

AFFAIRS OF THE STAGE

Margaret Wycherly is reported as seriously ill in New York with congestion of the lungs.

Chauncey Olcott is to appear next season in a new romantic Irish drama.

Charles W. Allen, who is Miss Viola Allen's manager, has made his mark as a producer of Shakespearean plays.

Wilton Lackaye will appear at McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, on April 3, in a new version of "Les Miserables."

Frances Starr has been but four seasons on the stage, and in that time has held leading positions in three big cities.

Edward Terry is a playwright as well as an actor. He collaborated with Louis N. Parker in writing "Love in Idleness."

Frank Keenan is to become an actor-manager. He has organized a company and obtained the Berkeley Lyceum Theatre, New York, and will give three or four plays at each performance.

Nora Shealy, the charming young woman who as the "Christmas lady" brings joy into the cabbage patch, is a student of Hebrew and can already read the Old Testament in the original.

M. Antoine has taken "King Lear" off the bill at his famous theatre in Paris because his voice could not stand the continued strain of the part. He will soon do a modernized version of "Tartuffe."

A. W. Phipps's more recent plays have all had their American productions under the management of Charles Frohman.

Mary Moore, Sir Charles Wyndham's leading lady, has appeared in all the notable productions given by him in London.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell is out of the hospital at Philadelphia and stopping for a while at the home of friends in that city.

An interesting member of Annie Russell's company is Elizabeth Johnson, daughter of Tom Johnson, mayor of Cleveland.

Ben Greet and his players are said to have done very well in California. There is warm praise for his new leading lady, Constance Crawley.

Eleanor Robson is an American actress, but she has several English actors supporting her in her company playing "Merely Mary Ann."

One of Keller's most mystifying tricks is the "Levitation of the Princess Karnac," in which a beautiful young lady is made to sleep in the air.

Miss Bibbins Lewis, only 10 years of age, daughter of Horace Lewis, has written her first play, which she calls "Dolores, or the Prince and Peasant." It is to be produced soon before an audience of her school chums.

Frank Vernon, the English producer, who is a member of Miss Viola Allen's company, is an interesting personality. He has made nine productions of the classics in London and has essayed important roles in nine revivals.

The organization presenting Ibsen's "Ghosts" under the direction of George H. Brennan company, is making its farewell tour this season. Next year the management has completed plans for a prolonged season in London.

Ethel Barrymore is an accomplished musician and pianist, and whenever there is an afternoon concert of note where she is playing she is sure to be present.

Mme. Sarah Bernhardt is to make another tour of the United States, this time under the management of Liebler & Co. The tour is scheduled for the coming fall.

Grace Filkins is to return to the stage. She has affixed her name to a contract with Fred C. Whitney for his "The School for Husbands" play, to be produced in April.

It is now said that instead of parting with the English rights of "Leah Kleschner" to any London actress or manager, Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske is thinking of bringing play and production over herself. Leah Kleschner, the character so successfully created by Mrs. Fiske, is a girl-burglar of much skill and courage in her strangely-chosen calling, which she repudiated and abandoned under the influence of love for her proposed victims. She is a heroine who would seem to have literally stolen into the hearts of New York playgoers; and the author of her being is the writer responsible for the libretto of "The Belle of New York."

Addressing the members of the O. P. Club at the Criterion, in London, the other night, on "The Public as Seen From the Stage," Miss Gertrude Kingston said a well-known French actress once observed to her, "I don't understand your English public. I go to the play every night, but your plays are

written for children, and not for grown-up people. What are your men and women made of? Have they no emotions, no passions?" The fact was that we in England did not take the stage seriously. "I do not want to be made to think; I want to be amused," she had heard from men of every calibre.

There is nothing so hopeless, in John Hare's opinion, as searching for new talent. The creative dramatic art, he says, is very rare.

Miss Ellis Jeffreys will appear during the spring in New York, with an English company, in Cosmo Gordon Lennox's adaptation "The Prince Consort." Alfred Surin has undertaken to supply her with a new play by the close of the year.

Among the plays which E. S. Willard has brought to America from England are a new version of "Tatterley," totally rewritten by the author, Tom Gallon, in which the actor will double the part of an old miser and his devoted servant—and an adaptation of Mr. Gallon's novel "Dickie Monteth."

