

WILLIE COLLIER'S MAN FROM MEXICO, AND OTHER PERSONS.

BY ASHTON STEVENS.

The man who will not laugh at Willie Collier in "The Man from Mexico" has no soul. I admit there is something to think about in the fact that our one serious playhouse has been for weeks and will be for weeks more, over to the pleasure of the ha-ha; but anything will reconcile the craving playgoer to this slice of farce if it is a good farce and a good farce-actor—such as we have now at the Baldwin. I put my admiration of "The Man from Mexico" to the test—I went to see him twice within the week; and the second time, as the first, I laughed myself almost into tears. There are some comic shows that drive the critics to kind words. He laughs, realizing that he who laughs leaves criticism behind, and then he sits him down at his desk and apologizes for having had a good time—says he hasn't much idea what it was all about, but it was certainly quick and funny, and he and everybody else laughed, and if you have any taste for this sort of entertainment, and are not too exacting, it will divert you, too, maybe.

The beauty of Willie Collier and this farce is that a man may enjoy them till he aches, build panegyrics columns high to their comic charms, and still preserve unsoiled conscience and unhumbled pride.

I would not belittle the importance of farce, which is one of the immortal parts of the theater, but nowadays most which passes for that is entirely something less. "The Man from Mexico," I should say, is a farce. It does not elevate its class, as Oscar Wilde's elegant exaggerations do; nor devote itself as industriously to a deliberate scheme of action as do some of the pieces that are made in France. It is a very difficult piece to place. You might say its scheme is more conversational than situational, because the actual incident is limited, and the most of the time taken up with vagrant dialogue. There are to be reckoned with, on the other hand, those verbal situations which are the direct outcome of the seemingly irrelevant dialogue, and which play such an important part in the comic interest. It is difficult even to place the authorship of the piece. I have the word of several playgoers that the basis of the plot has long since served in French and in English farces, and an honest man, who knows, tells me that the ludicrous climax of the prison scene is not written by Du Souchet at all, but is solely the invention of Collier. I said last week that it would be a hard matter to determine where Du Souchet's work ends and Collier's begins. Still, I cannot see Mr. Collier to the point where he even effaces Du Souchet's name from the programme.

However, the parentage of "The Man from Mexico" is not a vital question. It is the piece in performance that we are applauding, and Mr. Collier attends to it that he is all of that, and the world is gayer because of him. I doubt if there is any one, even among his associate actors, who grudges him a single line, or a single moment of the center of the stage. The part of Benjamin Fitzhugh is so written that he must be the play. There is no alternative—it is Collier or nothing. The star is not unconscious of his centralization, and, moreover, he knows how to get the fullest value from his background. His scheme of acting his own part is the best and the only one feasible to this farce. He is seemingly unaware of his audience and his own comicality, or as near it as a man can be, while throwing off gags and puns and catch lines at the rate of a dozen to the minute. In more legitimate farce, where there are no gag lines, an actor, to be funny, has only to present a serious countenance to the circumstances which overwhelm him; but the backbone of this piece is verbal play and a touch too much of unconsciousness would suggest a comedian in a trance. What Mr. Collier does is to give to the part as much legitimacy as it will stand for, and not a bit more. He is deliberately quiet and repressed; he presents (in the first act) the appearance of a respectable, red-headed, suburban person, with an arch taste in clothes; he has an anxious, worried look accentuated by spectacles—and out of this modest picture and gentle demeanor, or whirls a perpetual cyclone of American gags. The incongruousness of it points the fun. And then he makes a tremendous effect of the contrast between himself and the rest of the company. He is all earnestness and repose; they play in the loud, hustling key of conventional farce-comedy. He never goes into the painful details of any joke, or anything else; he relies on the subtleness of suggestion; he is perfect in the business of the part. By a single glance at the reviewer, the whereabouts of which we have forgotten early in the act, he gives the suspense to, makes inevitable, that convulsing climax of the prison scene. Willie Collier is a wonderful little farce-actor. I hope nothing will ever turn his head or induce him to become a comedian.

Mr. Collier has done so much for the second act I wonder that he doesn't do something for the finale of the first, which is now the one limp situation in the piece.

