

THE THEATRES

I have seen "Faust" until I have sometimes longed for the Damnation of Faust, the musical one by Berleo of course. It is not the model play of the world to start on. It deals with problems too abstract, too remote. The day has gone by when we delighted in dramas dealing with the strife between Gods and men. In days when there was a stronger belief in the supernatural the play was very well. As for its literary value, any English version produced in this country is so utterly unlike Goethe's original that it is all lost. Then there is that spoonful garden scene and that restive Fourth of July on the Brocken. Two such acts would slaughter any play. And there is *Marguerite*. I never yet saw a *Marguerite* whom I did not long and yearn to shake. I always want to lengthen her dresses and teach her to do her hair up on her head. It has always seemed to me that there was not enough of her to make a respectable tragedy. There is in the play one great character, a character unique and apart, *Mephistopheles*, the spirit that denies. A character as strange as *Hamlet* and as little understood, always shrouded in mystery and doubt.

The great difficulty in the enacting of such a character is that *Mephisto* is not mortal. Something must be done to convey the idea of supreme evil of more than mortal hate. This can not be done directly. It must be accomplished indirectly and by inference. If a man starts to swearing and reels off his whole repertoire, curses until he is black in the face, then you know just how much he can swear. But if he mutters only an oath or two and looks the rest you are in doubt. You wonder what he could do in that line if he laid himself out and the chances are you will greatly exaggerate his powers. The actor who plays *Mephisto* never shows his hand. He should awe his listeners rather than excite them. His power is in his inscrutable mystery.

The only fault that I have to find with John Griffith's *Mephisto* is that it lacks dignity, a awfulness. I should not be afraid of that kind of a devil. His *Mephisto* is a thoroughly jolly fellow with occasional bursts of very bad temper. He is so jolly that he is humorous even when he is angry. I do not object to the comedy which Mr. Griffith introduces, but to the kind of comedy. Its too good natured, too undignified, the kind of fun one hears among good fellows who are cynical but bear no malice. It should be, I think, a deeper comedy than that, a humor that takes in all the great jests of this world and the next, the whole gigantic joke of the creation. It should be a humor that would made one's blood run cold. Mr. Griffith has such a peculiarly fortunate face for the part that he might leave unsaid much more than he does. If he knew how much his eyes tell, I think he would not strain his voice so. He has intensity enough, but he lets it out too much; as some one has said, like most young artists he wastes that which is most dear. That which, like sentiment, when sparingly used is beyond price, when expended lavishly, vulgar and maudlin.

The Spooners will tonight bring their tenth appearance in the city to a close. These performances have been so often noted and criticized in Lincoln that any further comment really seems superfluous. Cecil has improved, however, since her last appearance here. In fact she has made a considerable advance

within the last year or two. No one will deny that this little soubrette has a measure of ability, though I firmly believe that her talents lie principally in her toes. She can dance, dance with a natural grace and ease which can never be taught or acquired by practice, which must be born into one, and is born with very few. Cecil's dances are good to look upon, and I see no reason why in the coming years she may not throw Queenie Vassar quite in the shade. Her acting is, as Rudyard Kipling would say, another story. She is sometimes clever, though I cannot see any indications of a great comedienne. Cecil is not and will not be a bad actress, and when one can dance and is graceful one does not have to be a great actress. The Spooner company, if lacking in acting ability, have the faculty of amusing their audiences, and that after all is the desideratum. Luckily the Spooners, exclusive of Cecil make no claims, and their modesty disarms criticism. If Cecil could get away from such plays as the "Hidden Hand" and be permitted to appear with a more brilliant stage setting than is possible with the Spooner company, her achievement of fame would be more rapid. Such capabilities as hers want a spectacular environment rather than low comedy surroundings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Thursday Sept. 10, "The Suwanee River" at the Lansing.

Friday Sept. 20, "The Derby Winner" at the Lansing.

Thursday the 19th the new three act Afro American musical comedy "Down on the Suwanee River" will be presented at the Lansing theatre. It may be well to state that this attraction is entirely different from the production given here last year under the same name. This company carries a band of fifty colored people. The first act is laid in Africa and the succeeding ones in America. There are forty five colored singers and dancers and a full brass band. All kinds of new novelties and specialties and catchy music embellish the performance.

Friday, Sept. 20th Al Spink's "Derby Winner" plays at the Lansing. The Derby Winner claims to be one of the greatest race plays on the stage and is full of the thrilling situations of the track. The company carries a number of clever dancers, singers and colored comedians, and several expert colored athletes. A specialty is made of the great race scene. The dramatic personages are many of them taken from life as it was in the great racing days in old St. Louis.

SOCIAL GOSSIP

Wednesday at noon occurred the marriage of Miss Sara Schwab and Mr. Maurice Deutsch at the residence of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. S. Schwab. Miss Schwab is well-known in this city, both as a graduate of the state university and as teacher for four years in the city public schools, where she has always been a great favorite. Mr. Deutsch is a merchant in Beatrice. He was born in France, and at his wedding his brother M. Jules Deutsch was present by a special trip from Paris. The Schwab residence was adorned with palms, ferns and rubber trees and with a profusion of bride and La France roses. The ceremony was performed in the front parlor, though both parlors were thrown together for the small company of the intimate family circle who alone were present. At exactly the stroke of twelve the bride and groom presented themselves under the brilliant lights of the central chandelier and Rabbi Leo M. Franklin of Temple

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Israel at Omaha repeated the clear, strong, hopeful words of the Unitarian marriage service, which he followed with the impressive triple blessing of the Rabbis. Immediately after the ceremony the wedding breakfast was served, after the French custom. Toasts were offered to all the members of the family in succession. At the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Deutsch for Chicago and the great lakes, by the afternoon train, some of the friends of the bride rushed into the station to



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follow the bridal couple with the usual attentions. Mr. and Mrs. Deutsch have already fitted for them a home in Beatrice where they are to reside after the return from the wedding journey. The wedding presents from friends were beautiful. The bride was remembered by all her college friends; and from Europe the family of the groom had forwarded many charming gifts.

W. E. C.