

## THE THEATRES.

Both houses are now practically closed for the season. An occasional attraction may bob up, but it is doubtful if anything of importance will be presented at the Lansing or Funke before the latter part of August or the first of September. Mr. Zehring is now at leisure, so far as the theatre business is concerned, and is thinking about the annual trip to New York which all managers are supposed to take. Mr. Church will be home in a few days with his "Faust" company, when there will probably be a confirmation or denial of the rumors lately heard as to a change in the management of the Lansing. It is understood that Mr. Church has made some money on the Pacific coast trip with "Faust." During the summer both houses will be renovated and touched up, but no extensive changes are contemplated.

Mr. Zehring tried the experiment of summer opera, and as he contemplates the place where the profit of the week's engagement of the Oriole Opera company ought to be, he is doubtless convinced that the experiment was not a success. The failure may mean that the Lincoln theatre going public doesn't like summer opera. It may mean that it doesn't like the particular company that Mr. Zehring engaged. Then again it may mean that it doesn't care for the old operas like "Erminie," "Chimes of Normandy" and "Said Pasha." As a matter of fact the people had no just cause of complaint as to the company, when the prices charged for admission are taken into consideration. It was not bad for the price. The trouble was, I think, that opera is not adapted to the wants of people who are attracted in the summer time by popular prices. They want something easier to understand and funnier. They prefer, for instance, the Spooner company with what Mr. Spooner himself would call "a rattling good comedy." Mr. Zehring desired to find out whether the people wanted summer opera at popular prices. He found out. It is not probable that there will be any more opera in Lincoln this summer.

Last Friday, too late for use in THE COURIER of that week, I received a communication which possibly I ought to ignore altogether, inasmuch as it makes a somewhat bitter attack on the dramatic critic for one of the daily papers. Professional courtesy is something, though some of the newspaper craft in Lincoln are not given to heeding it overmuch. The letter was signed by a well known name; but the writer asked to have his name omitted in the publication of the letter. I will go him just one better and omit the whole letter. People who write letters to the newspapers, to be published anonymously, should not expect editors to stand sponsor for what they are afraid to have credited to them; they should know by this time that the newspapers have wearied of publishing such communications.

The letter in this instance referred to that subject which has been much discussed in Lincoln and in these columns within the last two or three years—dramatic criticism; and the writer after abusing dramatic critics in general, heaped a rather large amount of special disfavor on one local critic in particular. Since the Lincoln papers first essayed intelligent criticism of things theatrical, a departure that dates back only a few years, there has been a general difference of opinion between the newspaper people on the one hand and the theatre people on the other, as to just what a theatrical criticism should be, with varying side opinions from the large body of theatre goers; and at times this

difference has brought on an exchange of personalities not at all creditable to either side. It was inevitable that the independence of the local critics which is now completely achieved should be attended with some objectionable features; but I believe the managers themselves, who are, perhaps, most vitally interested, will admit that the new order of things is far preferable to the old. Surely there is more interest in things theatrical in this city now than a few years ago, when the height of critical opinion was reached in the expression:—"So-and-so played last night at the ——— to a splendid audience. So-and-so is the best actor [or actress] in his [or her] line ever seen in Lincoln." And this interest must certainly be profitable to the managers. Better an acid activity than unrelieved stupidity.

It is a fact generally admitted by actors who come to this city, sometimes in fear and trembling, that Lincoln possesses better critics than any town of anything like its size in the west. Sometimes an injustice may be done. There are some notable instances of mistaken judgment. Critics are not infallible—not even Lincoln critics. But, generally speaking, they try to be fair; and if they occasionally err it is from an excess of zeal rather than from any desire to do injury to the actor's self-love or to lessen box office receipts.

Sometimes the critics may fall into the error of judging a thirty or a fifty cent attraction in the same manner that they judge a dollar or a dollar and a half attraction. Then again a farce or a melodrama is condemned simply because it is a farce or a melodrama, irrespective of the fact that a large class of theatre goers demand and honestly enjoy farces and melodramas. Occasionally these distinctions are, for the time being, lost sight of. But on the whole the dramatic criticism is something to be proud of. Toby Rex, of the *News* and Willa Cather, of the *Journal* have done capital work, and their writing is admired and enjoyed by intelligent and discriminating people.

After the foregoing remarks the point raised by my correspondent may be discussed with propriety. He wants to know, and he is a bit excited in his query, "if it is the province of a dramatic critic to go behind the returns or the scenes, in his judgment of a play; if the play itself and the manner in which it is presented are not the only things with which the critic can properly concern himself?" He objects to the "injection of so much personality" in the criticisms. He thinks "what the actors do should be criticised, not what they are or how they look."

