THEATRICALS IN NEW YORK.

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"The Cuckoo," the current attraction at Wallack's theater, is the latest offering from the French. The piece was "Englished" by Charles Brookfield, the well known London writer and dramatist. It will be remembered that its presentation in the English metropolis brought a hornets' nest about the ears of the play owner. The attack was especially severe owing to the fact that he had refused to issue a permit for another play which was declared by its would-be promoters to be less than half as coarse as "The Cuckoo." Any one who has seen the piece as it is presented at Wallack's theater in this city will be certain to become a partisan of those who condemn the play owner, for a more suggestive and indecent farce has not been seen in New York in many a year.

If the play had as a foundation a really good or particularly bright story, its nastiness might be ignored or at any rate extenuated, but the motif of the play is neither strikingly original nor particularly well worked out. This sort of thing might go in Paris, and it is said that it has been a great success in London, although the latter statement is well nigh incredible, but I do not believe that "The Cuckoo" will ever become very popular in this country. A spasmodic wave of prurient curiosity may give it a temporary vogue, but it should enjoy more than an ephemeral success it will simply indicate that much of what has been said about the deterioration of the taste of American theater goers is true.

It is indeed a difficult matter to tell the story of "The Cuckoo" without shocking the proprieties. To put it as mildly as possible, Hugh Ferrant, the friend of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Penfold, devotes all of his spare time to efforts to induce the latter to go with him on a trip to Maidenbourne. This trip, according to the programme mapped out by the gay Ferrant, is to last 21 hours. He even goes to the length of suggesting that, inasmuch as Maidenbourne is directly on the road to the Dieppe at which her aunt resides, she might easily tell her husband that she had been to visit her relatives.

At about this juncture and after the wife warns the husband that it would be a good plan for him to watch her a little more closely if he is at all interested in the matter of his honor, Penfold is smitten by the charms of Lady Alexandra Parke, whom he has met at the Aquarium. In order to have the way clear for the prosecution of his intrigue he suggests to his wife that she pay a brief visit to the aunt already alluded to. Ferrant makes a rush for the train, and the couple are next seen at the hotel in Maidenbourne. Ferrant, who loses no opportunity to exercise upon the impulsiveness of his temperament, secures a dressing room and appears at the hotel in a shivering and doubtfully bedraggled condition. Later on a loose fish gets loose, and Ferrant again distinguishes himself. Finally a newspaper man gets hold of the story of Ferrant's heroism, and, prompted by a waiter who has seen Mrs. Penfold, sends the account to his paper in London. The Cuckoo, using the name of Penfold instead of Ferrant. This brings matters to a crisis, and the erstwhile guilty couple start for the city again. There the wife assumes an air of injured innocence and succeeds in getting the story of the holiday's escapade from him. Aided and abetted by the man, who, being her husband's warmest friend, has induced her to shine, she plays a part suggested by him and finally "forgives" her spouse.

This may be intensely funny in France, but with the majority of right minded persons in the United States it would be regarded as intensely vulgar, besides being as pathetic as to border upon the tragic.

The cast was a strong one and gave the piece a representation which was as artistic that much of its nastiness was submitted, but there is still more than enough of it to suit the most depraved taste. The list of players follows:

Hugh Ferrant ..... Joseph Holland
Thomas Penfold ..... Thomas Wise
H. H. Nova Scotia ..... Frank Lee Sheffield
Gaston ..... Byron Douglas
Robert Wyldingham ..... Harrison Armstrong
Mr. Hewson ..... David Montgomery
Mr. Frost ..... Frank Armstrong
Footman ..... Sergus Cohan
Waiter ..... Jack Lee
Boots ..... Harry Lewis
Alexander Penfold ..... Arthur Lewis
Lady Alexandra Parke ..... Eleanor Bonnell
Leighton ..... Gertrude Lee
Gertrude ..... Nellie Bunner
Miss Middlebrook ..... Anna West

In the cast of "The Cuckoo" the part of a serving maid was played by a young woman, Miss Nellie Butler. The role was a small and not by any means a "fat" one. There was not a single particularly bright line in it, and yet in the few moments that she was on the stage she won the favor of the audience in a marked degree. She will be heard of to a more important way some day.

