

DE LA MÊME, AUX MÊMES

1^{er} février (1821).

... What do you think of my going to the play yesterday to see Talma in Hamlet? I was well rewarded by the pleasure of experience for the ennui of leaving home at half-past five and standing in the street waiting for the doors to open. I went with M. Fossard and M. Bertaud. Papa joined us a little later. We had taken three seats in the gallery; I left mine for your father and took a *supplément de balcon*, which put me quite near the stage, and enabled me to admire Talma's wonderful expression of features. I only regretted not to have a neighbour I could communicate to all the delight I experienced.

*M. de Crac*¹ was the *farce*, and I as usual found it very tiresome. After having sighed and shuddered with Hamlet, my mind was not turned to grin at Monrose's monkey tricks and facetious expressions. When the curtain dropped some voices called out for the *vaudeville* which had been omitted at the end. But in vain did the voices gradually rise to whistles and vociferations such as to shake the house. No actor appeared; the noise increased and became absolutely stunning; at last some of the boldest leaped upon the stage. The curtain was drawn up; but instead of actors some guards made their appearance, secured some of the young people and drove back the others with the butts of their guns. At this sight the rest became furious; everything they could lay hold of was flung upon the stage and soon cleared it of guards... however, the impulsion once given was not so easily stopped. When there were no more loose stools at hand in the pit, they broke down the benches, and everything that would give way to the united efforts of their hands and feet... All the lamps were crushed; they even tried to fling stools at the *lustre*... Fearing to be arrested as they went out, they all, in an instant, scaled the boxes, and then began a fresh shower of chairs and stools in the pit. Your father joined me during the bustle and as we were perfectly safe at the farther end of the balcony we stayed to see the end of the riot... It is terrible to see how easily a mob is roused to acts of folly and violence...

Munier has excited Edward to rise a little earlier to go and read Shakespeare with him every morning before breakfast... We have refused plenty of boarders since you left us and I hope we shall not change nor increase our number... Would not fencing be more advantageous to you than the exercise of the gun?... Farewell, my beloved children, I pray Heaven to help and protect you.

1. *M. de Crac en son petit castel*, pièce du répertoire.