The Stage

Easter in this part of the country generally marks the beginning of the season's end, and good attractions are quite as scarce as good audiences. The better class of stars have all closed by May, and the votaries of Thespis settle down for a long and well-deserved rest. The result of this proceeding is a dearth of worthy combinations for the last weeks in April, and Washington is already beginning to feel the truth of this. There were only one or two meritorious companies in town last week, and the business was quite monopolized by the best of these, while the others had to satisfy themselves with the slimmest kind of houses. Nat C. Goodwin put on "An American Citizen," "A Gilded Fool" and "The Rivals" to record-creating audiences, the house being sold out often before the doors were open. "The Highwayman," a poor opera given by an excellent company, drew only fair crowds to the Lafayette, in spite of diminished competition, caused by the Columbia being dark. Jolly Fanny Rice returned to the Academy in "At the French Ball," and succeeded in doing fairly well, while Cora Tanner and "Alone in London" failed to keep up the standard, either of worth or business. Flynn and Sheridan's Big Sensation drew strongly at Kernan's, while a bill rather worse than usual had a slightly bad effect on the box office receipts of the Bijou.

Willie Collier comes to the National Theater this week in H. A. Souchet's "The Man from Mexico," and an all-star company of some magnitude produce for the first time on any stage, at the Lafayette Square Opera House, a romantic drama, entitled "That Lass o'Lowries." The Columbia will be dark, "Cuba's Vow" is the attraction at the Grand and another "Uncle Tom's Cabin" combination is to be seen at the Academy. "The Parisian Widows" will be on hand at Kernan's, and an excellent vaudeville bill is scheduled for the Bijou. The outlook for business is not of the best, but the attractions are varied, the competition limited, and other details permit of the mercurial manager trusting that war news will not leave his house altogether empty.

National—"The Man From Maine."

Beginning tomorrow night at the National Theater will be seen "The Man From Mexico" and, judging from all the enthusiastic encomiums said to have been showered upon it by the New York and Boston press and public, the week's engagement here should be all too short to satisfy the admirers of Willie Collier and his efficient company.

The farce is said to be full of almost interminably humorous and ingenious complications, surrounding the escapades of the man in the title role, who has had a wrangle with a police officer after an evening of conviviality, serves a thirty days' sentence on Blackwell's Island, as a result, and, to prevent any scandal, deceives his wife with the announcement that he is going to Mexico for a month. His prison life, under an assumed name,

MISS LOUISE ALLEN.

With Willie Collier in "The Man From Mexico."

offers opportunities for fun of which that clever farceur, Du Souchet, is said to have taken the utmost advantage, and which, under the skillful and artistic manipulation of Willie Collier, that quaintest of comedians, is spoken of as being illustrated and demonstrated in the most ingenious and altogether ludicrous fashion.

The author's play upon words and phrases which the English language and American colloquialisms admit is excruciatingly funny. The lines are all bright, but, naturally enough, the star has the best of them, and one witty and humorous sentence follows another in such quick succession that the audience is said to be laughing uproariously from the beginning to the end of the performance.

This is particularly the case in the second act, where Dan Mason is seen to the best advantage in his comic impersonation of Von Bulow Bismarck Schmidt, a fellow-prisoner of "The Man from Mexico," and where he is made the victim of the latter's grim humor in a way that is claimed to be convulsing. It is genuine American humor that one sees in "The Man from Mexico," humor which sparkles and scintillates in every line of the dialogue and in every situation, and which instantly appeals to the dullest mind, stirring the risibilities of an audience to the highest concert pitch. Wednesday and Saturday matinees will be given as usual.

Lafayette—"That Lass o' Lowrie's."

In the production of "That Lass o' Lowrie's" at the Lafayette Square Opera House, Washington will have another "first night." "That Lass o'Lowrie's" is a drama in five acts by Frances Hodgson Burnett and Rose Eytinge, the book of the same name having the literary effort that first brought Mrs. Burnett prominently before the public.

The McKee Rankin company, "all star," which presents this play, is said to be exceptionally strong. McKee Rankin, Rose Eytinge, Nance O'Neill, Andrew Robson, H. A. Weaver, Burwell Cuyler, Edward Lamb, Arthur Maitland, Ida Van Sicklen, Ricca Allen, Alice Evans, Mrs. John T. Raymond, Eugenie Besserer, Ricca Scott and Mamie Murray making a list of names rarely equalled. The management of the Lafayette have decided on a special popular scale of prices for the stay of this company and the regular rates have been greatly reduced.

Grand—"Cuba's Vow."

A cast, said to be of exceeding capability and an abundance of new and realistic scenery, will assist in making "Cuba's Vow," this week's offering at the Grand Opera House, a most attractive spectacle. In the cast, aside from Terese Deagle, Leander Blanden and L. D. Blondell, the latter of whom essays the role of Gen. Maceo, are said to be a number of well-known artists. There are claimed to be eight scenic sets, among which the more prominent are a view of Pinar del Rio, the stronghold of the insurgents; the harbor of Barcelona, Spain, Cabanas Prison, in connection with which is a realistic incident in the cause and subsequent incarceration of Evangelina Cisneros; the arrival of the famous boat, "The Three Friends," the Fortress of San Severino, Satan's Bridge, and other localities which have become familiar to readers of the Cuban situation.

