National

Francis Wilson and an extraordinarily large company, numbering 120 people, will present Nixon & Zimmerman's production of George Edwardes' latest London Gaiety musical comedy hit, "The Toreador," for the first time in this country, at the National Theatre tomorrow evening.

"The Toreador" was presented at the Gaiety Theatre last June and made a tremendous hit. Since then it has drawn the largest audiences in the history of this notably famous theatre, which has been the scene of more musical successes than any other playhouse in the English metropolis. The London critics, since the premiere of the piece, have accorded "The Toreador" most unstinted praise, especially commending the book for the cleverness of its construction and the development of its humor, praising the lyrics for their witty lines, and the music for its fascinating brilliancy.

"The Toreador" was written by six famous authors and composers, all of whom have been identified with the greatest London musical successes of the past six or eight years, notably the immediate predecessors of "The Toreador," "The Messenger Boy" and "San Toy." James Tanner and Harry Nicholls wrote the book, Adrian Ross and Percy Greenbank the lyrics, and Ivan Caryll and Lionel Monckton the music.

"The Toreador" is staged in two long acts, with scenes which represent the interior of Mlle. Susan's flower shop in the Grand Hotel, Biarritz, a watering place in France on the shore of the Mediterranean, and the plaza or market place of the Spanish town of Villaya, distant about forty miles. While the story is mainly of a humorous character, very entertaining sentimental interests are woven into it, together with a sub-plot, which greatly strengthens it. Some of the situations are serious, but they are given a humorous aspect by the way they are played. The principal comedy interest, of course, centres in the character of Sammy Gigg, a young footman, or "tiger," played by Francis Wilson.

The story of "The Toreador" relates that Mrs. Hoppings, a wealthy English widow, meets at Biarritz the noted Spanish bullfighter, Carajolo. She has been most assiduously courted by Pettifer, an animal dealer, but notwithstanding this she falls in love with the toreador and consents to marry him. When the piece opens preparations are going on for the wedding, which is to occur the next day. After the wedding Carajolo and his bride plan to go to Villaya, his native town, where he is to celebrate his honeymoon and return by fighting eight fierce Texan bulls, provided for his especial benefit by Pettifer.

In the event that the bulls fail to kill Carajolo, Pettifer plans to force him to fight a tiger, hoping in this way to remove him from his path. He therefore advertises for one. Sammy Gigg is in Biarritz with his master, and has fallen in love with Susan, who runs the flower shop. Pettifer's advertisement strikes his eye, and he throws up his position and applies to the animal dealer for the place indicated by the advertisement. The footman believes he possesses all the fighting disposition a tiger should have. He is much dismayed when he finds that a real royal Bengal of the man-eating type is wanted, and seeks consolation from Susan.

The sub-plot here introduces Dora Selby, a rich young girl on her way to Villaya to see her guardian, Nancy Staunton, Mrs. Hoppings' niece, her friend, accompanies her, Augustus Traill, the son of Dora's trustee, and Sir Archibald Slackett, a young Englishman, who rescued Nancy from a hotel fire in Dresden and who fell in love with her, but who has not seen her since that exciting event, are to meet them in Villaya. Dora receives a letter from her guardian, in which he states that he will send his son Augustus to meet her at Biarritz to escort her to Villaya. He hopes the young man will favorably impress her. Believing Augustus a fortune hunter, Dora arranges a scheme with Nancy to impersonate a young man and to pretend to be her newly wedded husband, "Mr. Robinson." The part of Nancy will be played by the well-known young singing comedienne, Christie MacDonald, and in it she will make her first appearance in boy's clothes.

At this juncture of the story Teresa, a former sweetheart of Carajolo, arrives from Villaya in search of him. Moreno, a Carlist conspirator, has arrived ahead of her and informs Carajolo of her coming and that he has been chosen to lead a Carlist revolution to be precipitated by the coming bullfight. Carajolo attempts to avoid Theresa, but she finds him and denounces him for his falsity to the cause and to her, she having been engaged to him. Pettifer draws Mrs. Hoppings to the scene and she overhears the conversation. She renounces Carajolo, throwing at his feet in disgust the passport they were to use to enter Spain the next day. Teresa secures this. Sammy Gigg mentions that he is going to Villaya to return to the service of his old master. As she will be unable to cross the line into Spain on the passport unaccompanied, Teresa begs Sammy Gigg to go with her. This he consents to do, a complication here arising translating the story and the principal characters, with the exception of Carajolo, to Villaya.

In the second act, Sammy Gigg and Teresa arrive in Villaya. The bullfighter has not been in the town since his youth and Gigg, traveling on a passport for "Carajolo and wife," is immediately taken for the bullfighter, honored by the Governor, feasted by the men and feted and kissed by the ladies, and finds himself in a position, despite his expostulations that he is not the toreador, where he is expected to fight eight bulls and lead a Carlist uprising.