E. S. Willard was seen in a new character in the Knickerbocker Theatre, New York, on Monday evening. All his many admirers hope that this venture will be successful enough to compensate him for his disappointment over "Lucky Durham." It is an English version, by that industrious adapter Louis N. Parker, of Alfred Capus' "La Chateleine," and under the name of "The Optimist" was tried in Philadelphia a year or two ago. Now it is called "The Righter Side." The hero is a reformed rake, who, having exhausted the pleasures of dissipation, has applied himself to the study of electricity, and made a fortune. Being a country home, he discovers an old chateau, inhabited by the deserted wife of a man who had been as great a wastrel as himself. Pitying her forlorn condition, he relieves her financial necessities, and in time falls in love with her. He would marry her at once if she were free, but her worthless husband, seeing his opportunity in a rich lover, puts insuperable obstacles in the way of a divorce. How the dramatic problem is solved finally it would not be quite fair, perhaps, to tell. Mr. Willard has great faith in his part, and M. Capus and Mr. Parker together ought to be able to provide something superior to the resounding emptiness of Wilson Barrett. He is supported by Miss Alice Lonnon, who assumes the part of leading lady, Miss Marie Linden and the principal members of his company.

Report says that Clyde Fitch's latest play, "The Woman in the Case," has made a great hit at the Herald Square Theatre, New York. This is one of the instances in which prophecy, uttering a moral certainty, has been liberally justified. The piece contains many features which always have appealed, and until cultivation is far more general than it is to-day, always will appeal, to the least intelligent and the most numerous class of theatregoers. It is a most disconcerting and humiliating fact that the exhibition of human degradation upon the stage—the mimicry of some bestial assault, the open suggestion of revolting grossness, the spectacle of unsexed women in the last stages of drunken abandonment—seems to exercise an extraordinary fascination over persons who, outside the theatre and in their private relations, are zealous in observing and enforcing the ordinary decencies of life. It is no new phenomenon. The grosser playwrights of the Restoration period understood it thoroughly and used it unscrupulously in encouraging the reaction from an excessive Puritanism. Some of our modern dramatists, if less brutally and openly coarse, are not a whit less unclean.

During the last twenty-five years they have been growing steadily bolder in their defiance of the more respectable conventionalities; and appear to be approaching the point where all the restraints of refinement will be thrown aside, once and for all, unless some check is imposed upon them. Things are said and done in the glare of the footlights which would not have been tolerated for a moment a generation ago, but which now are received almost as a matter of course, not only by the graybeards, but by young girls fresh from the schoolroom and nursery teats. Thus one may mark the progress of the demoralization that is gradually paralyzing the public sense of self-respect, of cleanliness, of decency and morality.

Persons of mature years who go frequently to theatres will probably admit, says The Queen, that while there is no need to wring one's hands and cry about the decadence of the stage, there is very often a want of refinement exhibited which takes away a good deal of the evening's enjoyment. When Sir Henry Irving was charming London with his plays at the Lyceum Theatre, anyone entering in could be certain of seeing everything done in a cultured and artistic style, which added much to the attractiveness of the performance, and this example is still followed by many actor-managers to-day; but others, again, especially those who have a liking for the so-called society play, are apt to allow strange things to happen on their boards. Why, for instance, in certain productions it is deemed necessary for the curtain to rise on a discoloring party of ladies reclining in extremely neglectful attitude, smoking cigars, and talking in language which is "pronounced," to say the least of it. Some people may declare this is realism, and being true to life; but, granting this, it is only a certain phase of

life, which can hardly be described as happy, and is certainly not typical of ordinary households. Some little while ago, a piece was produced in which the heroine (?) appeared in a costume scarcely fitted for the drawing-room or even ballroom, but it had a successful run, nevertheless, as also have a few other plays in which the plots deal with a peculiarly nasty phase of life. The realistic playwright, too, on occasion will put a good deal of slang into the mouths of his female characters, a proceeding which makes the ordinary playgoer again wonder whether such "realism" is absolutely necessary for the amusement of the paying public, while in a few instances the vigorous language of the streets has been introduced. The short runs of the great majority of pieces which in this way have offended against good manners and taste raise the doubt whether the generalization of theatregoers really care for such introductions. No one wishes the stage to be placed under a glass case, as it were, but there is a happy medium in all things, and, tho no doubt the coarseness which characterized so many entertainments in bygone times is now toned down, there is still left great room for improvement.