The play does not attempt to glorify any action that may be questionable, but rather seeks to tell the story of Cuba's struggle for liberty in a truthful manner, garnishing a somewhat gruesome subject with a plot said to possess much literary ability. The story of the play deals with a vow of revenge made by Cuba Verona, who, returning to the hacienda of her father, a rich Cuban planter, has found her parents murdered and her home devastated. In the elucidation of the vow the tale of the country's struggle is interwoven among appropriate surroundings. "Cuba's Vow" is a play of the times, and one that may be popular with theatergoers long after Spain is humiliated and Cuba is free.

Academy—"Uncle Tom's Cabin."

The "Voodoo Festival" scene in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which comes to the Academy next week, will illustrate a peculiar phase of the negro superstitions in the South. Once each year on St. John's eve, the devotees meet amid the dark morasses of Lake Pontchartrain, and offer up to the "voodoo" their homage of gift and worship. Witch fires burn, charms and spells are woven, and the weird chant of singers and frenzied dance of the fanatics lends a grotesque uncanny effect to the scene. The bright colors in the costumes and the flashing torches of the worshipers are all characteristic of the negro love of strong effects and gaudy trappings. Huge alligators are seen lying about among the sedgy pools and fireflies flash and sparkle among the moss-grown oaks overhead. This scene is among the most impressive of the recent additions given the new version as presented by the Weber Company.

Bijou—Vaudeville.

Pretty Dot Davenport, said to be as vivacious a singing comedienne as ever appeared behind the footlights, is the headliner at the Bijou for the coming week. Side by side with this comes the announcement of the appearance of Miss Hamburg, assisted by Bruno Arnim, in a series of operatic selections woven into a comedy operatic sketch, entitled "Grand Opera in the Kitchen." These artists are said to be in the very front rank. The positive appearance of Kate Chase Sprague is promised. Miss Sprague has developed a refined musical and singing monologue into one of the most original and entertaining acts ever witnessed upon the vaudeville stage. Her dresses are said to be a feast for human eyes. Of her work the New York Journal says:

"Kate Sprague renders delightful solos on that difficult instrument, the harp, and sings classical and operatic selections with a well-cultivated voice. Her act "Just Like a Man," is witty and refreshingly novel."

Byron G. Harlan, possessor of the sweetest of all tenor voices has been retained for one more week, and assisted by Edward Moist, will present a series of new pictures and songs. The Brothers Armstrong, a pair of well-known comedians; Ford and Dot West, a sketch team of rare ability; Hadj Lessik, the wonderful Arab; Myrtle Trissider, the lovely singing soubrette; James Collins and Lucie Ray, the ever popular funmakers; Charles DeForest, in a comedy entitled "A Barker for a Day;" Thompson and Carter, with a bright comedy sketch, and the Bijou Burlesque Company complete what should prove an excellent bill.

Kernan's—"Parisian Widows."

Weber's "Parisian Widows," spoken of as the elite of all burlesque organizations, will be Manager Kernan's attraction at the Lyceum next week. During the present season this company has played all of the principal cities in the United States and the result is said to have been universal praise from press and public alike. In the company are Tenley and Simonds, the premier character comedians; Howard and Emerson, originators of illustrated songs; Letta Meridith, acknowledged the most perfectly formed woman of the vaudeville stage; the Cosmopolitan Trio, in operatic songs and bits of wit and humor; Boyce and Black, comedians; Raymond and Clark, the refined comedy duo; the Bornam Sisters, described as the "fascinators" in catchy songs and difficult dances; Lizzie Van, the dainty little entertainer and others. The concluding features is an original burlesque by Harry B. Marshall, entitled "A Night On Broadway." There will be matinees Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

THE PASSING SHOW.

It must have been a marine philosopher who remarked that the only real use of a log came in after the craft had foundered. However little significance this may have for a landlubber, it is true in many respects. Voltair replied to a rebuke won by hiss despair by saying that his failures only hurt him when he remembered that they had once been hopes of success. From these two standpoints there should be plenty of room for many theatrical managers, whose promising openings came early to grief, to drop a tear upon the mounds in which lie their buried dreams. For this has been a hard season—a bitter season, in contrast with which the much-talked-of one which preceded it fades into absolute nothingness.

As usual, the beginning of the theatrical year was made with a great deal of eclat and enthusiasm. Stars who had never before been heard of sprung up from all over the country like frogs after a rainstorm and managers with promising El Dorados were by no means scarce. The blithesome author was not behind either and announcements of new plays by newer playwrights filled the columns of the dramatic papers. Such sentences as "The well-known manager, Mr. Patrick Ryan, is contracting with George Murphy for his famous play, 'A Dollar and a Half,' in which the charming emotional actress, Cora Di Vorce, will star next month," were not rare and the average reader of stage news would have imagined that the exodus into the ranks of the theatrical profession had been enough to seriously jeopardize the welfare of all the rest. As a matter of fact something like one hundred and twenty new pieces were put on the road at the beginning of the season and started onward in their career with every prospect of success. Press agents were kept busy detailing the merits of their respective companies and managers sat in their offices dilating over the size of the out crop or shaking hands with themselves on account of the excellent promises another year had brought forth. Everything seemed bright and people connected with theatrical interests in that great mart of trade known as the "Rialto" felt that they were at liberty to congratulate themselves.

