

One Year With THE COURIER
For Two Dollars

McClure's
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Magazine

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THE THEATRE

"The Prisoner of Zenda" played to a crowded house on New Year's evening and to very good business in the afternoon at the Oliver. Howard Gould, not in the title role for the prisoner of Zenda appears only a few moments at the beginning and the end of the play is a satisfactory embodiment of the hero of Anthony Hope's novel. He reads the lines in his deep, clear voice with an enunciation worthy of Edwin Booth—at times. He is a well set up young fellow and he acts the good, brave, tender part, that Edward Rose wrote, convincingly. Fanchon Campbell as Flavia is wooden and apathetic. She has a part warmed to a glow by the young Englishmen, telling lines, pretty gowns and she has a pretty enough figure and features. In spite of it all her imagination is not vital enough to make her feel the part and Sunlocks has to drag a dead weight, has to warm himself with a fire that has never been lighted, but he does it. Next to Howard Gould who has youth and beauty but not more talent, Colonel Sapt, the Bismarckian supporter of the real king carries off the honors. His rugged masculinity and fidelity are interpreted by R. F. McClannan with unquestioned ability. Duncan Harris and Charles Clarke, as the English ambassador and the mayor of Strelsau are good actors of subordinate parts. The women in the cast strike the same note of disappointment that causes regret in nearly every travelling company. Almost any one of the undistinguished girls in Lincoln society knows how to modulate her voice, rise and sit down, walk and wear her gowns with some feminine grace and charm. But the ladies who play to Lincoln, croak through their parts, wear gowns with the elegance of a Bowery belle and rarely fascinate either the masculine or feminine heart. Fanchon Campbell was least exasperating in the last dungeon scene but even there she failed to utilize the splendid opportunities of her lines. She pronounced her lover's name as though it had but one syllable and that was the last one—dolph. The long cooing of the first she ignored at all times. How different the real Flavia caressed that first syllable. Homological students say that just as many of one sex is born in the course of ten years as of another; and according to the law of correspondences there should be just as many witty and handsome females as males. There may be of course, but they either do not get or to the stage, or the hard life destroys feminine charms as by fire.

Si Plunkard the hero Si, and a capable support played one of those same melodramas at the Funke Friday and Saturday evenings to full houses. It is to be deeply regretted that the average melodrama contains but three distinct features, a mortgaged home, a pretty daughter and a moneyed villain who is in love with the daughter. While the play is possible and plausible, it is very much of a bore. There was not enough in the play to allow full display of ability on the part of any one. Bertie Conway as Dora Page, quite captivated the audience by her singing, as she displayed much ability as a singer and also proved that she had not misused her vocation as an actress.

The three stars, Lillian Russell, Della Fox and Jefferson de Angelis played to standing room only, at the Oliver last Tuesday night. Miss Cather's criticism

of their performance in Pittsburg, is so just that it is printed below.

"Miss Russell, Della Fox and Jefferson de Angelis are all down at the Alvin playing—I won't say singing—"The Wedding Day" to packed houses. I cannot say that Miss Russell is altogether as lovely as of yore. There is a little drawn expression about her mouth now and then that tells that the years have not passed her by altogether. And yet what a mouth it is! Nature did her best on that woman—and played one of her sorriest jokes. It is as though the relentless old hag was just trying what could be done with a perfect body minus a soul. For Miss Russell not only lacks the power to portray emotion of any kind; she has no sense of humor, she is utterly without enthusiasm, indifferent alike to her part and her audience, even to her own charms. She is a plastic figure; as inanimate, as pretty, as much of a travesty upon the highest beauty as one of Canova's Venuses. All these stories about her improvement in acting and singing are fairy tales. Still those meaningless, stained-glass attitudes, still that smile as cold as winter moonlight, never broadening into "sunlight and salvation." Her voice is just as fickle as ever—or as Lillian herself. It registers just about six tones and you can never count on those.

And O the costumes she wears! Can anyone tell me why this matron insists upon disporting herself in bodices and abbreviated skirts as if she were in truth the "airy, fairy Lillian" who graced the boards of the Casino many a year ago? Why, those costumes would be trying to the physique of a lead pencil! They painfully accentuate her too evident embonpoint, and quite destroy that queenly grace which is the chiefest of her charms. Yet for two long acts her matronly person slipped and coquetted about the stage in this ingenu attire, a silly, a pitiful figure. To say that the part demands such costumes does not excuse them. It is one thing to consider the demands of a part, and another to offer yourself a living sacrifice to them. Since comic operas are not supposed to be rigidly realistic, I fail to see the reason for such immolation. Only in the last act did this beauty deign to dawn upon us costumed in that regal style which alone becomes her, and then—well, she was as near the apotheosis of blonde loveliness as you will find upon this imperfect planet. Good heavens! if that woman had a soul, just a little two for-a-cent soul, she might move the stars out of their appointed courses. But she has not. No thoughts beyond her dresses and her dinner will vex her, and in those tranquil eyes no tempest will ever dawn. Perhaps it is just as well. When women have keen minds behind a lovely face they tangle up the history of a nation.

