Several of the local playhouses enjoyed crowded houses during the past week. This gratifying condition of affairs prevailed at the National, Columbia, Academy, and the Bijou. The National had Mr. Jefferson, who presented his familiar repertoire of "Rip Van Winkle," "The Rivals," "Lend Me Five Shillings," and "The Cricket on the Hearth." During his engagement Mr. Jefferson played to the largest business that he has had in Washington for many years. At the Columbia "Are You a Mason?" one of the funniest and best-acted farces that have come to the Capital this season, delighted immense audiences from the very first night. The ever-popular "Superba," at the Academy, showed its remarkable drawing powers by bringing to the Stair theatre audiences that completely filled the house. At the Bijou a bill of vaudeville and burlesque of unusual excellence resulted in the best business this house has had this season. The production of "A Tin Soldier" at Chase's developed the fact that the patrons of the former Grand care less each succeeding week for the old Hoyt pieces. Had it not been for the assistance of Inaudi as a special attraction Chase's would have suffered considerably by comparison with the attendance at the other playhouses. The Lafayette stock company proved itself capable of presenting such an elaborate piece as "The Sporting Duchess" most creditably, with excellent box office results. Kernan's, with "The Bohemian Burlesquers," had a good show that got a generous share of the local patronage.

The Columbia will offer the far-famed musical comedy success, "Florodora," this week, while the National will present Richard Mansfield in his most recent play, "Beaucaire." Chase's will have "A Day and a Night," another Hoyt piece—the last of the present offerings of the musical comedy stock company—and the Lafayette will tempt patronage with a revival of "The Two Orphans," which has not been presented here for some years. The Academy will be occupied by Thomas E. Shea, an excellent actor, who will be seen in a repertoire of successes. The Bijou will have Alexandra Dagmar as the leading feature of its vaudeville bill, and Kernan's will offer "The Cracker Jacks," a burlesque troupe which has previously appeared at this theatre with much success.

The National—Mansfield in "Beaucaire."

"Beaucaire," which is regarded as the greatest success Richard Mansfield has had since his "Beau Brummel," will be presented at the National Theatre by Mr. Mansfield and company this week, with a single matinee on Saturday. In the cities in which "Beaucaire" has been presented, both play and chief actor have been given almost unstinted praise, and there is small doubt but that the theatregoers of Washington have a real treat in store for them in the new Mansfield offering.

"Beaucaire" affords Mansfield a role somewhat akin to "Prince Karl" and "Beau Brummel;" a role full of character, sentiment and glittering wit. It will be found the most lovable, enjoyable and generally popular role he has given his public in years. The group of people into which Beaucaire comes includes that circle of exquisites presided over by Beau Nash. So it is a comedy of manners; the gentlemen wear swords, but the sting is all in the ends of their tongues.

All the action takes place in Bath. The exclusive pump room is the scene of Act I. Beaucaire's own lodging is shown in the next act, and the setting of the third act is Lady Mary Carlisle's house on the night of her great ball, when Beaucaire is presented to her as Chateaurien. A roadway in the garden of Mr. Bansloe's country place, near the Diana, is shown in Act IV. The last scene of all is the assembly room in Bath on the morning the French Ambassador returns and discloses the real identity of Monsieur Beaucaire. The story of the nobleman mistaken for a barber, who obtains entrance into the most exclusive English circles, is replete with oddly humorous episodes, it is the humor that has been emphasized in "Beaucaire," though the fragrance of Lady Mary's red, red roses perfumes the whole play and discloses the Frenchman an ardent lover as well as a delightful wit. The curtain will rise promptly at 8 o'clock.

The Columbia—"Florodora."

"Florodora," famous as one of the most successful musical comedies heard in this country, will be the attraction at the Columbia Theatre this week. The engagement is for six nights only, with matinees Thursday and Saturday, and the preliminary sale of seats indicates that each presentation will be witnessed by a crowded house.

The company which will introduce "Florodora" consists of eighty-seven people. The principal members are Isadore Rush, Bertha Waltzinger, Guelma Baker, Frances Tyson, Will C. Mandeville, W. P. Carleton, Alf C. Whelan, and William M. Armstrong.

The chorus of pretty maidens is said to be an especially strong one, and trained to perfection, and the scenic production, costumes, and other accessories are fresh from the studios and workshops, so that "Florodora's" local introduction will be under circumstances that should win the same stamp of approval that was so readily accorded by the New York playgoers, by whom the piece is conceded to be the most diverting and original entertainment that has been seen on the metropolitan stage.

