Dramatic and Lyric.

The Banner Dramatic Company of America at the Theater next Week.—Daniel Frohman and the Lyceum Plays—The Tabernacle Choir Trip to the Fair.—Stage Gossip and other Noway Notes.

Next week will test the efficacy of the drama to draw money when other branches of business are languishing. Some of the dramatic journals are saying that general hard times do not affect the theater—on the contrary, that they rather help it, for the reason that it is when people are most depressed that they most need the cheering influence of the play. At all events the coming test will be a perfect one, as Daniel Frohman's Lyceum Theater company is known far and wide as the American Dramatic company par excellence and Salt Lakers fully appreciate the fact that Herbert Kelcey, Georgia Cayvan and the other artists of that splendid organization can drive dull care away if it is possible to be driven. Since last appearing here the company have added two new pieces to their repertoire—Americans Abroad and the Grey Mare, and these, with the successes of the past, The Charity Ball, The Wife, and Old Heads and Young Hearts, constitute the banner week's bill of the year.

Mr. H. B. Warner, who is in this city in advance of the company, which opens next Tuesday night, after mentioning the fact that Mr. Frohman himself comes here with his company, said:

"When Mr. Frohman went abroad last May, it was not so much with the desire to witness plays then being performed there, but more with a view of ascertaining what results had been reached by the various authors with whom he had contracts for new material. Many of the plays which are now being produced in London are not new to him. He is frequently enabled to read the manuscripts of these pieces long before production. He has many new plays for the Lyceum company coming, but how they will turn out it is impossible to say.

"Mr. Frohman said that there is a prevailing impression in London that the music halls are now in strong opposition to dramatic enterprises. Managers claim that the attendance at the music halls is now as great, and so many other outside attractions prove such strong magnets that the public is being weaned from the theater. Mr. Frohman said he did not agree with this idea. He thought the drama would always flourish; that nothing can kill the theater so long as the theater offers the public good and attractive work. When people do not go to the theater there is a reason for it, and that reason is found in the play. The plays which have been produced in London for the past season have not always been of a kind likely to attract large audiences, hence the audiences have gone elsewhere for their amusements. It is so in this country also. Good things always succeed."

"Are there any novelties to be brought forward in London?"

"Yes, the English authors have many plays, some of which are likely to achieve success; but where success will strike it is hard to predict. The opportunity for the American dramatist is always excellent. The difficulty is in getting from him the right character or class of play such as will be likely to interest and amuse an audience. We constantly hear the cry that American dramatists have no opportunity, but I have never yet seen that any thoughtful American manager has declined an American play that is likely to find favor with his public. Certainly Mr. Frohman has never done so. We know that men like Pinero, Jones, Grundy and Sims are capable of building good technical plays; yet plays with one-half their skill of construction, with far less than their brightness and cleverness of dialogue will succeed and find great favor in this country if the subjects were American, if the characters were American—for our own life is far more congenial in its theme and in its interest to our audiences than that of a foreign country. But the plays that we are constantly praying to receive from our authors do not come, but instead come many which lack important essentials for success."

"Can you name what those essentials are?"

"To name them would require much space and ramification over the subject of play writing. But it is chiefly the want of an American theme, the absence of interesting episodes, or what is called movement, and the feebleness of characterization. Many a play defies all rules of construction and is successful if it has the underlying basis of interest. Many plays that are extremely skillful in construction, clever in dialogue, keen in analysis, fail of popular success because they are lacking in that special charm which will carry plays of lesser technical worth toward success. It is not all good plays which succeed, nor all bad plays which fail."

"What about the new plays in the company's repertoire?"

"I regard Americans Abroad as a charming fairy story in style and treatment. It is the familiar tale of our childhood of the princess disguised as a beggar whom the noble hero rescues only to learn at last her rank and power. It is a [illegible] of a surprise to those who know the powerful work which the great Victorien Sardou generally offers to his admirers. It is a delightful picture of fashionable society life for the first two acts, with a touch of the author's facile power of dramatic complication in the last act, which plainly shows the master hand. It will be a novelty to the friends of the company here, inasmuch as it is pure comedy, graceful and refined.

"In the other new play The Grey Mare, as in Americans Abroad, there is a wide departure from all the plays with which the public are familiar in connection with the Lyceum Company, for here we have comedy of the brightest sort—characters of amusing effect, and a story of remarkable simplicity, though treated with extreme ingenuity. It is not farce, but is legitimate in its comedy touches, like Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer.

