A touch of hot weather, a dearth of meritorious attractions, and the presence of Buffalo Bill's Wild West—all prophetic of the coming of summer—served last week to keep the local theatrical business at its lowest ebb. Six houses, which has come to be Washington's regular quota since the closing of the Lafayette, solicited patronage, and while five were comparatively well filled nightly, even that quintette did nothing astonishing. Over at the National one of those strange organizations which the Frohmans occasionally send out with the presumable idea of teaching the public how to appreciate their more worthy companies, presented Anson Pond's antiquated melodrama, "Her Atonement." When it is remarked that the combination was suitably rewarded those who witnessed the production will know that it was given to empty benches. The Frawleys staged Augustus Thomas' "Alabama" beautifully at the Columbia and managed to secure the record of the period, while more than half the colored population and some of the white heard the Black Patti and saw her "Troubadours" at the Academy. An exceptional vaudeville bill established no new standards at the Grand, Phil Sheridan's "City Sports" drew fair-sized assemblies to Kernan's, and the Bijou's receipts remained at their usual high mark. Incidentally, the Elks' Benefit, on Tuesday, netted the charity fund of that order a very considerable sum, and the Sousa concert, on Thursday, was well attended. Colonel Cody's show brought out the ordinary crowd of people willing to undergo the discomfort of board seats and a burning sun for the privilege of seeing the gallant scout and his assistants shoot at glass balls and imitation Spaniards.

For the coming week only one new thing is promised—a military melodrama, which is to be put on at the Academy. The piece is by Jean Mawson, and bears the significant title of "A Daughter of Cuba." Alice Nielsen, who made an excellent impression last fall at the Lafayette, brings back Richard Golden, Marguerite Sylva, Joseph Herbert, Jennie Hawley, Joseph Cawthorn, and "The Fortune Teller" to the National. "Alabama," at the Columbia, gives way to Robert Hilliard's "Lost—Twenty-four Hours," in which T. Daniel Frawley is to play the leading role, while Milton and Dollie Nobles, Gemma Jewell, and the De Forrests head the vaudeville bill to be offered at the Grand. Harry Bryant's "Australian Beauties" visit Kernan's, and the usual programme holds good at the Bijou. Geraldine Farrar, a vocalist for whom much is promised, will be heard Wednesday at the Lafayette, and will probably do a large business, not only because of her own merit, but as a result of the "hustling" of George Rawlings, who is acting as her manager. Nothing big in the way of receipts can be prophesied for the week, but it is likely that the combinations in town will average well.

Columbia—"Lost—24 Hours."

It is to jovial, capable Wilton Lackaye, a Washingtonian by birth, if a New Yorker by inclination, that tradition lays the escapade which furnished the authors of "Lost—Twenty-four Hours" with material for their farce. The erstwhile Svengali had been touring an unlimited number of one-night stands and when he reached the festive Rialto his inclinations are said not to have been in the line of peace and quiet. Instead Mr. Lackaye is supposed to have hunted up a number of his friends and with them to have continued such a round of good fellowship that when he was finally put to bed at the Lambs' Club a good day and night elapsed before his awakening. The actor's inability to understand this lapse of time and the numerous mistakes which came out of the affair proved the best sort of foundation for a comedy, and Robert Hillyard's former vehicle was the result.

Of course, one need not explain that Mr. Lackaye did not quite get himself into the series of perplexities and complexities which are made to pursue Dick Swift in "Lost—Twenty-four Hours." A broken engagement with E. M. Holland and one or two like bothers comprised the player's troubles. Young Swift, however, is made a married man whose wife has gone away for a brief visit and comes home while he is still expecting her on the morrow. A pre-marital sweetheart also turns up in time to be caught embracing the chap when his spouse enters. She is introduced as Miss Swift, a long absent sister. In order to punish the benedict for this lie the girl proceeds to such extremes as not only weave further difficulties about him but as also tangle his brother, a young clergyman of sanctimonious mein and faultless habits. All these additions to the original theme provide a most amusing farce and one which should be excellently done at the Columbia.

In the presentation T. Daniel Frawley will make his first public appearance this season and much is anticipated of his work in the role of Dick Swift. Harry Corson Clarke will have abundant opportunities for dry fun-making in the part of the extremely good curate, while Selene Johnson's first chance at laughter-provoking will be given her in the character of the flirtatious young woman who causes Swift so much trouble, and Mary Van Buren will be the confiding wife. Mrs. F. M. Bates is to be seen as an old lady with missionary tendencies, Georgia Welles interprets the role of her daughter, Geoffrey Stein reads the lines of the individual with general propensities for love making and Alfred Hickman, Corinne Parker, Harry Gwynette, Frank Mathieu, and Thomas Phillips complete the cast. It is promised that the scenery will be correct and elaborate.

National—"The Fortune-Teller."

