Last week will go on record as one of the most profitable Washington managers have experienced this season, for there was scarcely a night when there were vacant seats at any of the six local playhouses. The performances of John Hare and his splendid company in "The Gay Lord Quex," the brightest and most cleverly constructed play of recent years, filled the National Theatre, while the perennial "The Runaway Girl" presented by a company that did not contain any well-known artists packed the Columbia at every presentation, and surpassed the financial record of any previous local production of the English musical piece. At the Lafayette the attempt to stage "Cyrano de Bergerac" met with great success, for from the initial performance the theatre was not large enough to accommodate the crowds that wanted to witness the work of the players of the Bellews company. The Academy of Music, with the popular Thomas E. Shea as the attraction in one new play and several of his time-tried successes, established a box-office record for the year. Both burlesque houses were well patronized, especially Kernan's, where "The Parisian Widows" entertained a series of crowded houses. May Howard at the Bijou came in for a large share of the burlesque patronage. Chase's was closed during the week on account of the occupancy of the theatre by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

This week's change of bookings will bring E. S. Willard, the English actor, to the National, where he will show most of his familiar repertoire, including "David Garrick," "Tom Pinch," "The Professor's Love Story," and "The Middleman." The Columbia will have "Sag Harbor," with the author, Mr. James A. Herne, in the principal role. The Lafayette will revive "Camille," while Rose Melville will display her "Sis Hopkins" at the Academy. Chase's will entertain the Orpheum Show, a traveling vaudeville combination. "The French Beauties" will be at the Bijou, and Manager Kernan's patrons will witness the doings of the "Vanity Fair Burlesquers." The city is rapidly filling up with strangers for the inaugural celebration, and the playhouses are enjoying the benefit of their patronage.

The National—E. S. Willard.

E. S. Willard, the English actor, will present a number of excellent plays during his engagement at the National Theatre this week, which, while none is a novelty to local theatre patrons, will offer a splendid opportunity for the display of his undoubted talents. One, "David Garrick," which will be the initial presentation tomorrow night, is especially adapted to the art of Mr. Willard, and his characterization of the chief personage in the Robertson piece has been received everywhere with a great deal of critical and popular approval. In addition to its performance tomorrow evening, "David Garrick" will also be the bill for Friday night and Saturday matinee. Charles Dickens' "Tom Pinch" will be presented on Tuesday night and at the Wednesday matinee, while "The Middleman" will be given on Wednesday and Saturday nights. The ever delightful "The Professor's Love Story," which proved such a popular offering on the occasion of Mr. Willard's last visit to Washington, will be given only once during the week, on Thursday night.

It has been three years since Mr. Willard last played in this city, but local theatregoers recall with much pleasure his admirable performances, and there is small doubt but that his present engagement will be unusually profitable to both player and audiences alike.

The Columbia—"Sag Harbor."

"Sag Harbor," the latest play from the pen of James A. Herne, which recently closed a run of three months or more at the Theatre Republic, New York, will open at the Columbia Theatre tomorrow night for a week's engagement, with matinees on Thursday and Saturday. James A. Herne has not appeared in Washington for nearly two years and his forthcoming appearance will probably be his last in this city, as it is said that he contemplates retiring from the stage to give his entire time to the writing and producing of new plays.

Regarding the play itself, though a comedy of the exhilarating sort, "Sag Harbor" is not without its drama and its moments of deep pathos. The romance of the two seafaring brothers who love the same girl develops almost to the point of tragedy in the third act, but is happily diverted in the nick of time into less strenuous ways through the intervention of old Capt. Dan Marble, portrayed by Mr. Herne.

"Sag Harbor" takes its title from a quaint old whaling village at the most easterly point of Long Island. The characterization of "Sag Harbor" has awakened critical praise in every city where Mr. Herne has thus far appeared. In New York one of the newspaper reviewers said: "Charles Dickens never drew finer character sketches." A critic in Chicago said: "Every character in 'Sag Harbor' is a gem drawn from life." In Boston, another writer said: "We have never seen more accurate copies of genuine American types than Mr. Herne has put into his own beautiful 'Sag Harbor.'"

"Sag Harbor" was produced in Boston last season at the Park Theatre, where it enjoyed a run of four months to the largest business ever played at that theatre. After touring New England to the capacity of the theatres, it was taken to Chicago, where it had a run of two months. Its career in New York is too well known to dwell upon. The original company will be brought here intact, also its wealth of scenery and properties. During the engagement in this city of Mr. Herne, the regular prices at the Columbia will not be disturbed.

Chase's—The Orpheum Show.

Manager Chase makes the claim that no better bill has ever been booked for the New Grand than that which will be provided this week by the Orpheum Show. The most important act of the bill is that of the Newsky Troupe, made up of eight Russian singers and dancers. They give exhibitions of their native dances and sing their country's songs in an altogether captivating manner. Five of the troupe are described as beautiful women.