When it is realized how quickly many of these bright hopes faded, and the enormous loss and fearful disappointment that some of them brought, one cannot help feeling that there is more risk in that business than in any stock market in the world. Out of the sixscore productions, given as a rough estimate, about ninety-four represent the number of first presentations contemplated early in the year. Of these fifty-eight have failed utterly, and been taken from the boards, while only thirty-six have met with even partial success. Something like sixteen of the thirty presentations that had been tried before, fell through, while fourteen survived the adverse conditions under which all labored. Eleven of these, rehearsed and prepared for the road, or announced as being prepared, never saw the light of day, against the eight afterward successfully produced, though not thought of until the season was near its close. Forty-eight of the failures were dramas, the romantic school being largely represented, while only seven of them were really melodramatic in tendency. Comparatively few farces or musical comedies were removed, eleven being the exact number of the former, while the latter, probably because of extra expense, filled in the remaining twenty-five.

The successes consisted mainly of romantic and melodramas, the thirty-four of them still before the public proving less their ability to please than the superabundance of such pieces when contrasted with the failures in that line. Those still on the road are mainly given by the bigger stars in the theatrical horizon. From the last, sixteen musical comedies or operas and seven farces, whether legitimate or vaudeville, survived. Only one established star proved to be a falling one. A careful estimate shows that melodrama of the vivid and realistic sort was most successful, though farce was a close second and musical comedy not far behind. Romantic drama pleased least of all. In every case the failures far outnumbered the successes, frequently overshadowing them.

Through and through, from beginning to end, the season marked the verity of a rule concerning the survival of the fittest. The leading lights of the theatrical profession suffered very little, the smaller and less worthy aggregations being the ones to fall by the wayside. New plays did not do well, most of them proving altogether unworthy, and in many cases forcing the stars to fall back upon past features of their repertoires. This is the more lamentable when it is considered that never before has so large a percentage of dramatic writing been from the pens of American authors. To do them justice, however, it may be said that English productions have proved no more stable than those of native birth.

The reasons for a bad season are always wrapped in mystery and this year has proved no exception to the rule. A continuation of hard times, of course, had a great deal to do with it and a number of minor conditions almost as much. The fact that the better class of attractions made money tends to show that lack of merit was largely to blame for lack of business. The prevalence of stock companies, the extreme competition and, for the last three months, the restlessness caused by the war scare has undoubtedly reflected on what, apart from its amusement side, is undoubtedly one of the largest business interests in the United States.

As has already been stated the year has not been a bad one for stars. Nat C. Goodwin, Sol Smith Russell, Henry Miller, E. H. Sothern, John Drew, De Wolf Hopper, Francis Wilson, Frank Daniels, Joseph Jefferson, Richard Mansfield, Charles Coghlan, Digby Bell, Walker Whiteside, Robert Mantell, Roland Reed, Stuart Robson, W. H. Crane, William Gilette, Thomas E. Shea, E. S. Willard, James A. Herne, Herbert Kelcey, Andrew Mack, Chauncey Olcott, Minnie Madern Fiske, Ada Rehan, Julia Arthur, Maude Adams, Julia Marlowe, Lillian Russell, Della Fox, May Irwin, Modjeska, Anna Held, Effie Shannon, Fanny Rice, Marie Wainwright, Fanny Davenport and others justly celebrated as being at the top of their several lines of work have not done in the least badly, eight or ten having played wonderfully successful seasons.

Katherine Kidder, Henry E. Dixey, Wilton Lackaye, Otis Skinner, Auguste Van Beine, Louis James, Frederick Warde, Robert Downing, Verona Jarbeau, Marie Jansen, Eugenie Blair, Mr. and Mrs. Russ Whytal, Edward Harrigan, Edward Milton Royle, Al. Lipman, Thomas Q. Seabrooke, Camille D'Arville, Marie Dressler, Madame Viarda, and others of lesser prominence are among the unfortunate ones. William Barry and Charlotte Behrens are dead, as is also Margaret Mather. Julia Arthur and E. S. Willard were taken seriously ill, and Fanny Davenport was not, at one time, expected to live. Variety shows, cheap burlesques, minstrels and magicians have averaged very well on their year's work.

Among the plays that may be named as positive successes are: "A Lady of Quality" "The Little Minister," "The Countess Valeska," "A Royal Box," "The Master," "The Hoosier Doctor," "A Royal Warrant," "The Man in Black," "The Wedding Day," "The Swell Miss Fitzwell," "The Electrician," "The French Maid," "The Highwayman," "The Idol's Eye," "'Way Down East," "What Happened to Jones," "The Wrong Mr. Wright," "Secret Service," "Under the Red Robe," "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," "My Friend From India," "A Bachelor's Romance," "A Bachelor's Honeymoon," "The Man From Mexico," "A Milk White Flag," "A Stranger in New York," "A Virginia Courtship," "Nathan Hale," "The Cat and the Cherub," "Shore Acres," "The Man-o'War's Man," "The Princess and the Butterfly," "The Moth and the Flame," "The Tree of Knowledge," "The Conquerers," "An Irish Gentleman," "Cumberland '61," "At the French Ball," "The Jucklins," "Shall we Forgive Her," "The Adventure of Lady Ursula," "The Sign of the Cross," "The White Heather," "The Serenade," "Jack and the Beanstalk," "The Ballet Girl," "The Bride Elect," "Half a King," "The Telephone Girl," "One Summer's Day," "The Belle of New York," "The Geisha," "An American Citizen," "El Capitan," "Heartsease," "Sowing the Wind," and one or two others. Daly's Company and the Castle Square Opera Company have also done remarkably well.

