

# GOSSIP OF THE DRAMA FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW

## Applause by Ushers

### A Deceit Which Deceives No One—Public Not Fooled in That Respect, But in Many Others.

"I SAW the ushers applaud and I knew very well the fate of that play." This was the sententious report of a first night in Washington a season or so ago. It was made to a well known manager in New York by one of the critics who attended the opening performance, and to both men it told the whole story—a story of a sympathetic audience weaned instead of being amused.

Two thoughts are excited by that incident, as it now recalls itself. The first is that so small a percentage of playgoers understand how often ushers are utilized to give plays vim and go. The second is that so few managers understand how futile such devices prove.

Every city in the Union suffers from this tendency of the ushers to counterfeit public approval. Washington certainly does. Several years ago, when more than one local theater was given over to vaudeville, a young woman was hired at much expense to sing three or four ballads. Her performance proved to be a genuine frost. But no one would have known it from the action of the audience. Every night that young woman was greeted with hand-clapping so generally distributed that it required close attention to discover that it started with the ushers scattered conveniently along the back wall.

But we need not go back so far for local examples. Only a few weeks ago a musical play was offered at one of our leading theaters. It was empty, dull and vulgar. It also cost a great deal of money. In consequence it simply had to succeed, no matter whether Henry Irving, Richard Mansfield and E. H. Sothern all failed. So the ushers, scattered about the rear wall as before, diligently applauded all the solos and every chorus which ended with a high note after a swelling in-take of breath.

To-day the young woman who provoked the vaudeville "frost" is no longer on the stage and the musical play is an acknowledged failure.

"Important if True."

A supreme instance of this deceit was reported all along the theatrical circuit recently. It marked the opening of a play produced by a manager famous as "the most artistic paperer" in the business.

Suspicion was first aroused by a press dispatch sent, prepaid, to every dramatic editor in the country. According to this dispatch the audience of that first night had refused to leave its seats at the close of the performance, had cheered itself hoarse, and clapped its hands until they were sore and had finally disbanded only on the initiative of the police. It was a fine story, but it belonged in what newspaper men call the "important if true" class, even as to the apparent value of such applause. It is clear the public is not fooled long enough to count. Perhaps it is not fooled at all, for a man usually buys seats to view a performance a second time only when he enjoys it himself, no matter what his fellow in the audience seemed to think of it. The occupant of every seat, these days, is his own critic. All the handclapping in the world will not prevail against the personal experience of a tiresome evening.

It is equally certain the critics are not deceived. Most of that craft find particular pleasure in opposing popular verdicts and so are ever on guard against much applause. All of them, moreover, are eternally on the watch for just such subtleties as the clapping by the ushers, and a play which has been seen through indulgent eyes invariably "gets the ax" when supported in this way by the "house."

The only possible good which can come out of this idiotic proceeding is this—that sometimes the actor who has his best goods in store for use at the core and the extra applause is needed to produce the work in its real form. In that event—an event which arises about once in a thousand years—author and actor would do well to rewrite their play and not depend on the aid of employees of the theater to cover up their mistakes.

"Ladies and Gents, Your Kind Applause."

In one respect every audience is easily fooled. If there are any exceptions to this rule they have not yet been recorded. Any actor or singer who has the applause he desires simply by manifesting more and more pretense and ostentation as he reaches the close of his "turn." From grand opera down to cheap circuses the performer has only to put on more airs, woggle his shoulders, and make a great effort, as he concludes in order to obtain a whirlwind of handclapping. This is well known to actors themselves, and however much they may take advantage of it they describe the whole proceeding in this terse phrase: "Ladies and gents, your kind applause."

You would think a self-respecting Washington audience would be ashamed to shower approval on a dancer merely because with great effort she managed to kick straight up in the air; but it never is. You would think it would be ashamed to applaud a much-heralded tenor merely because at the close of a fine solo he struck a high note in thin falsetto; but it never is. You would think it would be ashamed to shout wild roars of laughter at the tenth "fake" attempt of a cheap comedian to reach a high note; but it never is. You would think it would be ashamed to know that thrills and cadenzas are not fine singing, that blisses and rolling eyes and fine sentiments shouted at the top of the voice are not fine acting; that diving through pianos and brandishing slap-sticks are not fine humor; but it never is and apparently it never will be.

