

## With The First Nighters

### "THE COMMON LAW"

The lot of a stock actor or actress is no sine-cure and much allowance must be made for those who are obliged week after week to appear in one part while learning one or two others, but there is positively no excuse, unless Merry Christmas enters into it, for the way the English language is being used by those who are playing "The Common Law" at the Empress this week.

It is not the fault of whoever dramatized the thing, which is a poor play at best, for nearly all seem bent on outdoing one another in fearful diction, and most of them know better. While it would be a task for any set of actors to do anything with such a vehicle, the new people it served to introduce have not made any specially gratifying impression, though perhaps it is too early to judge them until they have a chance in a real play.

Paul Harvey, the new leading man as Louis ("Kelly") Neville, is sort of a Pierre of the Plains, rather than the artist-lover. Of Charles Richmond physique, he will probably score heavily with the dolls who dash in to the matinees, but he ought to do something about that hick hair cut before he goes much further.

Miss Merie Stanton, as Mrs. Neville was also something new, and gave us a unique idea of an aristocratic dowager of the upper ten with a voice a base viol had nothing on and the demeanor of one of those boys who stands guard while his fellow citizens are making little rocks out of big ones. So much for the Neville family as interpreted in the scenes revolving about Mr. Chambers' stewed studio.

Miss Nana Bryant as Valerie West, is giving the only lifeless performance she has been seen in since making her local debut, and while the character is one requiring who ever plays it to be subdued and retiring, it isn't necessary to carry it to an extreme. Even when she threw Querida out of the window, it was done somewhat nonchalantly. The popular leading lady seemed tired and worn and possibly a lack of interest in the play had something to do with her mood. \*

Miss Clair Sinclair is splendidly cast in this play and makes the most of it and Ferlinand Munier is a distinct hit as Jimmie. Clifford Thompson is excellent in the little he has to do, and John C. Livingstone gave a pleasing idea of what he is capable of in character work in the part of Querida.

As a whole the play and the company are disappointing and the disappointment is accentuated at the very beginning when the thoughtless stage manager brings the curtain down just as Miss Bryant is beginning to pose.

The play selected for next week is "Ready Money," by James Montgomery.

### ORPHEUM

Over at the Orpheum, Willie Weston comes right out, just like that, without a particle of fear. He is a smashing hit with a lot of real humor, but allows too many encores, if in the opinion of a vaudeville performer, that can be done. He is a lot of fun and brings plenty of new stuff to laugh at.

Richard Kean, impersonates some rather historic gentlemen in literature and the drama, and

some of his impersonations are very good, though his Svengali is not even a second cousin to the original. Mr. Kean evidently has an idea that Svengali was a serpentine dancer which is scarcely in accord with what Du Maurier had in mind when he wrote a piece about him.

Russel Mack and Blanche Vincent appeared so early in the program that the audience wondered what was the matter with them, but they found out quickly that there was nothing. They are both as clever as they can be with their music and chatter, though let down their act at the close with a supposedly patriotic song that is a mess.

Bessie De Voie and Guy Livingston put a lot of life into their dancing which varies, including some modern dances, a Spanish effect and a hunting fantasy. However there are plenty of others who do such things better. The Bison City Four are back again with their same old performance in which horse play predominates and one of the four, the tramp, is funny.

Genevieve Cliff is seen with her company in what is termed an idealistic comedy called, "A Breath of Old Virginia." The breath needs a little listerine, it is very bad, though that isn't the fault of the players, but of the one who put it together.

Houdini, the world famous self liberator, with an elaborate entourage is the big feature of the bill and mystifies his audiences with the East Indian needle trick and his escape from the water torture cell. Along the same line, a straight jacket doesn't mean any more to him than an ordinary sweater and one of his favorite pastimes is hanging by his feet in midair and freeing him-



DOROTHY GISH, WHO HEADS THE CAST WHICH IS TO PLAY "JORDAN IS A HARD ROAD," A TRIANGLE PRODUCTION AT THE AMERICAN THEATRE SUNDAY AND MONDAY



OLGA, DANCING VIOLINISTE WHO APPEARS AT THE ORPHEUM NEW YEAR'S WEEK