

MUSIC AND DRAMA.

A fashionable audience crowded the Schiller on the occasion of its opening as an English-speaking theater; and the ornate interior was enhanced by the bright costumes of women. The scene was one of coziness and brilliancy before the curtain went up on a sort of prologue called "The Major's Appointment." The authors, Messrs. Nelson Wheatcroft and George Hackus, acknowledged indebtedness to Miss Julia Schayer, a writer in the Century magazine, for what they suppose to be the idea of the story. They are mistaken in their supposition, but they are courteous in giving credit to whom they believe it due. "The Major's Appointment" is a dull and depressing piece of insanity, which purports to be pathetic. An aged officeholder who suddenly loses his position as a clerk (he lives in luxurious surroundings) finds himself without a vocation. He is awaiting an appointment and receives a document which he construes as an order to report for duty. The self-importance of the old man when he thinks himself again under orders is the only touch of humanity in the whole piece, and even this was indifferently enacted. One of the several superfluous characters in the sketch informs the Major that he has been made the victim of a practical joke. Thereupon the veteran officeholder proceeds to expire after a ghastly theatrical fashion. The audience indulges in a sigh of relief.

"Gloriana" is in three acts, and according to the playbill it is a farce-comedy. One is quickly undeceived as to its being a comedy, for it is already a farce in full dress and broadly British at that. There is a comical basis to the plot, but it might have been adapted to American conditions as well as to those of cockneydom. The theme is a reversal and parody of "The Lady of Lyons" plot, a wild young diplomat changing places with his valet to escape an adventuress with whom he has entangled himself. The adventuress—the word does not describe the woman but it will serve—pounces on him the morning of his wedding and bids him in livery. He confesses he is a mental and begs to be forgiven; but she, like the heroine of "The Grand Duchess," likes his sunny beauty all the more in his lowly station and declares in Claude Melnotte's words that "Love levels all ranks, and lays the shepherd's crook beside the scepter," etc. The fun of the first act is found in the spang of a British snob by Otis Harlan, who plays the valet and finds himself suddenly in the habiliments of his master. He is gaily amusing; the farce during its early stages is borne on his shoulders; on his acting, genial as it is, is too incongruous even for farce. While doing the valet he is a smart American, not a Cockney, as he ought to be; therefore when he poses as his master, the diplomatist, a certain point of comicality is lost. Mr. Harlan is clever as it is, but his work will be twice more enjoyable when he observes the consistency of an English servant's character.

In the second act the scene is changed to the flat of Mrs. Lovering, the adventuress, who appears to be the protégée of a tall, lanky, eccentric Russian aristocrat. Miss Henrietta Crossman is pretty and icily sparkling as the woman for whom no fitting name can be found in the English language. She could exist only in a French comic opera—or an English farce. She employs her lover to wait on table as a servant in livery while she entertains at breakfast her Russian board of a protector. The trio is in this situation when the card is brought in of the valet, who is masquerading as his master, Leopold Fitz Jocelyn. Notwithstanding the utter extravagance of his antics, Mr. Otis Harlan again kept his auditors in laughter, especially in a tipsey scene with the Russian functionary. As the dignitary from the Czar Mr. Edwin Stevens acted with considerable graphic power, but he was tempted to out-Herod Herod in the part. Miss Henrietta Crossman as Gloriana, the hoodswoman, was more reposeful than her associates in her work, and was polished and moderate, looking charming both in her rich and humble costumes. Speaking of her humble costumes, that suggests to say that mistress and maid change costumes in the last act even as master and man do in the first. Such complications would be intolerable, of course, except in the nightmare of farce.

The part of the young man who is trying to get married under the persecutions of Gloriana is played acceptably by Mr. Charles B. Welles; and the dainty and demure young English girl whom he wishes for a wife is Margaret Robinson. This young actress looked to advantage also in the "certain-raiser," but she was not taxed in either piece to do anything but look charming. She was a vision of beauty in the third act of "Gloriana," when she wore a bridal gown and veil. Mr. Thomas A. Wise appeared as one of those middle-class English uncles of which we have had dozens in the plays Ned Southern brings out. Miss May Robson was sharp enough as a London servant girl, though she took certain liberties with a louse gown too large for her. The liberties she might modify, if not the gown.

