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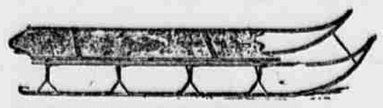

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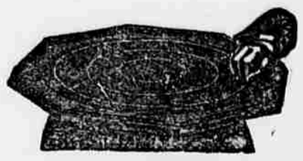

THE 99 CENT STORE

AMUSEMENTS.

The attractions held out by the theaters last week, albeit not voluminous in quantity, were yet of a higher artistic quality than those of any similar period in a long time. The Nordica concert at Boyd's, which furnished the solitary bright spot in a week of darkness, or worse, at that house, was one of those pleasurable events which come but rarely in this part of the world, but which invariably afford delight to the real music-lovers, and which also unquestionably give satisfaction to the more numerous others who can better judge of the prima donna's dresses than of her singing.

At the Creighton, that pretty play, "The Hoosier Doctor," was thoroughly enjoyed by audiences which increased in size toward the close of the engagement, when the merit of the presentation began to be known by the slowly percolating agency of oral testimony. The newspapers spoke well of it from the first. It is a gratification to reflect upon what is freely acknowledged by the better class of theater-goers—that whatever the attitude of the Omaha papers toward the theaters has been in the past, it is possible at present for their readers to get a reasonably just estimate of the value of any given performance, and to make up their minds with some degree of accuracy as to what it will be worth their while to patronize. That the public did not thoroughly avail itself, however, of this source of information regarding "The Hoosier Doctor" was evident from the meager attendance upon the earlier performances. And the cry of "Nothing to see" still goes up, chiefly out of the mouths of those very people who would have been best pleased with this particular play.

There are many weak points in "The Hoosier Doctor" which might to advantage, and doubtless will be, strengthened. The white cap episode in the last act might better be suggested than actually depicted; and if it is to be shown at all the reformed drunkard, Fred, is physically big enough to dispense with the gun in repelling the invasion. Worse than all this, however, because it is an offense against good taste, is a bit of the dialogue between dainty little Martha and her importunate lover. References to underclothing and to the absence of all raiment are out of place amid such surroundings and coming from such a source. To be sure, the lines get a laugh, and so do some of Mr. Bell's about the desirability of every man having "his own private Robinson;" but these clever and refined actors will do well to consider who it is who laughs.

Aside, however, from a few minor discords of this kind, "The Hoosier Doctor," as presented by Mr. and Mrs. Bell and their admirable company, furnished one of the most enjoyable entertainments of the season. It may or may not keep the road another year, according to the success or failure of the new piece, "In Illinoy," which is already in preparation. But the Bells may be certain of a cordial reception when they come again, and there are hundreds of play-goers here in Omaha who, for one reason or another, missed "The Hoosier Doctor," who could doubtless be induced with little effort to go and see it on a return engagement.

The question of down-town amusements for next summer, during the period of the exposition, is already coming up for discussion, and some interesting developments may be expected before it is finally decided. As heretofore announced by The Bee, the Creighton theater will probably be occupied at that time by its own stock company, or else by an elaborate spectacular production, which, it is hoped, may bear the same relation to the Transmississippi Exposition as "America" did to the World's fair. This arrangement leaves Boyd's as yet improvided for and no summer program has so far been outlined for that house. Judging from Chicago's experience in the summer of 1893, it would seem that a series of high class theatrical performances in Omaha during the life of the exposition might be made a source of profit to managers and of pleasure to resident and visiting theater goers. Sol Smith Russell, for example, could probably play a remunerative two weeks' engagement. So could E. H. Sothern, or E. S. Willard; and so could several of the very popular organizations which present entertainment of a lighter class. Some of the old romantic melodramas worthily presented would doubtless do well, as "Monte Cristo," for instance, with O'Neill. Young Paul Gilmore, who is rapidly coming to the front as a romantic actor, is negotiating for the plays and accessories of the late Alexander Salvini, with a view to starring in the roles which the lamented Italian helped to make famous. A fortnight of this sort of thing, "The Three Guardsmen," Don Caesar de Bazan," "Zamar" and the like—would be worth considering. It is not likely that any entertainment of a legitimately theatrical nature will be provided at the exposition grounds. If this is the case the matter will be left entirely in the hands of the local managers, who will doubtless handle it in a way to give general satisfaction.