Determined to Applaud.

Now and then the applause is genuine and is entirely merited, but still is out of place.

Witness the conduct of our own Washington audience at the Sernbrich recital last Thursday. In the course of the "Traviata" aria the singer was interrupted no less than four times. No one contends that the composition is worth



MARIE TEMPEST in "The Marriage of Kitty."

very much in any case; but if it has merit it ought to be heard through; and if the audience not only thinks it has merit but enjoys it beyond all description, it ought especially not to be interrupted.

Another curious example suggests itself. In the course of one of his lectures at the First Congregational Church Mr. Krehbiel once had a pianist play von Weber's "Invitation to a Waltz." The lecturer especially warned his hearers of the coda at the close of the composition, and asked them not to applaud until it had been played. But as soon as the audience heard the characteristic rhythm of the closing bars of the main section it made ready, and before the coda could begin the auditorium echoed with handclapping.

Perhaps the explanation of this eagerness is the same as that once offered by Daniele Manin, the Venetian patriot. He had gone to a public meeting organized by citizens who thought as he did. The chief address proved to be a great disappointment. Nevertheless Manin interrupted the speaker again and again, shouting, "Brava, 'Brava!" at the top of his throat.

"What are you shouting at, you fool!" asked some one near him. "That address isn't worth listening to."

"I came here to applaud, and I'm going to applaud," returned Manin. "The conclusion drawn from all this will be that most of the applause in our theaters is either fraudulent or unwise. That comes very near being true. The critics have always held themselves aloof from estimating popular favor according to the noise made by audiences, and the managers are coming further and further toward the same conclusion. Their argument is obvious; genuine applause bursts like heat from a furnace, from every section of the theater, when the approval is genuine, but based upon "Ladies and gentlemen, your kind applause," the manager can detect it on the instant; and finally if the applause is sincere and properly bestowed there are a thousand better indications of that fact than the clapping of hands. A. D. A.

Past and Future.

"Twice Told Tales" failed to hold the attention of local theatergoers last week. This is probably no surprise to anyone except Messrs. Frohman, Nixon, and Zimmerman. These three men—and one or two other theatrical managers—have yet to learn that the careers of "revivals" depends most largely on the worth of the thing revived. "Erminie" and "Mice and Men" are neither one of any great worth, and something more than "stars" is needed to give them life. Occasionally public interest in the personality of certain actors may carry along a bad play, but this is rare, and is a contradiction of a business rule instead of affirmation of one. Personality, spectacle, and advertising are not enough—in witness whereof "Ben Hur" was just turned up his toes in Philadelphia.

Washington will be glad to welcome Francis Wilson in comedy of any sort, and the firm of Russell & Gilbert in good comedy, each of those two conditions being an advance over the engagements of last week.

Kellar held his own, and more, at the Lafayette. Chase's fulfilled the first mission of the stage—to entertain. At the other theaters the ocean rolled on in its accustomed way. "The Red Feather" will divide attention this week.

Miss Tempest will offer a fine example of the versatility of genius. She sings as well as any woman now in comic opera. Yet she has invaded comedy and proven her ability to compete with actors who have given all their time to acting. "The Marriage of Kitty" is said to display her talents to advantage. We hope this may be true.

Grace Van Studdiford is the Red Feather. Here is another woman who can sing. The issue with her has been to find something to sing. According to our neighbors in Baltimore, she has found it in "The Red Feather." The opera was first produced in Baltimore and was greeted there as one of Mr. De Koven's most notable compositions. The lyrics are by Charles Emmerson Cook and read well. As a last recommendation the management has provided a mounting exceptional even for this day.