The list of failures is much longer, and prevents a retrospective from being altogether pleasant. In the first place, Fanny Davenport's new drama, "A Soldier of France," was early taken from the bills, and a revival of "Rosemary," "The Good Mr. Best," Henderson's presentation of "The Crystal Slipper," "Nature," "Very Little Faust," "My Wife's Step-Husband," "A Puritan Romance," "Christopher, Jr.," "The Maid of Marblehead" and Henry E. Dixey's "Thoroughbred" shared the same lamentable fate. "Wang" remained out only a few months; Camille d'Arville brought her tour with "Peg Woffington" to a speedy close; the scenery of Thomas Q. Seabrooke's "Papa Gou Gou" was attached in this city, and the revival of the piece entitled "A Normany Wedding" fared no better in New York. Anna Held killed "La Poupee" early in the year; Marie Dressler's "Courted into Court" closed shortly after its opening; Manager Frohman did not find "The Salt of the Earth" profitable; "A Southern Romance" did not satisfy first-class audiences, and was taken out with a cheapened company to do still poorer business; "The Sporting Duchess" suffered the same humiliation, and after losing a lot of money for E. H. Sothern, "Change Alley" was taken off the bills. Furthermore, Wilton Lackaye was forced to abandon "A Royal Secret;" Frederick Warde could not pay expense with "The Rise of Isklander," and "The Ward of France" was a miserable failure from the first; "A Paris Model" never got beyond its trial performance, and both "Our Boys" and "The Old Coat" failed to please Gotham.

John Drew, without acknowledging the wretchedness of the piece, understood the expediency of getting rid of "A Marriage of Convenience" some little time ago. Auguste Van Biene failed in everything he undertook, a revival of "The Heart of Maryland" in this country did not prove profitable, and Robert Downing soon brought his first attempt of the year to a close. Like "A Marriage of Convenience," Herbert Kelcey and Effie Shannon found "A Coat of Many Colors" worthless, and substituted "The Moth and the Flame," while "For Fair Virginia," after a wretched season here, went to join Belasco's war play in London. Corinne's production of "An American Beauty" turned out badly; a revival of "Miss Philadelphia" nearly forced the company into walking home; "1999" was a dismal failure; "The Paris Doll" and "The Broadway Girl" did not prove attractive; "In Gay Paris" closed early; "The Circus Girl" disbanded after leaving Washington; "One Round of Pleasure" and "The Whirl of the Town" found New York the safest place to founder, and one of the companies giving "The Girl from Paris" left the ring two months ago. "A Hired Girl" was frequently disbanded and reorganized, and "Bonnie Scotland" did not find it advisable to return to the road.

To continue with musical comedies, "The Nancy Hanks" was condemned all over the country, though it is still running, "The Isle of Champagne" has not had the smoothest road to travel, and "Bo Peep" never reached Washington. Bert Haverly and Laura Biggar abandoned "A Trip to Chinatown," "The Pacific Mail" had a narrow escape from stranding, "Little Monte Christo" has not been heard of, "In Town" returned to London, Grau's Celebrities never celebrated, and "A Boy Wanted" met trouble on the Pacific Coast. The saddest failure of all was that of Katherine Kidder's original play, though the fall from grace of Madame Viarda, the Polish actress, was not without its pathetic features. Bertha Creighton, Isabelle Evesson and Estelle Clayton were a trio of new stars who did not set the world afire, and returned to quiet places in small type, and Eugenie Blair is said to have broken off her opening tour a trifle hurriedly.

"The Privateer" died about the time that "Cuba's Vow" was forgotten but did not return so quickly, while "In Old Madrid" never reached this city, "Under the Polar Star" and "The First Born" did not succeed, "A Breezy Time" continued itself to small towns, "Old Lavender" has been doing a frightful business, the "Brownies" have not materialized here and "At Piney Ridge" closed its season before the usual time. "Human Heart" had trouble in the South a few months back, "Captain Impudence" was unfortunate and "The Indian" was scalped some time ago. "Patent Applied For" has been retired. "The City of New York" fell into the slough of despond and "In the Name of the Czar" did not prove a potent watchword in this country of freedom.