"My ambition has never been to shine alone among an aggregation of inferior people," said Alice Nielsen to a Times man when last "The Fortune Teller" was seen in Washington. "To me it seems a much finer thing to be counted the best member of an admirable company." Had this statement been made before the date set for Miss Nielsen's first local appearance as a star it might have been traced to the direct influence of a press agent, and so quickly forgotten, but the reporter secured his interview after having witnessed her production, and so took the remark with due seriousness. The former prima donna of the Bostonians certainly carried with her a cast capable of making good any boast.

At that time there were and there are now with Miss Nielsen a number of the best known people in the operatic field. Primarily, of course, her organization includes Eugene Cowles, the big basso, whose reputation makes any comment upon him unnecessary. Then there is Richard Golden, the original "Old Jed Prouty," who was once a star in "The Isle of Champagne," and there are also Joseph Herbert, a comedian who has won his title to big type by means of a series of emphatic successes, and Joseph Cawthorn, whose experience with "Miss Philadelphia" will be remembered. Marguerite Sylva, creator of the title role in "The French Maid;" Jennie Hawley, a one-time member of the Boston Ideals; Frank Rushworth, a tenor with few peers; Paul Nicholson, W. F. Rochester, Billie Norton, and May Boley, finish up what is undoubtedly an incomparable list of players.

Of "The Fortune Teller" itself it is sufficient to remark that Victor Herbert, who is responsible for "The Serenade," "The Idol's Eye," and "The Wizard of the Nile," never turned out a more melodious composition. Those who heard the opera when it was being presented here before can hardly have forgotten its charming opening chorus, the Italian finale of the first act, the Sousaesque swing of the march which ends the second, "Always Do as People Say You Should," "But Only in the Play," "The Serenade of Nations," "The Gipsy Love Song," or the magic Hungarian czardas of the initial scene.

Harry B. Smith's libretto also offers some very enjoyable features, among them the influenza story, which half of Washington was repeating a week after "The Fortune Teller" left. The lyrics of the piece are said to be jingling, its lines bright, and its complications ludicrous. "The Fortune Teller" has been doing an enormous business throughout the country, and is now on its way to Chicago, where it will be seen for the second time this year. En route it stops at the National Theatre for a return engagement, which begins tomorrow evening.

Grand—Vaudeville.

If there is any single condition known to mankind which has been more exaggerated and vulgarized on the stage than drunkenness it would be a difficult matter to find that condition. The inebriate has been especially overworked in vaudeville and the result is that a mere mention of the fact that a comedian has "a great scene" of that sort is sufficient to keep people away from the theatre. In "Why Walker Reformed," the sketch which Milton and Dollie Nobles are to present this week at the Grand, it is said that a rather new type of intoxicated individual has been evolved and the "San Francisco Call" has not hesitated to dub the manner in which Mr. Noble portrays the "jagologist" a notable piece of acting. Both comedietta and interpreters have been highly praised and there is every prospect that they will thoroughly delight local amusement-lovers.

But the Nobles are not the only headliners marked for the coming week at the Grand, among those who share honors with them being the De Forrests, who call themselves "whirlwind dancers." This team

Dollie Nobles at the Grand.

is of Americans who recently met with considerable success on the Continent and have returned for a brief time to their native land. They present two specialties, "Danse et Valse Superb" and "La Poupee Elastique." In the latter Miss De Forrest represents a rubber doll which her partner does not hesitate to bend this way and that and to throw about the stage. The act seems to be a clever novelty.

A treat is also promised in Gemma Jewell, a soprano who is heralded by the hearty praise of what advance agents call "press and public." Miss Jewell recently gave a series of recitals in cultivated Boston and literally worked the conservatives of the Hub into a state of enthusiasm. She will be heard here in three songs calculated to show her voice to the best advantage and should duplicate her Eastern hit. T. Wilmot Eckert and Emma Berg are to be seen in an operatic skit, entitled "Master and Pupil;" Louise Kerlin will give several "coon songs;" the Prentice Trio is to establish its excellence as an acrobatic triumvirate; Fields and Selma are to contribute a cake walk, and Frank Colton will endeavor to prove with his trained donkeys that the long-eared beast has been much maligned in the matter of stupidity. The list gives promise of a pleasing entertainment, and the business of the week will probably be good.

Academy—"A Daughter of Cuba."

Scenic spectacles of a military nature are reaching Washington in great numbers just now. Last week "Her Atonement" and Buffalo Bill's Wild West divided honors in this way, and it is now announced that in Jean Mawson's "A Daughter of Cuba," which will be seen tomorrow night at the Academy of Music, the battle of San Juan Hill will be produced in a manner that will require the services of scores of supernumeraries, dozens of flags, and a Maxim gun that will belch forth death and smoke to the infinite delight of patriotic ones in the audience. It is claimed that this effect takes unto itself a marvelously realistic nature, and that it adds greatly to th strength of the play.