"Buster Brown" comes to life at the Lafayette. New favorites and old—among the latter is Edwin Latell—were announced at Chase's. Melodrama,

farce, and burlesque complete the week's bill.

Such are the ups and downs of the theatrical season.

## At the Theaters.

National—Marie Tempest.

Marie Tempest will reappear in Washington at the National Theater tomorrow night after an absence of several years. This actress was last seen here in comic opera, but several years ago entered the field of "legitimate" comedy. During the past three years news of her success in more legitimate comedy has frequently reached this city.

Her play, "The Marriage of Kitty," which she will present here, ran for some 50 nights last season in London, and last night ended its long and successful engagement at the Hudson Theater, New York. In this season, where so many failures have been recorded in the metropolis, "The Marriage of Kitty" has been one of the bright spots in the dull horizon.

Miss Tempest is reliably said to have developed into a most finished and artistic actress, and there is scarcely room to doubt that her London and New York success will be duplicated here. She brings the entire production and the London cast, which includes Leonard Boyne, Gilbert Hare and Ada Ferrar, all of whom are well known and highly esteemed here.

The play is an adaptation by Cosmo Gordon-Lennox, Miss Tempest's husband, of "La Faussette" by Fred Green and F. de Croisset, which was acted with great success in Paris by Rejane. In the course of the action Miss Tempest sings a French song, "Tout passe, which will serve to show that she still retains her former skill in vocalization. Her costumes are said to be unusually rich and beautiful, although in one scene she is required to make herself as unattractive looking as possible—a task on which Miss Tempest enters with true artistic fervor.

The story of the play concerns the performing of a legal marriage ceremony between Kitty and Sir Reginald Belzize to fulfill the conditions of a will under which he has to be married in order to inherit a large fortune. It is understood that the married couple are to part immediately after the ceremony, and that a divorce is to follow. Of course, this does not turn out as intended, and after many complications of any extremely amusing character, the married couple duly fall in love with each other. Mr. Boyne plays Belzize and Mr. Hare the knowing lawyer who "puts up the job."

Columbia—"The Red Feather."

According to critics elsewhere, it is apparent from a survey of "The Red Feather," the opera in which Grace Van Studdiford opens at the Columbia Theater for one week beginning Monday evening, that Messrs. De Koven, Klein and Cooke have boldly disregarded all the recent developments of ragtime and two-step and irrelevant varieties, and have gone back to opera, the honest form of romantic opera, as known in the days of Genée and Millocker, of Audran and Suppe. "Red Feather" has a subject and plot.

That the lovely Countess Draga should be also the hand of Red Feather appears at a casual reading to supply excellent material for the purpose of opera, and it furnishes a relation between the hero, an officer ordered and determined to capture the bandit, and the lady of his love, who is actually the object of his search—that gives a sentimental motive to the romance. The intrigue is simple and yet not too obvious, and it moves, as opera plots sometimes do not, and reaches a conclusion through a logical series of situations which are capable of musical expression or embellishment.

Some years have passed since we have had a new work of such earnest intent and such well considered presentation. The music, we are told, has the characteristic charm of "Robin Hood," and the fresh beauty of "The Fencing Master." It is real music, fitted to its place and written with understanding as well as with sentiment. It is, from all accounts, admirably sung, and the whole production of "Red Feather," we are sure, is rich and sumptuous beyond anything just now in mind.

Miss Van Studdiford followed her fine performance of "Maid Marian" by a score from the same composer. Mr. De Koven is said to have given her some splendid solos in "The Red Feather," and F. Ziegfeld, Jr., has surrounded her with a company that is worthy of the star and the production, including

James E. Sullivan, Elsie De Vere, Lillian Sefton, Cora Tracy, Floye Redledge, Louise Hollister, Dean B. DuLany, Esther Brunette, Daisy R. Fuguet, Helen Wheaton, Evelyn Ormsby, Dorothy Maynard, George L. Tallman, and eighty-five others, ballet, chorus, "show girls," etc.

Chase's—Frederic Bond and Vaudeville.