These comical complications follow in rapid succession till Gigg is called to appear in the arena in a gorgeously decorated bullfighter's costume, presented to him through the generosity of the populace. He is only saved from his ludicrously perilous situation by the arrival on the scene of the real Carajolo, who comes to Villaya drawn by a telegram from Teresa, sent in Mrs. Hoppings' name, saying that all was forgiven. He extricates little Gigg from his difficulties by taking his place in the arena.

The story is brought to a happy termination by the straightening out of the sentimental tangles of Mrs. Hoppings and Pettifer, Augustus Traill, and Dora, Sir Archibald and Nancy, and by Sammy Gigg winning the somewhat coy Susan, who has followed him from Villaya to keep him out of trouble, with the result of being herself drawn into the whirl of comicalities.

The company will include Francis Wilson, Melville Ellis, William Blaisdell, Joseph Coyne, Robert A. Evans, Edward Gore, W. H. Thompson, William Broderick, Joseph C. Fox, Harry Wallace, George Hall, Adele Ritchie, Queenie Vassar, Maude Raymond, Christie MacDonald, Jennie Hawley, Sylvia Lisle Sadie Peters, Marjorie Relyea, and over 100 others.

Columbia

There is fun all the time in "Foxy Quiller," the successful De Koven and Smith comic opera, which is now in its second season, under the direction of Klaw & Erlanger. It will be seen for the third engagement in Washington as this week's offering at the Columbia.

The plot opens with the arrival of a young sailor, who has been promised the hand of his sweetheart if he can scrape up £2,000. He saves the amount out of his wages of £3 a month—a stage miracle which is seldom duplicated in modern life. The sailor has the whole sum in his vest pocket when he meets a strolling company of actors, of whom one, a Japanese dwarf, is a kleptomaniac. The dwarf promptly steals the tar's wealth.

It is then that the famous detective "Foxy Quiller" is called in, and, in his Sherlock Holmes deductions, there are opportunities for all kinds of fun. Quiller goes to Corsica in search of the thief, and while in that country is engaged by a Corsican to spy upon his enemies with whom he has a vendetta. Then "Foxy Quiller" is in his glory, for between the robbery and the vendetta there are clues enough to stock a round dozen detective agencies, and still have a handsome surplus to export. And so the fun comes fast and furious, and big Jerome Sykes as the detective keeps the audience in laughter during all the time he is on the stage.

The music of the opera is written in Mr. De Koven's best style. In placing the scenes of the piece in two countries so dissimilar he has been given an excellent opportunity to illustrate the difference in the musical styles. In the first act are to be found the English folk songs and much choral work of the highest class, while in the succeeding two acts the theme is in a lighter vein—the music of Italy, bright, tuneful, and rich in color effects.

Besides Mr. Sykes the company will include the following: Julius Steiger, Adolph Zink, the lilliputian comedian; Harry McDonough, Louis Casavant, Arthur T. Earnest, Eleanor Kent, Grace Cameron, Lillian Seville, Marian Bent, Marie Christie, Almia Forrest, and others, and a chorus of sixty.

There will be a special matinee New Year Day.

Chase's

If it be true that theatregoers like to be "thrilled," then Chase's this week should be the cynosure of all eyes, the Mecca for all footsteps. Keith's original and only "Cycle Track Sensation" is the novel feature by which it is promised hitherto unknown degrees of "thrill" will be brought within cognizance of sensibility. "The Cycle Sensation" is nothing more nor less than three very fast riders whirling inside a funnel-shaped stage track, and maintaining half the time an almost upside-down position, in which they are held by centrifugal force alone. It's only another of the wonders of the twentieth century, and it shows how man, little by little, subdues everything and brings it into his dominion for one purpose or another. Like most other exceptionally novel attractions in this sphere of amusement, it was originated abroad, and Mr. Felber, the foreign agent of the Keith-Chase theatres, secured it for his principals. Two weeks ago it was put on at Keith's, New York, and proved a success beyond the most ardent expectation of the producers.

The second feature will be supplied by those well-known vaudevillians, the Russell Brothers, who rank among the leaders, although this will be their first appearance at Chase's. They will present their remarkable dialect specialty, "The Irish Servant Girls," in which delineation they have never been equaled. Until recently they starred in "Sweet Marie," under the management of Oscar Hammerstein.

The remainder of the bill will include Charles Wayne and Anna Caldwell, in the amusing comedietta, "A Book Detective," which affords twenty minutes of refreshing laughter. Mayme Gehrue, lately with Weber & Fields, will give a dancing specialty that should be pleasing. The comedy stars, Edward M. Favor and Edith Sinclair, will be seen in their new farcical success, "The Magulrea." Margaret Ashton, the singer and character change artist who has the nom de theatre of the "girl of quality," and Scott and Judge, the acrobatic "farmer and the athlete," will be the remaining acts on the bill.

