

## AMATEUR DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE.

On Wednesday evening the public of Oldham had the opportunity of enjoying a seldom-obtained treat in the way of an amateur dramatic entertainment at the Theatre Royal. The recent appeal on behalf of the funds of the Oldham Infirmary awakened no more happy chord of sympathy than that which suggested the entertainment under notice. An early run upon the tickets betokened a successful issue to the project, and if the "performance" was successful in yielding a handsome sum to the credit of one of our most popular and deserving local institutions, it was no less gratifying in the success which attended it from first to last. The audience was drawn from all grades of society, and well did the new Theatre Royal look when the stalls, circles, and gallery were comfortably filled with the expectant concourse. The programme opened with the overture "Buy Blas," and after the curtain rose Mr. J. W. Radcliffe delivered the following prologue as an introduction to the stage proceedings:—

Ladies and Gentlemen! Your presence here to-night  
 Gives salient proof how dear is held by all  
 The cause of Charity and Love. No waste  
 Of words or time is needed to explain  
 That list of objects which you now support—  
 To say how comes it that these Therapian boards  
 By amateurs to-night are trod. Suffice  
 To say, no sooner did the cry go forth  
 That funds were wanted to pay off a debt  
 On what of all our noble institutions  
 For the noblest is—that one where pain  
 Is softened, and where cruel suffering's eased—  
 That one where wards and wings as monuments,  
 Examples of benevolence, stand out,  
 Their donors' names for ever handing down  
 As household words to our posterity—  
 No sooner did this cry go forth, I say,  
 Than scores of willing hearts and ready hands  
 Came forward to assist this noble cause.  
 An Amateur Performance of this kind  
 In Oldham is a novelty. Failure  
 Would place our artists in "A Regular Fix!"  
 But "Nothing Venture, Nothing Win," a proverb is,  
 Well known to all. I only ask that you,  
 By your applause, will give still further proof  
 That you appreciate their skill, and that  
 These deeds of love are dear to each and all.

The first item in the programme was "Nothing Venture, Nothing Win," which was cast as follows:—

Duke de Vendome .....	Mr. A. T. Radcliffe
Chevalier de Launay .....	Mr. John Duncuft
Marquis de Vigoual .....	Dr. George Thomson
Dobinecourt (Major-domo to the Countess) .....	Mr S. R. Platt
Captain Dannerville .....	Mr. Samuel Radcliffe
Countess Beauvilliers .....	Miss Amy Villiers
Martha .....	Mrs. Bickerstaffe

Officers, Servants.

Taking the characters in dramatic order, the audience are introduced to Dobinecourt and the Countess, who open a brilliant drawing room scene, and matters proceed in an easy and agreeable way until the Chevalier and the Marquis appear on the carpet. The acting is creditable on all hands, the easy-going, though occasionally reflective, style of Mr. J. Duncuft being well-suited to the character he had to perform. His position at the table, and the way in which he "sits improved." Dr. George Thomson was very happy in his rendering of "Cruel Chloris," the music, we may remark, being specially composed for the occasion by Mr. Lees, Church Terrace. He was deservedly applauded for the expressive way in which he sought to impress upon the inattentive ear of the otherwise deeply engrossed Chevalier "all the torments" forced upon him. In the second act the camp scene was excellent. Here we were introduced to the real Duke de Vendome, and it would have been difficult to have felt, had a knowledge of the fact been kept away, that the character sustained by Mr. A. T. Radcliffe was the portraiture of an amateur. He was undoubtedly the most "reposed" of the company, and looked quite at home both as a soldier and a gentleman. The introduction and interview with the Countess realised the highest expectation, and, indeed, from first to last Mr. Radcliffe's performance was everything that could have been desired. In the character of Dobinecourt Mr. S. R. Platt succeeded in obtaining applause at several points. Perhaps his most successful rendering was that in which he would not accept Vendome as the real duke; or, if we were undecided upon that question, it might be as regarded the subsequent interview with the Chevalier after the latter had returned from entertaining the Hungarian warriors. At this point both Mr. Platt and Mr. Duncuft well acquitted themselves, and as a consequence they received a measure of applause that would have sent a thrill of gladness to the professional heart. It need only be said of the ladies that they sustained their parts with marked ability, and contributed in no slight degree to the thorough success of the opening drama.

The second item in the programme was the bright and amusing triamviretta, in one act, entitled "Cox and Box," or the long-lost brothers—bright from a musical point of view, and made extremely amusing by the eccentricities of the actors (for the nonce) who appeared in the cast. First and foremost comes the performance of Mr. S. R. Platt as "John James Cox" (the batter). A more side-splitting, mirth-provoking performance, from a non-professional point of view, it has never been our pleasure to witness. His entrance to the strain of "My Master is Punctual Always at Business," and his strange capers as he skipped round the stage, were highly comic, and equally highly relished by the audience. The "James John Box" (the printer) of Mr. J. W. Radcliffe was an equally meritorious performance; his "Hush a Bye" solo, to his solitary rasher upon the fire-top, was rendered in right good style, and elicited a hearty burst of applause. The duet of these two rival lodgers—accompanying themselves as they did on the concertina and guitar, or, at least, upon a crash hat and a gridiron—seemed to tickle the risible faculties of the audience immensely. Sergeant Bouncer found an able exponent in Mr. James Dancer, who contrived to make a respectable rent out