Miss Mawson is the authoress of "A Daughter of Cuba," and its leading woman. She is said to have written the piece with a fine flow of wit and pathos, and to have put into it lines that alternately bring tears of laughter and of sympathy. The star is seen as a young woman who very properly leaves home and enters the service of the soldiers as a Red Cross nurse because her fiance goes to Cuba with the army. This role, in common with many incidents and episodes of the drama, are supposed to have been suggested by Miss Mawson's own character, and by the several adventures she had while studying the natives with a view to putting them, bag and baggage, into her work.

Not content with having personally ventured into Santiago, the authoress claims to have sent Artist Reed on a like mission, that he might put plenty of atmosphere and other desirable qualities into the scenes which he was engaged to paint for the production. Incidentally, she engaged what is described as a capable company, and includes Arthur B. Sprague, William H. Hallett, Louis Stephens, Alma Bradley, Louis Ripley, and Grace Atwood, to interpret her drama. A great many other things are claimed for the presentation, for which seats have been on sale since Thursday.

Kernan's—"Australian Beauties."

The press agent in advance of Bryan and Watson's "Australian Beauties," which will be seen for the second time this season tomorrow afternoon at Kernan's, is not anxious to take his oath that the girls in the company are really "Australian," but he is perfectly willing to pledge himself that they are "Beauties" and, after all, this is the more important portion of the announcement. The entertainment given by the organization promises to be an interesting one. It is respectively begun and ended with "The Typewriter's Wedding Day" and "The Duke of Monte Carlo," in the rendering of which Harry Bryan will be assisted by Ruby Marion, a young woman who has been with many of the best burlesque companies on the road during the last decade. In the olio which comes between these pieces will be seen Smith O'Brien, monologuist; Sheehan and Kennedy, Celtic wits; Hazelton and Vedder, soubrettes; George Yeoman, comedian; the La Villes, "knick-knack dancers," and Edna Urline, serio-comic.

Bijou—Vaudeville.

While no headlines are being advertised for this week's bill at the Bijou the programme announced bears the names of a sufficiently large number of clever people to guarantee that the entertainment contributed will be enjoyable. Among these vaudevillians are "The Gotham Comedy Four," mirth-makers and vocalists; Brown, Harrison, and Brown, farceurs; Ladell and Francis, novelityists; James and Fannie Donovan, Irish dualoguists; the Martelles, trick bicyclists; Pearl Hight, serio-comic, and the Bijou Stock Company. The performance should be pleasing and will probably draw a series of good houses.

The Farrar Recital.

The girl whose singing is said to have charmed President and Mrs. McKinley on the memorable day when Dewey's victory was patriotically celebrated at the White House by special request of "the first lady of the land," will be heard in public on next Wednesday evening at the Lafayette Square. Her name is Geraldine Farrar. She is a gifted and youthful aspirant for vocalistic honors, and it is not considered improbable that in the near future she will win a most enviable niche in the temple of fame. Miss Farrar will be assisted in her local recital by Newell Whitney Mansfield, the well known Boston pianist, and Dr. Anton Gloetzner, of this city. A long and varied programme is promised. Wide interest is being aroused regarding the concert, which is directed by Florence Lee Holtzman and managed by George Rawlings, who is familiar to Washingtonians through his connection with the Lafayette.

THE PASSING SHOW.

Some months ago, when the excellent business being done about the country was proving an irresistible incentive to exaggeration on the part of various and sundry press agents, a well-known New York newspaper published an extremely clever article in which the son of a theatrical manager was pictured asking his father about the many millions which he had read were in the old gentleman's possession. The satire was an amusing one, and had the further merit of disillusionising a number of reportorial enthusiasts who had been bringing discredit upon themselves and the season in progress by making statements concerning box office receipts that could not have approached the figures quoted under any circumstances. In reviewing the financial standing of the year just closing it is important to understand that no miracles have been wrought during the period, and that the revelations of such research do not argue that the term was not one of exceeding profit merely because it did not reach the absurd standard set for it.

As a matter of fact, though no attraction on the road has drawn an average of $17,000 a week, and the metropolitan houses have hardly been besieged to the extent that has been described, the seven months of active labor which have made up the professional epoch of 1898-'99 have been of a nature unduplicated during the last two decades. The general prosperity which followed the war with Spain, the number of unusually inviting combinations on tour, and the reaction from a long-sustained calm had a really unwonted effect upon the trade in entertainment and the result is that three or four fortunes have been made during this time and none of any size lost. Successes have been big and failures small; gains have been unvarying and drains infrequent; money-bringing ventures have been many and money-taking ones few. Altogether the season has really brought with it an unprecedented series of triumphs.

