

THEATRICAL NOTES

The Clay Clement Company played to a large house at the Funke on Monday the 18th. It was an appreciative and vociferous audience made up of university professors and their choice and numbers of less distinguished citizens who joined in calling Mr. Clement before the curtain several times. This young man is the heir apparent to the Joe Jefferson throne—an elective monarchy and withheld capriciously from claimants who have made money and fame. But such a position as Joe Jefferson occupies is the free gift of a loving people. No one can claim it. Richard Mansfield least of all because, he does not "love the lamb you know" but despises it and Sol Smith Russell has not the ability. Clay Clement's intellect and taste are as powerful and exact as Richard Mansfield's and he is a modest, gracious gentleman besides. The lamb loves him and bleats with rapture wherever it sees him. When his glossy hair has turned from brown to white Clay Clement will mean what Joe Jefferson means now.

His company the other night was about the same in quality and personelle that we have seen with him before. It might be better. Miss Rolinda Bainbridge who was Flora May Randolph was artificial though pretty and graceful. Miss Kara Kenwyn, who has made the part of the widow celebrated, wore fetching gowns and was very bewitching. Her part is too axiomatic and didactic. Some of her speechess are editorials. She speaks of matrimony with too much authority and decision for a wife of two days. Some of the old Nigger Poly's lines could be cut with much relief to the audience. The black butlers of the south are not allowed so large an opportunity to exercise their natural loquacity. Next to Mr. Clement I thought the villain Mr. Chas. Craig did the cleverest work. His villainy was repulsive, beefy, mercenary vulgarity. For its consistent brutality and attention to detail Mr. Craig is entitled to an appreciation from a review which the villian's work never receives from an audience. Miss Amalia Gardner, as the poor relation, had the accent and atmosphere of the Tennessee mountain girls in Chas. Egbert Craddock's books. She was not stagyeye at the stagiest of parts—the deserted female. Miss Gardner is young and unknown, but I should like to see her in a leading part. She has imagination and originality. Members of the audience who were not familiar with the south were overcome with admiration for the company's southern accent but the southerners said it was very poor.

The play is not remarkable except for the part of the Baron Franz Vicor Von Hohenstauffen. The plot is not new, the other characters are conventional but the German botanist is something new and delightful to theatre goers. "May he lif long und brospere." The action drags when the old butler has the stage to himself. His lines and the widow's dicta could be cut with benefit to the play. The scenery of the first act is new and very effective.

The Woodward at The Lansing has been playing a good business.

Emily Bancker at the Funke on Thursday night played to a fairly well-filled house. Thursday followed too hard upon Monday for any company, however excellent, to do a very good business.

Emily Bancker is a pretty woman with a good deal of temperament which

awakens interest and holds it. Miss Bancker's ability to express the capriciousness and volatile essence of pure femininity recalls Rosina Vokes, the appealing irrelevance of whose answers to masculine argument were irresistible, especially when clinched and bolted by a song and dance. Miss Bancker neither sung nor danced, more's the pity, but her quick replies and bird like movements are certainly like the famous Vokes.

The company was of indifferent merit, neither very good nor very bad. "A Divorce Cure" was preceded by a one act drama by W. S. Gilbert called "Comedy and Tragedy" which presented an incident of the time when actors and actresses had no legal standing and were classed as vagabonds. In this drama Miss Bancker had the stage to herself throughout. Such lines as she used are dear to the heart of the elocutionist. They range from comedy to tragedy and end with a startling climax and curtain.

"A Divorce Cure" is on the "Similia Similibus Curantur" principle. The husband destroys the wish for a divorce by making it very easy to obtain and by apparently giving his wife up with pleasure. Immediately he appreciates in value and the object of her previous admiration becomes "a dirty little monkey." The play stabs divorce and attempts to resuscitate the old fashioned idea of "once married, forever united" etc., and the gallery applauds vigorously.

The construction of the play is very loose. Perhaps when Harry St. Maur translated it from the French of Sardou he left out the articulations. For certainly the body and the limbs do not hold together. It must be St. Maur for the articulation in Sardou's creations is perfect. For instance a man named Grover Pursely appears in the first act, he takes up more than his share of the time and stage, considering that he appears only casually again, in discoursing upon the relations between him and his wife. Thereafter no one knows anything about him. He wanders about the stage casually like the famous restless Jew. I suppose he is a warning to the two about to be divorced. Like the Duc D'Orleans in the Curtain Raiser his fate is uncertain. By the way the parts of the Duc and of Grover Pursely were taken by the same man—Mr. J. P. Cope. His destiny and fate slighted in both plays have still not deprived him of an apparent interest in life. Perhaps the ribbons and the magnificent appearance he makes as the Duc do much to smooth the manner of his passing. But a play with the moral so obvious and insistant as A Divorce Cure would be tiresome without Emily Bancker.

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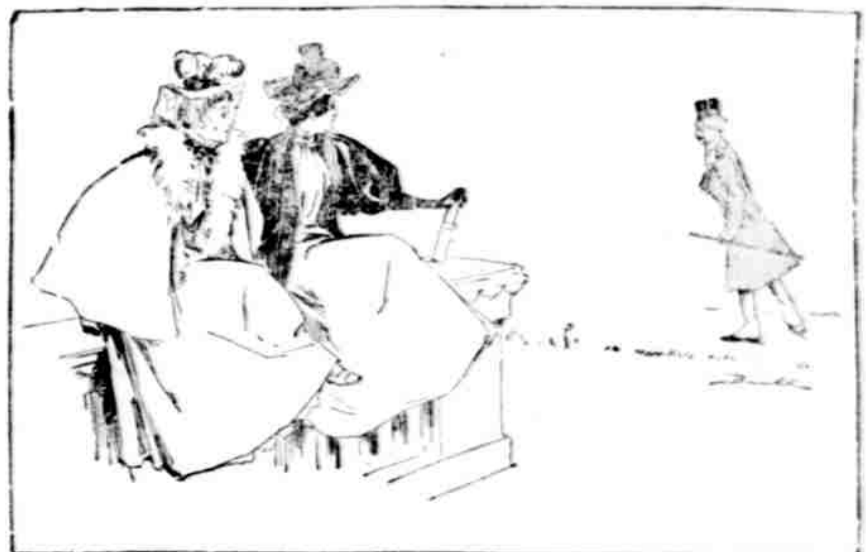
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Ella—What do you consider man's greatest fault?  
Stella—Being so scarce.