



THE Washington theaters have come through what are regarded as the worst two weeks of the regular season in a highly satisfactory manner. Most of them did a good business during the dreaded week before Christmas, and the past week their patronage has been large, or at least fair. The Christmas shopping had far less effect on the local playhouses than it seems to have had in other cities, and has had in Washington in other seasons. And yet there was no falling off in the Christmas trade, which shows the companies and productions at the theaters during this holiday season were so attractive they induced people to hurry through their Christmas in the stores in order to have time to go to the theaters. The imposing presentation of "The Prince of India" at the National the past week was witnessed by audiences that grew steadily in size from Monday night forward, with the exception of the Christmas matinee, which was not well attended, for reasons that are rather mysterious. The play is of the very sort that is supposed to appeal to holiday audiences—picturesque, full of action, and of lofty interest. Puzzling, and therefore rather unsatisfactory as Dr. Conan Doyle's "Brigadier Gerard" was, the clever acting of Kyrle Bellew and his associates attracted good houses to the Columbia. "Brigadier Gerard" will be shelved by Mr. Bellew, no doubt permanently, in a few days. It has not been a success, owing to a lack of clearness and distinction in its construction. The holiday desire for music combined with fun also gave the Belasco a reasonable patronage the past week, and "The Rose of the Alhambra" seemed to give a moderate amount of pleasure despite its very obvious defects.

After playing rather evasively through two columns of the ornate Christmas number of the Dramatic News with the problem of "How to get rid of bad actors," Mr. Frank J. Wilstach seems to conclude that you can't. He is consistent enough in the long deferred but persistent hopes of the public not to say this in so many cruel words. But plainly that's how he feels about it after taking a hop-skip-and-jump glance down the line of possible solutions of the problem offered in times past by divers and sundry geniuses who preceded him in making a feat at tackling it. He briefly recounts how some have suggested banishment, others, the guillotine; still others, more unfeeling yet, the rack and spiked barrel. But he points out that none of these will do, owing to the fact that we don't happen to be living in fifteenth-century Spain. Then he reverts to the suggestion of a French physician, based on Diderot's theory of acting, that if you could inoculate bad actors with the idea that they must imagine themselves actually to be the characters they represent, and cast them for tuberculous or bughouse roles, the trick would be turned. They would go into a decline, and put off for Arizona or get bats in their bellies and be sent to the most convenient sanitarium. But Mr. Wilstach admits this ingenious and delicate suggestion is hardly within the realms of the practical, and owns up to that so far as he is concerned he doesn't know the answer, and doesn't expect ever to guess it or otherwise find it out. He covers his retreat by undertaking to demolish the Diderot theory of acting, on which the French physician's scheme was based, insisting that the actor should not endeavor to imagine himself really and truly the character he represents. But the burning problem of how to get rid of bad actors Mr. Wilstach leaves just as far from solution as ever.

Some recent events in the stage world suggest a possible solution of the problem by means of the inoculation scheme more humanely applied. There can be little doubt that all actors have somewhere concealed in the convolutions of their brains the germ of an idea that they can write plays. Large numbers of people who have never had closer connection with the theater than to file futile applications for deadhead tickets are troubled with this idea. That it pervades the gray matter of most members of the profession is indicated by the frequency with which actors burst into playwrighting. Of late several good actors of our own stage have written bad plays, while a few bad actors have written good ones. The people who are anxious to rid the stage of the bad actors may find right here the true way of accomplishing their beneficent purposes. Let them craftily and assiduously instill into the minds of the bad actors the idea that they can write plays—or, rather, let them stimulate to the point where they set about realizing themselves such ideas presumably already present in the minds of the bad actors. No doubt, in a very large number of cases, the bad actors will turn out plays or musical comedies or comic operas good enough to secure production. It is hardly conceivable that any considerable number of them will evolve worse pieces than some that have been thought worthy of production by experienced managers of late. A success story of this kind stamped on the minds of the bad actors into playwrighting, and there you are. The problem will be solved to the general satisfaction, and no cruelty will be involved in the process. Mr. Wilstach ought to give serious thought to this suggestion.

Come to think of it, who are the bad actors, anyway? Who is to settle this important point, which, of course, must be settled before a step can be taken in the reform Mr. Wilstach proposes but fails to help along? The critics can't be trusted to pick out the bad actors. If half a hundred of them were gathered together for that purpose the meeting would break up in a riot. A noted critic not long ago decorated several pages of a magazine with specimens of his finest literary work in an effort to prove that one of the most popular and famous "stars" of the American dramatic skies was the worst actor in the world. The actors themselves would make a worse job of it than the critics, if they were asked to pick out the unmistakably bad ones from their ranks, for they would

be incapacitated by personal feelings as well as by untrained eyes and original poorness of judgment. Of course if there is no feasible method of deciding who the bad actors are, it will be impossible to eliminate them. The public must get along as best it may, taking the bad with the good. One thing is certain, the bad actors of to-day are vastly more endurable than the bad actors of the "good old school" who insisted on murdering Shakespeare and the other great dramatists in the most solemnly, stilted, and ceremoniously barbarous manner. Most of our contemporaneous bad ones run to frivolity, and are never oppressive, even if they are aggravating.

