

BORDERLAND.*

The man with the slide trombone squeezed out a few sonorous bellows; the operator on the bass viol breaks two strings in his violent efforts to put a graceful twirl on the finale; while the first cornet, who has been struggling vainly to get ahead of the rest of the orchestra during the whole production, succeeds in making himself heard by coming out bravely on a few plaintive notes after all others have ceased; the last touching strains of "Maggie Murphy" die away in the rafters above; the curtain rises and Banker Lester treads the stage.

Let us, however, before we turn our attention to the opening soliloquy of that down trodden person take a hurried glance over the audience. There in the manager's box we see a fair lady besparkling with diamonds and holding in one hand a beautiful bouquet of artificial flowers. At her side sits a portly gentleman with a long flowing mustache, who beams complacently upon the assembled company, and who cheers tremendously at the well timed sallies of his bosom friend, Senior Pickle, who is starring this evening. It is the distinguished horseman Augustus Read, and that dainty creature at his side is Miss Herr, the belle of our Four Hundred. And those other boxes, who do they contain? Those are persons not so well known to us—the *elite* of Sourstown, Puddingtown, Boalsburg and their suburbs.

We will seek the peanut gallery then. Mr. Hildebrand is there, in all his glory, with his friend Cartwright. He has had his head shaved for the occasion, and in the dim light of the tallow candles it looks so much like a cake of cheese that Baron Harefoot, the villain, (who when off the stage is in the grocery line,) is observed to cast his eyes continually in that direction. Mr. Cartwright, too, is in his element, for he at once succeeds in starting a dog fight in the gallery just as the baron comes to the finest part of his love scene with Banker Lester's daughter, thus attracting

the attention of the audience from the fine acting of that personage. William Brown is there also, but he is despondent this evening—he has failed to catch the eye of that fair one, who looks like the pictures of ladies on cigar boxes, sitting next sport Haas in the parquet. Mr. Haas, though, is as usual invincible and through the whole performance is longing for the moment when the lights would go out, and the whole opera house sink into the store below, as had been predicted it would by the wiseacres of the village.

In vain—the brawny farmer in the next seat but one from him acts upon his nerves like a skeleton in the closet.

And down there in the orchestra circle, who, green with envy apparently, are those gentlemen leveling their opera glasses made of beer bottles at the box which contains Mr. Read and his fair companion. They are Messrs. Pond, Crawford and Rumberger. Beside them sits Mr. Dale in a foot ball suit. He expects a riot to-night and has come prepared to meet any emergency, and if any thing does happen, we may expect brilliant work from him. Back under the balcony are three others we know—Messrs. Aull, Kessler and Williamson. The delights of the drama have proved too great a temptation for even that last stable minded man, for he has stolen from the sick bed of a dear friend to spend a few hours before yon tallow footlights. Yet the beauties on the stage seem not to interest him. Surely his thoughts are not here. Oh no—they are at Pine Grove.

See up there, in that box on the second tier, a man with a butter colored mustache who sits alone in his grandeur. Already the glasses of all the ladies in the house are leveled at him; he is used to that, evidently, from the way with which he carries himself. That is Colonel J. Frank Shields, and doubtless the Athletic Association is paying for that box, as well as for the refreshments with which he is served after each act.

But what means this strange hush that has come over the assemblage? Ah—I see. Yonder in

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