NEW TO-DAY—AMUSEMENTS. ALCAZAR-- Seats by Phone, Main 254. This Sunday Night, VERY LAST TIME OF ESMERALDA

To-Morrow Monday Evening A DOUBLE BILL At 8:15 Promptly, Mr. Frederick Paulding's Original Dramatic Play, "A MAN'S LOVE!" At 9 Sharp Prepare to Laugh, DION BOUCAULT'S Roaring Farce "FORBIDDEN FRUIT."

Dan Mason need not be included in the general background of "The Man From Mexico." An actor who can be funny through a German dialect in this end of the century is preposterously clever.

What I hope will stand without a rival as the worst record of 1898 is Nellie McHenry's vaudeville farce, "A Night in New York," which is now playing at the California. It ought to be in a tent for men only.

This is to me from "A Symphony Subscriber": I have been reading your remarks in

of instruments. You don't really suppose anybody cares about looking at the front elevation of a trombone, do you? Or at the man at the other end of it, either. And besides the esthetic side of it there is a good practical reason why we should keep our hats on. The Tivoli is not warmed for the symphony concerts, and the dressing rooms are not lighted. Are we to take off our hats at the risk of getting bad colds? And, having taken them off, how are we going to get them on again?

I had not, I admit, considered man and his trombone from "A Symphony Subscriber's" point of view, but the cold Tivoli struck us all hard last Thursday afternoon. I wished that fussy old gentlemen might wear their hats, too. The symphony management

season. The piece has a record of 1000 performances at the Duke of York's Theater, London.

Tivoli.

The Tivoli production of "Brian Boru," an Irish romantic opera, composed by Julian Edwards and written by Stanislaus Strange, promises to be as much an event in this season as the excellent production of "Shamus O'Brien" was in last. To properly present the work the Tivoli management has secured all the models and costume plates. Arthur Donaldson has been brought out from the East to play the title role, and Thomas C. Leary will appear as O'Hara, in which part he was prominently identified with the success of the piece on the road last season.

As told before, the score is hardly as ambitious as that of "Shamus," although it is written heavily and in the modern mode. A peculiar feature of the music is the number of quotations from well-known songs and operas that are employed in the orchestration. The vocal music is more directly melodic than that of "Shamus"—it was

Irish women, led by Mona, resolved to help their fathers, husbands and brothers. O'Donovan, who has secured, through Elfrida's machinations, the shamrock ring, the badge of kinship, tells them Brian is a traitor; but is unbeliever. Brian enters upon the scene and leads his devoted followers against the English, who are encamped near St. Patrick's Church, overlooking Dublin Bay. Brian is a prisoner, tied to the flagstaff. She is freed by the good-hearted fat Fitzhugh, a Falstaffian knight of the period. Brian and his followers arrive on the scene, subjugating the English, and Brian Boru is proclaimed King of Ireland.

California. And now we are to have our opportunity to laugh at the latest farcical garment from the workshop of that expert tailor, John J. McNally, who has many times in the past bid us laugh with him. The comedy in question is "Court-Ed Into Court," and it comes to us O.K'd as a five months' run at the Bijou Theater in New York last winter.

The story of "Court-Ed Into Court" will not tax any one to a great extent. It is written around the love affairs of a successful actress who is wooed and

of the husbands hears the sound of his wife's voice coming from a neighboring house, which he enters and finds there with her—only her long-lost brother. Soon after this the Gaiety girls arrive, and there are many complications before the happy lie is hit upon, and all ends discreetly.

Wright Huntington and Wallace Shaw will play the parts of the naughty husbands, Frank Denithorne will be the long-lost brother, Miss Kingsley the Gaiety girl and Miss Foster and Mrs. Bates the trusting wives.