It will be news to many people who don't keep close track of theatrical affairs, that Chicago has had an endowed theater since October last. It will continue to enjoy the distinction for at least three years, the endowment being assured for that period, it is said. Although the experiment has been a target for frequent jibes, and all sorts of false rumors have been circulated about its management, it has been conducted so far to the apparent satisfaction of its subscribers or endowors, of whom there are now about a thousand. Its director is Mr. Victor Mapes. The house is called the New Theater, and its backers hope to make it the center of a dramatic renaissance in the West. Each play put on is given a run of two weeks without regard to box office receipts. Only plays of real worth dramatically and having high literary qualities are presented. Of the five plays so far produced, the most successful, from the box-office standpoint, was a melodrama, then a comedy. "So far as I have been able to judge," says Director Mapes, in speaking of this aspect of the experiment, "their relative merits in the eyes of the subscribers were exactly the reverse of the box-office verdict throughout the list. The judgment of the critics was so greatly mixed, on the whole, as to make any deduction impossible." This Chicago experiment for the betterment of the stage seems so sensible and practical that it may be hoped real good will come of it. If Chicago does not develop into a theatrical center, it will be entirely its own fault, to begin with, because it lacks the art sense and enterprise. The New Theater may be the beginning of the work of making Chicago a new theatrical metropolis, a rival of New York, which is plainly becoming unable to meet the enormous demands of the entire country for high-class performances. We should have a new theatrical base in the United States. We are bound to have it sooner or later. It would be a good thing for our amusement world in a business and probably in an artistic way. It would decentralize the great theatrical industry, to begin with, a most desirable economic achievement, and it would bring into action on the art side new forces that might be expected to produce salutary and agreeable results in the way of diversification of the tone and character of our stage productions of all classes. There is very little doubt most of the troubles from which theatrical people have suffered of late have been due to the narrow centralization of the sources of production. There are not enough independent minds now at work, and the managers, on the stage, guided by their own intelligence, experience, and taste in selecting and producing plays. MAURICE SPLAIN.

THE POSTER THREATENED.
As befits the press agent of so frivolous a person as Eddie Foy, Mr. G. R. Atkinson is a radiant optimist mostly. But on one subject he is inclined to take the role of Jeremiah and play it with Nethersole intensity just now. This is the outlook for the brilliant and many-headed posters of imposing stars and stunning chorus ladies that once glorified the billboards, but have of late almost disappeared. Mr. Atkinson mournfully explained their disappearance yesterday. "It's all due to the strike of the lithographers in New York and other cities," he said, with the slight vibrato of a manly pathos in his voice. "The strike has played havoc with managers. It began early in the theatrical season, and not how many producers were caught without any pictured sheets to herald the coming of their attractions. Scores of managers had given in their printing orders to various lithographing houses, all details of the work had been completed, and it was up to the press, when the printers walked out. Consequently the lithographing houses were and now are in a very chaotic state, and unless conditions change the billboards throughout the country will soon take on a vacant stare. It's an ill wind that does not blow some one good. If the strike continues the newspapers will be a harvest. Money that has heretofore been spent for coloring matter for the big fences will eventually find its way into the newspaper office. There is some 'block' matter, printed sheets, pasted about here and there, of course, but the reds and the blues and the greens have been sadly wanting."

Mr. Atkinson said this as if announcing the death of a friend. Plainly, reds and blues and greens are dear to his heart. "Much emphasis has been placed on billboard advertising in recent years," he resumed after a bit. "But I think that more attention will be given to newspaper advertising hereafter. "For the circus the billboards offer an excellent medium for advertising. Being spectacular, an excellent impression of a circus may be made upon the billboard. Men go to a circus to see; they go to a theater to hear." We speak of the "spectators" under a canvas and the "audience" in a theater. The circus ring offers a series of passing pictures, and these may be reproduced with considerable effect upon the fence. But how are you going to convey the subtle lines of "The Shulamite" and the novel situations of "The Music Master" to a theater-going mind upon the billboard? "I believe," Mr. Atkinson continued, "the popularity of musical comedy, of extravagance, and pantomime is responsible for the emphasis theatrical managers have been placing upon billboard advertising. The chorus girl with her big picture hat, offers a good subject for the billboard, and an array of chorus girls, sextets, and what not, in variegated costumes, make a pleasing picture."

