

THE STAGE

THEATRICAL TOPICS

JANE OAKER GOES TO HACKETT.

Jane Oaker, who was recently Arthur Byron's leading lady, has made a transfer in the same capacity, to James K. Hackett, in his production of "Don Caesar de Bazan," and in so doing has taken a forward step towards obtaining the big prize that her grandfather, Christian Peper, has promised her. As in the case of several women now on the stage, a salary is no object with Miss Oaker. Her daily bread does not depend upon her earnings. When she first had leanings towards the stage, her relatives tried in vain to dissuade her, and after her grandfather saw that her mind was fully made up, he accepted the decision, and then said so long as she was going to be an actress, she must be a good one, and that he would give her \$100,000 if she would get to the top of her chosen profession. He is well able to keep his promise, being one of St. Louis' millionaire tobacco manufacturers. With such a prize at the top, and also the desire to gratify her own high ambition, she is working, heart and soul, to achieve her object.

By the way, Miss Oaker made her first success as Herma, with Modjeska, the same part in which Maxine Elliott first came to the front. Herma has been the means of starting many a prominent actress on the road towards success.

ROLAND REED'S DAUGHTER.

Florence Reed, the daughter of the late Roland Reed, a popular comedian



FLORENCE REED.

for the past quarter of a century, is a recent addition to the profession, having made her first appearance last season, in a monologue, at Proctor's Fifth Avenue Theater, New York city. She was successful from the first and played several of Mr. Proctor's theaters. When the F. F. Proctor Stock Co. was organized she became a member of the company and with it played a number of roles, including Kitty Fauntelroy in "Dr. Bill," Alice Lane in "The Woman Hater," Hetty Tarbox in "Lend Me Your Wife," Matilda Wedgall in "My Awful Dad," and Mrs. Dick Chetwind in "Young Mrs. Winthrop." This season she is engaged for May Irwin's Co. for leading business in her new play.

AFRICAN WAR DRAMA.

"The Outpost," a three act drama, by Edwin Barbour and James H. Hawkins, was produced for the first time on any stage at Jacobs' theater, Elizabeth, N. J., the other evening by J. K. Emmet and Lott's Gilson and company. The scenes are laid at the home of Fritz Von Neilandt, near Kimberley, where Nora Desmond has come to reach her brother, Lieutenant "Jack" Desmond, who is in the British army. She finds a good home, and is the heiress to the Orient diamond mines. Captain Fabian, a French officer in the English army, has been made the executor of her father's will, and is in love with her and asks her hand in marriage. She refuses his advances and loves "Fritz," a son of an old Boer, Oom Peter, and who is a civil engineer in the Boer forces, while Lieutenant Desmond is in love with Jean, a sister to the engineer. Tanta Lena, who is a sister to the old Boer, and who has three husbands, keeps house for the family and is in love with Reginald Smithers, a young American "willie" boy. These two characters introduce the comedy element. Captain Fabian, realizing that Nora loves "Fritz," plots to kill him as a British spy. "Ulgo," a typical African, despises Fabian and befriends "Fritz," who is compelled to flee from the house at the instance of Fabian, who declares he will blow the dam shackles of the Neilandts to pieces with a gatling gun which is brought into action in front of the house, but the sergeant in command refuses to fire on the house. Nora levels a gun at the soldiers from a porch, who makes a rush to the house when Nora climbs down a tree and seizes the gatling gun, and forces the British to surrender. The family are afterwards captured and made prisoners in their own house, and after many exciting incidents within the walls of the old homestead "Fritz," who has been out awed, comes home and seals his compact with Nora to wed him, while "Jack" Desmond, through the machinations of Nora, is reconciled with Jean, and Col. Willoughby, in command of the troops, finds that Captain Fabian has been persecuting Fritz and Nora, and dismisses him in disgrace. Little Toody, a child of six years old, through which much of the love making is done, forms quite a character in the play. The old Boer Neilandt, while defending his home in the second act, is killed. The play is picturesque, and lacks the usual fusillade of gun shots and hurrahs incidental to a play of its character.

ASPIRANT FOR STELLAR HONORS.