The English-speaking world has become pretty well advised of the merits of this musical comedy. The book is by Owen Hall, whose previous claims for recognition as a librettist were demonstrated by the cleverness of his work in "The Geisha," "An Artist's Model," "The Gaiety Girl," and other successes, and the music, which is "Florodora's" paramount charm, is by Leslie Stuart, a musician of well-established prominence in England. No composer of recent years has written such a number of attractive lyric gems as are to be found in "Florodora." A few of the prominent ones are the famous double sextette, "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden," "Tact," "I Want to Marry a Man," "I've an Inkling," "Come and See Our Island," "Willie Was a Gay Boy," "Galloping," "Under the Shade of the Palms," and dozens of others that have achieved widespread popularity. All of the music is of a thoroughly original type and peculiarly catchy quality, that makes it simply irresistible.

Chase's—"A Day and a Night."

The announcement for the last week of the engagement of Chase's musical comedy stock company at Chase's Theatre, which will begin tomorrow afternoon, includes an attractive list of vaudeville numbers to be given in connection with the popular Hoyt play, "A Day and a Night in New York." There is probably less plot to "A Day and a Night in New York" than any other play from the pen of the late playwright. It was constructed mainly to afford a vehicle to carry the numerous specialties that are presented throughout the performance. The play itself, however, is one of Mr. Hoyt's funniest, and the members of the company are congenially cast. Vaudeville, however, is to be the leading feature, and in addition to the specialties to be done by the members of the company it is understood that other leading acts of the vaudeville stage have been engaged.

Among the prominent features to be given by the members of the stock company, probably the most entertaining will be an entirely original act by a double octette, called "The Pajama Girls." Mary Marble and "Little Chip" will repeat the popular song, "Ching a Ling Loo," which became so popular when sung by this amusing pair a few weeks ago. "Little Chip" will, with Tony Hart, also do a German burlesque on the "Rogers Brothers in Washington," and Mary Marble will sing her favorite song, "The Hoo-doo-doo Man." Otis Harlan will appear in several entertaining numbers, and will render his song, "Just to Please the Ladies." A popular number will be an ensemble sung by the company, entitled the "Jockey Chorus." The other favorites of the Chase company will contribute entertaining specialties.

The Lafayette—"The Two Orphans."

The offering of the Bellows Stock Company at the Lafayette this week may be in a manner classed as a novelty, in that the organization will present in Washington for the first time in many years that old and time-tried melodrama, "The Two Orphans." Mr. Bellows announces that in presenting this old favorite he will use the famous Kate Claxton version, together with the incidental music, which differs very materially from the first English version of D'Ennery's masterpiece.

Competent critics have declared "The Two Orphans" to be the greatest play of its kind ever written, and its long life would seem to add truth to the declaration. That it has had a wonderful magnetic power is witnessed by the countless thousands who have paid to see it. Although Miss Claxton used it in her stellar operations for more than twenty years, visiting the same cities year after year, it was still drawing large audiences when she abandoned it to retire to private life. Its revival by the stock company ought to make a very interesting offering, and that the public still loves to see the old plays is evidenced by the large box office bookings reported by Manager Berger.

The following will be the complete cast: Chevalier Maurice de Vaydray, White Whittlesey; Count de Linieres, Francis T. Powers; Picard, Harry Corson Clarke; Jacques Frochard, John T. Sullivan; Pierre, his brother, Charles Wyngate; Marquis de Presles, Myron Leffingwell; Doctor of the Hospitals, Frederick Sullivan; Count de Mailly, Joseph Kaufman; Marquis D'Estrees, Tony Cummings; Martin, P. J. Durgan; chief clerk, Howard Sanford; officer of the guard, Harry C. Bradley; Antoine, Jeremiah O'Connor; footman, William Weaver; Countess de Linieres, Effie Darling; Louise, Antoinette Walker; Henriette, Lillie Lawrence; La Frochard, Grace Griswold; Marianne, Katherine Clinton; Sister Genevieve, Katherine Field; Sister Therese, Susie Parker; Florette, Leon Harrold; Julie, Elsa Czapska; Cora, Violet Pierson; Victoriene, Eva Whitford.

The Academy—Thomas E. Shea.

Thomas E. Shea will inaugurate a week's engagement in a series of plays tomorrow night at the Academy of Music. Mr. Shea is a popular favorite in Washington, and his annual visits to the Academy are usually attended with much success. He is an actor of more than ordinary ability, has an attractive personality, a fine voice, and acts with intelligence and discretion.

This year Mr. Shea has added a new play to the list of those in which he has appeared heretofore. It is entitled "The Pledge of Honor," and was adapted by James W. Harkins, jr., from Hugh Conway's novel "Called Back." The play opens in London and presents a scene wherein a band of anarchists are engaged in plotting against their Government. Gilbert Vaughn, a wealthy young Englishman who is blind, enters the room through mistake. A murder is committed as he enters and they, thinking that he has witnessed the crime, put him to severe tests in order to satisfy themselves that he did not see it. Vaughn recovers his sight during the action of the play, and assists in bringing the murderers to justice. One of the most striking scenes in the play represents a salt mine in operation. The role of Gilbert Vaughn is said to be one of Mr. Shea's best creations. It is a character part requiring the most delicate treatment, and the actor is accredited with a distinct success in the role. "The Pledge of Honor" will form the bill Wednesday and Saturday evenings.