A star attraction is Severus Schaeffer, who weighs 165 pounds, and easily carries and juggles more than that weight in cannon balls, dumb-bells, etc. He does astonishing things with plates, paper wads, 60-pound weights, lighted lamps, centre tables, bathtubs, and crockery. In one of his feats he holds in his teeth a chair in which a full-grown man is sitting, while in his disengaged hands he juggles all sorts of things. Will M. Cressy and Blanche Dayne, well known to local playgoers, will be seen in "Grasping an Opportunity," a very amusing rural comedy sketch, depicting a humorous phase of life on a New England farm. Mr. Cressy is one of the best known character actors in vaudeville, as well as being one of the foremost playwrights in the profession, and Miss Dayne is an engaging young actress. Weston and Herbert will be heard in a musical act replete with novelties and ingenious contrivances. Bertie Fowler, a young mimic, who made a hit in "Hotel Topsy Turvy," will be seen in a new line of imitations and caricatures of well known people and characters.

The programme will also include, Johnson, Davenport, and Lorello, in a comedy acrobatic creation, Jack Norworth, in a unique monologue, clean cut and crisp all through; Miss Louise Dresser, sister of Paul Dresser, the popular song writer with some new songs, and a number of very interesting motion pictures, all colored as natural as life, and projected by the Comiograph.

The Academy—"Sis Hopkins."

One of the most unique characters on the American stage today is unquestionably that of Sis Hopkins, a part created a couple of years ago by Rose Melville, one that has grown from a single act vaudeville sketch into one of the prettiest comedies which has been seen in years.

Not many months ago the name of Rose Melville was practically unknown to the general theatregoing public. She had never done anything but small parts, and was never particularly prominent, although her acting was of such a character as to attract much critical praise. No one knew what she was going to do or how she was going to do it when she was two years ago given a part in a farce comedy. At the rehearsals of the comedy she read her lines in a perfunctory sort of way. The first night of the comedy came. Suddenly, without warning, there came upon the stage a queer, awkward, ungainly figure; the figure of a country girl in gingham apron, mismated stockings, flapping shoes, and with her hair drawn so tightly and smoothly from her forehead that her eyes looked aslant like a Chinaman's. Two very queer and very prominent pigtails stuck out from the back of her head.

For a moment she stood looking at the audience in vacant-eyed, open-mouthed wonder. Then she giggled in a catchy, half-frightened sort of way. The audience looked and looked, and wondered in silence. Then she spoke:

"There ain't no use in doin' nuthin' for nobody what won't do nuthin' for you."

She giggled again. Then she continued: "Ye can't never make nuthin' doin' nuthin' for nobody for nuthin'."

The audience applauded and laughed at Sis Hopkins that night; the next morning the newspapers were full of the new stage character. Later Miss Melville went into vaudeville as Sis Hopkins, and last season she made her debut as a star in a play written for her, entitled "Sis Hopkins," a pastoral comedy. This season "Sis Hopkins" has been rearranged and several novelties have been added. "Sis" will be at the Academy of Music for one week, opening tomorrow night with the regular Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday matinees.

The Lafayette—"Camille."

"Camille," with Miss Haswell in the title role, will follow "Cyrano de Bergerac" at the Lafayette Square during the coming week. From the wealth of color and heroic action of the Rostand drama to the plainly set but strongly emotional story of Dumas is a sharp contrast, but there will be considerable interest in the new production from the fact that it will present Miss Haswell to her Washington acquaintances in an entirely new light. Physically, she will be a new type of Camille even to the most experienced of local theatregoers, and it will be interesting to note how her interpretation of the part tallies with the conceptions of the more mature emotional actresses whose names are familiarly linked with the character.

Mr. Ormonde will play the part of Armand Duval and Miss Mackintosh that of the half-world chaperon, Mme. Prudence. Duval will be the closest to a leading juvenile role that Mr. Ormonde has attempted since his stay in Washington, but it is generally conceded that he will make an engaging lover. Among the other members of the company who will appear are Miss Scott, in the part of Nanine, the French maid; Mr. Wyngate, Mr. Craven, Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Murphy. Mr. John T. Sullivan will have the part of the senior Duval. The play will be staged with the usual care and attention to detail that have become familiar to the patrons of the Lafayette.

Kernan's—"Vanity Fair Burlesquers."

Of all the attractions that play at Kernan's none is sure of a heartier welcome than the "Vanity Fair" Extravaganza Company, which will open a week's engagement at Kernan's tomorrow afternoon. It will offer a real novelty in the shape of the famous Kimuras, who are regarded as one of the most successful troupes of Japanese acrobats now before the public, and whose skill and agility must be seen to be appreciated.

In the first part "The Cadet Girls' Frolics," the members of the company depict scenes in which sportive damsels revel, while the comedians are said to grasp every opportunity. "Gay Times at the Paris Fair," the concluding burlesque, realizes all that it signifies. Frank Bush, the original mimic, who stands alone in his line, and never fails to present fresh delineations of character, will participate in the first part and the closing burlesque, which will agreeably surprise admirers who have heretofore only seen him in his specialty. The olio will also include Bessie Mae Hall, a rag-time vocalist, Iler and Walton, in travesty; Niblo and Riley, song and dance artists; Weston and Beasley, comedians; Harry Hastings, the favorite, and the Connolly Sisters, duetists.

Manager Kernan has always successfully catered to the large number of theatregoers among the visitors during inauguration week, and will give at least three performances daily, matinee, evening and midnight, while the city is filled with strangers.

The Bijou—French Beauties.

