played Moliere's Marriage Farce, on the 30th. of January, and on the 21st. of April they presented Les Fourberies de Scapin by Moliere and Les Plaideurs by Racine. The Garrison Amateurs produced Sheridan's Rivals followed by the farce of Monsieur Tanson for their concert on February 6th. The Quebec Gazette spoke favourably of the event, as follows: "The characters were sustained with the usual effect. His Excellency the Governor in Chief, the Countess of Dalhousie, and several of the Staff were present." A lighter programme was presented on the 27th. of April; it consisted of a comedy entitled A Cure for the Heart Ache, and a farce called Darkness Visible.

Professional entertainers came to Quebec regularly, and the announcements that appeared in the paper from time to time are very novel to a modern reader. On May 24th, 1824, this notice was in the Quebec Gazette, under the heading of 'The Dramatic Ventriloquist.' It is obvious from this and other advertisements of the period that people of the theatre were not averse to praising their sterling

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qualities. Thus: "The Dramatic Ventriloquist respectfully announces that he will deliver a colloquial divertissement, on Thursday evening next, at the Union Hotel, on which occasion Mr. Taylor will exercise his extraordinary faculties and inflections of the human voice." On May 31st., the editors of the newspaper remarked: "Mr. Taylor's exhibition on Thursday gave great satisfaction to those present; the peculiar talents of this gentleman deserve encouragement; his powers of ventriloquism are very great, and his imitations of celebrated actors of the day and his recitals are performed with a taste and excellence which do this gentleman credit."

A variety of entertainment frequently made up the programmes offered at the theatre called the Royal Circus. The Lieutenant Governor continued to lend his patronage to these pioneers in the theatrical interests of Quebec. The advertisement for October 21st, 1824, illustrates how eager the manager of the theatre was to satisfy all his patrons. "The Evening's Entertainment to commence with the admired Ballet of Flora's Birth Day or the Village Frolic. In the course of the Ballet an admired Pas de Trois by the Misses E. and C. Blanchard and Master William. National Song by

Mr. Ramage, and to be followed by Running, Vaulting and the Horsemanship of Master William Blanchard, the young English Hero. Equestrian Exercises by Mrs. Vallean.

Slack Wire by Miss Elizabeth Blanchard. Horsemanship by Mr. Turner, the flying Phenomenon. Comic Song, the Irish Duel, by Mr. Schinotti. The whole to conclude with the Favorite Farce of the Spoiled Child." With reference to this diversified entertainment, the paper on October 25th, said: "Circus. This place of amusement continues to attract respectable and numerous houses. The Ballets are got up in very creditable style, the dancing of the young Blanchards, of Mrs. Vallean, and Mr. Schinotti is very attractive, and indeed the whole corps de ballet exert themselves with great ability. Mr. Turner's horsemanship is surprising; the manner in which he rode and took some difficult leaps standing on his horse, without saddle and bridle, drew down thunders of applause from the admiring spectators. Mrs. Vallean appears as perfectly at her ease on the saddle as on the stage; the exploits of the infant equestrian, Master Blanchard, must not be overlooked - he is an astonishing little fellow, performing the most difficult feats with such ease and confidence as perfectly to



relieve the community from any apprehension for his safety. His sister, Miss E. Blanchard, is equally brilliant on the slack-wire. The entertainment on Saturday night concluded with the Spoiled Child,- Miss Brundage was an arch Little Pickle. The exertions both on the part of the managers and performers, to merit the public patronage, are so strenuous, that we hope they will meet with liberal encouragement."

This particular group of entertainers enjoyed the approbation and patronage of the people of Quebec. A commentary signed by someone who called himself 'Dramaticus' appeared in the Gazette on November 8th, of that year. The writer said: "The Circus seems to continue a place of considerable attraction by the public at large, and I think deservedly so - the Company possesses perhaps as much talent as is generally concentrated in an Estabishment of this kind; the variety of Entertainment offers to all classes and dispositions something palatable to each taste - and at a very cheap rate. This Combination of Equestrian with Dramatic Performances affords a pleasing relief to each other, so that the entertainments never become tiresome. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the Enterprising Managers for their Exertions to please, as well as the

Company at large for the disposition they evince to merit public favor. It cannot fail to be a source of additional gratification to the admirers of the Drama to learn that Mrs. Monier, the lady who so much delighted the inhabitants of Montreal by her abilities as an actress, is in a fair way of recovery from a severe indisposition. The lovers of chaste and correct acting may therefore anticipate with pleasure her appearance shortly at the Circus, where she is engaged."

For some months the same variety of entertainment appealed to the people of Quebec. "Military and equestrian movements" formed part of many programmes. Mr. Schinotti added a new note a few evenings in November, when he executed an Indian War Dance. Ballets were a frequent attraction, and a few of their titles indicate that no special subject dominated them. In November some of the ballets were the Ballet of the Scotch Mountains or The Female Archer, the Ballet of the Cobbler's Daughter, and in December came Offerings to the Graces. These ballets were directed and produced by Miss Aspinall, a dancing teacher, judging from the following advertisement that was



inserted in the Gazette: "Miss Aspinall respectfully informs her friends and the public that her Grand Juvenile Ball will take place on Thursday the 20th. January next, at the Union Hotel, at seven o'clock precisely."

All types of plays were presented. There were "the admired play of The Point of Honor " and The Irishman in London, as well as Tom and Jerry or Life in London, The Lady and the Devil, and The Miller's Maid. In 1824, as in later years, melodramas were a great attraction. Woodsman's Hut or The Burning Forest was given late in November and patrons of the theatre were thrilled by the Melodramatic Spectacle of Bluebeard and by The Forty Thieves, in December. The new year of 1825 showed a steady interest in the theatre, as stated in the Gazette on January 20th: "The Circus continues to be a place of considerable attraction and the encouragement given to the performances is fully justified by the talent and efforts used to gratify the public." Some of the dramas were Ali Pacha or The Greek Struggle for Liberty; the Grand Equestrian Drama of Tekeli; Ella Rosenberg; Rob Roy or Auld Lang Syne; and the Grand Dramatic Spectacle called Tymour the Tartar.

A neighbourly spirit was strongly marked among the early inhabitants of Quebec City, as this notice published in the Gazette on February 10th, 1825, indicates: "Last night Messrs. West and Blanchard, the Proprietors of the Circus, very generously played The Warlock of the Glen with the Farce of The Weathercock, for the benefit of Mr. Wm. Hamilton, whose losses by the late fire have been so great..... The performance in both pieces did great credit to the Company."

A Mr. Hanna and a Mr. Honey gave a concert at the Union Hotel on February 25th. Although their advertisement promised "that no pains or expense shall be spared to render it worthy of public patronage," no review of the event appeared in the Gazette.

Meanwhile people continued to patronize the Circus. The comic Pantomime called Harlequin Woodcutter, followed by a comedy entitled Midnight Hour drew approving audiences, at the end of February. Early in March came The Hunted Taylor or Billy Burton's Journey to Brentford and Adeline. The principal role in the latter play was portrayed by a Mrs. Monier, whose return from the theatre "far from having perfectly recovered from the shock she has sustained," was lauded by the newspaper. Later in the month the "Comical and

laughable Pantomime of Don Quixote," the melo-drama of the Broken Sword, and a farce called Turnpike Gate were given.

Benefit concerts were popular for many years in both Quebec and Montreal. Just as happens in our own time entertainments were given for certain charitable purposes. But then there were benefit concerts given for the individual actors and actresses. Sometimes such a concert was given on the closing night of a star's engagement at a particular theatre. This meant that the receipts of the evening's performance were given to one selected person. Other benefits took place during the theatrical season, or at the end of it. In such cases, every member of the cast, as well as the manager of the theatre, received a benefit. Some of the notices that appeared in the Gazette in April, 1825, illustrate the custom: "Mr. Martin respectfully informs his friends and the public, that Tuesday the 12th. of April is set apart for his Benefit when will be brought forward the greatest variety produced this season," Another stated: "We understand that Mr. Laidley's Benefit at the Circus takes place on Saturday next, when the Stranger will be performed. This Gentleman, we think, has contributed as much to the amusement of the Public as any other of the



Members of the Company, and we hope that he will receive a corresponding encouragement." A few interesting details were given in this insertion of April 28th: "Miss Elizabeth Blanchard takes her Benefit next Monday evening, under the Patronage of His Excellency Sir F. N. Burton and the principal families in the City; after which the Circus will be closed for a short period, to give time for the organization of the new Company, and also to make some alterations in the interior of the Theatre. We understand it is the intentions of the proprietors, to have the house lighted with Gas after the recess, the necessary preparations for which, are now going on.

From time to time, amateur and professional players took part in the same programme, as they did in the above-mentioned Benefit of Miss Elizabeth Blanchard. On that occasion the Young Gentlemen Amateurs of Mr. Shadgett's school ... politely volunteered to perform.

Evidently the Royal Circus was closed but a short time, for a variety bill ending with 'the Admired Comedy in 5 acts of the Soldier's Daughter' was advertised for May 16th and 17th. It was at that time that a certain Mr. and Mrs. Judah and Mr. Villalave and Company made their first appearance.

A very unique incident occurred in the theatre at Quebec in May 1825. A letter to the Gazette on the 19th of that month described an unusual event. It said "Yesterday night, Mr. Judah, the new Circus Stage Manager, in the third act of Pizarro, very unexpectedly addressed the audience, and alluding to the applause given Mrs. Monier, who played the part of Cora, and not to any disapprobation (for there was very properly none shewn, even if felt) of Mrs. Judah, in the character of Elvira, made some very rash and petulant observations, which ended in a bravado, and his informing the House that 'any gentleman knew where to find him.' On the scene dropping it appears that Mr. Judah insulted Mrs. Monier, who conceived herself compelled to appeal to the audience for protection, and appeared and informed the House of Mr. Judah's conduct towards her. Mr. Judah, on re-appearing was hissed and an apology or an explanation demanded, which he refused to give, by which, I conceive he acknowledged having given the <sup>insult</sup> the. Although hissed throughout the remainder of the performance, and repeatedly called upon to explain, he persisted in refusing, and when the curtain dropped did not appear. Now it appears to me, that since Mrs. Monier has publicly accused Mr. Judah of grossly

insulting a woman, the public must insist on an apology from him in the first instance and an explanation subsequently.  
I am, etc.

Your obedient servant,

B.N."

This unusual display of temperament and bad manners shocked the people of Quebec. The popular Mrs. Monier wrote her explanation to the editor of the Gazette on May 26th. This is it: "As an actress of the public, I am fully aware that my professional conduct is a legitimate subject of criticism, and I shall therefore never feel offended at any remarks upon my performance when written with candour; on the contrary, my constant practice has been to profit by criticisms and amend, as far as lay in my power, the defects which have been so pointed out. But I cannot help feeling myself unfairly dealt with by the Quebec Gazette (published by authority) in the following very uncandid paragraph which appeared in that paper on Thursday last, and against which I beg to protest.

"Mr. and Mrs. Judah were very well received on Monday night by a very respectable audience, as the Governor and the Widow. In consequence



of some arrangement, with which we are only partially acquainted, the latter character was supported by Mrs. Monier. The house was thinly attended, but it was evidently packed by Mrs. Monier's friends, who kept up a tremendous din of senseless applause at the close of every speech, that fell from that lady's lips. We object to this method of deciding on the rival pretensions of these ladies. The manager ought to know his own interest, and their relative merits. The public applause bestowed on a favorite of last season can be no criterion of her superior merits over any other performer."

I am sure some very false and scandalous statement must have been made to the conductor of that Journal, or he never would have given authority to publish the above.

It is not in my power to pack a house or to purchase plaudits: if my friends were in the house on the night in question it was not solicited by me, my name had not even

appeared in the Bills of the day; if they were indulgent to my efforts and rewarded them with their applause, I feel grateful for their kindness, and assure them that it shall be my constant study to preserve the place I hold in their estimation. I feel it my duty to repel the insinuations cast upon me by Mr. and Mrs. Judah that I have instigated any persons to uphold me or depreciate any other performer, but I trust that it will not be imputed to me as a crime if I have obtained and endeavoured to deserve the public favour during the last season; in this hope I leave it to the frequenters of the Circus to decide how far I have merited the aspersions cast upon me; to their judgment I shall at all times cheerfully submit; and remain their very grateful servant, M. Monier."

No further mention of this upsetting incident was made in the Gazette. One thing is certain, for several seasons afterwards, Mrs. Monier was treated kindly in Montreal and Quebec, and the press notices she received were always laudatory and friendly.

It appears that the Circus was soon improved, for on the occasion of Mrs. Vallalave's Benefit, June 1st, the paper stated that: "The Circus will be well lighted ... ,

and no pains nor exertions will be spared to render the performance amusing to the public." Incidentally the Comic Pantomime of Harlequin Skeleton was the chief attraction that evening.

From time to time, the managers of the Circus supplied thrilling entertainment for their patrons. Such entertainment was always described in dramatic fashion in the current edition of the local newspaper. Part of the advertisement of June 8th, 1825, is a good illustration of this habit: "Act 2 - Grand Ascension of the illuminated air balloon which will start from the back of the stage, and ascend to the Gallery with three persons in it, two of them will be in the Parachute suspended to the Balloon, and the other on the top standing on his head. The balloon will ascend to the Gallery in less than two minutes and descend in less than one. Grand Herculean Feats, consisting in supporting nine persons on his hands and feet. The whole to end with the laughable Pantomime called Harlequin Statue, or the Fright of the Clown."

It has already been observed that Mr. Schinotti added an unusual note to several programmes by performing his Indian Dance, which drew much applause. Then for his Benefit on June 17th that year, "a party of Lorette Indians



will attend and go through several Dances according to the Custom of the Aborigines of the Country, accompanied by Mr. Schinotti in the character of the Indian Chief."

The theatrical season of 1825 in Quebec closed with a Benefit for the Box office keeper, the master-carpenter, box and pit door-keepers. The programme was quite imposing, it consisted of the Favorite Opera of Inkle and Garico. "The whole to conclude with the Tiger Horde. Through the politeness of Colonel Jones the band of the 71st will attend."

The Royal Circus, embellished and refitted at great expense reopened for the display of dramatic and equestrian entertainment on Monday, November 7th. Two weeks later another note of beauty was added to the theatre, when the managers advertised that they had selected "a new Grand Drop Scene representing the Battle of Waterloo."

Even a brief survey of the early days of the Theatre in Quebec shows that most members of the community tried to improve and encourage local theatricals. There was a wide variety of entertainment, although most of it was of a melodramatic or rugged nature. Pantomimes and ballets offered a more artistic note, and one concludes that the managers of the Theatre as well as the amateur players tried to suit everyone in their appreciative audiences.

## CHAPTER II

### THE THEATRE - PRIOR TO 1812

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According to a book written by Franklin Graham and entitled *Histrionic Montreal*, the first company of professional actors came to Montreal in 1786. The town was under British military rule, and the garrison had its dramatic corps under the direction of their colonel. The quarters used by the amateurs were altered and improved when the professional players were expected. The company of comedians finally reached Montreal in February, after completing an engagement in Albany. The players were English. Their appearance in the American city was not a success, for they came too soon after the Revolution. In the Canadian town they were made very welcome, but owing to the small English population the troupe made only a brief stay. On February 27th they opened their engagement with Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*. The audience received it gratefully and kindly. The players went to Quebec, and returned to Montreal for a second short engagement. Several of the

actors had been associated with Lewis Hallam, Junior, when he attempted to revive the drama in New York, after the Revolutionary Period. When their season had closed in November, 1785, they went to Albany and then to Montreal.

The Montreal Gazette published the following notice on February 26th, 1789: "Montreal Theatrical Intelligence. We hear that Otway's much admired Tragedy of the Orphan, or the Unhappy Marriage, is at present in rehearsal at the Theatre, and will be performed some evening next week. The parts by particular desire are filled by gentlemen of this city, for their amusement, whose theatrical abilities are unquestionable, assisted by Mr. and Mrs. Allen.- The language of this play is truly poetical, tender and sentimental, the circumstances affecting<sup>and</sup> the catastrophe distressful in the superlative degree. We are also informed that the Pantomime of the Frolicks of Harlequin which was exhibited last Friday evening with such repeated bursts of applause, will be again performed with additions and improvements."

Even the earliest patrons of the professional theatre suffered a disappointment from time to time, as the following remarks indicate, they appeared on March 12, 1789.

"Theatre"

"The Public are most respectfully informed, that



after the Bills were published, announcing the Orphan, or the Unhappy Marriage, the Manager receiv'd a note from a Gentleman who was to have play'd a principal part - 'That on account of a severe indisposition he was unable to perform.' Mr. Allen (that the public may not be deprived of their evening's amusement) has selected the most striking and entertaining subjects from the celebrated Lecture upon Heads, with some original pieces, never before exhibited - and proposes to deliver them in three parts, and to conclude the Lecture with an Address to the Ladies.

Between the first and second parts, A Comic Tale, by Mr. Worsdale:

And after the second part, Mr. Foot's Prologue, by Mr. Worsdale.

The whole to conclude with that much admired Pantomime Entertainment call'd The Frolics of Harlequin.

As express'd in the bill of the day, with Additions and Improvements, and to conclude with a Country Dance, by the Characters.

The programme, in spite of the necessary changes, was long and varied. As no review appeared in the press, it is impossible to state what success attended it.

Amateur plays, especially those performed by the militia, filled the years from 1786 until 1798, when Rickett's Equestrian and Comedy Company of Philadelphia appeared. The company met with great approval and success, and repeated their visit several times.

In 1800, a Mr. Ormsby came to America from Edinburgh where he had been associated with the theatre. He became manager of the Albany Theatre, and while he never rose to a prominent position in dramatic circles in America he is of interest to Montrealers. It was on November 12, 1804, that the Gazette contained the following information:

"Theatre"

"By Permission

Mr. Ormsby, from the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, respectfully informs the Ladies and Gentlemen of Montreal, that he intends, (with their approbation) establishing a Company of Comedians in Canada, to perform in Montreal and Quebec alternately. The Theatre in this City, is fitted up in that large and commodious house, next door to the Post-Office; where will be presented, on Monday evening the 19th. instant, a Comedy in five Acts, called the Busy Body.

"To which will be added, the much-admired Farce, called, the Sultan... Bones, 5s - Gallery 2/6."

The post-office to which reference was made was on St.Sulpice Street not far from St.Paul Street.

There were French as well as English amateur theatricals and this notice of November 26, 1804, will show that French programmes were as long and varied as the English.

"Castigao Ridendo Mores"

"Théâtre de Société

Jeudi le 29 Novembre courant, a l'Hotel d'Hamilton, en cette ville.

sera représenté

Le Festin de Pierre,

Comedie en cinq actes, par Monsr. De Molière, suivi de

L'Avocat Patelin,

Comédie en trois actes par Brueys ...

Les Dames sont pries de se coiffer aussi bas que possible et sans plumets."

The same issue contained an English notice:

"Theatre"

"By Permission.

*Where from?*



"This evening, November 26, will be presented, a  
Comedy (never performed in Canada) called

Botheration,

Or, A Three Years Blunder

To which will be added, a Farce called,

Lethe,

Or, Esop in the Shades."

The amateur players as well as the occasional professional visitors found favour with their audiences. From time to time a satisfied patron of the theatre wrote to the editor of the Montreal Gazette in praise of recent dramatic entertainment:

"Sir,

The gratification enjoyed at our Théâtre de Société last evening, cannot be better expressed than through the medium of your paper.

Don Juan and the Village Lawyer, so admirably were these characters supported that their merit surpasses the extent of encomiums; suffice it to say that the pleasing and rivetted attention of the very respectable audience, was approbative of the high sense entertained of the performers to an individual, of the performance, to an exception of the regularity,

and the brilliancy of the representation throughout.

Vive le Théâtre de Société.

Montreal, Nov. 30, 1804."

Another devotee of the drama wrote:

"For the Montreal Gazette.

On the 19th. ult. Mr. Ormsby opened a Theatre in this City, with the Comedy of the Busy Body, and a Farce called the Sultan. The characters were in general well interpreted, particularly Marplot by Mr. Ormsby, and Miranda by Mrs. Ormsby who, during the presentation, drew from a crowded house repeated bursts of applause. The gentlemen who so generously stepped forward to assist Mr. Ormsby deserve credit for their strenuous endeavours to please, and discovered no inconsiderable share of comic humor. On Monday last they represented the Comedy called Three Years Blunder, with the entertainment of Lethe, or Esop in the Shades. The character of Thady O' Blarney, (with songs) by Mr. Ormsby, and Lady Apes and Mrs. Riot by Mrs. Ormsby, were very ably supported. The young lady<sup>who</sup> to made her first appearance in Rose, will, we presume with instruction and attention, prove an ornament to the stage. Nor can we conclude without paying a tribute of respect to the vocal powers, and comic humor of Mr. Calvert,

which cannot fail of rendering him a favorite performer.

