GOSSIP OF THE STAGE.

News and Notes of Plays and Players.

New York, Dec. 16.—I don't know whether you have heard of Mme. Alexandra Viardo, the Polish tragedienne. No? Well, take my advice and don't. The madame succeeded Richard Mansfield at the Fifth Avenue theater and made as big a fiasco as was Mansfield's success. Mme. Viardo, on her press agent says, is noble. In the midst of the nobility, then, should she relent. She has certainly failed to elevate the New York stage. At least that is what all the critics say, and so say I.

Down at the Fourteenth Street theater Andrew Mack, who has been touring the country for two or three years in poor Billy Scanlan's old play, "Alpine Acorn," is playing to record breaking business in Ramsey Morris' melodrama, "An Irish Gentleman." Of course there isn't much literary merit to the piece, but it fits Mack, and he has scored a big personal triumph.

Marguerite Sylva, who has duplicated Clara Lipman's success at the Herald Square theater as the French maid, is talking of starring. Just think of it!

Clara Lipman, by the way, is a real live star. With her husband, Louis Mann, she is being featured by George W. Lederer in "The Telephone Girl." It looks as though this time they had struck fortune's wheel.

Nobody appears able to understand just why Charles Frohman brought the Chinese play, "The First Born," back to New York at the Garden. Perhaps it was to exploit Lottie Collins and her lingerie in that naughty song that shocked all London, "The Little Widow." If so, a grateful public gives him thanks. Lottie is an artist from the tips of her toes to her head.

Wilton Lackaye has gone a-starring again in "The Royal Secret" and later will be seen in this city.

I want to say another word about Maude Adams. She is still packing the Garrick theater to the doors, and her engagement has been extended until March. John Drew takes to the road in January. Who has made the genuine success?

The material of which Rose Coghlan's dress, worn in the ballroom scene of "The White Heather," is made is said to have cost the mere trifle of $25 a yard. It was furnished along with the other costumes of this scene by the management.

By the way, Charles Frohman intends to produce three new curtain raisers before the end of the present season. These are "Oh, Susannah," now running with extraordinary success at the Old Bowery theater in London; a new one by Odonovan, the author of "La Poupee," and Bisson's latest piece, called "Jodelette," the American adaptation of which is to be made by William Gillette. The author of the Odonovan piece is from London, the author of "Thoroughbred," which was presented in this city at the Garrick theater, with Henry B. Dixey in the leading part.

Millie Price Dow, the English dancer who retired from the stage several years ago to become Mrs. Wallace, a prominent contractor and builder named Chlopsyard, then living in Buffalo, will return to her profession immediately.

Leander Richardson says: "The very liveral cutting between by Daniel Frohman upon the managership of Mr. Fiske's "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" at the Battery, probably saved that piece from being secured immediately thereafter by some New York production. The liberality with which Mr. Frohman swung his axe is to be gathered from the fact that he shortened the play by fully an entire act. Not all his manuscript was chopped out of the first two acts alone, and as the final curtain doesn't fall on the second night until nearly a quarter after 11, the acts in the original play would quite naturally have been considered interminable as well as dull. Mr. Frohman, in pursuit of audits, introduced in the third act of "The Princess and the Butterfly" a number of men playing with balls and otherwise carrying themselves like prize idiots engaged in exposing a particularly silly fad. These characters were eliminated by the Lyceum manager, and it is a very lucky thing that they were. In the present play "The Princess and the Butterfly" will doubtless run for large houses for quite a considerable period. It is but the kind of a play to avoid successfully to the greatest and most enthusiastic vicinity of the Lyceum. It isn't very strong, but it is so well put together the story is not without interest, and the characters belong to the well bred set, whose members don't offer run away with them. Some of the stage papers I perceive are raving over the beauty and accomplishments of Mrs. Julia Cox. I am prepared to admit that she is a very handsome girl, but I adhere to my first impression that her British affectations do not add to the charm of her personality or the sincerity of her acting. She ought to eat plenty of ice. Her manner, at least, is cold enough to indicate that she might be successful in that pursuit."

"It makes me laugh to read that Charles Hoyt is going to collaborate on a play with Duncan Thompson," said a well known comedian the other day. "For I do not believe it. For years Hoyt has been promising to write plays for actors and to collaborate with playwrights, but he has never done so, except for members of his own companies, and I do not believe that he ever will. He has never sold outright but one play in his life—"A Parlor Match"—and it is one of the sorest recollections that he has. He sold the play early in his career and has watched its regular regeneration with ever increasing envy and chagrin until it has become a fixed principle of his to sell nothing outright, but to lease on a well secured royalty basis. When he has been on the road, of course he met stars and managers in every city that he visited, and almost every night he would meet somebody whom he would take a fancy to, and before the night was over he saw possibilities in him for a great character and promised to write a play for him, but when he awoke in the morning he changed his mind, while the actor went his way hugging to himself the notion that he was soon to be made famous by the great farcical playwright. The actor never got the play, though. Among the stars who have for brief periods at one time or another during the past ten years cherished such illusions are De Wolf Hopper, Digby Bell, Thomas Q. Seabrooke, Francis Wilson, Eugene Canfield, Samuel Reed, Edward Holland and others.