"The Captain of the Nonesuch," "The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown" and "The Sunshine of Paradise Alley" were not much heard from after the first months of the year and have closed. "His Little Dodge" did not "go" in New York and was never tried elsewhere, and "The First Violin" has just left its retirement. "Phorso" has not been used by Maud Adams and awaits production by the Empire Stock Company. Mansfield has not fulfilled his promise of giving us "The Master of Ceremonies" and "Timon of Athens," Julia Marlowe has not revived "A Winter's Tale" and Ada Rehan will not produce "Joan of Arc." "Prince and Prima Donna" and "The Fight for Honor" have both been sidetracked, while "When Greek Meets Greek" was never dramatized, despite announcements to the contrary. "Miss Plaster of Paris" did not take form and "The Marquis of Michigan" has been put off until next season. "The Girl From 'Frisco'" shared this fate and a long list of other presentations promised at the beginning of the season have only gone to swell the list of disappointed hopes and dead ambitions.

Of course, with the number of minor companies continually beginning and ending their careers and the almost equal number of organizations whose winnings and losings are wrapped in mystery, it is impossible to obtain a complete and invulnerably correct list of the successes and failures of the year. Many of each have been among the smallest and poorest combinations—companies so infinitesimal in their importance that it would be manifestly unfair to compare or balance them with high class attractions. Much of such a list must also hang on opinion but, in general, the above accounting will be found exceptionally accurate. And it teaches a lesson to aspiring managers that will never be learned, for next year and the one after and so on so long as theaters exist there will be venturesome spirits at the opening of the battle that will be hopeless ambitions at its close. Last season was really a bad one, however, and several of the managers whose attractions failed then may succeed next time. "While there's life there's hope."

Save for some amateur affairs, the Columbia Theater will be dark again this week. While this narrows the field of local amusement considerably, it also reflects great credit upon Managers Luckett and Dwyer, who, at considerable pecuniary loss, are carrying out the excellent policy of playing good bills or none at all. Two of their bookings recently failed them, and after a strenuous effort to secure something equally good, they decided that darkness was better than inveigleing the public into visiting performances of inferior worth. This is an excellent policy, and should recommend itself to many other directors of theaters, both here and elsewhere.

Orchestras in the different houses continued playing the national airs last week, generally while the crowds were filing out after the show. At the Lafayette, Kernan's and the Academy "The Star Spangled Banner" was sung, and every attraction in town, including Nat C. Goodwin, made frequent allusions to the present crisis. Everywhere these little acts met with enthusiastic demonstrations of popular approval, audiences even joining in singing the enspiriting choruses. The musical directors of this city have shown great patriotism in the existing state of affairs, and deserve the thanks of everyone. Fanny Rice gave little metal flags on Monday night as appropriate souvenirs of her performance. The next move should be in decorating the playhouses in accordance with other buildings on business streets. This would show considerable regard, not only for the nation, but for the patriotism of its people.

FRIENDS OF LAST WEEK.

If there is one form of literature more amusing than another in this country of ours is the averags "mash note." A prevalent opinion regarding the abnormal appetite of the standard chorus girl is responsible for many of these epistles, while the writers of all seem to take it granted that morality is a dead letter in the theatrical profession. For the most part the notes are absolutely harmless, for, while the recruit for stellar or chorister's honors may feel hurt or worried over them, she soon grows indifferent, laughs heartily at the impudence of the writer, accepts the missive as a perquisite of office, and retains it much as an Indian keeps the scalps of his victims. All the "mash notes" do not come from deluded college youths or gilded young men, illiteracy in such communications being not infrequent. The aged rascal is much in evidence, but not so often successful, the average professional woman having better things to do than wait at stage doors with her skirts held high, as pictured by certain illustrated papers.

Age, condition and general appearance seems to have little to do with the matter, Marie Bates having once confessed to receiving a missive of the kind named while playing Mrs. Murphy, in "Chimmie Fadden," while the Russell Brothers and Richard Harlowe all have, or claim to have, trunks of them. "The Callboy," a brilliant and interesting contributor to the columns of the Dramatic Mirror, has been publishing his collection of late and the chief purpose of the present article is to append to it two specimens seen the other day. They were in the hands of Truly Shattuck, the charming vocalist who pleased audiences all last week at the Bijou. The first was scrawled on a big sheet of rough, blue-ruled paper, freshly torn from a tablet and multifolded into a small yellow envelope. The writing was in pencil and the author evidently believed both in short hand and phonetic spelling. The generosity of his offer is said to have tempted Miss Shattuck sorely but she bravely resisted and added it to her collection.

The letter runs, "My deer Miss shattuck—deer miss: having sean you work this week at the bijou and being much pleesed by it i would like to meat you. dont Believe that i am a masher for i am not but i like yur work and i wood like to meat you. If you can be at The Stag doar tonight After yur turn no wun wood ever no annything abot it and i think i wood show you a Grate time with out saying annything abot it. now, my deer miss Shattuck, du meat me and we will go over to sum place and have al the beer and oisters You want at my expence and i remane yurs ever Toony. P. S.—Yu will no me by my having a pip in My mouth and a little flag in my hat. I will stand for the beer."

The correctness of the last sentence lead Miss Shattuck into the idea that the author was either directed by some one else at that moment or that the thought of the amber liquid brought into his mind that divine inspiration which comes only once in a lifetime. The second letter was written in a fair hand on ruled note paper and read as follows:

"My Very Dear Miss Shattuck: I want to write and tell you how much I like the turn you do this week. I think it is the best I ever saw. I should like to know you and if you would care to know me all you will have to do is to nod this afternoon from the stage and I will see you tonight. Of course, whatever happens, I want you to keep this quiet because I have a wife that might raise Ned if she knew it. Do let me see you and don't forget to let me know. ——."