A great and general hunger for amusement was manifested throughout the country before the theatres had all been opened. Every house ready for business drew large audiences with comparatively worthless material, and as soon as the better class of people entered the field the gratifying inclination to playgoing became even more apparent. This was especially true in New York, where every resort on the Rialto flourished to an extent that astonished quite as much as it delighted its proprietors. Before the end of October an unheard-of number of actors and their vehicles were appearing on Broadway and in the vicinity of that famous street to the capacity of the buildings in which they were booked. At one and the same time "Cyrano de Bergerac" was packing the Garden to the doors, "The Christian" was placing standing room at a premium within the portals of the Knickerbocker, "The Fortune Teller" was performing a like service for Wallack's, "The Turtle" was filling the Manhattan nightly, and records at the Broadway, the Empire, the Madison Square, Daly's, and the Academy were being broken respectively by Francis Wilson and "The Little Corporal," John Drew and "The Liars," "A Brace of Partridges," "A Runaway Girl," and the melodrama, "Sporting Life." May Irwin came shortly after with "Kate Kip, Buyer," and a profitable Casino production completed the list.

This remarkable series of triumphs was not sustained more than a couple of months at the utmost, and it has not been duplicated. One or two rather important failures have occurred since what might be termed the ring was broken, and never again have nine great successes competed for patronage. A very high standard has been maintained, however, while the continual entrance into Gotham of such valuable presentations as "Because She Loved Him So," "Zaza," "A Romance of Athlone," and "Mlle. Fifi" has made the season there a wonderful one all through.

Despite the fact that an unlimited number of celebrities and some thirty or forty big productions have been taking in the provinces since last October, and notwithstanding the profits made by them, the unimportant stars and the minor offerings have been augmented greatly. Histrionic history records no year in which so many combinations of all sorts have bid for public patronage. The "Dramatic Mirror" for October 22, 1898, gave the names of 402 companies on the road, and since this roster left out nearly sixty troupes that had been included in preceding editions, it is but fair to suppose that the list might have been lengthened materially. A classified catalogue, arranged for reference regarding the conclusions printed in this column of last Sunday's Times, included 788 organizations of one sort or another; but these had existed, ceased to exist, and begun existence during the period covered, so that it bore no regard to the roll of troupes which toured simultaneously. Some interest attaches to the knowledge that nearly a thousand amusement enterprises were conducted between September, 1898, and May, 1899, but the financial magnitude of the term can best be realized from the "Mirror" register.

But a small minority of this multitude of "shows" ever reached the eye of the "upper ten" among theatregoers. Probably one-fourth of the number consisted of such popular-priced attractions as "Casey's Wife," "Johnny on the Spot," "A Spring Chicken," and "The Waifs of a Great City," while another quarter included only the various burlesque combinations, minstrels, hypnotists, magicians, and traveling vaudeville aggregations. Resident stock companies in the larger cities of the country and the several repertoire organizations which play at 10, 20, and 30 cents, and of which few urbanites ever hear, made up more than a third fourth of the roster given.

A surprisingly large per cent of this better class of performances was of great successes and a much smaller one of failures. Between the two came many enterprises that lasted out the year without either notable profit or perceptible loss, others that came as legacies from former seasons, and still others which took the form of productions made by stars whose personal followings assure them of satisfactory returns whatever their vehicles. Viola Allen made her debut as a candidate for paragraph notices in "The Christian," and Mrs. Leslie Carter assumed an extraordinary position in "Zaza," both being triumphant. Alice Nielsen was also well received in "The Fortune Teller," James K. Hackett dropped money with "The Tree of Knowledge," and won it back in "Rupert of Hentzau," Jefferson de Angelis has made "The Jolly Musketeer" pay and Annie Russell accomplished her accession to stellar honors in "Catherine" without apparent difficulty. All of these people were new to big type, but have proven their warrant to it by producing hitherto untried but now established plays. The James-Kidder-Warde and MacLean-Tyler-Hanford triumvirates are also beginners with brilliant futures, while Blanche Walshe created one of the sensations of the period when she stepped into the shoes of the late Fanny Davenport and it was found that she filled them completely.

Of successes won by recognized stars who have staged fresh pieces and of fresh pieces which have won success without the assistance of any stars at all there are several. After trying "His Honor the Mayor" and "Worth a Million," with a revival of "A Virginia Courtship," the unfortunate William H. Crane has found an adequate vehicle in "The Head of the Family;" after carrying "A Colonial Girl" and trying various other works, E. H. Sothern is being carried by "The Three Musketeers;" Sol Smith Russell followed the disastrous "Uncle Dick" with a more possible vehicle in the form of "Hon. John Grigsby;" Stuart Robson has made money both in "The Meddler" and in the very recent "Two Rogues and a Romance;" James O'Neill did well with "When Greek Meets Greek" and is doing better in "The Musketeers," and Olga Nethersole revived her old repertoire, staged "The Termagant," and produced Mrs. Kendal's "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" with credit to herself. Nat Goodwin, in "Nathan Hale" and "The Cowboy and the Lady;" John Drew, in "The Liars;" May Irwin, in "Kate Kip, Buyer;" Richard Mansfield, in "Cyrano de Bergerac;" Minnie Maddern Fiske, in a line of vehicles new outside of Gotham; Tim Murphy, in "The Carpetbagger;" Mathews and Bulger, in "By the Sad Sea Waves;" Chauncey Olcott, in "A Romance of Athlone;" Andrew Mack, in "The Ragged Earl;" Della Fox, in "The Little Host;" De Wolf Hopper, in "The Charlatan;" Francis Wilson, in "The Little Corporal;" Julia Marlowe, in "Colinette;" Ada Rehan, in "The Great Ruby;" the Liliputians, in "The Golden Horseshoe;" the Rogers Brothers, in "A Reign of Error," and apparently Willie Collier, in "Mr. Smooth," have all done well, irrespective of whether their efforts were classic or farcical, whether the ventures involved thousands or hundreds of dollars, and whether they were produced in New York or the provinces.

