

WE AND OUR NEIGHBORS

We have been reading in the New York papers, since it was first staged, very favorable criticisms of Paul Potter's Trilby. Last week a Trilby company played here. Not so good a company as the New Yorkers saw, but a fairly good lot of players. Svengali and Taffy were poor, M.m.e. Vinard, Trilby, Little Billee, the Laird, Le Zou Zou and Gecko had more than the average ability of strolling players. Talent counts for nothing however in such a play. As for coarseness it is quite the coarsest thing that has appeared here for many years. Sam T. Jack's dancers are pre-advertized. The audience is prepared for the ballet and for double entendre. Du Maurier's story of three men in their studio in the Latin Quartier emphasizes the purity of their lives, the unselfishness of their friendship for each other, their love for Trilby, their industry and their love of art. Potter's play—bad cess to it, makes of the three men three 'roues utterly demoralized and demoralizing. It makes of the Reverend Mr. Bagot, a wolf in sheep's clothing, a sensual priest of the Boccaccio type, whereas Du Maurier's Mr. Bagot is only a narrow-minded, simple-hearted village clergyman with genuinely strict ideas of propriety and social position. It does not even do Svengali justice for an audience who had not read the book would get no idea whatever of Svengali's mastery of music—his only excuse for being. Nothing is made of Little Billee's fame as a great artist. The only characters who are reproduced as Du Maurier wrote them are minor ones, Le Zou Zou, Mme. Vinard, Gecko and Dodor. One of the most charming scenes—the Christmas dinner is turned into a disgusting orgy. There is no excuse for this for Du Maurier expressly states that there were no women present except Trilby, her friend Angele Boisse and Mme. Vinard. These did the cooking and waiting. In planning the Christmas dinner they all agreed on no ladies and the Laird quoted from the Scotch gillie who said: "Them Wimmen spiles the ball." The dinner in the play occurs in the second act and I have never seen anything worse on the stage and besides it was deadly dull. At the Du Maurier Christmas dinner only men sat around the board. They told jokes, admired each other's wit and genius and peace and good will sat on every face. The dramatized dinner drew a few hoarse guffaws from that part of the gallery for which it was written. The body of the house was silent.

Paul Potter in conjunction with "Bill Nye" has lately written a play called "A Stag Party." It was a dismal failure, full of coarse jests and without extraneous help it could not but fail. A book like Trilby is a success because the author is able to make of each reader a friend, a lover. I would take a long-toilsome journey to see a real Trilby and Paul Potter has used this affection to his own end. He has abused it. He has shown himself a sensualist, a traitor to the good and beautiful. How different was Shakespeare's method. He took commonplace tales and people and made them fascinating. Paul Potter takes the most fascinating, lovable woman in nineteenth century literature and degrades her. It is frequently stated that in order to be interesting a play must be Frenchy. The plays that live and continue to please have not that quality, at any rate in predominance. "The Rivals" and "The School for Scandal" are characterized by the somewhat brutal frankness of the century in which they were written, but it is not Frenchness. It is just calling a spade a spade.

When a play of any importance is put

on at the Lansing or the Funke the galleries are apt to be occupied by a discriminating audience of university students. These men have an opportunity which they do not improve. When a playwright perpetrates anything so disgraceful as the second act of Trilby compact and concerted disapproval from the gallery instead of cheers might give the silence below courage to express its own disgust. The university men are accustomed to cheer and to hiss. Their approval or disapproval is a formidable thing. Hissing should be carefully used, but there are times when actors and playwrights need it as an indication of the public taste. A good hissing counts for more than any criticism in the papers. It is administered at the moment the fault is committed and makes a deep impression. University men—students of Shakespeare, Schiller and Browning make the galleries of the theatres of Lincoln respected by companies who play here! use your privileges to rebuke as well as to encourage.

Trilby is playing to large audiences in London and they say Du Maurier is making money. Well, if it were not for that the author might take the playwright by the nose and tweak it as Taffy did Svengali's.

The Nebraska Press association will meet in Lincoln on the 30th and 31st of this month. It will discuss the law of libel, how to get and keep advertising and incidentally will enjoy a banquet which the Lincoln hotel has generously agreed to give. The officers of the association have decided to organize a woman's auxiliary. There are about twenty-five newspaper women in the state and the men wish to include them in the state association. The following program by the Nebraska Press association, Woman's Auxiliary, Lincoln hotel, 10 a. m., Friday, January 31, 1896.

PROGRAM.

- Address of Welcome Press Association.....Miss Sarah B. Harris
- The Newspaper Woman.....Mrs. Peattie
- How to Make a Newspaper Interesting.....Miss Cather
- A Resurrection.....Mrs. Bryan
- Welcome by the City Federation.....Mrs. H. H. Wilson

All the ladies of Lincoln will be welcome at the reception held in the parlors of the Lincoln. It is hoped that if the time conflicts with the meetings of any club, the members of the club will be good enough to postpone their meeting. It may be convenient at some time for the club women of the eastern part of the state to have a friendly means of communication with the other parts of the state. There is no more diplomatic and at the same time pleasant way than by extending the glad hand to these members of the Woman's Auxiliary.

The committee on programs of the woman's city federation have decided to ask Mr. Bixby to read them a poem at their next meeting, which will be held in the art gallery at the state university. Mr. Bixby is said to be timid and shrinking, though his poetry does not indicate such drawbacks. If he really possesses a fearsome nature how the women will gloat over his sufferings. Nero and burning Rome! Turks and Armenians! how they will enjoy it.

Inaccuracy seems to be a necessary accompaniment of a daily paper. Still the Journal ought to be a little more careful about getting up its Sunday paper. Here's Miss Cather in last Sunday's edition talking about "Hall Caine's last book"—"The Bondman," which I read seven years ago. "The Bondman" was

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published in America in the first months of 1889. How many years after it was first published in England I do not know. Later on the article mentions 'elaborately trimmed toaks.' What is a toak? From the context I suppose it is something to wear, but what?

There is no arrogance more insufferable and deep-seated than that shown by a professional humorist. Bill Nye has certainly written and said funny things, but these later years he digs a barren soil. The soil was thin and poor when he began to cultivate it. It has grown poorer and poorer until its fertility is entirely destroyed. Well, alcohol will kill anything, let alone Bill Nye's humour. Some time ago he at-

tempted a lecture while in a state of intoxication. The next morning when he went to the depot some of his audience were there waiting for him and pelted him with eggs. Since then they say he is sober at his lectures.

The Dramatic Mirror publishes each week news from the towns and cities of the country large enough for theatrical companies of any consequence to visit. Under the head Nebraska appears Lincoln with occasionally some other towns of the state. On another page appears the name Omaha. Evidently the metropolis "does not wish to be considered nor yet to consider herself" as belonging dramatically to Nebraska.