The Earl of Rosslyn, the titled English gentleman who was at one time a shining light of the turf and later an unknown clerk, at a stipend of about $10, issued fortnightly, is to come to this country as an actor. The earl, it is said, felt that his title was worth more than $5-per, and accordingly adopted the stage as a profession at a moment when the stage wasn't looking, as the Brewery boy would put it. He has turned out, according to all accounts, a pretty good actor—for an earl—and would probably be able to win his way in his chosen field of effort even though he were not hampered by the title. He will make his appearance in England in a piece called "His Excellency the Governor," the American rights of which are owned by Charles Frohman. It is for this role that he has been engaged for New York.

And, by the way, this piece has revealed a condition of matrimonial and fraternal good will which is seldom seen in the theatrical world. When Charles Frohman determined to gratify the ambitions of Maude Adams and permit her to play Juliet, he made up his mind to give her as good support as it was possible to get. He made arrangements for closing the season of the English stock company in advance of the usual time in order to enable William Faversham to interpret the role of Tomas, his brother, Daniel Frohman, promised to do the same thing with the James K. Hackett company that his star might play Mercutio. This would naturally have left the Lyceum without an attraction after the close of the Hackett run in "Rupert of Hentzau." Brother Charles has been asked to come to the rescue with "His Excellency the Governor," in which the Earl of Rosslyn is to take part. Aside from this importation the actors will come from the Empire forces, except that one or two of the smaller parts will probably be played by Lyceum people. The effort of two brothers to help each other out would not be noteworthy in ordinary business life, but in the theatrical world it is almost unique.

Early in May dainty Belle Annie Burnell will sail for London, where she earned much fame and some money last year. She will play a brief engagement in that city, probably at the Garrick theater, the scene of her former triumphs. Last year Miss Burnell gave the Londoners her pathetic interpretation of the title role of "Sue," and Mr. Frohman, her manager, has wisely determined that it will be well to let her democratic but versatility be in one country at a time. It has therefore been arranged that she shall open in Madelaine Lucette Ryley's farce, "The Mysterious Mr. Bugle," in which she won success in this city. This play will be followed by two more, too strong but none the less charming comedies, "Catherine." Unless present plans are changed it is likely that Miss Burnell will play in London every summer hereafter. The quiet methods have served to make her an unusually strong favorite in that city, and when London likes an actress it likes her in a solid way which fashion that is mighty charming to the cockles of the managerial heart.

Prompted doubtless by the wonderful success of "Zaza," Olga Nethersole is to have a version of Alphonse Daudet's very naughty "Sapho," which she will present in this country at the beginning of her tour next year. The work is to be done by Clyde Fitch, who will take as his basis the original French story. "Sapho" earned for Daudet a place among the forty immortals of the Academy, and, while it is a trifle racy for general American consumption, the power of the treatment cannot be denied. Sixteen some years ago was seen a "Sapho" in French in this city, but its subtleties were beyond audiences who were able to follow the action of the piece only through a brief "arghument" printed on the programme or in one of those peculiar interlineary libretos which are so popular when foreign artists are on view.

Miss Nethersole is not to have the "Sapho" field to herself, however. Some time ago Julia Arthur was offered a version of the piece, which she declined because of the suggestiveness of the story. One of the most prominent managers in this country is reported to have acquired that version, which he will exploit in this city during the early part of next season. Besides these a number of the local stock companies of various cities are preparing to "do" the piece, so that it is not at all improbable that next season we may be in the midst of a "Sapho" craze, just as we are now Dumas mad.

Arthur Crispin

"THE CUCKOO" END OF ACT 2.

THE EARL OF ROSSLYN

SPEED PROGRESS ON THE WHEEL.

After 20 years of development the cycle has at least equaled in speed every means of traveling except the locomotive, power of electricity and steam. It can give the swiftest thoroughbred that ever flashed past the judge's stand a start and a beating in a mile race, while for shorter distances Geraldine Longman would be left panting in the lead. To illustrate the relative speeds of the different methods of human progression let us in fancy start them all in a mile handicap. No such thrilling race has ever been seen on any track, and it would be worth traveling a thousand miles to see, for unless one of another broke a record they would all break the tape at the same moment, proceeding a position such as sporting annals do not contain.