Notes of the stage. At one time it was the intention of Nixon & Zimmerman to star Viola Allen and H. B. Irving jointly, but this purpose has been abandoned. One small oyster, no doubt surcharged with malevolent pompanos, has put on the sick list Mlle. Kirkby Lunn, contralto of the Metropolitan Opera House. John Drew doesn't know just when, but he is confident he will play Shakespearean parts again some time. He says he would feel quite unhappy if he thought he wasn't. It is said that no less than fifty American variety actors are stranded at different towns along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railroad between Winnipeg and Victoria. Vaudeville is to be further enriched by accessions from the nobility. The Baroness Litta von Elsnor is soon to appear in a new and odd act, assisted by Pilar Morin, the Spanish dancer. The dramatization of "The Spoilers," already tried out in Chicago, will be produced under the Frohman direction at Baltimore, on January 28. Ralph Stuart will be the leading man of the company. "The operatic phenomenon of the day is the fact that the worse the opera, from a musical and esthetic point of view, the larger the crowds it draws," says a freespoken observer of things musical in New York. Rose Stahl has taken her pen in hand during times of playing "The Chorus Lady" and dropped a few lines to Mrs. Russell Sage, asking the latter to please send about \$100.00 to the actors' home on Staten Island. After the public ceases to clamor for Wilton Lackaye in his own dramatization of "Les Miserables," he will go back to repertoire, presenting "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," "Jack Cade," and the Salvini version of "The Outlaw."

Freddie Annie Dirksen, one of the brightest stars of the German stage, made her New York debut Thursday night in a farce called "How Men Are Chained." She showed herself to be an actress of great vivacity and charm. In private life she is the Baroness Hammerstein. Aubrey Boucault, who has for years steadily frowned on marriage as a mere fad, went off quietly to Elizabeth N. J., one day recently with Ruth Holt, and when they got back to Broadway they were man and wife. Boucault is about to join the Jefferson company and take a leading part in "Playing the Game."

John Philip Sousa has written an article full of withering sarcasm on "canned music," as music produced by mechanical means is called. He ironically gives a cast of "Paust" of the future, in which Mlle. Columbia Cylinder is down for the role of Marguerite and M. Duplex Two-Horn Phonograph appears as Mephisto. Notwithstanding the triteness of its name, "The Maid and the Mimic," produced at Springfield, Mass., Friday night, it is said to have turned out to be one of the most entertaining musical comedies of the season. The libretto and the fun are described as particularly original. Dorothy Russell, Doris Goodwin, Will C. Mandeville, and George Ober are in the cast. Louis Harrison may possibly pause and reflect hereafter before "calling down" a chorus girl right before the face and eyes of a large audience. He called one down in a loud voice at St. Louis Thursday night, and was paralyzed when the girl, Isabelle Meyers, stepped from the chorus into the footlights and told the audience that if they knew Louis as well as she did they would hiss instead of applauding him. Then the girl quit the theater. Oscar Hammerstein announced in New York Friday that, although Melba was only bringing with her half a million dollars' worth of diamonds, he would have two special policemen at the pier to meet her when she landed from the Caropla and escort her to the Manhattan Opera house, where she might stop away her sparklers in the strong box with opera director sleeve buttons and vest buttons. Hammerstein is anxious that Melba shall have all the diamonds she brought with her to wear when she appears in "La Traviata."

By the time Mr. E. H. Sothern has produced and got in smooth acting order the repertory of 14 plays which he is now accumulating, he will have ready for his permanent occupancy a new professional home on Forty-sixth street, New York, to be called Booth's Theater. Myer R. Bimberg, who makes a specialty of theater construction, will build the new house and expect to have it ready for Mr. Sothern's occupancy by the beginning of 1908. The site cost \$350,000, and the same amount will be spent upon the structure. Old-timers in New York will be glad to see the name of Booth restored to the theater list of the city. No doubt the extreme modernity of certain passages in "Madam Butterfly" is responsible for the following interesting and just remarks by a New York musical critic: "As a matter of fact, the putting of plays of modern life to music is very doubtful art. It causes a very natural amusement to hear the simplest questions and remarks of life set to the pompous phraseology of orchestral direction. When this sort of thing is done an illusion is raised, a vision dispelled, and we fall back upon our everyday selves and laugh. Wagner was right when he chose the subject matter for his music-drama from the dusky and shadowy realms of legend and mythology."