Both of which go to show that Washington need not fear losing caste because of the lack of stage door hangers-on. Miss Shattuck has filed both letters and will keep them as souvenirs of her visit to the Capital City.

A delightful bit of real comedy was that done by Jerome Sykes, as Constable Foxey Quiller, in "The Highwayman." From a part reminiscent of other and better ones, he constructed a legitimate character work of the highest order. The little details generally forgotten in such work were carried out in the full, and aided in making the one promising hit in the performance really enjoyable. He seemed to fit into the characteristics of a strange role, and give ease and finish to all of it. His little by-words, "Have a care; have a care, says Foxey Quiller, showing his intelligent teeth," "Always suspect a man with a big appetite," and "If ever I saw jail-bird whiskers, them is those," were heartily laughed over, and will be remembered quite as long as Frank Daniels' "Am I a wizard?" "The Highwayman" without Constable Quiller would have been as flat as a home-made biscuit, and Constable Quiller without Jerome Sykes would have been flatter still.

The latest war joke is a wonder. Gordon and Hughes told it last week at Kernan's, and it fairly brought down the house. "Mark Hanna has moved into his office, away from the ground-floor of the building in which he works," said Miss Gordon. "Why?" was asked. "Because," replied the original speaker, "he can't do business 'on the level.'"

This is a world of great expectations from small foundations and perhaps one was not right last week in not being satisfied with the support vouchsafed Nat C. Goodwin. This is not saying anything against the greater part of the cast for, while its work in "A Gilded Fool" was disappointing, most of the members were excellent in the other two bills. But one is likely to think that a company playing with a comedian like Goodwin should be as perfect in its smaller portrayals as in its larger ones. This was neither true of "An American Citizen" nor "The Rivals." In the former, particularly, the Otto Strohle of Louis Payne was a missing factor that grated on the nerves of a critical observer. Mr. Payne has no more idea how to conduct himself on the stage than would a yearling calf and he seemed quite as awkward. His attempt at an accent was simply ludicrous and his absolute disregard of small points was painful. Worse still there was absolutely no intelligence in his reading. That "collosal" on which so much depends might have been spoken by a parrot for the meaning it carried. Altogether Mr. Goodwin did not get a gem in engaging Mr. Payne and only the approaching end of the season prevents one suggesting a remedy.

"Another clever woman gone wrong," is what one might easily say of Cora Tanner, who revived "Alone in London" last week at the Grand Opera House. Miss Tanner is really an excellent and capable actress whom active theatergoers remember in a dozen different difficult roles, but in attempting to star she has greatly overreached herself. Besides her own ability a candidate for stellar honors must have a respectable supporting company and a good play, neither of which Miss Tanner's backers have provided for her. Still there is no reason why her inability to win out this time should disqualify her for future reputation and a careful search for the thoughtless starring bee in her bonnet and the application of a little good, hard sense to the insect's tail will give her a chance to work up next time before beginning to work down.

Fanny Rice is another little woman who has been seriously injured by the stinginess of her management. There are few brighter, jollier or more winsome comediennes in this country and her excellent work, both in "A Jolly Surprise" and "At the French Ball," have stamped her as being a winning card in every sense of the word. But when people want to see one person play they go to a vaudeville house where they are not forced to pay big prices for the purpose of hearing pages of poor padding delivered by inferior entertainers. There is just one capable actor or actress with Miss Rice and that one joined her only recently. As a result the piece drags and grows wearisome when the addition of a few bright specialty people would make the entire thing most enjoyable. Dr. Purdy can hardly expect to reap rich returns, even from so talented a woman as his wife, unless he expends something in making her performance pleasant to audiences. He should look to this and if he does not Miss Rice, in her own interest, should insist on receiving efficient and capable support.

A long interview with the stage manager might help Maxine Elliott a trifle more than her devoted admirers imagine. The truth is that success has gone to Miss Elliott's head and, without spoiling her beauty and, therefore, her reputation, has certainly injured her work. The interest and intelligence she used to display is gone and instead one notices stiltedness and mechanical regularity. Too much experience in one play has undoubtedly had some share in this, but Miss Elliott herself is to blame for most of it, and only prompt effort will save her losing a great amount of the charm that has made her famous.

A diversion from the usual wearisome and ungrammatical parody with its cheap bids for applause over the Maine disaster was given by Maxwell and Simpson last week at Kernan's. Mr. Maxwell had a well-written and beautifully worded set of verses upon the "Heroes of the Maine," which he sung to the air of "The Banks of the Wabash." In it is no nonsensical firey horseplay, but a dozen touches of real pathos that are given with so much feeling as to bring the tears to one's eyes. The illustrations represent a number of fine scenes, among them portraits of the dead sailors, and a view of Havana harbor by moonlight that, when one thinks of the brave boys sleeping there, is simply powerful. The song was applauded to the echo nightly and was the undoubted feature of the entertainment.