For the purpose of handicapping Major Taylor on his wheel he must be started at scratch. His nearest rival would be Salvator, on his remarkable effort at Morris park in 1896, when he placed a world's record, which still stands to his credit, he would be entitled to a start of 65 yards from Taylor, that Pelatier, the king of pacers, has gone a mile in 1:59¾. Our cyclist would have to give this lightning racer 291 yards, and Alix, the champion trotter, with a mark of 2:08¾, would be found on the 402 yard mark. This sets the end of another man's mark, and the other contestants in the great handicap must depend upon their own resources.

Given an ice course on which to skate, T. Donahue could do a mile in 2:12¾. This would gain for him a handicap of 541 yards from Taylor, so considerably over a quarter of a mile. In 1894 W. G. George ran a mile in 4:12¾. On this he would get credit for 1,110 yards, or 139 yards more than half a mile. In rowing Ruhlaer has the best time for his credit, and in order to make it an even race with Taylor he would have to be allowed a distance almost equal to three-quarters of a mile and would even then have to have the title to his favor. Perkins could, if given 1,032 yards handicap, win the balance of the mile in the same time that it takes Taylor to go the full distance, but to Natlish, the swimmer, would be given the greatest start of all, for he would only be called upon to swim 49 yards as against all the others.

But more marvelous even than the cyclist's speed is his power of endurance. To cover a mile in 91 4-5 seconds and 24 miles and 1,320 yards an hour is by no means as astonishing as to maintain a rate of 25 miles 1,173 yards an hour for 24 hours. The stupendous nature of the performance apparent when we consider that he could have run 61 of the swiftest horses in this country in a steadfast racing one after the other for ten miles each. This is probably the most wonderful evidence of human endurance and perfect mechanism ever seen in the world's history.

Such is the story of the development of speed by the cycle in the last two decades.

PECULIARITIES OF TRAP SHOOTERS.

Most all the prominent trap shooters have their little peculiarities. The famous Captain John E. Brown talks constantly when engaged in a match. He is always always personal and disagreeable. Frank Parmelee is a great kidder and is quite fond of "jollying" his adversaries like a cranky mermaid. J. A. H. Elliott is nervous and drinks black coffee to steady himself in all of his big shoots. Rollo O. Bicker is sad and silent. He has little to say, but keeps plugging away and generally gets there. E. D. Fulmer is serious and business like. In a match he knows nothing but shoot. Charlie Grim speaks only when spoken to and shoots just as he plows and hoes and cooks and sawed wood in his days. Fred Gilbert is also one of the reticent type, but occasionally wakes up and talks good and powdery while he shoots. G. W. Lemmis talks, but guardedly. He is too much interested in the scientific problem of coming out ahead. He is one of the popular shots among the rotaries.

Max Tedel Haskins, at present with William H. Crane, has been engaged by Nat Goodwin and Maxine Elliott to play the part of the frontier cowboy, Molly Larkins, in "The Cowboy and the Lady," in London this summer.

IN THE BASEBALL WORLD

How Quarrels Among the Magnates Injure the Game—Prospects of the Various National League Teams. Baseball In the Colleges. Interesting Chat.

[Copyright, 1899, by Charles E. Edwards.]

If Hamlet had lived at the end of the nineteenth century, he would never have said, "The play's the thing." The melancholy Dane, if he had been up to date, would have been prompted to say, "The game's the thing," for, as every baseball crank knows, the magnates who own the clubs may quarrel and fight and make deals and throw dirt in each other's faces all through the winter, but as soon as the teams put on their uniforms and the umpire cries "Play ball!" all such matters are thrown aside like last winter's heavy overcoat, not to be thought of again until another pennant has been fought for and won. Then, and not till then, the old sores may be reopened and old quarrels raked over. But during the playing season the magnates who have loomed up so large during the past few months dwindle down to pygmies in the eyes of the cranks in contrast to the mighty wielders of bat and ball.

Every winter the club owners have their sick spells and squabbles and troubles, but this year has surpassed them all in the magnitude of the deals that were planned and wires that were pulled to secure their passage. Men who have studied the game or have been identified with baseball interests in years past and thus understand the inner workings of the plots, know that the present troubles will bear fruit in due time. They perceive that the magnates are laying their wires for the organization of an eight league club to be made up of the largest cities and controlled by men who have the interests of the national game at heart.