December 1, 1804."

The much admired Caledonian Tragedy, called Douglas and a musical entertainment entitled Thespian Gala were the chief items on the bills for December 6th. There was a footnote to the advertisement in the Gazette, it stated that: "Mr. Ormsby respectfully informs the Ladies and Gentlemen, who honored the Theatre with their presence, on the last night's performance, that the Orchestra, which exhibited a vacant scene, will, for the future, display Musical Talents, which he hopes are calculated to please."

The manager of the theatre had humanitarian interests. On December 10th, 1804, he advised all the patrons of his theatre that he proposed: "with their approbation, to apply the Produce of next Evening's Performance to the benefit of the Poor, against the approaching inclement season; the money to be deposited with Gentlemen selected, for relieving such objects as may be thought worthy ... The tickets are limited to One Hundred and Sixty at One Dollar each."

The public witnessed the talents of a ventriloquist called Mr. Ronnie who entertained them at Mr. Hamilton's

Assembly Room on December 13th. The performance was so popular that it was repeated by urgent request on the 19th and 21st.

Meanwhile, at the theatre Miss In Her Teens and a farce, The Mayor of Garrat were presented on the 17th. A week later the attractions were: "A Favorite Comedy, call'd the Irish Widow. Characters - Sir Patrick O'Neale, Bates, Nephew, Whittle, Kickley, Thomas, Footman, and Widow Brady ... A Celebrated Pantomime in three acts, (interspersed with songs) called Poor Jack, or Benevolent Sailors. Men - Sam Stern, Harry Howser, Ben Bohstay, and Poor Jack - Women - Polly Ply, Sally Shamrock & Mother Double Score, ( a Wapping Landlady). New Scenery, New Machinery, etc. In the course of the first act, a view of the Sea - a ship at anchor gets under way, etc. In the second act, a Storm, Thunder, and Lightning. A Shipwreck, Poor Jack cast away. The whole concludes with a dance by the Characters."

The final performance of the year was on December 28th, when the Théâtre de Société gave:

"Le Barbier de Seville,

ou la

Precaution Inutile,



Comedie en quatre actes, par Monst. De Beaumarchais, suivi

Du Medecin Malgré Lui,

Comédie en trois actes par Mr. De Molière."

The new year started promptly at the theatre, for on January 2nd, 1805, was presented: "The celebrated Historical and Moral Tragedy called George Barnwell, or, The London Merchant ... a Comic Farce, (in two acts) called the Quack Doctor."

Mr. Ronnie continued to amaze audiences by his magic. Then on January 8th, a Mr. Calvert exhibited: "a variety of Deceptive Tricks, viz - Various Deceptions with Cards. Deceptions with Eggs. Cutting the Gown. Do. the Garter. Deception with a Quarter Dollar. Cups and Balls. The Cup and Dollars. The Magical Pye, and a variety of others; and the whole so clearly shewn, explained and simplified, that any Lady and Gentleman may perform the same on their return home."

The year 1806 offered a season of comedies, but the theatre was neglected by its former enthusiastic audiences. The following year, according to Mr. Graham's information, Seth Prigmore became manager of the theatre. Mr. Prigmore had come from England to America in 1792. He had the theatre

in Montreal renovated, and reopened it, January 7th, 1808, under the name of the Montreal Theatre. The first play, Coleman's Heir At Law, was attended by a capacity audience. In February, The Tempest was the outstanding attraction and Othello was produced in May. This was the first professional performance of Othello in Montreal.

The Gazette of June 23rd informed the public that: Abaellino, the Great Bandit, would be presented on June 24th; it was an exciting drama in five acts, translated from the German by Schiller. This play was typical of the thrilling pieces that were destined to attract patrons of the theatre in Montreal for many years.

In 1809 Mr. Prigmore was succeeded by a Mr. Allport, as manager of the theatre. The new manager was an excellent painter of scenery but very impractical, and as the local players were poor that year, the theatre was rarely opened. In July, John Bernard, a well-known comedian of the period, played a limited engagement. His charm and ability drew large audiences to the theatre, despite the weakness of his supporting cast.

Mr. Bernard, like the other well-known actors, who

*Handwritten signature*

visited Montreal in the first years of its theatre, was an Englishman who had already met with success in the American theatre. He began his career as a strolling player in England, then became a member of a regular company on the Norwich Circuit. He played at the Bath Theatre and later was a member of John Kemble's Company. He appeared at the theatres in London and came to America in 1797. He gained popularity in New York, Philadelphia, Albany and Boston and returned to England in 1819. Unfortunately, the English patrons of the theatre were not so kind to John Bernard as American audiences had been, and he died in poverty in 1828 in his native land.

Mr. Allport wisely resigned his position as manager of the theatre and his successor was John Mills. In 1810, Schiller's Robbers and The Indian Princess were the most noteworthy attractions. There were many farces including The Jew and the Doctor and the Spoiled Child. The latter farce was a great favourite with audiences and was repeated on several occasions. The company was as mediocre as it had been the year before, with the exception of the presence of John Bernard for part of the season. There was a young

David Douglas in the company, and although he displayed little histrionic ability at that time, in later years he succeeded Lewis Hallam as organizer of early American theatricals. In 1811, the Montreal Theatre was leased and managed by John Johnson, an excellent man experienced in provincial theatricals in England as well as in America. The only play recorded for that year was a comedy entitled *A Cure for the Heartache*, which was presented by the players on May 6th for the manager's benefit.

Canada was about to feel the pain of war once more. Doubtless some amateur performances took place, but in general, people were occupied with more serious things than dramatic entertainment. Thus ended the earliest period of the theatre in Montreal.



CHAPTER III

1812 - 1827

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The war of 1812-1814 had a decided effect on the theatre in Montreal. During the war and the years immediately afterwards, theatrical fare was almost totally lacking. At rare intervals some entertainment was given and was usually announced in the Montreal Herald under the common heading 'Theatre' - in this fashion.

"For the Benefit of the Poor - Will be performed by the Amateurs, on Thursday evening, 18th. February, 1813, the Comedy called The Poor Gentleman, with the Original Epilogue, spoken by the characters. Characters - Lieut. Northington, Sir Robert Bramble, Frederic Bramble, Sir Charles Cropland, Corporal Foss, Ollapod, Humphrey Dobbins, Farmer Harrowby, Stephen Harrowby, Warner Servant.- Emily Worthington, Lucretia MacTabb, Dame Harrowby, Mary Harrowby. After which a Comic Song in character. To which will be added, the Farce of Raising the Wind.

Characters - Diddler, Fainwould Sam, Plainway, Richard, Waiter -

Peggy Plainway, Miss Durable."

The concert was evidently a success, as it was repeated on the 23rd. of February.

It is interesting to note how frequently amateur plays were given for the benefit of unfortunate persons. The performance on Tuesday, March 16th, 1813, was presented for "the Benefit of the Widows and Orphans of our fellow subjects, who fell in the Late Battles in Upper Canada." The programme consisted of: "the Comedy called The Natural Son. Characters - Sir Jeffery Latimer, Major O'Flaherty, Bluihenty, Jack Hustings, Ruefull, Dumps David - Miss Phoebe Latimer, Lady Paragon, Penelope. To which will be added, the Farce called The Review, or Wag of Windsor. Characters - Mr. Deputy Bull, Captain Beauregard, Loony McTwalter, John Lump, Caleb Quotem, Charles Williams, Dubbs, Serjeant. Women - Grace Gaylove, Lucy, Phoebe Whitethorn."

The tendency to announce some theatrical performance by means of extravagant terms is not a modern habit as this old advertisement indicates: "For the benefit of the author of, and positively the last performance of the Wood Demon. Theatre Francais.

The public is respectfully informed, that according to

established usage, the emoluments arising from the next representation will be appropriated solely to the Author of the Wood Demon's Benefit.

On Monday Evening, February 17th, 1817, will be performed by the Amateurs of the Théâtre de Société, a pitch piece in one act called Les Douxe Billets. 9

After which, For the 4th and last time - The celebrated grand cabalistick spectacle Mel-Drama in 4 acts interspersed with processions, allegorical pageants, pantomime, etc. The Wood Demon or The Clock has struck. Written by J.D. Turnhull, Author of Rudolph, &c. Scenery, dresses and decorations entirely new and got up under the Author's special direction. In the course of the Evening an English Comic Song by an Amateur ..."

Frequently some freakish attraction was announced in the press, such as this one of October 24th, 1817: "Wonderful Phenomenon - The Ladies and Gentlemen of Montreal are respectfully informed, that the celebrated Female, called the Beautiful Albiness, is about to proceed on a tour through the United States, and proposes to remain a few weeks in Montreal. The singularity of this interesting Female has attracted the

universal attention and admiration of the Royal Family, Nobility and Gentry of London and Edinburgh. She has been honored with the presence and approval of the Princess of Wales, the Princess Charlotte of Saxe Cobourg, the Duchess of Oldenburgh, the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and other illustrious personages, all of whom acknowledge her to be the most astonishing Female ever known. She will receive the visits of those Ladies and Gentlemen who are desirous of beholding her from the hour of Eleven till Three in the afternoon, at the Mansion House Hotel."

On Saturday, November 1st., 1817, a brief but very enlightening notice appeared in the Montreal Herald. It was this: "After a lapse of nearly three years, the establishment of a regular Theatre is about to take place in this city. We have authority to announce to the public and admirers of the British Drama, that Mr. Turnbull (whose histrionic merit is not forgotten in Montreal) has succeeded in concluding arrangements, for the purpose with Mr. C. Holt and that the capacious building at the south end of St. Paul Street, is immediately to be converted to its originally intended use.

The lease is for ten years on terms reciprocally advantageous to the proprietor and manager, who has already



taken measures to engage performers of talent; and, also an assistant artist in the scenic department."

Popular and successful members of the theatrical world included Montreal on their list of places in which they chose to appear. British and American stars were mentioned in the press from time to time, and were usually lauded. On November 22nd, 1817, the Montreal Herald was proud to announce that: "For One Night Only - Mr. Finn, from the Theatres Royal Drury Lane, and Hay-Market, London, and Edinburgh, respectfully informs the Public that in consequence of the favourable reception his exertions have experienced on a former Evening and in compliance with the request of several Ladies and Gentlemen, he intends on Monday Evening, November 24th, at Mr. Pomeroy's Room, to present a Dramatic Melange of a Novel Nature called Mail Coach Adventures. In which entertainment Mr. Bruguerra has kindly consented to assist. To conclude with Imitations of the following London Performers: Mr. Kemble in The Stranger. The late Mr. Cook as Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant. Mr. Munden as Sir Abel Handy. Mr. Incledon, as Captain Macbeath. Mr. Braham, as Orlando. Mr. Terry as Lord Ogleby. The Young Roscius, as Alexander; and the celebrated Mr. Kean as Shylock."

With the coming of the year 1818, the theatrical situation improved in Montreal. The New Theatre closed for a brief period following the death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales. The season reopened on January 26th, with this programme: "A Comedy in five acts, called The Heir At Law. Written by George Coleman, the younger. Previous to the play an Address to the Audience, written by a Gentleman of this City, will be spoken by Mr. Turnbull.

In the course of the Evening, an entire new painting (or drop scene) will be exhibited, representing an exact view of Dunbarton Castle on the Clyde. End of the Play a Fancy Dance. To which will be added The Purse or Benevolent Tar."

On February 2nd another comedy by the same author was presented, it was John Bull or An Englishman's Fire-Side. A Mr. Richards offered a dance, and the entertainment concluded with a farce entitled The Village Lawyer. Two weeks later, a tragedy called George Barnev<sup>el</sup>l or The London Apprentice and a farce Animal Magnetism pleased a large audience.

A letter dated February 18th, 1818, and signed Mentor appeared in the Montreal Herald. Having dealt with the question of drama as an amusement, he became specific and having listed its uses and advantages, discussed the New Theatre recently

+ where from

opened and hoped it would pursue its very worthy course. Then he discussed the players: "Some of the public have lately attributed excellence to many of the present performers, which would have been better deferred, until they were more worthily deserved. To say that Mrs. Williams is an inimitable actress, may be very true, because perhaps she cannot be exactly imitated, but this was paying her a sort of negative comment. If I were to state, that she is inimitable because she excels those actresses that play with her, I should state the truth, but still pay her a poor compliment; for she unfortunately plays with those, who from timidity, vanity, want of memory, or some other unlucky failing, cannot repeat ten words following with proper accent, or good discretion; and of course, her own part must appear mangled, or confused and defective, when her interlocutors are unacquainted how to speak, or when to move. I shall merely say, till more has been seen of Mrs. Williams, and until she has better assistance, that she does play some simple characters with a chastness and propriety worthy of admiration; but although possessing a good face, and very pleasing voice, she has not yet displayed sufficient memory and judgment to command much respect in the higher walks of the Drama.

The Hero of this new stage, Mr. Baker, seems to be a person possessing a good memory and much discrimination, and with a knowledge of stage business, and a clearness and propriety of enunciation, seldom met with in a Provincial actor...

Mr. Williams is a lively and hustling actor, with a powerful voice and great confidence; but unfortunately his stage confidence militates against his memory; and from him we are too apt to have a superabundance of his created jargon, intruding upon the natural judgment of the author; he is one of those actors who say more than has been set down for them, and yet too often, say less.

I know of no disposition to condemn the other actors, because little can be said of them; they certainly have talent but they want much ... There are three points highly necessary to be impressed upon the minds of some of the Company; and these are a knowledge of their parts; energy of feeling, to make us feel they are more than statues; and an elevation of voice, at all times sufficient to render their words audible..."

The Montreal Herald thanked 'Mentor' for this excellent criticism, and at the same time praised the Management of the Theatre. Their comment was in part: "Much as has been said

against the moral of the Stranger, we cannot peruse the leading characters of this piece without feeling the fatal consequences of a deviation from the path of rectitude. Upon the whole this play was better cast, better supported and the interest better kept up than any we have seen. Mr. Baker's emaciated figures and his visage were truly characteristic of the grief-worm misanthrope. The Mrs. Haller of Mrs. Williams was so truly portrayed that while we admired her talents we could not refrain shedding tears of sympathy. Nor were we less interested in Mr. Thornton's Tobias . . . Mr. Williams in Salomon, as usual was excellent. Mr. Anderson played Francis, with great discrimination and feeling. Peter is not in Mr. Huntly's line; when Miss Grant has become acquainted with the stage, we think she will be both an acquisition and a favorite. We were so delighted with the play, that we forgive the farce. Like many others, we ought to have left the house when the play was over.

Monday evening introduced a new Actress, Mrs. Dorion as Maria, in George Barnwell . . . Mr. Baker's Barnwell was good . . . the cunning daring and cruel Millwood added another laurel to this lady's wreath . . . (Mrs. Williams').



Mr. Turnbull's Trueman was very feeling and very venerable.

Animal Magnetism - This farce was well played.\*

Exciting melodramas and broadley humorous farces were popular in the early days of the theatre in Montreal. Some of the programmes were described in a very detailed manner as this example will illustrate.

#### "New Theatre

Tale of Mystery, second time this season.

On Monday Evening, March 2, 1818, will be presented an interesting Melodrama in Three Acts called

#### A Tale of Mystery

Written by Holcroft, with the original Music by Shield. New Scenery, Painted by Mr. Turnbull and Honey. Dresses and Decorations.

#### Characters

Bonamo	Mr. Thornton
Count Romaldi	Mr. Baker
Francisco ( A Dumb Man)	Mr. Turnbull
Stephano	Mr. Richards
Montano	Mr. Kennedy
Malnaglio	Mr. Anderson
Piero	Mr. Huntly
Michelli, The Miller	Mr. Williams
Exempt	Mr. Honey
First Gardener	Mr. Wells
Second Gardener	Mr. George
Servants, Archers, Peasants, etc.	
Selina	Miss Denny
Fiametta	Mrs. Williams

Act 1st.

A Grand Gothic Hall in the House of Bonamo, attempt to murder Francisco, by Romaldi and servants, prevented by Selina.

Act 2nd.

A Garden decorated for a Marriage Festival with Festoons &c.  
Bowers &c.

A Dance between Miss Denny and Mr. Richards &c.

After which

A Grand Garland Dance, by the Characters. At the end of which the Peasants form a Group and with Transparent letters spell the name of Selina.

The Festivities are interrupted by the clock striking 10; Malnaglio enters suddenly, presents a letter, consternation seizes the whole, the music inspires alarm and dismay.

Scene 2nd.

Gothic Hall, Thunder heard at intervals, the lightning seen through the center window which imitates painted glass.

Act 3d.

The Wild Mountainous Country, called the Mont of Arpennaz.

With Pines and Mossy Rocks interspersed. A Water-fall over which is thrown a rustic Bridge. The Miller's House, Mill &c. &c. The increasing Storm of Lightning, Thunder, Hail and Rain become terrible. Dark clouds are seen descending which totally obscure the Horizon, in which the forked Lightning is visible, it strikes a Tree which is seen to fall. Count Romaldi appears on the mountains, pursued by the Archers, is concealed by Michelli the Miller and the Archers retire. Michelli recognizes Romaldi by the scar of a bite on the back of his right hand and crosses the bridge to recall the soldiers. After a severe conflict Romaldi is taken, his life spared by the intercession of Francis and Selina.

Curtain falls to Solemn Music.

To which will be added,

A Farce in Two acts called

The Hotel or

The Servant with Two Masters.

### Characters

Don Pedro	Mr. Thornton
Don Sancho	Mr. Huntly
Ferdinand	Mr. Anderson
Octavio	Mr. Richards
Barachio	Mr. Williams
Drunken Porter	Mr. Wells
Lazerrillo	Mr. Kennedy
Donna Clara	Mrs. Williams
Leonora	Miss Grant."

In reading over early theatrical programmes one is struck by the fact that the same actors and actresses played in both the drama and the farce of the evening. This would indicate that their memory and poise must have been great, else the audiences were easily pleased or suffered considerably.

Occasionally, some slight disturbance upset the peace of the theatrical section of old Montreal. This letter to the Editor of the Montreal Herald deals with one of these annoying circumstances. It was printed March 21st, 1818.

"Mr. Editor,

As it is probably known to many of your readers, that in conformity to a request made to Several Theatrical Amateurs of this City, they had it in contemplation to perform one or two evenings for the benefit of that

truly valuable institution the Female Benevolent Society, I imagine the public ought to be informed why an intention so laudible cannot be carried into effect.

When the circumstance was first mentioned to Mr. Turnbull, the manager of the theatre, he assured the Amateurs the house should be at their service; but after amusing them for fourteen days with a desultory and evasive correspondence, he now declines hiring the Theatre, until the Season would be so far advanced, as to preclude the possibility of young men of their pursuits devoting their time and attention to objects of this description, and which in short amounts to a tacit refusal.

It is for himself only to take into consideration whether he will rise, or fall in the estimation of the public, by refusing to hire his Theatre for so praiseworthy an object, as well as whether he will even benefit himself in a pecuniary point of view, for this measure may lessen the popularity of his Theatre, especially when it is known that the terms offered to him by the Amateurs were much too liberal." It was signed - "Prompter".

Despite the forebodings of the letter the theatre

continued to enjoy the support of an enthusiastic audience. Another subscriber offered a new suggestion to the Editor. He remarked that several persons had proposed erecting a theatre to be devoted to amateur plays only, and for the benefit of charitable institutions. The whole matter was settled to everyone's satisfaction according to the issue of the paper a week later. The "Herald" took no part in the controversy but regretted the misunderstanding between the public and Mr. Turnbull. Besides, in order to vindicate the Manager of the Theatre, the paper remarked that the Management and players had recently subscribed 22 8s. 5d. to be divided between the relief of suffering emigrants and the Female Benevolent Society.

