PLAYS OF THE WEEK

Tomorrow Night The Ensign in The Powers'.

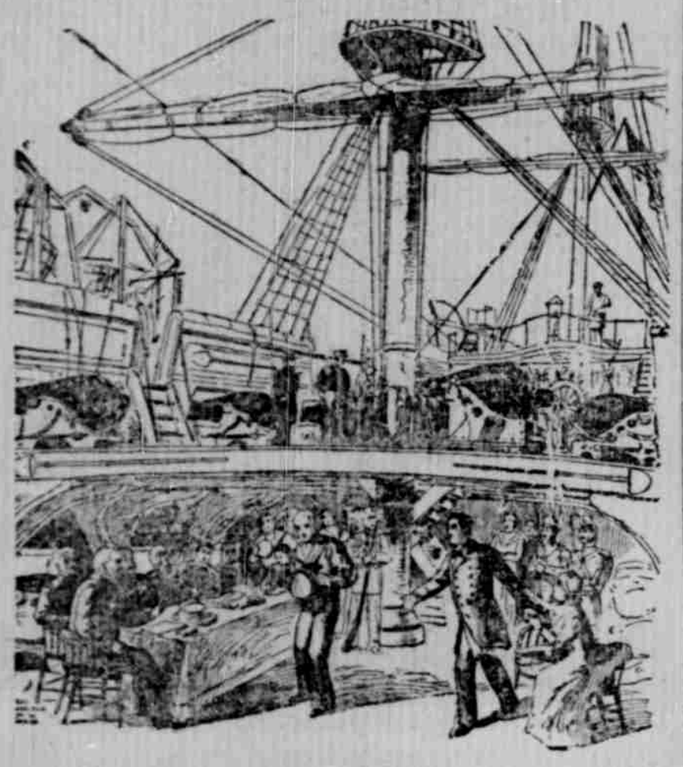
WHITE SLAVE IN THE GRAND

Smith Returns to the Vaudeville. General News and Notes of the Stage.

Playgoers had a surfeit of attractions at the different theatres during the past week. As usual one of the best things of the season, from an artistic standpoint, "The Crust of Society" played to a beggarly audience in The Powers' on Monday evening. Nikita's concert in Lockerby hall on Tuesday was well attended. Wednesday and Thursday evenings the Modjeska company presented The Merchant of Venice and Mary Stuart to fair houses in The Powers'. Friday, Saturday matinee and evening Rhea gave elaborate productions of her new play, The Queen of Sheba, in the same house. At The Grand the Police Patrol played to such business as it deserved, while Sam T. Jack's Old Age and Youth company had good business at Smith's. Appended are this week's advance notices.

The Ensign--Powers'.

"The Ensign," the new naval play which is to be given its first production in this city tomorrow evening in the Powers' opera house, was first tried in Minneapolis by Messrs. Litt and Davis last summer. It was cast with some of our best actors, then belonging to Mr. Litt's stock company, and scored a gratifying success. The intention was to put it on the road if it stood the test. Proving to be a play of remarkable dramatic strength, the owners at once set to work preparing scenery and the necessary and accurate stage effects. The formal production of "The Ensign" occurred in Washington, where there are more naval critics than in any other American city. It met with instant success there and was pronounced a perfect reproduction of naval scenes and incidents by men high in official circles. Since then it has been presented in Chicago, Boston and other cities, and everywhere has been received with enthusiasm. In the navy, Mr. Haworth, the author, has invaded a new field, and one that is full of excellent material for the industrious dramatist. We have many war dramas, but for some reason the navy has until this time escaped the dramatist. The characters in "The Ensign" are said to be clearly and distinctly drawn, the humor rich and unctious, and the general tone sound and healthy. Perhaps, speaking patriotically, the historical diplomatic incident of Mason and Slidell could not have been turned to better account than in a play for the entertainment of the old and the instruction of the young. Surely, that which adds to the public respect of the blue uniform of the American soldier or sailor is a patriotic thing. That which fires the American heart with fresh admiration for the navy of the United States and with renewed love for the union is worthy of praise. For these reasons "The Ensign" will be accepted as a break in the monotony of meaning less plays. But "The Ensign" appeals to the public favor not on patriotic grounds. It is said to be a powerful drama and the company that will produce it is a strong one. The scenery in which it is set is novel, striking and beautiful. There are five great scenes, and every one of them original. Each scene deals with an original subject, and treats that subject in a masterly manner. The grand harbor of Havana, the Cuban villa, the sectional internal view of a man of war, the president's private library, the spar deck of the battleship are splendid subjects for the scene painter. The details of a man of war are presented with lifelike fidelity. In fact, they are actually reproduced from photographs and color studies taken by an artist on board a United States vessel lying at the Brooklyn navy yard. The big guns, the coils of rope, the brasses, the bunting, the officers and men—all are brought out only as conscientious study of life as a competent artist could bring them out. By this sectional view is presented a double scene in the play. The effect is necessarily powerful.



