

THE FRENCH STAGE

Failure of Much Heralded Plays to Suit Parisian Taste.

Paris, December 15. The Paris theatre season so far, with the exception of a few plays mentioned later, has been a record of "false starts." Grand expectations were aroused by M. Maurice Donnay's "La Patronne," deliciously acted by Mme. Jeanne Granier at the Vaudeville. Brilliant hopes were elicited by M. Paul Bourget's "Emigré," magnificently interpreted by Guitry at the Renaissance. Wild enthusiasm was stirred by M. Bernstein's "Israel," delightfully rendered by Mme. Réjane at the Théâtre Réjane. Sanguine aspirations were aroused in regard to M. Henri Cain's "Révoltes," strongly given at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt. Roseate confidence attended the production at the Opéra Comique of M. Isidore de Lara's lyric drama "Sanga," and, above all, the "dramatic masterpiece of the year" was hailed by eminent critics when M. Octave Mirbeau's "Foyer" was brought out at the Théâtre Français, and acted to perfection by Mme. Bartet and by De Féraudy and Huguenot. Most of these works were written by the foremost dramatists of France. Never has the average excellence of French actors and actresses been on a higher level than that of to-day on the French stage. Nevertheless, none of these plays—barring a certain amount of success of curiosity—has made the genuine paying public "vibrate," nor has any one of them enlisted popular sympathy or hit the Parisian taste.

Take, for instance, M. Octave Mirbeau's "Foyer." It is a brutal, butcherlike buffoonery of French society, French decency and French self-respect. Every personage is a devil incarnate. All the men are hell hounds, and all the women are hell cats. It is not a play, but a menagerie of monsters. A member of the Academy, Senator and Baron of the Empire, teaches the art of blackmailing to Sisters of Mercy, sends his wife to her former lover to obtain \$50,000, and behaves like the most abominable "Apache." The Senator's wife acquiesces in her husband's revolting command, only regretting that in doing so she wounds the "susceptibilities" of her young, smart and passionate admirer, who for the moment happens to captivate her erotic fancy. The "ex-lover," the dishonest, foul mouthed company promoter and gigantic swindler, who disposes of many millions, accepts the proposition of the Senator's wife, and with the complicity of a venal abbé all hands, including the Senator, the Senator's wife, the salacious and absolutely bestial young lover and the depraved millionaire, start off together on a cruise on the latter's yacht for a honeymoon of shameless Byzantine debauchery. Such filth arouses curiosity. The actors and actresses do their work with marvellous skill and effect. The play is both hissed and applauded each night. It is a strange sight to see this libel on French institutions and society produced at the Théâtre Français. If a foreigner were to utter a tenth part of the venomous charges made upon French respectability and French institutions by M. Octave Mirbeau would probably have to quit Paris. It is only fair, however, to point out that M. Jules Claretie, administrator general of the Théâtre Français, after sensational litigation in the law courts was compelled by a judgment of the tribunals to produce the play, because he had made the fatal mistake at the outset of accepting it, although he tried subsequently to stop the rehearsals.

The repulsive characters of "Le Foyer" may have had a share in predisposing the public in favor of "L'oiseau Blessé," the new comedy by M. Alfred Capus, in which the personages are above all sympathetic, with Guitry in the leading part, admirably seconded by Mmes. Mégard and Lavallière. Taken altogether, "L'oiseau Blessé" is the most agreeable, as well as the most successful, play just now in Paris. It is a light and charming comedy, replete with witty dialogue, delicate humor and dainty irony. The title is taken from one of La Fontaine's fables, describing how a little bird, wounded by an arrow, unconsciously supplies its own feathers to direct another arrow against another breast, and the concluding line of which is: "Among the children of Japhet, one-half ever furnish weapons to the other." The "oiseau Blessé" is Yvonne Janson, a young girl of twenty, who has been deceived, under promise of marriage, by a wealthy young Parisian, and has become a mother. We find the girl, her mother and brother, a lad of twenty-one, living together in a modest little apartment on the heights of Montmartre. Mme. Janson is the widow of a government employe, and the family have only scant means of subsistence. The psychological analysis of the situation is disclosed with genuine sentiment and subtle pathos. Yvonne faces life with cheerful courage and confidence.

