

This dates back to 1840. Mlle. Atala Beaudouin (the actress who under the name of Louise Beaudouin created the role of the Queen in Ruy Bias) had left Frédéric Lemaître, the great and marvellous comedian. Frédéric adored her and was inconsolable.

Mlle. Atala's mother had strongly advised her daughter on this occasion. Frédéric was occasionally violent, notwithstanding that he was very amorous; and, besides, a Russian prince had presented himself. In short, Mlle. Atala persisted in her determination and positively refused to see Frederick.

Frederick made frightful threats, especially against the mother. One morning there was a violent ringing at Mlle. Atala's bell. Her mother opened the door and recoiled in terror. It was Frédéric. He entered, dropped into the chair that was handiest to him, and said to the old woman:

"Don't be afraid, I haven't come to kick your--, I have come to weep."

THE COMIQUES September, 1846

Potier, having grown old, played at the Porte Saint Martin towards the close of his life. He was the same in the street as he was on the stage. Little boys would follow him, saying: "There is Potier!" He had a small cottage near Paris and used to come to rehearsals mounted on a small horse, his long thin legs dangling nearly to the ground.

Tiercelin was a Hellenist. Odry is a connoisseur of chinaware. The elephantine Lepeintre junior runs into debt and lives the life of a coquin de neuveu.

Alcide Tousez, Sainville and Ravel carry on in the green room just as they do on the stage, inventing cock-and-bull yarns and cracking jokes.

Arnal composes classic verse, admires Samson, waxes wrath because the cross has not been conferred upon him. And, in the green room, with rouge on his nose and cheeks and a wig on his head, talks, between two slaps in the face given or received, about Guizot's last speech, free trade and Sir Robert Peel; he interrupts himself, makes his entry upon the stage, plays his part, returns and gravely resumes: "I was saying that Robert Peel----"

Poor Arnal recently was driven almost insane. He had a mistress whom he

adored. This woman fleeced him. Having become rich enough she said to him: "Our position is an immoral one and an end must be put to it. An honest man has offered me his name and I am going to get married." Arnal was disconsolate. "I give you the preference," said the belle, "marry me." Arnal is married. The woman left him and has become a bourgeoisie. Arnal nearly lost his reason through grief. This does not prevent him from playing his pasquinades every night at the Vaudeville. He makes fun of his ugliness, of his age, of the fact that he is pitted with small-pox--laughs at all those things that prevented him from pleasing the woman he loved, and makes the public laugh--and his heart is broken. Poor red queue! What eternal and incurable sorrows there be in the gaiety of a buffoon! What a lugubrious business is that of laughter!

MADemoiselle GEORGES. October, 23, 1867.

Mlle. George came to see me to-day. She was sad, and elegantly dressed in a blue dress with white stripes. She said: "I am weary and disgusted. I asked for Mars' reversion. They granted me a pension of two thousand francs which they do not pay. Just a mouthful of bread, and even that I do not get a chance to eat! They wanted to engage me at the Historique (at the Théâtre Historique). I refused. What could I do there among those transparencies! A stout woman like me! Besides, where are the authors? Where are the pieces? Where are the roles? As to the provinces, I tried touring last year, but it is impossible without Harel.\* I don't know how to manage actors. How do you think I can get on with these evil doers? I was to have finished the 24th. I paid them on the 20th, and fled. I returned to Paris to visit poor Harel's tomb. It is frightful, a tomb! It is horrible to see his name there on the stone! Yet I did not weep. I was dry-eyed and cold. What a strange thing is life! To think that this man who was so clever, so witty, should die an idiot! He passed his days doing like this with his fingers. Not a spark of reason remained. It is all over. I shall have Rachel at my benefit; I shall play with her that chestnut "Iphigénie". We shall make money, but I don't care. Besides, I'm sure she wouldn't play Rodogune! I will also play, if you will permit me, an act of "Lucrece Borgia". You see, I am for Rachel; she is an artful one, if you like. See how she checkmates those rascally French actors! She renews her engagements, assures for

herself pyrotechnics, vacations, heaps of gold. When the contract is signed she says: "By the bye, I forgot to tell you that I have been enceinte for four months; it will be five months before I am able to play." She does well. If I had done the same thing I shouldn't have to die like a dog on a litter of straw. Tragedians, you see, are comedians after all. That poor Dorval, what has become of her, do you know? There is one to be pitied, if you like! She is playing I know not where, at Toulouse, at Carpentras, in barns, to earn her living! She is reduced like me to showing her bald head and dragging her poor old carcass on badly planed boards behind footlights of four tallow candles, among strolling actors who have been to the galleys, or who ought to be there! Ah! Monsieur Hugo, all this is nothing to you who are in good health and well off, but we are poor miserable creatures!"

\* M. Harel was manager of the Porte St. Martin Theatre.

Mlle. Georges lived with him.

## TABLEAUX VIVANTS

In the year 1846 there was a spectacle that caused a furore in Paris. It was that afforded by women attired only in pink tights and a gauze skirt executing poses that were called tableaux vivants, with a few men to complete the groups. This show was given at the Porte Saint Martin and at the Cirque. I had the curiosity one night to go and see the women behind the scenes. I went to the Porte Saint Martin, where, I may add in parentheses, they were going to revive "Lucrèce Borgia". Villemot, the stage manager, who was of poor appearance but intelligent, said: "I will take you into the gynecium."

A score of men were there--authors, actors, firemen, lamp lighters, scene shifters--who came, went, worked or looked on, and in the midst of them seven or eight women, practically nude, walked about with an air of the most naïve tranquillity. The pink tights that covered them from the feet to the neck were so thin and transparent that one could see not only the toes, the navel, and the breasts, but also the veins and the colour of the least mark on the skin on all parts of their bodies.

Towards the abdomen, however, the tights became thicker and only the form was distinguishable. The men who assisted them were similarly arranged. All these people were English.

At intervals of five minutes the curtain parted and they executed a

tableau. For this they were posed in immobile attitudes upon a large wooden disc which revolved upon a pivot. It was worked by a child of fourteen who reclined on a mattress beneath it. Men and women were dressed up in chiffons of gauze or merino that were very ugly at a distance and very ignoble de près. They were pink statues. When the disc had revolved once and shown the statues on every side to the public crowded in the darkened theatre, the curtain closed again, another tableau was arranged, and the performance recommenced a moment later.

Two of these women were very pretty. One resembled Mme. Rey, who played the Queen in "Ruy Blas" in 1840; it was this one who represented Venus. She was admirably shaped. Another was more than pretty: she was handsome and superb. Nothing more magnificent could be seen than her black, sad eyes, her disdainful mouth, her smile at once bewitching and haughty. She was called Maria, I believe. In a tableau which represented "A Slave Market," she displayed the imperial despair and the stoical dejection of a nude queen offered for sale to the first bidder. Her tights, which were torn at the hip, disclosed her firm white flesh. They were, however only poor girls of London. All had dirty finger nails.

When they returned to the green room they laughed as freely with the scene shifters as with the authors, and talked broken French while they adjusted all kinds of frightful rags upon their charming visages. Their smile was the calm smile of perfect innocence or of complete corruption.