Other important profitable enterprises of the season have been "On and Off," "Sporting Life," "Mistakes Will Happen"—which closed in Washington, but enjoyed considerable prosperity in the West—"Phroso," "Way Down East," "The Turtle," "Why Smith Left Home," "A Brace of Partridges," "Hotel Topsy Turvy," "The White Heather," "The Telephone Girl," "The Three Dragoons," "A Runaway Girl," "Trelawny of the Wells," "Lord and Lady Algy," "John Ingerfield," "At the White Horse Tavern," "Because She Loved Him So," "Mlle. Fifi," "The Purple Lady," Charles Frohman's "The Cuckoo," and "A Dangerous Maid," none of which had seen the light of the theatre outside of one city until the beginning of this season, and all of which have proven valuable to their possessors.

For the rest, Dan Daly was to have been starred in "The Belle of New York," but was featured instead; Otis Harlan was to have gone out in "My Innocent Boy," but postponed the tour; Virginia Harned was to have tried her drawing powers in "The Adventure of Lady Ursula," and did not; Henry Miller was to have tested "The Ambassador," but contented himself with the cast-off offerings of John Drew; something was heard of Robert Downing's projected productions of "A True Knight," and "The Commander," as well as of Eugenie Blair in "A Creole Romance," but Mr. Downing has dropped out of sight, and Miss Blair is appearing in "A Lady of Quality." James Corbett was to have been seen in "The Adventurer," but took a saloon instead; "Mouse Trap Tobe" was to have been exploited, but did not materialize, and the much-talked-of "The Greek Slave" has not yet landed on these shores.

Charles Coghlan has closed his New York season in "Citizen Pierre." Roland Reed failed with "The Voyagers," "A Distinguished Guest" and a version of "His Absent Boy;" Burr McIntosh did not get far with "A War Correspondent," and Russ Whytal's experience in "Vagabondia" was short, while Ferris Hartman's "The Purser," Clara Thropp's "Where's Matilda," George Monroe's "Her Majesty the Cook," Sam Bernard's "The Marquis of Michigan," the Bostonians' "Ulysses," Eddie Bald's "A Twig of Laurel," James A. Herne's "Rev. Griffith Davenport," Digby Bell's "Joe Hurst, Gentleman," Henry Guy Carleton's "The Cuckoo," "The Conquerers," "La Boheme," "A Misfit Marriage," "A Dog in the Manger," "Little Miss Nobody," "That Man," "Brown's in Town," "La Belle Helene," "Yankee Doodle Dandy," Daly's "Cyrano de Bergerac," and "The Last Chapter" did not come up to expectations. "The Last Chapter" is a clever comedy and failed in New York merely because it did not introduce a disrobing scene.

Joseph Jefferson, Maude Adams, Julia Arthur, William Gillette, Herbert Kelcey and Effie Shannon, Marie Wainwright, J. H. Stoddart, Lewis Morrison, Frank Daniels, Fannie Rice, Walker Whiteside, Otis Skinner, Robert Mantell, Mme. Modjeska, Carl Haswin, Charles Leonard Fletcher, Creston Clarke, Auguste Van Biene, Clay Clement, J. E. Teole, Charles Gardiner, Lillian Lewis, Thomas E. Shea, Katie Emmett, Nance O'Neil, Warde and Vokes, Kate Claxton, Agnes Wallace Villa and even Go-Won-Go-Mohawk served up nothing new last season, several of them temporarily resigning stellar honors.