The anti-trust war has proceeded steadily, if not brilliantly, the past week. Nothing startling has happened, but forces have been quietly gathering which will soon make themselves manifest in an overwhelming assault upon the syndicate. An incident of the week has been the publication by the New York World of a characteristic letter from Joseph Jefferson, in which that veteran announces his present intention of remaining neutral in the fight, having, like Colonel Ingersoll, "friends in both places." This prudent conclusion points to the fact that although Mr. Jefferson's sight may be a trifle dim from age, he still retains a sufficiently piercing eye to the main chance, and those who are aware of his lifelong frugality will not wonder at a fresh manifestation of it. Several sons of the dear old gentleman are financially interested in various theatrical enterprises, and the prospect of a house divided against itself is naturally abhorrent to him. Who shall say, therefore, that paternal solicitude is not among the most holy of sentiments and does not and should not outweigh all paltry considerations of devotion to mere art for art's sake?

In response to a general demand for a first-class vaudeville entertainment, Managers Paxton and Burgess have decided to make their Christmas attraction at the Creighton of that character. With the powerful assistance of Colonel Hopkins of Chicago, a special company of clever people has been brought together for a short Omaha engagement, and will play four performances at the Creighton theater on Saturday and Sunday next. It is seldom that so brilliant an array of talent is even permanently associated, and that so many attractive features should be secured for a two days' season is a tribute to the energy and resources of the management. The list of performers includes Mary Norman, a prime favorite in Chicago and the east, Liberati, the celebrated cornetist, Fannie Bloodgood, the well known soubrette, Fred Cooper and Georgia Woodthorpe, assisted by Little Emily, presenting "Editha's Burglar," an excellent troupe of Japanese balancers, a clever clown juggler and Keating and Goodwin, blackface comedians.

Coming Events.

Hoyt's "A Bunch of Keys" will be seen at the Creighton this afternoon and evening, beginning a four-night engagement. Ada Bothner, the star of the company, is well known as a popular soubrette. Manager Bothner has surrounded her with what he describes as one of the strongest companies of singers and comedians ever seen together.

"At Piney Ridge," David Higgins' new southern play, which will receive its first presentation in this city at the Creighton Monday, December 27, comes with a long line of favorable comment. So lifelike and natural is the play, its story and the manner of telling it, that the play has been named the "Shore Acres" of the south.

Rice's "1492," the musical extravaganza which ran for two years in New York to unprecedented receipts, is to be presented at Boyd's on Wednesday and Thursday of this week, with all its original magnificence of scenery, costumes and accessories. The piece is a satire on the Columbus episode of 1492, and permits of a lavish stage embellishment. Of the seventy people employed in its representation, several are possessed of an almost national reputation. In the list of names there will be found Stuart, known as the "Male Patti," who will be seen in his wonderful impersonation of Queen Isabella; Zelma Rawlston, the burlesque actress and vocalist; Thomas Meade, a boy tenor; the Herald Square quartet; Frank Gardiner, Marie Conchita, Connie Thompson, Arthur R. Seaton, George D. Cunningham, H. J. Turner, Thomas H. Ince, George Ovey and others. The chorus, which includes nearly forty young women, has been specially selected.

Merely Players.

Fanny Davenport is to revive "Cleopatra" next month.

The Frawley company is having the best of success in Honolulu.

Joseph Jefferson will play eight weeks in New York next season.

James T. Powers, the comedian, has the part of Wun Hi in "The Geisha."

The Bostonians will produce "Rip Van Winkle" in San Francisco next April.

Odell Williams is appearing in vaudeville in a sketch called "The Judge's Wooing."

Mme. Herrmann denies the smuggling story which was recently published about her.

Macklyn Arbuckle has a prominent part with Willie Collier in "The Man from Mexico."

Georgia Busby has announced her matrimonial engagement to Walter Sandt, a New York broker.

Dispatches from Paris would seem to indicate that Sarah Bernhardt's new play is "hot stuff."

Margaret Dale of Henry Miller's company is said to be the youngest leading woman on the stage.

The Hoey benefit in New York last week will bring in about $4,500 to "Old Hoss" widow and mother.

Colonel Ingersoll is touring the east, telling those who are interested in the matter "Why I Am an Agnostic."

The Rossow midgets, who were seen here last season, are at the head of their own specialty company this year.

John Drew is rehearsing a new play called "One Summer's Day." May Buckley and Kate Meek will be in the cast.

Sousa's newest composition is called "The Lady of the White House," and is dedicated by permission to Mrs. McKinley.

Olga Nethersole is considering a revival of Kipling's "The Light that Failed," in which she will appear as Bessie.

The "Hoosier Doctor" company, after its engagement here had the agreeable prospect of three weeks of one-night stands.

The theatrical business is booming in southern cities since the cool weather set in and the yellow fever scare subsided.

The alimony of $250 a month which A. M. Palmer paid his divorced wife for years was recently reduced by the court to $100.