The Spring of 1818 witnessed a fair number of plays at the theatre in Montreal. On March 23rd were presented: "a Celebrated Play written by G. Coleman, the younger, Esq., called the Mountaineers; or Love and Madness ... After which a Comic Piece, in one act, (never performed here) called Intrigue; or Married Yesterday ... between the Interlude and the Farce, a Hornpipe, by Mr. Richards. To conclude with the farce of The Purse. A week later there was a benefit

Somers



for Mrs. Williams, on which occasion a Melo-drama by William Diamond, entitled The Foundling of the Forest, or The Unknown Female, and a Comic Farce, in two acts, The Budget of Blunders, were presented. A number of songs, duets and recitations were added for good measure. Then the popular and gifted Mr. Baker enjoyed a Benefit on April 6th. The programme was, as usual, long and varied, in fact it was this:

"A Grand Romantic Melo-Drama, in Two Acts, called Rugantino; or The Bravo of Venice, by M.G. Lewis ... After which the Favorite and laughable Farce of the Sleep Walker; or Which is the Lady Sommo, the ( Sleep Walker) for this night only; M.Baker.

In which character he will give imitations of Mr. Kemble, Mr. Kean, Mr. Young, the late Mr. Cook, Mr. Elliston, Mr. Munden, Mr. John Bannister and other prominent performers. The Evening's Entertainment to conclude with the favorite Pantomime of Captain Cook."

The last theatrical performance of April that year consisted in Jacquhar's celebrated Comedy The Beaux Stratagem and a Grand Melo-Drama, the Blind Boy. The part of Edmund, the blind boy, was played by Mrs. Williams.

On May 4th, Macbeth, and a Grand Serio Comic Pantomine ... Don Juan, or the Libertine Destroyed, made up the bill at the theatre. Romeo and Juliet were presented a week later. Mr. Baker and Miss Denny played the leading roles. Then on May 25th., an old favorite by the name of Bernard appeared in a Comedy, The Poor Gentleman, as well as a Musical Drama, The Adopted Child. Mr. Bernard concluded his successful engagement on June 30th., when a very excellent Comedy of The Clandestine Marriage; by George Coleman. The part of Lord Ogleby was played by the star. The remainder of the programme was made up of an Interlude called Sailors on Shore, and a Musical Farce, The Padlock, or An Old Man Taught Wisdom.

The grand Romance of Blue Beard, or Fatal Curiosity by the younger Coleman and the farce entitled The Jew and the Dollar were offered on July 15th. A very long miscellaneous programme was presented two weeks later. It was under the direction of Mr. Smith and patronized by local society. This same Mr. Smith was Professor of Music and leader of the Orchestra at the theatre and this special concert was for his Little Musical Family's benefit and his own. A number

of recitations and songs made up the first part of the entertainment. The second part comprised sacred music from Handel's Oratorio and the last part was composed of a variety of offerings.

The theatre was closed for repairs and improvements and reopened on October 21st, 1818, with a comedy entitled The Honeymoon. The characters and the cast were as follows: Duke Arango by Mr. Carpenter from New York and Charleston Theatres; Rolando, by Mr. McCleary; Juliana by Mrs. Mortimer from Dublin and New York Theatres; Volante, by Mrs. Delamater from the New York Theatres; Tamora, by Miss Moore from the Charleston Theatre. At the end of the play there was a Pas Seul, by Signior Scherra, lately a principal dancer of the King's Theatre, London ... The Comic Opera of The Poor Soldier concluded the opening entertainment.

Melodrama enjoyed another burst of approval. On November 16th., The Tragedy of Adelgitha, or The Fruits of a Single Error was given as well as a Musical Farce of No Song No Supper. The Tragedy of Pizarro or The Death of Rollo was presented December 7th., and The Irishman in London was on the same programme. Admirers of Shakspeare

witnessed Hamlet on November 30th and Mr. Baker played the title role. It is amusing to note that a musical afterpiece The Purse, or Benevolent Tar was added to please patrons of less serious dramatic fare.

The Gentlemen Amateurs were active in December and essayed Katzbuc's play entitled Lovers Vows, as well as a farce , Frightened to Death. They applied their receipts to the aid of the Female Benevolent Society. The regular players at the theatre selected Sheridan's School for Scandal for their programme of December 21st. The performance was for the benefit of Mr. Carpenter, their Acting-Manager, and this worthy gentleman made a Leap thru a Cask of Real Fire, before the entertainment concluded with a melodrama, Falls of Clyde.

A Mr. Frederick Brown from the Theatres Royal in London and Dublin came to Montreal in January 1819. His first appearance was on the 14th., of that month when he played the title role in Othello. That same evening a farce called Honest Thieves was presented.

The Herald congratulated the proprietors of the Montreal Theatre and praised the company of outstanding

players there. The remarks in part were ... "in the performance of Mr. Frederick Brown, who has lately arrived among us from the Boston Theatre, there is so much to praise, that the confined limits of commendation, would admit of too much tautology, were we to attempt to describe his many excellencies, in the parts he has sustained during the present week; but those of his Othello, and his Shylock, in the Merchant of Venice, and the Three Singles in the Three and the Deuce, have been so diversified, and successful, that all who witnessed them, must be assured of his being an Actor of the very first class; ... In Mrs. Brown, we have also received the most decided acquisition, her playfulness and ease, are remarkable for chasteness of action and propriety of feeling; and these, together with a dignified demeanor and clearness of expression, in the serious parts of Portia, not forgetting her sweet voice, and quaint simplicity in the character of Taffline, make us regret, from the intended short stay of Mr. and Mrs. Brown, that we cannot witness their performance above four nights longer."

The benefit of the popular Mrs. Brown was on February 8th, on which evening a comedy entitled The Suspicious Husband

was presented. Mr. Brown recited Collins' Ode On the Passions and a drama of current popularity, The Three and the Deuce, or, Which is He? completed the programme. A week later, the theatrical attraction was a tragedy called Jane Shore and a brief comedy entitled After the Wedding; as well as a Ballet of Action entitled The Siege of Quebec, or the Death of General Wolfe. On February 17th, Mr. Frederick Brown appeared in Othello and Catherine and Petruchio, altered by Garrick from Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew.

The month of March 1819 was quiet in theatrical affairs in Montreal, until the 29th, when Holcroft's comedy The Road to Ruin was given. Mr. Brown played the part of Goldfinch in that attraction. The second part of the programme was a Romantic Melodrama, the Lady of the Lake performed from the text of Sir Walter Scott. This latter piece occasioned some excitement as Miss Denny, the favourite actress of local audiences did not appear in the title role. The spectators stopped the play awhile, much to the embarrassment of a Mrs. Mortimer who portrayed the leading character. The play was resumed when it was explained that Miss Denny had refused to act, as the benefit she desired

before Easter, had not materialized.

A small variety of entertainments took place in April and May. Miss Denny offered a concert of vocal and instrumental music on April 5th, and the Sons of Harmony gave a concert two weeks later. The regular theatre offered Speed the Plough and Morton's admired comedy The Spoiled Child, on May 4th. Miss Denny's admirers were gratified to see her as Little Pickle in the Morton play. A very long programme was enjoyed on May 31st. It consisted of: Dr. Home's much admired tragedy of Douglas, or, The Noble Shepherd, followed by a number of songs and recitations, and concluded with the comic piece, Day After the Wedding.

September brought a Mr. and Mrs. Bartley from the Royal Drury Lane Theatre and Covent Garden, London. They gave readings and recitations in the Assembly Room at the Mansion House. They were well received and local audiences praised their entertainment. They gave scenes from Macbeth and Much Ado about Nothing, and recited Collins' Ode on the Passions, Mary the Maid of the Inn and many comic recitations.

Child prodigies were not unknown in the early days of the theatre in Montreal. There was Master George Frederick Smith, the much admired Musical Child; for whom a benefit



performance was held December 13th, 1819. The programme was: a comedy called the West Indian and a musical farce entitled Rosina. The advertisement for the evening concluded thus: "In the course of the evening, Master Smith will recite Dick the Apprentice's Soliloquy, sing the Song of an Irishman's Heart for the Ladies, and perform the first Violin part of a Medley Duett."

Mr. Frederick Brown a versatile and well-liked actor was in Montreal late in December, and the Herald welcomed him in the name of the theatre-goers and apologized for the fact that the local cast of supporting players were very weak. Mr. Brown played Macbeth as well as Maturin's celebrated Tragedy called Bertram, or, The Castle of St. Aldobrand. Early in January 1820. he played the leading role in Manuel, a tragedy. That same evening, he recited Collins' Ode on the Passions and was featured in a pantomime The Birth and Death of Harlequin. Miss Denny, previously mentioned, played Columbine on that occasion.

It sometimes happened that professional and amateur players united to present theatrical diversion. The following notice of January 15th, 1820, will indicate how this was arranged:

\*Theatre

We have the pleasure of announcing to the public that on Monday Evening, the 24th.inst. under the patronage of Lieut. Col. Burer, commanding the 37th.Regt. some officers of the Garrison, and gentlemen of this City, will perform the celebrated Comedy of the Honey Moon, and the musical farce of the Review, for the purpose of aiding the charitable subscription now on foot for the relief of the distressed Emigrants. Mr. Turnbull has agreed to let the Theatre for that evening, and Miss Denny and the other actresses of the present Dramatique Corps, have kindly consented to assist the Amateurs in their laudable undertaking. We feel assured the good people of this City, will require no further stimulus, than the present information to give their full support to so good a cause. The Band of the 37th. Regt. will be allowed to perform at the Theatre ...." This was the programme:

\*Tobin's Comedy of the Honey Moon.

Duke Aranza.        )  
                          )  
Count Mountalban.)    by Amateurs

Rolando        )  
Balthazer)  
Iampedo        )  
Lopez         )  
Jacques        )  
Campillo                    by Amateurs

Juliana	Miss Denny
Violante	Miss Honey
Zamora	Mrs. Mortimer
Hostess	Mrs. Cunningham

After which the Musical Farce of

The Review, or  
The Wags of Windsor"

Financially and histrionically, the affair was a success, according to commentaries in the Herald, a few days later.

A Concert was given prior to a Ball on February 3rd, at the Mansion House. The proceeds were devoted to charity. On the 7th, Mr. Brown gave his version of King Lear, to a delighted audience. He played the lead that night in a farce that was repeated frequently, by popular demand. It was "the farce called Three and the Deuce - or Which is He, and concerned three brothers So much alike in form, in feature and in dress, That which is which, will puzzle you to guess." Mr. Frederick Brown's stay was over for a time and on February 12th, immediately following his departure, the Montreal Herald expressed the admiration all theatre audiences had felt for him in this city. The article concluded by listing the numerous characters he had portrayed

during his last engagement. They were: Macbeth, Bertram, Don Manuel, Brutus, Young Wilding, Iago, King Lear, Hamlet, George Barnwell, The Three Siagles, Daran in the Exile, Ranger, Young Norval, Alexander the Great, Shylock, Belino, and Dominic Sampson. He had not had the opportunity to play Othello, his masterpiece.

A certain Mr. Brunet gave a series of entertainments which he called Philosophical Experiments and Illusions of Art. On February 26, he advertised: the Magic Box, The Seven Watches, The Marvellous Lamp, the Urn of Medicis, the Three Oranges, or Obedient Fruit, the Incomprehensible Column of Rosback, the Enchanted Handkerchief, the Goddess Flora's Garden, or Obedient Pyramid.

This ingenious piece of Mechanism which has been the admiration of all the learned in Europe, the Exhibitor flatters himself will be equally acceptable here. The Secret Book, the Pyramid of Romanzoff, the Three Pyramids, Transporting Liquors, with many other Experiments too tedious to mention."

Mr. Smith, Leader of the Orchestra at the Theatre received a benefit on March 13th. The performance, under

the patronage of the Gentlemen of the Private Theatricals and the Sons of Harmony, consisted in Homes' admired Tragedy of Douglas, or the Noble Shepherd, and the celebrated Farce ... Fortune of War, A Golden Chain, or Wooden Leg, Translated from the French by James Henney Esq. of Dublin."

The pupils of Mr. and Mrs. Duff gave a concert on April 10th at the Mansion House Hotel. A week later, the Officers of the Garrison and Gentlemen of the City gave Coleman's Comedy of The Poor Gentleman and a farce, Love a la Mode. The proceeds were devoted to charitable purposes. The youthful George Frederick Smith had such appeal for local audiences that he received a benefit on April 26th. The tragedy of Douglas with George as Young Norval and Miss in Her Teens with George as Captain Flash were presented. The event was such a successful one that the clever boy prolonged his stay in Montreal, and in compliance to public demand gave: "Recitations from the principal scenes of Shakespeare's admired Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet and the historical play of King Richard the Third. "

For several months a great scarcity prevailed in theatrical circles in the city. In September 1820, a

ventriloquist named Mr. Charles gave his Popular Exhibition of Illusions in Ventriloquism, Mechanical Games and Philosophical Recreations. The Herald spoke encouragingly of Mr. Charles and urged Montrealers to witness his clever entertainment. A fire had destroyed the local theatre, this was the climax of various distressing happenings that deprived local enthusiasts of the drama of all theatrical fare for a long time.

The year 1821 seems to have been very dull as far as the theatre in Montreal was concerned. Mrs. West gave a Grand Exhibition Ball, at the City Tavern, Assembly Room, in February of the following year. The programme for the event was this: The first item was a "Minuet and Strathsey by Eight Young Ladies. No.2 - Pastoral Dance of Ten, by Seven Young Ladies and Three Young Gentlemen. No.3 - The celebrated Grand Minuet de la Cour and Gavott, by Mr. and Mrs. N. West. No.4 - A March Dance, by four Young Ladies and Mrs. West. No.5 - Hornpipe by a Young Gentleman. No.6 - Scotch Reel of five, in which Mrs. N. will introduce Madame Parisot's Hornpipe. No.7 - A Fancy Dance of Six with an Allemande `a Trois by Mrs. W, and two young Ladies.

No.8 - A Reel of Nine, with a Scotch Jig by Mrs. W.

No. 9 - To conclude with a Grand Garland Dance by Twenty Young Ladies.

The Fancy Dances to commence at half-past Six O'Clock and conclude at half-past Eight, after which the General Dancing to commence with a Country Dance." One concludes that Mrs. West was amazingly agile and an excellent organizer.

The Amateur Players at Mr. Ray's new Assembly Rooms, Head of the New Market, on March 25, gave Dr. Young's Celebrated Tragedy: The Revenge, or Spanish Insult Repaired. They gave a Musical After-piece of The Purse, or: The Benevolent Tar, that same evening. The performance was praised in the local press, and that was one of the several occasions on which the Band of the 60th. Regiment aided the Amateur Players.

The Amateurs were very prominent in theatricals in April. On the 24th they presented a Grand Romantic Melo Drama in three Acts called Rudolph or the Robbers of Calabria ... by J. D. Turnbull. This Mr. Turnbull was a local playwright whose works entitled Wood Demon, Valdemar and others, were often performed in Montreal at that time. The Amateurs



completed their programme with a farce called Raising the Wind and other brief items. The play was such a success that it was repeated a week later, and on that occasion the part of Rosalia was undertaken by a Lady Amateur. The farce was called Silvester Daggerwood, or the Mad Dunstable Actor. The enjoyment of farces was very keen in 1822, and this tendency prevailed for many seasons. The play was again repeated on May 15th for the benefit of the Montreal General Hospital. In praising the Amateurs, the Herald remarked: "The performers have spared no expense and have used their best exertions to render the Amateur Theatre convenient and amusing: and with a truly laudable generosity have given benefits, before they have covered their expenses: their dresses are rich and tasteful, their scenery extensive and beautiful, and their performance equal to that of any provincial boards we have ever seen ...." The Amateurs gave their final performance of the season on June 3rd, the proceeds were devoted to some charitable cause. Their programme was this: Comedy of John Bull or An Englishman's Fire Side, by Coleman the Younger, and the Popular Farce by Macklen of Love a la Mode or The Humours of the Turf.

Several months passed and according to newspapers of the day theatricals were at a complete standstill in Montreal. Then on January 17th, 1823, came this interesting notice.

\*Tenders  
Required for the  
New Theatre

The Plans, together with the specifications for the Mason Work and Carpenters Work are deposited in the hands of Mr. Phillips, St. Laurent Suburb, to be by him communicated to undertakers who are required to give in to the undersigned, Tenders for doing the work.

The Tenders to be sealed and addressed Theatre Tenders to be given in on or before the 1st. February next.

By order of the Building Committee

George Auldjo

Montreal, 17th, Jany, 1823."

For some time local audiences remained bereft of real theatrical fare. There were a few concerts of vocal and instrumental music, as one on August 25th, by Mr. and Miss Clark. At the end of October one was given for the benefit of the

Montreal General Hospital. This concert was another example of the cooperation that existed among the amateurs of the local theatre, for members of the Montreal Orphean Society and others joined powers on that occasion. Even the local militia helped, for Lieut. Colonel Evans permitted part of the band to assist at the concert.

Musical concerts continued to please appreciative audiences in Montreal. During the autumn a Mr. Keene who enjoyed great popularity here, gave several entertainments. The following is the programme he selected for November 1st.

"Part First.

Song: Tho' Love is warm awhile. Braham  
Song: Is there a heart that never loved. Braham  
Ballad: Wm. the Brave (by desire). Words by a young lady on the death of an officer at the Battle of Orleans. Music by Gilfert.  
Polacca: The Bed of Roses. Gilfert.  
Song: The Death of General Abercrombie. Braham  
Song: (by particular desire). The Parting Kiss.  
Tyrolese Air.

Part Second.

Song: The Meeting of the Waters or the Vale Ovoca. Moore  
Ballad. A Temple to Friendship. Moore's National Melodies.  
Song: The Exile of Erin. Campbell  
Scotch Ballad. Auld Lang Syne. Burns  
Serenade. Lilla come down to me. T.Cooke  
Finale: Scots Wha Hae wi ' Wallace bled. Burns"

The first event of the theatre in 1824 took place on February 9th when the Canadian Amateurs performed *Le Marriage Forcé* by Molière and *Crispin Medecin* by Hanteroche. Then on March 24th, the English Amateur Gentlemen assisted by a lady will perform the interesting Melo Drama of *Rudolph or the Calabrian Banditti*. The entertainment closed with a new farce in two acts, written by Perry, called *Two Wives, or A Hunt to Husbands*.

The week of March 29th was a busy one at the local circus, a sort of theatre. Messrs. West and Blanchard and their troupe gave equestrian entertainment, and this included feats of strength, vaulting, tight-rope walking and dancing, and other clever acts that enthralled enthusiastic audiences. Thus they modestly summed up their talents in the Herald on April 10th...."the celebrated Equestrian Company will perform their astonishing Feats of Horsemanship, Olympic Feats, Rope Dancing, Wire Walking, Ground and Lofty Tumbling, Still Vaulting with a variety of other feats too numerous to mention". The troupe earned the support and generous praise of large audiences. Their energy and talents were boundless, so on May 8th, they announced that in addition to the Circus, they have erected an

elegant stage, with new scenery and have also engaged several performers from the different Southern Theatres, who will make their first appearances on Monday Evening 10th, May, 1824. The performance to commence with the admired Petit Comedy of The Sultan or The English Captive.

Solyman (The Sultan)	Mr. Monier, late of the New York and Philadelphia Circus, his 1st appearance in Montreal.
Asmyn	Mr. Sinclair, his first appearance these five years.
Grand Carver	Master George Blanchard
Roxalana	Mrs. Monier, from the New York and Philadelphia Circus, her first appearance in Montreal.
Ismena	Miss Brundage) Their first appearance
Elmira	Mrs. Brundage) ance in Montreal.

After which a Grand Equestrian and Military Entry by 8 horses who will lie down, sit up and go through their pleasing manoeuvres.

#### Balancing

By Master George who will go through his Olympic Feats.

#### Horsemanship

By Master William, a child seven years of age, who will make his first appearance on Horseback, and go through a variety of feats, astonishing for a child of his age.

Riding-Master .....

Mr. West

Clown.....

Master MacDonald

### Still Vaulting

By Messrs. West, Blanchard, Harris, Brazier, Laidley, Turner and MacDonald, Clown.

### Equestrian Exercises

By Miss Cecilia, only nine years of age.

### Slack Wire

By Miss Elizabeth, who will go through her pleasing performances concluding with the Manual Exercises.

### Horsemanship

By Master Turner, who will conclude his act by riding without Saddle or Bridle, the Horse in a rude state of nature.