Another American girl will aspire for stellar honors in grand opera. Barretta Mueller made her debut at San

Francisco the other night in the part of Nedda in I Pagliacci. This young lady possesses all the requirements for the position, a fine voice, good looks and temperament. Besides, she has had the advantage of study with some of the renowned masters of the art of singing, having just completed a course in Italy under the leading teacher in Milan, and in Paris with Madame Duprez-De Wost. She is a native of New Orleans, twenty-one years of age, and a handsome face and engaging manner make her a most attractive personality. Miss Mueller has appeared with the Neilsen company in parts in "The Singing Girl" and "The Fortune Teller," and while with the company was under the instruction of the Tivoli's present director, Mr. Paul Steindorff. Acting under his advice she betook herself to Italy to perfect herself in singing, and today she is in possession of one of the best cultivated sopranos in the country. While abroad she made the acquaintance of many musical celebrities, including Mascagni, the composer of Cavalleria, and Puccini, who gave her the world's greatest of modern works, La Boheme. Puccini was especially charmed with her voice. Miss Mueller is a favorite in Crescent City society, where she is highly connected, and is also well known in New York, where she has wealthy relatives.

A little Christianity is a dangerous thing—for others.

Capt. G. W. Streeter

Unique Character of "District of Lake Michigan."

(Chicago Letter.)

Around the wreck of the light-draught steamship Reutan on a Lake Michigan sand bar, near Chicago, June 10, 1886, has been woven one of the strangest and most complicated romances of American history; a romance in which Captain George Wellington Streeter of the wrecked vessel has figured prominently, together with the authorities of Illinois, Cook county, and Chicago. The last chapter of the romance is yet unwritten, and Streeter and his clan still claim the 200 odd acres of land on the lake shore, in the very heart of Chicago, which has been washed up around the Reutan's hulk by the storm-swept waters, or deposited there by municipal rubbish carts in the space of 15 years.

The area of land which Captain Streeter claims "by right of discovery" is worth at least \$25,000,000, if not more. Streeter calls his territory the District of Lake Michigan. He has

had been decided that the United States government had no claim or title to the land. Now Captain Streeter was happy; he had obtained an official national document recognizing his claim.

Then began a bitter fight. In the end the national authorities surveyed the land and the registrar of the Land office calmly announced that it was government property. This decision naturally roused Captain Streeter's anger, but he finally convinced Secretary Bliss that the "District" was "new" land, located by nature in an international highway. Secretary Bliss said the registrar was wrong and reversed his decision. The registrar thereupon handed in his resignation, which was accepted.

Organizes a Government.

Then the indefatigable Streeter played another trump card. He got the people who resided on his curious plot of ground to organize a "government."



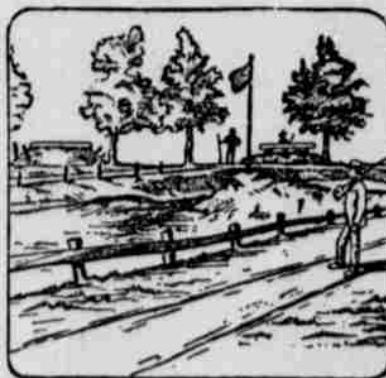
CAPTAIN STREETER.

been elected by his followers a delegate to Congress, and only last April was in Washington to see what was going to be done about the matter.

Captain Streeter says his ship was wrecked 451 feet off shore, but today the spot is half a mile inland. He could not get his vessel off the bar, so he stood by and "let things happen." After a while it became possible to walk ashore on the growing sand bar, and soon the city authorities began to dump their refuse there. Today a boulevard borders the water, and off in the other direction runs the North Shore drive.

Makes a Map of the District.

In 1890 or '91 Streeter had a map of his "District" properly drawn to scale



"FORT STREETER," CAPTURED BY POLICE MAY 26, 1900.

and duly filed with the Cook county registrar of deeds. After this he sold the property, and ere many moons there was a village on the site. Captain Streeter spent weary weeks in a study of maps, and finally recorded his claim with the Land office in Washington, D. C. He had come to the conclusion that the land was "unknown" till he "discovered" it, and that no authority in Illinois had any claim upon it. Not satisfied with his single claim at the national capital, he took out two "military territorial warrants" covering some \$6,000 in script. After such coddling of brains on the part of the Secretary of the Interior, Streeter got a "location certificate," since it

This occurred, to be exact, on the first Tuesday in April, 1899. The constitution of the United States was adopted, the American flag was chosen by unanimous vote as the emblem of the community, and the place was styled "The District of Lake Michigan." Laws for the government of the "District" were framed, and Captain Streeter was made clerk. Other chief officers were designated, and this body of men, on April 25, 1899, filed into the office of Clerk Burnham of the United States court for the Northern Illinois district, and formally took oath to uphold the United States laws in their "District." The mayor of Chicago, with the police chief and such other officers as were intimately concerned, were directly thereafter warned that, beginning with the next May day, they would be looked upon and treated as trespassers should they intrude on the territory of the "District."

