PARISIAN "LIFE.

The Closerie des Lilas—The Cau-cau— Parts (Nov. 23) cor. of the Continental Gazette, The terrestrial paradise of the medical students is the celebrated ball-room called by the polite world the Closerie des Lilas, but known to its habitue's as the Bullier of Prado, according to the season of the year. It is called Bullier (which is the name of the proprietor) in the summer, and in the winter the Prado, which is, I believe, a Spanish word, signifying such places of entertainment. The ball-room is the most elaborate in the city, and is perhaps one of the greatest curlosities. It is here that the peculiar dance called the "Can-can" is performed in all its extravagance and wildness. The establishment is situated in the left of the Boulevard Saint Michel, and just beyond the garden of the Luxembourg. These balls are given each week, with sometimes, par extraordinaire, a fourth. On ball nights the entire boulevard is encumbered with the stream of men and women on their way to indulge in wild revelry and awusement. The gaily-painted façade of the building is illuminated in gorgeous style, and an immense crowd of les miserables, gather in front to admire the tollets of the gay women as they enter and feast themselves upon the strains of lively music. In all their poverty and wretchedness their hearts are doubtless filled with envious longings at the sight of the gay and laughing women who flutter in and out like bright colored butterflies. Little do they dream that beneath all the splendid exterior which dazzles their eyes there lies more misery than beneath their own rags and poverty. Entrance to the saloon is gained by a flight of steps, some ten or fifteen feet in depth, conducting to a large and brilliantly illuminated ball-room, half subterranean, and capable of containing several thousand people. The saloon is entirely roofed over in the winter, but during the summer one-half is left uncovered, forming quite a handsome garden, ornamented with fountains, statues, and charming little alcoves, where the enamored swain may enjoy some degree of seclusion with his fair partner. Upon first entrance, especially during the winter, the smoke is so dense that the eye can distinguish nothing but a confused mass of human beings heaving to and fro like an ocean, and the ears are assailed by a din of human voices which confuses the sense and beggars description. I doubt it such a noise as goes up from a crowded Bullier ever went up from any other assemblage in the world. The growd at the Bullier is not like any other, except that it is composed of human beings; indeed, it can hardly be gaid to bear that resemblance, since it is a question whether medical students and cocottes are human beings or not. If they are, they certainly form a distinct species peculiar to Paris, and to the Latin quarter particularly. This horrible noise, if noise is not too musical a word to give to the terrific discord which bursts through the smoke like thunder through the clouds, is a compound of all the sounds which the organs of man, by distortion or other means, are capable of producing. Terrific yells of the men-French yells, which are not like any other yells, and what is more, students' yells-mingle with the screams of women, and rise musically up to the gay and lively accompaniment of the clinking of glasses and the shuffling of feet. This magnificent and harmonious flood of sustained music has for tonique, or fundamental note, the centinuous droning buzz of more moderate talk and laughter, from which musical basis the more terrible effects swell from time to time in magnificent crescendes. Wagner might introduce the Prado, one of its nights, to add to the effect of some of his forte movements, and thereby economize the wind of his trombones and the muscle of his grosse caisee. It is here, in the midst of this storm of revelry and excitement, that the French student may be seen in all his glory; here he lays aside all restraint and gives his whole soul up to enjoyment. It is here, too, that the women, sharing by force of associa-tion the utter abandon of the students, lay aside all the magnificent and stately airs which they wear elsewhere, and throw them-selves wildly into the vortex of dissipation. As a general thing, the women who frequent this ball are women of the quarter-their name is legion-and who, by constant association with the students, have acquired a character almost identical with theirs. There are, however, many of the "upper-ten" of the demi-monde who are frequent visitors to the students' paradise; and the same cocotte who steps to-night in stately dignity and queenlike robes through the fairy walks of Mabille may be seen to morrow at Bullier, in her short skirt, flinging her heels wildly in the air, and taking excruciating postures worthy of the finest contortionist in the Cirque de l'Imperétrice. The peculiar Parisian dance baptized by the name of can-can, is perhaps the most exciting of all such species of amusement, both for the spectator and the dancer It has but little regularity about it, and to the spectator who sees it for the first time it has apparently none. It has, however, its small amount of system, but the principal merit of the dancer is within two given points, the beginning and the end of a strain to commit as many extravagancies as possible, and to throw his body into as many unnatural and bicarre positions as the structure of the human frame will permit of. A very fine accomplishment, for instance, is to be able to throw a back somersault in the face of your fair partner, while she elevates her leg in the air until the tip of her toe and the crown of her head are upon the same horizontal line. It is not at all inartistic to be able to double youself up into a knot and rell upon the floor, while the beauteous daughters of Terpsichore dance around in a circle, after the manner of the savages in the Saudwich Islands. It is a good thing, also, to be able to agitate your legs, arms, and head with such rapidity as to present the appearance of a misty shadow. This accomplishment, however, I am told, is rarely met with. In short, the more horrible impossible the positions, the more artistic the dances. The province of the fair sex lies principally in the legs, though a few unnatural and comic contortions of the body are considered no mean addition to the talent of "elevation." The fair one who lifts her legs highest and with the most rapidity and frequency is con-sidered the most artistic, and a favorite and charming amusement of le beau sexcis to send some open-mouthed greenhorn's hat flying with the tip of her toes. During all this time the most infernal yelling must be kept up—the true spiciness of this exquisite dance consists in that harmonious adjunct. The most celebrated dancer in the Latin quarter is a young man, or rather a pair of long legs sur-mounted by enough body to keep them together and receive their sustenance, who rejoices in the pleasant soubriquet of Sardine although in no respect does he resemble that "brief" aquatic animal. Sardine leaps higher than any one else, and dances around among the women, who pass between his legs with perfect facility, with all the air of the great artist he is generally esteemed to be. He is the envy of all the students and the despair of all the

