

Crossing About Plays, Players and Playhouses

MAHA people have shown during the last week their willingness to be amused. Last Sunday, for example, more than 6,000 people went to the ball game, and during the afternoon and evening more than 18,000 went to Krug Park, while both the theaters, where stock companies are holding forth, had all they could take care of at matinee and evening performances. During the week the theaters were well patronized, and the managers feel much encouraged by the outlook. The coming of Mrs. Fiske to the New Theater, Company, Bluffs, took a large number of the representative local patrons of the stage across the river, where they enjoyed one of the most notable performances ever made of a modern play. Many regrets were heard that conditions are such that Fiske cannot be heard in an Omaha house, but for the present she is under the ban. It seems, without going into the merits of the case, that conditions under which Richard Mansfield, Julia Marlowe, E. H. Sothern, Sara Bernhardt, Sir Henry Irving, in fact, every living player but her, appear, ought not to be so onerous and burdensome that Mrs. Fiske could not come under them. It is an affront to public intelligence to say that the matter of her art is alone concerned. But to long as she and the managers of the Omaha theaters cannot agree on the business policy of the houses, why that long we will have to be content with going to Council Bluffs or any other adjacent point where we can see her. She is a great thing of one thing, and that is that the Omaha public will go a long way and do it under even greater discomforts than those endured last Tuesday night to see her play.

In the mistaken notion that he is impressing them with his importance and the desirability of the girl acceding to his bluntly announced purposes. She listens to him because it is part of the trade, and with the promise that on the morrow, after the "job" is done, she can slight him as she likes. She even seems to have lofty notions in other directions, but only in a vague and uncertain way. Schram has discovered this, when Papa Kleeschna, serene in his control, has overlooked them. It is all, but of these trifles Mrs. Fiske builds a character that finally stands out as well-rounded and complete whole, and, presenting none of the complexities of some of her other creations, is the more satisfying because it is the more easily understood. It is drawn in broad, sharp lines, without impressionistic effect or touches, none of the subtle psychological development of a Mary, none of the baffling conflict of animating impulses of a Becky, nor the suddenly awakened consciousness of a Tess or a Marta—none of these cloud the development of Leah. In many of Magdala we have the growth of a restless, discontented woman who has misused something into the penitent who looks forward to a life—what was it she expected? At all events, nothing that Mrs. Fiske ever did possess the delicacy of suggested things that she has in the garden scene, where she first hears the words of

the Nazarene. Did she love the Man or the Master, here was the birth of a soul, and it was made most obvious, and yet with such skill of acting that its development seemed but the slow course of evolution. Something of this lingers in Leah. In Becky Sharp she leaves us just as did the gifted Thackeray, in two minds concerning Becky's intentions when she was overwhelmed with the catastrophe of Rawdon's appearance, just when the Marquis de Steyne was about to yield to her importunities for a place for her husband. She had been thinking of nothing else long enough, but what would she have done? Her subsequent career is logical and in some regards pitiable, but the one great question remains unanswered. Becky has no part in Leah. Tess was stricken down by a weight of circumstances, she had not stolen anything, she had only given, and she paid the penalty. Marta is much like Tess, and there is very little of either of these in Leah. In fact, Mrs. Fiske has given us quite a distinct character, and one that in its simplicity is decidedly real from some of the heroines who have been asked to contemplate, sympathize with, or study and dissect as we liked.

Everyone of us cried "Bravo!" when she defied her father to his teeth, and told him she would burgle no more at his house, that she would rather die than distinguish between her property and that of others, and had lost her father. It was a most impressive scene, she didn't waver, she was brutally suggested, but she did show the natural grief of a girl at casting out of her life the last bit of love for her father; the tears that flowed down her cheeks were those she felt, and her words came in a scorching, scalding heat. But when she answered Sophie, a queer little catch in her voice was all that told of the storm she had passed through, and she was a brave figure, as she walked out of the door and down the stairs alone, on her way to the lettuce fields, wasn't she allowed to remain there? It is much more satisfying to think of her there bravely expiating her crimes than to be forced to think that Sylvia followed her and took her to his home as his wife. The one conclusion is logical, and the other is unreal.

But what a picture the curtain goes down on at the end of the fourth act, the play really ends. Kleeschna, his defiance born of natural courage and laughing while he shares the punishment even as he has shared the fruits of the crimes he has aided in committing, deliberately waiting the descent of the blow, and Raoul, gibbering in his stupor of drink and exhaustion, incapable of understanding the situation, unconscious of the disgrace that has come on his father's honored name, feeling only that the girl he had hoped would share the apartments from which he had lately turned another to make room for her, had scorned and spurned him. He could not understand her actions any more than he could the laughter of Kleeschna. And Kleeschna laughed at him because he did not understand. That whole act is one of the strongest ever offered; it is complete in itself, a play that would be understood without prefacing, and presented in the most forceful manner. Mr. Carterwright as Kleeschna, Mr. Mack as Schram and Mr. Arliss as Raoul, here showed themselves to be fit companions for the star, and the four gave the intensely dramatic act, full of quick changes of thought and action, leading steadily up to its tremendous climax, in such a way as can be described by one word only, perfect.