"Charles Hoyt is very clever, and he knows it. And does not propose to let anybody get any share of his thunder. He can do well enough alone and does not need to collaborate. His brain teems with plots and situations, and he can write the dialogue and lyrics as well as the purely mechanical part of a play or opera. Better than most men, so why should he take kids himself a partner to share the glory and the financial returns when he can have them all to himself?

The present talk about the death of melodrama is pretty well refuted by the success of plays of this class now on the stage. I have told you that this is about the worst season known to theatrical managers in six years. Notwithstanding this fact, Davis & Keogh, who are the undisputed promoters of America, have on tour the following plays: "Fallen Among Thieves," "The Bilboards of New York," "The Irish Artist," "Paddy Cahill," "Shipwrecked," "Down In Dixie," "On the Mississippi," they old stand by "The Hustler," "Girl Wanted," "On the Bowery," "The Waifs of Gotham," "Darkest New York," and "Hearts of the Klondike." They are also producing in London "Lost In Siberia," "On Land and Sea," "The Black Cat" and "Our Guardian Angel." Both Mr. Davis and Mr. Keogh express themselves as more than satisfied with business so far this season, and as far as attractions are concerned they can certainly give the profits Mr. Charles Frohman scores, spades and large and small casino.

FRANK CONNELLY.

A Composer's Start.

Herve, the French composer, began his career as an organist. When a boy, he strolled into a church one day and persuaded the blower to allow him to try the organ after the morning service. Then improvised something wonderfully good and strange. The priest supposed to hear it, strolled in and was amazed.

"Where did you learn to play the organ, my boy?" he asked.

"This is the first time I have ever played it, father," he replied.

"Well, you had better apply for the post of organist here," said the priest. "There is a vacancy next week."

The boy applied and was accepted.

A Clever Cat.

During a performance of "Esmeralda" in Rome, N. Y., recently, the cows in one act coming off all hooked Frederick R. Ward from his feet and he exclaimed, "What in Wait, Marguis, is a little cat doing? That comes to us with and cows like!" when the aforesaid cat, sitting up, and sending herself between the legs of the marquis, gave vent to a vicious "meow." The effect may be imagined. Mr. Wilton made a liberal offer for the cat, but she evidently preferred stock work.

Queer Stage Tributes.

Occasionally bouquets pull on the enthusiastic admirer of baritone genius, and he is driven to act blind or extraordinarily to testify to his admiration. A certain highly popular operatic "bag" was assuredly justified in being more alarmed than grateful when she discovered nestling in the recesses of a bouquet handed over the footlights a large white rat with pink eyes.

It was the favorite pet of a schoolboy admirer, who had thus parted with his treasure in order to more pronounced show his devotion to the charming actress. The living tribute had been inclosed in a strong box, which was then concealed in a bouquet purchased with the hoarded pocket money of the youthful admirer.

Birmingham, England, boasts of a weekly paper the proprietor of which on occasions of his favorite actress appears in the role of a newsboy and cries "Extra! Extra! Extra!" Birmingham is a manufacturing town, and the paper is devoted to the interests of the city. The actress is a great favorite with the Birmingham people, and when she appears in the role of a newsboy the sale of the paper is greatly increased. The actress is a great favorite with the Birmingham people, and when she appears in the role of a newsboy the sale of the paper is greatly increased.

"The Bonnie Brier Bush."

In dramatizations of popular novels theatrical managers have in recent years found things as good as the fools whose eggs were pure Klondike. Ill certain fine. The resulting plays have always been successful. That this is so may be better understood by calling to mind the phenomenal receipts and enduring popularity of Anthony Hope's "The Prisoner of Zenda," Mark Twain's "Pudd'nhead Wilson," Mrs. Burnett's "A Lady of Quality," Thomas Hardy's "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," and, or when Mr. Wegner is acting Hamlet, prince of Denmark in the private theater, in "Great Expectations" or even when the performance of the beautiful Miss Fotheringay is under the stern eye of a magnificent London manager in "Pendennis." So it is likely that a new English novel, with a purpose, by Francis Griffith, which is to be published the first of the new year under the somewhat too theatrical title of "Sunlight and Limelight," may fill "a long felt want."

How Actors Learn Parts.

Actors' methods of studying the lines of a part vary. Some memorize quickly, some keep a book handy, and so further effort in that direction is necessary. Others burn much midnight oil in acquiring the author's words.