Monday night will mark the only performance during the week of "The Man o' Ware-Man," which has always proved a most entertaining bill to the patrons of the Academy.

Another interesting offering will be "The Bells." The version of the story which will be used at the Academy this week was specially prepared for Mr. Shea by M. Louis Cardot.

"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" will be presented Tuesday and Friday evenings. The Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday matinees will be devoted to "The Voice of Nature," by Theodore Kremer, a popular play that recites the love story of two young people, and the many vicissitudes which attend their courtship.

The Bijou—Burlesque and Vaudeville

Alexandra Dagmar, "the most stunning woman in vaudeville," will be the conspicuous number that will undoubtedly attract local lovers of vaudeville and burlesque to the Bijou Theatre this week. Miss Dagmar has never been seen in Washington, and her advent will, therefore, be considerable of a novelty, especially as she has won pronounced successes in Paris, London, New York, San Francisco, and a number of other important cities in this country. Besides being a most beautiful woman, Miss Dagmar is claimed to possess the very best singing voice that has ever been heard on the vaudeville stage, and her popularity is enhanced further by the fact that she displays a number of beautiful dresses during her act.

Another feature of the Bijou bill will be a second series of living pictures, which will introduce Lenore White, the California beauty, and a dozen of so of the prettiest of the Bijou chorus. There will be, in addition, during the olio, such well-known acts as the Great Tascot, who will sing "coon" songs in his own inimitable manner; the Three Osnatos, triple bar experts; Josie and Willie Barrows, a team of clever dancers, and the Three Graces in a comedy sketch.

Dave Lewis will return permanently to the stock company, and will in conjunction with Bert Leslie be at the head of the organization in a new burlesque that will enlist the services of the entire aggregation of singers, fun-makers and beauties. During the burlesque solos will be rendered by such favorite Bijouites as Nellie V. Nichols, Susie Rocamora, Susie Fisher, Sophie Leslie, John P. Rodgers, Matt Kennedy, Lew Harvey, Al Cameron, and Charles Marsh. The cineograph will close the bill with a new series of motion pictures. Daily matinee.

Kernan's—"Cracker Jack Burlesquers."

Manchester's "Cracker Jacks" come to Kernan's for a week's engagement commencing Monday matinee, and will no doubt score its usual hit, as the company this season is said to be stronger than ever. Some of the old favorites have been retained, but mostly new faces will be seen. This company has the reputation of presenting one of the best all-around specialty and burlesque entertainments that have ever been seen at the Lyceum.

The opening burlesque is a skit entitled "On Board the Mary Jane," and brings twenty pretty girls into prominence in songs, duets, trios and quartettes. The following specialties will appear between the opening and closing burlesques: Brown, Harrison and Brown, who have appeared here before, are among the most pleasing people in the bill, and will present an act entitled "Wait a Minute," in which they promise to repeat their former local successes; Morrissey and Cameron, eccentric song and dance artists, who perform a number of feats that are as funny as they are astonishing; George Fredo and Sadie Forrest, "The Musical Tramp and the Elastic Soubrette;" Belle Hathaway, with her troupe of trained baboons and monkeys, and the Mayo sisters, in new songs.

The closing burlesque will engage the services of the entire company in a funny satire on one of New York's latest dramatic productions. The Novelties will include "The Sporting Girls," "The Saucy Girls," and "The Girls Who Look for Tips."

As an extra attraction, Manager Kernan has engaged Harvey Parker, the little (demon) wrestler, to appear at every performance during the engagement of "The Cracker Jacks." Parker has issued a challenge to all comers, and promises $25 to any man who stays with him fifteen minutes without a fall. Parker claims to have defeated all the well-known wrestling experts, including Roeber. He weighs 142 pounds, but bars no size or weight.

NEXT WEEK'S ATTRACTIONS.

The National—Bertha Galland.

Playgoers who are not too blase to permit their imaginations to be led away into the fanciful rounds of fairies and witches should enjoy the season of the wistful, mysterious little wood sprite, Isoult, and her romantic wooing by the plumed and armored knight-errant, Prosper, in "The Forest Lovers."

This melodramatic romance, taken from Maurice Hewlett's book, will have its first performance in Washington at the New National next week, with Bertha Galland in the principal role. The company numbers twenty-six people, and these will be re-enforced by twenty supernumeraries. "The Forest Lovers" is in five acts.

The Columbia—"Miss Bob White."

If a rollicking, merry comedy, interspersed with thirty-odd jingling melodies, interpreted by capable artists, assisted by a large and efficient chorus, together with a superb scenic equipment, and a countless variety of beautiful dresses, the whole ensemble accompanied by a largely augmented orchestra of thorough musicians, makes a successful opera, then Willard Spenser is said to have accomplished the fact with his new comedy opera, "Miss Bob White," which will be seen in this city at the Columbia next week.