Gladys Wallis won her suit for $110, the amount of one week's salary, against T. Daniel Frawley, who made no defense.

"Biff" Hall has recently added to his famous soubrette album the name of Bella Akin, whom he considers to lack ginger.

The trial of E. J. Ratcliffe, the erstwhile idol of the matinee girl, for wife beating, was a drawing card in New York last week.

Smyth and Rice are said to have made $75,000 up to the present time out of Du Souchet's farce, "My Friend from India."

Roland Reed has gone back contentedly and profitably to "The Wrong Mr. Wright," his later venture having proved less remunerative.

The New York Herald welcomes Chinese plays and especially Chinese incidental music, which is calculated to drown out the social chatterer.

The Barnum & Bailey show has arrived in England, and it is predicted that the opening, which occurs this week, will be a tremendous occasion.

A young actress named Alice Reade, who had understudied Amelia Bingham in "The White Heather," was called at short notice to play the leading role, made a pronounced hit and fainted at the close of the performance from nervousness and excitement.

De Koven and Smith's new comic opera, "The Highwayman," was successfully produced last Monday night at the Broadway theater, New York.

The new Overland theater at Nebraska City was opened last night with "Secret Service" to an audience which had paid over $4,000 for seats.

Lettice Fairfax, Augustin Daly's latest English find, was courteously but not warmly received the other night by a first-night audience at Daly's theater.

Sol Smith Russell and his family will spend the holidays in Washington, as guests of Manager Berger. Mr. Russell will resume his tour in St. Louis.

The former Baroness Blanc is now known to the vaudevile stage as Elizabeth Lawrence, the courts having enjoined her use of her former name and title.

A novel and doubtless popular vaudeville "turn" is that of Rawson and June, who are exhibiting the possibilities of the Australian boomerang in New York.

Margaret Mather's ingenious press agent is exploiting the fact that his star indignantly refused to buy a Chinese girl slave who was offered to her in Boston.

Signs point to a revival this year of the annual Christmas spectacle, formerly so popular in Philadelphia. A big production of "Sinbad" is promised for the holidays.

E. E. Rice, the veteran manager of extravaganza, sets the standard weight for actresses of burlesque at 140 pounds, for farce at 130 and for legitimate comedy at 110.

MUSIC.

On December 17, a year ago, Mme. Nordica was to have sung in concert in this city in conjunction with the Omaha Musical society, but owing to business complications on the part of her managers, the tour which was to have included Omaha, was abandoned.

On December 17, two days ago, a concert was given in Boyd's theater which might be called the anniversary of the great disappointment which momentarily shrouded in gloom the prospects of a young and energetic musical organization, left a number of profitless bills to be paid and so disturbed public confidence in the promises and contracts of artists and managers, that ever since it has been impossible to secure guarantors in this city for any musical project. The celebration of the broken contract which occurred Friday evening was one of the most glorious successes that has ever been achieved in the musical history of Omaha. The great artist whose nonappearance a year ago engendered a large amount of bitter disappointment, was never before in better voice or spirits and never sang with more thrilling effect. There is no reason to believe that it was through any actual fault of her own that she did not appear in concert according to contract a year ago. Indeed, the presumption must be that it was a hardship to her to give up the proposed tour, as by doing so she was obliged to forfeit whatever remuneration would have been hers had it been successfully undertaken. No great artist can afford to travel about the country giving performances and trust to luck for her salary. It is a safe presumption that the manager who cannot fulfil the promises of an agreement will not be able to carry the enterprise through to a satisfactory conclusion.

It is impossible to express in words the elements which unite in the formation of a great artist. No analysis of the interpretation of an aria, no dissertation on the anatomy and physiology of the throat as involved in tone production, no philosophical treatise on magnetism, hypnotism or any other ism will reveal or explain the how and why of those effects which thrill the listener. That there is a something which the great artist does that the small one misses and fails to do every one who has had the opportunity to hear them both has realized. The small artist very often seems to be doing much more than the great one. His interpretation of a selection bristles with points, each one of which sticks up obtrusive and independent of every other. You see not only what he does but are constantly obliged to notice the manner in which he is doing it. The great artist seldom reveals the method employed, but instead impresses you powerfully with the result. The one interprets the aria piecemeal, the other comprehends and expresses it as a unit. Tone-color is one of the most powerful means of a vocal expression, and there is no great artist who is not skillful in the use of it. The writer once heard a play in which all one character had to do was to say the word "Oh." With this single syllable he was obliged to express all orders and degrees of feeling and so well did he do it that oftentimes words would have failed where the simple inflection succeeded. So it is that the great singer—the inflection of a word, the progress of a single tone and its evolution in power, intensity and quality will express more than the whole song as interpreted by mediocrity.

