THEATRICAL NEWS

William H. Thompson Believes in Being a Good Actor.

Never Wanted to Be a Star and Is One.

COMMENTS ARE SEVERE

Says Factory and Self-Made Stars Are Bad.

He Does Not Like to Monopolize Lime Light.

"There are two kinds of theatrical stars with which the public is afflicted just now. One is the factory made star and the other is the self-made star. They both have much to account for. Both bad."

The speaker was William H. Thompson, who has been an actor all his life, but has persistently refrained from being a star until this season. In years he is now on his third score, and his hair is the next thing to white. For all that, he has no stellar ambitions, and it was almost with regret that he saw his name go up in big letters on the posters as Jouvenel in James K. Hackett's production of "The Secret of Polichinelle." He is a star now despite himself, and an effulgent one at that.

"The country is flooded with stars; we are almost cursed with them," continued the veteran actor, as he disgustedly threw away the butt of a cigarette and then stamped on it to put out the spark. We were having a quiet smoke and talk in his little coop of a dressing room at the Madison Square theater. This was last Wednesday, the very day before the strong arm of the city government saw fit to close the doors of the theater for non-compliance with certain fire regulations. The smoking was "on the quiet," as it was an absolute violation of the rules. That is one of the privileges of being a star. You can smoke in the dressing room and the stage manager dare not object. Any way, it was nearly an hour before the curtain time and the stage manager was not yet on duty.

"These factory made stars are the most prevalent," he went on. "They turn them out by the gross from the dramatic schools. It is like the product of a machine shop. They stamp them out and cut them to order in any size, shape or style you want, just as they cut out trousers in a sweat shop or make watches up in Waterbury.

"It gives the old time actor a gone feeling in the pit of the stomach when he sees this yearly crop of ready made actors while you wait' that is put on the theatrical market."

Mr. Thompson wiped his mouth as though to get rid of a bad taste, lit another cigarette and went on in a strain that would not win him a vote of popularity at the dramatic schools and on theatrical lounging corners.

"This self-made star is an evolution from the variety stage, a slapstick comedian who suddenly finds himself at the head of a company without knowing exactly why or how or what. He is a sad spectacle to a legitimate actor.

"We unmasked a star of this description the other night, or rather he unmasked himself, and it was funny. A number of gentlemen were discussing literature. It was away beyond my depth and so I did nothing but listen. They talked about Greek philosophers, then German poets, and then Emerson came up. As I am a great admirer of Emerson's work, I took a hand in the discussion. Meanwhile the self-made star had joined the party. He fairly ached to get in the conversation, but the names were all unknown to him, and so he sat there with a blank expression until he heard the word Emerson. Then he came at us.

"'There,' said he, 'gentlemen; there's a man I can talk about. I tell you I think Emerson is the finest man that ever blacked his face.'"

Mr. Thompson rubbed his hand over his mouth and laughed with his eyes.

"Has the orchestra come on yet?" he asked of the small dresser. "All right. Brush up that wig a little more and lay out the make-up."

"Why have you never wanted to be a star?" I ventured.

"Perhaps because I have seen so many of them. Seriously, because I don't think so very much of star plays, as they are called. One part plays are more for the glorification of one man than for the entertainment of an audience. I think the ideal play is where a number of actors have leading roles. In 'The Secret of Polichinelle,' you know, Mr. Ferguson has quite as important a part as I have. [Mr. Ferguson played in Topeka in "A Modern Magdalen."] I would not wish it otherwise. I don't want to bathe in the calcium all the time. Give the others a chance to have their eyes dazzled by the spot light. It is too uncomfortable a sensation for me to want to monopolize it."

"Are there no plays that you ever wanted to star in before?"

"Yes, I wanted to play in a dramatization of 'The Spenders,' but I did not want to make a star part of the character. I went to a very prominent manager and told him my idea and also that I could get the $25,000 for the production if necessary. I explained that I did not want to make a star part of Peter. All I wanted was the first ten minutes of the play and he could do what he pleased with the rest of it. I simply wanted to start it, let the audience see the old man when he is told that Jim is dead, and leave a picture in their minds of him starting off to the mountains with his pack on his back and his pick on his shoulder. I am sure it would have appealed to their hearts and made a play that could have been reckoned among the successes. You must touch their hearts to make the play stick in their minds."