Mr. and Mrs. Blanchard will go through their pleasing performances on the

### Tight Rope

The Evening's performance to conclude with the admired Farce of the

### Spoiled Child

Old Pickle  
Little Pickle, ( with a song  
and hornpipe )  
Miss Pickle  
Maria  
Susan  
Margery

Mrs. Monier  
  
Miss Brundage  
Mrs. Brundage  
Mrs. Valteau  
Miss E. Blanchard  
- - -

On May 13th, the same company gave the admired Petit Comedy of A Day after the Wedding, or a Wife's First Lesson and the admired farce of the Lady and the Devil. A few days later they presented The Point of Honour, or, A School for Soldiers translated from the French by Charles Kemble Esq., to which will be added the favorite Ballet of Little Red Riding Hood ... On the 19th they showed greater versality and the feature of their programme was the admired opera of Inkle and Yarico. The ballet that night was entitled Flora's Birth Day. They repeated The Spoil'd Child the following evening and presented the favorite Ballet of the Storm or British Tars Coast on Shore. Ten days afterwards they gave a benefit for the Catholic poor and on this occasion their features were the admired Opera of Turn Out and the Ballet of the Storm. The last of May witnessed their version of the Melo Drama of the Warlock of the Glen ... and the Pantomine of Harlequin Statue.

The Circus had few competitors in Montreal at that time. In May a Mr. Taylor who styled himself "the dramatic Ventriloquist" gave several entertainments each of which he called a "Colloquial Divertisement." At the New-Market Theatra the grand Melo-Drama of Ella Rosenberg ... and the



laughable farce of the Review or the Way of Windsor were presented on May 20th.

The Circus pursued its busy way throughout the summer months. In June the programmes embraced the following dramas, comedies and farces. Among the dramas were Warlock of the Glen; the melodrama of Ali Pacha or the Greek Struggle for Liberty the melodrama of Blue Beard or Female Curiosity and a Grand Equestrian Melo-Drama of Timmour the Tartar which was written expressly for the purpose of introducing the Horses upon the stage and played upwards of 100 nights at the Covent Garden Theatre. Incidentally this was one of the equestrian dramas that were repeated very frequently at the special request of Montreal audiences. Among the farces for June was The Weathercock or Love Alone Can Find Him. There were a few pantomines including that of Harlequin Statue or the Gigantic Ghost that was repeated on several occasions. A number of comedies delighted patrons of the Circus that month and these included the comedy of The Blue Devils and that of The Soldier's Daughter.

Several old favorite plays were given again in July while some new offerings varied the programmes. The new items

included the Grand Equestrian Melo-Drama Tekeli.... with Mr. Laidley as the hero and Alexina by Mrs. Monier, there was a Grand Operatical Romance of the Forty Thieves presented on July 12th. There were two pantomines that earned special merit in the eyes of the spectators and they were called The Pantomine of La Perouse or the Desolated Island and Don Juan or the Libertine Destroyed. There was one new Melo-Drama offered, it was The Maid and the Magpie or Which is the Thief. The month close magnificiently at the Circus with the presentation of an Equestrian Spectacle of Lodoiska.

The troupe ended the prolonged engagement at the Circus in August. Among their last offerings were two melodramas, they were entitled Valentine and Orson and The Miller and His Men. The outstanding comedies of that month were The Honey-moon and another The Sleep-Walker or Which is the lady.

In September, Senor and Senora Vilallave and their Company performed at the Circus. Their programmes were very similar to those offered by the West and Blanchard group. Their performance of The Blind Boy, a melodrama, was lauded by their patrons. Then on September 22nd, they announced, among

other attractions A Grand Ballet on Stilts by Mrs. Vilallave, Mrs. Blanchard, Miss Lopez, Miss Elizabeth, Mr. Vilallave, Mr. C. Blanchard. On the same bill was a farce entitled Of Age Tomorrow. A week later, Tom and Jerry or Life in London proved popular.

Mr. Keene returned to Montreal in October and was accorded a remarkable welcome. One of the laudatory remarks expressed in the Herald was: "If Mr. Keene were to appear on the English boards, we should be disposed to place him in that rank among vocalists, which Mr. Charles Kemble holds among the performers of genteel comedy; the one being as free as the other from that fringe and frippery, so much within the power of those performers who owe all to talents and art, reserving only to themselves the privilege of tastefully decorating the powers which nature has bestowed upon them."

The last theatrical performance for 1824 seems to have taken place on October 6th, when Tale of Mystery was presented at the Circus.

The first months of 1825 showed little increase in the way of the drama in Montreal. On January 15th, the Gentleman Canadian Amateurs presented Beaumarchais' Le Barbier de Seville

our La Precaution Inutile . After which, Florian's petit comedy of Les Deux Billets. The Evening's entertainment to conclude with the admired Burletta in 1 act, called Giles Ravisseur. Towards the end of April the Garrison Amateurs gave Sheridan's Rivals and a Farce, the Boarding House. They devoted the proceeds of the affair to charitable purposes.

The Circus began to assert its prominence as a place of entertainment after this notice had been published in the Herald for July 2nd. "Messrs, Blanchard and West, respectfully inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of Montreal, that their New Establishment will be opened on Tuesday Evening next the 5th instant, when will be presented a variety of Entertainments. They trust their exertions will enable them to bring forward such novelty as will meet the approbation and patronage of a liberal public. The Grand Dramatic Spectacle of the Secret Mine, with all the Horses got up in a superior style to any Piece hitherto produced in this country, with new scenery by Mr. T. Honey," held large audiences enthralled at the end of July. The following letter to the Editor of the Herald will indicate how well the public liked the Blanchard and West Company.

\*Mr. Editor;

Permit me, through the medium of your paper, to call the public attention to the great and unremitting exertions of the managers of the Montreal Royal Circus to deserve the patronage of the public. In pursuance to this resolution, they have agents of activity and judgment in almost all the large cities of the continent ready to engage the best performers both in stage acting and gymnastic exercises. these actors will arrive in succession as their engagements terminate and the first who shall make his appearance, is the celebrated Mr. Hunter, well known as the greatest equestrian in the world, which I state on personal knowledge. As he is to make his debut some time next week, I trust our citizens will not be backward in supporting the enterprise, to the indefatigable managers.

Yours &c. A Citizen.\*

The Royal Circus was the scene of Entertainment every night except Sundays during the season. The same type of thrilling, spectacular programme continued to attract many Montrealers. A Melodrama called "Tiger Horde" and another entitled "The Red Blood Knight or the Fatal Bridge" earned much applause.

The more genteel patrons of all sorts of theatrical fare were grateful when Mr. Keene gave one of his concerts on August 2nd. He was welcomed by the Herald, in which his programme was printed.

"Part 1.

Song	Love these dearest.....	Gilfert
Ballad	Oh Lady, ne'er think I could prove false to thee.....	Sinclair
Song	Farewell, but whenever you welcome the hour (Words by Moore; music by Keene)	
Song	To Ladies' Eyes .....	Moore
Ballad	Drink of this cup ..... (From Moore's National Melodies)	
Sporting Polacca	The Horne of Chance-- (words by Percy Farren, Esq... Music by Carl Von Gilfert).	

Part 11.

Song	O 'tis Love .....	(French Air)
Song	Crooskeen Lawn ....	(Carolan)
Song	The Thorn .....	(Words by Robert Burns music by Mr. Braham)
Song	My Native Highland Home ..	(From the Opera of The Slave)
Ballad	The Maniac .....	(Sir John Stevenson)
Finale	Scots wha hae	Burns"

It may amuse the modern patron of the theatre to know that the ingredients of the bills at the Circus include almost anything from opera to pole-vaulting. The programme for August 6th, 1825, is a typical example, for it comprised

the opera of 'The Poor Soldier' flying, vaulting and horsemanship, as well as a Ballet of 'The Shipwreck or the British Tars Ashore'.

Mr. Hunter, whose engagement was heralded with enthusiasm, lived up to preconceived ideas of his worth. On August 8th and 9th., previous to the "Admired Melo-Drama, taken from Sir Walter Scott's poem of that name called The Lady of the Lake, he went through his wonderful feats of Horsemanship, without saddle or bridle, with a variety of new feats, and a surprising Leap over a surface of canvas, 10 feet wide! and concluded with the drunken hussar." In other words, Mr. Hunter was truly the celebrated equestrian. Then his benefit occurred a few days later and Mr. Hunter surpassed his previous efforts by making "a surprising Leap over a number of horses and concluded with a wonderful Leap through twelve balloons. The Performance to conclude with the admired Melo-Drama, translated from the French, by John Howard Payne, called Therese, or the Orphan of Geneva."

Mr. and Mrs. Ostinelli and Mr. and Miss Ayling gave an excellent concert of vocal and instrumental music on August 12th. It was well received. The Circus was active the

following night, on the occasion of Mr. West's benefit, when The Hunted Tailor or Billy Button's Journey to Brentford and Timmour the Tartar were the chief attractions.

Mr. Keene was drawn into the company at the Circus on several evenings, the first of which was August 15th, when he played Count Belino in the opera The Devil's Bridge. Incidentally, this performance earned much praise as well as blame and Mr. Keene was praised. As the Herald remarked - "The musical talents of this gentleman will always secure attraction and approbation. But the public of this City have hitherto had no opportunity of witnessing his excellence as an actor. Last night in the opera of The Devil's Bridge he displayed a taste in costume, chasteness in personification and a dignity and ease of acting which would do honour to any stage, and excited universal applause.... Mr. Keene played the part of Henry Bertram in the Grand Operatic Drama of Guy Mannering or the Gipsy's Prophecy a few days later.

Mr. Frederick Brown an old favourite with Montreal audiences appeared at the Royal Circus on the evening



of Mr. Keene's benefit on August 22nd. It was his first time here in six years, and he delighted the spectators in the part of Rolla<sup>d</sup>, in Sheridan's tragedy of Pizarro, or The Death of Rolla. Mr. Keene was Alonzo in the same play, and was Patrick in the Opera of the Poor Soldier, that same night. At the end of Mr. Brown's brief sojourn, the company grew ambitious in another fashion and presented Othello, Moors of Venice. This seems to have been the first play by Shakespeare, attempted at the Royal Circus in Montreal.

Mr. Blanchard inserted the following useful information in the Herald on September 1st: "Mr. Blanchard begs leave most respectfully to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of Montreal and its vicinity, that ever grateful for the distinguished patronage he has received and hoping a continuance of it, he has engaged at a considerable expense, the following performers: Mr. Gale from the Theatres Royal Cobourg, Surry and Astley's Amphitheatre, London, and late from New York; Mr. Lawson, formerly <sup>of</sup> Mr. J. West's Celebrated Equestrian Corps, and Price and Simpsons of New York, as

Equestrian Manager; Mr. Asten, as Clown, late of New York; Mr. Simonds, as Comedian, of the Theatres, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore; Mrs. Parker, from the Theatres Boston, New York and Philadelphia; Mrs. Carnes, formerly of Mr. West's Equestrian Corps. Due notice will be given of their appearance." As a matter of fact, Messrs. Gale, Lawson and Austen, as well as Mrs. Parker and Mrs. Carnes appeared on September 5th, in the Grand Melodramatic Spectacle, written by W. Barrymore, Esq. ... El Hyder, and Mr. Gale played the title role. The offering was so well received that it was repeated a few nights later, accompanied by a farce called Forty Thieves.

The performers at the Royal Circus did not fail to aid their less fortunate fellowmen from time to time. On September 10th they gave a benefit for the Distressed Sufferers of the late Dreadful Fire; the play was Lady of the Lake with Mr. Judah as Roderick Dhu. The next performance starred Mr. Stoker, the undaunted flying phenomenon, will make his first appearance on La Corde Colante. The performance to conclude with the Grand Romantic, Melo-Drama of

Valentine and Orson." Coleman's admired and Laughable Farce of the Review, or the Merry Wag of Windsor, shared the honours with a Grand Ballet of Action, called the Brave Hussar; or, Soldier's Vengeance, on another programme. A musical farce No Song, No Supper was presented on the 17th.

Mr. McNally gave a musical entertainment at the Mansion House on September 19th. His programme will indicate his versatility. It was:

"Part First - On the Union Pipes

Lord Moria's Welcome Home

Garry Owen, with variations

Lord Harwick's March

The Downfall of Paris

There's nae luck about the house

Stagger the buck, with variations

Part Second - On the Clarionette

Bonaparte's March to St. Helena

A Favourite Spanish Waltz

Larry Grogan, with variations

An admired Irish Air

Part Third - On the Organ Pipes

Kitty Tyrrel

Go Where Glory waits thee

Auld Lang Syne

Colonel Vere Ker's March

The heaving of the Lead

A French Air

Part Fourth- On the Flagolet

The Wanderer

The Meeting of the Waters

The Post Captain

Saint Patrick's Day

Part Fifth - On the Organ Pipes

On Nanny wilt thou gang wi' me

Burns' Jane

Bruce's address to his Army

Carolan's receipt for drinking Whiskey

Erin go Bragh

The Bewildered Maid

The Little House under the Hill

All's Well

To conclude on the Clarionette

Rule Britannia, and the Dear Irish Boy.

On September 22nd, a new note was added to the Circus' entertainment, as indicated by the advertisement of the day: "The Performance to commence with a Trial of Skill, or, Who shall gain most applause, By Messrs. Johnson, Jones, W. Jones, Baptiste G. Blanchard, Master de Groot and Astén, Clown." There was held on September 24th the Benefit of Master William Blanchard, The Little Wonder!!! ... Ballet Dance of Little Red Riding Hood, or, A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing ... also "Master William Blanchard, will, for the first time sing the Comic Song of A Frog he would a wooing go, Heigho, says Rowley ..." The popular melodrama of Robinson Crusoe, or, The Bold Buccaneers, completed the programme.

Mr. Frederick Brown returned to Montreal and lost no time in announcing the object of his presence as well as his plans for the immediate future. This was his advertisement, under the plain heading "Theatre."

"Mr. Frederick Brown, respectfully announces to the public that he has taken a lease of the New Theatre in Montreal, which will be ready for Dramatic Performances on

the 14th November. The interior of the building will be finished in a style of elegance and comfort, not to be surpassed by any Theatre on this side of the Atlantic.

Mr. Brown is now in treaty with performers of established talent and respectability both in England and the United States: and he pledges himself that no endeavour shall be wanting, on his part, to procure a good company, and to establish a regular and well conducted Theatre, on a scale as extensive as the public patronage will allow him.

Mr. Brown offers, a Silver Ticket entitling the holder to the freedom of the Theatre for the season, to anyone who shall produce the best Poetic Address for the opening of the Theatre."

While awaiting the opening of the New Theatre, the Circus continued its brisk career, and several of the company enjoyed benefits. There was one for Mrs. Talbot on September 29th. The programme included: "the Melo-Drama of Ella Rosenberg, or the Triumph of Virtue... and A Comic Interlude, taken from the Montreal Herald, called Paddy on the Peace Establishment.

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(Kindly see next page.)

Justice Bladderchops ... Mr. Simonds

Clerk ... Mr. C. Blanchard

Paddy Geraghty, a

Jaunting Car Driver ... Mr. Talbot

The laughable Farce of Nature and Philosophy, or, Sixteen Years of Labour Lost."

The programmes continued to include horsemanship and vaulting, and according to their date, the following plays were presented at the Circus in October. On the 3rd, a tragedy, called Douglas, or the Noble Shepherd, and the operatic melodrama The Miller and His Men, on the 8th. Two days later a pantomime of Oscar and Malvina, or, the Hall of Fingall, was the chief item on the programme. The comedy of The Spoil'd Child, and a farce called The Romp, and two melodramas Valentine and Orson, and The Forty Thieves pleased many patrons. On the 13th, the management very proudly announced that: "Lieutenant Colonel McGregor has kindly consented that the Band of the 70th Regiment shall attend during the Performance, to play the most popular airs and marches."



A week later, Mr. R. Honey, Leader of the Orchestra, enjoyed a benefit performance. The entertainment was: "The Storm, or the Cheating Landlord ... the celebrated out and out classic, Comic, operative, didactic, moralistic, aristo-phanic, analytic, terpichoric, panoramic, extravaganza, burletta of fun, frolic and flash, in three Acts, called Tom and Jerry, or Life in London.

Corinthian Tom ...	Mr. Gale
Jerry Hawthorn ...	Mr. Roper
Bob Logic ...	Mr. Schinotti
Squire Hawthorn ...	Mr. Lawson
Paddy O'Boozle ...	Mr. T. Honey"

Mr. Blanchard exhibited his numerous histrionic talents at his special benefit on October 24th, when Blood Red Knight, or, The Fatal Bridge, was presented. Prior to the benefit, this announcement was made: "Mr. Blanchard will go through a pleasing performance in the art of Leger-demain, in which he never failed to astonish and delight the beholders, while in Paris, London, and all the principal Cities, in Europe and America ... Mr. B., in part of his

performance, will introduce the Vulcanian Basin, or the Burnt Handkerchief Restored. The Chinese Caddy, or the Mysterious Dove. The Mortar of Esculapius, or the Broken Watch ... The Bell of Apollo, or the Change of Leeds ... The Egyptian Pyramids ... The Chinese Pancakes ... and conclude with the Magic Bones, or the Enchanted Pedestal, on which he will introduce, by the word of command, Miss E., Miss C., and Master W. Blanchard, to the astonishment of the spectators." The series of benefits continued and favorite plays were repeated. Mr. McNally gave a few musicales and then came the opening of the Theatre Royal for the season. This event took place on November 21st, under the capable direction of Mr. Frederick Brown.

The Performers were: "Mr. Watkinson, of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, and late of the New York Theatre; Messrs. Horton, Essender, Herbert Clark, Heyl and Scott, from the Southern Theatres; Mr. and Mrs. Forbes, Mr. Harris, Mrs. Meline, Mr. Logan.

Miss Riddle, who has lately been performing in New York with such distinguished success is also engaged

for a limited number of nights. Many Performers of Celebrity will occasionally visit Montreal - a succession of New and Popular Pieces will be produced, and many of the Sterling Plays, particularly the works of Shakespeare, will be revived in the course of the Season, with appropriate decorations.

The Orchestra will be complete, and conducted by Mr. Richard Honey and Mr. Duff, who will alternately take the Direction of the Musical Department.... The Interior of the House is well warmed throughout with Stoves, and every attention has been paid to the comfort and convenience of the audience...

The Theatre will be open on Monday 21st November, 1825.

The Prize Address to be delivered by Mr. Essender (his first appearance in Montreal). After which Reynolds' Comedy of the Dramatist, or Stop Him Who Can.

Lord Scratch	....	Mr. Horton
Floriville	....	Mr. Essender
Neville	....	Mr. Forbes

Ennui	....	Mr. Scott
Willoughby	..	Mr. Logan
Vapid (the Dramatic Author)	..	Mr. F. Brown
Peter	....	Mr. Herbert
Servant	....	Mr. Clynch
Lady Waitford	..	Mrs. Horton
Marianne	....	Miss Riddle
(First night of her engagement)		
Louisa Courtney	..	Mrs. Forbes
Letty	....	Mrs. Brazier"

The farce was The Spoil'd Child with Miss Riddle as Little Pickle.

So much for the announcements prior to the opening of the Theatre, and the comments in the Herald on November 23rd, indicate that the announcements were not an idle boast. Incidentally, some of the remarks indicate that interest in a local playhouse lagged very definitely, from time to time, in Montreal. "Theatre - It was long a matter of complaint in this city that there had been no place of public amusement where the rich might retire for rational amusement, the man of business seeks relaxation from the cares and toils

of life, and youth be taught proper lessons of morality and the fairest path to the attainment of literary excellence. This desideratum has at last been obviated by the building of a new Theatre by subscription, whose construction, in point of architectural taste and ornament, reflects the highest credit upon those who superintended its formation and completion ....

On Monday night this theatre was opened for the first time by a party under the management of Mr. Frederick Brown, the lessee of the theatre, a gentleman of the best professional talents, and of the highest respectability in private life; and, with all, a gentleman who, we are sure, will discharge with credit and honour the various difficult duties which this new situation has called him to perform. There are, however, reciprocal duties which Mr. Brown, at the same time that he is endeavouring to perform his own, has a right to exact from the public, and without which it will be impossible for him to fulfil any of those expectations, which a people sanguine for rational amusement, may be tempted to lay at his door ... In short

+ Address the Theatre



the duties of this gentleman and the public are founded on a reciprocity of interests, and it will be their own fault if the hopes of either will be disappointed.

The house is small but compact and neatly finished ....

Previous to the commencement of the Performances, a Prize Address of considerable practical merit was spoken by one of the performers....