Wormwood's monkey circus, numbering forty of these funny animals, will be a feature of the bill that should prove especially interesting to the young folk. Chase's regular matinee prices will not be advanced on New Year Day.

Lafayette

The revival of Pinero's comedy, "Sweet Lavender," by the Bellows stock company at the Lafayette this week should prove one of the best things this company has yet given. Although "Sweet Lavender" was one of Pinero's earliest efforts, it will doubtless always rank as one of his best. In story, theme, and plot the play is entirely dissimilar from his more recent contributions to stage literature. There is nothing suggestive in it. Its humor is pure and wholesome and though essentially a comedy it tells a strong dramatic story which maintains the interest from the beginning to the end. Its character sketches are particularly effective.

The title role in "Sweet Lavender" has always been considered one of the best ingenue parts ever written, and it will be particularly pleasing to the admirers of Antoinette Walker to know that Mr. Bellows has selected her for the role. During the present stock season at the Lafayette Miss Walker has done her share of the work exceptionally well. She has not only played every part assigned her in a most pleasing manner, but she has always given promise of even better things.

Two important engagements have been made by Mr. Bellows, by which the services of William Redmund and Mrs. Thomas Barry have been secured as permanent members of the stock company. They will both make their first appearance as such in "Sweet Lavender." Mr. Redmund is one of the best actors in the country, his work with Alexander Salvini and other prominent stars having made him too well known to the amusement public to require any extended introduction. Mrs. Barry is one of the most painstaking of American actresses and in certain parts has few if any superiors. She starred for a number of years with her late husband, Thomas Barry, and shared with him the great success which was his for so many years.

There will be the usual matinee performances on Wednesday and Saturday. At the Saturday matinee every lady attending will be presented with a large autographed picture of Lillian Lawrence, the leading lady of the Bellows organization.

Academy

Another war play, "Winchester," will be the attraction at the Academy this week. This is its first visit to Washington, and it will no doubt give the best of satisfaction to the patrons of this popular playhouse. It is a very interesting story of another Confederate maiden who falls in love with a Federal officer. The first public production of "Winchester" was given at the American Theatre, New York, last winter, and was very successful.

The plot hinges upon lessons in telegraphy given a Virginia girl by a Massachusetts man when he is a prisoner and convalescing from his illness, through which she has nursed him. The knowledge thus gained she later utilizes for her struggling people, by tapping the wire running above her house, between Winchester and Kernstown. She thus gains knowledge of the plans of movements intended for the branches of the Northern army camped at these points, and gives the information to her brother, a captain in the Southern forces.

It appears that the girl's lover, Major Kearney, is not liked within his own ranks, and those who find out the girl's ruse keep silent, in the hope of shifting the blame on Kearney, and thus proving him a traitor. This is done, and Kearney is sentenced to be hanged. To save her lover the girl procures a pass through the lines, hurries to Kernstown and confesses. She secures her lover's pardon and rides back to reach him before the execution is accomplished. She arrives in the nick of time, after running the gauntlet of bullets and shooting the villain from his horse.

Margaret May will use the famous jumping horse Mazeppa in what is claimed to be one of the most sensational and thrilling episodes ever presented on the stage. The regular Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday matinees will be given, also a special New Year Day matinee.

Kernan's

At the Lyceum Theatre this week the attraction will be Sam Devere's Own Company. The company this year is said to far surpass anything that Sam Devere has ever brought to this city.

The organization consists of fifty artists, including some of the best novelties from all parts of the world, including Sallah Abdullah's Arabs, twelve sons of the Arabian Desert, in some of the most wonderful acrobatic feats ever seen on any stage; the "Six Royal Ascot Girls," England's latest craze; the celebrated Plasey Troupe, fourteen in number, especially imported to this country for Sam Devere's Own Company; the Imperial Trio, Hodges, Heywood, and Lancaster, in their sketch, "A Pleasant Evening;" the Misses Bennett and Stembler, late of one of the Hoyt companies, in a very clever farce, written especially for them by George Cohan; the World's Comedy Four, singers and comedians; Gertie Le Clair, and her Four Black Cherubs, one of the brightest and most pleasing attractions before the public, and the only Sam Devere, who is a "whole show in himself," and a sure cure for the blues. He will present an entirely new budget of songs and funny sayings.

The olio will be brought to a close with a laughable absurdity, called "The Cloak Models," introducing the full strength of the company, including twenty handsome young women. As a special feature Mr. Devere has engaged Mildred Howard De Grey in the reigning sensation of the year, "A Dream of Love."