Told by Lew Dockstader. Coming down Pennsylvania avenue in Washington I encountered a negro hobo, all rags, except for a fashionable white evening vest. "How dare you?" I said, severely. "Don't you know it is de trop to wear an evening vest before 5 p. m.?" "Boss," replied the tramp, earnestly, "there ain't nobody got no time table to regulate my clothes; they's runnin' wild."

THIS WEEK'S ATTRACTIONS.

Richard Carle in "The Spring Chicken" at the National.
The attraction at the New National Theater for the first week of the New Year, "The Spring Chicken," with Richard Carle heading the company, comes to Washington direct from a run of three months at Daly's Theater, and later at the New Amsterdam Theater, New York. "The Spring Chicken" is a comedy paraphrase of "In the spring a young man's thoughts like birds begin to fly." Everybody seems frivolous. The first sign of spring—and off comes the heavy hangings, and the girls rush into summer frocks. The one who seems most affected by this season of the year is "The Chicken," otherwise one Gustave Rabort, who has married an American girl. In past springs he has been so frivolous that his wife sends for her mother and father so that they may bring advice and consolation. Her father, one Ambrose Girdle, has still another object in his visit. He has hurt his arm, and wishes to consult a well-known celebrator of spring, called "Society," who is an infuser of lamb's blood, and Girdle becomes as much of a boy as any of the so-called spring affected.

The complications of the story, which is a very amusing one, take the most interesting characters through a restaurant scene and in an artist's studio. In the restaurant Girdle, who has run up such a bill that he can't pay it, is obliged to become a waiter and work it out. This gives Mr. Carle the opportunity of the play, and a capital chance for the display of his peculiar style of humor. Victor Morley, formerly the Frenchman in "The Prince of Posen," is entrusted with the part of "The Chicken," and is said to be eminently satisfactory. Beside McCoy, for two years the featured comedian of the New York Hippodrome, a prominent member of the company, Miss Emma Janvier, formerly associated with Mr. Carle in "The Mayor of Tokio," has the principal comedy part next to the heroine. The company is on its way to begin an indefinite run in Chicago, and Washington will be the only city visited between New York and the Western City. There will be matinee Tuesday (New Year's Day), Wednesday, and Saturday.

Eddie Foy in "The Earl and the Girl" Coming to the Belasco.
Manager Taylor, of the Belasco Theater, announces the appearance on Monday, December 31, for one week, with special New Year's matinee, of the English musical comedy, "The Earl and the Girl," in which the Messrs. Shubert are featured. Eddie Foy, the popular comedian, Eddie Foy, "The Earl and the Girl" recently closed a long run at the Casino Theater in New York. It is said to be a typical Shubert offering, finely mounted, and adequately presented. In the cast besides Eddie Foy will be Miss Clara Inge, Miss Zelma Rawiston, Mr. Harry B. Lester, Mr. William H. Armstrong, Frank Lavigne, Joseph Carey, and what is claimed to be the most lavishly costumed chorus yet seen in musical comedy productions.

Eddie Foy enacts the role of a dog fancier, who becomes stranded in a foreign country, and devises an entertainment, with the aid of his canine friends, by which he hopes to raise funds to return home. The Earl of Stole, in order to escape the vengeance of a circus "strong woman," who accuses him of jilting her daughter, induces the dog trainer to play "earl" for a night. They attend a ball together in their exchanged attire, and many unaccountable and complicated results result when the dog trainer makes love to the earl's fiancée.

Many novelties are promised, among them the swing chorus in the song of "The Earl and the Girl" was first presented at the Lyric Theater in London. Other musical numbers are "I Would Like to Marry You," "The Mediterranean," and a stirring march song, "The Greasers."

The mechanical force of "The Earl and the Girl" company arrived in the city yesterday to put up the swings for the big swing song feature, which will position itself in position at the swing place in the grandstand over the audience. This feature was omitted here last season, owing to the late arrival of the company. Under present conditions the swings will be up before the arrival of the company.