In a general way this correspondent has the right idea. There is a tendency in critics to over criticize, and that takes them outside of legitimate lines. Oscar Wilde is a case in point. After the Wilde disclosures critics in New York and London, with almost one accord, condemned his plays on account of the depravity of the author. Now, the depravity of the author had nothing to do with it. If Mr. Wilde's plays possessed merit before he was exposed they certainly did not lose it when he was dragged into court. What Wilde is himself has nothing to do with his plays as plays. Some people may not admire the personality of Mrs. Langtry or Mrs. James Brown Potter or Mrs. Leslie Carter or Steve Brodie or James J. Corbett. But when the society and divorce court belles appear on the stage they are no longer anything but actresses and their performances must be viewed in the same light as any other theatrical performance. And Steve

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Brodie and Corbett! On the stage they must not be applauded or condemned as bridge-jumpers or prize fighters, but must be considered and judged wholly as actors; and if they are deserving of any credit it should be given them notwithstanding their past history; if they are deserving of censure it should be bestowed regardless of the glamour which surrounds them. The dramatic critic should say whether the actor does his part properly. Whether his nose be a pug or his hair be red have nothing to do with his acting, and there is no reasonable excuse for reference to personal peculiarities unless they be such as to make the actor obviously unfit for his part. What the public is interested in knowing is how the play was acted, or what the play itself is; not the character of the actors; nor whether they have moles on the back of their necks or liver pads on their chests. So long as criticism is confined to its proper sphere and the critic is actuated by a desire to be honest and fair, criticism is dignified and valuable. When it descends to personalities and innuendo it loses its value and its place in the public's respect.

### NOTICE OF PROBATE OF WILL.

[First Publication June 1.]  
In the County Court of Lancaster county, Nebraska.  
The State of Nebraska to Frederick Rothe and Josephine C. Andrews and to any others interested in said matter.  
You are hereby notified that an instrument purporting to be the last will and testament of Carl Rothe deceased, is on file in said court, and also a petition praying for the probate of said instrument, and for the appointment of Frederick Rothe as Executor. That on the 23d day of June, 1895, at 9 o'clock A. M., said petition and the proof of the execution of said instrument will be heard, and that if you do not then appear and contest, said Court may Probate and record the same, and grant administration of the estate to Fredrick Rothe.

This notice shall be published for three weeks successively in THE COURIER prior to said hearing.

Witness my hand and official seal this 29th day of May 1895.

June 15. I. W. LANSING,  
County Judge.

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS.

First publication May 25.  
In county court within and for Lancaster county, Nebraska, May term 1895 in the matter of the estate of H. J. Krozenbrink deceased.  
To the creditors of said estate:  
You are hereby notified, that I will sit at the county court room in Lincoln in said county, on the 30th day of September 1895, and again on the 31st day of December 1895 to examine all claims against said estate, with a view to their adjustment and allowance. The time limited for the presentation of claims against said estate is six months from the 25th day of June A. D. 1895, and the time limited for the payment of debts is one year from said 25th day of June 1895.

Notice of this proceeding is ordered published four consecutive weeks in THE COURIER a weekly newspaper published

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Witness my hand and the seal of said county court, this 20th day of May 1895.

I. W. LANSING  
County Judge.

[SEAL]  
June 15

### SHERIFF SALE.

First publication June 1.  
Notice is hereby given that by virtue of an order of sale issued by the clerk of district court of the third judicial district of Nebraska within and for Lancaster county Nebraska in an action wherein Mary M. Reading is plaintiff, and James L. Silvernail et al are defendants, I will at 2 o'clock P. M. on the 2nd day of July A. D. 1895 at the east door of the court house, in the city of Lincoln, Lancaster county, Nebraska, offer for sale at public auction the following described real estate to-wit:

Lot number nine (9), in block number three (3) Summerdale Addition to the City of Lincoln, in Lancaster county Nebraska according to the recorded plot thereof.

Given under my hand this 31st day of May A. D. 1895.

June 29. Fred A. Miller,  
Sheriff.

### COUNTY COURT.

#### NOTICE TO CREDITORS.

First Publication May 25.

In the county court within and for Lancaster county, Nebraska, May term 1895, in the matter of the estate of Thomas Crawford deceased.

To the creditors of said estate:  
You are hereby notified, that I will sit at the county court room in Lincoln, in said county, on the 29 day of September 1895, and again on the 31st of December 1895, to receive and examine all claims against said estate, with a view to their adjustment and allowance. The time limited for the presentation of claims against said estate is six months from the 15th day of June A. D. 1895, and the time limited for payment of debts is one year from said 15th day of June 1895.

Notice of this proceeding is ordered published four consecutive weeks in THE COURIER, a weekly newspaper published in this state.

Witness my hand and the seal of said county court, this 17th day of May 1895.

June 15. I. W. LANSING,  
County Judge.