The organization includes Ethel Jackson, Mathilde Preville, Alice Campbell, Richard F. Carroll, Frank Deshon, William E. Philp, Thomas Whiffen, and Nicholas Burnham.

The production here will be identical with that presented at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, during its run of 100 performances last season.

The Academy—"Lost River."

"Lost River," Joseph Arthur's play, which ran for six months in New York last season, will be the attraction next week at the Academy of Music. It is said to be the best play the author has ever written.

The management has engaged Paul Gilmore to appear in the leading role, Bob Blessing. Last season Mr. Gilmore played King Charles in Henrietta Crossman's production of "Mistress Nell," and previous to that he was a well-known star. Some of the others in the cast will be Edith Fassett, as Ora, the heroine; Bartley McCallum, Elizabeth Woodson, Howard Missimer, Ada Bashell, and others.

Chase's—Polite Vaudeville.

The resumption of vaudeville at Chase's Theatre during Thanksgiving week will be made the occasion of one of the finest bills of the kind ever seen in Washington. The prominent feature of the bill will be Ten-Ichi and his troupe of seven Oriental wonder-workers.

In Japan, Ten-Ichi is regarded as the greatest living conjurer. His assistants include several pretty geisha girls, who are, themselves, skilled in the black art. Include the other numbers on the bill will include the Gainsborough Octette; Will M. Cressy and Blanche Dayne, in "The Village Lawyer," a new pastoral sketch written by Mr. Cressy; Leon Morris' ponies; Bimm-Bomm-Brrr; Ada Arnoldson; Monroe and Wesley; "Chalk" Saunders, and the Three Melrose Brothers.

THE PASSING SHOW.

Mrs. Fiske, that excellent actress who, when she finds time hanging heavily on her hands, dashes off a little speech that occupies about five columns of nonpareil telling the people of the country who patronize the theatres what a dreadful thing the theatrical syndicate is and how its iron heel of oppression is slowly but none the less certainly grinding the independence out of the native actor, and how the drama itself is rapidly going to the very dogs, has been at it again. Mrs. Fiske's latest bouquet of philippics was hurled at the so-called syndicate Tuesday night before the Nineteenth Century Club of New York. Her talk was vastly entertaining, if it sounded as well as it reads, while as an advertisement for the actress it was as ingenious as the historical milk baths of Anna Held.

After making the somewhat astonishing assertion that "the trust as an institution designed to enrich its members at little or no risk and upon the labor and property of others is a remarkable thing, and it can be described in no more expressive way than by stating that it represents in the theatre a part of what has been called in the recent magazine work of an entertaining young writer as 'the world of graft,'" Mrs. Fiske stated:

Competition in the drama now is almost impossible. And if there be any fault to find with the supply of amusements, responsibility may be easily placed. It may be said for the trust that it never has pretended that it would improve the American drama or American dramatic art. That leads to another consideration of its influences.

The producing manager, as an independent manager, has almost disappeared from view. If such a manager were to wish to invest today in the production of a play in which he had faith he could not get a theatre, or secure a route, equivalent to a share in what should really be his sole property. Thus it is not strange that ventures of original conception, which formerly were the life and variety of the theatre, are comparatively few. They will naturally decrease under prevailing conditions until the theatre falls to the dead level of commercial control. The natural impulses of the trust as to productions tend to the superficial, if nothing worse.

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Mrs. Fiske's allegation that the producing manager is practically a thing of the past is interesting, even if not correct. Mr. Mansfield, who will entertain Washingtonians this week in a syndicate theatre, manifestly did not have to "give up" to the terrible syndicate people for the privilege of coming to this city and playing at the National. Neither did Messrs. Fisher & Ryley, the proprietors of "Florodora," have to pay over a certain per cent of their gross takings to Frohman, Klaw & Erlanger, et al., for the right to appear in the Columbia, another local syndicate house. And Mr. Jefferson, who was here last week, did not have to forward to the syndicate headquarters any portion of his $15,000 receipts. Lulu Glaser is a new star practically, and her offering, "Dolly Varden," was much in the nature of an unknown quantity before it came to the Columbia week before last, but Miss Glaser was given the opportunity to play here in a syndicate theatre. Mrs. Fiske's remarkable statement to the contrary, notwithstanding, Frank Daniels, Anna Held, Amelia Bingham, Elsie de Wolfe, "Lovers' Lane," "The Christian," or any of the numerous other stars and plays that have already appealed for Washington patronage did not have to submit to the awful "graft" of the syndicate.

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A young manager, Henry Harris, determined to branch out this season as a producing manager and brought a new play, "The Last Appeal," to Washington. Local theatregoers did not like the piece and remained away, but the syndicate did not order Mr. Harris to immediately hie himself to the one-night stands. On the contrary, they gave him the opportunity of testing the merits of his propetry in Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, and Boston before even he himself decided the public did not care for "The Last Appeal."