The play performed was the Comedy of the Dramatist; most of the characters of which were ably supported. Mr. Brown in Vapid was life itself; and his delineation of the scene wherein he in vain endeavours to find out a rhyme to close his epilogue, evinced in a striking degree that absence of mind, so characteristic of poetic genius ... it may be sufficient at present to say, that Mr. Horton as Lord Scratch, Mr. Logan as Ennui, Mr. Forbes as Neville, and Miss Riddle as Marianne, performed their parts with great spirit and full effect. The Farce was The Spoil'd Child, in which Miss Riddle again appeared to great advantage."

Montrealers took to heart the advice so generously

given by the Herald, and a season of a variety of plays followed. Once more comedies, farces, melodramas and occasionally an opera, entertained the audiences at the Theatre. The plays of Shakespeare were given more frequently and this may have been the result of the resourcefulness of the clever Mr. Frederick Brown, who made a valiant effort to improve the theatrical situation in Montreal.

The first programme following the opening consisted of a comedy entitled Speed the Plough and an opera called Roxina. Mrs. Frederick Brown made her first appearance in Montreal in five years, on the 23rd and acted in the character of Violante, in the Comedy of The Wonder, A Woman Keeps a Secret. The next night Miss Riddle was Rosalie Somers in Town and Country. On the 25th, Shakespeare's Richard III, with Mr. Frederick Brown as Gloster and Mrs. Riddle as Queen Elizabeth pleased a good audience. A Farce, Rendezvous, or All in an Uproar, was the next attraction, and on St. Andrew's Day, the New Historical Play of Wallace, The Hero of Scotland, proved a welcome choice.

On December 1st, a play and a farce were enacted for the Benefit of the Widow and Family of the Person who was killed by a fall from the roof of the Theatre, while engaged in erecting the Building. Hamlet was given on December 5th, and Mr. Brown was in the title role. A farce called Nature and Philosophy completed the bill. Miss Riddle received a Benefit two days later and Morton's Comedy of The Way to Get Married, the recital of Collin's Ode On the Passions by Mr. Brown, and a play called the Two Pages of Frederick the Great were on the programme. The Merchant of Venice was the next attraction, the accompanying farce was Three and the Deuce, or, Which Is He? A Mrs. Turner made her first appearance on December 10th, she appeared in the Tragedy of Adelgitha, or The Fruits of a Single Erroe, ... and the Farce of the Irish Tutor.

At the middle of the month the Herald gave a brief review of recent offerings at the Theatre - Miss Riddle earned praise. Mr. Brown did full justice to Hamlet, they claimed and Mr. Judah was perfect as the Ghost. Mr. Brown's recital of Collin's Ode on the Passions was a classical treat



to all those who thoroughly understood that masterpiece of descriptive poetry. The remarks ended thus: "The Merchant of Venice was very respectably performed; the higher character of the play particularly ... "

Miss Riddle was reengaged by permission of a Mr. Barrere, then manager of the Chatham Theatre in New York. On the 14th she appeared in the celebrated tragedy of *Virginus*, or *The Liberation of Rome* written by James Sheridan Knowles, Esquire. The farce was *Rival Soldiers*, or, *The Sprigs of Laurel*; *Coriolanus*, or *The Roman Nation* was the next Shakesperean play to be given, it was accompanied by the farce of the *Sleep Walker*.

On December 21st, Montrealers were reminded of their duty to help the local Theatre towards success. The notice in the paper said: "A Meeting of the Stockholders of the Montreal Theatre was held yesterday, for the purpose of adopting measures to render to this establishment that support which, through the means of the Manager, it has become well-deserved of, nothing having been spared on his part to merit the confidence of a liberal and enlightened

*What paper!*



public ... the number of private entertainments was, without doubt, the principal cause of the want of that support. It was, therefore, recommended, that at least two nights in each week, viz., Monday and Thursday, should be reserved for the benefit of the Theatre only, and that every well-wisher of this establishment would withhold either from giving or receiving invitations on those days to prejudice that Institution which we have so long been desirous of having and which is now obtaining the credit of our City..."

Despite the financial difficulties that oppressed it, the Montreal Theatre continued to present a variety of performances. These were given twice a week, as may be inferred from the above remarks. On the 21st, a melodrama called The Wandering Boys, or the Castle of Olival and Tobin's comedy of the Honeymoon were played and the last two performances of 1826 introduced no new plays.

The year 1826 began in a promising way, as far as theatrical attractions at the Montreal Theatre were concerned. Plays continued to be offered on two nights every week. The first week witnessed the presentation of Macbeth, as well as a popular comedy entitled The Poor Gentleman, and two farces

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one was Raising the Wind, the other was Turnpike Gate. On the 9th Romeo and Juliet was the attraction. The part of Juliet was taken by Mrs. Barnes from the New York Theatre and the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane and Hay Market, London. She was considered a very finished actress. Then came Isabella, or, The Fatal Marriage, followed by Macbeth, on the 16th. A tragedy by Maturin, entitled The Tragedy of Bertram, or, The Castle of Aldobrand, with Mr. Frederick Brown as Bertram and Mrs. Barnes as Imogene were featured at another performance. Bickerstaff's Opera of Love in a Village and a musical farce entitled Paul and Virginia were given on the 21st. Mr. Brown continued to be lauded for his general excellence and on the 23rd presented his patrons with a tragedy called Evadne, or, The Statue. Mrs. Barnes was destined to retain her popularity and her portrayal of the Widow Cheerly in The Soldier's Daughter, pleased her audience. The Gamester was presented and then followed Hamlet, with Mr. Brown in the title role. The final plays of the month were a comedy by Cowley, entitled The Belles' Stratagem, and a melodrama, Ella Rosenberg. A number of

farces were appreciated in January. Besides those already mentioned, the farces were *The Spectre Bridegroom*, or, *A Ghost in Spite of Himself*, *The Spoil'd Child*, and *The Fatal Marriage*.

Mr. Maywood, of the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, Belfast and Glasgow, and late of the New York Theatre, made his first appearance in Montreal on February 1st, 1826. *The Merchant of Venice* was the attraction and Mrs. Frederick Brown was Portia, while Mr. Maywood played Shylock. That same evening, the new star played the role of Donald in a melodrama entitled *The Falls of the Clyde*. Mr. Maywood's first efforts to please Montreal audiences earned a generous amount of praise. It was at that period that the ever-energetic Mr. Brown went to Quebec for the purpose of erecting a theatre in that city. His object was to build one in Kingston and York (Toronto) as well, and to have them form a theatrical circuit in conjunction with Montreal. He felt, wisely enough, that each part of the circuit would enjoy better theatrical fare under such circumstances. Incidentally, this plan materialized in later years. *Othello*

as well as Catherine and Petruchio distinguished the next performance in which Mr. Maywood appeared. On the 9th, Cumberland's comedy of The Wheel of Fortune was presented and the Falls of Clyde repeated by special request. Another programme included a Comedy by Macklin, it was called The Man of the World, and a musical farce, The Adopted Child. February 16th brought the Opera of Rob Roy MacGregor, or Auld Lang Syne. The next entertainment provided a number of thrills through Colman's play The Iron Chest, in which Mr. Maywood again interpreted the leading role.

On February 22nd, Mr. Hamblin from Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London, made his initial appearance here in Hamlet. The farce on this occasion was Fortune's Frolic. Mr. Maywood portrayed Sir Pertinax in The Man of the World, at another performance. King Lear, accompanied by a popular farce Love a la Mode, marked another of Mr. Hamblin's successful evenings. The Herald then welcomed the newcomer to the theatre in Montreal and drew attention to his past success in New York as well as abroad. In criticizing his conception of Hamlet, the newspaper remarked: "Mr. Hamblin



has fully realized the expectations formed of him: having portrayed in an elevated and effective style one of the most difficult of Shakespeare's characters, leaving but one impression on the minds of those who were present,- an anxious desire of again witnessing him on the boards of our Theatre ... "

The first offering at the theatre in March was Coleman's Comedy of Speed the Plough, accompanied by a musical farce The Children in the Wood. Then came a number of offerings, little known to the modern patron of the theatre. These included the farces of The Midnight Hour, The Lady and the Devil, The Weathercock, and once again, The Village Lawyer. The comedies were entitled: The Natural Son, Wheel of Fortune, and Rule a Wife, or, Have a Wife. It may be remarked that at this period, as well as many others in the history of the theatre in Montreal, authors' names were usually omitted in theatrical advertisements, unless they were famous persons, such as Shakespeare, Sheridan, Knowles and others. March offered a number of melodramas, and these were entitled: Trial by Battle, or, Heaven Defend the Right, a play founded on the actual murder

a woman called Mary Ashford, the notice claimed, Melo Drama of the Inn-Keeper of Abberville, and School of Reform.

Mr. Hamblin appeared in Macbeth, and once more the press spoke kindly of him: "The whole character appeared to be generally considered a faithful portrait of the character its illustrious author intended." Julius Ceasar, with Mr. Hamblin as Brutus, and Mr. Frederick Brown as Cassius, was the only other play by Shakespeare, presented in March. The remaining attractions of the month were: William Tell, or, The Swiss Patriot, with Mr. Hamblin in the title role, The Hunter of the Alps, and one opera Paul and Virginia.

April witnessed the performance of Young's tragedy The Revenge, also the favorite Tom and Jerry, or Life in London, the first week. On the 10th came Dimond's celebrated drama of the Royal Oak, or, The Perils of Charles II. On the same bill were an interlude of Beaux without Belles, or, Ladies, we can do without You, and a musical farce The Highland Reel. Shield's Damon and Pythias and a burletta called Tom Thumb, or, Courtiers in Olden Times made up the next programme. Something unusual occurred at the theatre on the 19th, when a part of the Iroquois Tribe of Indians appeared in the Pantomime of Death of Captain Cook. Once in a while a coming attraction

was announced in very descriptive terms, as this brief example indicates "... the Satirical, Burlesque, Operatic Parody in One Act, called the Death of Life in London, or, Tom and Jerry's Funeral.\* Perhaps the only outstanding play presented in April, as well as one that is still familiar to audiences in our own time was Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer. A few unimportant or stupid farces were repeated and audiences who craved melodrama witnessed with great satisfaction The Forest of Rosenwald, or, The Bleeding Nun of Lindenberg. O'Keefe's comedy of Wild Oats, or, The Strolling Gentleman was the final play that month. The regular theatre closed early in May. On the 3rd of that month, Mr. Keene, the well-liked singer, returned to sing in the opera of Brother and Sister, or, The Widow's Vow. On the 8th there was a Grand display of Phosphoric Representation at the Pavilion on McGill Street. Two days later the Royal Circus opened for a busy season. Mary, the Maid of the Inn, a melodrama, and several equestrian acts constituted their first programme. Mr. Keene appeared there in Guy Mannering, a favorite Scotch drama of the period. That same month he took part in The Devil's Bridge, The Forty Thieves, and a melodrama entitled Lodoiska as well as a dramatic opera The Slave. Thus



Mr. Keene proved his ability as a versatile actor just as he had convinced earlier audiences that he could sing.

The Royal Circus pursued its usual policy of attempting to please the varied tastes of its audiences. Early in June came Timour the Tartar, in which Mr. Gale played the title role and Mrs. Turner was Zilda. An extremely long programme was offered on the 12th; it included equestrian acts and featured The Cataract of the Ganges, or, The Rajah's Daughter, by W. T. Moncrieff who also wrote Tom and Jerry. Mrs. Monier, an old favourite here, Mrs. Moreland and a celebrated clown, Mr. McDonald, performed a Ballet of Action of the Brave Chevalier, or, The Soldier's Return, in which Mr. Schinotti was Dunois the Chevalier. On the 17th, Mr. Gale was the star of Tekeli, or, The Siege of Montgatz. A petit Divertissement, The Banquet of Flora, or, The Temple of Happiness was another attraction that same evening. The Cataract of the Ganges, with Mrs. Monier as Zamine, Child of the Rajah, was repeated by special request. The presentation earned this remark in the Herald: "The Cataract of the Ganges has been got up with much expence, ability and industry: the Cataract itself being really ingenious and picturesque..."

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What are your sources?

A Scotch melodrama, Gilderoy, The Bonny Boy. Founded on the Popular Story of that Celebrated Outlaw.

Gilderoy .... Mr. Gale

Jessey Logan .. Mrs. Monier

In the course of the Piece, Mrs. Moreland will introduce a favorite Scotch Dance,"made up part of the programme on June 22nd. On that night Mrs. Monier recited the Comic Epilogue of Matrimony, or a Hint to Wives and Husbands, and the last item was a grand ballet called Terpsichore.

Mrs. Monier received a benefit the following week, and the bills of the day announced: "A grand Equestrian Melo-Dramatic Spectacle entitled Joan of Arc, or, the Maid of Orleans. In which all the beautiful horses will appear ... and the Petite Comedy of the Day After the Wedding, or A Wife's First Lesson."

Mr. Blanchard of the Royal Circus, on June 28th, informed the public that he had: "engaged Messrs. Faulkner and Spiller from the New York and Charleston Theatres; in addition to Mrs. Monier, Mr. Moreland and Mr. McDonald, shortly is expected Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Lacombe and Mr. J.M. Scott, of the Chatham Garden Theatre, New York; he has furthermore the pleasure to state that he has engaged the celebrated stage

clown Mr. Herbert, for a few nights only, (who will make his first appearance in the grand comic pantomime of Mother Goose, or Harlequin and the Golden Egg) with several other performers of note, of which due notice will be given.

N.B. Musicians of talent, also Theatrical and Equestrian performers will meet with yearly engagements and prompt payments.

Mr. Faulkner had a benefit at the Royal Circus on July 3rd. Prior to the event the Herald urged that many attend the affair because Mr. Faulkner is the only person who has ever here given us a specimen of tolerable imitation of Irish characters. A variety of plays were included on the programmes at the Royal Circus during the first week in July. These plays were, a melodrama entitled Robinson Crusoe, and another of the same type was called Mary, The Maid of the Inn. Colman's The Iron Chest was repeated, and John Howard Payne's Charles the Second, or, The Merry Monarch, were well received. On the 5th, the entertainment ended in a spectacular fashion with: "... the Grandest Display of Fire-works ever witnessed in Canada, made by Mr. Robinson ... to conclude with an Illuminated Inscription of Blue Flame

Surrounded with an Elegant Border of Printed Stars and Brilliant Fire." Mr. Schinotti had a benefit, on which occasion an opera Love Laughs at Locksmiths<sup>and</sup> grand Serious Pantomime of La Perouse, or, The Desolate Island, were the principal attractions. The rather strenuous programmes continued at the Royal Circus, and happy audiences witnessed The Nonsuited Lawyer, or, Jack on Shore, The Manager in Distress, or, The Actors in an Oproar, an admired Farce of The Irishman in London, and the whimsical Burletta of Bombastes Furioso, before the end of July 1826.

The Theatre Royal opened for a brief summer season, with: "Colman's play of The Mountaineers ... a New Farce in one act, called Is He Jealous?" On the 10th, Mr. Frederick Brown played the title role in The Stranger, and Mrs. Gilfert enacted the part of Mrs. Heller. In Catherine and Petruchio, these people had the leading parts. On July 15th, the Herald praised the cast at the Theatre for their presentation of The Honeymooners that they considered an evenly excellent play. The paper admitted the laughable afterpiece Of Age Tomorrow, and lauded Mrs. Gilfert's versatility, Mr. Brown's brilliance and qualities of many of the other members of the cast. The



next theatrical offering was Diamond's musical play of the Foundling of the Forest; Macbeth was gratefully witnessed on July 17th, and two nights later School for Scandal was enacted. In the latter play the different characters were played by the following members of the Company:

Sir Peter Teazle	... Mr. Placide
Charles Surface	... Mr. F. Brown
Lady Teazle	... Mrs. Gilfert
Maria	... Miss Riddle

In accordance with Mr. Brown's plans and promises, guest stars played limited engagements at the Theatre Royal, and the summer season witnessed several excellent performances. A Mr. Barnes from the New York Theatre played here for three nights, the first of which was July 22nd. He appeared in a comedy The Soldier's Daughter, followed by a farce The Rival Soldiers. A few days later the Herald remarked: "Our theatre has never yet been as brilliant as at present as it assembles the principal talent of North America, comprising Mr. and Mrs. Barnes, Mr. Lee, Mr. Placide, Mrs. Brown and Miss Riddle, actually performing, besides Mr. Kean and Mrs. Gilfert in expectancy, and last, not least, the manager

himself, who, as a general actor, we think is second to none.. \*  
The recent performance of Romeo and Juliet with Mrs. Barnes' Juliet was praised as was praised as was her Widow Cheerly, and Mr. Barnes as Governor Heartall with Mr. Brown as Frank Heartell earned compliments for The Soldier's Daughter. The Herald printed an excellent review of the entertainment of July 26th, when Bickerstaff's comedy The Hypocrite, and the farce of The Spoiled Child were presented at the theatre.

A person of recognized importance in the dramatic world of that time arrived in Montreal in the person of Mr. Kean, the celebrated Tragedian, from the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. He began his brief engagement on July 31st, in the title role in Richard III. That evening Mr. Lee played Henry, Earl of Richmond, Mr. Placide was the Lord Mayor of London, Mr. Frederick Brown represented Tressel, while the part of Lady Anne was essayed by the clever Miss Riddle. The theatre was filled to capacity and the Herald reviewed the play thus: "That performance, if it did not reach the extravagant height to which expectation had been lifted, was certainly original, novel, natural and striking ... The great characteristic of Mr. Kean's performance is an apparent

unconsciousness of the presence of an audience, and an exclusive attention to the scene in which he is engaged...

Mr. Kean's sole endeavour, and a very successful one it was, was to appear to be what he imitates and to give to an awful fiction the semblance of reality ... Richard is said to be Mr. Kean's principal character, and it is probable, for he has all the principal qualities adapted to the character - short stature, aquiline profile, guttural tone, and dark eyes, set so prominently that every motion of them is conspicuous ... In fine, Mr. Kean is the best Richard we have seen here."

The theatre was open on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings during the summer season. Mr. Kean followed his initial success by appearing next in The Merchant of Venice. Then came Colman's play The Iron Chest, or, The Mysterious Murder, in which Mr. Kean was Sir Edward Mortimer. He was supported by Miss Riddle as Helen, Mr. Placide as Sampson and Mr. Lee as Wilford. On the 9th Mr. Kean had a benefit, and on that occasion he appeared in King Lear. It was quite customary for a visiting star to be reengaged, if his particular gifts appealed to his audience, thus Mr. Kean began a reengagement. Once again he played in Richard III,



and in John Howard Payne's Brutus, or, The Fall of Tarquin, he appeared in the role of Brutus. In reference to the latter play, the Herald uttered praise, despite its newness, and anachronisms in the play, and the cast, especially Mr. Kean, were lauded. Next the Shakespearian actor was in Hamlet, to the great joy of his audiences. In this play he received special compliments for his acting in two scenes: "One was his interview with Ophelia, and the other when he spoke daggers to his mother." Mr. Brown played the part of the Ghost very well, they claimed.

Mr. Kean's stay was again prolonged. When Henry VIII was produced Mr. Frederick Brown played the title role, Mr. Kean was Cardinal Woolsey, Mr. Lee appeared as Cromwell, Mrs. Gilfert was Catherine, Queen of England, and Miss Riddle portrayed Anne Bullen. The play was given at the special request of many patrons of the theatre, but was not given as well as the other Shakespearian dramas that month. Mr. Kean had the leading part in Sylvester Daggerwood, The Dunstable Actor. This character was especially pleasing to him as it afforded him an opportunity to do: "Imitations of the most celebrated London actors - Kemble, Cook, Elliston, Munden,

Fawcett, Braham, Incledon, Liston and others, eminent as performers, singers, Pantomimical Actors and Harlequins. Mr. Kean enjoyed social as well as theatrical popularity in Montreal and a dinner was given in his honor at the Masonic Hall Hotel on August 22nd. His last appearance that month was in Lee's tragedy of Alexander the Great, he interpreted the part of Alexander.

The next great artist at the Theatre Royal was Miss Kelly, a celebrated comic actress from the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and U.S. Naturally she appeared in less serious plays than those selected for Mr. Kean's visit. The plays included Mrs. Cawley's Comedy of The Belle's Strategem, with Mr. Brown as Doricourt to Miss Kelly's Letitia Hardy. The new star introduced a number of mermaid songs and received many encores. Much Ado about Nothing and a musical farce Of Age To-morrow gave Miss Kelly an opportunity to demonstrate her versatility again. Her voice, her expression and her talents were recognized as those of an excellent comic actress. Tobin's comedy of The Honeymoon with Miss Kelly as Juliana and Mr. Brown as Duke Aranza was another success, and Much Ado about Nothing was repeated. Then Miss Kelly appeared as

as Julian a peasant boy in a melodrama entitled Peasant Boy, or, Innocence Triumphant.

