TOPICS OF THE THEATRES.

There is much reason for pride, and hardly any for shame, in the plays that are on our stages at the beginning of the new year. The general standard of the drama in this city is higher than ever before. Cleanliness is in a larger ratio to the filth; the acting is done by better methods and with no less ability; the acts of scenic representation are brought nearer to perfection; the foulness practiced have been generally reformed until the list of financially respected managers is of good length and the old-time prejudice of circumspect people against theatrical entertainment has well nigh disappeared. A summary of the things to be done at our theatres on Jan. 1, 1894, makes a record in which commendable matter predominates so heavily as to rejoice the hearts of those who contend that the stage is not degenerate. An old comedy, "The Rivals," will be given at the Fourteenth Street, with the *Mrs. Malaprop* of Mrs. John Drew as a focus of the footlights, and probably not much dulness will be seen in the general performance. Mrs. Drew deserves the latish praise that is bestowed upon her as our only conspicuous old-fashioned player of obsolete comedy since John Gilbert died, and nobody who wishes to enjoy the talent of this venerable actress should fail to see this revival of "The Rivals." Nevertheless, we are glad to call attention to the fact that at least three of the modern comedies to be repeated in this town to-morrow are equal to "The Rivals" in quality of composition, besides being in accord with our advanced stagecraft and acted with a uniform excellence unknown to the theatricals of former times. We have reference to "The Councillor's Wife," by Jerome K. Jerome and Eden Phillpotts, at the Empire (where it will be displaced by another piece on Tuesday); "Sweet Lavender," by A. W. Pinero, at the Lyceum (where its successor will be produced a week hence), and "The Professor's Love Story," by J. M. Barrie, at the Garden (where E. S. Willard will soon make a change of play). Here we have examples of comedies that are good literature treated in the most expert manner by the companies and with liberal taste by the managers. If Oscar Wilde's "A Woman of No Importance" be added first (as it is) as a comedy and conceived for its immorality, it still is polished in its performance at the Fifth Avenue, and must be ruled among the artistic things of the day.

French dramatic art will be illustrated at Abbey's by a Parisian company, in which are two distinguished ex-members of the Comédie Française, the senior Coquelin and Jane Hading, and the play chosen for the start of the season is Victorien Sardou's "Thermidor." There will be few faults in these performances, according to the French view of dramatic art, and the opportunity for instructive observation should not be neglected. A liberal range of pieces, from comedy to tragedy, will be performed during the engagement, and M. Coquelin and Mme. Hading will undertake to prove that they can enact serious and comic parts with equal facility. On that point there is bound to be a difference of opinion, but, conceding that they are among the best living representants of the ideas and usages of the Paris stage, we need have no hesitation in admiring at the same time the distinctly American drama that is now before us. Nowhere on earth do playwrights study and reproduce native character more skilfully, and nowhere is the acting of typical personages more adept. "Shore Acres," at Daly's, contains a group of New Englanders so well written and acted that they do not seem at all like mimicry. James A. Herne is fretted by the exposure of the fact that the story, principal characters, and chief episodes in that play, the whole authorship of which he had claimed, are substantially the same as those of James B. Murdoch's "Lighthouse Cliffs," and his lack of candor has proved a misfortune to his talent; nevertheless, his cleverness in eccentric delineation, in his own play and in those acted under his guidance by others, does not fall short of genius. "Old Lavender," at Harrigan's, with all its crudity and clumsiness, contains in *Lavender* the most artistic character ever written and acted by Edward Harrigan, and one that we need not hesitate to see followed in merit by the side of anything created by M. Sardou or interpreted by M. Coquelin. "A Temperance Town," at the Madison Square, is unpleasant in its ridicule of religion and temperance, but it is racy in Charles H. Hoyt's richest vein with Vermont-ers who are the lineal descendants of Mr. Hoyt's lovery adventurer in another piece—"say such things and do such things" as are the truth exaggerated only with the latitude allowed to a popular humorist. Mr. Hoyt is a farcical Dickens, and we are proud of his work. "A Temperance Town" has only two more weeks before giving way to renewals of other Hoyt plays; and "Old Lavender," too, is very soon to be put aside in favor of other Harrigan works. In Old Kentucky," at the Academy, is strong evidence that Messrs. Tim Murphy and Ben Teal know how to write and put on the stage a drama simple enough to be effective with the gallery and at the same time irresistibly interesting enough to entertain the parquet. Here again, we get the American playwright's faculty of characterization, for several of the Kentuckians are truly typical, the humor has the scent of blue grass, and the prankish negro boys are made much of without rendering them obnoxious. Graphic portrayal is strong, too, in Clay M. Greene and Joseph Brickner's "The New South," already reviewed fully in THE SUN and now to be given at the People's in the Bowery for a week.