Instead of weeping and being cast down, she is determined to make her way to independence and to win respect. The visit is announced of her betrayer's cousin and his wife, M. and Mme. Salvère, who have come in behalf of their repudiated relative to offer Yvonne a pension on condition that she consents to quit Paris and live in her native Breton village. Yvonne proudly rejects the offer. Salvère, at first amazed and interested by the girl's pluck and originality, gradually becomes enamored of her. His wife is also attracted by Yvonne's courage and nobility of character. Salvère and his wife married each other purely for love, and their life until now has been supremely happy. Salvère (played by Guitry) is a middle aged man of wealth and literary attainments. His intimate friend is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and, like many persons in actual life in France—such, for instance, as M. Cambon, M. Hanotaux, or M. Jusserand—although not of the "professional diplomatic career," is about to be made an ambassador. Through Salvère's influence Yvonne studies for the stage and becomes a successful actress. During a theatrical entertainment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Salvère, stimulated by jealousy, tells her that she loves her and cannot live without her. The inevitable happens. The wife at last learns the truth. Yvonne sacrifices herself and goes on a dramatic tour, resolved not to break up Salvère's happy home. There is profound humanity in this play, the fascination of which it is impossible to indicate by a mere outline of the story.

"Le Passe-Partout," a comedy in three acts by M. Georges Thurner, is drawing full houses at the Gymnase. It is a well thought out, drastic sarcasm on up-to-date Parisian "yellow journalism." The principal scene is laid in the newspaper office of the "Passe-Partout," and the sly thread of a love tale is deftly drawn out amid stirring events and sensations of newspaper reporting, political combinations and financial graft, which make highly picturesque settings.

"Les Vanquers," a four-act drama by M. Emile Fabre, deals with the seamy side of French political life, and its point of departure has some resemblance to the famous affair of Mme. Humbert, the adventuress. The part of Daygrand, the ambitious lawyer, is splendidly acted by Gémier, and although the play is sombre it is having a popular run at the Théâtre Antoine.

The Théâtre des Arts, under the management of an American woman, Miss Andrews, is having a success with a sixteenth century Flemish story put into a strong, well framed drama, called "Kaetje," by M. Paul Spaak. It is the story of a young painter, Jan, who has brought from Rome to his Flemish home the beautiful Pomona, a model, whom he fancies he loves, but who, soon becoming tired of Northern simplicity, takes flight to Southern climes, while

THE THEATRE



AGNES DE LANCE. Acting at the Bijou in "A Gentleman from Mississippi."



MAXINE ELLIOTT. Miss Elliott will open on Wednesday night the new playhouse bearing her name with a comedy entitled "The Chaperon."



ADRIENNE AUGARDE. Acting in "Peggy Macree" at the Broadway Theatre.

STAGE AFFAIRS

NOVELTIES OF THE WEEK.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT. MAXINE ELLIOTT THEATRE.—Miss Elliott in "The Chaperon."  
THURSDAY NIGHT. GERMAN THEATRE (Irving Place)—"The Blue Mouse."

ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

"The Warrens of Virginia" will be the attraction at this old playhouse for a definite period, beginning to-morrow night. That drama was at the Belasco last season. Frank Keenan is the chief actor in it. During the engagement the usual afternoon performances will be given.

ASTOR THEATRE.

The 15th performance at this theatre of "The Man from Home" occurred last Thursday night. That comedy will round out the season at the Astor. Mr. Hodge is the central figure in it.

BELASCO THEATRE.

"The Devil" will shortly depart from this theatre and will be succeeded by Miss Frances Starr in a play by Eugene Walter, entitled "The Easiest Way."

BIJOU THEATRE.

"A Gentleman from Mississippi" continues to diffuse merriment and at the same time impart a lesson from the stage of the Bijou. It is a clean and entertaining comedy. Mr. Wise's impersonation of the Senator from the South is an enjoyable feature of the presentation. The usual afternoon performances are given.

BROADWAY THEATRE.

Mr. O'Mara will begin to-morrow night the second week of his engagement at the Broadway in "Peggy Macree." Ample notice of that production has appeared in The Tribune. Mr. O'Mara has a fine tenor voice, and his vocal accomplishments are not new to those who attend the theatre. He made a distinct success in "The Highwayman," and there is every indication that he will be equally fortunate in the present vehicle. During the progress of the piece Mr. O'Mara sings a number of Irish melodies that are part and parcel of that country's history. His singing of "The West's Awake," Thomas Davis's stirring appeal to a section of Ireland that appeared to be inactive in its country's cause, finds him at his best.