Bijou

The one great sensation that has been presented on the vaudeville stage this season is the Madison Square Bicycle Whirl, which Manager Schlesinger, of the Bijou Theatre, has been fortunate enough to secure for his patrons this week. This "whirlwind bicycle race on a miniature track" has evoked great enthusiasm wherever it has thus far been presented. For the engagement of this act for the Bijou this week the management has secured the services of two such noted riders as Johnny Lawson, known in the wheeling world as the "terrible Swede," and Lester Wilson, the crack rider who finished second in the recent six days' race at the Madison Square Garden, New York City. The patrons of the Bijou will thus enjoy two of the leading riders of the country and not inexperienced racers, dashing around at breakneck speed on the bowl-shaped track which will occupy but one-half of the Bijou stage. It is an act that is difficult to describe and must have been seen to really comprehend the dangers it brings to the daring wheelmen who give the exhibition.

Not content with providing such a big headline feature, the Bijou bill will also include the popular Bonnie Thornton, who sings the very latest songs in her own inimitable manner, and to the great delight of the audiences.

Others who will contribute to the vaudeville part of the programme will be Williams and Adams, who will offer a new knockabout act; Sam. J. Adams, who will furnish a monologue that is said to be better than most of its kind; Palfrey and Hilton, comedy cyclists; Barrington and Martell and the Ryders, with their amusing troupe of performing monkeys.

The regular stock burlesque company will provide a burlesque that will engage the services of Dave Lewis, Bert Leslie, John P. Rodgers, Matt Kennedy, Al. Cameron, Nellie V. Nichols, Susie Rocamora, Grace Spencer, Hattie Hilton, Rita Knight, and the other favorites of the organization.

Attractions For Next Week

Stuart Robson, in his famous character, Bertie the lamb in Bronson Howard's comedy, "The Henrietta," will come to the Columbia Theatre next week with the customary Thursday and Saturday matinees.

Mr. Robson revived "The Henrietta" this year in response to numerous requests from managers of theatres throughout the country, who made the claim that their patrons have manifested a strong desire to see the comedian in what is undoubtedly one of the most brilliantly written and expertly constructed plays of recent years.

Mr. Robson has surrounded himself with an exceptionally able company, headed by Maclyn Arbuckle, and there is every reason to believe that the patrons of the Columbia will be offered one of the best comedy productions of the season, in "The Henrietta."

"Maid Marian."

The event of the coming week in musical circles will be the presentation at the National Theatre for the first time here of the new romantic opera "Maid Marian," written by Reginald de Koven and Harry B. Smith for the Bostonians, and which has been accorded a most enthusiastic reception in other cities.

"Maid Marian" has been but recently produced, and so popular has it become with all classes of theatregoers that the Bostonians will depend upon it exclusively the present season.

In the interpretation of "Maid Marian," the Bostonians have secured the services of a distinguished group of famous singers, included among whom are Henry Clay Barnabee, W. H. MacDonald, Grace Van Studdiford, Adele Rafter, Belle Harper, Frances Miller, George Frothingham, Josephine Bartlett, Frank Rushworth, W. H. Fitzgerald, Allan Hinkley, MacDonald Dorrington, Vernon Stiles, Cora Suters, C. W. Head, J. J. Martin, and others.

Keith's Vaudeville Spectacle.

Keith's new spectacular production will be presented at Chase's the week beginning January 6 as the central feature of a polite vaudeville bill numbering nine acts. It will be shown in two parts. The first is called the "Pageant of the Nations," and is said to be much more elaborate than when it drew immense audiences to Chase's last spring. The second feature, "The Venetian Flower Dance," is new. As a special attraction of this dance, Electra has been engaged, and with a graceful corps of ballet dancers is expected to heighten the artistic phase of the affair.

'M'Liss:.

No matter how captious the theatregoer, there is something in "M'Liss" which is sure to please. If he likes comedy, there is plenty of laughter, if it is tragedy he likes, there are moments when the dramatic interest is intense. In fact, from the moment the curtain rises on the first act of the play until it falls on the last act, it can be truthfully said that there is not a single dull moment. The company is headed by Nellie McHenry, whose success in the title role is said to have been even greater than the originator. "M'Liss" will hold the stage of the Academy of Music next week.

News of Plays and Players.

The announcement that Percy Haswell is seeking a prize play for her own use evidently means that the actress is becoming weary of the hardships of stock work and longs for a piece that will give her an opportunity of appearing at the head of a company strong enough to ask the patronage of the theatregoers of the principal cities of the country.