The Theatre Royal closed its successful season following Mr. Brown's farewell appearance on September 25th. The last programme was made up of The Tragedy of Pizarro, or, The Death of Rolla, and a musical farce No Song No Supper, with Miss Kelly as Margaretta in the latter offering. Exactly a month later the theatre reopened and Mr. Kean appeared in Macbeth. A whimsical farce called Fortune's Frolic completed the bill. The play went badly, and reached a climax when a dog made its appearance from the room where the murdered Duncan was supposed to be lying, and looking up in Mr. Kean's face, commenced howling and barking. It was followed by several others in various parts of the house. On October 30th, Mr. Kean appeared as Romeo in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Both the actor and the play received unstinted praise.

The Royal Circus opened for a few weeks that late autumn and followed its customary policy of entertaining its audiences with horsemanship, vaulting, comedies, farces, and the usual number of thrilling melodramas. They added no new plays to their repertoire. Before the close of the year, on November 20th, to be exact, the Theatre Royal was the scene of

a single performance. Mr. Spiller presented an offering of doubtful merit, it was entitled Begone Dull Care.

Thus ended the season of dramatic entertainment for 1827 in Montreal. As we have seen, a wide variety of amusement passed before the eyes of theatre-goers here. Some months of political agitation ensued and as a result the people of Montreal looked forward eagerly to the time when the local theatre would be able to open another season of successful performances.

CHAPTER IV

1828 - 1848

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From time to time, periods of political agitation lessened the interest in the theatre in Montreal. Thus, in the period extending from 1828 to 1848 there were several years when the drama was all but forgotten here.

The Canadian Spectator announced a benefit performance for Mr. Alvic at the Theatre Royal, on Thursday, January 24th, 1828. The programme consisted of a comedy entitled *Les Habits d' Emprunt* by Duvert and Nicoli and a melodrama by Victor Ducange called *Lisbeth; or, Consolations of Religion*. The latter piece they claimed was extremely affected, and replete with moral, sentiment and pathos. "The thunder will be terrific, and the lightning vivid and brilliant, but perfectly harmless!" The band of the 71st regiment played that night. A few nights later, Mr. Douglass presented a farce, *Lovers' Quarrels* and a French comedy *Les Mauvaises Tetes; ou, Le Baril de Poudre*. Songs and the Comic Burletta of *Crackerey's Misfortunes* completed the bill.

On March 3rd, the New Montreal Gazette contained this notice: "By the Gentlemen Amateurs of this Garrison and City, Colman's celebrated Comedy of the Poor Gentleman, Colman's Farce, in two acts, of the Review or, The Wags of Windsor, for the benefit of the Montreal General Hospital." The hospital received another benefit on May 2nd, when the Band of St. Andrews Church gave a concert at Mansion House. There was a benefit for Mr. Maywood of the regular theatre. It was held on May 16th on which occasion a farce called An Aunt in Virginia by Gault, was the chief attraction. In June, some pupils of the Montreal Academical Institution took part in: a forensic debate on the comparative merits of man and woman. The event was a benefit for the Orphan Asylum.

There were some musical concerts during the summer. Mr. and Mrs. Knight gave several performances. On July 7th, Mrs. Knight sang popular songs, while her husband played Kalkbrenner's celebrated Fantasia on the Air of Robin Adair. The Band of the 79th Regiment, by permission of Colonel Douglas, added several favourite overtures to the programme. On the 26th, Mrs. Gill and Miss George gave a vocal concert at the Theatre Royal.

In summing up the two artists, the Gazette remarked:  
"Miss George is certainly a delightful Vocalist...Her execution is able - her taste delicate...Mrs. Gill sang several agreeable airs with much feeling." On September 8th, the same newspaper passed the following observations: "If our city has been dull during the summer that is now waning, it has not been from any dearth of Music to cheer and delight us. Concert has followed concert in quick succession; and if we may credit report, each was more fascinating than the other. Another is to be given this evening, by Mr. and Mrs. Pearman of whose abilities as scientific Vocalists, we have heard much...they are to be assisted by Mr. Gear and Mr. Ripley."

The Theatre Royal was the scene of a varied programme on October 2nd. Mr. Claxton brought forward:  
"A variety of Mathew's most popular Comic songs, Recitations, etc. To conclude with Mr. Mathew's celebrated Wild Goose Chase: In which Mr. C. will support Seven Male and Two Female Characters." Half the proceeds were devoted to the Montreal General Hospital, and once again, the Band of the 79th Regiment attended..



Amateur Companies were particularly useful in maintaining interest in the theatre in Montreal. On January 17th, 1829, the Canadian Gentlemen Amateurs announced their benefit performance for the Orphan Asylum and the Societe Bienveillante. The programme was made up of Le Tambour Nocturne, ou, Le Mari Devin, and Moliere's Laughable Farce of Le Marriage Force. Friendly cooperation existed among the various amateur companies and on this particular evening, the Gentlemen Amateurs of Music occupied the Orchestra, the scene of the benefit was the Theatre Royal.

February was another busy month for the amateurs. A benefit was given by the English Gentlemen Amateurs on the 2nd, for the Orphan Asylum and the New House of Industry. They presented: Diamond's celebrated Drama, the Conquest of Taranto, with Dibbin's afterpiece, The Jew and Doctor. Two weeks later, the same group repeated The Conquest of Taranto and gave the celebrated National Afterpiece, in two acts, The Falls of Clyde. The entertainment was a benefit for the Montreal General Hospital. The Amateurs of the 79th Regiment presented a long programme on February 24th, for the Orphan Asylum and the New House of Industry. The entertainment in-

cluded: The National Drama, Rob Roy. Mr. Ryan, Master of the Band, gave Nicholson's Variations to the beautiful Air of the Blue Bells of Scotland, comic songs followed, and the last item on the bill was a farce entitled The Mock Doctor. The Montreal General Hospital enjoyed two more benefits before the month ended. The Juvenile Amateurs gave: the laughable Farce of Sylvester Daggerwood and shorter acts, for the hospital, and the Canadian Amateurs presented Le Grondeur by Bruyes and Giles Ravisseau, for the same institution.

The remainder of the spring was dull in the theatre, except on the occasions when the amateurs were busy entertaining excellent audiences. The Garrison Amateurs gave Colman's comedy John Bull and an afterpiece called Family Jars, for the Public Charities of the city. On March 26th, the Amateurs of the 79th Highlanders gave a concert by special request. Their programme included Rob Roy and an afterpiece entitled Raising the Wind. At the end of April the Gentlemen Montreal Amateurs organized an entertainment for charitable purposes. They gave Moliere's L'Avare and a farce, Le Retour Imprevu. English and French amateurs

helped complete the programme with several amusing songs, and the Band of the 79th Regiment was in attendance.

The Theatre Royal opened for a brief season in June. The new actor-manager, Mr. De Camp, was liked but the theatre was badly neglected by the public. One reason may have been the fact that the theatre advertised irregularly in the daily press. Paul Pry was offered on June 15th, and three days later the Gazette praised Mr. De Camp's acting and said the rest of the cast were adequate. Another programme offered the Comedy Frightened to Death and a small play called The Secret. This selection of theatrical fare led the Gazette to remark, that the public could not be blamed entirely for not frequenting the theatre. The season closed soon after July 1st, when the last professional performance was given. The play was The School of Reform, and the afterpiece was entitled The Day After the Fair, and both earned excellent press notices. In fact, the newspaper claimed that, despite an unsatisfactory season, Mr. De Camp's Company was the best the Province had ever witnessed.

For many long months, the people of Montreal depended on the amateur players for entertainment. The 71st Regiment

of the Highland Light Infantry gave numerous dramatic entertainments. The larger American circuses included Montreal among the places they visited regularly. There was a cholera epidemic in Canada in 1832 and almost all professional entertainment was suspended. A Mr. and Mrs. Anderson of Drury Lane Theatre and the Italian Opera House, London, performed in the British American Hotel. The amateur players produced plays as frequently as circumstances permitted.

The year 1835 found amateur plays entertaining appreciative audiences. On January 12th, the Garrick Amateur Club gave W. Barrymore's Scotch Melodrama, Gilderoy, or, The Reiver Converted. A Nautical hornpipe by a Gentleman and Buckstone's Irish Melo-Drama, Presumptive Evidence, or, Murder Will out, completed the programme, and the Band of the 24th Regiment furnished the music. The notices for the event drew particular attention to the fact that young ladies would play the female roles. The proceeds of the evening were given to the Ladies Benevolent Society. The Gentlemen Amateurs gave a benefit for the Montreal General Hospital. The Heir at Law and a farce, Lovers' Quarrel, were what they presented.

The month of February witnessed a joint benefit performance by the Gentlemen Amateurs and the Amateurs of the 24th Regiment. The programme included a comedy, Paul Pry at Dover and Theodore Hook's splendid Military Melodrama of Tekeli, or, The Seige of Montgatz. On the 23rd, the City Amateurs joined the Amateurs of the 24th Regiment in a benefit for the Orphan Asylum. They presented W. Dimond's play, The Conquest of Taranto, or, St.Clara's Eve, and a farce entitled St.Patrick's Day.

During the first week in September the Mammoth Elephant Menagerie and Circus thrilled large audiences at the Old Circus Ground. Montrealers were destined to wait a long time before the theatre grew prominent once more, in their midst. Joseph Proctor, a young actor from the American stage, made his appearance here and was successful. In November, 1837, a Mr. James Burke, the Champion Boxer of England, gave an exhibition of the noble and manly Art of Self-Defence. He was assisted by local amateurs and the event took place in Rasco's Hotel. For the most part the political upheaval caused by Mr. Papineau, his sympathizers and his enemies, swept theatrical fare out of the minds of Montrealers.

Mr. Reed, a celebrated ventriloquist from New York City, gave a successful performance on January 13th, 1838, at the Nelson Hotel. He repeated his programme by popular request.

The Theatre Royal was opened on a few occasions, the first of which was February 27th, when the Gentlemen Amateurs performed there. They gave a Comedy, Englishmen in London, and a farce, The Irish Tutor, or, New Lights, and devoted the proceeds to the Orphan Asylum. The concert was repeated in March. The Canadian Amateurs gave a benefit for the former House of Industry (then the Soup House). They selected a comedy by Lesage, The Tontine, several amusing songs, and a melodrama called Hariadan Barberousse, or, The Capture of Reggio, for their programme.

On March 27th, a concert of vocal and instrumental music was given prior to a Ball at Rasco's Hotel. The affair was organized by conductors and members of the Montreal Singing Academy, assisted by the Band of the Royal Regiment, through Colonel Wetherell's courtesy. On April 18th, the Military Amateurs<sup>gave:</sup> "under the patronage of the Officers Commanding Corps, a benefit for the wives and children of

soldiers unavoidably separated during the recent riots."

The programme consisted of Tobin's comedy, The Honeymoon, and a farce called The Review. The audience showed such enthusiasm that the entertainment was repeated several times. On May 9th, the Whitelaw Dramatic Amateurs presented The Rival Valet and The Village Orphan. The concert was a benefit for: "the widow and orphan of Corporal Millar who lost his life in his country's service in the recent rebellion." Once again, the amateur players lent their services to worthy causes.

Mr. Braunies gave a concert of vocal and instrumental music on June 15th. He was assisted by the Gentlemen Amateurs and members of the Montreal Musical Society. The affair was such a success that the programme was repeated a few nights later.

On July 26th, 1838, the Theatre Royal opened for a brief season, with an entirely new company. The cast included: Miss Melton from the Theatres Royal Haymarket and St. James, London, the Park Theatre, New York, and the St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans. Mr. Edwin from the Royal Haymarket Theatre, London, and the Park Theatre, New York.

Mr. Latham from the Royal Drury Lane Theatre, Dublin, Park Theatre, New York and the St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans. The opening night offered a comedy, Loan of a Lover and a short play called Perfection, as well as Dibdin's Waterman. On the 28th, Is He Jealous, and an operetta, Two of a Name, and a farce, Le Chalet, or, Why Don't She Marry, made up the programme. The Herald praised the company and remarked that the theatre was well attended by the public.

The season continued throughout the month of August. The programme of July 28th was repeated several times by special request, during the first week. One performance was called a Soiree Musicale, it was a special entertainment prepared: \*to satisfy an all-fashionable audience. On another evening a comedy, Two Friends and an opera called The Young Hussar, or, Love and Mercy, pleased patrons of the theatre. Other plays presented were entitled The Barrack Room, The Innkeeper's Bride, My Husband's Secret, The Dumb Belle, and a new drama, Sudden Thoughts. There was a benefit for Miss Melton, on the 13th, Rossini's Cinderella, and The Four Sisters, or, Which Shall I Marry, were on the programme.



About the middle of August, new members joined the company at the Theatre Royal. Miss Ellen Tree came from Royal Covent Garden and Drury Lane Theatres, Mr. Fredericks came from the Dublin Theatres. They made their first appearance here on the 15th in Sheridan Knowles' Hunchback and a farce, The Weathercock. Then came Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of The Wonder, or, A Woman Keeps A Secret, which earned favourable press notices for Miss Tree and Mr. Fredericks. Bulwer's Lady of Lyons and Tobin's comedy, The Honeymoon were the next theatrical attractions. On the 21st, by Command of the Governor-General, Sheridan Knowles' Hunchback and a farce, Turn Out were repeated. On the 25th, Sheridan Knowles' Love Chase and a farce entitled Perfection, were given. On that day, a person who signed himself "A Turfman in Canada," rebuked the Editor of the Herald for criticising the players too severely. The following programme for August 28th is interesting, as it includes the names of the entire company at the theatre. The play was Sergeant Talfourd's Ion.

"Adrastus (King of Argos)	.. Mr. Fredericks
Ctesiphon	.. Mr. Abbott
Crythes	.. Mr. Latham
Ion	.. Miss Ellen Tree
Clemanthe	.. Mrs. Henry Knight

The Hunter of the Alps -

Felix	.. Mr. Abbott
Rosalvi	.. Mr. Fredericks
Juan (with songs)	.. Mr. Edwin
Helena	.. Mrs. Jones
Genevieve	.. Mrs. Henry Knight"

The season closed on the 30th, when Buliver's Lady of Lyons and The Youthful Queen, with Miss Ellen Tree as Christine of Sweden, were presented.

On October 21, 1838, the Theatre Royal opened for another brief season. Mr. Edwin, Miss Melton and Mr. Latham were once again a part of the Company of players. Two Friends, Loan of a Lover and My Husband's Secret were eagerly applauded on the opening night. The Herald remarked: "Last night, after an absence of a few weeks, the highly popular dramatic corps commenced a short season ... were greeted by

a highly respectable audience with that approbation which their talents so richly merit. Miss Melton was in delightful voice and sung and acted with that natural and bewitching simplicity which has established her in the estimation of the most experienced in the art as unequalled in her department of the Drama. Mr. Edwin was most warmly greeted as was Mr. Latham, the inimitable "Peter Spyk"..... "

Mrs. Cathcart from the Boston Theatre came here on October 3rd, when she appeared in Blue Devils, a comedy called The Lady and the Devil as well as Dibdin's Waterman. The company added a danseuse to its members, she was Mlle. Arreline who contributed a special dance number at many performances. The Barrack Room, an old favourite, was repeated. Then for a number of evenings the bills offered a variety of farces and comedies such as: No, The Purse, or, The Benevolent Tar, Loan of a Lover, A Gentleman in Difficulties, Bee Hive, Two of a Name, Le Chalet, or, The Swiss Cottage, The Young Hussar, The Happiest Day of My Life, and O'Keefe's comedy called The Agreeable Surprise.

On October 15th by Desire and under the Patronage of Colonel Love and the Officers of the 73rd Regiment were

presented several scenes from Rossini's Cinderella, also The Adopted Child and a farce called High Life Below Stairs. Sweethearts and Wives and a farce, Mrs. White, Wife or Widow, were on the next bill. Gretna Green and old favourite plays were presented on the 17th. The Devil's Bridge, Sicilian Maid, Le Chalet, or, The Swiss Cottage, Four Sisters and The Mummy were the attractions for the remainder of the season.

On October 22nd, under the patronage of Lieutenant General Clitherow, and that of Lieutenant Colonel White, and the Officers of the 9th (Queen's Own) Hussars, Mr. Marks gave a concert of vocal and instrumental music. The event took place at Rasco's Hotel and Miss Melton and Mr. Latham from the regular theatre lent their assistance. A similar concert took place on November 1st, when the Band of the Royal Regiment was present.

For the next few years amateur theatricals were the only kind available to Montreal audiences. The Insurrection had left little taste for frivolities and serious drama though the amateur players were active. Visitors to the city were invited to join in local theatricals, whenever they displayed histrionic talents. It was in 1842, when the

amateur players were in the midst of a busy spring season that Charles Dickens, the novelist, spent some time here. The officers of the garrison still maintained their keen interest in the drama, it occupied their free time and made them useful to the community in general. On the occasion of Dickens' appearance the plays presented were: A Roland for an Oliver, Two O'Clock in the Morning and High Life Below Stairs. The performance was a private one on a Wednesday evening and ladies played the female roles. The following Saturday, the entertainment was repeated and regular actresses replaced the ladies in all feminine characters. The Wednesday performance was attended by some six hundred guests, and refreshments were served between the plays. The experience of playing in amateur theatricals in Montreal pleased Charles Dickens, who described the event in a letter quoted in Mr. Forster's Life of Charles Dickens. The letter was dated May 26th, 1842, and included numerous remarks about amateur entertainments here, and some of the remarks about the night of his first appearance were: "We had the band of the 23rd. (one of the finest in the service) in the orchestra; the theatre was lighted with gas, the scenery



was excellent, and the properties were all brought from the private houses. Sir Charles Bagot, Sir Richard Jackson and their staffs were present, and as the military portion of the audience were all in uniform it was really a splendid scene ... All the ladies were capital and we had no wait or hitch for an instant. You may suppose this when I tell you that we began at eight and had the curtain down at eleven ... It is their custom here to prevent heart-burnings, in a very heart-burning town, whenever they have played in private, to repeat the performance in public, so on Saturday (substituting, of course, real actresses for the ladies) we repeat the two first pieces to a paying audience, for the manager's benefit ... "

It may be interesting to note that the private performance took place in the first Theatre Royal. That theatre was demolished when the building was replaced by Bonsecours Market. The other performance was staged in a theatre called  
X The Queen's. *(formerly the Theatre Royal)*

Mr. Rodney was the last manager of the earliest Theatre Royal. In August, 1844, the last performance was given in the old theatre, and Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors

*then was Bonsecours Market built*

was selected for the occasion. The following year, the Royal Olympic Theatre was erected by public subscription. It had its formal opening on June 23rd, 1845, when Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* was presented. Mr. Skerrett was the manager.

The year 1846 witnessed greater activity in Montreal theatricals. The season opened at the Olympic Theatre on July 4th, when Mr. Skerrett and his company arrived after their engagement in Toronto and Kingston. The first programme included Douglas Jerrold's comedy of *Time Works Wonders* and a farce, *The Four Sisters*. A foot-note to the bill of the day stated: "Children in arms not admitted." The Hunchback and a farce called *Sketches in India, or, The Stage-Struck Tailor*, as well as Bulwer's *Lady of Lyons* were given the opening week. Mr. Skerrett complained of disturbing persons on the night of July 4th, he remarked in the newspaper: "It is my fixed determination, let my success be what it may, so to conduct the Theatre, that my patrons may enjoy the representations of our Divine Poet and the Satirists of the age, unannoyed by those whose existence is disorder ... "

Monsieur Phillippe, the French magician, presented a

"Grand Scientific Illusion in the Temple of Enchantment."

He appeared first on July 6th, and repeated his performance several times that summer and during the early autumn.

The week of July 9th witnessed a variety of plays at the theatre. Kortzebue's Stranger, Sheridan Knowles' Love Chase, The Merchant of Venice, The Taming of the Shrew, Paul Pry and the farces called Somebody Else, 'Twas I, Everybody's Widow and The Lady of Munster, were presented. Mrs. Frary, of the regular cast, contributed ballads and popular songs at each performance. Brief but favourable press notices supported the theatre. The habit of combining one of Shakespeare's plays with a farce persisted as on the 22nd, when Romeo and Juliet, and the farce of The Swiss Cottage, pleased a large audience.