SCENE FROM THE ENSIGN.

MISS SOUTH WRIGHT.

The White Slave--Grand.

"The White Slave," Bartley Campbell's most enduring play, will come to The Grand tonight for one week. Perhaps no play now before the public has been seen and enjoyed by so many people as "The White Slave." When the playwright took for his theme a story of slavery it appealed to the American sympathy that abhors anything approaching enslavement, whether of the mind or body. The skill of the dramatist was further shown by making the principal character of his drama a woman, young and beautiful. It is her trials that are portrayed, her heroism and her suffering that lend to the tale its pathetic and beautiful interest. A play of southern life, depicting southern character, affords the scenic artist wide scope for his brush, and in this piece all the luxuriant and tropical beauties of the sunny south are shown in a series of beautiful scenes carried by this organization. Aside from the scenic beauties of the play the most approved and skillful mechanism known to the mechanic's art is used, culminating in a rain storm of real water, the most realistic and inspiring effect of modern times. The play has been presented continuously for the past twelve years in all the principal cities of the union and each year seems to add to its popularity. This may be accounted for, in a large measure, to the uniformly excellent cast that Manager H. C. Kennedy always carries with him. This season all the old favorites have been retained, and where new members have been secured they have been engaged for their special fitness for their respective parts. The usual matinees will be given.

Riley and Sherley--Lockerby.

Everybody in Grand Rapids will want to hear James Whitcomb Riley and Douglass Sherley Wednesday evening, in Lockerby hall. The Atlanta Constitution, the leading paper of the south, said of them: "Mr. Riley ever grows more charming, and Atlanta was anxious to hear the gifted Mr. Sherley, whose graceful writings long ago made his name familiar. Mr. Sherley is a literary genius from Louisville. He has marked versatility and his part of the entertainment was an ovation. There is an originality about his prose sketches which is charmingly refreshing. One selection which he read, "The Brickyard Master and his Fiddle," has a fanciful turn in the theme, a weird conceit which Poe never excelled. The pathos of it is deeply touching and the tragic ending gives a climax which preserves the unity of the tale. Then there is a Russian sketch, "Vassa," tragic, too, the plot moving vigorously, and at the same time with perfect smoothness, as the drosky flies swiftly over the glistening snow. You see the land of the white czar which the untraveled have learned through Tolstoi. It was thrilling in interest and read with strong effect. In the lighter vein Mr. Sherley gave "The Buzz Saw Girl," one from his collection entitled "The Inner Sisterhood." This is a deliciously droll bit and that it is from life the bubbling laughter attested. Mr. Sherley made a pronounced hit. As a whole, the entertainment was thoroughly artistic and enjoyable." The sale of seats opens in the box office tomorrow morning.

Vaudeville--Smith's.