In the making of fun on the stage we Yankees won't take off our hats to any foreign folks whomsoever. It is true that we take comic plays from across the ocean without prejudice, as witness "Charley's Aunt" and its continued prosperity at the Standard; but we are the inventors and appreciators of a jovial kind of entertainment, the variety farce, which at the beginning of 1894 has some first-rate examples to speak of. Do these combinations of vaudeville and play reflect unfavorably upon the condition of our theatricals? We think not. They serve without any indecency, and without much that is vulgar, to satisfy a demand for thoughtless entertainment, and thus occupy with usefulness a field that in London is left to music hall grotesques and in Paris is hasty with polluting farces and boulevard shows. "A Country Sport," at the Bijou, with Peter F. Dailey, Max Irwin, and Ada Lewis to render J. J. McNally's flowery dentions, is choke full of comedy, and, as we progress along this year, we will be others, because instead of resisting innovation, we welcome it. The English will not take their farce, travesty, and vaudeville mixed, but we swallow such concoctions with a smack of the lips when they are as amusing as "A Country Sport in Africa," at the Star, we have different ingredients mingled, the negro minstrelsy of George Thatcher and some of his companions being the largest component, but with sufficient farce, variety, and spectacle to make the show almost defy classification. A new blend of minstrelsy and other things comes to the Harlem Columbia in the form of "Monte Carlo," performed by a company in which George Wilson and the German brothers, well-known as blackened comedians, appear with clean faces. "Monte Carlo" is said to have, besides a big assortment of laughable matter, a great deal in the way of novelty and surprises. Still another comic affair, the already familiarized "The Bluffer," is the week's presentment at the Grand Opera House, where its illustration of the rapid ways of an American boomer are sure to be taken very mirthfully. Even in German we have a local farce in "The Corner Grocer," at the Germania. "1492," at Palmer's, is a still different composite, with a glamour of ballet and burlesque over it, a big vaudeville entertainment ensoubled in it, a disrespectful treatment of the discovery of America by way of travesty, and an uncommonly clever lot of comedians of the antic sort.

All the comic opera with which we begin the year is of American make. J. Cheever Goodwin's "Panjandrum" goes to the Harlem Opera House, with De Wolf Hopper and Della Fox to make the most of its highly eccentric humor from the pantomimic encounter with the tiger to the singing of topical songs. They are a powerful pair at that sort of thing, and Harlem gets the production in all the integrity of its last season's summer's Broadway representation. The Bostonians keep on with Smith and De Koven's "Robin Hood" at the Broadway, but are ready to perform two other native musical pieces as soon as their public shall have had enough of the current one. The company is now in its fifth week. Willard Brian Purse, and Harrison's "The Princess Bonine" remains at the casino, with Lillian Russell as melodious and beautiful as ever, and with a handsome embellishment of the scenes.

Interesting ventures were made in other cities last week with new American plays. Charles Frohman drew forth from his supplies a comedy by Henry Guy Carleton, entitled "The Butterflies," assigned its chief role to John Drew, and made the test in Boston with what appears to be a positive success. It presents Mr. Drew in the guise of a gay and thoughtless, yet engaging man of fashion, the central figure in light scenes of humor and sentiment, but not so dominant as to shut out Maude Adams and Henry Jewett from opportunities to distinguish themselves. We shall have "The Butterflies" in New York by and by. Charles H. Hoyt had his latest work acted during the week in Buffalo. "A Milk White Flag" was deemed by Cleveland and Buffalo critics of sufficient merit to be taken to Boston, but not for instant consideration, and so it is, because the flight and for instance its use of a supposed service as a means of rampant fun, it will be remembered that Dion Boucicault had a "wake" for a supposedly dead man in "The Shaughraun," and Edward Harrigan in one of his pieces fooled with a funeral; so it may be that Mr. Hoyt, too, has escaped the dangers that attend attempts at mortuary merriment. His pretended corpse revives, is laid out for burial with military honors, while his wife flirts with the soldiery and other frivolous things go on, until the man gets out of the coffin. The whole force of the performances seem to be divided in judgment as to whether that part of "A Milk White Flag" is funnier than it is shocking; but there is plenty of time for the author to amend his work before it comes to town, if he chooses to. No doubt is expressed of the success of the piece in other respects. "About Town," an English version by Harry Fulton of the German farce called "The Corner Grocer," was tried in Chicago by Russell's Comedians, whose purposes of song, dance, and foolery it seems to have served well. It has a shred of a plot, an abundance of laughable incidents, and plenty of spots for vaudeville. This, too, is coming to the metropolis.

New Year's Day should be one of big audiences at the theatres and other resorts of public amusement. Extra performances will be given in the afternoon. The general attractiveness of the entertainments, the absence of any great event in outdoor amusements, the lapse of the old-time practice of social calls, and, above all, the growing modishness of going to the theatre on this holiday, can hardly fail to result in filled playhouses to-morrow.