Among the plays presented in 1897-98 and which began life anew in the theatrical year of 1898-99 were "The Bride Elect," "The Circus Girl," "The Little Minister," "The Geisha," "The French Maid," "The Girl From Paris," "A Boy Wanted," "A Jolly Night," "A Railroad Ticket," "A Bunch of Keys," "A Stranger in New York," "A Contented Woman," "A Milk White Flag," "An Enemy to the King," "The Prisoner of Zenda," "A Parlor Match," "At Piney Ridge," "Human Hearts," "The Ballet Girl," "Chimmie Fadden," "Cumberland '61," "Coon Hollow," "The Devil's Auction," "Down in Dixie," "The Heart of the Klondike," "Darkest Russia," "Eight Bells," "The Electrician," "Fabio Romani," "For Fair Virginia," "The Fast Mail," "Fallen Among Thieves," "The Great Train Robbery," "Girl Wanted," "Brother for Brother," "Gayest Manhattan," "Hogan's Alley," "The Heart of Maryland," "The Heart of Chicago," "The Pulse of a Great City," "Humanity," "A Hired Girl," "In Old Kentucky," "In Old Madrid," "A Bachelor's Honeymoon," "Lost in Siberia," "McFadden's Row of Flats," "The Man From Mexico," "The Man-o'-War's Man," "My Friend From India," "Miss Francis of Yale," "Natural Gas," "Charley's Aunt," "Patent Applied For," "Pudd'nhead Wilson," "Sowing the Wind," "A Southern Romance," "The Sign of the Cross," "Superba," "The Sunshine of Paradise Alley," "The Pay Train," "The Tornado," "The Limited Mail," "The Old Homestead," "Side Tracked," "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "The Last Stroke," "The Woman in Black," "The Land of the Living," "The Span of Life," "The Cherry Pickers," "Tennessee's Pardner," "The Twelve Temptations," "Two Little Vagrants," "The Tarrytown Widow," "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "Under the Red Robe," "Under the Dome," "What Happened to Jones," "When London Sleeps," "The White Slave," "Jack and the Beanstalk," "The Highwayman," "A Marriage of Convenience," "The Master," "El Capitan," "Half a King," "1492," "Bonnie Scotland," "A Breezy Time," and "At Gay Coney Island." Some of these pieces were very old, and some lasted only a short time, but all were projected at the beginning of last season.

This list might easily be doubled in length by the addition of the names of new dramas and farces presented in the popular-priced houses, such as "Knobs o' Tennessee," "How Hopper Was Sidetracked," and "John Martin's Secret." A roster of the vaudeville theatres which profited during the seven months just gone, of the minstrel and burlesque companies, of the hypnotists and magicians, and of the tent shows on the road would make it impossibly long. Nearly fifty stock organizations—organizations like the Murray Hill Company, in New York, and the Castle Square Company, in Boston—could be attached to the register, while over 200 repertoire combinations toured the smaller cities of the country. Among these were the Corse Payton Company, the Tommy Shearer Company, the Shea Dramatic Company, and the Spooners. Some thirty war dramas, among them "The Red, White and Blue," "The Maine Avenged," "A Daughter of Cuba," and "Strangled on Sunday" also held the boards, all combined bringing the catalogues mentioned well up to the numbers given.

These figures undoubtedly go further than anything else could in showing how tremendous a success the season has been. That such a series of great enterprises could have been supported, that a like multitude of smaller ones could have found profit, that successes have been so many and failures so few is a cause for hearty congratulation. No other nation in the world can make such a showing and no year within two decades has brought such fortune to American managers. The period has not only been one of great profit, but it has left over so many triumphs that there can be no doubt that next season will be quite as remarkable as was last.

In the general prosperity of 1898-'99, Washington and Washington managers have had no small share. While there have been bad weeks here as well as good ones, the average maintained was much higher than usual, and the Capital City has not only made profitable a larger number of theatres than are maintained in any place of its size in the world, but it has proven to outside directors that, while it will not pay for inferior productions or those which are sent under false pretences, there is always a hearty welcome waiting for a worthy attraction. The local season has been an eventful one in many ways.

Probably the most choice bookings of the period have been seen at the National, and the result is that Manager Rapley has now a bank account considerably larger than was that of last year. The house has been empty during several engagements, but it has not failed to do well with its better combinations. Thus, while "The Girl From Paris," "Rupert of Hentzau," and "Her Atonement" starved there, no less than half a dozen companies, among which were those offering "The Christian," "The Charlatan," and "Nathan Hale" have come well up to $10,000 each for their week's appearance. The building has, if anything, added to its reputation during the past few months.

Although only one full season has passed since Luckett and Dwyer assumed control of the Columbia, that place of amusement has already proven a formidable rival, and an important factor in the field. Syndicate direction has prevented the young lessees from securing the most desirable of offerings, and often those presented have been very bad, but the doors have never been closed, and some remarkable financial records have been established. It has been not only proven that the theatre can do well with meritorious combinations, but that its clientele is sufficiently large to occasionally make poor ones profitable. Thus "The Geisha," which had been twice done here by Augustin Daly's troupes and against small opposition, never drew notable audiences until it came back for a third time in the hands of an unknown company, and was put on at the Columbia, while E. H. Sothern and Annie Russell were occupying the city's other two first-class houses. Richard Mansfield also broke the record for big business in Washington at the Columbia, and altogether Managers Luckett and Dwyer come out of the first year of their proprietorship with colors flying. The Frawley Company is now doing well at the F Street resort, and promises to remain there for some time yet.

Manager Painter's first term of sole managership at the Lafayette has not been altogether fortunate. While the house has had some big weeks, poor ones have been more frequent. Manager Painter does not feel that he has been honestly treated in the matter of bookings, and it is not probable that the Lafayette will remain under the direction of the syndicate in the future.