In Harper's Magazine it is related how the elder Wallack once played in a romantic drama in which, after taking an impassioned leave of the heroine, he leaped on a horse which stood just in the wings and dashed across the stage. Wallack objected to this nightly gallop, and it was, therefore, arranged that one of the supers, who closely resembled the actor, should make the ride. He was accordingly dressed exactly like Wallack, and sent to the theatre in the afternoon to rehearse. He carried off his part well, and the stage manager departed.

But the super was not satisfied, and complained to a young member of the company who happened to be present. "Why, see here," he said, "that thing is too dead easy. A man with a wooden leg could do it with his eyes shut. I used to be in a circus. Couldn't I stand up on this here equine and do a few stunts?"

"Certainly," exclaimed the other; "that would be all right. Go ahead." "You're the old party, wouldn't you object?" said the super, doubtfully. "Object!" returned the player. "Why he'd be tickled to death. Do it." That evening when the critical point was reached Wallack was gratified to see his counterpart standing ready beside the horse.

"Leaves good-night—good-night," cried the hero, preparing to drop over the edge of the balcony.

"Stay!" cried the heroine, clinging round his neck. "You ride perhaps to death." "Nay, sweet, say not so: I ride to honor! With thoughts of thee in my heart I can come! Good-night—good-night!"

He tore himself from her frantic embrace and dropped out of sight of the audience. "Go!" he hissed to the man. As the horse leaped forward on to the stage the fellow gave a mighty vault and alighted standing on its bare back. He danced up one foot gracefully and danced down the other, and just as he turned a somersault, landed on the horse's back, and bounded lightly to the stage.

It is recorded that the audience applauded tumultuously, but the remarks of Wallack are, unfortunately, lost. At the Princess Theatre next week will be seen a play that is claimed to be one of the greatest dramatic successes of the season. It is "Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall," the vehicle in which Bertha Cilland is exploited as a star by J. Fred Zimmerman, jr. From the moment of its production this play has been a success; and when it went into the New York Theatre last winter for a run, so great was the impression made on the theatregoers of the great cities, and the metropolitan audience, that it was returned to three different New York theatres for a week's engagement. The play is a romantic comedy, by Charles Major, and the stage version is by Paul Kester. The action of the piece takes place in the Elizabethan period, and not only "Good Queen Bess," but her unfortunate cousin, "Mary, Queen of Scots," appear in the intensely interesting scenes with which the play is said to abound. A curious feature of old English life in the days of the hard-drinking, fierce-fighting and true-loving lords of the Elizabethan age is found in the old dining-room of Haddon Hall in Derbyshire. On one of the walls of this ancient banqueting hall, whose carved panels and time-mellowed beams have been the admiration of architects and art-connoisseurs for years, there is a queer sort of contrivance—a little above the height of a man's head, whose purpose has to always be explained to visitors. It is a sort of pulley with leather running thru it, and when the master of the revels discovers that one of his guests was not drinking his full allotment of burnt sack, the delinquent was trussed up by one arm to this pulley, and the wine poured down his sleeve. Sir John Vermon, as drawn by Charles Major in his original and delightful novel, "Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall," is depicted as one of these roystering, deep-drinking noblemen. In Paul Kester's stage version of the novel in which Bertha Cilland will be seen at the Princess Theatre, the dramatist has introduced this quaint feature.

Primoze Minstrels, presenting the genuine oldtime style of entertainment, will be at the Princess the latter half of next week.

"MAID AND THE MUMMY" COMES FROM GOTHAM

Three Nights of Hilarity—Product of Richard Carle's Clever Pen at the Princess.