Sydney Grundy is lucky in having the week all to himself, for he provides the only new play for the attention of those in quest of dramatic novelty. He is further fortunate in getting his work on the stage of the Empire, for there it is sure to be acted finely before a keenly intelligent audience. This London dramatist's "Sowing the Wind" will displace "The Councillor's Wife" on Tuesday evening. It has already been judged and accepted in London as a good achievement in stage literature. The playwrights of that city have taken to writing with avowed moral purposes, but at the same time they do not lose sight of the fact that to succeed a play must entertain, and Mr. Grundy always keeps his eye on the main chance of interesting and diverting his audiences. "Sowing the Wind" indicates by its title that somebody deservedly reaps a whirlwind, and the lesson he professes to teach is that early indiscretion is apt to lead to late sorrow. But the author appears to have let the moral lesson merely underlie his work, which is devoted mainly to pleasantly human motives, engaging natural characters, and a moving domestic story. There is a sweet, gentle, and honorable girl for Viola Allen to enact, and an unaccustomed guise for Henry Miller, for it is that of the old gentleman who sowed the wind in his youth and encounters the resultant storm in his age. That wonderfully versatile actor, W. H. Thompson, has a role, and so have Cyril Scott, W. H. Crompton, William Farren, Mary Nelson, and Agnes Miller. "Sowing the Wind" has already gained London's verdict of approval, and surely it will be presented powerfully to its New York jury.

Brooklyn has a contrast between two American dramas, one being almost wholly intellectual and the other as preponderatingly materialistic, though both aim to hit the audience's heart. They are Bronson Howard's "Aristocracy," performed as finely at the Columbia as it was during its long season at Palmer's, and Leander Richardson's "Under the City Lamps," given by a suitably forcible company at the Bijou. In the Howard comedy the opposition of American wealth and European breeding are shown in unusual conditions, and the theme is treated in the author's more careful manner. The Richardson work is a realistic melodrama of the popular calibre, good in its class, and an entertainment for the multitude.

Our scenic shows glitter and sparkle in three theatres. Hardly one of them is a home product, for even "America," though put together here by Bolossy Kiralfy, is largely English in its scenery, most of its dancers are imported, and its singers are foreign. It fills the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House with resplendent sights on the off days of the opera. "The Voyage of Suzette" at the American is a transfer from the French, though the rearrangement of the music and the English wording were done in this city. It has a various and crowded quantity of elements, consisting of ballet, melodrama, pantomime, farce, and spectacle, a good proportion of which is effectual as holiday entertainment, and there is more talent in the company than the play knows what to do with. The work of improving the text is going on. The third spectacular performance is in Germania as in words, but in universal language as to what it exhibits, for it consists of "The Pupil in Magic" at Niblo's by the Liliputians for this week only.

While America is willing to accept theatricals from England there is no tit for tat in the matter, and our drama is scorned in London contumely. The latest news concerning Augustin Daly's theatre in Leicester square is that he will abandon it at once and come home with his company. The failure of the Daly farce in London caused no surprise among shrewd observers, but it was a surprise to them when the Englishmen rejected utterly Mr. Daly's artistically ornamental production of Tennyson's "The Foresters." It is true that the acting, aside from that which Ada Rehan did as *Maid Marian*, was no more than mediocre, but the embellishment was fine, and patriotic pride in their poet laureate should have impelled the Britishers to at least go to see the performance. "The reason for the failure," said an expert to a SUN reporter, "is that Daly was an American. He had brought Miss Rehan to them, and her beauty and her art had captured their fancy as an American wonder—just as Buffalo Bill and Joaquin Miller had done—but when it came to a manager from New York opening a permanent theatre in London and proposing to establish himself in a playhouse alongside of Irving, why, it was preposterous, don't you know! That was the view taken of it by the newspaper critics and by the intelligent theatregoing public. They are hide-bound in conservative prejudices over there, and Daly couldn't break down the barriers." Another well-informed man said: "I believe it was against Daly's own will that he went to London at all. Here was the situation: He had allowed Miss Rehan to grow bigger than all else in his business. She had been built up in fashionable popularity at the same time that the rest of the company had steadily diminished in value in public regard. James Lewis is an extremely good comedian within his limits, and Mrs. Gilbert is highly respected, but no other member of the company is worth a cent in attractiveness. Indeed, the Daly company is no longer thought of as a complete organization, but merely as a support to Miss Rehan. Well, naturally, she received many offers from managers, who were willing to 'star' her. Responsible parties were willing to assure to her the same salary she was receiving from Daly and a good slice of the prospective profits besides. The example of the recession of her companion, John Drew, was before her. She was in a position to dictate terms to Daly, and she did it, you may be sure. She stipulated a London season and a tour of this country, and the manager had to accede or let her go. He chose the former alternative, and so the London venture ensued, with a 'starring' tour of America to follow next autumn. The London part of the scheme has resulted in disaster, but I predict success for the American part, which is to begin about ten months hence."