GARRICK THEATRE.

Jan, no longer under the infatuation of Pomona, weds his first sweetheart, the faithful Kaetje. The Théâtre du Grand Guignol is doing well with a number of bright, mirthful one or two act farces, interspersed with theatrical "thrills." The best play at the Grand Guignol is a clever farce called "Cent Lignes Emues," by M. Charles Torquet, depicting the tribulations of a literary man besieged by the editor of his newspaper, who requires a hundred-line obituary notice, in emotional and laudatory language, concerning the writer's mortal enemy and rival.

GERMAN THEATRE.

"Alt Heideberg" will be revived here to-night. On Thursday night "The Blue Mouse" will be the bill. Miss Hermine Hellman will impersonate the principal character. "Alt Heideberg" will be repeated on Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

LYCEUM THEATRE.

The 15th performance of "Love Watches" at this theatre will occur on January 4. Photographs of Miss Burke will be distributed as souvenirs of the occasion.

MAXINE ELLIOTT THEATRE.

This new playhouse, a description of which appears elsewhere in this paper, will be formally opened on Wednesday night, and Miss Elliott will appear there in a comedy entitled "The Chaperon," made for her by Miss Marion Fairfax. Grant Mitchell, Thomas Thorne, Mrs. Louise Rial, Miss Ida Gilman, William Harrogon and Miss Rene Kelley are in the cast.

NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE.

In order to give the little boys and girls in both parts of the country an opportunity to see "Little

CASINO THEATRE.

Eddie Foy has won another victory, this time in a musical tragedy entitled "Mr. Hamlet of Broadway." Mr. Foy is essentially a clown, and a highly amusing one at that. He finds himself at home, therefore, in his mimicry of Joey Wheeler, "a clown of Bunk Brothers' show." As a variant he gives, in the second act, a burlesque of Hamlet.

CIRCLE THEATRE.

Both Mr. Potter and Mr. Ryley have spoken concerning features of "The Queen of the Moulin Rouge," but neither of them intimated a willingness to use a disinfectant. The curious corner where the Circle is located, and expect to see thrilling novelties there. The usual afternoon performances are given.

CRITERION THEATRE.

Mr. Gillette is in the third month of his engagement at the Criterion Theatre in "Samson." Henri Bernstein has announced that he will visit this country to witness the American production of his drama. Afternoon performances will be given this week on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

DALY'S THEATRE.

The indications are that Mr. Faversham will use "The World and His Wife" throughout the present season. Public interest in that drama is such that Mr. Faversham has decided to defer the presentation of new plays until next season. The usual afternoon performances are given.

EMPIRE THEATRE.

Miss Adams begins on Thursday night the second week of her engagement in Mr. Barrie's comedy of "What Every Woman Knows." There will be afternoon performances on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of this week.

GAIETY THEATRE.

Beginning to-morrow night, "The Traveling Salesman" will enter upon the third month of its prosperous career in this city. It was first presented at the Liberty Theatre, and the public has flocked to it ever since. Frank J. McIntyre is the leading actor in it. Those who have seen his clever performance in that comedy commend it to their friends, and so Mr. McIntyre finds himself a real star without the aid of those devices used to proclaim a "great actor." The usual afternoon performances are given.

GARDEN THEATRE.

Mr. Dixey is enjoying a measure of popularity at the Garden by his simple and effective acting in "Mary Jane's Pa." It is a play particularly attractive at this season. The usual afternoon performances are given each week. There will be an extra performance on New Year's Day.

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LIBERTY THEATRE.

Mr. Thompson's spectacular production of "Via Wireless" is not the least of the popular representations on the local stage. It has prospered from the beginning, and as far as is known it will remain at the Liberty for an indefinite period. The usual afternoon performances are given.

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NEW GERMAN THEATRE.

(Madison avenue and 59th street.) A farcical extravaganza entitled "Robert and Bertram" will be the offering here this week, except Saturday afternoon when "Hannele" will be presented. Beginning Tuesday there will be special afternoon performances, appropriate to the season, for the little ones.

GRAND OPERA HOUSE.

Low Fields in "The Girl Behind the Counter," will be the bill here this week. There will be concerts to-day.