Those who like a bright, pleasing entertainment full of music and fun should see the "French Beauties" at the Bijou this week. The company comes well recommended, and the management claims to have one of the best of those breezy, effervescent shows so popular at the present day. No expense has been spared in the way of stage settings and costumes, and everything connected with the production is said to be new and up to date.

The opening number is a novel first part, consisting of the entire company on the stage at one time. An added attraction, secured at a considerable expense, is the famous Takezawa Japs, twelve in number, and reputed to be among the greatest troupes of foreign performers now in this country. They introduce a double slide for life, and other feats equally marvelous. Operti's Living Pictures, direct from the Dewey Theatre, New York, under the direction of Signor Albert Operti, represent pictures from the old masters, and at the present time are making one of the greatest sensations in the burlesque world. Miss Mildered De Gray, who will introduce her barefoot dance, is direct from a prominent New York Theatre. There will be a closing burlesque, entitled, in "Gay Paree," in which the entire company will appear.

Haley's Band Concert Tonight.

Mr. Haley is one of the most progressive musicians in the District, and besides having under contract the 125 musicians who will be required for the orchestra at the inaugural ball, he has a large military band over which he has wielded the baton for a number of years. This band, to the number of fifty members, will give a concert at the National Theatre tonight.

It is believed that the programme will be so attractive as to induce a very large attendance. The soloists will be Miss Lillian Sefton, soprano, and Mr. Carlos M. Ulivirl, clarinetist. The concert will be in line with those that Mr. Haley has heretofore given and will contain not only classical numbers, but selections of the lighter form, which will catch the popular ear.

The box office will be open from 1 o'clock today. Seats in any part of the house will be 50 cents.

NEXT WEEK'S ATTRACTIONS.

The Columbia—The Rogers Brothers.

Visitors to Washington during the inauguration week have a treat in store for them in the amusement way, as the Rogers Bros., in their latest and most successful musical comedy, entitled "The Rogers Brothers in Central Park," will hold forth at the Columbia Theatre during the week.

The Rogers Bros.' success on the road since leaving New York during the present season is said to have been quite marvelous. The company is a very large one, containing no less than seventy people, and the cast is claimed to be one of the best that has ever been taken on the road in a musical show.

The management of the Columbia will receive and book orders in the order in which they are received, beginning tomorrow morning.

The National—Alice Nielsen Opera Company.

Inauguration week will be appropriately celebrated at the National Theatre by the third annual visit to that playhouse of the Alice Nielsen Opera Company, presenting the two successful operas by Victor Herbert, "The Singing Girl" and "The Fortune Teller."

Both these compositions have been heard in Washington before, but they were so thoroughly enjoyed and so liberally patronized by local theatregoers that there is every reason to believe they will have a repetition of the patronage during the coming engagement. Miss Nielsen's organization is unquestionably the largest, most thoroughly disciplined, and most capably cast light opera company in the country.

The Academy—"On the Suwanee River."

Stella Mayhew's portrayal of Aunt Lindy in "On the Suwanee River" is described as a first rank work of art. It is pronounced a lifelike embodiment of the rolling-gaited, devoted, and affectionate old Southern mammy, abounding in felicitous touches of original humor, pervaded by a spirit that gives it undeniable appearance of reality.

An entire new scenic outfit has been provided for the present season of "On the Suwanee River," which has been elaborated and beautified in every particular. The cast contains of last year's company Fred Truesdell, L. Earl Atkinson, Allan H. Bailey, Harrison Stedman, and Willow Francis. The engagement is for one week at the Academy of Music, beginning Monday, March 4.

Anita Trueman's Lecture.

Anita Trueman, the girl philosopher, presents a rare oratorical treat in her lecture entitled, "The Modern Standard of Greatness," which she will deliver at the National Theatre next Sunday night. Miss Trueman is a brilliant success as a lecturer, and the "New York World," in speaking of her, said:

"Miss Trueman, eighteen years old, heir to philosophy of all ages, besides being a philosopher, is a poet." The "New York Herald," speaking of Miss Trueman, said: "She is pretty, with a roguish look, said to be Plato's reincarnation, lectures offhand on any subject, and her audience is in touch with her soul."

Dr. Stafford on "Macbeth."

It is expected that a very large audience will be present at Dr. Stafford's lecture on "Macbeth," which he has been requested to repeat. The date selected is March 5, at 4:30 o'clock p. m., at the Lafayette Square Theatre. The varied range of human passions in "Macbeth" make the great tragedy an exceptional vehicle for the exercise of Dr. Stafford's powers. Many persons claim that it is the finest of all of his admirable lectures.

THE PASSING SHOW.

The White Rats' "strike" is the momentous topic that, since Thursday, has been agitating as never before the Thespian brotherhood—vaudevillians of necessity, and "legitimates" through sympathy.

The fight between this recently formed and very powerful society of vaudeville performers and the Vaudeville Managers' Association, composed of the leading managers of the East and West, is now, to quote both parties, "on in dead earnest, and is to be fought to a finish." All of the houses in New York City, except Koster & Bial's and Tony Pastor's, are embroiled, as also those in Providence, Springfield, Worcester, Albany, Rochester, and Boston, and the other association theatres. The Rats promise that the strike will become general, involving every theatre employing one of their order or any in sympathy with it.