Morocco's. The late unpleasantness will be celebrated at Morocco's this week by a melodrama called "The Blue and the Gray." Inside the smoke, powder and pageant runs the story of a young Northern captain and a beautiful Southern girl. Her father has been captured and condemned to death. She appeals to the hero, Moude Edna Hall, who loves her devotedly, but, true to his duty, refuses to interfere. Through a train of Morocco circumstances the prisoner escapes, to bring death and disaster to the Yankee camp. The hero's life is spared only on condition that during the father's life he and the heroine shall neither see nor communicate with one another. The gallant captain becomes blind during the war, and five years later, miserable and mortgaged, is discovered by the heroine. Her father, now being dead, she is honorably able to devote her fortune to the comfort of what is left of the hero. All the Morocco favorites are in the cast, and as the play offers some big scenic opportunities a characteristic performance may be looked for.

Orpheum. The Orpheum announces several important changes in its bill for this week. Five new acts will go on, and two return engagements will be played. The new people include Rice and Elmer, who are said to do exceptionally clever work on the horizontal bars; Almo and Dumont, high-class musical specialists, in solos and duets on a variety of musical instruments; Carter de Haven, a diminutive comedian, who has recently made such a success in the East. Master de Haven is but ten years of age, but is said to take rank as an artist rather than as a boy player.

The novelty of the bill is Professor Gallando, clay modeler, who is said to excel anything of the kind that has yet appeared at the Orpheum. Knight Aston, a tenor robusto, has been imported from Australia by Gustav Walter for the Orpheum circuit and a tour of the East. The boys' Hungarian military band, which recently played such a successful engagement at the Orpheum, have been brought back for a farewell week, when they will leave for the East en route to Europe. The hold-overs include Patrice, supported by Alf Hampton and J. Whitbeck, Barney and Russell and Paulo and Dika.

Mile Dika. The company which Messrs. Rich & Harris have selected for the presentation of "Court-Ed Into Court" is above the average, including as it does Marie Dressler, John C. Rice and Jacques Krusec, John G. Sparks, James P. Callahan, Damon Lyon, Harry Ertheimer, John Fries, John C. Sore, Max Duryea, Clara Palma, Sally Cohen, Blanche Verona, Carrie Francis and Marion Brighton.

Krusec and Mr. Rice are established institutions in New York, but this is their first visit to California. Numerous songs and specialties will punctuate the presentation. There are half a dozen ras-timers to say nothing of the Irish and character songs.

Alcazar. They will give a double bill at the Alcazar this week, consisting of the first performance here of a pathetic curtain-raiser by Frederick Paulding entitled "A Man's Love," in which the author, Frank Denithorne, and Chas. Bates will appear, and "Forbidden Fruit," one of the many sporty comedies written by the late Dion Boucault.

A part of the story of "Forbidden Fruit" is not unlike that of the immortal song, "After the Ball." The two erring husbands go to the Cremorne to dine, expecting to meet there two lively ladies of the Gaiety world. While waiting for their fair companions, one

perhaps for this season that "Brian Boru" was, of the two operas, the better liked by the public of New York. At all events it was the success of last season, and we may thank the Tivoli's enterprise for the chance of hearing it. This is the author's argument:

The action of the first act takes place in the Wicklow hills, at the beginning of the seventh century. The Fairy Queen, the Spirit of Ireland, with her train meet at midnight and summon Brian Boru and Pat O'Hara, his henchman. They warn the former of his fate, and point out to him how to reach the throne of Ireland. To the latter they give a magic fiddle and show him how to save his master's life, the sister of O'Connor, one of his most loyal chiefs. The English Princess, Elfrida, tries to win him by her wiles, and the plots of her scheming factotum, the monk, Oswald, O'Donovan, his foster-brother, is also desirous of securing the throne of Ireland. The first act ends with Brian accepting the flag of Ireland and taking oath to set his dear country free.

The second act takes us to the English headquarters in Dublin Castle. All is roasting and feasting. The English set a trap to imprison Brian, but O'Hara plays his magic fiddle, all are entranced to dance, during which Brian escapes. The first scene of the third act is in the forest near Dublin. Here the true-hearted

will have to hold out some warmer inducement than the law before people will part with any of their clothes in that temperature.

ASHTON STEVENS. Baldwin. To-night and for another week Willie Collier in "The Man From Mexico" will fill the auditorium and the box office of the Baldwin Theater.