On May 5 Streeter and some 25 citizens of his "District" took possession of "The District of Lake Michigan." Streeter's home was made the center of government, and above it the American flag was hoisted. Chicago awoke to the ringing alarms of war. At the city hall it was decided that Captain Streeter must be suppressed by force, and 100 soldiers were sent to perform the work. "Military Governor" William H. Niles objected. He and 14 of his men were captured and put into jail for "unlawful assemblage," and on May 6 Streeter's settlement was wrecked by the neighboring landowners. But no court could be found wherein to try the Streeterites. They were released, and immediately sued their captors for false imprisonment.

Fort Streeter Captured.

A year later—on Saturday, May 26, 1900—there was another exciting fracas. Streeter's force had again entrenched itself and was ready for business. In the afternoon of that day 500 city police officers were mobilized, and, armed with rifles and revolvers, they prepared to advance on Niles and his men, who held possession of the property on the lake shore between Oak and Huron streets.

The news flew around like wildfire that the "invaders" had landed on the

water front at 1:30 that morning, had thrown up two formidable rifle pits, hoisted the American flag, and were offering armed and riotous resistance against the combined authority of city, county and state on behalf of their self-constituted sovereign state of the "District of Lake Michigan."

The police planned to make a demand for a formal surrender of the handful of men, first through the Lincoln park police, and, if that plan failed, through the high sheriff himself. "Governor" Niles accepted the advice of Park Officer Walter Hayes, and surrendered ere his diminished force of five men was still further reduced. There was a good deal of shooting during the day, and when the casualty list was made out it was found that eight men and a girl had been more or less hurt.

Statement of the "Government."

The war was over, for a time at least. After his arrest Niles made a statement: "I am the military governor of the District of Lake Michigan," he said, "and was elected to that position by the citizens of the district. What are they going to do with us? A year ago they couldn't find a court to try us in. Judge Kohlsaat in the Federal court ruled that he had no authority to grant the release of one of our men, who was held prisoner by force—which, by the way, was all that caused us to surrender today. The Judge gave as his reason that he had no jurisdiction. One man was carted back to the county jail and then quietly let go. We claim the ownership of the land through right of discovery. The survey of 1821 established the line of the state of Illinois, and there has been no territory annexed to the state since that time. There is a clause in the constitution which gives people with the standing we have the right not to be interfered with when we are covered by a treaty, and we are covered by a treaty, which the United States made many years ago with Great Britain. Why, they couldn't find a court to try us a year ago, and they can't find one now! They have been all through the courts, and this is the net result of their work. We claim we own approximately 186 acres lying in the District of Lake Michigan."

The End Not Yet.

What will happen next the future alone will tell. Streeter was in Washington as late as last April, demanding that he be recognized as a duly elected delegate to Congress from "The District of Lake Michigan." He says he will build a police court on his curiously acquired land—if his it be—and that a defensive force will be organized forthwith. Whether Streeter wins his queer contention at the last; whether Chicago wins, or whether the state of Illinois is victorious, "The District of Lake Michigan" will be pointed out by future generations as one of the most remarkable plots of land in the whole world.

One of the most essential equipments of the district is a building, the sections of which are loaded on several wagons and are ready to be put together in a moment's notice. The only drawback to this scheme is that the police have not given Streeter time to unload the sections and put them together. A large furniture van is the principal government building. It is the capitol, executive mansion, state department building, treasury building and the home of most of the other departments. Entrance is gained through the rear by means of two gang plank leading up to a gate. The gang planks are lowered like a medieval drawbridge to admit welcome visitors.

A Great Invention.

An Atchison (Kan.) woman has a habit of eating too much, and she invented a method of knowing when she had enough, and will have her discovery patented. An ingeniously made little alarm bell is set in her corset, and when the pressure of the corset from eating amounts to so many pounds to the square inch the alarm is set off and the woman must quit. Sometimes she is in the midst of a juicy steak, or she may be just tasting a delicious dish of ice cream, or she may have just reached her coffee, when the pressure sets the alarm off, but she then quits. When visitors are at the house the alarm startles them a little at first, but they soon get used to the gong. The inventor says the alarm has been of more benefit to her than a score of doctors.—Ex.

Pocket Pistol in South Carolina.

"When does the new law, passed by the last legislature, in regard to pistols, go into effect?" was asked by a hardware dealer. There seems to be considerable doubt as to the time when the law is to go into effect. Upon investigation, it was learned that July 1, 1902, is the time when no more pistols of the usual variety can be sold. The act provides that pistols twenty inches long and weighing three pounds may then be sold to those who want them. A weapon of this size, however, could not be concealed in the hip pocket, but the law goes further and prohibits the carrying of any sort of firearms, concealed or otherwise.—Greenville (S. C.) News.