The Press.

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THE PRESS,
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TO OUR STOCK OF
BLANKETS.
Having unsurpassed facilities for obtaining all the best makes of
BLANKETS,
we are now prepared to offer the largest assortment of goods in this line to be found in this country. Our long experience in this branch of our business gives us the opportunity to offer such inducements to the public as cannot be found in any other establishment. Selling more of these goods than all the trade combined, enables us to handle much larger quantities, and thus gives us great advantages over others who do not devote special attention to this department.
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ROCHDALE, ONTARIO,
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In their various sizes and qualities.
CRIB AND CRADLE BLANKETS;
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A Good Assortment of
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Blankets Ranging in Price from $3 to $25 per Pair.
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GIFTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS.
25 PER CENT. SAVED BY PURCHASING YOUR
WATCHES, JEWELRY,
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SILVER-PLATED WARE,
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English Watches,
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Bracelets, Setts,
Pins, Ear Rings,
Finger Rings,
Sleeve Buttons,
Studs,
Medallions,
Neck Chains,
Guard Chains,
Chataine Chains,
Vest Chains,
Pencils,
Thimbles,
Pens and Cases,
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SILVER-PLATED WARE.
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SUPERIOR WATCHES, American, Swiss, and English.
SILVER WARE, of every description.
PLATED GOODS, American and English.

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NOW OPEN.
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FURS
Of our own Importation and Manufacture.
HUDSON'S BAY SABLE,
ROYAL ERMINE,
DARK SABLE MINK,
REAL CHINCHILLA,
DARK SIBERIAN SQUIRREL,
In every fashionable style, for
LADIES, MISSES, AND CHILDREN.
FURS MADE TO ORDER
AT THE
PARIS MANTILLA, CLOAK, AND
FUR EMPORIUM,
920 CHESTNUT STREET,
J. W. PROCTOR & CO.
USEFUL, NEW, AND ELEGANT
HOLIDAY PRESENTS.
NOW OPENING
FINE LACE AND BROCATELLE CURTAINS.
SATIN, TERRY, AND REPS DO.
EMB'D LACE AND MUSLIN DRAPERIES.
RICH TASSELS AND GILT CORNICES.
FRENCH FURNITURE COVERINGS, PLUSHES, &c.
Also, PREMIUM BLANKETS, the finest quality made and MARSEILLES QUILTS of all sizes.
Superb Double DAMASK TABLE CLOTHS, of all sizes, with ⅝ and ¾ NAPKINS to match.
And HANDKERCHIEFS, imported expressly for the season, for Ladies, Gentlemen, and Youth, comprising some very new and desirable styles of Gold Embroidery, Hem-stitched, and Corded Border.
COWPERTHWAIT & CO.,
N. W. cor. EIGHTH and MARKET Sts.
1008 CHESTNUT Street.

JOSEPH AND WILLIAM E. WOOD,
IMPORTERS AND DEALERS IN
CLOTHS, CASSIMERES, VESTINGS,
AND
TAILORS' TRIMMINGS,
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.
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BOYS'
CADET SUITS,
ADAPTED TO
MILITARY SCHOOLS;
ALSO,
JACKETS, PANTS, AND OVERCOATS,
OF FANCY CASSIMERES, MELTONS, &c.
COOPER & CONARD,
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ARCH-STREET CLOAK STORE,
A RANDOM ASSORTMENT OF
LADIES' AND MISSES' CLOAKS.

ED. GROSJEAN,
1013 CHESTNUT STREET,
Respectfully calls the attention of the ladies to his well-selected line of
LINEN CAMBRIC HANDKERCHIEFS.
Also, a fine collection of
Fancy and Embroidered Handkerchiefs,
Gents' and Ladies' Handkerchiefs.
INITIALS AND OTHER DESIGNS Embroidered in the latest styles and in the best possible manner.
A full assortment of
EMBROIDERIES.
NIGHT-GOWNS,
CAPE CHEMISES,
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COLLARS, SLEEVES, CUFFS,
HOOP SKIRTS, HEAD DRESSES,
NETS, GLOVES, &c.