On the other hand, the managers make the declaration that there is no better time than the present to meet the issue, and as they say "to prove the value of association unity." They positively state that all who have gone out of their theatres on strike shall never return, and that they have forfeited the salaries due for the part of the week during which they played. They further allege that there are more acts idle today than can be accommodated, and in proof of this assertion, after the first inconvenience due to being unprepared for the unexpected strike, all of the houses deserted by the Rats were soon running with full bills, and to what is said to be just as large business, and, in some instances, larger, than ever before the rumpus was inaugurated. On the contrary, the Rats are jubilantly declaring that victory already perches upon their banner, and say they propose to organize road companies to go on tour at once and get up benefits to provide the very necessary sinews of war. The ill feeling that has been engendered by what is very generally regarded as the unfair methods employed by the vaudeville performers in giving no notice of their purpose to walk out of the theatres may be seen in what is said by both sides. Manager Keith, who is perhaps the largest employer of vaudeville talen in this country, in discussing the matter, said:

"I have been very much worried over this sudden turn of affairs, for the reason that I had always considered the vaudevillians as my friends, and I am sure that I have always been theirs. I have always tried to do the best I could for them, and have reason to believe that I have helped a great many.

"I make no threats, but say confidently that I can go on presenting the same class vaudeville I have always given. I did not see the performance tonight, but Mr. Albee declares it is as good as any we have had in weeks, and, by no means inferior to the one we had last night."

Mr. George Fuller Golden, the monologue entertainer, who is generally reputed to be the founder of the order, and who is, in addition, its president, says:

"The demands of the order were just and equitable and they must be complied with or no Rat will ever play in a syndicate theatre.

"The 5 per cent commission must be abolished," said he. "The managers agreed to do this two weeks ago and they have not kept their agreement. We know they didn't agree as an association, but as individuals, and it is their promise as individuals we ask them to keep. This is not a movement of the White Rats alone.

"All vaudeville performers are in it. Shall we stick? Well, I guess yes—to the bitter end. We are sending out one company of our own and we shall send out more. We shall have benefits, too, and we can live as long as we please. It's a fight to the finish, sure. No give up—on our side, anyway.

"That talk about our contracts is absurd. There was plenty of blank space left in them, and any equitable clause that was omitted might have been written in. They're only trying to gain time. And we won't stand it."

Mr. P. B. Chase, the manager of the Grand in this city and the general secretary of the Vaudeville Managers' Association, and also proprietor of the Burke & Chase Vaudeville Company, which suffered by the defection of several of its stars, discussed the strike very freely. He said:

"At every meeting of the Association of Vaudeville Managers for the past three months the question of abolishing the 5 per cent commission on the contracts of performers has been discussed, and, as all agencies have been dispensed with since the formation of the association, and, as the managers have been booking their acts direct with the artists, there has appeared to me no valid reason or excuse for deducting this commission. At the last meeting of the Eastern branch of the association held in New York City, early this month, I offered a resolution, which was adopted, that we recommend at the regular meeting of the entire association, to be held on March 6, that the commission clause be stricken from all contracts for engagements after the first Monday in June. This action was not taken in response to any request or demand of the society known as the 'White Rats,' nor in pursuance of any agreement with them, but the members of this society have now determined not to carry out their individual contracts with members of the association and refuse to play our houses unless we abolish commissions from this very date and waive the matter of commissions in existing contracts.

"They go so far as to ask us to abrogate all contracts with their members. Upon our part we cannot repudiate nor permit them to repudiate existing contracts and it is and has been our idea that the commission clause which has been in existence during the entire history of vaudeville could not well be removed nor dispensed with before June.

"The White Rats further decree that their individual members shall not make contracts with us, through the regular channels, with the manager in person, nor at our regular New York booking office, but that they shall be made only through the White Rats' society at its office in New York City. It is easily observable that there is no question of difference between us as to salaries, but it is as to the place of booking and the time when commissions shall cease. We shall certainly insist upon independence and the right to book our acts, with whom, and where we please, and we will play such acts as please our audiences whether the person engaged be a White Rat, White Star, White Mouse, or a member of any other organization.

"On Thursday of last week, in order to force the managers into obedience, every member of the White Rats playing the vaudeville houses of this country, without any notice whatever, struck, went off the stage, and walked out of the several houses. The very same day all places were filled and the business went on as usual. It is a matter of small moment, indeed, of very much less importance and consequence than the public might believe, as there are over three thousand acts in the business, of which only six hundred are members of this society. I am not opposed to the White Rats, and will book and play its members in the regular way, doing business through the regular channels, but I do insist, as do all my associates, that we shall run our own business independently, claiming for ourselves freedom from any bondage.

"I have been overwhelmed since this little trouble began with applications from some splendid road combinations that wish to book time with me during the balance of this season and if I should find myself inconvenienced in securing the very best of polite vaudeville bills I shall play at my regular prices certain dramatic attractions in my theatres, of such standard worth, high merit, character, and reputation as will astonish theatregoers and create a revolution in prices of standard theatre productions."