Harry Bulger in "The Man From Now" at the Columbia.
The standard of Henry W. Savage will again float over the Columbia Theater for the week beginning to-morrow night, when he will offer as the attraction for New Year's Harry Bulger in the new musicality, "The Man From Now." The book and lyrics are by John Kendrick Bangs and Vincent Bryan, and the music by Manuel Klein. These gentlemen are said to have provided Mr. Bulger with an excellent vehicle for the exploitation of his peculiar ability, and Mr. Savage has given the production a sumptuous mounting. "The Man From Now" ran at the Tremont Theater, Boston, for sixteen weeks, and has played extended engagements at the New Amsterdam Theater, New York, and the Studebaker Theater, Chicago. Mr. Bangs used as the ground plan for his work a series of idealistic articles that dwellers upon earth 1,000 years hence may expect in the way of entertainment and real life. Woman is given a strong position in the land which Mr. Bangs has founded, and the possession of more money than one can spend is described as treason. Mr. Klein has written some catchy music, and as stated in a recent musical value, Edward H. O'Connor, a Washingtonian, is one of the principal supporters of Mr. Bulger in his fun-making. Isabel Hall, a prima donna, who is seen in London in "Savage's" "Princess of Posen" company, has a leading feminine role, and others in the cast include Helen Hale, Hattie Arnold, Lucy Tonge, Bertha Johnstone, Walter Lawrence, Edward Martindell, Phil Branson, and Constance Collier. The matinee will be a special matinee on Tuesday (New Year's Day), and the regular Thursday and Saturday matinees.

"The Ten Crickets" the Leading Feature at Chase's.
Chase's line-up this week to receive the holiday rush includes Joseph Hart's fine spectacular production, "The Ten Crickets," the Quigley brothers, "The" Quartet, Harry Ladell and Rosa Crouch, the Four Dunbars, Zena Keife and her pony, Austin Walsh, and the motion pictures, entitled "The Merry Frolics of Mephistopheles." Mr. Hart's presentation in the matter of pretentiousness and finish will compare favorably, it is said, with the larger extravaganzas of the high-priced theaters. "The Ten Crickets" is in two scenes, and it introduces a double quintet of pretty girls, and singing songs and dances. There are also several songs interpolated. Norma Seymour, the prima donna, and W. N. Cripps, the well-known actor, are special features of the production. The Quigley brothers have won headline honors for their comedy work

in "Election Day," their own original satirical sketch. "The" Quartet is said to be the best male quartet in the world. Harry Ladell and Rosa Crouch will appear in a melange of song, dance, and humor. The other attractions are all seasonal and novel. Chase's never raises prices at the New Year's Day matinee.

"A Jolly Baron" at the Majestic.
Starting with a matinee to-morrow, the Majestic Theater's bill for the week will be the favorite light comedian, Billy S. Clifford, in his latest musical fantasy, "A Jolly Baron." This is said to give Mr. Clifford a specially congenial character, that of a duke, son of a Wall street broker. The latter's entire hopes are centered in his only boy. Thomas Baron, Sr., having made his fortune, hopes to retire and leave the business in charge of his son. Imagine his dismay when the idol of his life comes home from college expelled for some boyish prank, and instead of being a manly, square-shouldered, level-headed young man, he is an Anglo-nomadic, with London-cut clothes and an English drawl. But he comes out all right in the end. Through the play runs a humorous running gag, a ragging, a pretty, well-dressed chorus, catchy musical numbers and lines, said to be genuine, go to make up a pleasing production.

"The Ninety and Nine" at the Academy of Music.
"The Ninety and Nine," the offering at the Academy beginning to-morrow evening, is credited with being one of the best of rural dramas, possessing besides the usual quota of quaint fun a story that is good and simple. It is stated that any possible prejudice that might be aroused through using a religious theme for a play has been eliminated. The company presenting the play is said to be one of the best and largest appearing at popular prices, and is headed by Miss Bayne Whipple. An unusually thrilling scene is a locomotive running through a raging forest fire. This piece of success is said to be a most realistic bit of ingenuity. A special matinee will be given New Year's Day, at which there will be no advance over the regular matinee prices.

"Kentucky Belles" the Bill at the Lyceum.
Clever comedians, vaudeville artists, and chorus girls are promised a plenty in the "Kentucky Belles" company, which comes to the New Lyceum this week. This organization is claimed to be one of the best on the circuit to-day. Two burlesques and a fine list of variety turns are on the bill. The first is a satire on the growing ambition of American girls with money to gain position abroad as the wives of penniless titled foreigners, called "Society." The second burlesque, "Murphy's Mistake," Mr. Jack Reid, author of the piece, assumes the leading role in each. The Wlora Trio, Hungarian singers and dancers; the Century Comedy Four, male singers; Andy McLeod, musical artist and comedian; and Young Buffalo, assisted by Mlle. Marletta, in a shooting act that is thrilling, are the leading features of the bill.

