

# Theatrical News and Gossip

## FANNY DAVENPORT'S SUCCESSOR.



Blanche Walsh, who has Fanny Davenport's role in the Sardou play, made her debut on the professional stage at the age of 18, with Marie Wainwright, as Olivia in "Twelfth Night." She was with Miss Wainwright three seasons, playing Zamora in "The Honeymoon," Florence Marygold in "My Uncle's Will," Madeline in "Frederic Lemaitre," Grace Harkaway in "London Assurance," and Queen Elizabeth in "Amy Robsart." She then signed with Charles Frohman, and originated the part of Diana Stockton in Bronson Howard's "Aristocracy," produced in September, 1892. She played in this two seasons, and then appeared as Kate Kennion in "The Girl I Left Behind Me," and on January 1, 1895, joined Nat C. Goodwin, playing heroines in "A Gilded Fool," "In Mizoura," "David Garrick," "The Nominee," "The Gold Mine" and "Lord of the Five Shillings."

After that came a season of summer stock in Washington, during which she had the leading part in "Pink Dominoes," "My Awful Dad," "American Assurance," "My Wife's Mother," and Romeo in E. A. Lancaster's one-act piece, "Romeo's First Love." She was next heard of as the adventuress, Mrs. Bulford, in "The Great Diamond Robbery," produced in New York city in 1895. In November she assumed the part of Trilby at the Garden theater, New York city, and played it for the remainder of the season. She then rejoined Nat Goodwin and sailed with him for Australia, playing all the parts she had previously had with him in America, and also as Lydia Langouin in "The Rivalry" and Louise in "Gringoire." Returning to America in October she originated the part of Margaret Neville in "Heartsease" with Palmer's stock company. In January Miss Walsh played in "Straight From the Heart," in New York, appearing in the dual role of brother and sister, Harold and Clara Nugent.

Miss Walsh is a remarkably quick study, having on several occasions demonstrated this fact, two of which are worthy of mention.

In August, 1895, with only two hours' notice and without a rehearsal, Miss Walsh played the role of Trilby in the original company and won high praise for her successful accomplishment of a difficult task. Again, at the Boston museum during the late winter, Miss Walsh was sent for to play Ethel Varney in Mr. Gillet's "Secret Service," which was being produced there. She saw the play for the first time on a Tuesday evening, and with one rehearsal played the part the following night and for the remainder of the Boston engagement, sailing for England May 5, opening with "Secret Service" at the Adelphi theater, London. On her return to America, she played for two weeks in "Secret Service" at the Empire theater, New York city, then with Sol Smith Russell in "Bachelor's Romance" at the Garden theater, New York city. In January, 1898, she returned to the Empire theater, playing Jeanne Marie in "The Conquerors." On May 20 she joined the Herald Square stock company. Her last engagement, previous to making her debut as a co-star with Melbourne Macdowell, was at Denver with the Manhattan Beach stock company.



MELBOURNE MACDOWELL.

manuscript of the parts of "The Fatal Card" until three days before its first production in Seattle. Some of the actors were required to study sixty sides of typewritten part, rehearse the play in that time and in addition give a performance of another play each evening. The production was not as smooth as might be expected on the opening performance, but after that everything worked as smoothly as if the company had been playing it for a season. This comes from the fact that R. E. French is an expert stage manager, having started nearly a thousand productions in the last twenty years. Another point in favor was that several members of the company are old-time actors and have had many years of stock experience.

"But going back to the later sixties and early seventies," said Manager Russell, "in the smaller cities, like Cleveland, Buffalo, Pittsburg and Detroit, when a stock company was engaged for a season and had to produce very frequently a new play each night, receiving the part after the performance at night for the play the next night, was the good old times when actors worked forty-eight hours out of the twenty-four. True, there were not so many plays in that period as there are today, and many actors had under-standed the play, having played in them the season before.

"Each member of the company was engaged for a special line of business. The leading man was supposed to be up in the second part of all of the standard dramas,

which consisted of Shakespeare, Tom Taylor's plays and Robinson's comedies. Next came the heavy man, then the comedian, leading lady, first old woman and chambermaid, now called soubrette. All of these were supposed to be up in their respective parts of these plays, but frequently a utility man was called upon to take the leading part in a new play every night. Most of the theaters having stock companies played stars; that is, a new actor or actress of considerable eminence or renown came to the theater for a week's engagement, having a repertoire of plays in which they played the leading or star part themselves. Some of these had new manuscript plays, entirely new to all of the members of the company. This is where the hard work of the stock company began.

"Maggie Mitchell was one of the stars of those days. She had among her plays 'Fanchon the Cricket,' 'Little Barefoot,' 'Pearl of Savoy,' 'Satin in Paris,' 'A Woman of the People,' and several others. She would frequently change the bill every night. This required an amount of work on the part of the company which the present actor is utterly incapable of performing, from the fact that he has not had the necessary stage experience to do the amount of study necessary, or to fake, or substitute lines, retaining the sense of the play. Dion Boucicault was another.

"He was the first American actor to produce standard plays. From his pen

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Tonight—Last Night.  
Engagement of MR. WALTER WALKER, assisted by MISS MILDRED ST. PIERRE and a sterling company of players, presenting Henry Guy Carleton's famous comedy.

"The Nominee."

THE Nominee" with Mr. Walter Walker in the title role, at the Seattle theater, and "The Fatal Card," at the Third Avenue theater did a splendid business last week. "The Nominee" company will not tonight.

The present week will be all that the theatrical folk could ask for. Belle Archer will begin a three nights' engagement at the Seattle theater tomorrow night. Melbourne Macdowell and Blanche Walsh, in the Sardou repertoire, open tonight at the Seattle theater in "Cleopatra." The play will be presented Friday night and Saturday matinee. "The Fatal Card" will be given a single production on Sunday night.