Oh, Marier, rier, rier,
She's the girl I most admire,
And if her love I could acquire
A pianner I would buy her,
Or on battlefields expire,
For Marier, rier, rier.

sung Fanny Rice as she hurried around her dressing-room last night in search of some bit of make-up or other. "I'm not using that song now," she explained after a time, "but I like it, just the same. It strikes me as being a rich burlesque on the average 'girl' ballad. I wonder where my rabbit's foot is—the one I use for my face, not a specimen kept for good luck. Oh, here we are! Do you know, I never see one of those moving pictures without thinking what an excellent scene it would make to have the camera take an actress just as she is emerging from one costume and getting into another. In the second act of this play I am obliged to change from an evening gown to bloomers, dancing shoes and a pipe in two minutes. How do I do it? Well, I just throw myself into things. Many of these changes are made by wearing one costume over another, but there is no such chance here. I have to hustle, and then just make it. But how the scene would go in a vitascope.

"Another thing of interest is this cabinet. I saw the thing worked in Paris first and it seemed such a novelty that I tried it, and made a hit. And so I still keep it, although it is very hard on the voice, and costs me many sore throats. A little dressing must be done in there, too. A black robe has to be worn to keep the body from being seen, the face whitened to show prominently, and then the little mimic body attached to the neck. I suppose when all is finished I look like one of these caricatures with a small body and big head.

"Some of these times you will see me in legitimate comedy, and there is money in it for the man who can write me a good one. Of course, people at present expect me to make them laugh, and I am told that I succeed, but I have higher ideals, and wish to be remembered for more serious work. I do not sing 'coon' songs now, because I think they have been abused, and I despise the commonplace. Better anything than that. Are they playing the overture? And I not dressed yet! Now, I will have to hurry. You'll excuse me, I'm sure. Good-by."

"Yes, Foxy Quiller is a character new to the boards and it proves to be one of the most unique I have ever had the honor of assuming. It is full of good lines and I must say I like it. One of my jokes takes well since the war scare began but used to fall flat before. Someone says Captain Scarlet is a regular walking battery and I reply, 'Well, if he is a walking battery I'll be a disappearing gun carriage.' It always brings applause now where it seldom won even laughter before. So you see that grim visaged war is not without its benefits after all—at least to the actor. Have a cigar? No? I'm glad of that—it's my last. Come again, old man, whenever you can get past the doorkeeper. I'll always be glad to see you even—there's my cue!" And without another word Jerome Sykes, alias Foxey Quiller, ran on to amuse the audience with his sneering, scornful scowl and his intelligent teeth.

Cora Tanner was at her hotel when The Times man called yesterday. She was also at lunch and the fact that both sardines and conversation were absorbed at the same time did not improve either. "The time for the legitimate revival of melodrama is at hand," she said earnestly, and with as much feeling as one can exhibit when the companion to the hand gesturing holds a sandwich. "We have had too much comedy and romantic drama. Clear-cut and strongly-built plays will now be well received and next season will find me again at the head of my own company. Like Rose Coghlan and others I have tried all branches of work, including vaudeville, but I like this best and shall stick to it. Well, I shall hope to see you again and until then, good-by."

"Yes, I'm going to shelve 'A Gilded Fool,'" said Nat Goodwin, as he hopped off his bicycle the other day, redolent in perspiration and a reddish black sweater, as well as some other garments. "There never was much in the piece, and it has to go. 'An American Citizen' will also follow in the way of the time-worn, although it has been a very close and dear friend to me for the last three years or thereabouts. Next year will find me using 'Nathan Hale' exclusively, or at least only interrupted by an occasional performance of 'The Rivals.' Yes, we have had an excellent week in Washington and have, in fact, done well all over the country. I like this city, though, and if I were going to——" And in a few moments the jovial Goodwin was imparting his affection for Washington in a manner sufficiently eloquent to make the heart of a native glow, but which hardly afforded food for an interview.

PRESS AGENTS' ROUND TABLE

"One of the best and most jovial good fellows in the world is Willie Collier," said the press representative of "The Man From Mexico" a pair of days ago. "He is a good-looking young chap, too, and has but one physical defect, he is color blind. Sometimes this leads into serious trouble for the comedian, but more often the results are simply funny. A case in point occurred a few weeks ago when we played a one-night stand in Pennsylvania. The theater had been occupied by a local patriotic association the day before and we found their stuff littering up the dressing rooms in frightful shape. We managed to keep our costumes from getting mixed with theirs, however, until the second act of the play, when Mr. Collier comes in dressed as a convict.

"The lines before his entrance lead up to it and his appearance generally brings a laugh. Well, as I said, the prison scene came last and someone got off a sentence about 'here he comes in his somber dress' and then he came. The audience laughed, too, but not in the right way and the remainder of the players, after getting over their surprise, had to exercise great care to keep from going into convulsions. For Collier, in his color blindness, had mistaken a cast-off costume made of the striped portion of an American flag, for a convict suit and looked like a caricature of Uncle Sam more than anything else in the world. They haven't stopped twitting him about it yet and I—well I was so far ahead of the show that I couldn't see it and I'm not willing to vouch for its truth but it sounds well and I suppose that's all you want."