HACKETT THEATRE.

Interest in "Salvation Nell," and in Mrs. Piske's acting in it is still maintained. That drama will, therefore, occupy the stage of the Hackett until further notice. The usual afternoon performances are given.

HUDSON THEATRE.

"Lady Frederick" is enjoying a measure of popularity at this playhouse. There will be afternoon performances this week on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

KNICKERBOCKER THEATRE.

Miss Scheff still occupies this stage, appearing as the mirthful prima donna in the musical piece of that name. Success has attended her efforts from the first. The usual afternoon performances are given.

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LYRIC THEATRE.

"The Blue Mouse" still rules the Lyric stage. More than that need not be said. The usual afternoon performances are given.

MAJESTIC THEATRE.

Because of the popularity of "The Pied Piper," it is announced that that mirthful spectacle will remain at the Majestic indefinitely. Mr. Hopper and dainty Marguerite Clark are the principals in it. There will be afternoon performances this week on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

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NEMO KIAW & ERLANGER

close the engagement at the New Amsterdam Theatre on January 22. The entire production will be taken to the Colonial Theatre, Boston, for a long run. The next attraction at the New Amsterdam will be a musical comedy, entitled "Kitty Grey," that has been long popular in London. Charles Frohman has brought over the original company, headed by George Huntley. Those who wish to see "Little Nemo" are advised to do so during the remaining weeks of the engagement.

NEW YORK THEATRE.

"Miss Innocence" continues here her riotous reign over the multitude that finds diversion in a moving panorama of pretty faces, multi-colored dresses and stage devices that attract and please the eye. Miss Heild's demure picture of innocence on the highway of pleasure is, of course, the important feature of the production. Hereafter there will be afternoon performances on each Wednesday during the engagement.

SAVOY THEATRE.

Cleveland Moffett's drama of "The Battle," now at this theatre, begins its career with the approval of those who sit in judgment. Mr. Lackaye is the chief actor in it. During the engagement at the Savoy the usual afternoon performances will be given.

STUYVESANT THEATRE.

Miss Bates may still be seen here in the drama of "The Fighting Hope." Need more be recorded? She will remain at the Stuyvesant until public interest in that drama begins to wane. The usual afternoon performances are given.

WALLACK'S THEATRE.

"The Boys and Betty" is still visible here. It provides a wholesome entertainment and is especially commendable at this season. The usual afternoon performances are given. Miss Cahill is the chief of the merry-makers.

WEBER'S THEATRE.

Miss Russell will close her engagement here in "The Stronger Sex" on Saturday night. There will be an extra performance on New Year's Day. On the following Monday a comedy by George Broadhurst, entitled "An International Marriage," will be presented. Dicky Bell, Christine Moran and Gertrude Dalton will be in the cast.

WEST END THEATRE.

Lulu Glaser in "Mlle. Mischief," will occupy the stage of the West End Theatre for a week, beginning to-morrow night. There will be the usual afternoon performances.

THE HIPPODROME.

The Hippodrome will end the old year just as it will begin the new, with the most successful entertainment in its history. The productions of this season took a firm hold on public favor at the start. "Sporting Days," with its sporting events and pretty scenes, gives genuine delight. Then there is the circus, the parade, the putting up of the tent and the ring performance, filled with European novelties, including the Musical Elephants. Marceline never was funnier, and in his wake follow a score of clowns in assorted and amusing antics.

A NEW "WIZARD OF OZ" COMING.

L. Frank Baum, author of "The Wizard of Oz," is writing a new "Oz" comedy for Montgomery and Stone. It is to be called "Oma of Oz," and may be used by those clever comedians next season. Manuel Klein will provide the score.

A NEW PLAYHOUSE

Maxine Elliott's Theatre To Be Opened on Wednesday Eve.

The most important theatrical event of the week will occur on Wednesday night when a new playhouse, built by the Shuberts and named for Maxine Elliott, will be formally opened. Miss Elliott herself will dedicate the structure, appearing in a new comedy entitled "The Chaperon," made for her by Miss Marion Fairfax. The new playhouse is situated in West 33rd street, between Sixth avenue and Broadway. It will be built for Miss Elliott, and, as may be seen from the accompanying picture, its official name is

MAXINE ELLIOTT'S THEATRE.