The season was well advanced before the Grand Opera House found a tenant. Several experiments were made in the big building but with no good effect. A certain Manager Butler, who once failed in an effort to conduct the Bijou, occupied the Grand for two weeks with Davis and Keogh attractions, but local amusement-lovers were not willing to tolerate that class of entertainment, and the venturer was forced to give up the struggle. After the theatre had been sold at auction it was leased by Managers Burke and Chase, who have been filling the stage since January with a series of high-class vaudeville aggregations. Washington had never had an opportunity of cultivating a taste for twenty-minute sketches and "coon songs" before, save in its stag houses, and the test was watched with some interest. While it is hardly probable that Managers Burke and Chase have found their enterprise profitable as yet, the outlook is good and they will continue.

When Kernan and Rife resigned their interest in the Grand and thus abandoned the field of popular-priced farce and melodrama to the Academy, the future of that house looked extremely promising. As a result of the desertion Manager Rapley was given his choice of the second rate companies on the road, and has so manipulated affairs that many of the best of these have been seen at the Academy. Returns have not been as large as might have been expected, and the attractions proffered have not always been good, but the average kept up is encouraging, and neither patrons nor proprietors have room for complaint.

Kernan's and the Bijou have remained rivals in the field of variety. Despite the efforts of each manager to injure the other, both places of amusement still prosper and probably will continue doing so. The earnings of the year in both cases have been large.

Two seasons of grand opera, neither of which was financially successful; an uncommonly large number of picture exhibitions and other minor enterprises, and the building of a museum complete the list of events for the local year. Ten new plays have been given their premieres here—"That Man," "Hotel Topsy Turvy," "On and Off," "A Misfit Marriage," "The Christian," "Zaza," "Rev. Griffith Davenport," "A War Correspondent," "A Dog in the Manger," and "Joe Hurst, Gentleman." Incidentally a long-continued policy of honesty in criticism has proven to the public that the reviews of The Times are not bought by local managers with their advertising, and that consequently the theatrical opinions of one Washington paper may be relied upon.

FRIENDS OF LAST WEEK.

The beautiful rendering of "Alabama" given last week at the Columbia Theatre by the Frawley Company called attention to three members of that organization, one of whom deserves advancement and the other two relegation to a line of smaller parts than they have been doing. The first of the trio is George Gaston and the second and third are respectively Myron Calice and Frank Mathieu. Mr. Gaston is the actor who was seen in "Trilby" as Dr. Bagot and whose performance marked him for more than usual compliment. His impersonation of the hypocritical, cowardly little preacher was even more consistent and fine than had been that of the role's originator, and his portrayal of Decatur, the old negro servant in Augustus Thomas' play, was distinguished by the same care and intelligence, though no two less like efforts could be imagined. The writer has seen any number of clever people attempt representations of old darkeys and, not even accepting Milt G. Barlow, all were ridiculous. Mr. Gaston's Decatur was perfect in make-up, perfect in dialect, perfect in walk and gestures, perfect in vocal intonation—perfect in ever requisite to good work. It sat aside its conceiver as one of the most able members of a first-class combination.

Myron Calice is beginning to remind one of James Kearney, who will be recalled as the pugilistic looking individual whose surgeon in "Held by the Enemy" was one of the finest efforts of the Columbia Stock season, but whose later assumptions were merely absurd through their stilltedness and staginess. Mr. Calice made an excellent impression with his Laird in "Trilby," but the manner in which he played the broker in "The Charity Ball" produced the same effect histrionically that might be created musically should some one try rendering "Home, Sweet Home," on a penny fife by means of a windmill. Mr. Calice puffed and blew and grew red in the face and clasped his hands as though in prayer, the end of it all being that the spectator was left in doubt as to whether he had been suffering from remorse or colic. These gymnastics were repeated last week in "Alabama," and with the same result. Mr. Calice is an intelligent man and while he may not be a good actor there is no reason for such performances as he has been giving. Mr. Kearney was not intelligent and so might have been excusable.

One cannot blame Frank Mathieu as much for his defections as one can blame the manager who cast him for a part so important as is that of Armstrong in "Alabama." Mr. Mathieu has been on the stage only a very short time, and, all things considered, does very well. But it was not to be expected that he would bring out all the fine points that have so much to do with the charm of the impetuous young railroader and he did not. Though smooth, he showed constantly the machinery back of his effort and, therefore, was not adequate to the character. Mr. Frawley should not have put him into it. These two flaws in the production were not small and presented the only obstacles between it and perfection.

To the average theatregoer an acrobatic act is a thing productive of torture. Humanity is still moved to a certain extent by sympathy and the effort necessary to the accomplishment of difficult physical feats is generally so apparent that only the most apathetic could enjoy the spectacle. This was not true, however, of the three brothers Luken, whose work on the horizontal bars last week at the Bijou was at once remarkable and pleasing because of an entire absence of the detracting feature mentioned. The young fellows, all of whom were good looking, did not grow red in the face, their panting was not observable, and each of their offerings was not preceded by a series of glances and measurements calculated to impress the audience with the belief that the coming performance would be the last. Everything they did was done gracefully and easily, though much of the exhibition has never been duplicated here. There were no misses and no apparent weariness. Such a "turn" has not been witnessed in Washington for many moons.