"The Paper Chase," the piece which Miss Vokes and her company of players presented at Hooley's Theater last evening for the first time in Chicago, is but a farcical version of "A Scrap of Paper," the comedy which frequent presentations on the local stage have made familiar to the Chicago public. Its plot is built upon the complications created by the loss of a prized document—a recipe for curry dressing replacing the letter of the comedy—and its personages have unmistakable counterparts in Sardou's clever play, only that in the cow-sotting Mr. Charles Thomas has supplied them are broadened as the exigencies of farce demand. The English author, however, has robbed his production of some of the effectiveness it might otherwise possess by presenting it in a too extended form. The plot is but a slender one at best, and when spread over three acts it becomes not only attenuated to the point of barrenness in certain places but it wears the auditor by too long continued variation of one theme. The farce could be compressed into two acts, and when preceded by a one act curtain-raiser might constitute an attractive evening's entertainment, but in its present shape the need of condensation and the resultant increased briskness in movement are frequently felt.

Miss Vokes and her co-workers present the farce in the finished, merry manner that have in former engagements won for them warm admirers among Chicago theater-goers. Miss Vokes finds in Mrs. Pomfret, the kind friend who will always make "everything right if you'll just leave it to me," a role permitting a display of the vivacious manner, the abundant good nature, and the eccentric little peculiarities of action and movement that have been seen in every play she has presented for many seasons, and which have won for her a goodly coterie of followers. Folk Morris, in the part of a forgetful dotard in search of a cure for baldness, offered another of his delightfully finished character sketches. Ferdinand Gottschalk found a congenial rôle in Mr. Baskerville, a jealous but flirting husband; and Courtenay Thorpe as Capt. Kirby was amusing not only in speech and action, but the idea of his dainty graces and elegant manner belonging to an army Captain was in itself smile-provoking. Walter Granville made a satisfactory Dixon and R. Franklyn "doubled" as Mr. Wagstaffe and the Inspector. Miss Flora Clitherow was pleasing as Mrs. Baskerville, and Miss Evangelina Irving was acceptable as Nelly. "The Paper Chase" will be presented all the week and the management announces a matinee Wednesday.

"Where are the Shakespearean dramas best received?" Mme. Modjeska was asked by a reporter for the New York Times. "Everywhere in the world," she answered, "except in New York—perhaps I ought not to say it, but I will," she added, laughing, "everywhere but in New York." "Art cannot exist without a home. We have in America no place where the actor can stay and develop his talent. We are tramps, wandering from place to place. We have no standard theaters, few stock companies, no conscientious devotion to legitimate art. Every actor tries to make money. The star system kills the genius it would foster. The schools train young people of mediocre talent for mediocre work, and the modern play furnishes a field for such work. Look at the beautiful houses of art in the Old World. In Prague the poor peasant people raised \$2,000,000 to build a theater. It burned as soon as it was finished. Within three months they raised \$2,000,000 more and built a theater that is a worthy home for art. You have nothing that approaches it in this country. What do you do here? A rich man builds a theater and gives it to the city and the city puts in a livery stable keeper or a drug man as manager. One week they have great actors in the legitimate drama, the next they have a degrading play, acted in a degrading manner. Or a looseup and saucer scene interpreted by pretty girls and handsome men of no talent.

"I have hundreds of letters a year from young girls desiring to go on the stage. Now, out of some three hundred aspirants in the last year, I have found one girl that can act. She is in my company. 'What are the essential qualifications of a successful actress?' they ask me, and I say, 'Soul—soul—soul! After that, mind; after that, a pretty face, for we have no use for a homely woman on the stage. Then a winning voice, an attractive personality. But soul first, for talent is not always apparent at first, but is the child of the soul.'

"There is great talent among American women.

I have cried with Georgia Cayvan—she has feeling, soul—and laughed with Ada Rehan; and Annie Russell and Mrs. Booth—all are talented. But it is the people. They have no respect for art. They and the star system, the love of money, kill artistic growth."