some astonished woman, and throwing a graceful somersault, twists himself like a corkscrew back to his partner, whom he saintes by gently waving his leg over her head. To sum up, the students' ball is un-doubtedly the greatest curiosity in the Latin quarter, if not in all Paris. It was created by the students, and has always been sustained by them. The effect of the peculiar character of the students is here more plainly visible than anywhere else. The utter abandon of their natures, and their entire diaregard for all conventionalities, have here their full sway. The terrible influences which licentiousness and too much freedom of thought have produced upon the unhappy female portion of the quarter is here presented to view in its most glaring colors.

Dryden's Heroic Plays.

During the Commonwealth, as everybody buring the Commonwealth, as everyoody knows, the pinyhouses were shut up, and the race of actors which had been encouraged by the numerous theatres of London found their occupation gone. But on the return of Charies the Second, with his foreign tastes and educated appreciation of dramatic wit, the stage revival. The spirit of Shakspeare and Jonson, it is true, and down. had flown. There was no resurrection of the true Elizabethan genius for dramatic composition. But plays were in request; and Sir William Davenaut, who had employed his leisure hours during the winter of Puritanical suspension in writing operas of a romantic cast, began to furbish them up for representation on the punlic stage. These plays were written in rhyme, and, either on this account or for the mere sake of pulling his performances. Davenant hit upon the lucky idea of calling them "heroic." Dryden was then an aspirant after literary fame, and the way to win laurels was to write for the theatre. He therefore turned his hand for the theatre. He therefore turned his hand to the composition of heroic plays. The seed scattered by Sir William Davenant had tallen upon fruitful ground. The very name heroic suggested all manner of things to Dryden. While reflecting on the faults of Davenant, he says:—"I opened the next book that lay by me, which was 'Arosto,' in Italian; and the very first two lines of that poem gave me light to all I could desire:-