The idea of getting the product of an unheard-of Fitch or Thomas or Howard by means of a prize is not at all original with Miss Haswell, and, indeed, unless she has better luck than have two New York papers she stands very little chance of getting a play that will rise above the level of mediocrity. The metropolitan publications that sought to prove that there is an abundance of good unacted plays lying around the country simply because managers would not give them a trial found how impossible it was to secure a dramatic product of any degree of merit.

One offer was for a one-act piece, and the successful "Chums," seen frequently in this city in the vaudeville houses, proved conclusively that almost any writer of twenty-minute sketches could turn out a better product without half trying. And yet "Chums" was considered the best of the several scores of sketches that were submitted to the committee having charge of the award. More recently a Gotham weekly paper offered a prize of a thousand dollars for the best play written either by a known or unheard-of playwright. There were not many compositions included in the contest and for some reason or other the great army of ambitious Sardous of this country who are popularly supposed to have a plentiful supply of comedies, dramas, romances, and the like constantly on hand, subject to the hurried call of a Frohman or some other prominent producer, refrained from loading down the mail with their writings for this particular prize.

The successful play was admitted by a committee that included such a past master of dramatic construction as David Belasco and two experienced and acknowledged brilliant New York critics to be unsuitable for the purposes of production, although it might look well in cold type.

Here's all the country complaining that the native writer has no chance for his dramatic white alley nowadays, but when a thousand dollars is offered for a play, the judges are compelled to decide in favor of a piece that will not do for the footlights, even if it is fit for publication!

Miss Haswell cannot seriously hope for better success than the publication whose thousand dollars brought them nothing better than "Chivalry," and even if she does succeed in getting a little free advertising from the scheme she will hardly dare to give up her present stock position in favor of the great play that is to come to her and capture the prize—just what the prize is to be Miss Haswell has failed to state, except that the successful dramatist is to enjoy the honor of having his play acted by the former Lafayette stock company's leading woman.

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There are very few persons who write to any extent but who really believe away down deep in their literary souls that they possess the necessary qualifications for the successful dramatist. Daniel Frohman, who perhaps reads as many plays as any other manager, not even excepting his more energetic brother Charles, says regarding the requirements of playwriting:

"Whatever may be said about the quality of play produced in this country, there is no lack of material. I myself receive for examination about six plays a week, an average of one for each working day. Of these I read all that come from writers who are known to me by reputation; the others I hand over to my stage manager; he reads and assorts for my attention those manuscripts that are promising. Among them all we find many that have a great deal of merit. Most of these come from inexperienced writers; others come from literary men, who at present are greatly attracted to the stage.

"The trouble with literary men as playwrights is that they show a tendency to make their characters talk, instead of making them act; that is to say, they relate the story in a series of dialogues rather than in 'movement.' Now the whole question of playwriting depends upon action, action, action; the characters must work out the plot. Sometimes the plot works out of character. In setting out to write, the dramatist should bear in mind that he must, in the first place, have a dramatic story to tell; he must tell it tersely and logically, each part being in its proper place, all parts closely welded together into a complete, well-rounded drama. It must be a story susceptible of constant development. The dialogue, in my opinion, is the last thing to be thought of. After all, the real work of a dramatist is done before he puts pen to paper; he must have conceived the general plan—the architectural scheme—and into this he must have woven the incidents, which should not only be interesting in themselves, but should be a natural outcome of the story; should, indeed, be a part of the very warp and woof.

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"Of course, there are some good writers for the stage, whose work violates this rule; but they are exceptions. Some, for example, excel in character and incident rather than in any strong plot. But very unusual skill and invention are needed to make a play successful by strength of incident. Yet a play of this sort may be very fine. For example, Bronson Howard's 'Henrietta,' which as a play of contemporaneous interest I consider one of the best American plays ever written, is so rich in incident that the story is of comparatively little account. It teems with life; it is brilliant in coloring and in character drawing. And with what masterly skill every detail is managed! At the end of each act, the main thread of the narrative, which for a time has been lost sight of, is taken up again, and the interest is carried over to the beginning of the next act. In it comedy and drama were equally commingled—a rare art.

"On the whole, I take an optimistic view of the future of the American drama. But I realize that, compared with the French and German writers for the stage, our writers are handicapped.

"Besides being outspoken and bold in the treatment of themes tabooed in England and America, the French are very prolix. French dramatists like to write wordy plays, with endless speeches, and the French theatregoers—all the French are theatregoers, for that matter—are good listeners. A French actor enjoys nothing better than to walk down to the footlights, harangue the audience, then walk across the front of the stage and repeat the operation. But the restless American will not endure a play that gives actors too much of this. We are a busy, energetic people, and we want our plays to be crisp in dialogue and quick in action. In adapting plays from the French our authors have to do a great deal of pruning. The pruning process, by the way, I have found to be essential with nearly all plays. Any prolixity in the dialogue becomes very apparent when the piece is put on for rehearsal. As I have said, a play is a thing of action, not of words, and when it is being given it is often found that some of its words are actually in the way and hamper the movement.