"The predominance and variety of comedy during the coming engagement of the Lyceum Company here is most striking. In Americans Abroad we offer a specimen of present day French comedy. In the Grey Mare is English comedy of today. In Old Heads and Young Hearts is English comedy of half a century ago. Even in the well known plays of The Wife and The Charity Ball there is plenty of amusing comedy and of a kind differing widely from that of all the other plays in the repertory, and being the most strictly American."

* * *

H. G. Whitney, who with Bishop Clawson has gone east in the interest of the Tabernacle choir tour, writes from Denver to Professor Stephens:

"Our reception here has been more than kind, it has been of the overpowering sort; and if it were not for the financial paralytic stroke which Denver has sustained, I believe the reception to the Tabernacle choir could be made something like a triumphal entry. Even as it is we expect the choir will do a good one night's business. We found local managers anxious to let their houses on very fair sharing terms, which shows their faith in the enterprise, or willing to rent to us outright. We had the choice of four places, the Broadway theater, the Manhattan Beach house, the Coliseum, or the Trinity M. E. church—the latter being the magnificent edifice whose great organ Prof. Radcliffe came over here to assist in dedicating. The Tabor Grand was occupied on the only night the choir can devote to Denver, or Manager McCourt assured us he would have been glad to book it. We have been greatly aided by Mr. McCourt, whose house, you know, is closely allied to the Salt Lake Theater from the fact that both are in Al Hayman's chain or circuit, and his influence, especially in introducing us to the press, has been very valuable to us. Another gentleman to whom we are mainly indebted for the offer of the church, is Prof. Blake, who, you remember, once spent some time in Salt Lake and gave Belshazzar there. He is now president of the Continental Oil Co. and a trustee of the Trinity M. E. church. He is an ardent lover of music, and an admirer of yourself and your choir, which he says he considers gives the best choral music he has heard anywhere in America. Of course, we can make no positive booking as yet—our work is merely preliminary, to get refusals of dates and to 'whoop things up' generally, by letting the papers know of the enterprise. We are forced to tell them everywhere that whereas the trip is 'all but' a fixed fact, the committee we represent are still wrestling with the railroads at home on the question of rates, and, while we hope for the best, yet even at this late hour the whole enterprise may 'gang aft agley,' if the railroads will not do their part to help so big a scheme. We sincerely trust you will have the question settled ere now and that we will be apprised of it in Kansas City, for it is a great drawback for us when we have received as good an offer as we did in Denver, not to be able to close it on the spot, so many things are liable to happen after we leave a place, to unsettle our arrangements. People in Salt Lake who feel that times ought to put in just one day in Denver. We went about with curiosity reading the signs posted on the front doors of bank after bank occupying the great business centers of the city: 'This bank is in the hands of the comptroller of the currency.' The blinds were all drawn, and not a sign of life was apparent in or around them. The three or four banks which weathered the storm are crammed with people—though many of them are depositors. The papers are full of notices to stockholders of this, that and the other bank, submitting propositions on which they can resume, and asking stockholders to call and sign them. Generally they contemplate paying off all indebtedness, running from six months to two years, at 6 per cent interest. It is said that many are signing, convinced that to require the banks to try and realize on their loans and other assets now means nothing left for the stockholders. One notice in the papers calls on all the stockholders of a certain savings bank to meet at the Coliseum, a hall capable of holding 3000 or 4000, admission by case book only, to frame a petition to the courts in favor of discharging the assignee of the bank and appointing some one who shall be named by the depositors. Mr. Thatcher (an uncle of Ned Boyle's by the way) to whom we had a letter, is president of the clearing house and head of one of the banks that survived. He and others whom we told of the manner in which Salt Lake banks had stood up under the trying times said it would be the grandest thing that could happen for Salt Lake if, after the crisis was over, it could be said that her people succeeded in keeping cool and retaining their common sense, when people in other cities all around them were pulling down their own financial institutions in mad, senseless, unreasoning and unreasonable panics."

* * *

A telegram received today from Chicago from Messrs. Clawson and Whitney says that arrangements look extremely favorable for the Tabernacle choir concerts en route to the World's Fair, at Denver, Kansas City and St. Louis. The concerts will probably be given in the Trinity M. E. church in Denver, the Kansas City Auditorium, and the St. Louis Exposition.

* * *

Next to Richard Mansfield Mr. Augustin Daly has long enjoyed the reputation of being the sternest manager in the profession. As illustrating his autocratic methods, the following is taken from the N. Y. Sun: An English actor, now in New York, who has visited Augustin Daly's London theater, says that other members of the company besides James Lewis will resign after this season. It appears that the discipline at the London theater is even firmer than in the New York house. An hour before the curtain goes up every one in the company, from Miss Rehan to the property boy, is obliged to assemble in the green room and stand in line like school children. The stage manager comes in with a big book and calls off the names in alphabetical order.