Only two weeks ago a new star, Charles Dalton, produced in Washington, for the first time on any stage, "The Helmet of Navarre." It was a most imposing production, but it is not believed Mr. Greet, the London promoter of the venture, paid for the privilege of presenting his star in the syndicate theatres of the country.

Mrs. Fiske evidently did not weigh her remarks very carefully or she would not have said that such enterprising and independent managers as Liebler & Co., Wm. A. Brady, Kirk La Shelle, Jacob Litt, and Mr. Mansfield, Stuart Robson, N. C. Goodwin, Jefferson de Angelis, James K. Hackett, May Irwin, Amelia Bingham, Otis Skinner, and any number of other stars and attractions beyond the immediate direction of Frohman—Klaw & Erlanger-Nixon & Zimmerman-Rich & Harris combination are compelled to pay for the right of playing in the syndicate houses.

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Mrs. Fiske then proceeded to go after the syndicate members for importing their productions. She said:

He [meaning Charles Frohman] and his fellow-operators do not experiment with the American author unless driven to it by a lack of "goods" with fixed values in the foreign market. They have options on every play of note produced abroad that has possibilities for money-making in this country. And as long as these foreign possibilities exist they will take no risks in native ventures. Almost invariably they import the "production" or duplicate it from the original models. This, of course, is mere commercial enterprise, calling for no greater intelligence than is required in signing a check for the cost of the "material." Thus the American dramatist suffers, for his opportunities are very few. Yet the American dramatist gives us reason to be proud of him.

There is as bountiful a supply of talent in the theatre today as there has been at any previous time. But talent does not find a congenial atmosphere in proximity to the Theatrical Trust. Having no desire to develop talent for its own sake, and having no use for talent, except in its mediocre state as a part of the general scheme to obtain the money of the public with as little substantial return as possible, talent consequently has little excuse for improvement. To begin with, the practice of making replicas of foreign productions in itself has a deadening influence upon the actors. No individuality, no originality of thought is possible in these circumstances, and naturally no stage direction of the sort that furnishes the only practical stage school is possible. Stage managers of the trust, like scene painters of the trust, simply study the foreign models and copy them as nearly as they can. Under these conditions of mere slavish imitation is it strange that mediocrity prevails? There is no lack of men and women capable of writing plays and acting plays in this country, but playwrights and actors require encouragement as well as criticism. The influence of a sordid and commercial control that seeks only the easiest method of securing the dollar, and that has no aspiration and no conscience with respect to the advancement of American dramatic art, is serious.

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Once again does Mrs. Fiske miss the bullseye of verity. Charles Frohman produces more plays during the course of a theatrical season than does any other manager or combination of managers, perhaps. This season he directs the tours of Julia Marlowe—even if the announcements do credit Charles Dillingham, Mr. Frohman's right-hand man, with the honor—Maude Adams, Annie Russell, Virginia Harned, Mrs. Carter, and Blanche Bates, in conjunction with David Belasco, Ethel Barrymore, John Drew, William H. Crane, William Gillette, William Faversham, "Eben Holden," and will shortly present another play, "Colorado."

Of this baker's dozen of attractions, only two are, as Mrs. Fiske puts it, "foreign possibilities." Julia Marlowe's "When Knighthood Was in Flower" never saw the Atlantic; Maude Adams' new piece, while it is by Barrie, an Englishman, first saw the footlights in Albany a few weeks ago; Annie Russell will soon produce a new play by Clyde Fitch; Virginia Harned, in "Alice of Old Vincennes," had no model to copy after; Mrs. Carter is getting ready her new play, "La du Barry," by Belasco, and Blanche Bates' role of Charette in "Under Two Flags" is entirely original in conception and interpretation; Ethel Barrymore's "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines" was initially played by Miss Barrymore in this country last season, in Philadelphia; Mr. Crane's idea of "David Harum" is wholly his own, and he would be naturally grieved were Mrs. Fiske or any other person to suggest otherwise; Mr. Gillette is now showing Londoners his original character of Sherlock Holmes, while in "Eben Holden" E. M. Holland has a new character study; "Colorado," soon to be brought out by Mr. Frohman, is by an American author, Augustus Thomas, and will be performed for the first time in this country. Only John Drew and William Faversham, of all Charles Frohman's stars, are using plays of foreign make.

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Klaw & Erlanger, the other end of the terrible combination against art, manage "Ben Hur," "The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast," "The Liberty Belles," "Foxy Quiller," the Bostonians, the Rogers brothers, and own an interest in the tour of Mary Mannering. Of the entire Klaw & Erlanger list but one attraction, "The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast," is a "foreign possibility," and this was the greatest gamble ever been made by any American managers, as it was the first of the big London Christmas pantomimes to be brought to this country. Klaw & Erlanger had a pretty good idea of what their receipts would be from the Rogers brothers, but the English piece was an entirely new proposition for this country, and there is scarce a better firm of managers that would have dared make the production.