That actress is associated with the Messrs. Shubert in the enterprise, and will be her own manager. It is her purpose to appear there once every season in some novelty. It was designed to be a woman's theatre, the permanent stage home of Miss Elliott and other actresses under the direction of the Shuberts. Julia Marlowe, Nadina and Mary Manning will appear there from time to time. During the regular season new comedies by Clyde Fitch are to be produced at that playhouse. This new temple of the drama was constructed in conformity with the latest laws of the city governing the building of places of amusement. It is a building by itself, externally imposing and rich in its simplicity. It is a low edifice, as it appears facing the street, reaching no higher than the third story of an ordinary city residence. It is fireproof and built of marble, steel and concrete. The floors of the auditorium, the cellar and the balconies are of steel and concrete, as also are the stairways, which are topped with marble. Wood has been used only in panelling the reception room, for the windows, the swinging doors leading to the balcony from the stairways and in the framework for the theatre seats. Swinging glass doors are used in the front of the theatre, but all other exits are closed by steel doors. The only wood used behind the proscenium opening is the stage proper. All the modern devices for public safety have been introduced. The heating plant is outside the building, cut off entirely from any connection with the theatre save by the connecting pipes. Two systems for heating and ventilating are employed. They are known as the direct and indirect systems. Fresh air is drawn in from outside, heated and forced by powerful blowers into the auditorium, and by a system of suction all foul air is exhausted through the roof. In this way those sitting in the second balcony are not distressed by the heat rising from below, which is so often found to be the case in other theatres.

THE SEATING CAPACITY.

The seating capacity of the theatre is about nine hundred. All the chairs are the same, the seats in the second balcony being as comfortable as those on the ground floor. Each seat is twenty-two inches wide. This measurement is several inches wider than the average theatre seat. On the ground floor there are only twelve rows of seats. The balconies have only a few rows each. The first balcony is so low that it might be called a mezzanine, whereas the second balcony is only slightly higher than the regular first balcony in any other theatre. Spectators, therefore, seated in any part of the house are near the stage. The cost of the theatre, including the value of the site it occupies, is estimated to be \$750,000. The decorating was supervised by Miss Elliott. There is an harmonious blending of colors in silks, velvets and satins, and the expensive quality of the materials employed to carry out the effective scheme of interior embellishment is indicative of the actress's fine taste. It was she who suggested a marble capital at Versailles, was her model for the general design of the interior of the theatre, with adaptations necessary to modern ideas. It is said to be the only theatre in the city having a front of pure marble. The finest quality of Dorset marble was employed. Excepting four Corinthian columns and a balustrade running along the entire top of the front, the aspect of the theatre from the street is severely plain. The four columns support the cornice, into which was chiselled the name of the theatre. Surmounting the cornice is the marble balustrade. Nothing will be placed on the marble front to announce the attraction, nor will any part of the structure be defaced with advertising matter.

INTERIOR DECORATIONS.

There is a foyer in the rear of the auditorium and separated from it by stairs. On the left side of the foyer are stairs of white Italian marble leading to the balconies. The second balcony is reached by a separate entrance on the outside. To the left of the foyer are stairs leading to the women's reception and cloak rooms. The lounge room for men is on the right side of the foyer. There are no columns to obstruct the view from any part of the theatre. The columns which support the balcony are placed behind the last row of orchestra seats and form part of the partition which separates the foyer.

THE Foyer.

The interior decorations are in old ivory, old gold and mouse colors. The walls on all sides of the auditorium and in the foyer are panelled in the silk damask. A marble base runs around the foyer. The foyer ceiling is in panels of ornamental relief in old ivory. The ceiling of the auditorium is in panels of velvet curtains separate from the foyer. The ceiling of the balcony is in panels of velvet curtains separate from the auditorium. The dome, ceiling, balcony fronts and fronts of the boxes are of plaster in rose garlands, colored in old ivory color. The entire decorative scheme is in keeping with the period of Louis XVI, the pattern being copied from an old French palace.

THE BALCONIES.