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BEAUTIFUL AND SEASONABLE GOODS!
PRICES MUCH LOWER THAN ELSEWHERE!
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ALL-WOOL POPLINS AND REPS, for $1.
Excellent French Merinoes for $1.25.
A fine stock of Delaines and Calicoes.
All-Wool Plaid Cashmeres, a great variety.
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Corner of EIGHTH and SPRING GARDEN.

THORNLEY & CHISM
ARE SELLING
Power-Loom Table Linens,
Shaker and other Flannels,
Extra Super-super Kochdale Blankets,
Frosted Beaver and other Cloths, Cassimeres, &c., &c.
VERY CHEAP.

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Long and Square Broche Shawls.
Long and Square Blanket Shawls.
Plaid Shawls, Striped Shawls, Plain Shawls, &c.
Children's Shawls, Misses' Shawls, Gents' Shawls,
Long and Square Black Thibet Shawls,
At THORNLEY & CHISM'S,
S. E. Corner of EIGHTH and SPRING GARDEN.

SILKS! SILKS!
Good Black Silks for $1.
Better for $1.25, $1.50, $1.75, $2, and $2 25 per yard.
Plain Brown, Blue, Purple, and Green Silks, for $1.50.
Black Brocaded Silks, Plaid Silks, &c., &c.
BEAUTIFUL BROCHE SCARFS.
A LARGE STOCK OF BALMORAL SKIRTS,
And all other kinds of Goods, comprising
A FIRST-CLASS STOCK.
At THORNLEY & CHISM'S,
S. E. Corner of EIGHTH and SPRING GARDEN.
1024 CHESTNUT STREET.

E. M. NEEDLES,
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Invites attention to his extensive assortment of goods suitable for
USEFUL AND ACCEPTABLE
HOLIDAY PRESENTS,
IN LACE GOODS,
HANDKERCHIEFS, EMBROIDERIES,
VEILS, AND WHITE GOODS.
1024 CHESTNUT STREET.
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EDWIN HALL & CO., 26 S. SECOND street, have—
LADIES' SCARFS in great variety.
LADIES' SCARFS at $1 00.
LADIES' SCARFS at $1.25.
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LADIES' SCARFS at $1.75.
LADIES' SCARFS at $2 00.
LADIES' SCARFS from $2.50 to $7.
SCARFS—WHOLESALE AND RETAIL.

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WOOLEN SHIRTS AND DRAWERS,
WHITE AND SCARLET,
Of superior quality, and warranted to wash.
Also, a full assortment of
GENTS' FURNISHING GOODS,
Of the best quality and latest styles.
WARNOCK & CO.,
No. 1 SOUTH SIXTH STREET.

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Of the best quality and latest styles.
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Of superior quality, and warranted to wash.
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Of the best quality and latest styles.
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A full assortment of
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The Press.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1863.

The King Lear of Edwin Forrest.

"King Lear" was on Monday evening produced at the New Chestnut for the first time this season. By very many it is considered *the* character of Shakspeare, and *the* impersonation of Mr. Forrest. However clearly the standard may be understood, taste will sometimes differ in its judgment of genius, and reasoning upon so affluent a subject will never direct all minds to the same conclusion. Shakspeare, who, by the way, has nearly completed his three-hundredth year, has presented the world with so many instances of beauty and sublimity, that he may be said to have sucked the fountains of dramatic resource dry, and to have left but slender chances to less gifted followers. His characters were real men and women, not a parcel of words, with the name of the character who was supposed to speak them prefixed. Consequently, his plays are something more than a mere jumble of the parts of speech, although the unwarrantable freedom which playwrights and adapters have taken with them would seem to suggest that they considered them but little better. "Lear" is an instance of this. It has been cut into and cut out of; speeches have been interpolated and excsinded; the plot of the playwright has been intertwisted with the plan of the poet, a wheel within a wheel, and the original tragedy has been "adapted" to the requirements of stage effect. This is just as much the fault of the public as of any individual. It should long ago have had intelligence enough to know when the Shakspearian text was adhered to, and energy enough to discourage impertinent alterations.