The educational value, to those studying singing, of hearing a great artist can hardly be measured. It has been a source of sorrowful surprise to the writer to notice how many young people in this city studying singing failed to avail themselves of the opportunity of hearing Madame Nordica Friday evening. A half dozen lessons cannot begin to make up to them the advantage which they have allowed to pass by unimproved. There are perhaps in this city 100 young women trying to learn to trill, and many of them have never heard a real trill. They do not know what it sounds like and they are as one groping in the dark, trying to reach something indistinct whose whereabouts is unknown. Those who heard Madame Nordica's trill have indelibly impressed upon their memories a model by which they can gauge their own efforts and toward which they can ever labor to progress. Even after memory shall have become dimmed by time there will yet remain that feeling which the great artist produced. Besides the display of perfect technic there is to be observed in her singing an eternal fitness of things which is the consummation of musical art. There is proportion between the different members of a composition which is definitely conceived and executed. One phrase does not stand out needlessly conspicuous from all the rest, just as a matter of accident. There is a reason for everything; there is a natural relationship between all the parts. There is a definite object toward which the whole progresses; there is a steadfast determination which carries along, not only the soul of the music itself, but the souls of those who listen. These things no student of music who ever expects to have any understanding of the art as an art can afford to miss.

The first number which Mme. Nordica sang was the aria from the "Queen of Sheba," by Gounod, which has already been referred to in the columns of The Bee. The recitative with which it begins was simply but earnestly declaimed and made the most fitting introduction to the broad legato melody, almost religious in character, which followed. The intensity of the dramatic climaxes, several of which occurred toward the end, was remarkable. Mme. Nordica was never in better voice than Friday night and her vocal organ seemed to respond instantly to every demand made upon it, no matter of what nature. The low A which occurs early in the aria proper was a marvelous tone and hardly to be expected from the same throat that later was to sing the E flat above high C. At the close of this aria the great prima donna was repeatedly recalled and sang three encores; the first one being "At Parting," by Rogers, an American composer, residing in Cleveland, O. The second was "Just for This," composed by Mrs. Beach of Boston. The third was "Ich Liebe Dich," by Foerster.

Her second number was the Polonaise from the opera "Mignon," composed by the Frenchman, Ambroise Thomas. A selection more different from the first aria could hardly have been found, and there are few artists in the world who can successfully sing them both. The first demands a dramatic interpretation almost Wagnerian in its style; the second the possession of colorature technic such as would be expected from a singer of the Rossini school. The polonaise was the most popular number of the program, and its conclusion was greeted with an outburst of applause and cheers rather new at this longitude. Its reception proves conclusively the presence of musical appreciation in this city, and the writer believes that if performances such as that given last Friday evening could be heard here at least once a month the time would not be far distant when the people of this city would have such an interest in them that they would be sure of abundant patronage. At the close of the polonaise Mme. Nordica sang two encores, the first entitled "When Love is Kind," by Miss Lehman; the second "Spring Song," composed by Mrs. Beach.

The performance opened with the polonaise by Chopin, played by Mr. E. Romayne Simmons with a dash and spirit that made it a worthy introduction to the program to follow. Mr. Simmons is a successful soloist and if he confined himself to that branch of pianistic work would probably be able to maintain the high position. As an accompanist he possesses unusual ability and infuses into the work a magnetism which greatly enhances the effectiveness of the work of the artist whom he is assisting.

Mr. Williams sang the prologue, "Pagliacci," as his first number, and showed considerable range, a melodious voice and a musicanly training.

Miss Grace Preston contributed the great aria which opens the second act of "Samson and Delilah," and sang it with a rich, full contralto voice and accuracy of intonation.

Mr. J. Henry McKinley made his first appearance with the aria which, strangely enough, Gounod chose to open the first act of his opera the "Queen of Sheba." Mr. McKinley possesses a robust tenor voice, best in the middle register. He does many things well, but unfortunately puts right beside them certain other things which contrast unfavorably. There is a suddenness about some of his effects which surprises, and not always pleasantly. His voice is musical and his singing dramatic. He was enthusiastically applauded and obliged to respond with several encores in the course of the evening. He is deservedly one of the leading tenors of the country. Indeed, encores were in great demand and each of the artists was called back repeatedly after every number.

The concert closed with the great trio from "Faust," by Gounod, and sung by Mr. McKinley, Mr. Williams and Mme. Nordica. Few concerted pieces have ever been written that can equal this trio for brilliancy and dramatic intensity. In the production of the opera it is generally impossible to go beyond the point where it occurs until after repeating it two or three times, and this too, in spite of he ever growing sentiment that the progress of an opera mus not be interfered with. The rendering of th etrio was all that could be desired and Mme. Nordica's voice never shone with greater brilliancy.