Viewed from the standpoint of the disinterested onlooker there can be but one result to the contest and that is the ultimate but none the less decisive victory for the managers, who simply desire to conduct their own business affairs as they may see fit. The calling out of the actors by the impulsive and mistaken gentlemen at the head of the White Rats without first giving the managers an opportunity to prove their sincerity in the matter of doing away with the 5 per cent commission was certainly a decided mistake and one that will do more toward influencing the general public against the order than anything else they might have done.

There can be no denying the truth of the claim of the men at the head of the theatres that there is and always has been an over-supply of vaudeville acts and that not more than one-third of the available performers are members of the organization. It is also a well-known fact that the vaudeville actor is the best paid member of the theatrical profession and receives more money in a single week for his services than does the average bank cashier for a month of responsible labor, and the bank official is popularly supposed to be in possession of an education and a fair share of intelligence—a claim that is rarely made concerning a vaudeville actor. The same "turns" are being foisted upon vaudeville audiences this year that were popular a decade ago, and in only a very few instances have the jokes or songs been altered. Most vaudeville performers know no such thing as improving their entertainment and are perfectly content to sing the same songs and relate the same stories season after season. Even this year monologists who scored emphatic successes at Chase's last year have returned with the identical material and have expressed surprise that they have not received the same amount of praise that was accorded them on the occasion of their first appearance here.

The majority of the members of the White Rats are players who might be very well dropped from vaudeville programmes, and if the present difficulty has no other result than the accomplishment of this end the fight between the players and the managers will not have been without some good product, so far as the long suffering vaudeville audiences are concerned.

The version of "Camille" to be presented by the Lafayette Stock Company this week, while essentially Dumas' play, has been under the blue pencil of Walter Clarke Bellews during the past week, and tomorrow night will see a production far more pleasing and up to date than the original book. Mr. Bellews has inserted much of his own stage business, has changed the ending of the first act, and has eliminated many lines that did not tend to the play's improvement, so that the "Camille" which the stock company will show will be a different one from, and in many respects an improvement on, other versions heretofore given in Washington.

The most widely discussed woman in Washington last week was undoubtedly Miss Irene Vanbrugh, leading woman with John Hare in "The Gay Lord Quex." The stir which this play has created in theatrical circles is due in part to Arthur Wing Pinero, the author and past master in the art of play construction. The responsibility for the rest lies with Mr. Hare, Miss Vanbrugh, and their associates, whose admirable interpretation of the piece is beyond criticism. In moral circles, it is safe to say, its effect has been little less than cyclonic, for it is hardly a play to which to send the children; but then the moral is not the objective point just now.

The great third act has not been surpassed by anything ever seen here, in the matter of artistic dramatic ingenuity. Mr. Hare's quiet handling of the scene and Miss Vanbrugh's intense and powerful portrayal of the woman at bay, mark it as one of the greatest and most artistically conceived climaxes ever put into a play. America has been loath to leave its own hearthstone in search of additions to its gallery of artists, but Miss Vanbrugh saved that trouble by crossing the pond on her own account, and incidentally on that of Mr. Hare, and coolly helped herself to a conspicuous place in the esteem of the American public. Miss Vanbrugh may now save herself the further bother of asking a release, for the deal is closed. To a Times interviewer the other night the actress expressed her delight at being in America, and then generously allowed the subject to be turned to herself.

"This is not my first visit to America. I came over here four years ago, with my sister, Violet Vanbrugh, and her husband, Mr. Arthur Bourchier, when they made a starring tour of the United States, but then I was playing small parts and since that time I have been hard at work, and now I hope that the good people of America will not forget me when I return to England. The part of Sophy Fullgarney teems with possibilities, and while it is a great strain, I love it. My part in "A Pair of Spectacles" is a very small one, for the play is really Mr. Hare's, but the people in it are such a delightful little party that I refused to be kept out, and so I play the wife. Our success in America has been phenomenal. Isn't it nice? When one leaves home and one's own people how glorious it is to be welcomed into a strange country, as we have been in America!

"I believe this is Mr. Hare's farewell tour, but I can assure you that you are not going to get rid of me, for I am looking forward to many future visits to this country. Shall I come as a star? Well, that's hard to say. You know we don't star in London as you do in America, and I shall wait until I am fully convinced of my capability before I attempt to start out for myself. In comparing London to America I did so from a theatrical viewpoint. In our dramatic world, London is England. If you are a success in London the provinces are yours, but over here New York isn't America, by any means. We have learned that each city has its own independent ideas as regards the theatre and so on all sides find that the spirit of '76 is still the ruling one.

"I have been asked so many times if I miss the demonstrations of applause which the English audiences are so accustomed to manifest. I must confess that at first it seemed a little strange to be received so quietly. For a time I thought 'They don't like me. What must I do to make them?' But after a while I realized that it was the American custom and now I rather like it. I feel and understand that the audiences are enjoying the play in their own way, and that is just what I should always want."

Personally, Miss Vanbrugh is a typical English girl, rather spirituelle in appearance, full of animation, and, of course, the English accent is not missing. Dramatically, she is an artist whom America will always welcome with characteristic hospitality.

"In my mind, the greatest task of a dramatist is to successfully adapt a novel to the stage," said Thomas E. Shea, to a Times man during a wait in the performance of "The Voice of Nature," at the Academy last week. "The present epidemic of book plays and the rather unnotable success of some of the number, makes this observation a little superfluous, but you will not mind that.