Mr. Forrest has taken pains to preserve entire the character of *King Lear*, knowing that without such care the best performance would be but a travesty. The manner in which he delineates the childish, loving, passionate, broken-hearted old king, is something to be vividly remembered for years and years; to be treasured up as a wondrous picture upon which we delight to gaze from time to time, and to be witnessed with a thrill, and suspense, and holding of the breath, such as cannot be created by any other actor.

From the first scene, where *Lear* appears in a room of state in his palace, to the last over the body of the dead *Cordelia*, lies a vast field for the display of passions. The exceeding love with which he fills and feeds and derives sustenance from the expressions of doating affection it covets; the enraged disappointment which ensues at the diffidence and seeming coldness of the cherished daughter *Cordelia*; the speedy discovery of the ingratitude and hypocrisy of *Regan* and *Goneril*; the awful denunciations which ensue; the unsettlement and final overthrow of reason; the recognition of *Cordelia* in the last hours of life; the agony and death of the old King over the corpse of the only daughter whom he had treated with harshness, yet who repaid it all with loving-kindness—these provide the tragedian with an almost unequaled opportunity for sounding all the heights and depths of human passion. They are rife with elements of love, pity, terror, hate, rage, remorse. The study which Mr. Forrest has given to the character of *King Lear* is evident not only in those grand passages of the poet which could not but produce some effect, even when interpreted by an indifferent actor, but in all the slighter phases of the characterization. Having drunk in with pleasure the protestations of *Regan* and *Goneril*, the old king turns to his darling *Cordelia*, and addresses her, not as he addresses her sisters. His voice grows more melodious and loving; he vacates his throne, and advances, with trembling steps, towards that object of his tenderest solicitude and nurture, exclaiming, in tones bespeaking a comfortable assurance of an abundant return of the overwhelming love his bosom grants:

"Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The vines of France, and milk of Burgundy,
Strive to be winnessed, what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak."

The action which accompanies this passage in Mr. Forrest's rendition, the incredulity and surprise with which he listens to *Cordelia's* "so young and so untender," the petulant forbearance with which he grants her time to prove that her words go not with her heart, contrast finely with the burst of excitement in the retort of *Lear*. "Thy truth then be thy dower," the blind passion with which he rebuffs and banishes the faithful *Kent*, and the fierceness with which he turns on *Goneril*, when she would out down his train to half its size, with

"Detested kite! thou liest.
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know,"

Perhaps the portion of the play which on Monday evening awoke the greatest enthusiasm was the course pronounced against *Goneril*, at the conclusion of the first act. It is not possible to convey to those who did not see and hear it, an adequate conception. Imagine a blue descending sight to the blind, or hearing to the deaf. A new sense would be requisite to take in the meaning. To those who did see and hear it, it will only be necessary to make mention of the absolute abandonment of the actor to the character. Mr. Forrest seemed not to be Mr. Forrest, but the *King*. We felt sure beyond a doubt that he entirely lost the consciousness of his own identity, and became identical with the outraged old monarch. And when the curse was pronounced, and he was half borne tottering away, the applause was so tremendous and long-continued as to prove that intelligent enthusiasm had reached its highest bounds. As a specimen of enraged invective, the curse pronounced against *Goneril* was the principal point made.

But it is not in invective alone that Mr. Forrest excels. In his quiet scenes he is unspeakably tender and effective. His reply to *Regan*, "I gave you all," is a delicious piece of acting. It gives place or notice to no more than twenty-five of the hundred knights which *Goneril* has already cut down to fifty, was wonderfully pathetic, and the varied intonation and action which expressed the passage commencing,

"Oh, reason not the need—our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous."