The next engagement on the books is that of "The Girl From Paris," a gingery operatic farce that attained to tremendous vogue in New York last



THE CALL ABOUT THE SYMPHONY CONCERTS AND THE PEOPLE WHO ATTEND THEM, AND I JUDGE YOU TO BE A FUSY OLD GENTLEMAN WITH NO PARTICULAR LOVE FOR MY SEX. FOR PERMIT ME TO EXPLAIN I AM A WOMAN, ONE OF THOSE WHO GO TO THE SYMPHONY CONCERTS, NOT BECAUSE THEY THINK IT IS THE NICE THING TO DO, BUT BECAUSE THEY FIND DELIGHT IN GOOD MUSIC, AND WHO DO HAPPEN TO KNOW "THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCHUMANN AND SOUSA." NOW YOU HAVE CRITICIZED, IN YOUR SARCASTIC STYLE, THE WOMEN WHO HAVE KEPT ON THEIR HATS AT THESE CONCERTS. WILL YOU KINDLY TELL ME WHY THEY SHOULD TAKE THEM OFF? THE HIGH TONED ORDINANCE WAS ENFORCED TO GIVE ALL PERSONS AN EQUAL VIEW OF THE STAGE. WHAT IS THERE TO SEE AT THE SYMPHONY CONCERTS? A LOT OF MEN IN MODERN CLOTHES AND A LOT

NEW TO-DAY—AMUSEMENTS. SAN FRANCISCO, CAL. ESTAB. 1867. LOS ANGELES, CAL. ESTAB. 1894. THE ORPHEUM. GUSTAV WALTER, Director-General. Week Commencing Monday, January 17—GREATEST CARDS IN THE VAUDEVILLE WORLD! Return From Their Triumphant Coast Tour for Positively One Week Only Prior to Their Eastern Engagements and Thence Homeward Bound to Their Native Land. THE MUSICAL SENSATION OF THE CENTURY. GUSTAV WALTER'S IMPERATOR. THE KNABEN-KAPALLE HUNGARIAN BOYS' MILITARY BAND. 40 Little Natural-Born Musicians. New and Popular Selections. RICE AND ELMER In Their Original Specialty, "A RUBE'S VISIT TO CHINATOWN." CARTER DE HAVEN, PROF. GALLANDO, Diminutive Comedian. ALMONT AND DUMONT, HIGH-CLASS INSTRUMENTAL DUETISTS. Direct from Australia—KNIGHT ASTON—World's Renowned Tenor Robusto. PAULO & DIKA, BARNEY & RUSSELL, Eccentric Vocalists. Novelty Character Artists. Last Week of the Legitimate Star PATRICE ALF HAMPTON and J. F. WHITBECK. In Their Dainty Playlet—"A NEW YEAR'S DREAM." MATINEE TO-DAY, SUNDAY, JANUARY 16th. Last Appearance of Musical Dale, Elinore Sisters, La Petite Lund, Farum Brothers, Kisty Mitchell, Mile. Romello and the BALLET SPECTACLE. PARQUET, m.c. 25c; BALCONY 10c; CHILDREN 10c, any part.

NEW TO-DAY—AMUSEMENTS. Baldwin Theatre TO-NIGHT and ALL NEXT WEEK. THE BIGGEST OF BIG SUCCESSSES! WILLIE COLLIER, THE MAN FROM MEXICO. The Quaintest of Quaint Comedians, in THE MAN FROM MEXICO. AN ABSOLUTE AVALANCHE OF LAUGHS, THAT'S RIGHT! PRICES—A good Reserved Seat on the lower floor, \$1; Balcony, 50c and 75c. Special Matinee Prices. Last Performance Next Saturday Night. MONDAY, JANUARY 24. THE GIRL FROM PARIS. TIVOLI OPERA-HOUSE. Mrs. ELEANORE KRELLING, Proprietor & Manager TO-NIGHT—LAST TIME OF Our Holiday Spectacle, "MOTHER GOOSE!" New Songs, Dances and Specialties. TO-MORROW EVENING. "BRIAN BORU" A Romantic Irish Opera. First Appearance of ARTHUR DONALDSON, Baritone. CHARLES CHARTERS, Character Comedian. Popular Prices... 25c and 50c. MOROSCO'S GRAND OPERA-HOUSE. Victor Morosco, Sole Lessee and Manager. Last Two Performances of "THE FLUORER" in the History of the Theatre. Magnificent Presentation of the Great War Drama "THE BLUE AND THE GRAY." Beautiful Patriotic Scenes and Tableaux. The Acme Quartet in War and Camp Songs. A Strong Cast. New Scenic and Mechanical Effects. Evening Prices, 10c, 25c and 50c. MATINEE SATURDAY AND SUNDAY. CHIQUITA! Cuba's Atom! The Smallest Woman on Earth, is Positively the MARVEL OF THE AGE! Daily Receptions at the CHUTES Afternoon and Evening. 10c to all, including Vaudeville. Children 5c. BUSH-STREET THEATER. The Thalia German-Hebrew Opera Company. FRIDAY AND SUNDAY NIGHTS. "THE WANDERING JEW." Dramatic Opera in 4 acts, by Professor La-telner. Box office open daily from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m. BUSHNELL ALERTS. Admission... 25 cents.