The greatest theatrical production that has ever been made in this country perhaps is "Ben Hur," which was done by Klaw & Erlanger last season, and which represented an outlay of money large enough to wipe out the average manager's bank account.

Nixon & Zimmerman, another part of the syndicate, own the Francis Wilson opera company, with Mr. Wilson, "Miss Bob White," and "The Messenger Boy," and of the trio only the last named ever saw a foreign stage. Mr. Wilson, who was one of the loudest shouters against the syndicate, soon saw the false position he occupied and hastily sought shelter in the "trust" bandwagon, and has been happy ever since, even if the good people of Jackson, Tenn.; Kokomo, Ind.; Brenham, Tex., and numerous other centres of population and culture miss his anti-syndicate curtain speeches.

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After giving the syndicate several other vicious pokes Mrs. Fiske proceeded to relate how the combination of managers influence the press, and in substantiation of her assertion referred to the case of a Philadelphia newspaper which recently was compelled to discharge a notoriously incompetent dramatic critic who, when he found that he wobbled around in the position, and that his release was imminent, immediately started to cry "the syndicate's after me," when in reality he only saw his own shadow pursuing him.

* * *

"The inevitable results of the present tendency," says Mrs. Fiske, "are always foreseen. An appetite for the trivial and the mediocre is being created. It is as if the reading of young people was confined to books of a cheap, silly, and sensational character, and the existence of better books was absolutely kept from their knowledge. Another of these inevitable results is seen among the older generation—persons of settled taste—a great number of whom have given up habitual theatregoing, obtaining recreations in other directions, and attending the play only when occasional visits of noted artists warrant the belief that disappointment will not result. This class, that has become disgusted with the mediocrity of much that is offered on the contemporary stage under the Trust's regime is undoubtedly more numerous than the class of narrow-minded persons that formerly refrained from theatregoing because of the attitude of some of the churches with respect to the stage. And this class, which should be the best support of the theatre, has virtually ceased to support it at all."

Certainly the actress whose greatest recent achievements were in such models of refinement as "Tess of the D'Ubervilles" and "Becky Sharp" paints a most gloomy future for the American drama, the dramatists, the critics and even the theatregoers. It is, indeed, sad to contemplate being forced to go to the playhouse to view the offerings of such "trivial and mediocre"—ask Mrs. Fiske—actors and actresses as Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Sothern, Mr. Mansfield, Mr. Robson, Mr. Bellew, Mr. Hackett, Mr. Drew, Mr. Gillette, Mr. Goodwin, Mr. Skinner, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Collier, Mr. Warfield, Mr. DeAngelis, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Daniels, Mr. Faversham, Miss Marlowe, Miss Adams, Miss Russell, Mrs. LeMoyne, Miss Allen, Miss Barrymore, Miss Glaser, Miss Walsh, Miss Irwin, Miss Bingham, Miss George, Miss Mannering, Miss Sylva, Mrs. Carter, and the many others who play in the syndicate theatres.

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Perhaps Mrs. Fiske would prefer to have the theatregoers of the country only patronize her own performances, and those of Miss Crosman and Corse Payton. Neither of these undeniably brilliant players ever appears in syndicate houses.

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Leon Mayer, who was in Washington during the past week, looking after the business interests of Joseph Jefferson, left for Portland, Oregon, Wednesday evening, to join the Thomas Jefferson comedy company, presenting the same repertoire as shown here by Jefferson, pere, last week.

Joseph Jefferson will close his fall tour next Saturday night at Baltimore, and will at once leave for Florida, where he will spend the winter. In the spring Mr. Jefferson will play eight weeks, appearing in a number of the larger cities of the middle West and East.

* * *

Joseph Jefferson played to one of the largest matinees in the history of the National Theatre yesterday afternoon, and even "standing room" was at a premium. About 2 o'clock the telephone in the theatre box office ting-a-ling-ed. Clarence Jacobson, Manager Rapley's assistant, answered the call.

Said the man at the other end of the 'phone: "What's the best you can let me have for seventy-five cents this afternoon?"

Answered Clarence: "Seventy-five cents is the general admission—standing room."

Then this from the man: "All right, lay aside two for me, and be sure and get them well in front and on the aisle if you can."

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The appearance of Alexandra Dagmar at the Bijou this week calls attention to the fact that many of the big women on the stage are going into vaudeville. When one pauses to reflect for a moment, one is surprised at the number of women of Amazonian proportions who have of late gone in for this line of stage work.

Of Junoesque singers alone who have deserted the realm of opera for the luxury of vaudeville, there are Alexandra Dagmar, Grace von Studdeford, Camille d'Arville, Jessie Bartlett Davis, and Katherine Germaine. From the dramatic field Marie Wainwright and Emily Lytton found it an easy step into vaudeville, while Marie Dressler, Rose Coghlan, and Amelia Summerville, all three exceptionally large women, followed the same course with equal success.