The few unfortunates who visited the National last week and there saw a performance of "Her Atonement:" were treated to the rather unusual effect of an entire evening's portrayal being redeemed by ten minutes of exceedingly creditable work. The actor who accomplished this was Frederick Perry, whose impersonation of the French valet who robbed his master's dead body was very bad indeed. In the second act of the piece a scene was presented in which Preterre was arrested by two detectives and his effort here was most praiseworthy. The hunted look with which he observed the approach of the "men in plain clothes," his attempt to deny complicity to them, and finally his struggle were so like those one sees in everyday life that they caused certain persons in the house to shudder. There was nothing of the two-blows-up, two-blows-down, and a waltz song by the tenor about Mr. Perry's fight. It was an excellent imitation of such a combat and accordingly most commendable.

CHATS WITH THE PLAYERS.

Almost the only player of any ability in the organization which presented "Her Atonement" last week at the National and, excepting Louis Aldrich, quite the only one of reputation, Orrin Johnson was a shining mark to the interviewer. Such a figurative beast of prey went from The Times to the Riggs House in search of a victim and met Mr. Johnson in the hotel lobby. The actor was alone and unprotected. A moment's conversation accomplished the deadly work and both beings took seats at the side of the room. Said Mr. Johnson: "I have thought the matter over with considerable care and have come to the belief that the American stage is about to witness a universal return to melodrama. Already signs of this movement are manifested, and there can be little doubt that the natural trend of events will ultimately bring a long series of just such productions as that which is now holding the stage at Daly's.

"The causes which have been involved in securing this result are many and evident. Histrionic history is merely repeating itself as do the records of the political world outside. It is not so long ago that an extended experience with the ultra-quiet in stellar offerings and the dominance of that school of which Edward Harrigan was a disciple, effected a boomerang spirit to which was directly traceable the class of works represented by 'The Shadows of a Great City,' 'The Romany Rye,' and 'The Ticket of Leave Man.' The average theater-goer does not care to see represented in a common way the incidents of his every-day life. He takes no interest in witnessing the repetition of the more tragic phases of his own existence. Instead he desires some idealism and a great deal of high color about those plays which are furnished him. Consequently the Forbes Robertson-Arthur Pinero-Henry Arthur Jones-Oscar Wilde sort of effort that has recently filled our places of amusement has given way to the extreme of such romantic bits as 'The Three Musketeers,' and will finally come to a combination of the classic and of the profane melodrama.

"It is not my intention to express the idea that this revival will bring forth the grandiloquent and impossible presentations of former years. Each succeeding epoch of realness has its effect upon the return to idealism, and ends in a nearer approach to perfect art. Of course, it will be impossible to colloquialize Shakespeare to any great extent, though Maude Adams' performance of 'Romeo and Juliet,' in which I will be seen as Paris, is to be marked by a tendency in that direction. But the melodramas which are to be received by the public will show complete departure from those which found favor two decades ago. The better class of the pieces of this sort done recently have been quite natural, 'The White Heather' and 'The Great Ruby' both being examples of the fact, and those of the future will be even more so—rather like 'The Charity Ball' than resembling 'The Two Orphans.'

"Probably a great part of the reason for a return to the highly colored in stage productions is not so much the taste of the amusement-lover as the inability of those who cater to him. More art is required in making a natural play interesting and in playing it interestingly than in awakening enthusiasm with melodrama. We have had few authors who could write such works and few actors who could use them. Then there has been a strong movement to the extreme that exhibits realism rather than realness. The episodes that go to make up a story mark epochs in the lives of its characters and they are not natural when they accept these occurrences without a sign. While it is true that the more cultured a man is the less he shows emotions, none of us have yet reached perfection in that regard. Great grief or intense joy brings all to the same level. Consequently there is nothing faithful in the portrayal of the impersonator who hears of his mother's death and remarks immediately, 'We're having fine weather.' A reaction from this sort of thing undoubtedly has had much to do with the return to romantics. Ultimately we shall go back again to naturalism, and finally we shall reach an ideal art that will be ideal because real."

And, having survived the attack of the beast of prey, Orrin Johnson rose to greet another specimen of the ilk who came from still another paper.

While standing in the box office at the Columbia a few days ago, T. Daniel Frawley began conversing on the past and future of his local season. And this is what he said:

"While it would not be truthful in me to remark that I am as yet completely satisfied with our engagement in Washington, I can say in good faith that the outlook is most encouraging. We have been in town but three weeks and are already laying aside profits for wet weather. The newspapers have been correct in stating that my determination is to send an organization to Milwaukee later on and the arrangements have gone so far that it will be impossible for me to back out, no matter how bright things look here. If,