"Take for example the works of Dickens. The cleverest characterizations in English literature are found in his novels, but there is such a mass of undramatic literature, such a multiplicity of plots and superabundance of detail, that the dramatist who assays to fit the stories for the stag is undertaking a great proposition. 'A Tale of Two Cities' begins with 'coming back to life' and not until the middle of the story is this peculiar shading of gloom explained to the reader. It would be impossible for one to fully bring out this shading upon the stage and the careful student of Dickens is disappointed with the dramatization, no matter how carefully and scholarly it is made.

"The essence of dramatic construction is unity of thought about one central theme. The essential is progression, each act building upon the other and each stronger and more forceful than the last. Today I own the sole rights to nine plays, each of them excellent properties, for each possesses these cardinal principles. Four of the nine are 'book' plays, yet each has been adapted to the stage by persons fully cognizant of the needs of the realm behind the footlights. When the happy period arrives when dramatist is also novelist you will have perfect book plays, and not until then. The model for dramatic construction is 'Hamlet,' the first act of which will probably ever remain as the firmest dramatic foundation ever laid.

"About my plans? Well, nothing in particular. I propose playing popular-priced houses for a while. Had Marie Corelli consented to my proposed alterations in her dramatization of 'Barabas' I would now be in the higher-priced houses, but, like most authors, she had her own peculiar ideas and declined to change a line or situation. So the deal was declared off."

An astonishingly low scale of summer prices has been adopted by Manager Chase for the New Grand. At the daily matinees the balcony will be 10 cents, the orchestra circle 15 cents, and the orchestra 20 cents, and at night 25 cents will buy a seat anywhere in the house. All seats will, as usual, be reserved.

Mr. Chase has concluded to abandon the comic opera feature and instead will stick to polite vaudeville. He states that the style of entertainment, while equally as refined as his winter bills, will be typical "roof garden" vaudeville, by which he means the programmes will be more breezy and less serious. He believes he knows just what is wanted for summer diversion, as he has been successful for years in operating Lake Hiawatha Park at Mount Vernon, Ohio. It is his purpose to put the Grand in complete summer dress, making the decorations and hangings assist the great electric fans in making the interior invitingly cool and cheering. Handsome Japanese screens will cover the open doors, windows, and exits, and the iron landings on the west side of the theatre will be similarly enclosed with lanterns hanging overhead and green vines and running plants filling every nook inside and outside the house.

James A. Mahoney, of Washington, created a very favorable impression last week when he appeared with the Lafayette Stock Company, in their production of "Cyrano de Bergerac."

Mr. Mahoney was a member of the old Lawrence Barrett Club, of this city, which gave Wilton Lackaye, Charles B. Hanford, and many others to the native stage, and since then has played with many of the country's notable stars. He was in Lotta's support for a long time, and played an important part with Neil Burgess' "A County Fair" during its memorable New York run.

Washington is always glad to welcome back its own, and it is hoped that Mr. Mahoney may be seen in the Lafayette company's future productions.

James A. Herne and William Gillette are the two best representative American actor-playwrights, and both have had some remarkable successes. Mr. Herne was born in Troy, N. Y., on February 1, 1840, and has been on the stage for over forty years. His first appearance was made at the Adelphi Theatre, Troy, in 1859, as George Shelby in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." He remained in his native city for two seasons and then went to Baltimore, where he played in a stock company at the Holliday Street Theatre for three years. During that time he delivered the address at the opening of Ford's Theatre, on Tenth Street, in this city, in which President Lincoln was afterward assassinated. After leaving the Baltimore company he traveled as leading man with the beautiful Susan Denning, and then went to California, as did all the best Eastern actors. As long ago as 1869 Mr. Herne managed a theatre in New York—the Grand Opera House.

Mr. Herne's first great success was "Hearts of Oak," which was brought out in San Francisco in 1878. It had a wonderful vogue of ten or twelve years and earned a fortune for the author, and only last season was successfully revived and taken on the road. Mr. Herne describes it as a melodrama without a villain. His second play was "The Minute Man," produced in Philadelphia in 1885. He lost considerable money on this, and finally "Drifting Apart," a play first presented in New York, and from which Mr. Herne expected much, completely ruined him financially. In 1888 he produced in Chickering Hall in Boston a serious drama which proved to be the forerunner of the problem play. The work was a little in advance of its time, though it barely missed being a success.

In 1891 Mr. Herne entered into negotiations with the late J. H. McVicker, for the production of a new play which Mr. Herne called "The Hawthornes." Mr. Herne was a poor man, disappointed and thoroughly disheartened, for he had been long trying to find some one with money and influence who would interest himself in this play. Mr. McVicker wanted a spring attraction for his theatre, and he was charmed with the work. He rechristened it "Shore Acres Subdivision," and under that title it was first produced at McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, on May 23, 1892. The production attracted but little attention, and the play was accounted a failure, only one critic predicting a great popular success for it. After a week of poor business the play was renamed the third time, "Uncle Nat," but the change of title did not draw any larger audiences, and at the end of the third week, the drama was withdrawn and other plays in the Herne repertorie substituted.