From the fairy bowers of comic opera and musical comedy, which is a distinction with a difference, Lillian Russell and Truly Shattuck both found their way into more profitable popularity, while Katherine Bloodgood, Bessie Blitz Paxton, and Dorothy Studebaker all stepped out of the magic circle of the most exclusive society into the broad glare of the footlights of the vaudeville stage.

Another remarkable circumstance is that all of these women, almost without exception, are handsome to a striking degree, though Miss Dagmar has been known during her whole vaudeville career as "the most stunning woman in vaudeville." She is described as a talented singer, with a rich, clear voice of wide range, but it is her remarkable stature and her superb beauty of face and figure that have made her the most notable woman in vaudeville. She is almost six feet in height, and of splendid heroic proportions. And best of all, from the feminine point of view, she wears beautiful gowns.

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One of the best characterizations in "The Sporting Duchess" as performed by the Lafayette Stock Company last week was Charles Wyngate's portrayal of Capt. Cyprian Streatfield, a stammering, bashful and many times engaged man. Before Captain Streatfield finally found the right girl, he had proposed to thirteen wrong ones. The role was one of the bright features of the play, and Mr. Wyngate's work was especially commendable in view of the fact that he was just recovering from what threatened to be a serious illness, and which, according to the actor, handicapped him considerably.

If Mr. Wyngate ever entertained any doubt regarding his popularity with Washington theatregoers it must have been dispelled within the past two weeks during which time he has been made to understand in a most gratifying way that the patrons of the Lafayette Theatre think too highly of him to give him up except under protest. This is Mr. Wyngate's second season in Washington. He came here last year practically unknown. As in the case with every stock actor, Mr. Wyngate has been seen to better advantage in some parts than in others. An important point in his favor is his attention to dress. He always looks well, knows what to wear, and how to wear it.

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Probably the greatest shock Mr. Wyngate ever gave the Lafayette patrons generally and the matinee girls in particular, was when he appeared last season as Dave in "In Missouri." When he slouched on the stage in the dirty, ragged make-up of the blacksmith's apprentice the audience gasped and refused to believe it was Mr. Wyngate. Recalling this incident to a Times interviewer one afternoon last week, the player said:

"That was the happiest week of the season for me—that is, regarding the choice of parts. I gloried in Dave. The electrician let me have a pair of his overalls and I borrowed the shoes from a workman about the theatre. They were all much too big for me, but that didn't matter. All the make-up I used was a little on my eyes. For the rest I just smeared my hands and face with dirt and was ready to go on. I took a great fancy to the part after seeing Nat Goodwin's performance of the play, and when Mr. Bellows put it on in Denver I asked for the role and he gave it to me. I like character work best, and for that reason I think I am better fitted to play it than any other line. Light comedy, too, is easy for me, but I can't endure juvenile roles. They give you nothing in return for your work. If a man is capable of playing only juveniles, his career is practically at an end when his youthful locks are gone, but a character actor may play as long as there's life in him. Put a man into play a character part in a new production and if he makes a hit he is in demand from that time on, but a juvenile may go on creating new parts forever, perhaps, and never be noticed. Then, too, the role is so much more interesting. You have a character to study—a creation that must be distinct from any other in the play, and one that depends solely and entirely upon what you make it.

"But much as I'd rather play character parts than anything else, in 'stock' one must be prepared for anything. I have the greatest faith in Mr. Bellows. It has frequently happened that he has cast me for a part that to me looked impossible. I would tell him, but he would always say: 'Well, you just try it. I think you can do it,' and after playing the part I would always feel, although perhaps I would be very bad in it, that I had done the best in my power and that he had made me do it. He has an indefinable way of compelling you to do your best. This is my fifth season with Mr. Bellows, the first being some years ago with the original Frawley company out in San Francisco."

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Few persons who attended the performances of "The Rivals" and "The Cricket on the Hearth," by the Jefferson company at the National Theatre last week were aware of the exact identity of the young woman who enacted the role of Lydia in the first and Dot in the last-named play. She is Georgia Mendum, niece of John Drew, and cousin of Ethel Barrymore, two of the most conspicuous and successful stars of the present day. A few years ago the latter was but a school girl and known to fame only through that of her family, and Miss Mendum stands a pretty fair show of following in her footsteps. She is exceptionally clever, has a bright, spirited manner and is a charming young woman. When a representative of The Times called on her one morning during the week she seemed quite amazed at the idea of being interviewed.

"It seems rather strange to select me for I haven't done anything great or even interesting. In fact, just now I don't feel as though I'm doing much of anything for I'm not in "Rip" and time hangs heavily on my hands. We're never satisfied, are we? When I have had to play every night I used to wail about never having any time and now it's just the other way. We close next week in Baltimore, and then? I should like to go in 'stock' for a time. I say for a time, because while I think it's a splendid school, it is very apt to sap all the good from one's work. A woman who has tried and failed in other things may go into stock work without fear, but, to my mind, continued playing and rehearsing new pieces are very detrimental to one's art. You haven't time to study one role thoroughly, consequently you cannot help but give it merely a superficial treatment and the result is not only unsatisfactory to yourself but to your audiences. I played leading roles for five weeks in stock last spring with the Wright Huntington company.

