

Plays and Their Players

Curfery Comment on ye Pathing Show @ Goin' on ye Stage @ Platform.

So many unkind things have been said of the members of the dramatic profession that it is a wonder that the dispositions of all actors and actresses are not acrid and irritable, like Richard Mansfield's, but fortunately for them and for numberless stage hands who might suffer from tempers of the Mansfield type, this result has not followed the long course of contumely that they have suffered. The public has been too prone to judge the profession by its sins, its many virtues being left unconsidered. The people of the present time are cutting away from this ungenerous attitude, and coming to know more and more that the dramatic profession is not all made up of froth, foibles and wickedness. A few nights ago an event occurred in New York, which beautifully illustrated some of the chief traits of stage folk's character, their warm-hearted generosity and sympathy. The theatrical season this year has been remarkable for the number of actresses who have suffered more or less severe illness, among them being Miss Marie Dressler. One night this week her professional friends arranged for her a benefit, which eclipsed all the past records of Broadway and netted for Miss Dressler more than \$5,000. The benefit was less notable for its financial success than for the unanimity, enthusiasm and unselfishness with which it was successfully carried out. Men and women, eminent in their work on the stage, freed themselves from other obligations, traveled long distances between their own regular performances, and cheerfully inconvenienced themselves in many ways to take a part in this benefit for their unfortunate friend. This is only one of a great many instances that the world knows of, and countless others, that are never publicly known, of a magnificent generosity which seems more abundant and spontaneous among the members of the dramatic profession than any other. Mr. J. H. Stoddart, the fine old actor, who will appear here again on Monday night in "The Bonnie Brier Bush," tells in his delightful reminiscences of many acts of great, self-denying kindness which he experienced during his career upon the stage, and this is also true of Miss Clara Morris' equally interesting book of memoirs. Perhaps it is the possession of this admirable attribute that helps to keep them cheery and optimistic, even when the knocks are coming fastest.

Messrs. Fisher & Riley, managers of "Florodora," have an ambition to score a record of 1,000 performances before the piece is finally shelved. The company that played here a few weeks ago is now playing in Pittsburgh, and after playing in Chicago will return to New York to begin a long engagement at the Academy of Music. Most of the members who played in the engagement in this city will go to New York, the cast being as follows: Helen Redmond, Dolores; Edna Hunter, Angela; Robert Graham, Giffain; W. P. Carlton, Lord Aberdeen; Donald Brian, Capt. Donegal; and Grace Dudley, Lady Holyoak.

When Rice's "Show Girl" appeared here in November, one of the least important parts, that of "Susannah Jones," a dashing debutante, was played by Miss Margaret Knight. Miss Knight is the latest of the Rice "finds." It will be remembered that just before "The Show Girl" came here Mr. Rice discovered that there was a lowly member of his company who could sing, act and was extraordinarily good-looking. The result was that in London Kathryn Hutchinson was his prima donna. When "The Show Girl" company appeared a night or so ago at the Columbia Theater in Boston, Miss Hutchinson could not take her part, and Rice gave it to Miss Knight, who at short notice essayed it successfully. Rice has the reputation of having discovered more prominent actresses than any other man in the business.

An explanation of the disappointing playing of the role of Princess Flavia in "The Prisoner of Zenda" the other night is given by the announcement that Miss Ola Humphrey, wife of Edwin Mordant, who was co-starring with her husband, retired from the cast just before the play came to London. Her