"Some stars do not fade," I said. "You mentioned the ease with which many of them passed out of sight. How do they manage it?"

Mr. Thompson lit another cigarette.

"Mainly intellect, of course. Genius will always survive whether its possessor happens to be an actor or not. But outside of that God-given gift actors nourish their talents more carefully than do men in other walks of life. They are more particular about their physical condition than are most people. It is part of an actor's stock in trade to be well and strong and in prime condition. Disease and bad health are his supreme enemies. He knows it and he fights them. That's why you rarely see a sickly actor. I don't doubt that actors are the healthiest class of people in the world, for a healthy body is the only sure support of an active brain.

"I know how much in earnest actors are in this respect, because I went up to Muldoon's last year, when I was a bit run down, to get my nerves and muscles in proper shape again, and there I saw how earnestly the actors took to the physical rejuvenating process.

"Among the patients was a well known star, who had been getting too fat, and who went there to work off 20 or so pounds. It was an awful grind, too. On the weekly day off from exercise this overfat star wanted to take some nice little trip where he could rest. Some one suggested a trip of inspection to the Bloomingdale asylum, which would be interesting and non-exertionary. Four or five of us went along. Our guide from Muldoon's introduced us to a keeper who was anxious to take us on a tour of inspection all over the place. The fat star was enthusiastic and wanted to see everything.

"So we went. We saw nothing but stairs. We went up stairs to the fifth floor, along a hall, down again to the basement, up again to the roof, down again to the cellar, and so on. It lasted for two hours and a half, and it was a hot day.

"We saw nothing of Bloomingdale except stairways, garret storerooms, kitchens, pantries and coal cellars. I don't doubt that we climbed up and down at least ten miles, if it had been spread out flat, but never a crazy person nor an interesting person or thing did we see.

"When at last it was all over the fat star collapsed.

"'Give me,' said he, 'no more days off. For rest I prefer the regular hard day's work at boxing, running and club swinging. I don't care for these restful experiences. They are too wearing.' Nobody but an actor would have stood it without a protest. Actors will endure almost anything if they think it is for their physical welfare."

The callboy stuck his head in the door and bawled: "At the window!"

"All right. That's my cue," and Mr. Thompson vanished down the passageway to the stage.—New York Herald.

The Actor Who Never Wanted to Be a Star but Is One.

William H. Thompson.

PULLS TAFFY OUT OF PIANO

A Texas Girl's Description of Malek's Playing.

She had a familiar looking box in her hand and as she brought out a chocolate and held it between her thumb and forefinger she told of the Malek concert at Dallas last Tuesday evening, says a writer in the Fort Worth Telegram.

"He plays as sweet as that." She held the chocolate a moment, and then it disappeared. "Did you ever hear anybody pull taffy out of a piano? Neither did I until Herr Ottokar Malek played Chopin's Fantasia in F minor. I would not have been at all surprised if he had stopped to dip his hands in flour. Even in the Brahm Rhapsodie he kept the same sweetness of tone no matter how big the chords were, just like a long pull at a big rope of molasses candy.

"Of course I wanted to talk with him and my friends arranged it. But Malek in concert is one man; Malek in the parlor is another. The parlor door opened and introductions began, but I got lost before they were well over. I looked up—considerably up. It was later that I realized how very tall he is—tall and slight. All I saw was a wonderful pair of eyes. I did not know folks were allowed to have eyes like that.

"Once I picked up a little sparrow that a boy's sling shot had brought down to the pavement. The little, soft, feathered thing lay in my hand and the eyes looked into mine. I wake sometimes at night and see again the pleading and suffering of that helpless, wounded, dumb life.

"Malek has those eyes. Where did he get them?

"This was my first thought as the Hungarian-English welcome faltered from a not too loquacious tongue.

"Later I heard the story. Oh, yes, there is a story, a love story such as you read about—a faithless sweetheart, a broken promise, a broken heart. They say he has recovered. The hearts we know always do. But there are his eyes. When Wilbur McDonald came in with Miss Pyle—Miss Pyle has just returned from a lengthy study under Leschetisky—there were many 'ja ja's' and 'nein nein's' between them. I did not know what it was all about, but Malek's eyes smiled and I wondered. I had not thought they could.