Burton Holmes at the Columbia.
Burton Holmes, the well-known lecturer on travel, is making his annual appearance at the Columbia Theater. Instead of confining himself to only one course and one list of subjects, he will this season give an evening course on five successive Sunday evenings, beginning January 6, as well as two parallel matinee courses on Monday and Tuesday afternoons, beginning January 7 and 8. The Sunday evening and Monday afternoon courses will be exactly alike, the subjects being "Cairo," "The Nile," "Athens and the New Olympic Games," "Naples," and "Venus and the Eruption of Mount Vesuvius." These subjects are the results of Mr. Holmes' wanderings last winter, and are all new to Washington. This series has already been given in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other of the larger cities of the East and Middle West, where it has proven so popular as to necessitate a return engagement later in the coming spring. The Tuesday afternoon course (Course C) will have for its topics "Japan," "The Art of Tea," "The Tyrolese Alps," and "Switzerland." These were all popular in former seasons. The sale of seats for either course will begin at the Columbia Theatre box-office to-morrow morning at 9 o'clock.

Elmendorf's Lenten Lectures.
On the afternoon of Monday, February 4, Mr. Dwight Lathrop Elmendorf will deliver the first of his Lenten series of travel talks. In this new series of five lectures, Mr. Elmendorf follows in the wake of the findings of old. After wandering through Ireland, England, and Scotland, he will cruise to Norway and the "Land of the Midnight Sun" concludes the series. With the exception of a few of the motion pictures, every illustration is made and colored by Mr. Elmendorf.

ON THE FOREIGN STAGE.
The Americanization of London's amusements goes steadily on. Olympia, an immense new place of entertainment just opened here, is patterned largely after the Lyceum.

The London production of "His House in Order," presented by George Alexander at the St. James Theater, has now run more than 300 nights, and still seems to be drawing as well as ever.

The London Lyceum Theater, long the headquarters of Henry Irving, and the scene of so many of his greatest productions, has just been sold at auction for \$350,000 to some one whose identity has not been disclosed.

Charles Frohman, in an interview in London, denies the charge said to have been brought against him by an English manager that he is paying actors and playwrights too much. He said he would revise his scale of emolument just as soon as the actors and playwrights held a meeting against him in Trafalgar Square. Frohman has had to take two additional theaters in London in order to revive "Peter Pan," and make his production of "Nelly Nell," in which Lou Parré will appear.

London writers seem to have been seriously embarrassed by the feebleness of our present line of adjectives when they undertook to describe the scenic wonders of Beerholm Tree's new production of "Anthony and Cleopatra," presented in the British metropolis. The day after nothing to approach it in the way of imperial Oriental splendor was ever attempted before, apparently. But dramatically it didn't count for much. Tree's Anthony made no great hit, and Constance Collier as Cleopatra was enthusiastically applauded, not for her acting, but for her striking beauty.

One of the successes of the London season seems to be the opera founded on Goldsmith's "The Vicar of Bray," by Mrs. Liza Lehman and David Bispham. Mrs. Lehman talked interestingly a while ago about the genesis of the work. She said: "I believe my themes were created by my subconscious mind, and noted by my conscious mind. The opera came to be written in a curious way. My husband and I, while staying at Eastbourne, found a beautiful copy of Goldsmith's work in an old curiosity shop. The illustrations were delightful, and the idea came to me for my opera. It is a remarkable coincidence that at the moment when I was considering the subject, the same idea occurred to Mr. Bispham."

ON THE GOTHAM STAGE

VEWS AND REVIEWS

New York, Dec. 29.—In spite of a number of changes at the theaters, the general excellence which has marked the character of the attractions so far the present season continues. A number of old favorites which have been on our stage again installed in the metropolitan playhouses, and are doing well. Dicy is filling the Lincoln Square by his performance of "The Man on the Box," and "Brown of Harvard" is at the Majestic, with Harry Woodruff as the hero—hero, just now, in more than one particular, for the recent Gould-Castellane divorce in France has excited anew the interest in the curly-haired actor, who was once Anna Gould's hero in real life.

Ever since the sensational divorce case was closed there has been the most active speculation whether the rich divorcee would gain her heart's wish, which, but for the opposition of her family, would have been realized years ago and made the actor her prince consort in the dynasty of Gould. That is enough to inflame the temperamental Gothamites, to whom any novelty is welcome that shall vary the monotony of the clatter of trains and midnight feasts at Martin's or the Cafe Ambassadeurs.

Woodruff is taking it all with dignified reserve. He is tending strictly to business, and is committing no impropriety. If the expected should be the ultimate consummation, the whole profession will rejoice. Incidentally, the affair has lent impetus to the business of the theater where he is appearing.

Henry De Vries, the Dutch actor, followed May Irwin at the Bijou this week in "The Double Life," by Rinehart Roberts. It is a play of multiple personalities, well played by the actor and with some moments in the action that hold the interest in a tense grip. He has six weeks, but not a few. It is the case of a man who forgets his own identity and for a period of years leads a dream existence.