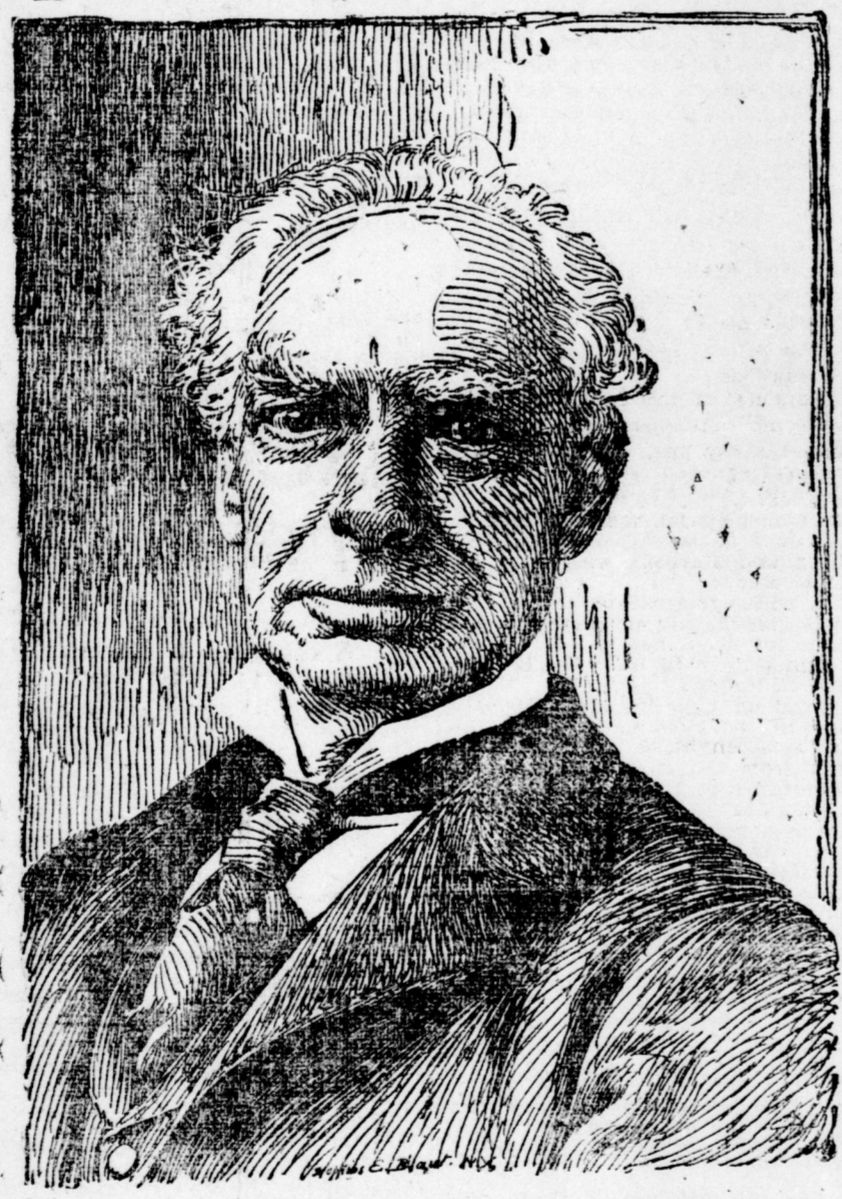
place was filled by Miss Florence Gale, who will keep it for the balance of the season. Several times during the performance here Miss Gale dropped her lines, and her cue was taken up by Mr. Mordant.

Virginia Tyler Hudson is no longer a member of the "When Johnny Comes Marching" Company. Virginia will not be remembered by Londoners who saw that musical war-drama when it was presented here, as she was only a chorus girl, despite her sonorous name. The reason for her departure, however, is interesting. Many who saw this show at the Grand with its chorus of hoop-skirted damsels, wondered how their grandmothers, in similar gowns, ever managed to get along. The difficulties that were feared came in a heap at the New York Theater the other night. During the singing of "Katie, My Southern Rose," Miss Hudson became mixed up in her hoops and caused a most unexpected commotion. Instead of gliding gracefully off as she struck the wings, she bumped into the girl before her. She got tangled in her skirts and performed a tumbling feat that was not announced on the programme. It is said that Miss Hudson thereupon emitted a remarkable vocabulary, which resulted in a heart to heart talk with the manager, and the subsequent departure of one sylph-like form from the chorus.

Theatergoers in this city who saw "The Wizard of Oz" when it appeared here a short time ago, have not forgotten the distressing situation in which little Anna Laughlin, as Dorothy

was viewed by an audience not alone numerically extraordinary, but of a social quality quite notable in this part of the town. The last-named condition must be ascribed to Mr. Hilliard's personal popularity among the "smart set" for mere melodrama, no matter how munificently garnished with scenery and mechanical effects, does not appeal to this portion of the metropolitan community. "The Wizard of Oz" is ready told in this correspondence, is a stage adaptation of two or three of the early plays of John Hay, now a member of President Roosevelt's cabinet. As counterplots to the story of the Mississippi engineer who, when his steamboat caught fire, ran her aground at the loss of his own life, in order to insure the safety of the passengers, the episodes of Mr. Hay's "Little Breaches" and "Banty Tim," have been made use of by the dramatist, and the whole mixture turns out to be exceedingly interesting and highly dramatic. The leading scenic episodes of "Jim Bludso" are a steamship race on the Mississippi and the bursting of the levee by the swollen waters of that majestic stream, causing a disastrous flood and furnishing opportunities for intrepid acts on the part of the hero. It is perhaps quite superfluous to say that Mr. Hilliard, in the pivotal character of this play, affords a sturdy picture of virile, courageous manhood. There is no doubting the depth of the impression he has made of the favor with which the entire performance has been received by the public. "Jim Bludso" will have an extended and prosperous run in New York.