During the latter part of July, a number of new plays were given and several old favourites were repeated. Othello, Richard III, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, and The Merchant of Venice pleased audiences who delighted in Shakespeare. Colman's Poor Gentleman and The Iron Chest were presented. She Stoops to Conquer, Love's Sacrifice, Lady of Lyons, The Wreck Ashore, The Wandering Boys, or,



The Castle of Olival and The Love Chase proved to be popular attractions. As usual, there were numerous farces, including: St.Leger Race, or, Kill and Cure, Turn Out, The Dead Shot, Lottery Ticket, A Match in the Dark, The Windmill and Where Did the Money Come From? On the 25th, a performance was given under the Patronage of the Right Honourable Earl Cathcart, Governor-General. That evening, Buckstone's Comedy of Married Life, or Fireside Sketches, and the farce, Loan of a Lover, were given.

The Mammoth Circus came to town on July 23rd. The proprietors were Rockwell and Stone, the acting-manager was William Hubbell and the treasurer was L.G. Mead. The Circus remained two weeks and proved popular.

August was another busy month for Mr. Skerrett's Company at the theatre. They presented Hamlet, Richard III, Taming of the Shrew, As You Like It, with success. On the 7th Lieut. Colonel Nesbitt and the Officers of the 60th Rifles lent their patronage to the theatre. The Band of the Regiment supplied music, and Colman's comedy of The Poor Gentleman, and a farce were on the programme. Comedies remained popular, these were: Tobin's Honey Moon, Buckstone's Married Life,

Sheridan's School for Scandal, Colman's John Bull, Macklin's Man of the World, and Massinger's New Way to Pay Old Debts. Other comedies were: Time Works Wonders, Grist to the Mill, Monsieur Jacques, Rights of Women, or The Rose and the Thistle, and The Millionaire. There were melodramas: Castle Spectre, The Wreck Ashore, The Gamester, Rob Roy, The Violet, Homes' tragedy of Douglas. The opera of Guy Manner-  
ing and the burlesque tragic opera called Bombastes Furioso were given. Many new farces were introduced and these included: Sketches in India, Innkeeper's Bride, Shocking Events, The Secret, The Married Rake, Man About Town, The Happy Man, You Can't Marry Your Grandmother, The Irish Tutor, Dobson and Son, The Rendezvous, and Trifling Troubles.

On August 15th, Monsieur Gibert and Mrs. Syrus of Paris, and Messieurs Brady and Winter gave a concert of vocal and instrumental music. The proceeds were devoted to: "the sufferers by the late fire at La Prairie." On September 4th, Mr. Templeton who enjoyed fame as a vocalist of merit gave a concert at Donegana's Hotel. He received such approval that he gave concerts on the 17th and 21st, on which occasions he featured Scottish airs.

Hamlet was the initial attraction in September. Macklin's Man of the World, Jerrold's Time Works Wonders and Sheridan Knowles' Hunchback, as well as Dion Boucicault's Old Heads and Young Hearts and She Stoops to Conquer were the chief attractions early in the month. Farces and comedies of former performances were repeated, and an innovation was made on September 8th. That evening, according to available advertisements in the local press, witnessed the introduction of a vaudeville act. Four days later, the regular theatrical season ended. A comedy called The Manager in Distress, and farces entitled Fashion and Loan of a Lover, preceded Mr. Skerrett's farewell address that evening.

September 21st was the day on which the After-season opened at the Olympic Theatre, Mr. Skerrett was again in charge. The policy of presenting a variety of plays was resumed and comedies predominated, as titles of the offerings indicate. Tom Noddy's Secret, The Dead-Shot, The Minister of Finance, The Married Bachelor, The Lady of Palums, or, Catch Her Who Can, Two Strings to Your Bow and Thumping Legacy were given.

The season continued until October 12th. Numerous comedies and farces of the earlier season were repeated. Charles II, or, The Merry Monarch, and a melodrama, The Bottle Imp drew large audiences. On October 9th were presented: a Comedy, Two Strings to Your Bow, a bagatelle from Punch called Mrs. Candle's Curtain Lectures, and two farces, the Spectre Bridegroom and The Sleeping Draught. Three nights later, the final programme was given, it was a collection of old favourite plays.

The Amateur players were active again. On October 17th, the Junior Amateurs presented a farce The Queer Subject, the mock opera Bombastes Furioso and My Fellow Clerk. Four nights later the French and English amateurs gave an adaptation from Sheridan's Rivals. Then the English and Canadian Gentlemen Amateurs gave a joint programme. It comprised: Une Comedie Francaise and a farce called Damon and Pythias.

Very few entertainments took place during the next winter. On November 18th, Mr. Schallehn, late conductor of His Majesty's Orchestra, assisted by Mr. Van Maanen and Mr. Berlyn gave a concert. Mr. Mooney presented several Irish musical entertainments. The day after Christmas was

the date of a concert of vocal and instrumental music. The Earl Cathcart lent his patronage and the proceeds were devoted to charity.

Charitable soirees, as they were termed, frequently were given in the year 1847. There was one on February 11th, for the benefit of the University Lying-in Hospital. A number of illustrated lectures were given, and a Mr. G. Anderson organized several concerts and balls for charitable purposes. About the middle of February, Mr. Berlyn and Mr. Van Maanen gave a concert: "for the relief of the famishing poor of the City." The Musical Amateurs assisted with the programme and the Governor-General patronized the affair. A benefit was given for the poor of Scotland and Ireland, on the 25th. The following month, Miss Livingston gave a concert. She had excellent talent for the occasion, as she was assisted by Mr. G. Anderson, Mr. Butlin from New York and the principal Glee Singers of Montreal.

During the summer theatrical season, Much Ado About Nothing, The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Katherine and Petruchio, and more commonplace plays were given. In August, a group of beautifully trained children from the

Imperial Theatre in Vienna, were here for ten days. Their grace and precision delighted their Montreal audiences.

A cholera epidemic distressed people in Montreal and Quebec as well as their vicinities. Thus in 1848, theatricals were eclipsed by affairs of greater importance.

The year 1849 was one of political agitation in Montreal. Numerous riots took place, Lord Elgin was mobbed by the Tory party, and the Parliament Buildings were burned following the passing of the Indemnity Bill. In spite of exciting events, the amateur players continued their theatrical activities. The Garrick Club was formed and selected Rob Roy for its first dramatic offering. The following year an effort was made to establish a cheap theatre available to more people. The idea was frowned upon by many who considered the theatre an evil institution! Two attractions were advertised in the Herald during November, 1850. On the 28th, the Garrick Club performed Payne's melodrama of Ali Pacha and Buckstone's farce of John Jones, or, I'm Haunted By A Fiend! The next evening, the XXth Regiment Band under Mr. F. Oliver, Bandmaster, gave a concert. The Officers of the Garrison were patrons on the 29th.

The spring of 1852 witnessed a series of lectures by a Dr. Brownson. On May 3rd and 5th Mrs. Emma G. Bostwick gave concerts at the City Concert Hall. She was assisted by Signora R. Pico and Signor Vietti of the Italian Opera, as well as M. Ebben a celebrated Fluetist and Mr. Mueller, pianist. The actual programme for the 5th was:

\*Part I

1. Fantasie from Lucia di Lammermoor - Strakosch  
Chas. Mueller
2. Cavatina from "Ernani" - Verdi  
Signor Vietti
3. Cavatini from I Puritana "Qui la Voce" - Bellini  
Mrs. E. Gillingham Bostwick
4. Grand Solo - Flute - Briccialdi  
Herr Eben
5. Irish Song "Erin Weeps Forsaken" composed expressly  
for Mrs. E. Gillingham Bostwick by G. Maeder
6. Spanish Song "La Sandunga" composed expressly for  
Signora Pico-Vietti by Blanco  
Between the First and Second Parts  
Miss A. E. Oliver

The Youthful and Talented Performer on the Concertina,  
will appear, and execute a Fantasia of Scotch Airs,  
Composed by Case.

Part II

1. Grand Polka de Concert - Wallace  
Chas. Mueller
  2. Duo from "Don Pasquale" - Donizetti  
Mad. Pico and Sig. Vietti
  3. "Springtime is Coming," written and composed for  
Mrs. Bostwick by G. F. Bristow
  4. Fantasie on an Air from "La Sonambula" - Haake  
Felin J. Eben
  5. Rondo et Variatione from Cinderella - Rossini  
Signora Pico-Vietti
  6. Duo from "Linda di Chamonnix" - Donizetti  
Mrs. Bostwick and Sig. Vietti
- Finale - Scotch Song - "Down the burn Davie, love."

A French vaudeville company appeared, and the players at the Theatre Royal revived Sheridan's Rivals. Other popular plays that season were: Heir at Law, London Assurance, School for Scandal, Country Squire and She Stoops to Conquer. There were many benefit performances given by amateur players. The benefits were for those who had suffered from the cholera epidemic and the many fires that occurred at that time. Among the summer concerts were those presented by Frost's Juvenile Musical Association.

In 1853, Mr. Buckland remained lessee and manager



of the theatre. He pursued his usual policy, and repeated plays that always appealed to Montreal audiences. Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, Katherine and Petruchio, Rob Roy, London Assurance and School for Scandal were again presented. After the regular theatrical season ended, the Theatre Royal reopened for special performances in which Dion Boucicault, the dramatist and actor, appeared. He enjoyed a genuine welcome, perhaps owing to the fact that his London Assurance and other plays were popular here.

English as well as American actors and actresses continued to appear here during the brief theatrical season. A wide variety of plays ranging from the perfection of Shakespeare to clumsy farces were given. Numerous soirees were organized for charitable purposes and songs, dances and other forms of entertainment were part of the programme at many of the soirees. On January 19th, 1855, a quadrille band played at a soiree organized by Young Men's St. Patrick's Association, for charitable purposes. The Printers organized a similar affair for the Orphan Asylums on January 30th, and added glees to their attractions.

In January 1856, a Mrs. Unsworth, assisted by her

daughter and several talented Amateurs and Professional Gentlemen, gave a concert of vocal and instrumental music. The True Witness, a few days later, said: "Mrs. Unsworth's Concert on Tuesday last was numerously attended ... her talents and those of her colleagues, were appreciated by the public." Lectures were well attended during the winter, and a Mrs. Gibbs was frequently heard on the subject of sacred music.

Soirees were still organized for benefits in 1858. The different military bands continued to assist at these affairs. Military concerts were given as that by Major Devlin's Company on January 19th. The Companies of Capt. Latour and the Montreal Volunteer Rifles lent their assistance at several amateur performances.

Mrs. Unsworth organized another concert of vocal and instrumental music on April 6th. The programme was:

"Part I

1. Solo - Pianoforte ..... Mr. Cherrier
2. Song - "March the Cameron Men"... Mr. Muir
3. Duet - "Speak Gently" (Glover) ... Miss A. and M. Unsworth
4. Song - "The Nightingale," dedicated to Florence Nightingale  
by J. A. Harrower ... Mr. C. Harrower

5. "Ah Che la morte" (Il Trovatore) ... Mr. C. Clarence
6. Cavatina - The Mocking Bird, (The Slave) ... Mrs. Unsworth
7. Flute Obligato ... M.H. Gauthier

## Part II

1. Duet - "What are the Wild Waves Saying ... Miss A. Unsworth  
and Mrs. C. Bennett
2. Solo - Violin ... Mr. G. Herbert
3. Song- "Jessie's Dream, or the Relief of Lucknow,"  
(Crawford) ... Mrs. Unsworth
4. Song - "Like the Song of Birds in Summer" ... Miss A. Unsworth
5. Song - Caller Herrin ..... Mr. Muir
6. Irish Ballad - "Rory O'More" ... Mrs. Unsworth
7. Grand Finale - God Save the Queen!"

The plays of Shakespeare were especially popular in 1859. Barry Sullivan, an Irish tragedian of the period appeared here that season. Among the plays in which he took part were: Richelieu, Macbeth, King Lear, Richard III, Hamlet and the Merchant of Venice. Many of the perennial favourites as London Assurance were repeated. A few new dramas were attempted such as The Young Actress.

A regular company was engaged for the full theatrical season, every year. Meanwhile, amateur players continued

their benefit performances, frequently using the regular theatre during the absence of professional actors and actresses. Opera Companies usually included Montreal among the places they visited while on tour. Spanish dancers, magicians, wandering minstrel shows and an occasional Shakesperean actor gave our city a variety of entertainment.

Lectures were still popular in 1860, and concerned such subjects as Rome, the Patroness of Learning by Dr. Ives. On May 25th, there was a Literary and Musical Entertainment in the Bonaventure Hall. Three days later a concert was given in honour of the Eighty-First Anniversary of Moore.

In reviewing the period extending from 1849 to 1860 one remarks how frequently the dramas of Shakespeare were repeated. The groups of amateur players, including those of the Militia, continued their helpful careers. Benefit performances were frequent, yet, as a whole, the fate of the theatre was hazardous, owing to the numerous political upheavals and serious epidemics. The years were a prelude to the more active time that followed in our theatre.

CHAPTER V

The Theatre from 1861  
to Confederation

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The year 1861 offered a great variety of entertainment. Early in January, Wood's Minstrels arrived from New York and proceeded to attract large audiences. On January 25th, the Thistle Society celebrated Burns' anniversary by giving a Grand Promenade Concert. The Band of the Royal Canadian Rifles gave a benefit concert and their programme was:

"March	.....	Hardy
Selection	.....	L Italiana in Algeri Rossini
Selection 2nd	.....	La Traviata Verdi
Valse	.....	Beloved Star Laurent
Selection 1st	.....	Don Pasquale Donizetti
Galop	.....	Politechnicker Kuhner

On the 30th took place a Military Performance under the Patronage of Colonel Bradford, Commanding the Royal Canadian Rifles and the Officers of the Garrison. They presented Luke the Labourer, comic songs and a farce, A Dead Shot. The music lovers heard the Montreal Oratorio Society sing Mozart's Twelfth Mass.

February offered nothing in the theatre. The Montreal Oratorio Society gave another successful concert on March 1. Ten days later a concert of Sacred Music was presented in aid of the Building Fund of the Free Day School, Griffintown. On the 19th, Youmans' Juveniles appeared in a benefit performance for the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society.

April showed an increasing number of entertainments. During the first week, Signor Blitz, the world-renowned magician and ventriloquist, with his troop of sixteen learned canary birds, performed at Mechanics' Hall. He was undeniably clever and the Herald praised him and urged that children be taken to see him. The Young Mozart Society, comprising one hundred and fifty vocalists, all pupils of Prof. W.W. Davis, made their first appearance in

a concert on April 4th. They were assisted by Prof. Torrington, Mr. Pyle and several Gentlemen Amateurs. The following evening, the Montreal Oratorio Society gave Haydn's First Mass and Selections from the Messiah.

Minstrel shows were extremely popular in April. One troupe was called Ethiopian Troupe, and all its members were coloured folk. Then Mrs. Matt Peel's original and only Campbell Minstrels came and earned praise from the Herald: "The songs, dances, and burlesques were rendered in fine style and gave great satisfaction." On April 10th was announced the engagement of the celebrated French Company, numbering twenty-five Artistes from the French Theatre, New York. The Herald remarked that on the 15th:

"Mr. Buckland, in conjunction with Mr. Bertrand, will inaugurate the dramatic season. Arrangements have been made with the entire French Company, now acting in New York, to give a series of performances, the first of which, Les Canotiers de la Seine, will be given on Monday evening.

This excellent comic drama was played in New York upwards of twenty nights to overflowing houses, and, we doubt not, will be eminently successful in Montreal." The French

Company met with success and offered Pendant L'Orage, Les Crochets du Pere Martin, Le Courrier de Lyon, Le Roman d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre and Les Bohemiens de Paris, during the first three weeks of their stay. At the end of April, Prof. Millar, Pythonist and Traveler, gave a performance of Astounding Transformations and Illusions. He was assisted by his wife, who sang. Mr. Youmans continued to direct Juvenile Concerts.

The French Company presented plays throughout the month of May. The plays were: Mlle. De La Seiglieri, ou, Le Peuple et la Noblesse, Madame Bertrand et Mlle. Raton, Le Camp des Honnetes Femmes, Une Allumette Entre Deux Feux, L'Histoire de Cendrillon, Le Gamin de Paris, La Grace de Dieu, L'Amour Maternel, Le Pere Bonhomme, Jobin et Nanette and Embrasson Nous Folleville. During the first week, Unsworth's Minstrels appeared here. There was an important entertainment on the 10th, when Madame Inez Fabbri, a Great Lyric Tragedienne of the New York Academy of Music, sang. She was assisted by Miss Anina Rosetti, Mezzo Soprano; Mr. Charles R. Adams, Tenor; and Herr Richard Mulder, Pianist and Composer to Her Majesty the Queen of Holland.



The same group of people presented the first act of Verdi's *La Traviata*, on the 15th. Their last programme consisted in vocal and instrumental selections and the last act of *Il Trovatore*. Mr. Carter, organist at Christ Church Cathedral, and the Cathedral Choir, gave a concert on the 16th. Minstrel shows continued to come to Montreal: Christy's Minstrels and Brass Band presented: "original programmes, descriptive of Darkey Life in the South," during the week of the 20th. Another popular company came from Boston, it was called Peel and Trowbridge's Minstrels, their favourite song was Listen to the Mocking Bird. At the end of the month, Spanish Dancers appeared at the Theatre Royal, the dancers were Senora Ysabel Cubas and Don Juan Ximenes. They danced between the plays presented by the French Company, as the programme for the 28th indicates.

"*La Chute des Feuilles*, comedie ... By the French Company

*El Marinero y la Maja*, Scene Andalouse, .. By Senora Y Cubas and Don Ximenes

*Titi*, Performed by the French Company

*La Flor de Andalucia*, Pas seul ... By Senora Y Cubas

*Jobin et Nanette*, Vaudeville ..... By the French Company."

On June 3rd and 4th, Mr. Buckland of the Theatre Royal, presented Mr. Strakosch's Grand Concert Company.

In the Company were: "Melle. Carlotta Patti, the young and gifted cantatrice, whose recent success has placed her in the Front Rank of Concert Singers - Signor Brignoli, the finest Operatic Tenor who has visited America in many years - Madame Amalia Strakosch, the popular Contralto and Ballad Singer - also Signor E. Barili, the Famous Baritone." On the 11th, Prof. Anderson, Great Wizard of the North, made his initial appearance here. His programme, A Night in the Wonder-World won the applause of large audiences. The French Company gave Don Caesar de Bazan as their final offering of the month.

Vocal and instrumental concerts maintained public interest during the summer. One was presented on July 1st by Madame L. Gomez de Wolowska, Prima Donna Assoluta of La Scala of Milan, Imperial Operas, Paris, Vienna, etc., assisted by Signor Girolamo de Fossati, Primo Basso Assoluto of Rome, Paris, La Scala of Milan, as well as other artists. There was a Musical Festival by Mr. W.W. Davis' seminary classes. The Hungarian Brothers gave a concert on the 5th,

on which occasion the Band of the Royal Canadian Rifles also appeared. Mr. Sam Cowell, a distinguished singer and Mr. Gustavus Geary, a celebrated Irish tenor and his little daughter Mina Geary entertained a pleased audience.

The Theatre Royal was the scene of the opening of a new dramatic season on July 11th. As usual, a great variety of plays was chosen for the month. The programmes included: Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Merchant of Venice, Katherine and Petruchio and Hamlet. Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer, Knowles' Virginius, Payne's Brutus and Bulwer's Money drew appreciative audiences. Other plays were: Belphegor, the Mountebank, Damon and Pythias, Black-Eyed Susan, The Corsican Brothers and Three Musketeers. There were numerous farces: Romance Under Difficulties, Artful Dodger, An Alarming Sacrifice, and Jackets of Blue. Then on the 29th, Mazeppa, or the Wild Horse of Tartary was presented with the highly trained horse Minnie-Ha-Ha, earning great applause!

The month of August was a time of continued success for the Theatre Royal stock company. A glance at the titles of the plays offered indicates that they were

below the standard of those of the previous month. Melodramas and equestrian dramas were featured including: Dick Turpin, Herne the Hunter and Camaralzaman and Badoura, or, the Peri who loved the Prince. Burlesques were part of several programmes: Captain Charlotte, Po-ca-hon-tas, Atalanta, Conrad the Corsair. The farces were: Swiss Swains, Slasher and Crasher, The Youth That Never Saw A Woman, An Object of Interest, Laughing Hyena, and Stage Struck. The titles of the remaining plays were: The Invisible Prince, The Foster Sisters, My Daughter's Debut, Perfection, Crossing the Line, Daughter of the Regiment, Nell Gwynne, or, The King's Rival and Guy Mannering.