Manager Smith will return to his vaudeville programs. This week he announces as a leading attraction Dalma's congress of Spanish novelties, consisting of a troupe of pigs, monkeys and ponies. It is represented that the performance given by these animals surpasses anything of the kind ever attempted by any other trainer of brutes. The Dalma sisters will also appear in high ladder balancing and refined acrobatics. The new roster of specialty performers is unusually strong and large. At the head of it is the name of Alice Haynes, direct from the Trocadero in Chicago. Charles and Ruby Knight as the Broadway Dude and Bowery Bum; Mabel Stanley in songs; the Vernon sisters in burlesque ballads; De Lorimer, queen of lyric melody; Howard and Morton, sketch artists; Welch Bros., knockabouts; James Ward and the regular stock company will contribute to a tuneful and entertaining olio. The opening offering will be a racy burlesque, "Harem Secrets," and the closing farce, "Out for Jollity."

General Stage Notes.

Hundreds of cases may be cited of great actors and actresses who began the life before the footlights on the variety stage. Edwin Booth gave his first public performance as an end man and a banjo player in the city of Baltimore. The admission was 12½ cents. And John Sleeper Clark was the end man who played opposite to Booth on that occasion. Not only did many members of the dramatic profession come from the variety stage, but many old actors are returning to it, as it pays them better than the drama.

"As You Like" is to be given at Palmer's on November 3, afternoon, under the auspices of the Professional Woman's league, with a cast culled from its membership exclusively. At the last writing the distribution of characters stands thus: Mme. Janauschek will play the part of the melancholy Jaques. Miss Mary Shaw will be the Orlando; Miss Mary Robson, Touchstone; Mrs. D. P. Bowers in all probability—the Banished Duke; Mrs. Minnie Maddern-Fiske Phebe, and Miss Lotta Crabtree Audrey. The Rosalind has not yet been decided upon, although Rose Coghlan and Mme. Modjeska have been suggested.

Joseph Jefferson's election as president of the Player's club, to succeed Edwin Booth, was generally expected. He represented more than any other actor available for the office those traditions of the American stage which his predecessor embodied. A public meeting of the Players' club will be held at Palmer's theatre on November 13, Edwin Booth's birthday, at which there will be appropriate exercises in commemoration of the dead actor. It has been decided to keep for all time the rooms in the club house in which Mr. Booth died exactly as he left them. The rooms will be shown to visitors on public occasions and will be accessible to members under regulations.

Daniel Frohman's company of comedians from the Lyceum theatre, New York, will play "Americans Abroad" in The Powers' at an early date. It is a gentle comedy in which Georgie Cayvan has made a distinguished hit. She will not appear in the caste selected for the present tour, but her place will be filled by Maud Harrison, a clever actress, who has long played leading parts for Mr. Frohman.

Rehearsals for the great military entertainment, to be given in Lockerby hall November 9, are progressing finely. The drill squad is working every evening. The minstrel first part, the specials and the military fancy dance promise to be first-class. Many novelties will be introduced by Paul Davis, John Brower, Fred Wurzburg, Bert Rice and others.

Pauline Hall's press agent has promulgated the apparently official declaration that the weighty madame is eight pounds lighter than announced a month ago. The avoirdupois of her new opera is not yet determined, but it is believed to be strong enough to sustain her through its three acts.

Paul M. Potter, in a letter to the London Era, refuting Robert Buchanan's charges of plagiarism in the matter of Sheridan, remarks: "Having served my apprenticeship in dramatic criticism, I have no such opinion of Mr. Buchanan's abilities that I should care to borrow his ideas."

The announcement is made in all seriousness that Maurice Barrymore retires from the stage in six weeks' time, and will thereafter engage in the exalting occupation of raising fancy lap-dogs for the 400. If this statement is correct a splendid actor indeed goes to the bow-wows.

The Koh-i-Noor, the operetta which Oscar Hammerstein recently wrote, is shortly to be produced at Koster and Bial's in place of one of the acts of the ballet of Versailles. Ruth Davenport and Charles Renwick have been engaged for the cast.

Fanny Davenport has decided to be an "authoress." The title page will be a lithographic "sight," with her name larger than the title itself. The inside pages are to be filled in by a miserable but bright young man for fifty actual dollars.

James R. Adams, now playnig his second year with "The Country Circus," is going out next season at the head of a company that will play "Bobby Buttons," a combination of farce, specialties and pantomime.