David Belasco is hard at work making ready for the presentation of a play to be called "Five Little Pilgrims," a dramatization by Martha Morton of the novel named "The Truth Tellers." Considerable mystery is maintained regarding the date of this production, some persons insisting that it will not occur until next season, while others rather strongly intimate that the event will take place before a great while at the Victoria Theater, where "The Eternal City," with Viola Allen as the main individual attraction, is not fulfilling



Yours Sincerely
J. H. Stoddart

Who will appear at the New Grand Monday Night in "The Bonnie Brier Bush."

Gale, found herself when she was consigned by cruel fate and a Kansas cyclone to wander with only Imogene, her cow, as a companion, in the strange land of the Munchkins. The pity which her unhappy lot provoked will be dispelled by the knowledge that Miss Laughlin will soon be a happy bride, the announcement having been made of her engagement to Joseph Buckley, manager of Otis Skinner. The marriage will take place in a few weeks.

Miss Helena Frederick, who will be pleasantly remembered as the Lady Rosie Pippin, of "The Emerald Isle," by those who witnessed that delightful comic opera when it appeared here a week ago, has resigned from the Jefferson De Angelis Company, and left it last Saturday night. Miss Frederick is booked for an important role with a forthcoming musical comedy in New York.

New York's Current Offerings.
The volume of theatrical productions in New York fluctuates sharply from time to time. Last week we had four entirely new presentations, and this week we have had but two. Next Monday night there will be another large influx of plays and players, and perhaps the week afterward nothing at all that is fresh in the amusement line may come to us. Of this week's offerings, the most interesting is "Jim Bludso," projected by Rich and Harris, with Robert Hilliard as the star feature of the cast. The melodrama was made known at the Fourteenth Street Theater on Monday evening, and

the anticipation of its most sanguine admirers. The Belasco play was originally purchased from Miss Morton by Fred Berger, who used to manage the tours of the late Sol Smith Russell, and who intended to present it expensively at his Lafayette Square Theater in Washington. Mr. Berger's stage manager, after reading the manuscript, thought he could improve upon it, and proceeded to make a number of alterations, which may or may not have enhanced its value. At any rate, when the work was finally placed before the public, it scored a decided success, and the stage manager conceived the idea that he was wholly responsible for this state of things. So he set up a claim to the rights in it, and tried to dispose of them, but could not find the opening. Meanwhile Mr. Berger transferred the ownership to Mr. Belasco, who, as is supposed, has done some remodeling on his own account. He will dress "The Five Little Pilgrims" with the same elaboration that has marked his equipment of "Du Barry," "Zaza," and "The Darling of the Gods," and already has engaged some of the best juvenile actresses in this country for the principal characters.

Meanwhile the other Belasco enterprises are going on swimmingly. At his own theater, Miss Bates, in "The Darling of the Gods," is turning away large numbers of people at every performance, and in Boston the large Hollis Street Theater is jammed almost to suffocation every time Mrs. Carter

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appears in "Du Barry," while David Warfield, with his unique characterization of an East Side Hebrew auctioneer, is entertaining large audiences "on the road."

The season of souvenir performances in New York is beginning. "The Silver Slipper" is approaching its one hundredth repetition on the Broadway Theater, when suitable gifts designed to commemorate the occasion will be distributed among the members of the audience. This musical work has had a wholly extraordinary run. Last week the receipts were, in round figures, \$16,000, a fact that places Mr. Fisher's entertainment upon a par with "The Sleeping Beauty" and "The Beggar King," which has hitherto been regarded as quite the most astonishing example of money-drawing theatrical attractions ever brought to view in America. The box office takings of "The Silver Slipper" began at \$12,000 a week, and have increased with undeviating steadiness until reaching the point here mentioned. The likelihood of a change of bill at the Broadway for a considerable time to come.

Another souvenir performance will be given during the present week, when "The Ninety and Nine," Ramsay Morris' railway locomotive melodrama, will record its 125th representation at the Academy of Music. This play, which Frank Meece is the manager, has had the best run at the Academy since "In Old Kentucky," justly regarded as the most wonderfully successful melodrama of this time, inasmuch as in its tenth year it has played to two \$10,000 weeks in Chicago. "The Ninety and Nine" will not move out of New York until Jan. 24, when it is to tour a tour embracing the largest cities.

