

streets are wide; the manner in which they are lit up at night, and the commodity of the ways made for foot-passengers so that they may be safe from vehicles in the most dangerous thoroughfares are astonishing. There is nothing to compare with it in Europe. It is only in London that such thoroughfares and such superb nightly illumination are to be found, and where so careful an attention is paid to the safety of the public. And all this decoration, and indeed half of the city are not more than twenty years old!

I have already become an adopted Englishman. I drink my tea twice a day, I eat my "tostes" well buttered. I read my Gazette scrupulously every morning and every evening. I have been waiting with impatience for one of those plays to be performed which have obtained universal applause, such as those, for instance, of the "divine" Shakespeare. I have at last been rewarded. Yesterday I read on the playbill (*affiche*), *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. So I said to my sister, who is with me, We must go and see *Hamlet*. We set out, therefore, for Covent Garden.

We had intended to take tickets for the boxes, but there were none left. We tried to get into the first gallery (our *premières loges*), but there were no seats to be had there. I proposed then that we should try the upper gallery, but we were advised not to. There remained the pit. This was also full. I must needs stand, and my sister obtained half a seat at the end of a crowded bench. It was all most brilliant. The house, which is square and partly gray and partly gilded, without harmony of ornament or design, is not imposing in itself. But the crowd of spectators, the quantity of lights, the rapt attention of the coloured crowd, make a striking *ensemble*.

No sooner had we seated ourselves than to my extreme astonishment something fell on to my sister's hat. It turned out to be a piece of orange peel. Here I must mention that an essential part of a lady's *coiffure* in London is a flat round hat, which is a most ingenious device of coquetry. It heightens beauty and diminishes ugliness; it confers grace and play to the features. It is impossible to tell you all the varied effects an Englishwoman can derive from her hat. Curiously enough, the hat is not worn on State occasions, and neither at Court nor at assemblies, nor even in the *premières loges* of the theatre, and its place is taken by French feathers. I was just wondering whence the piece of orange peel had proceeded when I saw a man come from behind the scenes with a large broom in his hand. Knowing that Shakespeare makes use of everything that pertains to human life, I thought that *Hamlet* was going to begin by a sweeping scene. I was mistaken. It was only a servant who was cleaning the front of the stage, which I now noticed was covered with the remains of the feast of oranges and apples which was taking place in the upper gallery. My sister received a small sample on her hat.

At last the play began. Not having the good fortune to understand the English language, I could not follow one word of the dialogue. But I am told that the play gains rather than loses by being translated, though our Anglomaniacs say it is untranslatable. But I have now read the play in M. Letourneur's translation. The play is sheer madness—nay, more, it is the wildest and most extravagant