Of course Jeff de Angelis is the strong arm of the company, the man who "makes the wheel go round." If it were not for him that blonde opera would never get any where at all. I will never be quite content to go under the grass until I have seen him play Sir Toby Belch in "Twelfth Night."

As for Della Fox, she has never been in such good trim since she left De Wolfe Hopper. When I saw her last in "Fleur-de-Lys" I thought that the brilliant part of her future was all behind her. But she never did better work than she is doing now. Monday night it almost seemed that the "tender grace of a day that is dead" had come back to her. She was so conspicuously unlike anyone else. She was not for a

FUNKE OPERA HOUSE
F. C. ZEHRUNG, Mgr.
Corner O and Twelfth streets

ONE SOLID WEEK, COMMENCING WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13

Return of the Favorites,
SPOONER DRAMATIC COMPANY

Supporting
Miss Allie Spooner and F. E. Spooner
In a Repertoire of New Plays.

Monday night two ladies or one lady and gentleman admitted on one 30c ticket if bought before 7 p. m. Seats on sale Saturday 10 a. m.

10c 20c 30c

moment broad or loud, and she never glanced across the footlights. She had all those timid, shrinking, captivating little mannerisms that are all her own, and that little upward look that is like nothing so much as one of Raphael's star-gazing cherubs. You remember that peculiarly innocent little smile, an infantine sort of smile? I never saw it come and go so bewitchingly. And they tell me that at four o'clock in the morning, when the son of the ex-minister to France and the hotel porter carried her up stairs after a supper that ended in intoxication and unconsciousness, though she was ghastly white, that smile was still on her lips, tender, infantine, like that of a sleeping child.

"Alas what are all these destinies thus driven pell-mell? Whither go they,? Why are they so?"

Tuesday evening Miss Fox's part was sung by her understudy. The manager announced that she was "indisposed" and Miss Russell and De Angelis apologized to the audience.

There is one woman of intelligence and earnestness and talent in that company. Lucille Saunders. She has a contralto voice of considerable range and power, and after the uncertain solids served up with a frappe champagne smile by a certain blonde divinity, a good, reliable vocal organ gave you a sense of security and relief. After enduring the shallowness of those two dazzling daughters of joy for an hour, it was like a breath of fresh air when this real woman with a real voice stepped on the stage and sang. Sang a love song, but O, so different from their love songs! I do not know Miss Saunders' professional history, but I know that life means more to her than jewels and cocktails. I don't think she has always sung in comic opera. Strange how a serious purpose, an aspiration, even a fleeting one, leaves its consecration on a face. As Stevenson said: Endymion may marry Andry and settle down and tend pigs all his life, but he will always be a better man for having once loved the moon.

Secret service played to very good business at the Oliver on Wednesday night. The play is not lacking in interest from beginning to end. It is common enough for the sophisticated to go home after a play like Secret Service, when the lights are down, the orchestra silent and the heart is out and say that after all the play lacked "a great passion" and that the heart that has been beating in quick sympathy with the hero was "worked."

But if, during the progress of the play this suspicion never occurred to the critical ones, it is unfair both to his own susceptibility and to the author to revoke the reliable response of the emotions when played upon by the dramatist.

The company that was here on Wednesday night is Frohman's second company and "Secret Service" without Gillette is plum pudding without any sauce. Mr. Byron Doug's is evidently a young man of parts and if it had not been for missing Gillette so much I could have loved him more. Miss Margaret Mayo, the little neighbor girl from across the street, looked like Rosina Vokes. She was petite and she piped up quick with the birdlike notes that were so fascinating in Rosina. That little Mayo girl knows the power of pure inconsequent femininity. I do not believe there was a person in the audience excepting "Toby Rex," who has set his face against broad and butter school girls, that was not sorry when yellow hair and blue eyes stopped talking and hopped off the stage. She has the unstudied naturalness that is connected with the Mayo name. Though she may not be kin to him, Frank Mayo was the logical father of just such a dewy rose of a girl. I take everything back about the ladies in the traveling companies not understanding the art of wearing good gowns when they had them. Miss Mayo only had one, and that was not her's but her grandmother's; but it fitted her and became her, and she wore it unconsciously. Miss Ingham, the leading lady, was a trifle cold and she had an unpleasant habit of aiming her forefinger at the person with whom she conversed, even intimating her white-haired mother in this way. But for the rest she was better than the average. Miss Anne Wood, the mammy, was very clever. This type is increasing in frequency on the stage but it is so delightful that satiety is still a long way off.

The "Pearl of Savoy" was the bill presented by the Spooner Dramatic company at the Crawford Grand last night, in spite of the bad weather a large audience was present and one that evidently felt itself well repaid. The play was received with many signs of appreciation. Miss Allie Spooner proved a most picturesque and magnetic Marie and was most heartily applauded.—The Standard, Leavenworth, Kas.

The supporting company is far above the average. The Spooners open at the Funke next Monday night. "The Pearl of Savoy" is the bill. Prices 10, 20 and thirty cents. Two ladies admitted on one 30-cent paid ticket if bought before 7 o'clock.