

Good Plays, Small Crowds at Theaters

Street Car Strike Responsible for Empty Seats All Week at the Theaters, but Actors Go Ahead With Their Work and Afford Much Excellent Entertainment for the Attendants.

ANOTHER week of good plays and empty houses is added to the history of the stage in Omaha. In this case it is not the fault of the public; the people undoubtedly wanted to go to the theater, but the prospect of walking home was too uncertain, and the possibility of having a brick bounced off his head on the way down did not appeal very strongly to the man who had been from work without having it actually happen. So the players went through each night with the cordial approval of the few who did congregate there, and gave excellent performances for the edification of folks who made up in enthusiasm what was lacking in numbers. The Burwood presentation was very attractive. First of these was Bert Williams and company in "Mr. Lode of Kool." The name is strikingly significant of the peculiar sort of comedy that attaches to Williams' name, and the piece and the company were in no wise disappointing. Mr. Williams has the comedian's ready wit, his limitations, and doesn't undertake to overcome by assuming any natural obstacle that has been placed in his way. But by pure talent he has raised himself to a place in the estimation of the public that many a more pretentious man of much lighter hues of skin might envy. Williams has very markedly the true capacity for conception and expression that is the attribute of dramatic genius. His range is so far a narrow one, circumscribed by circumstances he will probably never overcome, but he has made himself master of a certain type, and so long as the American public has a taste for comedy of the lighter sort and are ready to laugh at the innocent fun furnished by a comedian of real skill, just that long Bert Williams will be sure of his audience.

The other play at the Burwood was Eugene Walter's "The Wolf," presented with much care by a Shubert organization. The power of this play to hold resides in the directness of its appeal. It deals with the primitive passions, the elemental attributes of man, and has for its background and atmosphere the nature to which we all get close once in our lives. It presents the eternal triangle, with no variation as to situations; two men and one woman, and one man wins her. The other man is killed. The winner, of course, typifies the good and noble, the other man is evil. One is of nature, the other civilization. But the main interest in the Walter's play is its profane of this support which dramatic reputations may sometimes be built. A few short months ago Eugene

Harte's Poem in "The Witching Hour"

THE second act of "The Witching Hour" was constructed around a poem of Bret Harte's entitled "A Newport Romance." The poem was published in 1872 and consists of nineteen stanzas, the first seven of which tell the legend of a haunted house that formerly stood near the town of Newport, R. I. The last two of these seven stanzas are used by Augustus Thomas in one of the finest bits of dramatic sentiment ever penned by a native writer. The first seven stanzas of this poem are as follows: They say she died of a broken heart, (I tell the tale as 'twas told to me), But her spirit lives and her soul is far, In that old house by the sea. Her lover was fickle and fine and French; It was nearly a hundred years ago When he died of a broken heart, (I tell the tale as 'twas told to me), With the Admiral Rochambeau. I marvel much what periwigged phrase

Won the heart of this sentimental Quaker; And what golden-laced speech of those modish days She listened—the mischief take her! But she kept the verses of mignonette That she gave; and ever as their bloom faded And faded (though with her tears still Her youth with their own exhaled. Till one night when the sea for wrapped a shroud Round spar and spar, tann and tree, Her soul went up in the faded cloud From the sad old house by the sea. And ever since then when the clock strikes two She walks unbidden from room to room; And the air is filled as she passes through With a subtle, sad perfume. The delicate odor of mignonette, The ghost of a dead and gone bouquet, Is as that tells of her story—yet Could she think of a sweeter way?

Walters was sleeping on benches in New York parks; now he is wealthy and popular and getting more wealth and popularity each day. But his genius is more for adapting than for originating. "Paid in Full" made him the vogue in New York, but Florence Gerald is suing him for cribbing the play from a sketch she wrote for vaudeville, and with excellent prospects of making him settle. "The Wolf" followed "Paid in Full" and has been very much praised, but any one who has followed the magazine of late years has been made familiar with the McTavish and Jules Beaubien type by the writers of stories of the north woods; while the great dual scene that closes the third act and the play is lifted bodily from a novel by an obscure author which appeared a year before Mr. Walters gave his play to the world. Mr. Walters is not the last man who has built success on the ideas of others, nor is it likely he will be the last.