"The best dramatists are those who are most in sympathy with actors. One reason why so many English dramatists are successful is because they have been actors themselves.

"A clever author will give every actor something worthy of his art; this stimulates him. So he makes the best of his opportunity, and when every actor in the cast does this, the effect is that of well-rounded drama perfectly played. In brief, to be able to produce this effect is the secret of playmaking.

Not in Dickens' Class.

Stuart Robson, who is touring the country this season in his old success, "The Henrietta," playing Bertie the Lamb with his wonted cleverness, tells a story that is interesting, even if it does not possess all the earmarks of veracity.

Mr. Robson and his company did not play the week before Christmas, following the custom of most theatrical organizations. The comedian spent his brief holiday in New York with his family. Wandering about a big book concern one morning, he stopped near the manager's desk when an Irishman entered and addressing the manager, said:

"I see you have a sign outside for a 'Man Wanted;' I guess I'll take the job."

Just then the Hibernian happened to glance at the wall, and there confronting him a huge placard announced:

Dickens' Works This Week for $4.95.

The applicant for the "job" studied the sign for a full moment, and then, turning to the manager, said, in tones of deep disgust:

"Oh, he does, does he? Well, I'll not work for that for any man," and walked away.

Blanche Bates' Recovery.

Blanche Bates' many Washington friends will be glad to hear of her recovery from the attack of typhoid which threatened her life a few months ago and which brought the tour of the "Under Two Flags" company to a sudden termination.

Miss Bates last week returned to New York from a Southern resort, almost completely well and anxious to resume her theatrical labors. "Under Two Flags" will soon be sent out again with Miss Bates in her original role of Cigarette, and Eugene Ormonde, of last year's Lafayette stock company, as leading man.

Another Local Stock Company.

D. V. Arthur cherishes an ambition to furnish Washington, at the Columbia Theatre, with an exceptionally good stock company next spring. Mr. Arthur, it will be recalled, directed the company that occupied the Columbia stage two years ago with such successful artistic and financial results. That organization, undoubtedly the very best "stock" company that has ever appeared for the patronage of the theatregoers of the Capital, was headed by Percy Haswell, Olive Oliver, Eleanor Carey, Stephen Grattan, and a number of other excellent players. The pieces presented were far ahead of anything that has ever been offered by any other summer company, and the productions were in every respect the equal of the Broadway originals.

Said Mr. Arthur, in discussing the matter:

"I have conferred with Mr. Luckett relative to bringing a company for the exploitation of some of the best plays of recent production, as well as trying several pieces that have never yet seen the glare of the footlights. I have a number of new plays in my possession, and if we decide to put the scheme through I shall present some of these unacted pieces during the stay of the organization. I have always regarded Washington as one of the best cities for a spring and summer stock company in the country. I shall go into the plan rather more ambitiously than before, and will make a strong effort to bring to this city such well-known actors and actresses as Maud Hoffman, Olive Oliver and Eleanor Carey, Aubrey Boucicault, Thomas Wise, recently seen here in 'Are You a Mason,' and a dozen or more other players of like ability.

"If we decide to try the plan I shall immediately commence to engage players for the season, which will be inaugurated about the first week in May and continue for eight or ten weeks."

Frawley After Plays.

Daniel Frawley, the Washington actor, who makes a specialty of conducting stock companies in the far West, and especially San Francisco, was in the city, the guest of his mother during the holidays.

Mr. Frawley is in the East after new plays for his company, which still includes Mary Van Buren and Harrington Reynolds, of the organization that occupied the Columbia Theatre three seasons ago, after the end of the regular theatrical year. This year, Mr. Frawley—he refuses to be known nowadays as T. Daniel—has been playing with considerable financial success such well-known pieces as "Secret Service," "The Liars," "Brother Officers," "The Only Way," and "Lord and Lady Algy." He is now after an original play, and believes that one with a naval background would just about suit his purpose.

Failing to find a drama of this sort, Mr. Frawley will content himself with the Western rights to some of the recent Broadway successes, including, perhaps, John Drew's "The Second in Command."

New York "Du Barry" Mad.

Just at present the theatregoers of New York are "Du Barry" mad. Never—anyway, not within the last decade—has a drama made such an emphatic success as the Belasco play did Christmas night, when it was revealed for the first time in all its magnificence.

Gotham is used to big theatrical productions, but even the most confirmed theatre patrons, persons who are just as well acquainted with the ins and outs of the show business as the managers themselves, confessed that Belasco had eclipsed all previous efforts to provide gorgeous stage pictures. The newspaper reviewers were unanimous in the claim that while New York had never before seen such an expensive production, it was equally certain that the stages of London and Paris had never excelled this latest product of Mr. Belasco.