"When he turned to me I was too tangled up with myself to know what to say. First I thought of the weather. Then 'How do you like Fort Worth?' popped into my mind, but I pinched myself in time.

"'America is a big country, a very big country.' This in English, and I breathed easier. 'And you Americans are so quick. Everywhere you do things in a rush. Only the trains sometimes go slow. I do not like that.

"'In Chicago, I think I would not like to live there always. I cannot think there well. We Europeans do things more deliberately.' (I am a slow person myself and this pleased me.)

"'In Chicago they even compose music quick. They sell it quick too.' There was a smile with this, but whether the eyes or mouth was responsible I forgot.

"'Ach, this rag time. Americans everywhere want rag time. A crime against music, against all that is best in composition.'

"Nevin has written a rag time song. I was a little timid in saying this.

"'So? I did not know it. Nevin writes good music. Nevin and McDonald I like best of American composers. My favorite composer? Any who writes good music. One man suits one mood. When my mood changes, I want another. The mood selects the composer. Sometimes I play Schumann all day. Sometimes I want Chopin. Then it is Bach or Beethoven, or maybe Strauss—dance music may be good music, but Strauss is best of all.

"'You study the piano? That is good. The piano is the greatest instrument. Practice and study and work all your life and yet you can never say: "I have mastered it." The speed with which the keys may be struck is beyond calculation. Some times I am surprised myself to find how fast my hands move. Its technique is limitless. No artist long remains the undisputed master. Another works harder or thinks better. The unknown of yesterday is the greatest today. The greatest today becomes the unknown of tomorrow. Why? Because the piano has not been mastered and may not be. It is orchestra or voice. It gives forth one tone or all possibilities of tone combination. It is the obedient servant of the brain. That is why it must remain the greatest instrument.

"'The violin has but one voice. That will be what the player gives it. Its technique can be mastered, has been. All masters of that instrument reach one well established and known standard.

"'Technique? The ability to produce tone by the muscles acting under the direction of the brain. You practice certain exercise that your muscles will be able to obey the mind. You strike a false note—your technique is bad. The mind should have ordered differently. Technique is not a muscular matter at all, but a mental one. You must think always first the tone you want to produce.

"'Do not forget the pedal. Its use cannot be taught by rule, but no great mastery of tone can be produced without it. Think your note, and then strive with hands and pedals to express it. The greatest tone, the greatest technique.'

"'I can imagine Malek's brain a honey-comb filled with honey, if he thinks those sweet sounds he gets out of the piano."

And another chocolate disappeared.

Heart

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Dr. Miles' Heart Cure Cured Me.

No matter what's the matter with your heart, it will pay you to try Dr. Miles' Heart Cure. It is a great heart and blood tonic that cures by removing the cause. Try it for a short time and you will find that you are no longer short of breath after brief exertion, that you can sleep in any position with comfort and without the dread of smothering spells. It removes the symptoms and cures the disease. It strengthens the heart's action, enriches the blood and improves the circulation. It has cured heart disease when all else failed. It has brought relief when death seemed nigh.

"Since taking a number of bottles of Dr. Miles' Heart Cure during the past year my health is better than for many years. I no longer experience any trouble from lying on my left side, which disagreeable symptoms used to bother me greatly. The frequent spells of palpitation and fluttering that I was at that time subject to were most alarming. At times my heart would beat so violently that the movement was noticeable through my clothing. Doctors said my heart was enlarged and I had frequent severe shooting pains through and in the region of my heart. I think Dr. Miles' Heart Cure a great medicine and have always been able to secure great relief from its use. I am in good health now, considering that I am 60 years old. I wish you success."—ANDREW JACKSON, Italia, Wash.

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A Simple and Certain Method by Which Chlorosis, a Frequent Affliction of Growing Girls, May Be Overcome.