This department has in other times expressed its diminishing regard for dramatic criticism as practiced in New York, but it has never quite expressed the sentiments forth in the editorial from Collier's. Mr. Hagood was once a Gotham critic

himself and knows whereof he speaks: A play of intelligence, dramatic to those who like to think, dull to those who do not, is successful in Chicago and the west. It receives extreme praise from men of experience and brains like that of the president of the United States. Booth Tarkenton, the manager of the Chicago Tribune, it arrives where most conspicuous American productions are made—the neighborhood known as Broadway. On the first night there is a mixture of interest and chill. Immediately several of the papers of largest circulation in the city declare these critics are wrong. These critics are charges are erroneous. These critics are a natural product of the "Anderson." It is the air they breathe. It is they know, David Belasco is their god. A pretty chorus in their heavens. Tarkenton says, "The Theater" is their highest reach. Ideas worthy they. They represent honestly both themselves and their audience. They are the great power when they put in such hands a weapon that might be used to penetrate, to inspire, to lead. A critic's power, either to fertilize or to blight, rests in the strength of his criticism. He can lead the public on. Criticism has some power, either to fertilize or to blight. Remembering this, a critic should be a "Griffith Davenport." "Children of the Ghetto," "Candida," "El Gran Gaieteo," "The Master Builder" are some of the plays which we say without hesitation that New York criticism does less to help the American stage forward than it does to hold it back.

At the Omaha Theaters

Fine Display of Drama, Musical Comedy and Vaudeville Provided for Patrons of the Boyd, the Burwood, the Krug and the Orpheum During the Week of King Ak-Sar-Ben's Coronation Festivities.

As a vehicle for the appearance of Mr. S. Miller Kent at the Boyd theater for four nights, beginning this evening, with a matinee Wednesday, Joseph M. Gaites has provided P. E. Dumm's comedy, "The Dry," the story in brief deals with the absurd cant and feigned sincerity of the reform mayor who is likewise editor of the prohibition organ, "The Argus." A love affair with his secretary, adds interest; and the material for dramatic conflict is supplied when it becomes necessary for him to sit in judgment on her father, the village druggist and a deacon of the church, who has been accused of selling whisky without the necessary prescription. Among the cast secured by Mr. Gaites to support his star, are the following: Harry Brown, James Bevin, Harry Malinall, Wilson Reynolds, Marcus Moriarty, Lydia Dickson, Helen Tracy and Winona Shannon.

"Mary's Lamb," as in all the Carle plays, is a big feature. There are whole bevy of pretty young women who appear as cow-girls, Dutch girls, grisettes, models, Parisian dandies, debutantes, soldier girls and showgirls. The latter pose in fleshing-up scenes when Miss Archer sings about "The Modest Little Model." The music of "Mary's Lamb" is all on the catchy order, the principal songs including "Betsy's the Belle of the Bathers," "My Madagascan Maid," "I Idolize Ida," "The Modest Little Model," "If No. 1 met No. 2," "We're Hollandaise," "Jamais de la Vie" and "Never Borrow Trouble."

"Girls," the Clyde Fitch comedy, in which he sets out the attempt of three young women to live independent of mere man, and their final surrender to the inevitable, will open an engagement of three days at the Burwood with a matinee this afternoon. This is a cleverly constructed comedy, and has some very interesting situations. It has been well received everywhere, the company now presenting it having been especially selected by the Shuberts for the piece. A matinee will be played on Tuesday afternoon.

All day next Wednesday, starting at 10 a. m. and continuing until 11 p. m., the Burwood will offer a continuous performance consisting of ten vaudeville acts and a half dozen reels of the famous Burwood brand of moving pictures. One of the pictures to be shown is a reproduction of the trials and incidents of Dr. Cook's world-famous pilgrimage through the frozen north in quest of the long-sought North pole. Visitors to Ak-Sar-Ben will find the long entertainment contains much to interest and amuse. Patrons may come at any time and stay as long as they like.

Low Dookstader and his minstrels, now

Al G. Field's Annual Banquet

ANY business and theatrical men will gather in Columbia, Ga., October 5, to attend the twenty-third annual banquet tendered to the members of his company and invited guests by Al G. Field, the minstrel. It is a peculiar coincidence that the banquet this year will come in a manner very similar to the minstrel, Columbia, O. The banquet is given yearly on the anniversary of the first performance, in Marion, O., October 5, 1886, but never in the nearly a quarter of a century that the troupe has been touring here they have been at home on this anniversary. Members of the first company, who could be located, prominent men in the theatrical profession, newspapermen and others have been invited to join with the minstrel upon their gala occasion and many acceptances have already been received. Originally this banquet was confined to members of the company and a few local guests, but the growing popularity of the feat and the greatly diversified interests and places represented about the tables, now makes the affair of greater importance.

Many familiar names appear upon the roster of the first company and it is of general interest to note what has become of these old time black face artists who so uproariously amused with their antics. A number have answered their last curtain call; some have become wealthy and retired to a serene life of quiet, others are still in the harness. Several will be present at the 1909 banquet.