The one thing that now concerns the gentlemen who direct the fortunes of most of the metropolitan theatres is the regret that "Du Barry" was not installed in a bigger playhouse, where the takings would be considerably larger than in the rather small Criterion.

Already Belasco is said to have been approached with a view to moving to one of the larger theatres at the disposition of the lessee of the Criterion, but the chances are that he will refuse to go. While in Washington making ready for the premiere of his piece, Mr. Belasco said that none of the managers of the large houses had enough faith in his venture, and that on this account he was forced into the Criterion.

The most astute of New York's theatrical prophets are now asserting that Mrs. Carter and "Du Barry" will remain in the metropolis until warm weather interferes with the performances.

Nordica and Ragtime.

Because Nordica has included Ethelbert Nevin's little negro song, "Mighty Lak' a Rose," in her repertoire, she has been accused by some Western critics of indulging in the ragtime habit. She indignantly denies that she even fancies the coon songs, which have hitherto been popularly supposed to belong exclusively to her sister in art, May Irwin. Nordica wants nothing of the coon songs, and claims that this particular class of music is never sung at concerts by artists of recognized standing, although they may softly hum the crooning ditties in the sanctity of their own homes.

When an interviewer recently asked Mme. Nordica to discuss ragtime for the purposes of publication the singer replied:

"I have not discussed, and I am not prepared to discuss, the effect or influence of coon songs or ragtime upon the musical future or education of the people of America. It may be but a temporary appearance in the form of a peculiar syncopated rhythm that has, for the time being, fascinated the masses; or it may be a reflex of the peculiar and plaintive melody of our colored population which has affected the people through sympathy and through a peculiar melodic strain. But all this is a question of popular music is entirely outside of my activity either in opera or concert work.

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"The particular song of Ethelbert Nevin, 'Mighty Lak' a Rose,' belongs to the best class of the latter-day American compositions, and is so distinct from coon songs or ragtime as to make it a surprise, in the estimation of musicians, that anyone should identify it with such popular music. It is a song to which justice can only be done by a cultured singer or a musician; otherwise it would become super-sentimental and useless. Of course I am very much surprised that such distinctions are not made, and that papers will state that I have sung such songs as are adapted for vaudeville and for the street organ. This is exactly what they are doing.

"Of course in America there are people who have no knowledge of classical music and who don't understand the contrast between it and the popular song and march, and it is difficult to explain these distinctions to them. After a while, when they become more cultivated in music, they will appreciate the vast difference between the popular song and the classical song which is adapted for the concert stage. As for ragtime and coon songs, while they may be very pleasant for the time being, they cannot, of course, be permanent, and they can never be utilized in their present form for the concert stage."

"Little Johnny Jones."

The four Cohans will next season present a new musical piece from the pen of the versatile George Cohan. It will be called "Little Johnny Jones," and, according to Mr. Cohan, will be a more ambitious effort than anything he has yet done.

The company will be considerably larger than this season's Cohan organization, and the management will try to come nearer to the regulation Casino production than is "The Governor's Son."

The Goodwins Coming Home.

Mr. and Mrs. N. C. Goodwin, after their unsuccessful London season, will sail for America January 4, and on January 20 will commence a tour of this country, using "When We Were Twenty-One."

The bookings will include many cities of the kind known in the theatrical world as "one-night stands," in which the Goodwins have not been seen for a number of years.

During the tour, in addition to the Esmond piece, Madeline Lucette Ryley's "An American Citizen" will also be used, and in the spring a new comedy from the pen of an English playwright will be tried with a view to its production in the larger cities next season.

Elsie de Wolfe's Success.

When Henry Miller concludes his engagement in "D'Arcy of the Guards" at the Savoy Theatre, New York, he will be succeeded by Elsie de Wolfe, in Clyde Fitch's "The Way of the World."

When Miss de Wolfe was compelled to vacate the Victoria on account of the peculiar business methods of Oscar Hammerstein she moved her organization to Boston for a couple of weeks. But the theatregoers of the Hub have taken most kindly to "The Way of the World," and the fashionables of Boston town have crowded the Tremont Theatre nightly since the advent of the Fitch play, and from present appearances Miss de Wolfe's theatrical enterprise is quite likely to emulate the brook made famous by the poet.

The part of Nevil, played in the original production of "The Way of the World" in this city by Vincent Serrano, is now in the hands of John Mason.

Ladies' Matinee Popular.

The attendance at the special ladies' matinee given at the Bijou Theatre Friday afternoon was so large that the management has decided to continue the plan of giving Friday afternoon performances for the entertainment of the women of Washington who care for burlesque and refined vaudeville, as presented at the Bijou. At these ladies' matinees smoking will be prohibited.