Barney Ferguson will next season be managed by J. Wesley Rosenquest, J. E. Ackerman, advance representative. Mr. Ferguson has two new plays, Duffy's Blunders and McCarthy's Masquerade.

The stage has sustained a great loss in the failure of Miss Lillian Lewis' alleged endeavor to commit suicide. The flare young woman did her best to oblige.

Manager Reeves has engaged to play the adventuress in "Hands Across the Sea," Katharine Roland, a young actress of great beauty and much promise.

Sarah Bernhardt will begin her engagement at the Paris Renaissance in "Les Rois," by Jules Lemaitre, about November 1.

Dolly Nobles has left Charles Dickson's company and rejoined her husband to play her original part in "The Phenix."

E. S. Willard produced Hamlet in Boston last Monday evening to a critical audience and scored an emphatic success.

Agnes Herndon has decided to go out starring again, this time with a new piece from the French of Emile Augier.

Manager John Stetson of Boston has purchased a $100,000 summer residence on the North Shore, Beverly, Mass.

After his engagement here Sol Smith Russell may go to London to play in Mr. Daly's theater there.

Joseph Whiting replaces Louis Aldrich as the Hon. Hannibal Rivers in "The Senator."

Marie Tempest has quit J. M. Hill.

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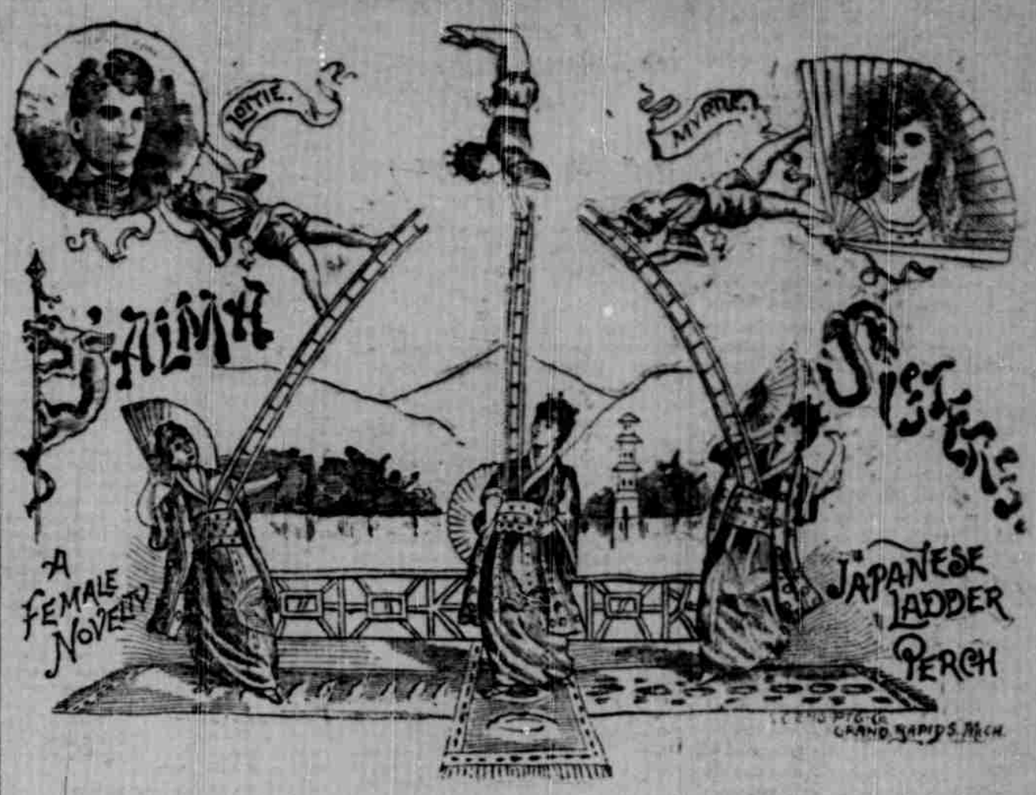

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