Every mother knows that the danger line in the development of a girl is crossed at the point where girlhood and womanhood meet. Ills that lurk in the blood then disclose themselves and, if neglected, become seated diseases disturbing all the later life and frequently lead to consumption and the most frightful derangement of the nervous system. This critical point cannot be too closely guarded. Care insures robust health; neglect means living misery.

Mothers of growing girls can profit by the experience of Mrs. E. C. Young, of No. 303 Lynn street, Ithaca, N. Y., who was safely brought through her girlhood's critical period by a simple course of treatment, after physicians had failed to help her.

"When I was seventeen," she says, "I began to fail in health and, in spite of all the medicines our family doctor gave me, I continued to grow worse. Neither he nor another doctor who also attended me seemed to be able to reach the cause of my trouble. It was chlorosis, they said, a form of anaemia with which girls of about that age are often afflicted. I was troubled with shortness of breath, hadn't a bit of color and couldn't go upstairs without being all tired out. My limbs were dreadfully swollen and my appetite entirely gone. I had nervous headaches for which a doctor recommended glasses, but the glasses did not cure them. Each month I suffered a great deal of pain and was very irritable.

"This condition kept growing worse for three years until finally it became intolerable and I began to hunt eagerly for some remedy that could effect a certain cure. Finally I found a friend who said she had been cured of a similar trouble by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, after her case had been pronounced hopeless. Upon her strong recommendation I decided to take this remedy. Relief was almost immediate and after using the pills for a short time I was cured altogether and I have remained perfectly well and strong ever since."

The value of such a remedy is beyond the power of words to express, for it determines the happiness of a lifetime, and it is fortunately within the reach of all who need it. These pills have also cured locomotor ataxia, partial paralysis, St. Vitus' dance, sciatica, neuralgia, rheumatism, nervous headaches, after-effects of the grip, palpitation of the heart, pale and sallow complexions and all forms of weakness in either male or female. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People are sold by all druggists, or will be sent direct from Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Schenectady, N. Y., post-paid on receipt of price, fifty cents per box; six boxes for two dollars and a half.

COMING TO THE THEATERS.

Offerings for the Topeka Playgoers Next Week.

The Guy Stock company, which opens a four nights' engagement at the Crawford Sunday in "Slaves of Russia," with "My Jim" Monday, women's free night, is composed of twenty-two first-class people and is considered to be the best of its class this season. The company carries all the scenery, palms, furniture and properties for the production of high-class dramas and comedies. The vaudeville feature is the Original Five Dollars, a family of comedians and acrobats who were several seasons with the Ringling Bros. circus.

The story of "The Silver Slipper" is the basis of much mirth and melody that tended to make this latest musical comedy by the authors of "Florodora" the most successful and popular musical play produced in New York last season. It played to crowded houses at the Broadway theater for six months, and duplicated this business for eight weeks at Philadelphia and four weeks in Boston. "The Silver Slipper" is booked for an engagement at the Crawford opera house today, matinee and night.

Mr. Julius Cahn will present W. H. Turner in the dramatization of Westcott's widely read book, "David Harum," at the Crawford Thursday. The play is now nearly three years old, and since its production it has had a phenomenal measure of success. Mr. Turner played "David Harum" here last year. So did W. H. Crane, and Turner's playing compares very favorably with Crane's.

The scene of "Mary of Magdala," Paul Heyse's drama in which Mrs. Fiske will appear at the Crawford theater on March 4, is Jerusalem at the time of the rule of the Romans, and much of the spirit that moved both the conquerors and the conquered—the careless permission of the Romans of the religious and domestic habits of the Jews, and the smouldering hatred [illegible] Romans by Israel—is illustrated in the drama.

Theatrical Notes.

"The Chinese Honeymoon" will soon celebrated its one thousandth performance in London.

Owen Hall has written the book for a musical play, called "The Little Cherub," which satirizes the craze for private theatricals.

"The Finishing School" is the title which Max Pembertan has chosen for his new costume play, which is to be produced next month in London.

Willie Collier has made such a substantial hit in Richard Harding Davis' play, "The Doctor," that his contemplated trip to London has been abandoned.

William Brady and George Musgrove, the London manager, have signed contracts whereby "Way Down East" is to have an early production in the English metropolis.