Coincident with the play one of the magazines for January is publishing a remarkable article from the pen of Prof. Hugo Munsterberg, of Harvard, on a case in Chicago, where a man was hanged for murder last summer on his own confession though he was actually guiltless. The whole case is explained by the learned psychologist on the theory of auto-hypnosis, the man having at first denied the crime and then suddenly confessed his guilt, adhering to it till six days before the execution, when suddenly he recovered his normal state of mind and declared he had no knowledge of the crime or his confession.

The case is not exactly analogous to that of "The Double Life," but it casts a startling sidelight on the probability of the dramatic phenomenon of a man losing his identity for years from the effects of a blow dealt him by highway robbers. It helps to a comprehension of a problem which is usually taboed in the theater because of its supposed improbability.

De Vries is a superior actor, and in moments of the play where the dramatic interest is specially keen, he rises to great heights.

Mrs. Leslie Carter begins her tour under her new management on January 2, in "Cleo" by Milton Royce, the author of "The Squaw Man." Her company began rehearsals last Tuesday, and includes her old leading man, Charles Stevenson, and William Abington, Nell Moran, Charles Rowan, Helen Robertson (Mrs. Harry Benrimo), Hattie Russell, Donah Benrimo, and Phyllis La Fond. All attempts to bridge over the difficulties with Belasco have failed and the burn-ahired actress will throw herself heart and soul into her new environments. Several rehearsals were held this week at which the star was not present, but as they were only preliminary heats, her absence had no importance. Her first appearance will be watched with unusual interest in New York, as her sensational marriage to Lou Fay's has not yet ceased to exhaust her as a theme for gossip. She is said to have some strong scenes in the play.

William Gillette closed his engagement at the Garrick in "Charles" to-night and goes on to-morrow to the play. The piece has been revived with conflicting feelings here, but it held its own very well during a satisfactory run.

"The Daughters of Men" at the Astor is drawing to the close of its seven weeks' schedule. This Klein play did not warrant an extension of time, and it is only too apparent that it has not duplicated the success of "The Lion and the Mouse," in spite of the educational propaganda which the author has been conducting through magazines and other mediums of enlightenment. It is not, however, that the public is not educated to the subtleties of his theme, which accounts for the apathy shown by the public in spite of the fine cast; the simple truth is that Mr. Klein has overshoot his mark, and instead of writing a virile drama of the industrial situation, he lost himself in a maze of complications.

The photographic remembrances of current thought in dramatic guise need something very human and very vital to make them hold together—action and love, which "The Lion and the Mouse" possesses, and "The Daughters of Men" possesses only as an incident to the author's polemic spirit. Who cares for the conflict of labor and wealth in a play unless it is made sublimely to the old, old story of the conflict of hearts? We know that Mr. Klein can possibly tell us, and it has been much better stated by Gompers and President Roosevelt. It was much more interestingly told in a real play, "The Lost Paradise," and in a modified way in "The Middle Man."

What keeps "The Man of the Hour" alive is the action in which it abounds. There is something doing all the time, and the characters are not mere animated photographs charged with thundering speeches on the rights of capital and labor, but theatrically available types with vital attributes. There is no great difference between the two plays, but the latter is just that much the better.

A very decided hit is credited to Joe Weber in his double bill of "Dream City" and "The Magic Knight," pure burlesque, but far superior to the ordinary in artistic scope, with music by Victor Herbert, and a cast including Lillian Blauvelt, Otis Harlan, and Clary Loftus. Such a combination, with the alert and agile Joe Weber as a capstone, should, in all good faith, give a good account of itself, and does. "Dream City" is a musical piece in two parts; in other words, a musical comedy. "The Magic Knight," described as "a dash of grand opera," concludes the bill. Miss Loftus made a new record in her imitation of Rose Stael as the "Chorus Lady." She also imitated Harry Williams and, of course, Ethel Bar-

ON THE GOTHAM STAGE

VEWS AND REVIEWS

rymore. Since Miss Loftus began to mimic her, they are all doing it, yet none as well as she. Weber impersonates a Long Island farmer in this piece. In "The Magic Knight" Lillian Blauvelt has a chance to warble grand opera, and emits some notes that excite the envy of the Conried and Hammerstein forces. Herbert is an adept at this sort of thing, as he showed when he helped Fritz Scheff to descend so gracefully from her pedestal as "the little devil of grand opera" into the subtleties of musical comedy. As Frank Daniels used to sing, "He did so politely 'twas music to the ear." The critic applauded the show rapturously, and Glenora Davys, of the Globe, said it surpassed anything she had seen in Weber's plays since the palmy days of Weber & Fields.