Music and Musical Notes

Musical Calendar for the Week.
MONDAY—Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Kelly, song recital, "Shanty," St. Mary's Avenue Congregational church, 8:15 p. m.
TUESDAY—The musical season of 1904-5 in this city has been one of unusual merit and activity. With three engagements of grand opera, numerous recitals of various nature and some fine orchestral programs, Omaha has gone a good many steps nearer to a genuine musical life. Of course, the most brilliant and important event was the appearance of the grand opera company at the Auditorium. The long looked for, much discussed "Parsifal" was given with Burgstaller and Promstadl to illumine the principal roles. The second night Sembrich and Caruso in "Lucia" sang themselves into the hearts of those who like the older school of music best. These two nights of opera would have reflected credit on any community, and Omaha was indeed lucky to have such an opportunity.

Mr. Savage's English version of Wagner's great music drama preceded the German production by several weeks and gave people a chance to get acquainted with the score. Not a few liked the English production the better for the evenness of its ensemble. The chorus work was certainly a revelation. The patronage for the three performances was so good that in April the hearts of those who like the older school of music best. These two nights of opera would have reflected credit on any community, and Omaha was indeed lucky to have such an opportunity.

In a local way Robert Cusaden has made a beginning in the orchestral field. His three philanthropic concerts were symbolic of an ideal which, we hope, will come to pass. They were enjoyable, because the spirit which prompted them was sincere and the musicians who took part put real love into their work.

Coming Events.
In considering the production of the Sothern-Marlowe company, "A Daughter of Erin," by Charles Crawford, for three performances, May 28 and 29, commencing with a matinee Sunday, May 28, at the Orpheum, Mr. Keene, who takes the leading role, has been seen in that part in this piece for the last two seasons throughout the eastern states, and this is his first appearance as well as his first production of this play in Omaha. The play is a modern Irish comedy-drama. Mr. Keene is supported by a capable and well-balanced cast, who handle the brilliant dialogue, beautiful love story and exhilarating comedy with such snap and ability as to make the play delightful and very interesting from the beginning to the end. The play will be Ancient Order of Hibernian night.

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The presence of Franz Wilesek in Omaha this winter has added greatly to the pleasure of music lovers, and his return to New York will be a great loss. As an artist he ranks very high, and he has been generous with his gifts. Mr. Stevens, his manager, says that it is impossible to engage a night at Boyd's theater for a farewell concert, and the plan has been practically given up. Why not have one somewhere else?

The local clubs, choruses and musicians have given many good programs. The organization of the Concert Promoters gave to the people the best recital of the winter. It is to be hoped that next year this society will be liberally seconded in its efforts to bring great artists to Omaha.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Kelly will give their unique song recital, "Shamrock," on Monday evening at the St. Mary's Avenue Congregational church. The recent Irish literary revival has brought to the attention of the world at large the beauties of the old Irish songs and legends. Such poets and authors as William Butler Yeats, Stanford Brooke and T. W. Rolleston are spending some of the best energy of their lives in gathering together and making permanent this ancient literature. Mr. Kelly, being of Irish birth, has very naturally taken an intense interest in the typical songs and legends of his own people. He has unearthed some of the most interesting material. He has the real, genuine passion for old book songs (what joy is there akin to it). Last summer in Dublin he found some treasures in the way of old song collections. The following program would delight the little knot of enthusiasts who are working for the individuality of Ireland and ought to bring out a good audience here in Omaha:

We have had one recital of Chamber music, which ranks as the finest form of absolute music, "designed in the first place for the most eminent patrons of the art—the kings and queens whose love for it gave it maintenance and encouragement." When royalty took up the cultivation of music it was as a private function, and the concerts were given in the king's chamber. Musicians were practically servants in the royal household. Representative chamber music is written for strings alone—trios, quartets and quintets, with sometimes the piano forte added, or one or more of the solo wind instruments.

Of the great singers, Mme. Melba appeared in concert at the Auditorium and distinctly disappointed her admirers, who had learned in the past to expect thorough, conscientious work from her. She is invariably ungracious to Omaha audiences, but this they can stand if she will only sing her best. Ellison Van Hoose, the tenor of her company, was vocally more satisfying.

Mr. Gadski, who sang with the Pittsburg orchestra, did most beautiful work. She is in the heyday of her career and takes infinite pains to please her listeners. The criticisms all through the country have been generous and enthusiastic. She and Nordica vie with each other as great dramatic singers. Gadski can hardly cope with our famous American singer in the matter of quenchy physique and personal magnetism. Just to look at Nordica is a tonic.

In the purely concert and oratorio world Genevieve Clark Wilson's name means music. Every one who grows because she is an indefatigable student. Her singing with the Chicago orchestra was a delight. One great singer came to Omaha in a role entirely different from her usual choice. In "Love's Lottery" Madame Schumann Heink took the country by storm. She has had enormous houses, and her gorgeous contralto voice has glorified the strain of a light opera. Her Jolly German good nature and bubbling fun were a revelation to those who only knew her in reformer-like dresses and more ladylike manners. She took the country by storm. She has had enormous houses, and her gorgeous contralto voice has glorified the strain of a light opera. Her Jolly German good nature and bubbling fun were a revelation to those who only knew her in reformer-like dresses and more ladylike manners. She took the country by storm. 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