The underlying cause of nearly every league complication in the past has been due to the baleful influence of "combines" of cliques of magnates, who hold meetings secretly before the regular conference of the league members and pledge themselves to vote for and stand by certain measures notwithstanding the wishes of their fellows or whatever arguments or information may be placed before them in the regular way. This, together with the "proxy" evil, is something that the leaders must forswear if they wish to retain the high standard on which the game now stands as well as the confidence and support of its patrons.

The players themselves, of course, can take no hand or part in these broils, and the majority of them take no particular interest in the matter, except in so far as they touch themselves personally. They know that one natural result will be an increase of salaries all around when things come to a head, for as matters now stand their wages are at the lowest ebb known in years, and any change will be a boon as far as they are concerned.

All this newspaper talk and the general interest that is taken throughout the country in the doings of the National league leaders throughout the nine playing months only add more conclusive evidence of the wonderful hold that baseball has on the hearts of the American public in general and the cranks in particular. What other game in the world has so much space given up to it in the public press during the time when it is not played? Unlike any other sort of sporting enthusiast, the baseball lover when he can't watch a game must needs talk or at the worst read of it.

For the past six weeks and more much pencil and paper and time have been expended in figuring out the prospects of each team for the League pennant. Eagerly the players have been scanned during the few games already played, at as yet little expense, to gain much insight into the real strength of the clubs has been afforded. Nevertheless a majority of the experts are agreed on a few points, the main one being that the Boston team won't have such a picnic in winning the flag as they had in winning the pennant the past two seasons. It is likewise generally admitted that Brooklyn, Cincinnati, St. Louis and Chicago have each been greatly strengthened and that fall and that each of them will give the champions a hard fight for premier honors.

Many have figured out completely in their minds just how the teams will stand in accord with their wishes, that the race, and the teams that beat them out in the finish will know that they have been playing baseball.

The Chicago include a fast lot of players, who will be able to put up a better game than last year, though the absence of Dahlen will probably be felt for a few weeks. The Cincinnatis, who are always a fast team, have been greatly strengthened by having big Jack Taylor, the crack St. Louis pitcher and Selbach, the former Washington left fielder, added to the list.

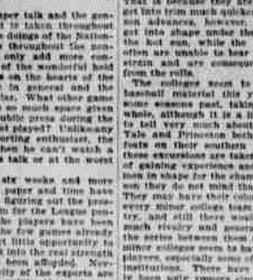
Many people who witness the opening games every season are at a loss to understand how it is that the League players are always so stiff and sore for the first few weeks in spite of the trying out they are supposed to have undergone in their preliminary trips to the south before the opening of the season. They point to the contrast between these seasoned veterans and the antics of the players on the various college teams, who never show such symptoms of rust. The reason is found in the difference in the average age of the players in the League and in the universities. The latter are young fellows whose joints are not set and who thus find it comparatively easy to get into good shape. This fact is often verified by the actions of the youngsters who are playing in the major leagues for the first time. At the beginning of the season they often show up well in contrast with their more experienced fellows. That is because they are younger and get into trim much quicker. As the season advances, however, the veterans get into shape under the influence of the hot sun, while the recruits very often are unable to bear up under the strain and are consequently dropped from the rolls.

The colleges seem to have better baseball material this year than for some seasons past, taking them as a whole, although it is a little too early to tell very much about the players. Yale and Princeton both suffered defeats on their southern trips, but as these excursions are taken for the sake of gaining experience and putting the men in shape for the championship season, they do not mind that very much. They may have their colors lowered by every minor college team in the country, and still there would be just as much rivalry and general interest in the series between them as ever. The minor colleges seem to have some good players, especially some of the southern institutions. There have unfortunately been ugly rumors circulated in regard to the amateur standing of some of the players. Whether they are unfounded or not, if the colleges want to keep the game on its present high level they should see to it that the standing of every player who plays in them is above the slightest breath of suspicion.