Ten years ago the A. M. Palmer company—it was then called the Union Square—presented at the Columbia a play called "A Parisian Romance." Reports had preceded the organization of the profound impression made by a young and unknown actor in one of the subordinate parts. Gossip at that time said—how true the statement was one never learned—that the character in the play which had been lifted to sudden prominence was one which had been rejected by Mr. J. H. Stoddart, the veteran leader of the Union Square company. The crowded house that night watched the young stranger, who essayed the rôle of Baron Chevrial, observed him with an ever increasing intensity which was not demonstrative until it culminated in an outburst after the death scene at the banquet. The performance was practically stopped while the uproar of applause continued, but the young actor had too much taste to appear in an open scene. The action was permitted to be resumed, but when the curtain fell the house was again in tumult. After a delay which was filled with enthusiastic cheering the new actor, in his dressing-gown, with his youthful face free of the wrinkles of Baron Chevrial, was pushed before the curtains. Then he got a reception which some actors earn after a lifetime of service, but it came to him at the threshold of his career. It is almost a decade since that night, and Richard Mansfield has since distinguished himself in many and varied rôles; but it is not likely he has ever tasted more sincere applause than that which proclaimed his triumph on his first appearance in Chicago. The play has lived in the meantime, not because it is a particularly interesting story, but because of the subsidiary character which Stoddart rejected and Mansfield created. That "A Parisian Romance" cannot be announced nowadays in Chicago without drawing a crowd goes without saying. It was produced last night at the Grand Opera-House, and criticism discharged its task in merely saying that Richard Mansfield was the Baron Chevrial.

Mr. William H. Crane's impersonation of Senator Huxford in "The Senator" is attracting his admirers to McVicker's, notwithstanding the fact that the portrayal is familiar to them. The character as he represents it is not only Western in its broodingness, it is also human in its touches of sympathy. This play deserves its popularity, and Mr. Crane is entitled to the praise accorded to him in the title rôle. He may not have great flexibility as a comedian, but there are certain generous traits of American character which he understands, and these he satisfactorily represents. Miss O'Neil is charming both in person and manner as the heroine; and the other members of the company are equal to the requirements of the varied parts. "The Senator" is as fresh and enjoyable today as when it came from the pens of David D. Lloyd and Sydney Rosenfeld.

Where the players are: Stuart Robson plays in Charleston and Savannah this week, James T. Powers in St. Louis, Robert Downing in West Virginia and Ohio towns, Katie Emmett in New Orleans, Nat C. Goodwin in Louisville, Ky.; Charles Dickson in St. Louis, Jefferys Lewis in San Francisco, Margaret Mathier in Sacramento, Stockton, and San José, Cal.; Nellie McHenry in St. Louis, Julia Mariow in Minneapolis, Annie Pixley in Boston, Sol Smith Russell in Kansas City, Roland Reed in Montana cities, Alexander Selvig in San Francisco, and Frederick Ward and Louis James in New Orleans.

Ramsay Morris' comedy company, which includes George Giddens, John Glandonning, Harry Gwynnente, Elsie De Wolfe, Mrs. E. J. Phillips, and other players, began its tour in Montreal last night, presenting "Joseph," an adaptation of a play which had a run of more than 500 nights at the little Theater Déjazet in Paris.

"Chicago has been coming up during the last four years—likewise its streets." This is the simple joke with which Frank Lincoln, the American humorist, greets his Chicago acquaintances on his return after four years spent in wandering over the world, entertaining audiences in every clime. He will be in Chicago two weeks.

"The Pulse of New York," which is making the rounds of the outlying theaters, is at Havli's. Miss Stella Mayhew shows her versatility in a number of varied characters. Walter Jones has no less than three rôles in which to rotate. The scenery illustrates different quarters of New York.

Wemyss Henderson, who managed the New York run of "Sindbad" this summer, arrived in Chicago yesterday. He will represent in New York Manager David Henderson's different enterprises, "All Baba," the Chicago Opera-House, and the Duquesne Theater, Pittsburg.

Signora Elinora Duce, the Italian tragedienne, will appear at the Fifth Avenue Theater, New York, in January under the management of the Rosenfeld Brothers. During her stay in this country the actress will appear in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and St. Louis.

One of the largest crowds ever assembled in the Chicago Opera-House witnessed the 130th performance of "All Baba" Sunday night. Although the spectacle is now in the twenty-first week of its run its patronage remains large.

"Senator Apple-Jack" and "Sons of Sardinia Land," two laughable acts, are the principal attractions at Haverly's Casino. Crowded houses attend the performances.

"The Danger Signal," a sensational drama after which a half dozen melodramas are modeled, may be seen at the Windsor.

Mr. W. H. Crane has entered on the fourth week of his engagement at McVicker's, presenting "The Senator."

"The Midnight Alarm," with its fire-engine and horses, is this week at the Clark Street Theater.