"Wasn't it nice to be the leading woman?" asked the interviewer.

"Well, to tell you the truth," replied Miss Mendum, "the only difference I noticed was that I had a better dressing room than anybody else. That may have been a distinction made in my favor on the part of the management of the house, but since then I have declared myself against leading roles. You notice that I'm not playing them with Mr. Jefferson, don't you?

"My career? Really, I have had none. I just wandered on the stage. It's a habit in our family. I spent three years with my uncle, John Drew, during which time I played small roles in his plays and this season I joined Mr. Jefferson. I was a little afraid to attempt Lydia in "The Rivals," for I heard of so many well-known people who had essayed the role, but there is small opportunity for work in it so until another and a better part presents itself, I shall have to trust to the good will of the public and hope that I may have the chance to repay them and you newspaper people for your interest in me."

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Ten-Ichi, the conjurer who will appear at Chase's Theatre Thanksgiving week, at the head of a troup of seven Oriental wonder-workers, is considered in his country to be their greatest magician. He is the Japanese "Herrmann the Great." So great is his reputation in the Orient that in Peking, when he applied for permission to give a performance, the censor declined to grant the license, fearing that his exhibition would so far surpass that of Ching Ling Foo that the latter would be discredited before his countrymen. Ten-Ichi is now making his first tour around the world. He has the assistance of a company of seven magicians, included among whom are several pretty young Geisha girls, who themselves perform some astonishing tricks.

Some of Ten-Ichi's greatest acts are done with fire and water. For the first act a box of burning coals is brought upon the stage. Using the chop-sticks, Ten-Ichi selects one, and placing the glowing ember in his mouth, apparently eats it. After swallowing several of these coals, he emits from his mouth a shower of sparks, and by the means of these sparks lights a display of fireworks arranged on pinwheels. The illusion closes in a blaze of fire.

But Ten-Ichi's greatest feat is the one that he calls the "enchanted fountains." In this act streams of water gush from a cup, the blade of a sword, flaming torches, and the heads of his assistants, until at its close there are sixteen miniature geysers playing simultaneously. Where the water comes from is a source of mystery to all but Ten-Ichi and his assistants.

The women of the company also do a number of very clever tricks. The butterfly dance of Miss Ten Katsu illustrates the art of dancing as practiced in Japan. Ten Katsu is the principal figure in a remarkable illusion wherein Ten-Ichi causes her to change into a grown man before the audience. Another wonderful feat, different from similar ones, is the suspension of Master Ten-Ichi in mid-air, high above the stage, and without any apparent support.

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Unless all signs fail, Messrs. Fisher and Ryley will have the most successful season that any firm of theatrical managers has recently enjoyed in the tour of the two "Florodora" companies, which are to make the great musical comedy known throughout the United States as well as in the principal cities of Canada.

From all over the country the demand from managers has been so pressing that the only possible way to meet it was by sending out two organizations, and even with this arrangement none of the playgoers outside of the larger cities will be able to see the play this year. The routes of both companies are booked solid for the entire season, and the length of the engagements runs from three nights to eight weeks.

In the equipment of the two organizations precisely the same policy has been pursued, namely, to give the public outside of New York city performances that will in every way be as satisfactory as those seen in the Metropolis, where "Florodora" has been presented to crowded houses for a year, and is booked to remain another season. The expense of sending an attraction of such proportions on tour would be quite enough to discourage almost any managerial firm, but, with the way the fame of "Florodora" has been circulated it is patent to the owners that the returns will fully justify the outlay of the sum required to maintain the organization while traveling.

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From London town comes the news that N. C. Goodwin is about to turn his back on his English country home and the great London success that was his—in the cabled reports that followed his opening a few months ago.

The fact is, Goodwin's success in the English capital has been principally made in the newspapers, for during the last month or so the comedian has been appearing to half-filled houses, and this condition of affairs has been quite unknown to Nathaniel in his later years.

So, even if the Britons will have none of our Nat, America will welcome him again and do everything in its power to show that it still believes him to be the best comedian of the day.

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The talk of theatrical New York is Klaw & Erlanger's production of that bewilderingly dazzling spectacle, "The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast."

The newspaper reviewers have exhausted their vocabulary of adjectives in heaping praise upon the magnificence of this extravaganza, and they also admit that never has a production of this kind offered so much in the way of genuine laugh-producing specialties.

The audience, when its senses are not dazed by the grandeur of the moving pictures which constantly feast the eyes, is enjoying in uproarious laughter at the antics, comic songs, and sayings of the comedians, Harry Bulger