When the season closed, the actor-dramatist came East and began his struggle all over again. Every prominent manager was either visited or written to but none would consent to put money into a play that had proved a failure. In the end Mr. Herne had to give it up and accept an engagement in a New York production. About this time, R. M. Field, the manager of the Boston Museum Stock Company, needed a new play and sent his stage manager, Edward E. Rose, who has since become prominent as a dramatizer of popular novels, to see Mr. Herne. Mr. Rose heard the play read and his report convinced Mr. Field of its merits. Accordingly arrangements were concluded for a Boston production, which toook place at the Boston Museum. The success of "Shore Acres" was pronounced and it scored a run of one hundred and fourteen performances, which was remarkable for Boston. Mr. Field believing that it was merely a local hit, sold his interest in the play to Henry C. Miner for $1,500, and that astute manager is known to have cleared $35,000 as his share of the following season's profits.

"Shore Acres" was acted by Mr. Herne all over the country, until his made his production of "Griffith Davenport," which, by the way, received its first presentation on any stage in this city nearly two years ago.

"Sag Harbor" followed "Rev. Griffith Davenport" and has proven so far to have been the greatest success that Mr. Herne has yet achieved, and the critics in all the cities in which the play has been presented claim it is a better play than "Shore Acres," which is saying a great deal.

Chase's New Grand will be open next Sunday night for the accommodation of inauguration visitors. Mr. Chase has prepared a splendid musical programme, headed by Della Fox, the comic opera prima donna, together with the famous United States Marine Band, in full uniform, supplemented by the biograph moving picture scenes and other high-class musical artists, providing a generous quota of melody.

Rose Melville, the clever young star whose quaint characterization of "Sis Hopkins," the Hoosier girl, "who don't see no sense in doin' nuthin' for nobody what won't do nuthin' for you," has brought her not a little fame and fortune, is an native of Indiana, and made her studies from life.

"I was a preacher's daughter, you know," says the young comedienne, "and as a child I often accompanied my father over the circuit when he held protracted meetings. Of course, the larger proportion of attendants at these meetings, which were held in rather out of the way places, were people from the back districts who seldom emerged from their seclusion, and whose attire was, as you may imagine, far from the latest mode. Being a girl and from the city, I was naturally struck with the queer get-up of many of the children with whom I played while the 'grown folks' were occupied at their devotions, and having a fine sense of the ridiculous, would describe to my older sisters on my return home some of the funny details of the costumes which I had seen. At that time nothing was further from my mind than a stage career, and the thought of using these queerly dressed, gawky girls as models for a character creation never occurred to me.

"Later, however, I determined to try my fortune behind the footlights and had to run away from home to do it; but that is another story. However, in casting about for something original in the line of an American type I recalled the amusement which I had personally found in a contemplation of the Hoosier country girls and straightway set about devolving a 'make-up' from memories of probably a score of my childhood's playmates. I had been on the stage for some years, however, and had played about everything from Fanchon to Topsy, when, quite by accident, I saw one day an almost perfect prototype of this much talked of 'Sis.' It was in Washington, Ind., that this maid in question burst upon my vision, first seated in a home-made wagon drawn by a half-grown steer and later in a general store, where she had gone to make some additions to her very remarkable wardrobe.

"It was with difficulty that I kept my face in a state of respectable soberness while the girl was making her selection from a pile of gingham sunbonnets that the shopkeeper was showing her, but when she removed the old one and displayed a pair of stiff braids which stood at almost an acute angle from her head I made no further attempt to restrain my risibilities, but laughed outright. The girl and her 'paw,' who was assisting in the selection, remained unconscious of the cause of my merriment, for the maiden turned toward me with a simper, almost of apology, as she pressed a particularly bright colored sunbonnet down over the pigtails and said rather at me than to me, 'Like it?' I promptly answered that it was most becoming and volunteered to place it at a more fetching angle. During this process I made a careful note of the shades and textures of the remainder of her costume and I have practically reproduced it exactly, although some portions of the 'outfit' are obsolete, and I have them manufactured expressly for 'Sis Hopkins.'"

The Western critics are still in arms anent Mr. Sothern's Hamlet. The latest controversy was started by the "Toledo Blade," whose dramatic writer championed Mr. Sothern's ambitious effort. A correspondent accused Mr. Sothern of being inspired by financial greed, and not by the sublimity of Shakespeare's masterpiece. Apparently to the correspondent's mind a crowded theatre and an enthusiastic audience are not consistent with true art. It seems unusual that "Hamlet" should meet with such prosperous box office results.

Despite the arguments pro and con, Mr. Sothern's presentation is still meeting with brilliant success, and his week in Cleveland closed to bigger receipts than he experienced in the "Zenda" days, and the opening last week in Toronto was to standing room only, while the advance sale in Buffalo for the latter part of the week means playing to the capacity. This is certainly wonderful business for Shakespearean drama, but Mr. Sothern's production of "Hamlet" is an eventful one. It seems to appeal to every kind of theatregoer, perforce of its modern treatment, the clear and forceful reading, and the excellent company. Miss Harned's Ophelia has also aroused considerable discussion. It is well that so much interest has been taken in a Shakespearean revival, for it proves the performance is worthy of it. Box office encouragement is the legitimate encouragement for art.

