NEW THEATRICAL THINGS.

THE NELL GWYNNE CHAIR REACHES VAUDEVILLE.

Fitzsimmons as an Actor in "The Honest Blacksmith" Crowded. Practised by a Musical Quartet. A Legal Play by Laurence Hanscom Among Foreign Productions.

King Charles II. and the old-fashioned expletive used in "Nell Gwynne" at Keith's last week. The chief episode of the brief play is the one wherein Nell masquerades as a street messenger. She has been seen in an opulent and handsome gown, and next is the main sentiment of the period. She has caught the sovereign's promise to respect her honor, and her wheedling from him a significant moment to set up her Prime Minister. Now she is in a hurry to get about the royal business. For there's fun to be had out of it and it includes one matter in which she has a certain interest. She orders him to set a little house for her father. He hesitates. Then she tells him he is not use to receiving orders and simplifies why when her commands are ignored impertinently. Then he has to place another hair for her before going in something the table. This he does readily, for he now is enchanted by her whim, and he draws back a little to see the next development of the whim. She demands that he give her his chair as a chair. His protests are vain, and he yields to her.

He is a full sovereign, and he knows he throws taller than the seat of the chair. So he stands away up to his knee, down into the hall, then up to the table. Upon there she protests that several substitutes be tendered, that several rival actresses be dismissed, that a journalist be killed off and that the young Duke of Richmond be saved. This last is the object of her masquerading. For she has heard the Duke's mother plead for her life. Robert Griffin Morris is the author of this first Nell Gwynne play. It is wonderfully and fabulously naughty. It is not, however, a performance for the most part, most of her sentiments being disguised in her longing at being a king. In her reading she utterly she is full of brogue and lilting, but these characteristics mark only a small portion of her speech. Eva Randolph and Elsie Payne are satisfactory assistants. The setting is tolerably elaborate and complete, and the costumes of all three players are handsomely in keeping with the rest.

William Gill has much to answer for. He wrote "The Honest Blacksmith," in which Fitzsimmons is appearing at the Star, and he put among his interpreters an industrious male quartet. An even worse point in his indictment is that he doesn't turn the slugger loose among these singers until after they have finished their specialties. One chap plays two cornets at once, a more terrible example of vice than the subversive habits of smoking cigarettes and signing other men's names to commercial paper. Another member of the quartet fastens the end of a slide trombone to the sole of his shoe and works its slide by extending or drawing up his leg. He escapes prompt punishment, and so no moral is pointed by the serious penalties given to the villain, a swindler, cutthroat and gambler, who seems by comparison of childlike innocence. The atrocities of these four men are worst when they sing, which they are permitted to do, though a previous scene of a smithy has shown that hammers suitable for missiles are plentiful, and with a horse in sight that kicked hard about so small a matter as the application to his hoof of a red-hot shoe. Not long after the assault on song Fitzsimmons attacks the vocalists. They are found with satisfactory thoroughness, but it is all too late. Their immediate extermination in full view of the audience and without net or spot light, is the only means by which a lesson can be conveyed. That oversight seems all the more heinous because of the behavior of another character who has all the earmarks of the vocalist, she is one of two comic sweethearts, and, with her companion, is preparing for the vaudeville stage. She is brilliant of complexion and violent of gesture. Her skirt begins a long way above her ankles and her bodice stops shockingly short of her throat. Her voice is husky and she directs her remarks at the gallery, employing salary emphases without much regard for what she has to say. Yet she doesn't sing. William Gill isn't such a bad sort after all.

In a blacksmith shop Fitzsimmons puts a leather apron over his neatly creased trousers, makes a horseshoe and nails it to the hoof of a live horse. Before the first fall of the curtain he knocks down and drags out a villain. In the second act his speech again is far less convincing than his swatting of a punching bag and an extremely fat opponent in a boxing bout. He drops blows and ditches in about equal numbers. What he has to say is said with far greater apparent effort than is expended on gymnastic exercises. His last blow at the bag breaks the cord from which it swings and sends it straight across the theatre into the balcony. His staff at his opponent said that worthy to fear that his nose is bleeding, and that is the sole expression of interest in the proceedings that he evinces. In a third act the fighter pretends drunkenness, reeling exaggeratively and sitting down to talk in mandlin heroics. It is at the end of this act that he comes before the curtain, and in schoolboy fashion recites a well-worded piece. In the last act he is on the eve of a fight, which is shown in motion pictures. Except for the time given to horseshoeing, boxing and exercising, he seems not to be enjoying himself. His wife is his companion at times. Her figure is of the ample sort that usually calls out remarks from unruly gallery gods. At the sound of them the fighter falters in his speech and glances in unfriendly fashion at the offenders. The wife whispers to him, and he recovers enough to go on. The son of the couple is named in the playbill but does not appear. "I guess he's takin' tea with Mrs. Gerry," is the explanation the father offers.

Following the revival of Nell Gwynne as a stage character, a similar rush to another old-time actress, Peg Woffington, seems likely. In this case a fine old comedy, "Masks and Faces," by Charles Reade and Tom Taylor, will be used generally. Maude Adams spoke a year ago of an intention to appear in this play, though no date for its reappearance has been set. Marie Tempest, who was one of London's recent Nell Gwynnes, is preparing to use "Masks and Faces." Winifred Emery, an English favorite, is also studying the rôle of Peg Woffington. "Masks and Faces" was produced originally at the Haymarket in 1852, with Mr Stirling as Peg, and Mr and Mrs. Leigh Murray and Benjamin Webster in the cast. Twenty-three years later, Squire and Lady Bancroft acted the fiddler and Peg at the Prince of Wales with Ellen Terry, Charles Coghlan and Maggie Brennan.

Henry V. Esmond, whose "When We Were Twenty-one" is again before us, has started on a romantic comedy for Lewis Waller. A. W. Pinero's long-looked-for "comedy of manners" will be produced by Arthur Bourchier in April. Cecil Raleigh has finished a drama called "The Queen of Society," in which he has fitted the leading rôle to the talents of his wife.

Lotte Gulbert, who has recovered from a breakdown, says she will never return to America. In that case she will not lost a great star even though Miss Gulbert is identified with music halls only.

The queen's death will have a blighting effect on London theatricals. Beerbohm Tree's revival of "Twelfth Night," scheduled for Jan. 31, will undoubtedly be postponed. George Alexander was to have produced Haddon Chambers's latest comedy, "The Awakening," to-night at the St. James, but he will wait for a week or so. Mrs Patrick Campbell, who have celebrated the anniversary of her marriage to Mr. and Mrs Beerbohm Tree, will "rest" to-night, but that must be a real "rest" to-night.

Lady Troubridge and B. C. Stephenson are writing a society drama for Lily Langtry, to be called, rather cheap, title of "A Great Lady." It will probably be charged before the production in London. Jane Norman was a soloist of the London cast of "Sweet Nell of Old Drury," at the same time that Ada Rehan was singularly disabled as the knickerbocker in "Sheridan," an English actor, by Brander Matthews. "May Blossom" is doing well in Chicago.

Beerbohm Tree breaks her silence in the matter of her theatre. These are the things she recently said in a speech in Hull: "To save the theatre, the theatre must be destroyed, and its actors must be turned to the Greeks, and play in the open air, and make it impossible. We must go back to the Greeks, and play in the open air, and make it impossible. We must go back to the Greeks, and play in the open air, and make it impossible. We must go back