THE SUN told lately of the ludicrous failure of a dramatic scene in Cleveland through the balking of a stereopticon employed therein. The play which suffered this accident was Elmer E. Vance's "Patent Applied For," but as produced in New York last week, that very episode in the drama proved one of its most novel features. The theme is the familiar one which includes a theft of papers, with a forgery accompaniment. Its story has progressed to the point where the validity of the papers in question is being determined before a United States court. The chief witness for the prosecution is an expert handler of the stereopticon, and he gains permission from the Court to have the room darkened. Then a genuine signature to the disputed one are thrown upon a canvas and magnified till each signature is six feet long. The expert then points out that the length and breadth of corresponding letters in each signature are the same, the width of each entire name is exactly alike, and so positively pronounces the disputed signature a forgery. Then the defendant's attorney withdraws from the case, and everything ends happily for hero and heroine. Before this two scenes are enacted on shipboard. The first shows the amidships portion of the vessel's deck, broadside to the audience. In the storm which terminates the scene, an attempt is made to imitate the rolling of a ship amid heavy waves. To do this a loose flooring above the stage is required, and to this are fastened deck houses, smokestacks, mast-stubs, etc. The rocking motion is attained by lifting the rear of this floor two or three feet by invisible means, and letting it rise and fall as if impelled by the ocean's billows. The edge of the deck next the footlights remains motionless. The play's story has the endangered boat saved with all hands aboard, but the counterfeit rocking has so jarred its upper structure that they swar and wriggle in a way suggestive of anything but getting ashore in good order, and a gaping seam three inches in width opens and closes in the ship's side, consistent with each rise of the deck. Incidental to the moment when the deck has lifted to the highest point an ice so steeply slanted that the hero is compelled to pull himself over it hand over hand by a rope, a noise is introduced. Those who have heard it will recall it as the loudest stage whistle of record. Whether meant for escaping steam, shriek of wind, or signal for aid is not apparent. But a noise it is beside which the ear-splitting factory whistle of act one is insignificant, and which would put to shame the loudest "Cyrene" calliope extant. Another boat scene possessing novelty and startling effectiveness comes in the use of the panorama at the rear of the stage which is passed along in a manner made familiar in horse-race scenes before. First the vessel appears to be passing a lighthouse, then comes a more distant stretch of beach and a bit of Arcadian shore. These are followed by straggling buildings and boats, which grow thicker and nearer at hand, and not till the observer's head fairly swims does the dock appear, which is the destination of the mimic craft. But relief for dizzy heads is had when the hawser is thrown ashore and the boat stopped. Few melodramas have more novelty of incident and mechanism than "Patent Applied For," and not a very little additional care in handling the latter would produce far better results.

The museums and other wonder shows are sure to be crowded to-morrow. The dime palace of Huber has Lalo, with an extra set of arms and legs to prove that nature had a notion to make two of him; Pauline Nana, the girl who goes into a cage of lions and makes them do her bidding; George, known as the Turtle Boy; some albinos, trained birds, and a general filling up of the exhibition halls, while the theatre has a numerous company of specialists. Doris's Museum has the kangaroo boxer, Big Frank, in bouts with a human pugilist bearing the same name, Morello's dog circus is another feature at this show house, and there is a Wild West exhibition of Indians, sharpshooters, and so on. Doris has a dramatic company to play "A Happy New Year," and a specialty company to give a variety show. Santa Claus in wax remains at the Eden Musée, and confectionery will be given away to-morrow. The stage show at the Eden is maintained spiritedly. Hagenbeck's trained animals at Tattersalls are, of course, favorite holiday sights for the children as well as grown folks, and it is a really marvellous exhibition of human courage and brute savagery. The World's Fair is continued in full size and diversity at the Grand Central Palace.

Vaudeville starts its year under full headway. Much has been done to popularize this style of amusement in the direction of good repute by the "continuous" shows at the Union Square and Proctor's. The outcome of these enterprises was at first doubtful. Success lay alone in convincing women that they might go to these theatres without any shyness, and the difficulty was entirely overcome, so that the assemblages now are remarkable for refinement. Much of this result is due to cleanliness on the stage. The acts may sometimes be brilliant or dull, but none of them is immodest, and most of them are excellent. Of course, to-morrow's holiday will send multitudes to these houses. The programme at Union Square includes a burlesque opera, "The Pirates of Penzance," and a long vaudeville show employing Lizzie Richmond, W. T. Bryant, Luciani Tattalli, A. O. Duncan, the Murray Brothers, Frank Burt, Tepack and Steele, Irvini, Del Toledeni and Rice, the Brilliant Quartet, Al Great, and others. The Proctor entertainment is given by the Delmeirs, Belle Black, Press Eldridge, Elsie Adair, Drummond Staley, Bello Birbeck, the American Macs, Bellac and Acuda, John Ray, May Sherwood, Jessie Ashton, William Rave, Ada Henry, the Judges, Moyrice and Goodrich, Mamie Kine, Crane brothers, Dorothy Parkes, William Castellett, Lizzie Hall, Crawford brothers, the Solars, George Klein, Caron brothers, R. H. Dockrill, and Nellie Seymour.

