



THE COURIER

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"AMONG THE BREAKERS."

An Eruption of Home Talent on the Lansing Stage.

We spoke last week of a contest between the mantles of Edwin Booth and Laurence Barrett for the possession of Frank Polk. "Among the Breakers" and Frank Polk were produced at the Lansing theatre Wednesday evening; but the mantles, or one of them, and Mr. Polk did not effect a consolidation. There were too many other actors, young men who did not, like Byron, have to wait until morning to find themselves famous, but who won glory in a single bound and before 10:30 p. m.—there were two many other artists, we repeat, and the mantles were bewildered.

"Among the Breakers" was the most successful home talent entertainment ever given in this city, and we say this with memories of bright entertainments in which the elongated Mr. Higginbotham and George Foresman, always so coy, and Lieutenant Griffith and the then Miss Minnie Latta, and Miss Lemist, and other interesting and capable people participated.

There was a large and fashionable audience—and it was an able audience, able to appreciate the good things in the performance.

Under ordinary circumstances it is never wise for amateurs to attempt to put on as heavy a piece as "Among the Breakers." The best success is obtained with farces; but this play which has a decided leaning toward the melodrama, with m-m-murder and villains in it, was carried in such a manner as to give, in the language of the *Journal's* dramatic critic, "complete satisfaction to those present." Whatever of drag there might have been in it was effectually dispelled when Frank Polk once got fairly started on his mad career, and the rolling thunder and Mr. Reese's heavy lines, which were well read, were nicely balanced by Frank Burr's facile fun and Ross Curtice's markedly successful Irish comedy.

In the first act Mr. Reese as *David Murray* gave an intelligent interpretation of a role calling for considerable ability, and he improved steadily all through the play. He is to be congratulated on his acting and make-up. Ross Curtice and Miss Grace Burr opened the act with a pretty domestic scene, in which Miss Burr charmed by her grace, and Mr. Curtice elicited the warmest approval by his decidedly clever Irish sketch. Mr. Curtice invariably makes a hit; but we believe he never appeared to better advantage than as *Larry Devine*. Miss Burr's *Biddy Vane* was at all times a delightful accompaniment to the roguish *Larry*.

Mr. Hicks who early made his appearance with Sam Low as *Clarence*, his ward, might have sacrificed the beautiful for the sake of propriety, and added whiskers or something else that would have given him a more venerable appearance. Sam Low's lines were cast in pleasant places—very. He receives an inheritance in the first act, and after some fine love scenes with a very pretty girl, *Bess*, he finally, at the end end of the play, wins her hand as well as her smiles. Some young men in Mr. Low's place would have felt like whooping it up a little, but he took things very seriously, and when he said, "What, you my father!" it is not at all unlikely that strong men in the audience wept. That Mr. Low should have tried to send his father into a dark room with a tea cup for a light instead of the candle was not at all remarkable under the circumstances. Most any man, had he known, as Mr. Low knew, that everything, including

Bess, was coming his way henceforth, would have been a little flurried at first.

Frank Burr's impersonation of *Scud*, a colored servant, added to that gentleman's reputation, and distanced many a professional performance of a similar character that has been seen on the same stage. Mr. Burr has much ability, and his stage presence is exceptionally good. His specialties added much to the enjoyment of the entertainment. His song was original, and this with the musical selection given by him and Miss Burr and Mr. Curtice, were well rendered.

Mr. Polk figured in the play sometimes as *Peter Paragraph* and sometimes as *Frank Polk*. It wasn't an easy matter to tell just where the one left off and the other began. He had a pleasant time with himself from start to finish, and his remarks on the side were usually to the point. He referred with much tact and good taste to THE COURIER, and he also took occasion to give some good advice to Frank Zehring, who occupied a prominent place in the auditorium. His blood-curdling business with the long knife was a clever bit of burlesque. There was never anything on any stage like Frank's performance, and nobody who saw "Among the Breakers" will ever forget *Peter*.

A strong feature of the entertainment was the scene in the last act were *Bruce Hunter* placed his arm around *Bess*. If Mr. Hicks desired to impress upon the audience the idea that this particular process is entirely out of his line, we must say that he effectually cleared himself of any suspicion that might have been entertained on this point.

Miss Ruby Jones, who carried the role of *Mother Carey*, won much well deserved applause. She gave evidence of excellent dramatic judgment, and her reading was intelligent and forceful. *Mother Carey* was charmingly done.

Miss Grace Oakley had an exceedingly difficult part to play, and the way in which she acquitted herself is deserving of the highest credit. It requires abandon, much more than most amateurs are capable of exhibiting, to save a soubrette role from utter failure. Miss Oakley met the requirements admirably. She was entirely self-possessed and her graceful facility lent much color and spirit to the performance. It was perfectly natural for the men in the play to pay tribute to the lovely *Bess*. Her hornpipe in the last act was executed with infinite grace and dainty effectiveness.

Minnie Daze was done by Miss Rachel Brock. Miss Brock's appearance called forth many expressions of admiration. She was strikingly handsome, and she sustained her sometimes trying part very cleverly. She had a clear understanding of what was expected of her, and she was at all times an engaging personality.

"Among the Breakers" was preceded by a short program consisting of a pleasing recitation by Miss Myrtle Stevenson, entitled "The Waltz Quadrille" a selection by the University Glee club that attested the skill of this organization, and "The Marble Dream," a recitation by Miss Effie Steen, which was highly entertaining. Miss Steen's recitations are always enjoyed.

The entertainment was for the benefit of the poor of the city, and \$200 was realized.

"For a long time I suffered with stomach and liver troubles, and could find no relief until I began to use Ayer's Pills. I took them regularly for a few months, and my health was completely restored."
—D. W. Baine, New Berne, N. C.