

THEATRICAL NOTES

The "Town Topics" company played at the Lansing on Friday and Saturday to audiences which rewarded their efforts by frequent laughter. The songs and the jokes were a little worn but the audience was good natured enough to be amused by them, and as the papers say, "a pleasant time was had."

The Payton Comedy company has played to good houses the past week at the Funke. The Octoroon part of Zoe which Carrie Louis, the leading lady, played on Wednesday evening, was evidently not suited to her character. She disappointed the uncritical, easily satisfied audience to which she played. The second lady, Miss Lillian Sutton, is graceful and has very pleasing and coquettish moments when it is a pleasure to be a part of the audience.

Norbert King does some artistic work, so does the young man who took the part of Weene Paul, though I could not find his name on the program. Their work is refreshing as a little dash of original effort in a gallery of chromos. The company as a whole do not work well together. Each member appears to have a specialty which he works whenever he gets the stage and each one gets it in turn. In consequence the picture is without blending or composition. For instance, the slave, Pete, drowned the voice of the auctioneer, and sassed the white men who were present in an impossible way. He would have been knocked down and stayed down if he had attempted such a course in slave times. An ability to do a darkey part well spoils the whole in this case, but there were others. "The Octoroon" is a poorly written play, full of impossible mock heroic dialogue. We do these things better now. The Payton company can find modern plays with a little of the extract of realism in them, and still do their turns.

Eddie Foy played at the Lansing on Tuesday evening. His company was a fairly good one. They have got all the talent there is away from Eddie, whose efforts to amuse are hopeless. His acting—I beg the profession's pardon for calling Eddie's faces, speeches and skipping, acting—is perfunctory. It makes me think of the tired gents who do their turns every other hour all day long in the vaudeville. He has all the freshness of wax fruit. However there was a sprightly interested young woman, Miss Mary Marble, whose snap, bubble and enjoyment of her act accomplished much for the show. She can dance and she can sing with a pretty little appealing note and withal liquid that went to the heart so long as it was new and unexpected. But let the next soubrette try it and she will strike flint. The dancing was good. The play is a farce comedy which is the same as no play at all. Of course the nasty old red-nosed tramp was on hand. He is in every farce comedy company on the road and he is an unmitigated, nauseating nuisance. He is an exaggerated picture of the shuddering figure that vice, dirt and laziness will reduce a man to. There is no humor in the make up to an audience not brutal enough to be amused by a bull fight. He is thoroughly bad and disgusting. He is more demoralizing than living pictures too, because he tries to make the most heart-breaking, hopeless sight in the world, funny. He deserves Anthony Comstock's company and pursuit.

Can you picture to yourself a rush-

ing, mounting wave? Its crest is white with foam. Every moment it gathers force. Its coloring is more vivid, more striking at each onward leap. At last it rises to the utmost height. There is a sudden crash, a blinding mass of falling water, a deafening roar. The wave has fallen. The echoes thunder out its requiem. Can you picture this? Yes? Then you have an idea of the force of "The American Girl." It is the strongest comedy drama that has been seen on the local stage. Strong situations pile up one after the other, gathering strength as the scenes advance. One is prepared by the crescendo for a climax, but not for such a one as comes, blinding like a flash of lightning by its intensity, answering back with thunder in the shape of tumultuous applause.

"The American Girl" was seen for the first time in Dallas last night. It scored a brilliant triumph. Its reception last night was nothing short of a triumph. The audience was not large, but what was missing in number was made up in genuine applause. "The American Girl" is a comedy drama in four acts by H. Gratton Donnelly. The story of the drama has already been published in full by the News. It is a good one. Here and there, as the play progresses, one seems to catch a familiar scrap of the theme, but as the thought flashes through the mind a new turn is taken. A new and startling climax overwhelms one. Familiarity vanishes. In its place comes a refreshing feeling of pleasure, of admiration. Mr. Donnelly must certainly be congratulated. He has handled his subject in a masterly manner. He has given us something that is not theatrical merely, but natural. They are exquisite. Each has its turn. Infectious humor works its way through dainty pathos with a subtle witchery that is entrancing. Passion takes the place that poetry for a moment held. Love holds sway over all. It is a love that knows no end. It is a woman's love for a man, and that grander affection of husband and wife and brother and sister.

But one cannot attempt to review "The American Girl" in an hour. At first glance one drinks in its beauty. "The American Girl" will live. It is a brilliant, masterly play. Wholesome, a sermon, if you will, but scintillating with wit, captivating with a love story, supreme in its naturalness. The moral of the play is worthy of hearty commendation. That form of sin which subdues the mind, and the pity which melts the heart, contribute to elevating the moral and spiritual tone of mankind. They exert a most beneficial influence by making men and women more humane. These elements are embodied in the drama.

The cast last night was thoroughly in keeping with the play. There was not a weak point to be found in the whole performance.

Bob Graham, an old favorite here, while hardly playing what could be termed technically the lead, stands out from the other characters with a clearness that can, however, be only attributed to the artistic manner in which it was handled. Mr. Graham displayed his breadth of talent by giving the character the most exquisite shading that one could conceive. His voice is a delightful one. His bearing manly. His work throughout was brilliant beyond the fondest expectations.

Miss Anita Hendrie was superb as Jasmine. Her acting was so thoroughly realistic that the audience frequently expressed its hearty approval. She is an exceptionally attractive and capable actress. Her histrionic efforts would do credit to any star. She is graceful in movement and gesture, and realizes evidently the value of repose as well as expression.

Little Violet Moore and Little Pecky Kaufman are deserving of much praise for their characterizations.

The remainder of the cast was in every respect first class. The cast:

Ross Volter, an American hustler, R. E. (Bob) Graham; Sampson Craft, a very confidential agent, J. Irving Southard; Philip Devon, an artist, Frank X. Hope; Sir John Balfour, an English gentleman, John Fenton;

James, an English servant, John Wilard; Snapper, a protective society officer. W. H. Cook; Jasmine, the American girl, Anita Hendrie; Swister, afterwards Saratoga, Jeanette Lewis; Lady Georgiana Derwent, a diplomatic mother, Emma Salisbury Southard; the Hon. Laura Derwent, of the English nobility, Abbe Johnson; Catherine Carew, Jasmine's mother, Helen Roberts;

Roy Devon, Prince Roy, Little Violet Moore; Virginia Devon, the little lady, Little Pecky Kaufman.

"The American Girl" will be given this afternoon at matinee and again tonight. The News takes pleasure in commending the attraction in point of company and play as one of unusual merit. The Funke, Wednesday, December 16.

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