"The Cherry Girl," now running in London, has not turned out to be the success expected and Charles Frohman has relinquished the American rights to the piece.

The theatrical syndicate now includes Klaw and Erlanger and associated interests, Litt and Dingwell and Stair and Havlin. This combination controls nearly 600 theaters.

Hilda Spong, who has been William Faversham's leading lady, returned to London last Wednesday and will be seen in a Frohman production in that city early next month.

Maude Adams has fully regained her health and her season may be extended so that she can appear in San Francisco. Miss Adams has never appeared on the coast as a star.

Mrs. Jane Germon, at one time a very popular actress playing with Booth, Forrest and the elder Hackett, celebrated her eighty-third birthday in Baltimore last Monday.

"Sancy Sally" was given its first performance in America at Boston last Monday night by Charles Hawtrey and company. It is pronounced a good comedy by the Bostonese.

Ellta Proctor Otis is to play Mother Frochard in the coming production in New York of the "Two Orphans," under A. M. Palmer's direction.

The news has recently developed that Charles B. Dickson and Lillian Burkhart, who were married about eight years ago, were divorced by the New York courts about a month ago.

Dick Carle and Robert Bowers have decided to call their latest work, "The Mummy and the Maid." The first production will take place in Chicago in June. Dave Lewis will play the chief role.

Edna Wallace Hopper lost her suit in the British Columbia courts to break the will of Alexander Dunsmuir, claiming a share in the millions left behind, but she will appeal the case to higher courts.

Sandol Milliken, now playing leads with Robert Edeson in "Ransom's Folly," is to be married next month and will retire from the stage. Miss Laura Hope Crews, now with "Merely Mary Ann," taking her place.

Zangwill's play, "The Serio-Comic Governess," which was written for Cecelia Loftus, has been turned over to Daniel Frohman, the latter's manager. The piece is taken from one of Mr. Zangwill's short stories.

David Belasco is said to be so delighted with the success in London of "The Darling of the Gods" that he has instructed his agent there to look about for a suitable theater in which he will make annual productions.

Julia Marlowe has returned from Europe in robust health and will shortly start a spring tour, playing in Shakespeare and possibly "When Knighthood Was in Flower." Tyrone Power has been engaged as her leading man.

Elwyn Barron, who was at one time a dramatic critic in Chicago, but for the past six years has been located in London, will arrive in New York next week to superintend the production of his latest play, "The Ruling Power."

Andrew Mack and an entire American company will go to Australia next year and make a tour of that country. Contracts to this effect were signed in New York during the week by Rich and Harris and J. C. Williamson, the Australian manager.

Origin of Basketball.

Basketball as a recreative game is unique in its origin, for two reasons: Firstly, it is our one, positively sure, home American production; secondly, the name, date and place of its authorship is exactly known. Of no other game in all the category can this be said; the birth of the bulk of them is buried in an obscurity which reaches beyond the cuniform-covered, baked-clay tablets of Babylon, and the hieroglyphics of the remotest Egyptian records.

Basketball, on the other hand, was born in the year 1901, at Springfield, Mass., and its author was James Naismith. The story is short enough to be interesting. In that town is a training school connected with the Young Men's Christian Association, and, of course, professors, among them a professor of psychology, who is paid to teach the young ideas how to think, effectively. In one of his lectures he called attention to certain conditions upon which the brain could with advantage be exercised, and challenged his class to supply the requirements to meet them. The conditions were the invention of a new game which could be played indoors, in a limited area, by a defined and unalterable number of contestants, and adaptable to both sexes. Upon this hypothesis one of his pupils, James Naismith, the same night evolved "basketball." It was put into practice the next day, experimentally, and found to meet the conditions and limitations laid down by the professor admirably. But it had more than an academic value, as its rapid spread as one of our most appreciated pastimes attest.—Sporting News.

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Says David Harum: "Do unto the other fellow as he'd do unto you; but do it first." —DAVID HARUM, Act. I.

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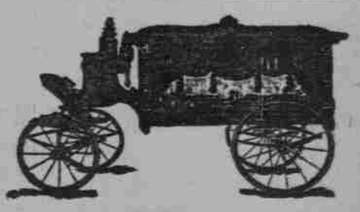

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