With component parts of a financially embarrassed actor, a deluded doctor, who fancies he has discovered the elixir of life, a would-be detective of Scotch extraction, a theatrical property man, masquerading as a genuine Egyptian mummy, a fire-eating Brazilian with a well-developed propensity for osculatory endeavor, a barkeep, a would-be tough, whose courage comes out in an instant, an exceedingly vivacious type of the actress, a charming sweet and pretty girl, the daughter of the doctor, an exceedingly eccentric spinster, the doctor's sister; a perfect type of the child of the east side streets of New York, and a very cute "Tiger," Richard Carle, the author of book and lyrics of "The Maid and the Mummy," has evolved some side-splitting situations, which Robert Hood Bowers has embellished with some very tuneful music. This combination has proved the biggest hit of the year, for from the beginning of its long run at the New York Theatre, New York, until the present time, unquestioned success has everywhere greeted "The Maid and the Mummy."

"The Maid and the Mummy" is a musical melange in the best sense of the words. Mr. Carle has been most successful in injecting numberless bright and catchy lines, laughable situations and most amusing complications, and Mr. Bowers has supplied some extremely pretty and catchy music. The entertainment had come of the best points of light and comic opera, musical and farcical comedy, bufflesque and extravaganza, and it introduces beauty, laughter and song most happily. Of the former there is not the slightest question, for on all sides it is said that there are more pretty faces in the organization than have been seen in a like company for many years. Of laughter there is plenty, for there is said to be not a single dull moment from till it falls on the last act. The lines are bright and the situations most amusing. Of song, too, there is a sufficiency, there being sixteen musical numbers, all of the bright, catchy, tinkling order, which are so popular with the theatregoers nowadays. The story which Mr. Carle tells concerns principally the substitution of a theatrical property man for an Egyptian mummy. Washington Stubbs, an actor-manager, has fallen in his own business, and is trying to sell his theatrical properties as genuine antiques. To him comes Dr. Elisha Dobbins, a scientist, who fondly fancies that he has discovered the elixir of life. The doctor wants the mummy to experiment upon; of course Stubbs hasn't one, but in the extremity he sends to Bolivar, his property man, to play the part. Of course, discovery comes, but it is not until the final curtain, and then everyone is forgiven. Incidentally there are two love stories woven in, one concerning the doctor's daughter, Flo, and another that of Washington Stubbs and a pretty actress, Tricie Evergreen, who was formerly his leading lady. The important musical numbers are "My Gasolene Automobile," "Flo," "The Saleslady," "Letters," "Sad Experiences," "The Poster Diversity," "Oh, Gee, It's Great to Be Crazy," "My Egyptian Queen," "A Congress of Nations in Ragtime," "I'm So Dizzy," "I Fell in Love with Polly" and "Peculiar Julia."

The company which is to present "The Maid and the Mummy" includes May Boley, Adele Rowland, Janet Priest, Bessie Fairbairn, Madge Vincent, Richard F. Carroll, Edward Garvie, Frank Woolley, Gilbert Gregory, Edward Groh, Jessie Caine and Earle Dewey. One of the excellent features of the very large chorus, numbering sixty-two people, mostly pretty girls, and experts say that it is seldom one sees even in stage spectacles a more fascinating array of dainty specimens of fair femininity. "The Maid and the Mummy" is presented under the direction of the Richard Carle Amusement Company and comes to the Princess Theatre the first half of this week. There will be a matinee on Wednesday.

Whipping-Posts for Wife-Beaters. President Roosevelt's suggestion, in his recent congressional message, that "some form of corporal punishment" is desirable in dealing with wife-beaters and other "offenders whose criminality takes the shape of brutality and cruelty towards the weak," has led to efforts to establish a whipping-post in the District of Columbia, and to some discussion in the press of the country at large. The Chicago Evening Post, that "no man who beats his wife is anything short of a brute and a coward, and for such the infliction of physical pain tends to put a check on his brutality."

The same paper says further: "The law that merely fines or imprisons the wife-beater, most often gives the severest punishment to the innocent victims of the man's brutality. And it seldom punishes the brute as he should be punished. From this viewpoint it is not surprising to find those usually arrayed against the administration of harsh and degrading penalties strongly favoring the whipping post for that most brutal offence, the beating of wives."

A Dimpled Chin. Not one girl in 10,000 has a dimple in her chin. Indeed, the kind of dimple seems to be more frequent in men than women. It is a remnant, whereas other dimples of the face come and go with changes of expression.