Every year some of the crack college nights players are tried by one or more of the League clubs. It is a great rule they are not found to be of a caliber entitling them to admission to the ranks. Now and then, however, one will prove to be a great find. Two of the men who have been picked up by the manager of the Quaker team, Hoy Thomas, who became famous as a catcher of the University of Pennsylvania nine for few seasons ago. Last year he played with the Orange Athletic club of Orange, N. J., and, after covering first base for the Philadelphias in a creditable manner that he will remain in the place permanently during the whole season. Arthur Irwin tried to secure Thomas for the New Yorks in 1896, but the young collegian was not presented to play ball for a salary at that time. According to the reports of his work with the Philadelphias, Thomas bids fair to be one of the stars of the season, already a remarkable base runner and batsman, he has picked up an idea of how to play first base with such wakefulness that he easily outclasses Douglass, who filled the place last season. With Lauder of Brown university covering third base and Thomas on first, the colleges are well represented in the Quaker infield.

CHARLES E. EDWARDS.

PITCHER STENZEL, ST. LOUIS.



PITCHER TAYLOR, CINCINNATI.

MATCHING ARABIAN STEEDS.

The Countess of Warwick drives a magnificent matched pair of white Arabians, which are known as the "Bothwell twins." The fame of the pair was presented to her by the late Sultan. The story of the presentation illustrates the keen admiration of horseflesh and his gallant generosity. The countess had one white Arab and the baron another, and the baron discovered that the two were a perfect match. He was anxious to make a pair of them, and he offered to purchase the counties treasure for her own fleet. But Lady Warwick refused all offers. The baron had set his heart upon matching these two equine beauties, and rather than be disappointed he presented his to the countess.

STORIES OF THE STAGE.

Here is a story taken from a little scene in real life that illustrates forcibly what a unique place May Irwin holds in the popular esteem: It was on the Pennsylvania ferryboat. There were a number of celebrities aboard, among whom were General Wilson and his family, Colonel Woodbury of the Sixth Illinois and other representatives of the army and navy, evidently bound for Washington. Sitting opposite General Wilson were May Irwin and some members of her company. She soon became the center of attraction, and every one began to gossip about her half audibly. General Wilson's family among the crowd. There seemed to be some sort of argument between Mrs. Wilson and her husband, and at last she got up from her seat, went across to Miss Irwin, and, with many apologies, asked leave the liberty, introduced herself. After getting permission to do so she took Miss Irwin over to her party and made her one of them.

"I am more than charmed to meet you, Miss Irwin," said General Wilson. "I've seen you so often and heard about you still more. Why, do you know, Miss Irwin, they have mementos of you even in Porto Rico, whence I have just come?"

"Why, how's that?" said Miss Irwin.

"Well," said the general, "if you knew how popular your songs are with the army boys it would be worth more than all the applause you get at the theater. Man's the time in our field marches, after the bands have run out their repertory of national songs, they conclude, with relentless force, your songs. They have even become popular down there with the natives. When I left, it was by no means an uncommon sight to see squads of these rough soldiers boys celebrating the turn of affairs to the tune of 'The New Rolly' and 'There's a Hot Time in the old Town Tonight.' You see, Miss Irwin, the world is pretty small, after all."

Frederic de Rellecille has many good anecdotes about the first production of "Pron Fron" in London. After the 201st performance Benjamin Webster, who adapted the play for England, gave a dinner to the company, and Charles Fechter, who was then in London, was a guest. Toward the end of the dessert Fechter said to Webster:

"I'll lay you a wager that I'll disguise myself so completely that nobody here shall be able to recognize me—not even you."

On which he slipped out of the room. Five minutes later coffee was served. The waiter who poured it out—a big fellow, with black whiskers, heavy eyebrows and the broadest complexion of a southerner—fumbled no doubt by the quality of the assembled guests, committed clumsiness on clumsiness, spotting a tablecloth here and a cup there and finished by sending a great splash of scalding coffee on Webster's shirt front. A storm of epithets was raised.

"Ass! Idiot! Blockhead! Don't you mind what you are about?" The unfortunate waiter excused himself as well as he could with a strong "Marseillaise" accent. The incident was soon forgotten and conversation resumed. But, after a few minutes, as if out of pure spite, the waiter, the offender took up a lump of sugar between his finger and thumb and coolly dipped it into De Rellecille's coffee.

Webster, as host, seeing to his feet, enraged, seized the insolent waiter by the collar and pushed him to the door. But with a turn of his hand the other whipped off his wig and whiskers and cried: "Hold again, Benny boy! You've lost your wager! Champagne all around!"

