

reversal of form under the law of compensation, and now, just as a man pays his admittance to a fake sideshow and after having been hoaxed comes out and tells his friends that it is fine and they ought to see it, we extend our felicitations to Atlantic City, where the "Colonel" will conduct the preliminary bouts before the next Grand Encampment, and we hope for his sake and for theirs that the frog-legs, chicken, patte de fois gras, high-balls and Clicquot will be placed before him and his possible assistants, even with a more lavish hand than that which extended hospitality to the ingrate here, for he is a nice little fellow and we hope he does well.

### DRAMA

#### McKEE RANKIN'S AGE.

When the announcement recently appeared that Nance O'Neill was going to join Dustin Farnum's troupe, the first question the theater-going world asked was, "What has become of McKee Rankin?" And then followed a general impression that the actress' ancient preceptor had died at last of old age, and that in some mysterious way the death notice had gotten sidetracked.

But soon came another notice to the effect that Miss O'Neill's appearance with Mr. Farnum would be in a play written by McKee Rankin. And so it appears, after all, that the tentacles of this old man of the stage are wrapped as tightly as ever about the destinies of Nance O'Neill.

At moments such as these the reflective mind is prone to wander into alien fields and make vast and vague conjectures as to the possible age of McKee Rankin. The possible, not the probable age; that last would be too difficult a problem, involving a nicer calculation in chronology than modern mathematics afford the means of making.

When the writer was a little child, but a brief space emancipated from the indignity of swaddling bands, he was taken to a theatrical performance and there he got his first glimpse of McKee Rankin. He beheld a white-haired old gentleman whose ability to dodge the grim reaper for a year or two longer appeared to depend upon a super-human degree of agility. Months, years, lustrums and decades have since rolled by, and that venerable man is still with us, and looking not a year, not a day older. Indeed, he could hardly afford to.

And that one thing, the age of McKee Rankin, threatens to remain what it has always been, a mystery. In what lands, and under what name, he acted in bygone ages is not known. He may have made love to Rachel or played "seconds" to Frederic Lemaitre at the Theatre Francais; he may have been understudy to Charles Kemble or Edmund Kean at the Haymarket; he may have trod the boards with David Garrick at Covent Garden, or exchanged repartee with Betterton or Colley Cibber at old Drury. He may have dodged dead cats with William Shakespeare at the Globe, or banded epitaeta with the pit along o' Kit Marlowe. He may have been played opposite to the celebrated Roscius before some vice-sated Caesar in the hey-day of the Roman stage. There is a tradition that in his early youth he was an "all-around" actor, and this being the case, there is good room for the supposition that he accompanied Noah in clogs when that ancient weather prophet executed his pas seul before the ark.

Only one thing seems quite positive about the age of McKee Rankin, and that is (to quote the words of Tom Corwin anent an ancient federal officeholder who held an especially luscious sinecure), "When the day of judgment comes they will have to take him out and shoot him."

#### FINE BILL AT THE ORPHEUM.

Vaudeville at the Orpheum took a decided turn for the better this week. In fact it is ad-

vanced vaudeville in everything the term implies without a single feature to call forth any fault finding from the most critical.

In Charlotte Parry the Orpheum has the very best headliner of the new season, for Miss Parry's work is far removed from the average run of vaudeville sketches, and her impersonations are little short of marvelous, considering the brevity of time elapsing between her changes. She is ably assisted in her little play by Reginald Parry and Frank Brink, though their work is easy compared with that of the star. Her artistry is of a rare order and worth every cent of the money, if hers was the only act on the bill.

The Woods and Woods trio in their tight wire specialty, are "toppers" in their particular line, and coming as they do the first act on the bill, which is usually supposed to be the least creditable, make the man in front wonder what is in store.

Romania Hyde, the local violiniste, created a



Lily Lena, at the Orpheum next week

splendid impression and was nicely received by her friends.

Cathryn Palmer, a singing and dancing comedienne, is a real scream with a natural humor that is irresistible and a certain grace in her dancing that would make her act enjoyable even if she did nothing else.

The Musical Trio of Grace Marshall, Grace Freeman and Clara Rogers won more admirers than they will ever know. Every one of them is a specialist and "class" marked every number they played.

It will be hard for the prejudiced who have not seen, to be convinced that a colored ventriloquist is exceptionally talented, but in the case of Frank Rogers, it is gratifying to say that he is one of the big hits of the splendid bill, and can hold his own with the best in the business.

Selma Bratz, the juggler who is just a slip of a girl, has accomplished wonders in perfecting her work. She closed a bill, which for variety, talent and all around cleverness, is one of the best ever seen at the Orpheum.

The manager announces for the week to come, includes Lily Lena, the English singer; Charles Dana Gibson's Electrified Girl Review, with music by Alfred Solomon, and lyrics by Paul West. Julius Tannen, monologist. Dick Gardner and Anna Revere, Ruby Raymond company in a sketch entitled "The Street Urchins." The three Donals in a strong arm act and Marseilles in a puzzle in black and white.

The Colonial is open for the season, its first regular season, too, by the way, for the house was completed after last winter's shows were well started and attractions were taken as they could be secured.

For the next few months, however, local playgoers will have an opportunity of seeing a big booking of popular plays that have never appeared here except at top prices. The Cohan show this week seems to have caught public fancy with little trouble. It is typically Cohanesque, rapid fire action, slam bang plot, pretty girls, good singing, comedy and pathos jumbled up until two and a half hours slip away before you know it. Among the song hits are, "Waltz With Me," "Jack and Jill," "Harrigan" and "My Small Town Gal." Grace King and her supporting companies present the show splendidly and the company numbers several singers above the average. Today's performances close the engagement.

The Mack company is back in old time form at the Grand this week in its presentation of Paul Armstrong's stirring play, "Salomy Jane." Blanche Douglas has a role somewhat similar in type to her girl in the former Mack production of "The Girl of the Golden West," and she takes full advantage of her opportunity. Her work is excellent this week and with the fine support she has received from Mr. Mack in the role of Jack Marbury and the other players of the company the play has been popular. Paul Armstrong dramatized "Salomy Jane" from Bret Harte's western idyl of the same name and the story is absorbingly interesting.

The newly-organized Bungalow Stock company opens its season at the Colonial Monday afternoon in the Shubert success, "The Love Route." The Bungalow theatre which will be the home of the new company after next week, is undergoing repairs and for that reason the opening play is given in the Colonial.

Walter Arington has assembled a company that, from all appearances, will give the Bungalow patrons an excellent season of stock shows during the next few months.

The personnel of the company includes Bertha Creighton as leading woman; John Ince, leading man; Francis Brandt; Mayme Arington, ingenue; Florence Craig, character woman; William Belfort; Thomas Paulley, A. J. Caldwell, Harold Kennedy, A. J. Cole, W. W. Craig and several others.

"The Love Route," is the play in which Guy Standing and Odette Tyler starred a season or two ago and which was favorably received. Ed. Peple is the author. Mr. Arington announces that he will give the play a very elaborate staging. The engagement opens with a special Labor day matinee, Monday, and continues through the week with a Wednesday matinee.

William Winter, the New York critic, has compiled a list of stars and the productions they will be seen in this season as follows:

Maude Adams, in Twelfth Night; Viola Allen, in The White Sister; Margaret Anglin, in The Awakening of Helena Ritchie and Twelfth Night; Macklyn Arbuckle, in The Circus Man; George Arliss, in Septimus; Mabel Harrison, in The Mouse Trap; Ethel Barrymore, in Mid Channel; Kyrle Bellew, in The Builder of Bridges; May Bertrand,