LOTTIE WILLIAMS IN "ONLY A SHOP GIRL"

Charming Little Comedienne Coming to the Majestic Theatre This Week.

The brilliant scenic comedy drama entitled "Only a Shop Girl" with that magnetic little actress, Miss Lottie Williams, and a company of thirty competent artists, will be seen this week at the Majestic Theatre with a matinee every day. The author is said to have harmoniously woven together a play of intense interest containing novelty as to plot and incident. The play abounds with thrilling situation calculated to arouse the enthusiasm of the audience, the strong climaxes being admirably worked up. There is also a strong comedy vein running thru the piece, which is interspersed in such a skillful manner as to relieve the strain caused by the more serious portions of the play. The scenes are laid in the fashionable shopping district and the East Side of New York City. Great scope is given for elaborate appointments and ingenious mechanical devices, and it is said no expense has been spared by the management in taking advantage of the same. In the production for this season, each act is set off with splendid scenic embellishments. The most striking stage settings are those representing the interior of a large department store, the Fifth-avenue shopping district and Herald Square at night, also the beautiful Hudson River by moonlight. These scenes are claimed to be among the most realistic ever seen on any stage. The story of the "Shop Girl" is unfolded in a most skillful manner and treats of designing villainy plotting against honesty and virtue; successfully for a time, but receding upon the guilty ones in the end. The company for this, its last presentation of this most effective story, owing to the fact that Miss Williams will leave the cast to appear in her magnificent new scenic production "My Tom Boy Girl," the management has carefully selected every member so that every part will be sustained in a praiseworthy manner. In support of this popular favorite are the following well known artists: Lillian Ames, Margaret Brownlee, Maude Kellett, May Woods, Nellie Bernard, Viola McDonald, Ollie Marshall, Sadie Stanley, Dollie Moore, Mable Price, Gordon Gray, Frank Richardson, A. L. Lester, Wm. J. Woods, Eugene LaRue, Arthur Kline, Burton Henderson, F. E. Page, Charles Hines, Sirap Hill, Master George Cooper and a chorus of pretty girls.

The King's Modesty. The following interesting story is told by Walsh Dawson in the week's Social Gazette. It occurred a few years ago. Mr. Dawson had been asked to call on Lord — in connection with the work of the Salvation Army, and in the midst of a thick fog had lost his way. When in the neighborhood of Buckingham Palace he ran against a gentleman and asked if he could direct him to Lord —'s house.

"Certainly," he replied, good naturedly. "I am going near the place myself. I will show you the house. I also know Lord — very well indeed." We chatted away merrily. I told him all about my work, and of the magnificent labors of all those connected with the Salvation Army. He seemed deeply interested, and when at last I reached the house of Lord —, he said to me with great earnestness: "Oh, it is dreadful to think that so much suffering exists in this city! Is it really as bad as you say, sir?" "It is, indeed," I replied.

"Well, I must say good-night," he remarked, after a slight pause. "Before I go, however, I want you to accept this little gift—this gift for the poor suffering ones. May God bless you and the workers of the Salvation Army!" He placed in my hands the "little gift"—ten bright gold sovereigns. "Sir," I said, with considerable emotion, "God will reward you for this generosity; God will bless you. But your name, sir? What name will I put down in my book?" He seemed disturbed at this question, and replied hurriedly, "No name at all—no name at all, please; simply 'Anonymous.'"

Just then the fog cleared a little, and I could see my generous friend's face distinctly. It was surely familiar to me—very familiar. Now, where and when had I seen his face before? All at once the truth flashed over me, and raising my hat, I exclaimed, "Your Royal Highness!" "No, no!" answered the gentleman, smiling; "not that, please—simply 'Anonymous.'"

Raising his hat, and bidding me a hearty "Good-night," he swiftly hurried away. "Yes," concludes Mr. Dawson, "it was His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales—now His Majesty King Edward VII."

Effects of Chloroform. Ether and chloroform, so useful in sending men to sleep, have the very opposite effect on plants, which are stimulated to the freest possible activity by these drugs. In Denmark and Germany advantage has been taken of this fact to force flowers in recous and glasshouses, and to make them bloom out of season. The results are said to be marvellous.