There is an excellent story going the rounds on Frank Daniels, whose "Idol's Eye" played the banner business of the year a few weeks ago at the Columbia Theater. The tale is very timely and what is more is absolutely true. It seems that Daniels has a friend who is strongly patriotic and who has been fairly worrying the life out of him to enlist. The comedian, however, has still several weeks of a very successful season to finish and did not relish the idea quite as much as pure love of country would have dictated. And so the friend worried him night and day until he became heartily sick of the whole business. Then an idea struck him and, one afternoon when he was being troubled more than ever, he sprung it. After the patriot had talked some time Daniels interrupted by asking if his comrade would do likewise if he enlisted. Overjoyed the gentleman replied in the affirmative, matters were quickly settled and the two set off to the nearest recruiting station. There both signed applications and after a formal examination the friend was admitted. "Good," he exclaimed. "I'm willing to make this sacrifice to get you in." Daniels laughed. "What's up," queried the astonished volunteer. The entertainer was about to reply when the recruiting officer replied for him. "You're too short by an inch," he said. "Rejected!" And it is said that the friend is anxious for war to start so that he can begin penance for making a fool of himself.

NEXT WEEK.

John Drew will begin an engagement at the National Theater a week from tomorrow night, when he will present a play altogether new to the city, "One Summer's Day." It is described as a love story, classed as a comedy, and is from the pen of a young English author-actor, Henry V. Esmond, London playgoers seemed to have liked it, for it was staged at the Comedy Theater September 15 last, and only withdrawn a few weeks ago, thus giving it a run of over six months there. Mr. Drew played it for seven weeks at Wallack's Theater, New York, though originally it was only booked for five weeks. "One Summer's Day" is of the present date, healthy in sentiment, and has to do with a band of more or less jolly English picnickers on a picturesque Thames island. Its scenes are laid altogether out of doors—the first two acts taking place in a sunlit corner of this island, while the last is placed on a moonlit lawn. Mr. Drew's manager, Charles Frohman, is said to have shown his best enterprise in these stage settings. Indeed, he is declared to have given to John Drew this season in two plays the most artistic frame in which that actor's work has been placed since he became a star, six years ago. The cast of "One Summer's Day" will be nearly double that necessary for "A Marriage of Convenience." Matinees will be given Wednesday and Saturday. The sale of seats begins Thursday next.

Sousa's "The Trooping of the Colors," the monster international spectacle, of which so much is being written just now, will be produced in this city on May 11 and 1, at the Lafayette Square Opera House. Of this spectacle the Pittsburg Times says as follows:

"The Trooping of the Colors," Sousa's new musical patriotic spectacle was given its first production last night at Pittsburg Carnegie Music Hall. The audience was large and thoroughly in the humor for a performance of the kind. The whole thing is admirably worked up, and everything possible is introduced to appeal to the pride and patriotism of not only native-born American, but Americans by adoption.

"The Spirit of '76" dominated not only the production, but the audience. Everyone, from white-haired men and women to shrill-voiced children, joined in a wild outburst of cheering when, near the finale of the piece, the United States military and marine forces marched on the stage with the flutter of nearly 200 flags around and above them. Several of America's best-known patriotic songs and hymns were given powerful renditions, and the audience, as each concluded, made the hall ring with enthusiastic cheering. One of the features is the entrance of the Continentals—a white-haired, feeble man, jealously holding the American flag, while on one side is a younger man, fifing "Yankee Doodle," and on the other a stripling beating an old-fashioned drum.

Then came British grenadiers, saluted by the chorus with "God Save the Queen;" next, the German infantry, while the blare of the band and the voices of the big chorus filled the place with the stirring notes of "Die Wacht Am Rhein;" next, preceded by the singing of the solo of the "Marseillaise," came some French zouaves; then in marched a standard bearer of Ireland, who was greeted with loud applause, and behind him the Scotchmen, headed by bag-pipers.

Then came the boys in blue, and the audience seemed never to weary of cheering the United States infantry and marines, as they ranged themselves in front along the stage. Then everybody joined in singing "The Stars and Stripes Forever," which was repeated again and again, the enthusiasm reaching a climax when "The Star Spangled Banner" was sung, with each member of the chorus waving a small American flag in time to the music.

The performance will be repeated this afternoon and evening.

BRIEFLY TOLD.

Two handsome souvenirs of different successes now running in New York have been received at The Times. One is an ornamental jar, silver coated and sent as a testimonial of the one hundred and fiftieth performance of "The White Heather." The second is a silver-plated or lacquered plate, handsomely decorated and engraved with the information that it commemorates the fiftieth presentation of Henry Miller's "Master."

Because of a binding engagement elsewhere Mr. Geoffrey Stein, who did some of the best work of the Columbia Stock Company last Summer will not be seen here during the coming supplementary season.

Robert Hilliard and Bob Fitzsimmons are to b jointly featured in a new melodrama. "How have the mighty fallen" —and which way?

Whenever managers want to revive some old play it is wonderful how invulnerably and unanimously the public begins to express its coincidences with their opinions.

Clyde Fitch wrote "Beau Brummel" when he was twenty-two years of age—and hasn't gotten over it yet.

"Northern Lights" may be given a production in London. If the run of war plays keeps up the Britishers will soon begin to imagine that our Army is trained on the stage.

Jerome Sykes and Joseph O'Mara have