The theatre continued to draw large audiences in September, and the programmes were similar to those offered in July. Macbeth, King Lear, Richard III, Hamlet and the Merchant of Venice pleased those who enjoyed Shakesperean drama. Massinger's New Way to Pay Old Debts, Buckstone's Flowers of the Forest, Coyne's Everybody's Friend, Buckstone's Married Life and Sheridan's Rivals were presented. There were numerous other plays including: The Gamester, La Dame de St. Tropez, Don Caesar de

Bazan, The Octoroon, Colleen Bawn and The Lancers. Meanwhile, the French Company appeared in Le Gendre de Monsieur Poirier and Jobin et Nanette, on the 17th. The performance was given to celebrate the return of His Imperial Highness, the Prince Napoleon. A midget called Tom Thumb gave numerous impersonations during the month.

Charles Dillon, of Royal Drury Lane and Lyceum Theatres, was the chief actor of the season at the Theatre Royal. Carry and Sarah Nelson were featured during the month of August, and Eliza Webb from the London Theatre was the principal actress in September.

Few new plays were added to the repertoire of the company at the theatre in October. A dramatization of Dickens' Great Expectations, Coyne's Fraud and Its Victim, and Farquhar's Comedy, Wine Works Wonders, rose above the many burlesques and farces that were presented. During the month, Christy's Minstrels reappeared, and a celebrated troupe of Swiss Bell wringers called Blaisdell Brothers, entertained interested audiences. There was a concert of classical chamber music on the 29th.

Saint Cecelia's Day was celebrated by the Montreal

Oratorio Society, whose members gave Romberg's Lay of the Bell and selections from Mozart's Twelfth Mass. Meanwhile, the Theatre Royal witnessed the performances of: Buckstone's Green Bushes, Monsieur Jacques, Wine Works Wonders, Cinderella, The Creole, Rory O'More, Tobin's comedy of The Honeymoon and several farces. Thus ended the month of November.

The month of December witnessed a lull in entertainments. On the 20th, the Montreal Oratorio Society gave Handel's Messiah. There were a few unimportant comedies and farces presented at the theatre. The Prince Consort died and all professional performances were suspended until December 30th.

In 1862, the Theatre Royal was ten years old. Mr. Buckland remained its lessee and manager, and a survey of the attractions offered shows they are essentially the same as those of the previous year. As You Like It, Knowles' Hunchback, Our American Cousin, The Jealous Wife and Colleen Bawn, drew patrons to the theatre.

Some remarks have been made about the excellent policy of Mr. Buckland, in pleasing the various people who enjoyed supporting the theatre. The manager was wise

and kind, the actors and actresses he selected were well-recommended, and his wife was skillful and versatile as an actress. Mrs. Buckland was admired as she portrayed Juliet, Portia and other Shakesperean heroines. She was equally natural in parts she essayed in The Rivals, School for Scandal, Damon and Pythias, and many others.

A large number of musical entertainments took place in the early part of 1863. The Irish Protestant Benevolent Society gave a concert of vocal and instrumental music on January 6th. Mr. J.W. Youmans organized another concert of vocal music by his Juveniles. On the 15th, the compositions of Mendelssohn were featured by the Classical Chamber Concert group. The Sedgwicks (father and son), aided by other artists, presented vocal and instrumental music on the 27th. There was a military concert before the end of the month. The Glee Club of the Second Battalion Scots Fusiliers sang, and the event enjoyed the patronage of Colonel F. Stephenson.

On February 5th, Mrs. Buchanan Hall, popularly known as the Irish Poetess, recited her own poems. Concerts of vocal and instrumental music were frequent throughout the

month. The Montreal Oratorio Society selected Haydn's Creation as their next offering. A very different type of entertainment was offered by Duprez and Green's Minstrels and burlesque opera troupe, that included Commodore Foote and Colonel Small, the smallest men in the world! Ralph Waldo Emerson lectured on Clubs or Societies for Conversation, on the 26th.

During the early part of March, George Vandenhoff gave a series of readings. The selections were from Hamlet, Charge of the Light Brigade, The Rivals, School for Scandal and Great Expectations. On March 14th, the Sergeant Amateurs of the Scots Fusiliers Guards gave their first play, for the benefit of the Canadian Military Asylum, Quebec. Their programme was: The Stage-Struck Yankee, Toodles, and Lend Me Five Shillings. The Sons of Mars Amateur Minstrels also took part in the benefit. Another amateur group, Members of the Soldiers' Institute presented Rose of Ettrick Vale, the Momentous Quest and the Dead Shot. The Canadian Philharmonic Society performed their first grand concert at the end of the month, and the Montreal Oratorio Society sang Haydn's Creation, on the 31st.



On April 6th, there was a grand promenade concert by the Band, Bugle Band and the Glee Club of His Majesty's 47th Lancashire Regiment. Youman's United Juvenile Singing Classes gave a benefit for the House of Refuge and Industry. Miss E. Idler, assisted by Julius Werner and other pupils of Dr. Schilling performed in aid of the German Church. The Canadian Philharmonic Society gave a concert on the 21st. Mr. and Mrs. Buckland of the Theatre Royal were given a benefit by the Garrison Amateur Society. The amateurs presented Sheridan's Critic, or, A Tragedy Rehearsed, and Mark Lemon's farce, The Camp of Chobham. Fox and Currans' Great Varieties and Concert Troupe played a successful engagement.

On the first day of May the Ravel Troupe of rope walkers began to entertain pleased audiences. George Christy's Minstrels arrived on the 11th, the same day that Buckley's Serenaders and Burlesque Opera Troupe came to Montreal. The latter group proved most ambitious, and even attempted Il Trovatore! The Young Mozart Society gave a concert of vocal and instrumental music on the 14th. A Circus was here from the 18th to the 21st, and the final

attraction of the month was Napoleon, the Distinguished Prestidigi-comedian and his troupe.

An excellent pianist L. M. Gottschalk performed on the 5th and 6th of June. The French Company from Niblo's, New York, came on the 15th, prepared to present a series of comedies, dramas and vaudeville acts. Dumanoir's comedy, Le Gentilhomme Pauvre and Les Premieres Amours were on their first programme. Some of the other plays they gave were: Pas de Fumer sans Feu, Les Marquises de la Fourchette, Le Pour et le Contre, Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon, Don Caesar de Bazan, Marie Jeanne, Heloise et Gargaillon, Les Memoires de Diable and Les Fils de Giboyer.

Madame Anna Bishop assisted by Edward Seguin and Gustave de Speiss gave a concert on July 9th. The season opened at the Theatre Royal on the 13th, when a full and talented dramatic company presented Jenny Lind and Still Waters Run Deep. A young American, Barton Hill, was featured in Lady of Lyons and a farce, Object of Interest, on the following night. During the remainder of the month the plays included: Knowles' The Wife, Love's Sacrifice,

Lucretia Borgia, Our American Cousin, Aurora Floyd and The Octoroon. Some of the farces were: Family Jars, Delicate Ground, Handy Andy, and Loan of a Lover. Madame Anna Bishop organized a musical festival on the 20th. Towards the end of the month a unique group of entertainers arrived, they were Grandfather Pike's Troupe of Old Folks from Boston.

With the exception of Morris Minstrels and Band, the cast at the Theatre Royal supplied all entertainment in August. Many of the plays were those offered earlier in the season and some additions were made to the list. The Duke's Motto, Marble Heart, Flowers of the Forest, Lost Ship, The Stranger, Rob Roy, East Lynne, The Sorceress, Hidden Hand, Lady Audley's Secret, The Willow Copse and Child of the Regiment were performed by the regular company. Miss Kate Denin and Miss Emily Thorne were guest stars during the month. The French Company used the theatre on a few occasions in order to present Nos Intimes, Vivacites du Capitaine Tie, La Poudre Aux Yeux and Le Medecin des Enfants.

The theatre remained open throughout September,

Miss Kate Kearney was the featured player. As usual, comedies, tragedies and farces were offered to nightly audiences. Buckstone's comedy of Married Life, The Little Devil's Share, Paul Pry, Counsellor's Daughter, The Idiot Witness, Black-Eyed Susan, Wonderful Woman, and Ladder of Love were the plays. The farces included: The Merry Cobbler, Sweethearts and Wives, and the Devil and the Deserter. The French Company presented: La Bataille des Dames, Risetete, ou, Les Millions de la Mansarde, Don Caesar de Bazan, Nos Intimes and L'Aveugle.

General Tom Thumb, a curious little man, his wife and other entertainers came to Montreal on October 9th. Mr. Vandenhoff gave readings from Shakespeare on the 20th, and the French players enacted Les Canotiers de la Seine, thus concluding their engagement. The regular company at the theatre presented several plays including: Jenny Lind, Our Female American Cousin, Angels, Home and Abroad, Stage Struck and the Greek Corsair. Among the farces were: Poor Pillicoddy, Paddy's Wedding, A Devilish Good Joke and Taming a Truant. A Miss Helen Westminster was the principal actress for the month.

The Martinetti and Marzetti Families began a series of performances on November 4th. They featured pantomime, grand ballet, tight-rope acts, and gymnastic feats. There was a promenade concert by the Prince of Wales Volunteer Rifles, and a festival of music celebrated Saint Andrews' Day.

The Canadian Philharmonic Society concert took place on December 4th. Mr. Fred May, an Irish comic singer, performed the same evening. Woods' Metropolitan Minstrels and Julien Burlesque Opera Troupe arrived on the 7th. The Montagnards Canadiens gave a concert on the 18th, and that event marked the close of entertainments for the year 1863.

According to the Montreal Gazette, the first players to arrive in 1864 were Duprez and Green's Original New Orleans and Metropolitan Minstrels. Their stay extended from February 3rd to the 6th. A concert of instrumental music took place at Mechanics' Hall, for the benefit of Miss Eudora Mitchell. On the 25th, the Montreal Orchestral Union gave the first of their series of Thursday evening performances.

There were several popular lectures, including those sponsored by the Natural History Society and one on Brazil,

by the Rev. J. C. Fletcher. Saint Patrick's Society gave a promenade concert on March 17th, and John Douglas Borthwick lectured on the life and plays of Shakespeare, on the 18th. The Theatre Royal announced that Miss Kate Fisher - Daring Equestrienne and Brilliant Protean Actress, would appear in *Mazeppa*, *The King of Tartary*, with her beautiful horse, *Wonder*. Miss Fisher received applause when she performed for a few evenings, beginning March 28th. The Sedgwicks gave several concerts of instrumental music.

On April 7th, a stock company came to the theatre. It was a unique company in one respect, as twelve of its members were Bedouin Arabs who gave an Exposition of Oriental Miracles at every performance. The star of the troupe was a comedian called M. W. Fiske. The dramas were: *Harold Hawk*, *Home Again*, *The Irish Baron*, *The French Countess* and *Le Chalet*. Some of the farces were: *Limerick Boy*, *Paddy Miles' Boy*, *Make Your Wills*, *Eaton Boy* and *Going to Auction*. On the 12th, Mr. Vanderhoff gave delineations of comic Shakesperean characters - *Hotspur*, *Falstaff* and *Harry, Prince of Wales*. A sensational play called *The Ghost of Thruswalden* was given at the theatre on the 21st. A varied and excellent musical programme was presented on the 27th and 28th when

L. M. Gottschalk played the piano and Madame Amalia Patti Strakosh and Signor Carlo Patti sang. The Celer et Audax Theatrical Club, whose members belonged to the Fourth Battalion, Royal Rifles, gave their first performance on the 30th. They presented A Happy Man and The Wreck Ashore for charitable purposes.

May was a dull month for those who desired entertainment. There was a benefit performance by the Celer et Audax Theatrical Club, that selected Ben, the Boatswain, and Boots at the Swan for their second appearance. Stanley and Mason's Minstrels arrived on the 16th, and a few days later a benefit concert of vocal and instrumental music took place.

The French Company gave a series of programmes at the Theatre Royal from June 2nd to the 25th. Their opening night featured Les Petits Oiseaux, a comedy by M. Labiche. During their stay they performed: Les Filles de Marbre, Les Noces de Jeannette, Je Dine Chez Ma Mere, Jean Baudry, Les Canotiers de la Seine and Jean Qui Pleure et Jean Qui Rit. The Company grew ambitious and gave a few comic operas including Tromb Al Cazar, with music by Offenbach. They selected

Alexandre Dumas' Tour de Nesle (Tower of Death) for their final performance. Three days were devoted to Grand Opera, when Signor Brignoli, Adelaide Phillips, Signor Marcusi, Signor Susini, Madame Zampucci, Signor Nardini and Signor Locatelli arrived. The group of singers came from the Italian Academy of New York and presented Rossini's Barber of Seville on the 13th, Donizetti's Don Pasquale on the 14th, and selections from various operas on the 15th. Less sublime entertainment was offered by the Davenport Brothers, who did feats of Magic, from the 22nd to the 25th. The regular theatrical season was inaugurated June 30th, when the comedy of The Serious Family and a farce called Delicate Ground were the chief attractions.

The manager of the Theatre Royal engaged special players as added interest to spectators. Miss Kate Denin, Mr. Sam Ryan, an Irish comedian, Miss Emily Thorne, Miss Madeline Henriques, the Webb Sisters and Barton Hill, a young American, were featured during the summer season. Many plays, familiar and pleasing to local audiences for several years, were repeated, including Lady of Lyons, The Iron Chest, East Lynne, Colleen Bawn, Lucretia Borgia, The Honeymoon,



Knowles' Love Chase and The Hunchback. Some of Shakespeare's plays were given, as Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth and The Taming of the Shrew. There were the usual number of inconsequential comedies and farces, but the outstanding favourite of the month of July was Tom Taylor's play called Ticket-of-Leave Man. It was repeated several times at popular request.

During the early part of August, Falconer's drama of the Nobleman's Daughter, Lady of Lyons and Bride of Lammermoor were given. The comedies and farces were: A Morning Call, A Day Too Late, Rose of Killarney, Good For Nothing, Black-Eyed Susan, The Wandering Boys, Cricket, or, The Witch Grandmother and Thrice Married. Barton Hill was the leading actor in Our American Cousin and Ticket-of-Leave Man and The Marble Heart. The remainder of the month witnessed performances of The Idiot Witness, Corsican Brothers, The Jacobite, Child of the Regiment, Unequal Match, Loan of a Lover, Swiss Cottage, Pocahontas, Leap Year, or, The Ladies' Privilege, Handsome Husband, Four Sisters and the Wandering Minstrel. The McAllisters, a group of sleight of hand artists, were supported by good audiences during

their engagement lasting from the 22nd to the 24th.

Three programmes were presented in September, before the regular company of players at the Theatre Royal disbanded. Grist to the Mill, The Maid and the Magpie, Jonathan Bradford, or, Murder at the Wayside Inn, Everybody's Friend were the final attractions. Professor Rogers, who styled himself Mimic and Ventriloquist, was here the 8th, 9th and 10th of September. Madame Anna Bishop organized a musical festival on the 14th and 15th. Signor Farini, stilt and tight-rope walker and Monsieur L. Vericke, aerial gymnast, opened a long series of performances on the 19th. Madame Anna Bishop gave concerts on the 21st and 22nd. The French Company returned to the Theatre Royal and repeated their successes of the earlier season.

Mrs. Wentworth Stevens organized a concert of vocal and instrumental music on October 12th. Signora Anna Steffani of the Italian Operas of Paris and London theatres sang at the Theatre Royal on October 20th. She was supported by several other excellent singers. Ida MacFarlan, a clever child reader, gave selections from Shakespeare, Tennyson, Hood, Bell and Monk Lewis. There was a concert

by the Prince Consort's Own Rifle Brigade on the 28th, and the jolly group known as the Morris Minstrels, Brass Band and American Opera Troupe made another visit to Montreal.

Early in November a benefit concert<sup>was given</sup> in aid of a building fund for a church at Acton Vale. Duprez and Green's Minstrels were here during the first five days of the month. The week of the 14th was devoted to Italian Opera, with the following programmes: Act II of Bellini's Norma and Donizetti's Lucretia Borgia, on the opening night, Verdi's Il Trovatore on the 15th, Lucia and Favorita and a repetition of Il Trovatore concluded the engagement. Following the happy ending of the professional theatrical season, Mr. Buckland thanked the patrons of the Theatre Royal for their encouragement and support.

Miss Eudora Mitchell was the object of a second benefit concert of vocal and instrumental music, on November 23rd. A few nights later a similar performance took place in aid of Saint Andrews' Home. Camilla Urso, a violinist of some repute, played at Nordheimer's Hall on the last day of the month.

The Theatre Royal opened in December during the engagement of Campbell and Castle's English Opera Troupe. The company opened their season here on the 19th, with a performance of The Bohemian Girl. The initial offering received due praise but their schedule was upset when the Prima Donna, Miss Stockton, fell ill. A week later, they gave Rose of Castile, as well as Maritana and Bellini's La Somnambula. Two other attractions were offered during the month, one was a concert of vocal and instrumental music by Elena de Angelis and her pupils, and the other, was a concert by members of the English Workingmen's Benevolent Society.

The year 1865 was outstanding in the history of the Theatre Royal. The stock company continued to please large audiences with its increasing repertoire of plays. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean were welcomed by crowds of theatre patrons who applauded the Keans in Henry VIII, The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet, Much Ado About Nothing and Richard II. According to Mr. Franklin Graham boxes cost ten dollars, seats in the gallery were sold for a dollar and a half, the second gallery seats were seventy-five cents, and seats in the pit

cost fifty cents. Even the price list indicates what an unusual attraction the Keans had for Montrealers.

Barton Hill and Charles Dillon returned to the Theatre Royal during the season 1866. Barton Hill was featured in Flowers of the Forest, Green Bushes, The French Spy and The Woman in Red. Charles Dillon gave finished performances, as usual, in Richelieu, Macbeth, Hamlet, Richard III, Othello and King Lear. The customary variety of plays offered included: Knowles' Love, Lady of Lyons, Mesalliance, Corsican Brothers, Cricket on the Hearth, Charles Reade's Never Too Late to Mend, She Stoops to Conquer, School for Scandal, The Iron Mask, The Octoroon, Our American Cousin and Boucicault's Colleen Bawn. It was a season during which Montreal patrons showed their usual preference for their customary plays.

Thus with the year 1866 ended the period prior to the famous Acts of Confederation. In 1867 the Union of the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was brought about. This act permitted the admission of existing or future provinces to the original union, and it is common knowledge that the present Dominion of Canada has resulted.

The benefits of Confederation have been felt in all branches of Canadian life, either directly or indirectly, even by such institutions as the theatre in Montreal. With improved economic and social conditions in Canada, large cities have developed and prosperous towns have increased in number. With greater wealth at their disposal educational methods were altered and Canadians have learned to use their leisure hours profitably and pleasantly. An increased interest was shown in the theatre; groups of amateur players received support and encouragement and despite a somewhat haphazard career, enjoy a prominent place in modern Canadian life. But amateur players could not fulfil all theatrical requirements, there was, as there is now, a definite need for professional actors and actresses. Some of the most brilliant British and American people of the theatre have appeared in Canadian cities. Canadians have also contributed very talented people to the professional stage and their history is told in a most interesting fashion by Miss Margaret Christian Edwards written at McGill in her thesis/entitled Canadian drama, dramatists and players.

Someone may justly wonder why Montreal has usually been neglected by the visiting professionals. The answer is

that Montreal audiences, in general, prefer to support local talent, and usually greet other players in an apathetic fashion. Consequently, well known theatrical people are loath to appear here and until definite support is assured them, Montreal will be deprived of much that the theatrical world has to offer. Amateur players are excellent in their own sphere but they lack the training and experience of professional players whose greater skill awakens one to a keen appreciation of the drama. Now that amateur theatricals enjoy greater popularity in our city, one hopes that this interest in the theatre will soon cause Montreal audiences to encourage professional players and that local patrons of the real theatre may have the pleasure of witnessing the finished performances of famous persons of the dramatic world.

The history of the theatre in Montreal has been varied by years of success, interrupted by periods of struggle and disappointment. It is to be hoped that the present sympathetic attitude towards the drama will assure Montrealers of rich and splendid offerings in the theatre in the not too distant future.

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