Chase's will marshal this week for the delectation of lovers of polite vaudeville Frederic Bond and company, Poettinger's Swedish Ladies' Quintet, Edwain Latell, the Fred Gillet Trio, and Gardner and Lottie Vincent, C. W. Littlefield, the Dancing Passports, and the American Vitagraph motion pictures, depicting the sensational incidents in a train robbery.

Frederic Bond will emphasize his engagement by appearing in a condensation of "My Awful Dad."

Poettinger's Swedish Ladies' Quintet is formed of five Swedish singers, whose act is said to be the height of picturessque.

Edwain Latell is the black-face bag-jost and comedian who in the past has had the happy faculty of extorting more laughter from the Chase audiences than can be credited to any other comedian of like character. The Fred Gillet Trio are European acrobatic comiques of great renown. Frank Gardner and Lottie Vincent will submit a comic satire on golfing entitled "An Idyl of the Links." C. W. Littlefield is the mimetic comedian. The dancing Passports, offering novel parodical dances, are a foreign offering of recent importation.

Lafayette—"Buster Brown."

Broadhurst & Currie's new musical extravaganza, "Buster Brown," will be presented at the Lafayette Theater the ensuing week. The work has been accorded an ovation wherever it has appeared, and is accredited with being one of the season's biggest, most elaborate and finished successes during the initial appearance in New York. At the end of the first act there were fourteen curtain calls. "Buster Brown," as Outcault cartoons him, is a pleasing, mischievous fellow, but as Gabriel, late of Nat. Wills forces, impersonates him, he becomes clowning, mischievous, and funny, and Tige, the dog, in the hands of George Ah, the English animal impersonator, is a corresponding hit. The many pranks and attendant troubles the artist incorporates in his newspaper illustrations are said to be brought out in a happy, bright, and laugh-provoking manner by Gabriel and Ah. There is an assemblage of fifty show girls; new and elaborate scenery; music mostly original, and a cast which includes Jack Taylor, Rosa Barnett, Nannie Dodson, Lucille Drew, Al Lamar, Knox Wilson, Mammie Goodrich, and Charles Strain.

Academy—"McFadden's Row of Flats."

"McFadden's Row of Flats," a popular farce comedy, will be the attraction at the Academy this week, opening tomorrow night. The production this season is said to be an entirely new one, and in this edition of "McFadden's Row of Flats" the latest and most popular music of the day will be heard. The company includes the Exposition Four, Gertie DeWitt, Ada Boshell, Joe Willard, Fred Reed, Jerry Sullivan, Walter Bramlette, Teddy Simmonds, the Yellow Kids, May Baker, and Lily Hart.

Empire—"On the Stroke of Twelve."

The comedy drama "On the Stroke of Twelve" begins a week's engagement at the Empire Theater tomorrow afternoon. The management of this enterprise promises a well written drama, quick in action and relieved by a great variety of interesting incidents. The cast this season has been selected with care and with a new scenic equipment. The comedy incidents have not been slighted, but on the contrary form the greater portion of the action. A novel Hebrew character, a negro servant and an Irish hostler are the leading comedy bits, and their lines are spirited and full of quick humor.

Hampden by Her Beauty.

Maxine Elliott Finally Wins Recognition for Her Work.

Can beauty aid an actress in her profession, or is it a theatrical crime to be too beautiful?

Single as it may seem, this question is apparently answered negatively so far as beauty is concerned, by the experience of Maxine Elliott in her effort to win recognition as an actress. At last, however, success has come to her, but it has been in spite of her beauty, and not because of it, that she is now a star in "Her Own Way."



MAXINE ELLIOTT, in Clyde Fitch's "Her Own Way," at the National.

From the time Miss Elliott first decided to go upon the stage, she has had people talk of her beauty, when she wished to discuss her art.

"Of course you will be a success on the stage," her friends told her. "You are so beautiful."

And while most women would have accepted this as a compliment, to Miss Elliott the remark implied that even if she had talent, she would have no need for it.