The latest book to see life behind the footlights is "To Have and to Hold," which in its dramatized form was presented for the first time at Baltimore last Monday night, and, according to all reports at hand, scored a very substantial success, as might be presupposed, owing to the great popularity of the book. The stage version of the Johnston story was made by Mr. Ernest F. Boddington, a former Brooklyn dramatic critic. At least the programme credits Mr. Boddington with the work, although Mr. Edward E. Rose had a hand in the tinkering, and to him is undoubtedly due a great share of whatever success the play may attain. The initial performance was a great event in Baltimore's theatrical history, and attracted an unusually large number of well-known managers and critics from New York. Miss Johnston, the author, was expected to be present, but was detained at Birmingham, Ala., where she is at work on a new novel, which she could not leave at the time.

According to Acton Davies, "To Have and to Hold" as a play is a rather "wabbly" affair, a thing of shreds and patches in its earlier scenes, but it is eventually saved by a fine last act. This act fairly atones for all the earlier sins of omission and commission. It seems to be the fashion of all these latter-day book dramatizers to stray as far away from the work they are supposed to be dramatizing as possible. In some particulars, Mr. Boddington follows the tradition of the cult. His first act, however, is a fairly faithful transcription of the book. The sale of the English maids gave a chance for a charming setting, and after the marriage of Percy and Jocelyn the plot is led by some charming tableaux. This act is thoroughly interesting. The sale of the maids is conducted a little too much after the manner of comic opera, but with that exception the stage management was admirable. The second act shows the exterior of the fort at Jamestown, and Lord Carnal's arrival. He captures Jocelyn, but Percy passes himself off as the Governor of Virginia and carries the girl off under Carnal's nose by a clever ruse. The first scene of the third act passes in the old watch house, and after Carnal has captured the heroine again Jeremy climbs to the rescue through a trap door, and Percy, Jocelyn, and the preacher make another escape through the cellar exit.

Conventional as this scene was, it caught the house, and the applause was just beginning when a curious thing happened. The scene changed quickly to the open sea, with the refugees all huddled together in a tiny boat. Another quick change showed Percy, Jeremy, and Jocelyn on the pirate ship. This was a most elaborate set, which must have cost piles of money, and weeks of preparation. But the curtain fell on that third act in silence.

There wasn't even "a hand." In plain English, the act had been killed by canvas. The audience was happy as long as it got action, but it absolutely balked at the interpolated scenic effects. Not a line that is spoken in these two sea scenes can be heard by the audience, and the play would be strengthened infinitely if they were both cut out. There are three scenes in the final act: The hold of the ship where Percy and Jeremy are prisoners and break their bonds; the cabin where a somewhat butchered but still very effective rendering of Miss Johnston's great trial scene takes place, and then the deck of the ship with all sails set and a charming little love scene between husband and wife, while, by a clever panoramic effect, the ship skims over a moonlit sea. This scene sealed the fate of "To Have and To Hold" irrevocably. In spite of its shortcomings, this play will prove a great popular success.

The principal parts were assumed with not a little success by Miss Isabel Irving as Jocelyn Leigh; Robert Lorraine, an English actor imported especially for the production, as Ralph Percy, and Charles Wolcott as Jeremy Sparrow.

The dramatization of Judge Robert Grant's novel, "Unleavened Bread," which was presented in New York City a few weeks ago with considerable success, is headed toward Washington, and is scheduled for an early production at the Columbia Theatre. The piece was interrupted during what promised to be a profitable metropolitan engagement by the financial difficulties of the manager of the Savoy Theatre, where the piece was presented, and it was impossible to secure another Gotham playhouse at the time.

Miss Eleanor Robson, who was seen in "Arizona" at the Lafayette last season, is seen to great advantage in "Unleavened Bread," and is credited with making one of the most emphatic hits of her very successful career. Besides Miss Robson, the piece will introduce to local amusement seekers a number of capable and experienced players, who should give a very good performance.

Harry Corson Clarke, who was a member of the Frawley Stock Company, at the Columbia, two seasons ago, has met with a great deal of success in the Northwest this year in a comedy entitled "What Did Tompkins Do?" There are no late reports as to the experiences of Mr. Tompkins, but Mr. Clarke claims to have played to capacity audiences in many of the cities in which he has appeared.

At present the clever comedian, who has a decided penchant for old men roles, is endeavoring to secure a New York theatre simply to prove that there are a few good actors who are unknown to Broadway, and that he is one of the number. There is every likelihood that if the Tompkins play is of any real merit and the longed-for metropolitan opening eventuates, Mr. Clarke will be written down in the theatrical history of the year as another of the hitherto almost obscure actors who have impressed Gothamites with their actual merits.

Washington measured Mr. Clarke several years ago, and decided that he was uncommonly clever, and only needed an opportunity to demonstrate his worth.

Now the effervescent young women of the chorus and the volatile soubrettes have banded together for mutual benefit and the furtherance of what they are pleased to term their "art," and will henceforth be known as the White Mice, although they have no affiliation with the White Rats, the vaudeville performers' society. The name of Cerise Rodents is still at the disposal of the estimable ladies of the stage who wear red gowns and flashy jewelry, and boast of their "pasts," whenever they see fit to organize.