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I cannot tell. It is an essence distilled from all this, which intoxicates from the casting meeting to the last hour of the last show; which we can seek afterwards in a thousand quarters, and never find, because the time for it has slipped, like smoke, through our unwary fingers.

I often wonder why the public, so obviously incidental to the piece, are such patient patrons of student mirth. Why do they come, year after year, submitting themselves voluntarily to the danger of braining by a saveloy hurled joyously from the Gods, or of being knocked down by a youthful Jehu riding a motor-bike up the aisle? How do they endure the same lame puns and the same lampoons, the same perennial pornography and buffoonery?

"A Casting Out of Inhibition"

The answer must be that they like it. It is for them, as well as the actors, a casting out of inhibition. I have seen respectable gentlemen roaring with laughter at a string of *doubles entendres*, and old ladies giggling salaciously at what would shock their grand-daughters. And it happens nowhere else—this reversal of tradition—shoutings in the intervals, leaping from the pit on to the stage, and interjections freely scattered through the playing. We have never experienced what happened once in London, when the play *Young England* was so bad that it would not have lasted a week, had a man on the second night not made a humorous interjection which brought the house down. After which it became the fashion to go merely to interject and listen to others doing likewise, on which basis the play ran for two years.

Nowhere else do such things happen—the outrageous, the comic, the inane. Nowhere else can the uncomely spread of a civic nabob be so brutally pilloried, or the dropped "h" of a political chief be travestied. And all this is manna to a people surfeited with repertory and professional mediocrity.

On the Stage

You may have noticed, too, the predominance in student activity, of the haka party. Doubtless the hakes which they chant are spurious and set the blood-thirsty old Rangihaeetas and Rauraharas a-turning in their graves, but it is an involuntary tribute to another and more primitive culture, grounded on the same terrain.

For all these things, then, I salute the Dionysian God of Extravaganza. He may cause trams to be lifted from their tracks, he may inspire law-suits and police action, and parents to snatch their daughters away from the seats of higher learning, but his divine frenzy is more precious than gold. Like Charles Lamb, I reluct at the inevitable course of destiny, and mourn nostalgically for the old days—but who am I to complain, I who in my time have played the parts of Captain Rook, of Tweedlesid, of a White Ant, and the nether regions of a moa!

"If you want a new slant on home life," said Ernest Thomson, in a recent BBC talk, "try television. The settie is tugged to the centre of the room, facing the screen . . . next morning the apartment looks like a ship's cabin after a storm. . . . One department at Alexandra Palace spends all its time creating beautiful designs for televising; no one has worked out a Design for Viewing."

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