# DESERET EVENING NEWS SATURDAY NOVEMBER 24 1906

# THE PLAY IN NEW YORK. BY CHANNING POLLOCK

## ecial Correspondence.

EW YORK, Nov. 20.-Puccint's opera, based on "Madam Butterfly," was the one really notable event of last week, and its openis drew a curious mixture of Casino first-nighters and Metropolitan Opera House seat-holders to the Garden the-The commodious auditorium hasn't had such a gathering since Richard Mansfield presented "Cyrano de Bergerac" there in the autumn of '98. Madam Butterfly" seemed to me to fall away below expectations, but many other people, who know more shout grand opera than I shall ever know, enthused over the performance. On Wedresday evening a young poet greeted me after the second act with: "Isn't it remarkable? This is the fifth lime I've been here for that inter-

mezzo!" Considering that this was the fourth rendering of the piece in New York I agreed with the gentleman that it was very remarkable.

Whatever charm attaches to the work sung at the Garden may be attributed o the fact that "you may score, you may sing the play if you will, but the scant of real poetry clings to it still." ohn Luther Long and David Belasco's yagedy was so remarkably fine that my form of its story must retain some peasure of merit. I cannot feel, how-

wer, that anything but length has been added to the piece in turning it into an opera. What was a constantly nto an opera. What was a constantly nteresting tale condensed into one act s very dull when drawn out into three, is very dull when drawn out into three, and lines that were natural and nec-essary in a play seem ridiculous and commonplace when put to music. Im-agine composing an aria to such a sentence as "I have leased this house for nine hundred and ninety-nine years, but with the privilege of can-celing the contract at the beginning of any month!" It is like writing an ode , bet readed.

a hot potato. na, which seeks to represent life as it exists, there must be verisi-militude. Opera, however, can have a such aim, since its foundation is minute between the second of the surface of the second sec cessful it must be open in loftler loveller English than s used in s book written in Italian by Illica I Giacosa, and translated by R. H.

Excepting for a brief passage here and there, Puccint's music is not in-spiring nor brilliant. He adopts the Wagnerian method of theme introduc-tion and makes it ridiculous. The Consul and Pinkerton lift glasses of Scotch whisky, for example, and im-mediately we hear the theme of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Why not "The Star-Spangled Banner." Why not "The Campbells are Coming." or, better still, a bar or two of "We Won't Go Home Until Morning?" The silent scene in which Cho-Cho-San watches for her haband through the night and until the desen is place for a wonderful inter-Excepting for a brief passage here is place for a wonderful inter-

mezzo, but Puccini's is unimaginative and unpicturesque. It disturbs no and unpicturesque. memories of Mascagni.

memories of Mascagni. The story of "Madam Butterfly" fol-lows the original closely, after a sort of prologue in which is shown the marriage of Pinkerton and Cho-Cho-San. Pinkerton, instead of yielding to the influence of absence, as Mr. Long made him do, espouses Butter-fly with the deliberate purpose of wedding an American girl when he has grown tired of her. The second and third acts of the opera are respec-

and third acts of the opera are respec-tively the first and second halves of

tively the first and second halves of the tragedy's one act. Henry W, Savage's production is very beautiful. The exterior of a Jap-anese house, and the interior, with a view of a cherry orchard through the windows, could not be made more ex-quisite. The opera is well sung, too, various sets of principals alternating in the chief roles. Elza Samosy various sets of principals alternating in the chief roles. Elza Szamosy, Rena Vivienne, and Florence Easton sing Butterfly: Joseph Sheehan and Francis MacLedian have the part of Pinkerton, and Winifred Goff and Thomas D. Richards take separate nights in the part of the consul. There is no inadequacy in the presentation. "Madam Butterfly" is doing an excel-iont business at the Garden.

Lew Fields' entertainment at the Herald Square Theater was made over last week, "About Town," after a run of three months, being condensed into of three months, being condensed into one act and played as a first part to a burleque on "The Great Divide." This burlesque, with the addition of Peter F. Dailey to the company, quite brought back recollections of the old days at Weber & Fields'. Binnche Ring also has joined the forces at the Herald Square.