Mr. Clark is the man with the book. He was so rattled on the first night that when he got to the C's he shouted:

"Clark."

No answer, for the others were afraid to speak.

"Clark."

More silence.

Then Clark fined himself $1 for being late. He had to pay it too. A little farther down the list he called:

"Rehan."

"Present, sir," replied the actress.

"I didn't hear you," said Mr. Clark.

"Fine her 50 cents," spoke up Mr. Daly. "Next time she will speak up."

Jimmie Lewis laughed at this, and he was fined 25 cents for unseemly conduct. And this is the performance that goes on every night before the play begins.

If any of the slaves speak to Mr. Daly either in or out of the theater they are fined 25 cents.

All complaints to Mr. Daly must be written out and delivered to the back door man. He turns them over to the stage manager and he gives them to Mr. Daly's clerk, and from there they go to headquarters. If a personal interview is granted the player must have three different people beside he who stand in front of Mr. Daly's door. He won't receive any one unless his bulldog is in the office to protect his master in case of trouble. Life in the Siberian mines is one wild gaiety compared to existence in Mr. Daly's London company, so the members say. Not even the revered Rehan is free from these fines and annoyances. There's only one member Mr. Daly does not dare fine. That's the dog.

* * *

While the Lyceum Theater Company is on the road the home theater will be occupied by Sothern in Captain Lettarblair, it being his seventh annual engagement there as a star. As Miss Merington's clever and witty comedy was withdrawn last year only before it had exhausted its popularity, it should easily fill the Lyceum during the time weeks that have been set apart for its run.

The company supporting Mr. Sothern will be practically the same as that which was with him last year, except in one important case, the leading lady. Miss Virginia Harned gives place to Miss Grace Kimball, a young girl who has been much less on the stage than most. Miss Kimball is said to far exceed Miss Harned in ability.

STAGE GOSSIP.

Ned Boyle and his talented wife still tarry in our midst.

Alexander Salvini will essay Hamlet next season.

Mr. Eugene Ormonde will be the Matthew Culver of The Wife cast.

Henrietta Crosman will succeed Georgia Drew Barrymore in Frohman's comedians.

The serpentine dance on roof gardens is the prevailing amusement in New York this summer.

Wm. Faversham, the serpent, in Aristocracy, joins the Empire theater forces in November.

The young nobleman in Aristocracy says that the word "damn" is an abbreviated edition of Hamlet's soliloquy.

Henry Miller and Viola Allen will play the leading roles in Chas. Frohman's stock company at the Empire theater this season.

Charles Alfred Byrne and Louis Harrison are credited with receiving $25,000 in royalties last season. Next year they will have six operas and plays on the road.

The wife of Mr. H. B. Warner, advance manager of the Lyceum company, who is now in this city with her husband, is Louise Paullin, the famous opera singer.

Wisely, like the clever dramatist that he is, M. Sardou has taken for his theme in Americans Abroad that which fits every age and every clime—love, pure and unadulterated love.

William W. Randall, well known in theatrical circles, has launched into existence a new paper devoted to the drama, music, vaudeville and circus. It is called "The Amusement Globe."

The Charity Ball and The Wife, probably the most admired of all the Lyceum plays, are now respectively in the fifth and sixth years of their performance, yet are always demanded at each engagement of the Lyceum company.

The curtain-raiser, White Roses, which the Lyceum company plays upon The Grey Mare night, has three characters only, which will be presented by Georgia Cayvan, Effie Shannon and Mrs. Thomas Whiffen.

Clay M. Greene and Mr. Thorne of Boston have written a comic opera for the Bostonians called The Maid of Plymouth, which, with The Ogalallas, will constitute the principal repertory of the Bostonians the coming season.

Since the recent terrific slump in silver, managers have urged Peter McCourt of Denver to change the name of The Silver Circuit, arguing that the name would make it unpopular with careful managers, but Peter remained true to the name as he is to the cause of silver.

In the Charity Ball the part of the old organist, which was probably not remembered in the former presentation, will be made prominent this time by being in the hands of Augustus Cook, a new comer, who makes quite of a feature of it.

The casts of The Wife and The Charity Ball will be unchanged from their former presentation here excepting that Mr. Ratcliffe will assume the role previously played by Henry Miller, and Miss Shannon will be in the serious roles, while Bessie Tyree now plays Miss Shannon's former parts.

The performance of Boucicault's fine old comedy Old Heads and Young Hearts, and the quaint costumes of the period, 1830, will be a pleasant novelty to those who did not see the performance two years ago. The Lyceum company is the only one which ever presented this play in the correct costumes of the period the play is supposed to represent.

Bald Heads!

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