The theatres of Tony Pastor and Herrmann are places of varieties after the usual manner, with more latitude in them than is permitted at Keith's or Proctor's, yet conducted with no traffic in drinks, and nothing else to keep polite folks away. Our one spacious and beautiful music hall, perhaps the finest in the world, is Koster & Bial's. The week's company at Pastor's consists of Hélène Mora, Juniort Valaures, John W. Kelly, Billy Carter, Lucier and Archmere, Hector and Louraine, Meehan and Raymond, John and Nellie McCarthy, Davis and Jerome, Lillian Bell, Ward and Vokes, C. M. Hill's company at Herrmann's presents about as wide a variety as could well be assembled, the dancing of Bertoto being a feature, with the acrobatic feats of the Nelson sisters in close rivalry for first favor. This theatre will be devoted to vaudeville for some time to come, with weekly changes of actors. The Koster & Bial programme mentions Lottat and Foden, the Zannetta troupe, O'Brien and Redding, and Jessica as additions to the company, and the retention of Wood and Shepard, the Kinkerettes, Brothers, Quality and Neumann, Sabel, and Bessie Bellwood, who came here with an extraordinary London prestige. Indeed, for the past ten years she has been, perhaps, the most talked of variety singer in England, and the talk has not been so much about her artistic merits as her eccentricities and pugilistic exploits in the gay life that hovers about the big London music halls. There was great curiosity to see her last Monday night and an unusually large audience assembled to greet her. Her success was immediate, and she won it not so much to her vocal gifts or to any extraordinary display of figure, as to her unique personality and a certain self-confidence which seems to say to the audience, "Well, you and I will get to know one another pretty soon, and then we'll be all right." In other words, Miss Bellwood possesses the rare ability to take her audience completely into her confidence, in which respect she reminds us strongly of Maggie Cline. Indeed the English music hall may be described as a sort of cockney counterpart of our own Irish variety stage. In Gotham there is always room in this country for people with a sense of humor and an ability to express it, and although we do not understand Miss Bellwood's act with the "penny dreadful" any more than we understood the songs of Yaquinette, nevertheless we do appreciate both women because they are funny. It is pleasant to note the fact that an odd and novel form of talent succeeds with New York audiences much better than did the row of shining teeth and the massive, silk-clad limbs which were the chief artistic recommendations of Harriett Vernon.

Those who dwell near the lower end of the Bowery find in their own neighborhood as large a variety of entertainment as do those who live within a stone's throw of upper Broadway. The Jewish theatres, three in number, are doing remarkably well this season, and have recently attracted the attention of a great many Gentiles, who find much entertainment in their representations of Shakespearean and classic Hebrew dramas. The appearance of the audiences which fills these theatres would seem to give the lie to the stories current about hard times and destitution among the Russian and Polish Jews of the east side. The Chinese theatre, in which many of the most ancient of stage traditions are religiously preserved, is the scene of another class of playgoers. Curiously enough, a good many Americans visit this theatre and find much amusement in watching performances of which they do not understand a single word. Dozer street rialto gossip declares that Young Hyson, the popular female impersonator, has been engaged by Manager Hickox for the rest of the season, and that old Pop Gong, the veteran property man, will have his benefit some time during the period of the Chinese new year celebrations. There are other places of entertainment in the neighborhood which complain more bitterly of the hard times than do those already mentioned, but which, nevertheless, offer to their visitors more artistic shows than they did in former years. The reason of this is that several actors of fairly good repute have been compelled through misfortune to seek engagements in dime museums and concert saloons, and experienced playgoers are often surprised to recognize in such places faces with which they have been familiar in up-town playhouses. The Atlantic Garden, a place that has always enjoyed a good reputation as the resort of respectable germans, frequently welcomes entertainers of the kind that have seen better days, and in this manner contrives to give a show that is surprisingly good when one takes into account the fact that no admission is charged.

A professional humorist said: "Suppose the comic papers were to appear week after week with the same jokes in them, what would the public have to say about it, and how long would they continue to sell for ten cents apiece? Well, in my opinion it is about time for the people on the variety stage to take a tumble to themselves and pretend that they are comic papers, even if they don't change their jokes oftener than once a month. One of the principal reasons for the success of J. W. Kelly is the fact that he is not unmoved himself as well as his entertainer, and that he writes the jokes which he delivers every evening, and is, moreover, continually writing new ones. I have known that man to have new matter ready every night for six nights running, and that's what I was sorry to notice the other evening that he was not only taking up too much time on the stage, but getting off a lot of his old stuff. However, he is a thousand miles ahead of any of the others. There's Chas. Lindrige doing the sort of funny business that might be expected from certain children in a nursery, and I admit that he's been doing it for as many years as I can remember. When it comes to a man appearing on the stage dressed as no human being was ever known to dress, and getting off such remarks as 'I put my wife down on the floor' as an inmate of mine, I am led to ask in all seriousness, have audiences any rights that variety people are bound to respect? Then there are Wood and Shepard, who are really clever men, but have been doing the same old act ever since my childhood. Harry Kernell used the same jokes so many years that I'm sure they must have had a meeting to do with his insanity, and as for Ella Wagner, whom I have not seen for a long while, I am positive that if she were to loom up on the local stage to-morrow, it would be either in her style of the Captain or else to sing her favorite song which extols the virtues of some particular brand of cigarettes. I've noticed another thing about these people, and that is that when one of them has been so successful on the variety stage that he can blossom out as the star of a farce-comedy, he never does anything or says anything that he hasn't been known to do and say a thousand times before, and when you go to see him in his farce-comedy, it makes you think that some playwright has sold him a quantity of farce-comedy material in the form of so much mush in which the artist's songs, dances, jokes, or other specialties are carefully embedded. Ward and Vokes are coming out in a piece of their own, and I sincerely hope that they won't do the same old business they've been doing at Pastor's. The real trouble is that when they're not acting, these variety actors never do anything to improve themselves. Did you ever hear of one of them spending his afternoons in a public library or going about taking notes of funny things which he could introduce into his specialties? I know one of them who used to do that sort of thing not very long ago, but he's not in the variety business any longer. His name is Francis Wilson."