Tomorrow night the Nordica concert company will appear in Kansas City and immediately thereafter the great prima donna will proceed to Philadelphia to join the Damrosch opera company. Her first performance with that organization will be in the role of Brunhilde in Wagner music drama, "Die Walkure." This role Mme. Nordica has never yet sung, but pursuant to her determination to become a Wagner singer she is adding it to her repertory. The Bee will take pleasure in informing its readers concerning this first performance of one of the greatest musico-dramatic conceptions ever evolved by the human mind.

HOMER MOORE.

Musical Notes.

Schumann and Tschaikowsky both studied law before they decided to devote themselves and their lives to music.

It is said that Handel, when traveling, used to order a dinner for three and if real hungry for five, and then eat the whole himself.

Mozart and Paderewski are well known for their love of billiard playing. Paderewski occasionally plays throughout the whole night.

Paganni, probably the greatest violinist the world has yet seen, was also a wonderful guitar virtuoso. He even went so far as to write concertos and fantasies for that instrument.

It is said that Paderewski never plays at a concert without first dipping his hands in very warm water. Every pianist has noticed the stiffness that results from very cold fingers. Perhaps if everybody used hot water they could play like Paderewski.

W. J. Henderson, editor of the New York Times, delivers a lecture on the orchestra, which he illustrates with each instrument in turn, from the first violin to the snare drum, explaining the characteristics and peculiar uses of each as found in modern scoring.

At the last concert of the Pittsburg orchestra, William H. Sherwood was given the greatest ovation ever accorded to a pianist in that city. There were twelve recalls, and he was obliged to play, and a double encore before the audience would cease the applause after the performance of Beethoven's "Emperor" concerto. It will be remembered that Mr. Sherwood gave a piano recital in this city recently.

Saint Saens, the composer of "Samson and Delilah," has started from Paris en route to his favorite winter resort, Las Palmas, in the Canary islands. When he arrived at Lyons he stopped for a few days to advise with the operatic authorities there concerning the production of his opera "Henry VIII," founded upon Shakespeare's play. He will visit Madrid, as the same opera is in preparation there, under the direction of Mancinelli.

Tuesday night, at Creighton hall, a recital will be given by the piano pupils of Martin Cahn and the violin pupils of Dr. Baetens, to which the musical public is cordially invited. The Euterpean club will contribute one number. Those of Mr. Cahn's pupils who will appear are Corinne Paulson, Henrietta Rees, Jessie Lobman and Grace Hancock. Dr. Baetens's pupils are Rosa Tremberth, Emily Cleve, Warren Cahn and Guy Woodard. Three compositions by Dr. Baetens will be performed and a cello solo by Gotterman will be played by Miss Lillie Eiche.

Thursday evening, December 23, Mme. Eleanor Meredith of New York will give a recital in the First Congregational church under the auspices of the Woman's club. She will be assisted by Mr. Joseph Gahm, who will play the accompaniments and also one solo. Her program contains selections by Nevin, Foote, Neidlinger and Jordan, all American composers. Also by Malloy, Franz Liszt, Rubenstein, Mascagni, Temple, Helmund and Henschell. The most interesting number on the program is "Die Loreley," by Liszt. It is a song frequently but very seldom successfully attempted. It is founded upon the German legend of the Loreley, and is one of Liszt's most original vocal compositions. Mme. Meredith possesses a strong dramatic voice and is an experienced artist. She ranks with the very best in New York City and is engaged for concerts this year with Damrosch and Seidl.

PENSIONS FOR WESTERN VETERANS.

Survivors of Late War Remembered by the General Government.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18.—(Special.)—Pensions have been issued as follows:

Issue of December 2, 1897:

Nebraska—Original: Hans Holk, Cedar Bluffs, $8; Charles Neumann, Sutton, $8; James F. Bishop, Giltner, $6. Reissue: Joseph T. Clark, Cortland, $14. Original widow, etc.: Minor of Isaiah, Belville, Tekamah, $10.

Iowa—Original: Anton Althen, Meservey, $8; Albert E. McCue, Ottumwa, $6; James Martin, Des Moines, $8. Increase: Emory C. Morton, Nevada, $6 to $8. Original widow etc.: Zulema Campbell, New Hartford, $8; Lucinda McMartin, Castalia, $12; Elizabeth A. Taylor, Knoxville, $8.

North Dakota—Original: Albert P. Winslow, Arville, $6. Increase: John Nagel, Fort Berthold, $8 to $10.

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