NEW TO-DAY—AMUSEMENTS. California Theatre BEGINNING MONDAY EVENING, JAN. 17. "PLEASE MARRY ME, IT WON'T TAKE LONG." Big, Buoyant, Billowy, Brilliant, Ebullient Bundle of Laughter, COURT-ED INTO COURT. BY JOHN T. McNALLY. THE COMPLETE Comedy INTRODUCTION ELABORATE PERFECT Production MARIE DRESSLER, MOST IRRESISTIBLE Extant. JOHN C. RICE AND TWENTY OTHER FARCEURS. IT SCINTILLATES IN WIT. IT BUBBLES WITH MELODY. Join the Throngs and Hear the Songs. "Whooop De Dooden Do," "Ram-a-Jam, I Want That Man," "Bon Jour, Monsieur," "I Ain't Oblivious to Stand No Nigger Foolin'," "Mamie Reilly," "If That Ain't Wining a Home, I Don't Know," "Why I Became a Sailor," "Ma Lulu," "I'm the Tender of the Tender of the Tender in Town," and "O'Dooley's First Five O'clock Tea." COMING—"WHAT HAPPENED TO JONES." CALIFORNIA THEATER. TO-NIGHT (SUNDAY)—LAST TIME—JOLLY NELLIE McHENRY in Her Brilliant Comedy A NIGHT IN NEW YORK! MONDAY—"COURT-ED INTO COURT." GENUINE CORBETT-FITZSIMMONS CONTEST Reproduced at 873 MARKET STREET, OPPOSITE POWELL. As follows: 1, 7 and 10:45 p. m., preliminary; first and second rounds: 7 and 7:45 p. m.; third, fourth and fifth rounds: 8 and 8:30 p. m.; sixth, seventh and eighth rounds: 9 and 9:15 p. m.; ninth, tenth and eleventh rounds: 10 and 11:30 p. m.; twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and knock-out. The fight in the world where any part of this great fight was ever reproduced for this price. ADMISSION, 10 CENTS. OBERON—O'FARRRELL STREET. Grand Concert Every Evening by CARL MARTENS. COSMOPOLITAN ORCHESTRA. THE LYBECY CYCLE SKATING RINK, Howard St., between Third and Fourth. Moving 50c. RACING! RACING! RACING! —CALIFORNIA JOCKEY CLUB— Winter Meeting, 1897-98. Beginning MONDAY January 10 to January 22, Inclusive. RACING MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY. FIVE OR MORE RACES —H DAY. —RACES START AT 2:15 P. M. SHARP. —Ferry Boats leave San Francisco at 12 M. and 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30 and 3 P. M., connecting with trains stopping at the entrance track for your direct tickets to Shell Mound. —Returning Trains leave the track at 4:15 and 4:45 P. M., and immediately after the last race. —THOMAS H. WILLIAMS "R. President. —R. M. MILROY, Secretary. THE OAKLAND RAY THEATRE. Open daily from 9:30 a. m. to 12 m.; 2 to 4:30 p. m.; 7:30 to 10:30 p. m. Ladies' Skates, Free.