Ibsen's "Ghosts" will be acted at the Berkeley Lyceum on Friday afternoon by Mary Shaw and others. "Our Country Cousins," the comedy written by Paul Potter for the Lyceum will be produced on Jan. 8. Edward A. Dithmar and Augustus Thomas are under contract to the Lyceum for comedies that are nearly done. A. M. Palmer's stock company began a long season in San Francisco last week with "Lady Windermere's Fan." Other pieces, new and old, are to follow. The cat that smiles on us from the billboards of the town, in the interest of "Charley's Aunt," has nothing else to do with that farce than to direct attention to its fun; but the feline grin of the creature is so striking that her value in the exploitation of the current play at the Standard is very great. The hundredth performance of "Charley's Aunt" brought souvenirs to the audience, and they consisted of statuettes of the mirthful cat, but whether they were meant to honor the cat itself or the play that the cat laughs at is an open question. Daniel Bandmann proposes to return to the stage. Clara Morris's husband, Mr. Harriott, has become an actor in her company. Frederick Warde took the poor debtor's oath in Boston, Charlotte Tiffany has sprained her ankle, William H. Morton has been removed from Bloomingdale to a Pennsylvania asylum. The laugh of the rialto is on Harry Wright, a young actor who gave up a good part in "Old Lavender" rather than crop his pretty hair. A Neumann and Adolf Philipp have prepared the libretto of an opera named "Cleopatra" and Lillian Russell has agreed to produce it some time during the year 1894. The music is by Ludwig Englaender, a composer of whom but little has been heard of late years, though an opera by Englaender, a composer of whom but little has been heard of late years, though an opera by Englaender, entitled "Die Jüdin," was produced in this city a few years ago. Mme. Modjeska will be seen in Boston next week in a revival of Sardou's "Fedora," and Mme. Bernhardt will produce Sardou's "Thermidor" in Paris next month. Sardou's "Dante" will be produced in London next spring, with Mme. Bernhardt in the title role. Mme. Bernhardt will also produce in Paris next spring a play by Jean Richepin, called "Nana," based on Zola's novel of that name. Mme. Bernhardt will be seen in London next spring in a revival of Victorien Sardou's "Cyprienne." Mme. Bernhardt will also produce in Paris next spring a play by Jean Richepin, called "Nana," based on Zola's novel of that name. Mme. Bernhardt will be seen in London next spring in a revival of Victorien Sardou's "Cyprienne." Mme. Bernhardt will also produce in Paris next spring a play by Jean Richepin, called "Nana," based on Zola's novel of that name. Mme. Bernhardt will be seen in London next spring in a revival of Victorien Sardou's "Cyprienne."

POEMS WORTH READING.

The Printer.

Poor artists, who preserve the arts,
Who toil through weary nights and days
With tired eyes and heavy hearts;
No poet sings the printer's praise.

To them, the years no glory bring,
They walk not in the path of fame;
But uncomplaining sit and sing
The praises of another's name.

And me they much have helped along,
And doubtless after I am dead
They'll print my name and spell it wrong,
And part it with a period.

OF WASHAN.

In the Temple of Wisdom.

From the Athenæum.

"Give me thy dreams," she said; and I,
With empty hands and very poor,
Watched my fair flowery visions die
Upon the temple's marble floor.

"Give joy," she cried. I let joy go,
I saw with cold unclouded eyes
The crimson of the sunset glow
Across the disenchanted skies.

"Give me thy youth," she said. I gave;
And, sudden clouded, died the sun,
And on the green mound of a grave
Fell the slow raindrops, one by one.

"Give love," she cried; I gave that too,
"Give beauty." Beauty sighed and fled,
For what, on earth, should beauty do
When love, who was her life, was dead?

She took the balm of innocent tears
To hise upon her altar coal;
She took the hopes of all my years,
And at the last she took my soul.

With heart made empty of delight,
And hands that held no more fair things,
I questioned her: "What shall requite
The savor of my offerings?"