"The Toreador" Special Train.

Quite the most imposing theatrical entry into the Capital of the season was made yesterday afternoon when "The Toreador" special train of seven cars steamed into the city and unloaded the 150 people utilized in the different departments of the production.

The production proper took up three of the largest-sized baggage cars, while the various members of the organization completely filled three parlor cars and a day coach. The train left Jersey City at 11 o'clock and made the run to Washington in five hours almost to the minute.

A. L. Erlanger, the head of the theatrical syndicate, and a score of other prominent managers accompanied "The Toreador" company and will witness the first performance at the National Theatre tomorrow night.

Sousa Home Again.

It is at once a compliment and an admission of great merit when so conservative and influential a paper as the "London Times" remarks in connection with one of the Sousa concerts in London that "the concert as a whole proved an admirable and most surprising lesson in the possibilities of a wind band when ably trained."

The success of the "march king" has had no parallel in England, where the former Washington bandmaster was elevated to a degree of popularity equal to that which he enjoys in his own country.

The Sousa band played to record business in every place it appeared, and so great was the general demand that Sousa returned to London for a second engagement, during which he gave twenty-four concerts at the Empire Theatre and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

After the English season Sousa and his forces returned to America in time to partake of their Christmas dinner in New York, and after a brief rest the regular winter tour of the organization will begin in January, Washington being one of the first cities to be visited.

The American Invasion.

What the English writers are pleased to term the "American invasion" is causing a good deal of comment at present in London and the larger cities of England. The time was when the American actor in London town was regarded much in the light of a curiosity, but with the first engagement of "The Belle of New York" commenced the "invasion" which has of late given a number of writers many moments of worry, and caused them to devote a great deal of valuable newspaper space to the fact that slowly, but none the less certainly, are American actors and actresses taking the bread from the mouths of the less competent English Thespians.

The only exception that has appeared to this protest against the presence of American players on the London stage is the following, from the "Pall Mall Gazette:"

"The so-called American 'invasion' is becoming perennial food for the theatrical paragraphist. With dim eyes and a voice choking with emotion he bewails the competition which this incursion renders more severe, and hints darkly at the necessity for some protective tariff. In regard to musical comedy, or what passes as such, the need is certainly imperative. But for other branches of American art, no; emphatically no. The English dramatist can learn much from the craftsmanship of a Gillette, as the actor may probably study his methods—so quiet on the surface, so powerfully agitated at heart. For herein lies the secret of the true, the only, reserved force. All else are counterfeit, mere accessories by which the actor strives to cover up physical or mental debility from the curious gaze."

Jane Oaker's Rapid Rise.

Jane Oaker, leading woman with James K. Hackett in "Don Caesar's Return," is a St. Louis girl, now in the second year of her stage career, who, whether through the merit of her work or the smile of Dame Fortune, finds herself the chief support of one of America's foremost stars.

Last season the public suddenly discovered that an actress by the name of Jane Oaker was a member of the company supporting Kathryn Kidder and Louis James in their repertoire, and, too, that she was keeping both stars busy looking after their laurels, for her work was said to be one of the distinct features of the Kidder-James productions. Miss Oaker's acting with Mr. Hackett last week was excellent. To the character of Marijana she lent personal beauty and charm, while her interpretation of the role left little to be desired. Off the stage Miss Oaker is very attractive and speaks of herself and her work with much reticence. Although she apparently realizes the advantages of her position and the means through which it was gained, her sensible little head has not been turned and her one idea seems to be to achieve even a greater success than that which has attended her efforts so far. In chatting with a representative of The Times Miss Oaker said:

"My stage career has really been so very brief that it hasn't had time to be interesting. I never did any amateur work in my life, but I cannot remember the time that I didn't think of going on the stage. I had always intended to do so when the proper time came, which it did last year in an offer from Miss Kidder and Mr. James to join their company. I made my debut in the role of Hermia in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and then followed parts in "Richard III," "Pygmalion and Galatea," and "A Modern St. Anthony." In the latter play I enacted the leading role—the one opposite Mr. James."

Josephine Cohan, Dancer.

Josephine Cohan danced herself into the favor of the local public last week and established herself so firmly therein that she will long be remembered as one of the daintiest, cleverest, and most charming players who has ever visited Washington. "The Governor's Son," which occupied the stage of the Columbia Theatre last week, served to bring the Cohan family back to this city, where they have been known hitherto as an entertaining vaudeville company, appearing in a condensed version of their present play.

Josephine Cohan reminds one of an animated piece of Dresden china. She is an ethereal bit of femininity, and envelops herself in an atmosphere of refinement and daintiness. Her personality is charming and one is attracted to her as soon as