A feature that attracts the eye is the proscenium arch, supported on each side by two fine columns of golden grained Syros marble. The columns cost \$2,500 each. The curtain is of silk velvet. Above the proscenium and extending one-third into the auditorium is a vaulted ceiling with a cornice of rose garlands, the same as the cornice extending around the entire ceiling. Back of the vaulted ceiling is a flat dome. The ceiling and dome are colored in old ivory. Suspended from the dome is a large chandelier of French glass. All the electrical fixtures are of old gold. On each side of the auditorium on the orchestra floor is a large double box separated from the rest of the house by a balustrade of Skyros marble. This arrangement gives four boxes on the lower floor. On each side of the balcony is a single box. The front of each of the old ivory, with garlands of flowers in the decoration. The furniture for the boxes is carried out in Louis XV style. The chairs have old ivory frames with seat coverings of silk broche in floral design. In each of the lower boxes are six chairs, and the upper boxes have eight chairs each.

THE FLOOR.

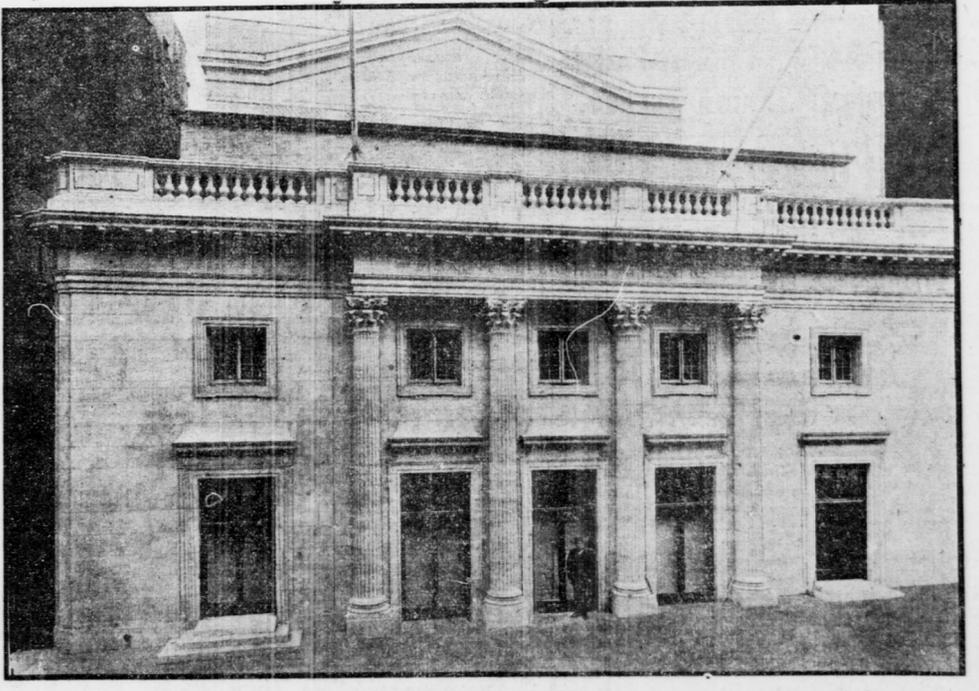
The floor of the entire house is covered with a rich mouse colored velvet carpet, the tone harmonizing with the general color scheme. The orchestra seats and those in the two balconies have frames in old ivory effect, and are covered with silk velvet in the same tone as the velvet drapings. All of the drapings, carpets and silk panellings are fireproofed. Three curtains are used. The asbestos fireproof curtain is in the same tone as the velvet drapings and the drop curtain. The drop curtain will be used after each act, but a third curtain, made of yellow silk damask, of the same material as the side panellings on the walls, will be lowered first at the end of each act. The stage on the passageway on the east side of the theatre. Miss Elliott's dressing room is directly off the stage. Marshall & Fox, of Chicago, were the architects.

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM."

A notable feature of the dramatic and musical attractions of the holidays will be the joint appearance at Carnegie Music Hall next Saturday afternoon of the New York Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Walter Damrosch, and of the Ben Greet Players, in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The Players will give a regular stage performance, and the orchestra will perform all of Mendelssohn's musical setting. Besides Ben Greet's regular company a children's chorus and a children's ballet will take part in the performance. "Ye Spotted Snakes" and "Through the House" will be sung with the full chorus by Grace Clark Kahler. Mrs. Lou Will Moore, with the children's ballet, will interpret the "Spring Song" and "Nocturne."

COARSELY DEFINED.

"What is the distinguishing quality of the problem play?" "It makes you think. The first half keeps you wondering what the question is, and the second half keeps you guessing what the answer."—Washington Star.



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