were the completest framework for such thoughts that can be conceived. So, in his wanderings through the storm, and in his encounters with *Edgar* disguised, the voice with which he makes his frequent allusions to his daughter might have melted the hearts of *Goneril* and *Regan* themselves, had they had any hearts to be melted. A great opportunity to this great actor is presented in act fourth, where *Lear* enters fantastically dressed with flowers. The reply, "Ay, every inch a king," was delivered with a royalty of look, attitude, emphasis, and bearing, which bespoke the blood of a line of kings. The remainder of that remarkable passage was likewise delivered with that wonderfully expressive intelligence which is the idiosyncrasy of Mr. Forrest's genius. The interview which soon after follows with the faithful *Cordelia*, is all quietness, gentleness, full of a pathos which renders tears irreproachable, and prepares us for the calmness of the agony which follows. *Lear* in his delirious state, the last words of *Lear* are very few, and he who reads in his closet those few lines is most remarkably gifted if he clothe them with an iota of the mournful expressiveness with which Mr. Forrest arrays them. To appreciate the beauties of the impersonation, however, requires a more careful looking than the mere playgoer is usually disposed to yield, even to the most exalted efforts of the most exalted poet or tragedian. "Lear" is a play which, properly studied, is of more advantage to the health of mind and heart than any mere learning of the schools. True, we must bring this learning with us to help it, for we have not the spectacles of Shakspeare; we do not understand men and things with the godlike intuition of his rainbow genius; we cannot sound the depths of the breast of man, and survey all the precious spoils of that turbulent ocean washed up in tribute to our feet. It need not be wondered at that the older men grow the more they read Shakspeare, and the better they understand him, and that the majority of those who, in early life, attained proficiency in a knowledge of him, were precocious. Either in heart, intellect, or will. It need not be wondered at that in this, his three hundredth year, his renown is stronger than it ever was before, and that in every quarter of the globe evergreens of fame are branching out from the one evergreen of his majestic self. Least of all need it be a matter of surprise that the highest ambition of the best actors, after the time of Shakspeare, has been fitly to interpret him, and that the lifetime of the most stupendous genius has never done him more than justice. Happy is that tragedian who never does him less.

Beholding the sudden and fearful outbreak of *Lear* against *Goneril*, all who witness the play in its progress are prepared for a similar burst of rage against *Regan*. If *Goneril*, by curtailing her father's train of hundred knights, thus drawn down upon herself such awful denunciations, what can *Regan* expect, who goes to the length of putting the king's messenger in the stocks? Here, in the encounter with *Regan*, are finely pathetic passages, which are not, however, generally dwelt upon as such. *Lear's* unwillingness to believe that this fresh outrage could have been intended, or, at least, perpetrated by *Regan*, the tenacity with which he clings to that one daughter, the loving obstinacy with which he shuts his eyes to the soul-sickening truth which stares him so relentlessly in the face, were all given with fine effect by Mr. Forrest. Among these passages are his reply to his daughter's welcome, commencing:

"Regan, I think you are: I know what reason
I have to think so. If thou should'st not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb.
Sepulchring an adultress."

Another:

"Ask her forgiveness?
Do you but mark how this becomes the house
Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Age is unnecessary; on my knees I beg (kneeling)
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food."

And another:

"No, Regan, thou shall never have my curse:
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness: her eyes are fiery, but thine
Do comfort and not burn."

And, again, the confidence with which he turns to *Regan*, when *Goneril* again confronts him, confident that at least "he can stay with *Regan*, he and his hundred knights," until *Regan*, discovering unmistakably her true character, exclaims:

"If you will come to me,
(For now I spy a danger,) I entreat you
To bring but five-and-twenty; to no more
Will I give place or notice."

We have already adverted to the pathos of his reply, "I gave you all"—words which are doubly pathetic, coming between the harshness of those to which they are an answer and the insolent cruelty of *Regan's* retort, "And in good time you gave it." Here follows the short scene where he is banished about between *Goneril* and *Regan*, and where *Lear* concludes his invocation to Heaven with

"You think I'll weep:
No, I'll not weep.
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!"

But where the character pictured by the poet is complete in itself, like that of *Lear*, and where the impersonation does such even justice to it, as the impersonation of Mr. Forrest does, it is but a partial and ungrateful business to pick out beauties here and there. It is like discovering what part of a sun or star shines brighter than the other parts, or pronouncing what feature of a perfect countenance we most admire. Still, where one cannot follow line by line the poet and the tragedian, there is a certain pleasure in reverting to those points which, from the very circumstances of the case, impressed him most vividly at the moment.

In the third act *Lear* is exposed to the storm upon the heath. The passage,

"Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters,
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness:
I never gave you kingdom, called you children:
You owe me no subscription; why, then, let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand your slave—
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man.
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters joined
Your high engendered battles, 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!"

was given quietly, with calmness, and almost with submission; but the lines,

"Pour on; I will endure
In such a night as this! O! Regan, Goneril!
Your old, kind father, whose frank heart gave you all.
O, that way madness lies: let me shun that;
No more of that—"

were spoken with a heart-broken and impassioned utterance, which once more reminded the audience that *King Lear*, and not Mr. Forrest, stood before them.