'Le dame i caviller, l'arme, gli amori, Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese to canto; for the very next reflection which I made was this, that an heroic play ought to be an imita-tion, in little, of an heroic poem." Let us pause for a moment to wonder at the miracles of chance and genius in conjuction. Davenant calls his pseudo-operas heroic; Dryden puzzles how he is to improve upon them; the first lines of the first book he takes up suggest the necessary hint. The public has a taste for heroic plays. Heroic plays must follow the model of heroic poems. Love and valor are the main matters in heroic poems. Therefore, the more love and valor 1 crowd into my plays, the more heroic will they be, the more money shall I make, the more laurels will they crown me with. Shut up Ariosto, and begin to scribble. This was a very common mode of reasoning with Dryden, and nothing is more charming than the nawete with which he exposes in his prefaces these secret workings of his mind. But stop a moment—all is not yet finished: if everything about my play must be heroic. I cannot put up with common prose or pedestrian blank verse:— The plot, the char-acters, the wit, the passions, the descriptions. are all exalted above the level of common con-verse, as high as the imagination of the poet can carry them, with proportion to verisimilitude, w * Blank verse is acknowledged to be too low for a poem—nay, more, for a paper of verses; but if too low for an ordinary sonnet, how much more for tragedy, "etc. Aias! poor Milten! This is the heroic poet who asked permission to versity your "Paradise," and who got the answer from you, "Let the young man tag his rhymes!" Moreover, reasons Dryden, we must not only soar to the height of extraor-dinary characters and passions, but also indulged dinary characters and passions, but also indulge ourselves in portentous changes of fortune, in ourselves in portentous changes of fortune, in supernatural machinery, in rare and wonderful combinations of events:—If any man object the improbabilities of a spirit appearing or of a palace raised by magic, I boldly answer him that an heroic poet is not tied to a bare representation of what is true or exceeding probable; but that he may let himself toose to visionary objects, and to the representation of such things as, depending not representation of such things as, depending not on sense, and therefore not to be comprehended by knowledge, may give him a freer scope for imagination." Thus Dryden pieced together his theory of the heroic drama, in which Herod was out-Heroded by the meanest hoster, and the very pages swaggered in King Cambyses' vein. The critics of the day, laughing at these pretensions of the heroic poet, described him as the "man nature seemed to make choice of to enlarge the poet's empire, and to complete these large the poet's empire, and to complete those discoveries others had begun to shadow. That Shakespeare and Fletcher (as some think) erected the pillars of poetry is a gross error: this zany of Columbus has discovered a poetical world of greater extent than the natural, peopled with Atlantic colonies of notional creatures, astral spirits, ghosts, and idols, more various astral spirits, gnosts, and idols, more various than ever the Indians worshipped, and heroes more lawless than their savages." (Censure of the Rota.) If it were worth while to criticize the theory seriously, we might point out that Dryden's first mistake arose from confounding the style proper to the Italian narrative romance with that which suits the stage. We tolerate a great deal of impro-bability and extravagance of fancy in reading a semi-serious poem like the "Orlando," which seems ridiculous when acted in a would-be tragedy like the Indian Emperor. His next and faial blunder was to suppose that he possessed the imagination fit for inventing supernatural machinery or for portraying characters raised above the human stature. The farrago of nonsense which he produced is the best posof nonsense which he produced is the best pos-sibly commentary on this criticism. With all his viger of intellect and flery genius, Dryden could not toar above the earth. The style with which he sought to dignity his matter was in-flated—overloaded with bombastical apostrophes and similes ridiculous for their prostic magnilo-quence. He mistook "sound and fury" for poetle rapture, and thought to scale the heavens by piling mountains upon mountains of mere verbisge. Supposing his hastily and incon-gruously formed ideal of the heroic drama to have been capable of realization, Dryden was have been capable of realization, Dryden was

the last man to have attempted it.

His heroic plays, however, secreeded for a few years with the public. The enthusiasm for these extravagant and turgid dramas, which were called herote because they were written in a language elevated above nature, and exhibit passion in a state of manuacal costasy," rose to the high water-merk on the appearance of the "Conquest of Granada." Dryden's arrogant epilogue to this pieces of med like a glove thrown down to challenge men of common sense. This glove was taken up by many, but none of Orscon, an account of the control of the Dryden's an agonists uchieved so signal a suc-cess as the authors of The Rehearsat for whom it remained to borst the bubble of beroic and to obliterate them for ever,-Pall Mad Gazette.

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