Miss Beaudet has a peculiar weakness for going down stairs backward. No earthly consideration could persuade her to walk down and descending rule wouldn't overwhelm the theater in which she is acting if she once descended her dressing room stairs in the ordinary way. And so, to the delight of stage hands and the calcium man, she makes a grand and crashing descent four times every night. It's dangerous and it isn't graceful, but no one can deny that Miss Beaudet's superstition is original.

THROUGH THE AIR ON WHEELS.

A unique plan for an elevated path 10 feet above the surface of the earth is proposed by a Colorado engineer. His idea is to build the structure from Denver to a spot nine miles out for the use of cyclists, roller skaters and horseless carriages.

The originator, in advancing the claims of the path, says that in addition to the advantage of a clear path the rider would obtain an elegant view of the surrounding country; there would be no dust, or dogs or cattle or any thing else to satisfactorily upset either mentally or physically when once he was inside the gates.

The superstructure could be light, and comparatively inexpensive would be taken up in the streets thereby. The surface of the path, according to the original idea of the idea, where it is exposed to the weather, would be of asphaltum laid on a bed of bituminous concrete, which would be laid on a wooden floor. There would be, with curves at the ends of the same thickness, will form the material for the floor.

The surface could be made smooth enough, he says, for any purpose. Where protected from the weather by a roof the roadway could be made of hard wood flooring on edge, after the manner of a bowling alley. Such a floor would add strength to the structure, as it would form a continuous girder. The roadway would be guarded by wooden wire fences, which would be made portable, and this should be painted with aluminite. The fence would prevent the rider from falling and would catch hats and other articles.

The originator thinks the elevated path would be a paying investment. Cyclists could purchase quarterly or annual tickets and stage fares could be charged occasional passengers, either on roller skates or wheels. Then money could be made by renting skates and wheels for use on the path. Stations could be established at convenient points along the path, where elevator would take the passengers and their wheels up and down. The promoter says he has had inquiries from New York parties who expect to build an elevated path in the suburbs of New York city.

NOTES OF THE THEATER.

Eugene Scribe, the French playwright, in less than half a century wrote and produced 80 dramatic pieces of one kind or another, and over 200 of these have been recorded as marked successes in Germany and Italy alone. In one single year Scribe and Legouve's "Bataille des Dames," turned into English by Charles Reade as "The Ladies' Battle," was produced in 22 German theaters, 18 theaters in Italy, 12 theaters in Austria, 9 in Russia, by 8 different companies in England and at many theaters in the United States.

In Schiller's Tell's production of "Caesar Rolli" the part allotted to Mrs. Brown Potter is that of a wicked glass slider.

A row of the provincial theaters in England recently a dog became so much interested in the play that he leaped on stage the footlights and tried to pulse the priority claims.

Oscar Hammerstein claims that his new Victoria roof garden in New York will be operated on a "high class" basis.

Augusta Van Dorne presented "The Broken Melody," which was an emphatic failure in Atlantic, for the seventeen hundredth time at Edinburgh recently.

"There is on the English stage today no actor of sufficient genius," says William Archer, "to make a sensation in classical drama without short investment. Everywhere the overgrown and overfed public is on wan and prejudiced in material interests that a great production is necessary to attract them."

Mrs. Langtry has been giving her reminiscences. She was one of seven children, the others all boys. She was put through a course of manly sports by her brothers. She always loved horses and began her sporting career at 11, when she became park owner of a mare named Pilot.

An effort at stage reformation has just been inaugurated by an even half dozen ballet girls of the Vienna court opera. They have banded themselves together in a society or league of propriety, each taking a solemn pledge to "live by her labors as a dancer and to receive no attentions from gentlemen except such as are fair and honest."

Sothern's mother was sensitive to interruption of any sort. During a scene in the act of leaving his box during the delivery of one of the actor's best speeches, he shouted out, "Hi, you, sir, do you know there is another act?" The offender was equal to the occasion, however. He turned to the actor and answered, cheerfully, "Oh, yes; that's why I'm going."

Gustave Salvini, another son of the celebrated tragedian, has made a hit in Phoenix, where he has been playing "Kean."