"The gods," she said, "with generous hand
Give guerdon for thy gifts of cost:
Wisdom is thine to understand
The worth of all that thou hast lost."

E. NESBIT.

The Last Buccaneer.

From Macmillan's Magazine.

The winds were yelling, the waves were swelling,
The sky was black and drear,
When the crew with eyes of flame brought the ship
Without a name
Alongside the last Buccaneer.

"Whence dies your sloop full sail before so fierce a gale,
When all others drive bare on the lee?
Say, come ye from the Main of Honduras or Tony Salvador,
Or the gulf of the rich Caribbees?"

"From a shore no search hath found, from a gulf no line can sound,
Without rudder or needle we steer;
Above, below, our bark dis the sea fowl and the shark,
As we fly by the last Buccaneer.

"To-night shall be heard on the rocks of Cape de Verde
A loud crash and a louder roar;
And to-morrow shall the deep, with a heavy meaning, sweep
The corpses and wreck to the shore."

The stately ship of Clyde securely now may ride
In the breath of the citron shades;
And Severn's towering mast securely now flies fast
Through the sea of the balmy Trades.

From St. Jago's wealthy port, from Havana's royal fort,
The seaman goes forth without fear;
For since that stormy night not a mortal hath had sight
Of the flag of the last Buccaneer.

LORD MACAULAY.

Not Called.

From the Tacoma News Ewe.

He may be a scholar familiar with books,
In person a model, unrivaled for looks,
An orator, too, like the great Mr. Pudd,
But that, to our notion, is not quite enough;
In language decided the truth must be told,
We think, for our parish, he's rather too old.

For aught that we hear of, he may be a saint,
And none of his errors makes any complaint;
He knows all the canons and rubrics by heart,
And off to the needy will blessings impart;
But he isn't the shepherd we want at our fold,
We think, for this parish, he's rather too old.

Did you ever learn that experience tells,
And work by a master for full twelve sells?
You make a mistake when that man you pass by,
And say, when inquired of the reason and why,
In language emphatic "The truth must be told,
We think, for our parish, he's rather too old."

O what shall we do when our pastors get gray,
And cannot quite compass the world in a day?
I know nothing else save devoutly to pray
That such may be called to some region away
Where angels invite to the City of Gold,
And none will refuse them for being too old.

Abou Ben Advertiser.

From Printers' Ink.

Abou Ben Advertiser, nervy man,
Awoke one night to study o'er his plan;
When, lo! a vision lighted all his room,
Making it rich as Golconda in bloom,
And he saw outlined in the presence there
The face of a once haughty millionaire,
Who, ere he had put on his money freely gave,
For many years was wont to advertise
In the San Francisco *Examiner*.

The vision now wrote in a book of gold,
Exceeding nerve had made Ben Abou bold,
And to the advertiser's ghost he said,
"Still writest thou?" The spirit raised its head,
And answered, with a look which banished jest,
"The names of advertisers wealth hath blessed."
"And is mine one?" asked eagerly Ben Abou:

With a frown came the answer: "Nay, not so"
Then Abou spoke more low, as who would serve,
Because the presence really broke his nerve.
But either still, and said: "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one of those illfated men
Who never let up, O vision truly wise,
After they once begin to advertise
In the *Examiner* of San Francisco."

The vision wrote and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom mighty wealth had blessed,
And lo! Abou Ad's name led all the rest.

And he is still in the *Examiner*.

The Schoolgirl.

From the London Queen.

Her smooth head bending low,
She pores with eager joys,
Dark eyes and cheek aglow,
Over the old tale of Troy.
Dear heart and innocent soul!
There may the growing years,
As thy quick spring tides roll,
Bring joy, not tears.

For thee let knowledge spread
History a tented page,
Quaint thoughts of sages dead,
The poet's noble rage,
Gains patient science gives,
And lettered fancies tine.
The master music that lives,
Deathless, divine.

For thee let music wake
Deep inarticulate chords
Which the rapt soul can take
Swifter than any words
Art's gorgeous gardens, gate
Through gates enwreathed with flowers,
And fairy dreams begulle
Thy blameless hours.

But may no learning dim
Those clear, regarding eyes;
Still let the morning hymn
And orisons arise.
Leave knowledge which the mind,
And not the heart can move,
Still, girl, thy treasure find
In faith and love.

LEWIS MORRIS.

A Very Busy Woman.

From the Hudson Gazette.

She pronounced in sounding platitude
Her universal gratitude,
For men of every clime and zone,
From the tropics to the poles;
She felt a consanguinity,
A sisterly affinity,
A kind of family skinkinity,
For all these foreign souls.

For Caledonian Highlanders,
For brutal south sea Islanders,
For wet and moist and dry landers,
For Gentile, Greek, and Jew;
For Finns and for Siberians,
For Arabs and Algerians,
For Terra del Fuegians,
She was in a constant stew.