So in the encounter with *Edgar*, disguised as a madman, the words of *Lear*:

"What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?
Couldst thou save nothing? *Did'st thou give them all?*"

"Death, traitor! nothing could have subdued nature,
To such a lowness, but his unkind daughters,"

became, between the lips of the tragedian, as eloquent as the poet intended them to be. The finely conceived piece of acting in which the poor old king is drawn away, exclaiming:

"Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains:
So, so, we'll go to supper i'the morrow."

was likewise unspeakably effective.

The fierce invectives which mark *Lear's* speech with *Edgar*, in the fourth act, contrast vigorously with the mournful quietude which distinguishes his interview with *Cordelia*, and this leads us naturally to the calm torture of the closing scene, of which we have before made mention. The man of refined intellect, warm imagination, and quick sympathies, would, we think, scarcely be able to say certainly that he preferred Mr. Forrest's impersonation of *King Lear* to any of his other impersonations. The character seems to belong peculiarly to Mr. Forrest. The man who would venture to play it would indeed be excessively ambitious. Physically and intellectually, Mr. Forrest and the character of *King Lear* awful denunciations which ensue; the unsettlement and final overthrow of reason; the recognition of *Cordelia* in the last hours of life; the agony and death of the old King over the corpse of the only daughter whom he had treated with harshness, yet who repaid it all with loving-kindness—these provide the tragedian with an almost unequaled opportunity for sounding all the heights and depths of human passion. They are rife with elements of love, pity, terror, hate, rage, remorse. The study which Mr. Forrest has given to the character of *King Lear* is evident not only in those grand passages of the poet which could not but produce some effect, even when interpreted by an indifferent actor, but in all the slighter phases of the characterization. Having drunk in with pleasure the protestations of *Regan* and *Goneril*, the old king turns to his darling *Cordelia*, and addresses her, not as he addresses her sisters. His voice grows more melodious and loving; he vacates his throne, and advances, with trembling steps, towards that object of his tenderest solicitude and nurture, exclaiming, in tones bespeaking a comfortable assurance of an abundant return of the overwhelming love his bosom grants:

"Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The vines of France, and milk of Burgundy,
Strive to be winnessed, what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak."

The action which accompanies this passage in Mr. Forrest's rendition, the incredulity and surprise with which he listens to *Cordelia* "so young and so untender," the petulant forbearance with which he grants her time to prove that her words go not with her heart, contrast finely with the burst of excitement in the retort of *Lear*. "Thy truth then be thy dower," the blind passion with which he rebuffs and banishes the faithful *Kent*, and the fierceness with which he turns on *Goneril*, when she would out down his train to half its size, with

"Detested kite! thou liest.
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know,"

Perhaps the portion of the play which on Monday evening awoke the greatest enthusiasm was the course pronounced against *Goneril*, at the conclusion of the first act. It is not possible to convey to those who did not see and hear it, an adequate conception. Imagine a blue descending sight to the blind, or hearing to the deaf. A new sense would be requisite to take in the meaning. To those who did see and hear it, it will only be necessary to make mention of the absolute abandonment of the actor to the character. Mr. Forrest seemed not to be Mr. Forrest, but the *King*. We felt sure beyond a doubt that he entirely lost the consciousness of his own identity, and became identical with the outraged old monarch. And when the curse was pronounced, and he was half borne tottering away, the applause was so tremendous and long-continued as to prove that intelligent enthusiasm had reached its highest bounds. As a specimen of enraged invective, the curse pronounced against *Goneril* was the principal point made.

But it is not in invective alone that Mr. Forrest excels. In his quiet scenes he is unspeakably tender and effective. His reply to *Regan*, "I gave you all," is a delicious piece of acting. It gives place or notice to no more than twenty-five of the hundred knights which *Goneril* has already cut down to fifty, was wonderfully pathetic, and the varied intonation and action which expressed the passage commencing,

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