But it was her talent that finally won recognition, even from the critics who had formerly discussed only her beauty. When she played with Mr. Goodwin, the remark was frequently made. "She doesn't have to act; she's so beautiful."

And all the time Miss Elliott was studying and striving to advance and



GRACE VAN STUDDIFORD as "The Red Feather."

win commendation for her work instead of for the gifts of personal beauty which nature had bestowed upon her.

And at last, in "Her Own Way," the case-hardened critics of New York, who had spoken of Miss Elliott's beauty for ten years, conceded that hidden behind it was real ability.

The admission, coming after years of sincere striving, proved all the more welcome because Miss Elliott had almost given up hope of ever living down her reputation for beauty.

Personally, Miss Elliott believes that a homely girl with talent will succeed on the stage quicker than a beautiful girl without talent. The remarkable feature of Miss Elliott's own experience is the proof found therein that good looks can sometimes act as a positive detriment to advancement in the theatrical profession. Now that she has finally achieved a success, Miss Elliott will find that her beauty will aid her in her future career as a star.

Dramatized Novels.

A Play-Form Rather Avoided by English Managers.

In England we have had of late few of the plays made from novels which have been so conspicuous on the American stage. Possibly the reason may be that English managers seem to have more faith in the ability of their original dramatists than in the case with their American confreres. There is not any prejudice in London against the dramatized novel per se, and I ought to be the last to deride them for one of my greatest successes on the dramatic stage was made in "Recky Sharp." But London managers are not inclined to believe that the publicity a novel has attained is going to help a play made therefrom, unless the play has sufficient intrinsic merit to carry it. It is a similar case to relying on the name of a famous playwright to make a success for his play. That may and does draw on a first night, but if the piece does not please the name is valueless.

Now I arrived in New York recently some time in advance of the date of my opening, and naturally I went to a great many theaters. I saw some of the dramatized novel plays, which it would be frivolous to mention, and some of them have since been reckoned with the departed. "De Mortuis," etc., or as the schoolboy translated it "of the dead there is nothing left but their bones," and as far as I know there were no mourners among the public.

It seems to me to require almost as much skill to make a good dramatization of a novel, and perhaps even more, as to write an original play. A hack playwright will make a paste and scissors version, which will necessarily be clumsy and unsatisfactory, and often unintelligible to those who haven't read the book. The able dramatist will be hampered by the differences in methods of construction between a novel and a play. His great difficulty is to find what he can leave out, while the less experienced writer will go astray on the rock of trying to cram in everything he can. I have heard it said that "the only way to make a good dramatization is to read the book once and then throw it away."

Naturally, this is an exaggeration like most broad statements, still there is much truth in it; but many novels have good dialogue that is worth "lifting," and nowadays some novelists write in dramatic form and with a very vivid eye to the ultimate stage use of their work.

The story of a play must be consecutive, consistent, and developed in logical sequence. In a book one can halt, go back, and explain motives which are not clear upon the surface. Thus, again, the action of a book may be as diffuse as the author pleases as to time occupied and changes of scene and location; but the dramatist is bound to a certain extent to conform to conventions and to observe those mysterious and often haunting terrors known as "The Unities."

When Dickens' novels were first written, crude versions were quickly put upon the stage, but despite the enormous circulation of the books the plays did not do well. Dickens' longer stories are so diffuse that they do not lend themselves readily to dramatic treatment. The one exception is "The Only Way," but his short stories have been the source of many paying plays. "The Cricket on the Hearth" is now being re-

vived in London, and is still in Jefferson's repertoire here; "Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings" was done as "Uncle Dick's Darling" by Toole; "The Message from Mars" appears to have been inspired by "The Christmas Carol." "Little Nell" was a great success with your Lotta, and there were several others.

The theory's books are even less fitted for dramatic treatment with the exception before mentioned of "Vanity Fair."

Tonight's Symphony.

Miss Nichols as Soloist and a Good Program.