"The Great Decide" only exacger-ates slightly what actually occurs in "The Great Divide." William Vaughn ates Moody makes his heroine, whose cab-in is entered by three rufflans, spring in is entered by three rufflans, spring forward with a rapid-fire propesal that one of them marry her. In the burlesque, Miss Ring travestying the role assumed by Margaret Anglin at the Princess, captures the rufflans, and, at the point of a gun, makes one of them take her to a justice of the peace. Tis one, played by Mr. Dailey, wishes with all his heart that he had stayed in jail. The idea is deliciously comic, and it is humorously worked out. "The Great Deci"s" lasts over an hour, and hasn't more than 10 minutes of dulness. Miss Ring's imitation of hour, and hasn't more than Aritation of of dulness. Miss Ring's imitation of Miss Anglin is croital, and Mr. Dailey, while not so closely following Henry while is extremely droll. Mr. Fields,

Miller, is extremely following cienty Miller, is extremely following cienty George Beban, Edna Wallace Hopper, and Harry Fisher all are laughable. Lawrence Grossmith alone fails to "make good," proving as totally un-"make good," proving as totally un-funny as he was in "About Town." There are two musical interpolations in "The Great Decide." One of them, an Indian dance, staged by Julian Mitchell, is rather crude and ineffec-tive, but is justified by a fine piece of music by Gustav Kerker. The com-poser of "The Belle of New York" has never done anything else that so completely established his rank as a musician. "About Town" has been greatly improved by its curtailment, and the whole performance at the Herald Square is now well worth the attention of any one who wants to be enlivened.

enlivened. The long-haired drama escaped from The long-haired drama escaped from its covers last week and ran riot in our theaters. There were special mati-nees until you couldn't rest, and audi-ences in which flowing ties adorned the men, and mannash coats the wo-men. Alan Dale confided in me at

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intuition which warned him against the profession of criticism in the beginning, . . .

Mercedes Leigh gave us "The Proph-et" and "Salome" on Thursday after-noon at the Astor, in a performance that was two parts play and three parts Intermission. A great many people who expected to find Oscar Wilde's tragedy charmingly wicked suffered the disappointment of their lives. "Sa-lome" is merely an undrametic lome" is merely an undramatic and unpoetic poetic drama, in which Miss Leigh showed us a Salome who might have graduated from a Boston Select School for Young Ladles. Her dance before Herod might possibly have cap-tivated that ancient monarch, but I'm dead sure it wouldn't make a hit at Oscar Hammerstein's Victoria theater of varieities. Harry Leighton's John the Baptist and William McVay's Her-od were the redeeming features of the entertainment.

Alla Nazimova, who came to this country with the Russian Players, and who was adopted as a daughter-in-art by Henry Miller, gave her first per-formance in English on Wednesday afternoon at the Princess. The play chosen was "Hedda Gabler," and Madame Nazimova achieved a complete success. Her interpretation is said to

Matthews-Poems of American Pacompare favorably with that of Mrs. Fiske. The supporting company in-cluded John Findley. Dodson Mitchell, John Blair, Mrs. Thomas Whiften, Lau-ra Hope Crews, and Mrs. Jacques Mar-tin. Poulsson-Runaway Donkey, Stockton-What Might Have Been Expected. Valentines-Aunt Louisa's Book of

Mrs. Sarah Cowell LeMoyne's mati-nees of "Pippa Passes" at the Majestic were not received so well. Browning's beautiful poem is not adaptable to the requirements of the stage, and the in-terpretation was hardly all that it might have been. Mrs. LeMoyne is a trifle advanced in years for the role of a siren, and her Ottima was less satisfactory than her remarkable portrayal of the Monsignor. Mabel Taliaferro was charming as Pippa.

Two of the most interesting events of the week were the competitive mat-inees of "Mrs. Dane's Defense." One day the name part was played by Lena Ashwell, who created the role in Lon-don, and the next by Margaret Anglin, who first assumed it in America. The recent presentations were accomplished win presentations were accomplishe without bloodshed or violence. Honor without bloodshed of violence. Honors proved to be about even, Miss Ashwell's work being the more intellectual and Miss Anglh's the more emotional. One of the results of the performance was to establish the fact, not established by "The Shulamite," that Miss Ashwell is a very remarkable actress. is a very remarkable actress.

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