Nobody seems to know just where Charles Frohman intends to play "The Good Shepherd" this time, inasmuch as he has announced for some time in February. Contrary to managerial custom he has not divulged the name of the theater he has in view, and there is talk of a random guessing going on in consequence. "Ulysses" was first shown by Beerboom Tree at his Majesty's Theater in London, where it not alone attracted the attention of the most earnest attention by reason of the splendor of its pictorial environment and the perfect drilling of its horde of supernumeraries, but also, as it is understood, has brought over to this country all the scenery, costumes and properties made use of by Mr. Tree on the far side of the Atlantic, and will employ some two hundred persons in the New York revival—a condition of affairs indicating that the exploitations of "Ulysses" here will at least require a considerable number of days in the city.

The return of Edward Harrigan to Broadway next Monday night at the Bijou Theater in "The Bird in the Cage," a new comedy in three acts, which he looked upon as something of an event. By an odd coincidence, it was at the Bijou that Harrigan was last seen in New York, upon the occasion of the production of one of his own plays. This was not successful, and afterwards, until he was engaged for the Fifth place, Harrigan passed the larger part of his time in the vaudeville theaters. "The Bird in the Cage" has been played in Boston and elsewhere, and report is to the effect that Harrigan has been enabled to rehabilitate himself in an artistic sense. The engagement at the Bijou will be for five weeks only, owing to the congestion of theatrical attractions in this city as well as all the other Broadway theaters.

The holiday business of many of the New York playhouses last week was entirely phenomenal, and in some instances all previous records were outstripped. The largest audience of the week was drawn to the New York Theater on New Year's Eve, when the receipts of a single performance, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," touched the \$3,000 mark. This melodramatic opera of the civil war period appears to have taken a solid hold upon the audience of the community, being quite out of the line of regulation musical works of the lighter order. The crinolines worn by the female members of Mr. Whitney's company have been an occasional source of mirth, as, for instance, the other evening, when one of the chorus girls, while engaged in the execution of a waltz, became entangled in her hoopskirt and fell over the edge of the stage, plump into the big bass drum. She was extricated with considerable difficulty, the audience receiving the episode fairly in convulsions of laughter.

There is no indication that Mrs. Langtry will have any need to change her bill at the Garrick Theater during her brief New York engagement. She has held "Mlle. Mars" in reserve in case her own play, "The Cross-Ways," should prove ineffective, but the rush to see this last-named work—or, rather, Mrs. Langtry, herself—has been so great as to render the second production inexpedient. All feminine New York seems to be talking of the Langtry dress, which are spoken of as far and away the most gorgeous and beautiful examples of millinery art ever imported to this country from Paris. Therefore it has not been usual to "bill" New York for incoming attractions more than four or five days prior to their advent, but E. R. Reynolds, the manager of De Wolf Popper, has cast precedent aside by plastering the town from one end to the other with handsomely printed announcements of the coming of his star full three weeks ahead of that event. This action has been the occasion of awakening protests from various other managers on the ground that interest in their own announcements of current attractions is drawn away by the Hopper posters, which they hold should not have been put up until the Thursday prior to the production of "Mr. Pickwick." This occurrence, Mr. Reynolds, however, who is a stalwart and placid citizen, not easily stirred to outward show of emotion, views the situation in a dispassionate way, and his customary disposition was, as they are covered by brigades from other theaters. As he is the controlling stockholder in the Metropolitan Printing Company, which furnishes not alone the advertising matter for Mr. Hopper, but for most of the other attractions hereabout, Mr. Reynolds is inclined to the impression that he cannot present state of things as long as anybody else, since the rival forces must purchase from him the paper in which they hide his announcements of Mr. Hopper in "Mr. Pickwick."

E. S. Willard and his company on Saturday night bade farewell to New York for a period of indefinite duration. This occurrence was recorded at the Harlem Opera House to which establishment some of the largest audiences of the season had been attracted during the week. Mr. Willard will now travel through the large cities until next May, at which time he will sail for England, taking up his professional pursuits in that country for at least a year, and a half before returning to America. During his absence, however, he will be represented in this part of the world by at least one company traveling under his direction, presenting the new French play "La Chatelaine," and perhaps other works from his repertoire. This season promises to be entirely the most successful of the Willard series upon the American continent.