O, it worried Miss Sophronia
Lest the isles of Patagonia
Should die with the pneumonia,
With the phthisic or the chills.
Yes, indeed, she worried daily,
Lest a cough or cold should waylay
Some poor soudanese of Malay,
Dying for the lack of pills.

And she toiled on without measure,
And with most unstinted pleasure,
For the good of Central Asia,
And the pagan people there.
But meanwhile her little sister
Died of a neglected blister,
But sophronia hardly missed her,
For she had no time to spare.

Shall Women Smoke?

From Tid-Bits.

Shall woman smoke? Why should she not, if she is minded to?
Why shouldn't woman do the things that lordly man may do?
He makes her stand on tramway cars, a clinging to a strap,
If an though she step upon his foot, or tumble in his lap.
She is forced into politics; she practices at law,
She's taken up the surgeon's work with lancet and with saw.
Some play at football, so we're told, and there are also
When on their safety bicycles the Rozens do hum
Man makes her do a thousand things that once were
If she assumes his duties, pray, why not his pleasures, too?
She wears his collars, and her clothes are cut quite as he are.
If she be mannish in her dress, why not have her cigar?
And furthermore, man has encroached on woman's sphere of sale,
He's taken on dressmaking at a truly wondrous rate,
And some men's coats for ladies fit pretty best the Dorcas set of tight.
To this encroach, and yield no jot, most surely is not right.
Of course it will not be pleasant, just at first, to see Minette,
Like any fellow, puffing at a horrid cigarette;
Nor will the sight be of a strongly pleasurable type
When first we see our daughters lighting up their evening pipe.
But men get used to all things, be it soon or be it late,
And this, like other problems, must fulfil its settled fate.
'Tis very safe to prophesy the time is not so far
When women all will smoke who live beyond their first sight.

QUESTIONS BY SUN READERS.

A friend writes this interesting letter:

"For the information of Mr. J. A. Stuyvesant, I beg to inform him that at least one member of his family was engaged in 'trade' thirty years ago. I refer to that Mr. Stuyvesant (I think his first name was Peter) who with my grandfather, Francis Salmon, were members of the champagne firm of —— —— & Co. In the corner of the labels used thirty years ago the names 'Stuyvesant & Salmon' appeared. F. S. Q."

Here is a good story about the tailor's goose, when it has a double:

"A learned writer says that the plural of goose, a tailor's iron, is gooses, and has the following to say relative thereto: 'The plural of goose, the bird, is geese; but the plural of goose, the tailor's smoothing iron, is gooses. A merchant, who wished to order two of these irons, wrote: 'Send me two tailor's geese.' Then he scratched this out, and not daring to venture on the solution of the problem, changed his order to read, 'Send me a tailor's goose. P. S.—I want two, so you may send me another.' C. W. B."

We still stick to what those prominent tailors said. They told us that when they started in business they bought a sufficient number of geese.

1. Can you point me out the article and clause in the Constitution that empowers Congress to legislate upon what shall or shall not be a legal tender in payment of debts? 2. Is not this power, by the Constitution, vested alone in the States, restricted, however, to silver and gold, or certificates or notes, representing these? 3. If by any possibility Congress does away with silver as a legal tender, will that in any way affect the power of Virginia, Missouri, Colorado, and any other State declaring silver dollars, as at present coined, and fractional parts thereof, to be a legal tender in payment of all debts, contracts, and liabilities by their respective citizens, or of establishing banks with notes of issue, representing and circulating as legal tender, based upon silver, as it is not the present national tax upon issue of State banks clearly unconstitutional? Has any test case ever been submitted to the supreme Court to test this question? 5. Is not the power of Congress constitutionally restricted to the simple mechanical branch of coining gold and silver, and fixing the relative value thereof? 6. Have we the right to claim, that owing to the fact of decreased production, the purchasing power of gold has increased and not that the purchasing power of silver decreased, and hence demand, if a change be made, that silver shall remain as at present and the quantity of gold decreased in proportion to its purchasing power? 7. What is the necessity now more than for the past century for us to regulate our coinage by European standards? SUBSCRIBER.

1. The right is claimed under paragraph 5, section 8, of Article 1, and paragraph 1, section 10, Article 1. 2. Not according to the decisions of the courts; by the last quoted paragraph States are forbidden to "coin money, emit bills of credit, make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts." 3. We think not. They could make silver legal tender within their own boundaries. 4. We do not know of any case decided by the Supreme Court on the point you make. We think the tax is constitutional; Congress has power "to lay and collect taxes * * * uniform throughout the United States." 5. We think not. It has certain powers, and further powers to make laws for enforcing the first powers; we think that it has acted, in the matter of silver, wholly within its constitutional rights. 6. You have a right to claim this; but the facts don't bear out your claim. The day's labor of an unskilled laborer is taken as the ultimate measure of value; and, measuring by this, it is found that the purchasing power of silver has decreased, and that of gold has increased slightly. 7. It has never been legally necessary for us to do so; but now that the means of communication are so much better than ever before, it is more than ever a commercial necessity for us to have a coinage that will be current everywhere. Gold is so current; silver