At the Garden Theater "Madame Butterfly" has made way for De Koven's "Student King," which was well received this week. De Koven was anxious to have his new opera make its metropolitan debut at the Lyric, where Mrs. Pike is holding forth now. De Koven is the proprietor of the Lyric and built it for a temple of music with a view each year of producing one of his own compositions there. But Col. Savage is not allied with the interests that control the destiny of the Lyric, and he has a lease on the Garden which he cannot let go of. This theater occupies a corner of the great Madison Square Garden, and is a pretty playhouse without. But it is far down-town and away from the elevated that connects with the uptown playgoers. So it is at times undergoing an eclipse, until a microscope shows a "College Widow" in its path, or something else equally irresistible. "The Student King" arrives under a favorable sign of the zodiac, and unless all prophecies prove false, will have a prosperous season.

"Peter Pan" timed his return to town opportunely to catch the Christmas cheer that was in the air, and has had a warm holiday greeting at the Empire, where he followed John Drew. The new act which has been so much discussed had a great deal to do with the renewed interest shown in the fair drama. It adds one more chapter to the well-deserved series of disappointments that betide the terrible Capt. Hook, the pirate chief, who almost gets the better of Peter and Wendy in this adventure, but finally is discomfited in the struggle with the mermaid. He has to continue playing the part on amors, and it is quite beyond dispute that she has been very successful in Barrie ju'd esprit. FRID. F. SCHMIDT.

THE PLAYLET'S THE THING.
And Sketch-wright Cressy Turns 'Em Out While You Wait.

Writing a playlet while you wait is no trick at all for Will M. Cressy, who appeared at Chase's the past week in one of his own very numerous tabloid dramas. Give him a good story, three separate ideas, and a good finish, he says, and a playlet grows under his hands like a magician's roosebud. He got the sketch-writing habit in this acute form, he confessed the other day, because he was "busted." He had to go into vaudeville, had no "vehicle," and no money to buy one, and so had to undertake writing one for himself. After the first plunge, the thing was easy.

"At the time I started in writing, a sketch would bring about \$15," Mr. Cressy said. "To-day I could sell 100 at \$500 each, and I don't know how many I have known of a few that brought \$1,000. And a good act is worth it, too. A successful sketch will command from \$200 to \$500 per week, and is good for two, perhaps three years."

"I have written a great number of them. Year before last, the season of 1904-1905, there were 126 one-act plays being presented in the first-class vaudeville theaters in America. Of this number, eighty-six were from my pen. My work has 163 been presented in this country, 25 in Europe, 5 in Australia, and about 5,000,000 pirated versions in the cheaper circuits."

"Oh, yes, I have tried my hand at short stories, but I don't like them. I don't like to question 'But what's the use?' From \$15 to \$75 for an idea in short-story form, or \$500 in sketch form. Which would you write? I always write the last page of an act first. If I can't do that, I don't write it. I don't try the rest of it. For without a good finish, no act is good."

To the question, "Do you think a newspaper man could write good sketches?" Mr. Cressy answered emphatically, "No." "Why he thus answered: "Because his training has been to do the same line of work in an entirely different manner. The newspaper man writes words for the eye. A play is written for the ear. The newspaper man writes words and sentences to catch the eye, to be looked at. The playwright writes them to be spoken. I probably receive two or three hundred sketches from different writers in the city, and particularly with my judgment on them. And some of the worst have been from newspaper men. Good newspaper men, too."

Engagement of E. S. Willard.
Several new characterizations will give extra interest to the engagement of that brilliant actor and accomplished artist, Mr. E. S. Willard, who will appear at the National next week. No dramatic visitor is more popular in Washington, and particularly with those who rightly esteem the refinements of dramatic art. There will be an added interest in his return this season because of the novelties in his repertoire. "The Professor" will be the first of the new ones. It is going to be followed Tuesday by the new play "Colonel Newcome," which Mr. Michael Morton derived from Thackeray's great novel, "A Trip on the Grand Canal, Venice." "A Trip on the Grand Canal, Venice," and "The Enchanted Castle," and "The Enchanted Castle."

Sunday Evening Entertainment.
The Sunday offering at the Academy will be Shepard's moving pictures, which promise a programme of all popular features, among which will be "Scenes in Burmah," "The Black Hawk Burglars," "That Lumberjack," "Acrobatic Story," "Cards and Crime," and "The Terrible Kids." The latest popular ballad, beautifully illustrated, will be sung by one of Washington's favorite singers.

The usual Mayer concert will be given at the Majestic next Monday night. These are the most popular of the very popular entertainments provided each Sunday. An excellent programme has been arranged for the concert. The favorite singer, Mr. Chick, will render a new selection of illustrated songs. The feature films for the motion pictures are: "A Search for a Wife," "The Express Train Robbery," and "The Enchanted Castle."

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