Of the first twenty-five that composed the first Al G. Field Greater Minstrel but one, aside from Mr. Field, himself, remains with the company. This is Joe Hatfield, a curly headed boy when he joined the show nearly twenty-four years ago, now a man past the meridian of life, grown old in the service. Doc Knott, a nephew of the celebrated Proctor Knott, was the press agent and died a few years ago in Louisville,

Ky. G. F. Campbell, the general agent, died in South America while in the United States consular service. Ellis Kerr the treasurer, is manager of the Enterprise Printing and Engraving company, Columbus, O. Charles Sweeney, the stage manager, is now manager of the John Robinson circus and will be present at the banquet. Lewis Kerr, the band leader, accumulated property in Newcasttle, Pa., and died there one year ago, a wealthy man. Charles Graham, the vocal director, who wrote the popular songs of a decade ago, "If the Waters Could Speak as they Flow" and "Two Little Girls in Blue," died in New York City. Of the comedians, Lew Spencer died in Chicago; John Russell died in England; Harry Bulger is still in the harness with Colonel Henry W. Sawyer; George Jenks has a large grocery store in Columbus, O.; Billy Casey died in San Francisco; Larry and Matt of the Diamond Bros. are dead and Lew lives in retirement. Of the singers, George White, the baritone, has a large hotel at Coney Island, and is a millionaire; John Graham is with the Savage Opera company; Carl Richmond is singing in the Michigan Avenue Baptist church, Chicago, and is teaching vocal music; Harry Pearce has become a legitimate actor and is with Brewster's Millions. Gus Lambregger, the property man, is the proprietor of Lambregger's zoo, and is wealthy. William Junker, the baritone, is the manager of the Hardy Gurdy Glee company.

From the twenty-five that composed the first troupe the number has now more than doubled. It has been estimated that in the twenty-five years that the troupe has been on the road that they have traveled a distance equal to more than twenty times the circumference of the globe. Last season the distance traveled was 32,000 miles, the longest continuous movement being 1,000 miles, from Denver to Chicago, the shortest, four miles from Wheeling to Baltimore.

Pilgrims to Baltimore and the sepulcher of Hamlet may be interested in a bit of information sent by George Brandes, the Danish critic and exegetist of Ibsen, to George Sylvester Viereck in connection with statements made by that essayist in a series of articles entitled "Confessions of a Barbarian." "The grave of Hamlet is not in Elsinore," writes Mr. Brandes. "Hamlet, according to the legend, was a minor vassal king in Jutland; he never

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POLLY OF THE CIRCUS

Adventures of an Actor Man

JAMES A. GLEASON, who plays the title role in "Checkers," has done about everything in an endeavor to lead novelty to his eventual career. He soldiered in "M" Battery Seventh United States artillery from May, 1895, to February, 1901, and in "D" troop, Second United States cavalry, from June, 1902, serving at Washington, D. C., in Cuba and in China with the artillery, and at Fort Ethan Allen in the state of Vermont. He has seen service with the Mangrove river guard, Camp Stotenberg, Pampanga, and in the expedition to capture Mantalan and Pellarido in Laquing, Cavite and Batangas provinces. He was wounded at Rosario, while hounded in, in a church with a detachment of thirty-six by 600 natives under Mantalan.

Receiving his discharge from the Second cavalry on June 20, 1906, at Angel Island, Cal., Gleason went to his first theatrical job and called it the grave of Hamlet. Thither people go today.

Mrs. Langtry is writing a novel. It is to be called "All at Sea," and will tell of a pretty woman and her husband who agree to live apart, and in the course of time, the husband changes his mind and the wife, who has been waiting for him to return, is surprised to find that he has married another woman.

Mrs. Langtry's memoirs, now in course of composition, amount already to 60,000 words and her publishers say the tale is not more than half told.

Miss Mary Manning, according to announcement, years ago, even stopping in a play written by Miss Cora Maynard which deals with the mother over her composition, father and mother over their hostile family, which does not sound particularly psychological. The name of it is "The Watchers."

Pinner's "Midchannel," which Miss Barrymore is to play, is described by London critics as gray and depressing. Of its characters, Mr. Walleley of the Times says, "They are like Mr. Bernstein's people, brutes and violent brutes. The middle aged husband is a violent snarling, and in the course of time, beautified brute. The wife is a vicious brute. The husband's mistress is a stupid brute. The wife's lover

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ADMISSION--Balcony Circle, 50c; Main Floor, \$1.00; Reserved Seats, \$1.50; Box Seats, \$2.00.

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Of Des Moines vs. Of Minneapolis

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When Frank Daniels plays "The Belle of Brittany" later in the season his prima donna will be Miss Eliza Ryan.

Miss Mary Shaw has obtained the right to play "The Broken Screen," which she will act this season alternately with "The Right of the Soul."

The production of a new musical comedy by C. M. & McLellan and Ivan Caryll called "The Buty," is intimated by B. C. musical comedy, says it is voluminous