The second popular concert of the Washington Symphony Orchestra, which takes place at the Columbia Theater this evening, will be marked by the debut in America of perhaps the most eminent and successful of the younger violinists of today—Marie Nichols, who has just landed in this country on her return from Europe. There, after completing her studies with Yzere, Hallr, and Joachim, she made a triumphant concert tour, winning generous applause in Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Edinburgh, and London. She is said to have a brilliant and yet a deliciously mellow tone, and to have completely mastered all the technical difficulties of her instrument; and last, but not least, to be remarkable for youth, grace, and beauty. Her two numbers will be played with the orchestra, and will be a Serenade for violin and orchestra, by Max Bruch, and a Caprice, by Guldraud.

The orchestral selections are calculated to display the Symphony Orchestra at its best. They comprise a selection from Bizet's "Carmen," "Symphony by Nègre," a Scherzo, by Goldmark; overture to "Poet and Peasant," by Von Suppe; a selection from Mr. De Koven's new opera, "Red Feather"; the celebrated Largo for strings, by Handel, and finally, the beautiful waltz, by Strauss called "Morgenblätter."

An Unusual Compliment.

Washington Symphony Orchestra With "The Red Feather."

Members of the Washington Symphony Orchestra have arranged a graceful compliment for their conductor, Reginald De Koven, composer of "The Red Feather." The entire orchestra of sixty men has volunteered to take part in the performance of a special matinee to be given on Thursday, January 21, at 2:15, at the Columbia Theater. For the first time in the history of Washington, in fact, for the first time in the history of the country, has an entire permanent symphony orchestra arranged to take part in a performance of this character. It is a remarkable compliment to the composer, and there is no doubt that it will result in a memorable performance of the opera. This special performance will be conducted by Mr. De Koven.

Miss Sefton's Success.

One of the most conspicuous successes of "The Red Feather" company is Lillian Sefton, a Washington girl, who is understudy to Grace Van Studdiford. Not long ago Miss Van Studdiford was unable to sing her role and Miss Sefton was called upon at a moment's notice to assume the post of temporary star. Her success was instantaneous. She sang and acted as "Red Feather" for several days, eliciting from the critics wherever she appeared the most commendatory notices.

Miss Sefton is not only a resident of Washington. She is a native of the Capital and a product of its educational institutions. Half those who go to the Columbia this week will know her as a personal friend.

Had Gabriel's Toe.

Gabriel, the little comedian who plays the title role in "Buster Brown," created some excitement at Ocean View, Va., last summer. He weighs only thirty-eight pounds, but nevertheless thinks himself an expert swimmer.

The surf around Ocean View abounds in crabs, and one morning Gabriel had secretly donned his baby's size bathing suit before a shriek echoed along the beach that startled the hotel guests from their reveries.

Gabriel had omitted the shriek, and his partner, Lamar, who plays the juvenile role in the attraction named, thinking he must have run afoul of a shark,

rushed into the water, clothes and all, to his rescue. A moment later he emerged bearing Gabriel on his back, to whose toes hung a huge crab. The young man now wears rubber boots when disporting himself in the surf.

Lines to Mr. Mansfield.

Mansfield, whose various talents all agree are known from Iliad to land, from sea to sea; Thy robes are new lustre to the scene impart; Add art to nature and to nature's art; While listening crowds still wonder still admiring, And find in thee the true Prometheus fire!

For who can doubt the once all-glorious stage Has lagged behind the genius of the age? Since players, unashamed, their shame admit— Their love of lucre and their lack of wit; For more contented grovel than we see, The love of fame excites their souls no more; Such are they now; but there was once a time When Garrick made dramatic art sublime; When Betterton avoak the tragic strain, And Quin and Macklin echoed it again. The lovers' love will be combined, And what was coarseness e'er, their taste refined;

Then Washington her sprightly art avowed, And Olive, triumphant, smiled upon the crowd; Then Abington with archness ruled the town— Charmed with her laugh and even with her frown. For such a stage, loved Goldsmith shaped his pen, And Dryden flourished in full honor then; For such a stage, grave Johnson wrote Irene And by his presence dignified the scene; For such a stage, famed Burke oft spoke in praise, And thrice great Sheridan received his bay.