Macdowell is an excellent actor, and the rapid progress he has made during the past few seasons is deserving of all the praise he can secure. The supporting cast is most capable, having been especially selected for the roles in which they are to appear.

The costumes, stage pictures and scenic arrangements, down to the smallest details, will be as complete as possible.

Miss Walsh in the title role of "La Tosca" is seen in a personation in which she is constantly fascinating, because of her humanity, and of the marvelous way of the passions which is an essential part of her proper portraiture.

"Cleopatra" does not follow the line of Shakespeare, it undoubtedly carries with it a sequence of human interest, and the success achieved by the play itself, aside from the magnificence of its production, proves that plays, even if founded on the great Shakespeare, appeal to the better class of the public. That is not to say that Shakespeare's "Cleopatra" is less than "Cleopatra" of history, but the French writer has invested the character itself with so much that appeals to modern audiences, and in a manner purely dramatic. The storm scene of the fifth act is said to be one of the most stirring examples of realism known on the contemporary stage.

Owing to the extreme length and stupendous production of "Cleopatra," the Seattle theater will close on Wednesday morning, and not more than eight seats will be sold to any one person for a single performance.

At the Third Avenue theater Downie's Specialty Company will be the attraction of the week and will undoubtedly draw big houses.

MANAGER J. P. Howe, of the Seattle theater, is back from San Francisco, where he spent several weeks. He returns with the interesting news that he has succeeded in looking the great and only Padewski, who will appear here April 12. The attraction will be the greatest of the year, not only from a theatrical standpoint, but those who appreciate fine music will go to hear the great musician; those who don't will go to see him.

MANY years ago an unscrupulous Bostonian by the name of Phillips dashed almost breathless into the local room of a Brooklyn paper about 1 o'clock Sunday morning. His last "form" was about to be sent to the press, when Phillips burst in, shouting, "I've got a piece of news that's a 'heat,' and no other newspaper man in town knows a thing about it. This bit of news is worth \$10, but I'll sell it for \$10 cash down."

The editor was given him. Then he announced that just as a Fulton ferry boat was entering her slip a few moments before her pilot dropped dead at her steering wheel. There was no one to notify the engineer to stop the boat's engine, and consequently she crashed against the pier of her landing with full force, killing and maiming a large number of passengers.

As Phillips claimed to be too nervous to do it himself, a reporter was detailed to write up a brief description of the affair of the paper, while others were detailed to prepare "sore heads." All the reporters were sent post haste to the scene of the accident to get particulars, and as soon as possible of the killed and wounded for later editions. Phillips in the meantime slipped out unobserved.

When the reporters reached the ferry slip they found that no such catastrophe had occurred. The whole thing had no relation to the news of the day.

The unscrupulous Phillips, who afterwards was accused of having been the author of the article, came to near ruin, that statesman's chances for the presidency.

But mark the sequel! Less than three years after this a pilot of a ferryboat did drop dead at her wheel of her feverish disease, and his unquipped boat did crash into the pier, but fortunately, she neither killed nor crippled any of her passengers.

What might have happened did occur.

In the dramatic field the same coincidences are shown. When Mr. Charles Dyer, the most original of dramatists, made his "A Contented Woman," and made its heroine defeat her husband for the sovereignty of Denver, people laughed at the idea, as supremely ridiculous. But in the last election in Salt Lake City, she actually defeated her husband for a State senatorship.

This all adds proof to the old saying about truth being stranger than fiction. As a rule Mr. Hoyt never rebores much upon plots or stories for a foundation of his comedies, but in the case of "A Contented Woman" he has cleverly woven a well-acted plot and interesting story, with many amusing complications following one upon the other, all which are supplied worked out in Hoyt's most humorous way.

The story is based upon the Western states, giving in some of the far right to vote and making them eligible for municipal offices.

The play is in four scenes, all of which are laid in Denver, and the scenery used in the production is said to be the most beautiful Mr. Hoyt has ever presented.

Every particle of the scenery and all the stage accessories, even to the rugs and brioche-brac, in fact, everything necessary to make the presentation here identical with that given in New York, will be brought from Hoyt's theater. The cast is the same as that of the original production, and will be a very pretty drama, well written and presented by a strong company. The Downie company embraces thirty people, carrying their own band and orchestra. In addition to their plays they introduce refined specialties between acts, making the performance almost a continuous one. The Downie company is an old organization, having toured the Eastern country in their own palace car for a number of years. The frequent presentation of their plays in their respective parts not to be obtained by the usual road company. "The Prince and Lady" will be given tonight and Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday the comedy, "What Happened to Medway," Thursday and Friday evenings the old favorite, "East Lynne," Saturday matinee, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and a new bill on Saturday night.

MEWEN, the great Scottish hypnotist, will play a farewell engagement at the Third Avenue theater, commencing next Sunday night. Of all the hypnotists that have ever visited Seattle Mewen is the bright particular star. Aside from the scientific problems that he presents to the audience his entertainments are said to be as laughable as any class or kind witnessed on the stage.

THE prominent Eastern theatrical manager, E. D. Suter, will send a number of his attractions to the Coast this spring. The first to arrive will be that huge musical farce-comedy success, "Who Is Who?" headed by the long and short comedians, Pusey and St. John, supported

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THURSDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, March 8, 9, 10.

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In Sardou's Great Plays.

Thursday and Friday Nights and Saturday Matinee, "CLEOPATRA"

Saturday Night Only, "LA TOSCA"

NOTE—Owing to the extreme length and stupendous production of "Cleopatra," curtain will rise at 8 and 2 p. m. sharp.

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