The eagerness to witness Julia Marlowe in "The Cavalier" nightly leads considerable numbers of New Yorkers to purchase seats in parts of the Criterion Theater which were intended by the builder of this structure for orna-

ment rather than use. These spots are the upper tiers of private boxes on either side of the auditorium, directly underneath the roof, and so situated that their occupants cannot possibly see much more than the tops of the actors' and actresses' heads as they go through the performance upon the stage beneath. The holders of these places seem well enough pleased, however, for there is a certain sense of satisfaction in participating even remotely in events patronized with conspicuous eagerness. The Criterion is filled almost to the point of positive discomfort every evening and at each of Miss Marlowe's matinees, and the competition for the purchase of tickets is a quite amazing all-day spectacle.

LEANDER RICHARDSON.
New York, Jan. 7, 1903.

Theatrical Tittle-tattle.

Grace Cameron's season in "A Norman Wedding," which appeared here earlier in the season, will shortly close as the public has not taken kindly to the piece.

Thomas Q. Seabrooke, of "The Chinese Honey-moon" Company now playing in New York, is back in harness again after a two weeks' struggle with pneumonia.

Johnny Page, the clever little dancing comedian, has fully recovered his health after a sojourn at Mount Clemens, and has joined the Ward & Vokes Company.

Charley E. (Parson) Davis, famous in the sporting world, will probably go on the stage in vaudeville, using a monologue as a vehicle.

David Warfield is giving "The Auctioneer" in San Francisco to wonderful large business. This engagement is Mr. Warfield's first in that city since he left it thirteen years ago.

A Chinese Honey-moon is breaking all records at the London Last Monday night the 506th performance was celebrated. The New York record of the piece stands at 260.

Joseph Weber and Lew Fields celebrated their 25th anniversary as partners in the music hall in New York New Year's night. Their first engagement was at a dime museum on the Bowery at \$6 per week.

It is claimed for Lole Fuller that she has played longer engagements in Paris than any other American actress now living, and that her name as a dancer is the greatest known in the French capital.

Willie Collier, who is connected with the Weber & Fields Company, on Christmas gave every member of that organization a present, from the proprietors down to the call boy and stage-door tender.

Mrs. Langtry opened her season in New York at "The Crossways." The New York critics were almost unanimous in praising Mrs. Langtry's gowns, but wrote caustically of the actress' work and the play.

Members of "The Wild Rose," "The Bird in the Cage" and "The Foxxy Grandpa" Companies were in a hotel fire last week at Holyoke, Mass., but all got out without serious injury. Several lost their personal effects, such as jewelry and other small articles.

Spence and Aborn, managers of Nellie McHenry in "Miss," are to make a production next month of a new play by Langdon McCormick, entitled "Hearths Adrift." The new play is of the melodramatic order and will be played in the popular price theaters.

Frank Bush, who was well known on the local variety stage as a Hebrew impersonator, is playing with one of the London pantomimes and has become a favorite on the other side. Mike Whallen, also well known as a monologue artist in this country, has secured contracts in London covering the next three years.

John Drew has presented his library of theatrical literature to Harvard University. The collection was gathered by the late Robert W. Lowe, of London, and is one of the most complete and satisfactory libraries of its kind ever collected. The late seventeenth, eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries are represented in this collection, which consists of over 500 volumes.

Mrs. Constance Drexel-Biddle, the well-known society woman, is reported to have signed a contract with Weeden Grossmith which assigns to her an important role in "The Night of the Party." Mrs. Drexel-Biddle had almost completed arrangements to go into vaudeville when the offer from Mr. Grossmith reached her in Philadelphia.

Richard Ganthony, the author of "A Message from Mars," and brother-in-law to Marie Dressler, recently arrived in New York with his wife, who came to see her sick sister, Miss Dressler, which are still feeble, and although she frequently asks for her mother, has not yet been told of the latter's death, which occurred while she was ill.

The strong calcium light, representing the sun, in "The Daughter of Hamlet," has been playing havoc with Blanche Walsh's eyes, and she will have to go under the care of a specialist for the next couple of weeks. Wagnhals & Kemper are endeavoring to arrange the lights so as to save Miss Walsh's eyes in the future.

William Faversham and Julie Opp were married in Greenwich, Conn., last week by Judge Charles D. Burgess of that city. Miss Opp had arrived from London last Saturday. Both Mr. Faversham and Miss Opp were recently divorced, the former from a professional, and the latter from Robert Lorraine, now playing in London.

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