

THEATRICAL NOTES

"And Eugene Aram walked between with gyves upon his wrist."

"Eugene Aram," which was presented at the Funke last week is a poor medium for the expression of talent like Mr. Whiteside's. The play shows no constructive skill. The plot is unfolded by a series of monologues delivered by the hero from the middle of the stage with his eyes set and an agonized face. Such plays demonstrate the difference between novel-writing and the playwright's trade. A play must be alive, able to move itself. Even a successful novel may be a series of descriptions or character analyses—in which case it is entirely subjective. There is the difference between them that there is between the animal and the vegetable world. Sometimes in the case of a dramatized version of a novel the playwright, in transferring the book to the stage leaves out the dramatic spirit and the play falls flat. Sometimes when it is not there he puts it in and sometimes it is neither in the book nor the play. The character of "Eugene Aram" in itself is dramatic. The play "Eugene Aram" is prosaic and literary in a Dickens way.

Mr. Whiteside had the stage to himself most of the evening. He had about the same chance to thrill the audience that an elocutionist has. It is a tribute to his ability that he succeeded in doing so once or twice. Notably when he talked over with himself the advantage of killing his guest and accomplice, and when he relates the story of his crime. His support was automatic and perfunctory but perhaps the play was to blame for that. They had not the ability to overcome the conditions which bind genius that the star had.

The costumes were charming, being those of the first half of the eighteenth century—panniers and a Watteau pleat and all that, a shepherdess style endeared and familiar to all lovers of Dresden figures and French fans. The ladies of the company wore their gowns with an old time grace that is almost lost since the bicycle victory. Alack-a-day! those lovely draperies blown into the sweet disorder that Herrick sung, must we give them up because of microbes, the tobacco habit and locomotion?

"The Prisoner of Zenda" played at the Lansing theatre on Wednesday night to a good house. The audience was composed of people who read books. It had the critical expression of one who sees his own ideas worked out or antagonized by another. Manager Dowden says the tickets were bought by a new set of people, teachers, professional men and whole families.

The play is a powerful piece of dramatic composition except in one respect, and that is the denouement. If Flavia does not marry the English Rudolph what is all this pother about? Why have the play at all? True love's bark is tossed about on rough waters, but never, except in this case, are the true lovers divided. Romeo and Juliet, Othello and Desdemona, died together, but Flavia says she will marry another man. And when she said it the prim and conscientious audience reeled and writhed with horror. It is an artistic necessity in the book, it is a dramatic impossibility on the stage. And it would be so easy to marry them—on the stage. Let Black Michael live, a perpetual menace to a reigning red Elphberg. Let the real king die in his dungeon—nobody'd care. Then in order to keep a red Elphberg on the throne even if he did get his red hair by mistake, Sapt, that magnificent old bluffer, would

have transferred his incorruptible, unreasoning hereditary fealty to Rudolph the Red—the man he had put on the throne to foil a villain and would keep there if it took the whole army to do it. When the author lets old Sapt kill Black Michael there is no hope for Rudolph Rassendyl. For Michael is the only menace to a peaceful reign by the Prisoner of Zenda. When Michael is shot the audience knows that Rassendyl will have to go back to England and never be reunited to his sweetheart. The subsequent dawdling in the dungeon to the music of Black Michael's funeral mass is only tantalizing an audience whose confidence has been abused and cheated. Neither the music, nor the dawdling nor the chaste kisses can allay the irritation which this unnecessary denouement has caused.

Howard Gould, who is Prince Rudolph III, King Rudolph V and Rudolph Rassendyl is versatile and magnetic. He has departed from Sothern's more artistic conception in introducing jokes into the coronation scene.

The vain old mayor causes a laugh with his strutting but it is out of place though John Findlay is a serious comedian and the discord he makes is a low-toned one.

Isabel Irving has a cameo face cut in pink and white, delicate and old-fashioned as a miniature painting of the king's grandmother at sixteen. She does not disappoint the ideal of Anthony Hope's Flavia, and that is the limit of praise.

Charles Walcot as Colonel Sapt was the very spirit and image of Bismarck, gigantic, monarchical, a man of resources as well as of blood and iron. When he knelt and kissed the hand of the false king it was a tribute to the honour and manliness of the pretender that brought the house down on him.

The scenery was very fine. The leather hung room of the castle of Tarnheim, hung with family portraits, the dungeon at Zenda and the winter palace at Strelsau were especially effective.

The company is the original New York company with the exception of Sothern, and, I presume, Maude Odell, who played Antoinette de Nauban. The betrayed woman is apparently as necessary as the villain and the hero, but unless she does it well, and I have never seen anybody do the part who was not an unmitigated bore, her sufferings, so far as the audience is concerned, are deserved. It may be that the part can not be played in any other way. In which case apologies are due the betrayed I have hated murderously ever since the act first became popular.

The following notice, regarding the opening of the New Fourteenth Street theatre at St. Louis, by Mr. E. J. Henley, in "Deacon Brodie," will be of interest from the fact that Mr. Henley will present this play at the Funke on Tuesday evening, December 1. Mr. Henley was last here with Booth and Barrett. This is Mr. Henley's second year as a star, and his success is already assured. This engagement will be of interest to the travelling men of the United States, for the following reasons: "In order to raise \$150,000 to complete the National Commercial Travellers' Home, at Binghamton, N. Y. The Commercial Travellers' Fair will be held December 15-28, 1896, in Madison Square Garden, New York city. It is proposed to celebrate Tuesday, December 1, by aiding this benevolent work, and we ask all theatres to help in a way that will be profitable to all concerned.

FUNKE OPERA HOUSE

FRANK C. ZEHKUNG Manager.

One Night Only.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30.

CHORONCHORONCHORON

WHITNEY OPERA COMPANY

In the Great Success

ROB ROY

The only Company

Music by Reginald DeKoven.

Book by Harry B. Smith.

Cast - Brilliant - Chorus

AUGMENTED ORCHESTRA.
ORIGINAL STAGE SETTINGS.

Seats on Sale Friday, November 27.

Funke Opera House

One Night Only,

Tuesday, December 1.

The Distinguished Character Actor,

MR. E. J. HENLEY,

Supported by a Strong Company of Metropolitan Artists.

Presenting the Celebrated Drama by Robert Louis Stevenson and William Ernest Henley.

DEACON BRODIE.

Seats on Sale Saturday, November 28.

YOU MAKE A MISTAKE

If you fail to get
a pair of nice

TAN SHOES or OXFORDS

for yourself or children at our store.

Ours are perfect in fit, latest styles, low in price, and good to wear.

Webster & Rogers
10430 St.

T. J. Thorpe & Co.,

GENERAL BICYCLE REPAIRERS

in 3 branches.

Repairing done as Neat and Complete as from the Factories at hard time prices

All kinds of Bicycle Sundries. 320 S. 11TH ST.

Machinist and General Repair Work. LINCOLN.