But times have changed; the cursed thine of gold Has marched men's minds and soiled minds are cold. The vulgar appetite has vulgar taste, And what is paltry vulgar pleasure best; This empty creature and oh! shame, his wife, Devout of culture and half-dressed of life, Presume upon our children's seat to sit To judge of excellence and yawn at wit!

Away with such; and may a brighter day Brought back by Mansfield, long with Mansfield stay! My shades of former Genius press around; By their approval may he still be crowned; May their applause sustain his manful task; May their applause be all his life's reward!

Taught by Audiences.

Authors and Composers Learn From the Public.

Reginald De Koven said to a recent interviewer that he had written "Red Feather" in order to lay "Robin Hood's" ghost.

"Joe" Jefferson told me once, he said, "that I would rue the day I produced 'Robin Hood'; that I would be Robin's slave forever; that no matter what I might do, neither the critics would say 'Good, very good; perhaps, but not so good as Robin.' Mr. Jefferson said he had been cursed by 'Rip Van Winkle' in this way. He knew he had done more artistic things than 'Rip Van Winkle,' but the public would not admit it. And his prediction about me has come pretty nearly true. So I have written 'Red Feather' to prove that I can do as well, or better, than I did in 'Robin Hood.'"

Speaking of "Red Feather" when it was originally produced by the Van Studdiford opera company, Mr. De Koven said: "Neither Mr. Klein, Mr. Cook, nor myself did a thing to the opera for the first three nights. We simply sat in front and watched. For one audience teaches more than five years of dress rehearsals."

"We noted the applause—saw what points told. We noted what did not seem to go, jotted these things down and profited accordingly. The ideas our audiences gave us were legion. 'An umbrella audience' was one of them. It differs, not only in different cities, but in the same cities on different nights. It depends largely on what it's had to eat and the weather.

"For instance, an umbrella audience is the very worst audience that ever traveled by cab or trolley to worry a company of actors into fits of nervousness. It's raining, you see, and everyone who comes has braved the elements to see a show. It's a wet and uncomfortable audience, and it is in bad humor. It needs to be talked into a more cheerful mood. And that's what makes an umbrella audience the hardest under the sun for the actor to entertain."

Modern Stage Methods.

Frederic Bond's Apt Comment on Various New Conditions.

"The Actors' Earthly Paradise!" That is Fred Bond's description of polite vaudeville, and he professes to be a competent judge. Few of the younger comedians have had a more arduous or more successful career than Mr. Bond, heading the Chase bill this week.

"I do not wish it to be thought," continued Mr. Bond, "that I am either idle or unambitious, when I make this apparently extravagant estimate of the place of polite vaudeville in the actor's scheme of life. In undergoing the process of self-analysis and reflection I find, perhaps, that I am inclined to be pessimistic about the drama and the actor of today, as compared with conditions as they were when I was battling most strenuously for success as a legitimate comedian.

"But please don't consider me a 'has been' as they say; not by long odds, for I feel even more capable than ever of genuine acting. The fact is, however, that actors, like physicians and other professional men, are becoming specialists. Indeed, they are forced into it. The public demand for amusement, for plays and dramas, is so great, the theaters are so many, and the geniuses are so few, that actors and actresses by degrees are being thrust forward to fill the breach and to induce the public to paying the high prices charged by the regular theaters.

Failors—Not Playwrights.

"As a consequence of this playwrights have become literary tailors and similarly they cut and fit their products to the limited capabilities of stellar aspirants and claimants. The result is what actors call 'one-part plays,' wherein all the subordinate characters are 'simply feeders,' to use the technical term, but which might better be called satellites, made to revolve perform around the artificial central luminary.

"A manager nowadays, after he has obtained a play that suits his star, proceeds to select the supporting company. The actors are being thrust forward to fill the breach and to induce the public to paying the high prices charged by the regular theaters. The clothes are there and the actor must wear them. The consequence is that the modern actor finds himself hard