THE DRAMA AND ATHLETICS

A SHAKESPEAREAN REVIVAL

"Willie the Swan" Seems to Be Valuable at Present From the Box Office Standpoint---New Productions.

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There was a time, and not so very long ago, either, when the dramatic manager looked upon a Shakespeare production as an expensive luxury. It was a sort of cup thrown to the howling Cerberus of higher art. It was a venture entered into with fear and trembling after long solicitation and urging entirely from his ambitious leading lady, for it is a good old unshacked tradition of the stage that no fabulous theatrical glimmer could even be dedicated at a third star without first trying her hand at Shakespeare. Managers deplored this expensive means of bringing a star into unimagined existence, sighed and reluctantly dropped out the old Shakespearean scenery.

Then came a change. Shakespeare was relegated to the back vestibule and for a time was presented to vast though admiring audiences, who sulked vociferously and ineffectually for "another." Owing to the beautiful scenery exercised in such performances, whereby the gush of the theatre at one night boosted the double and hose of the Boniface of the next, Shakespeare was made to pay, perhaps, though not in any princely proportions.

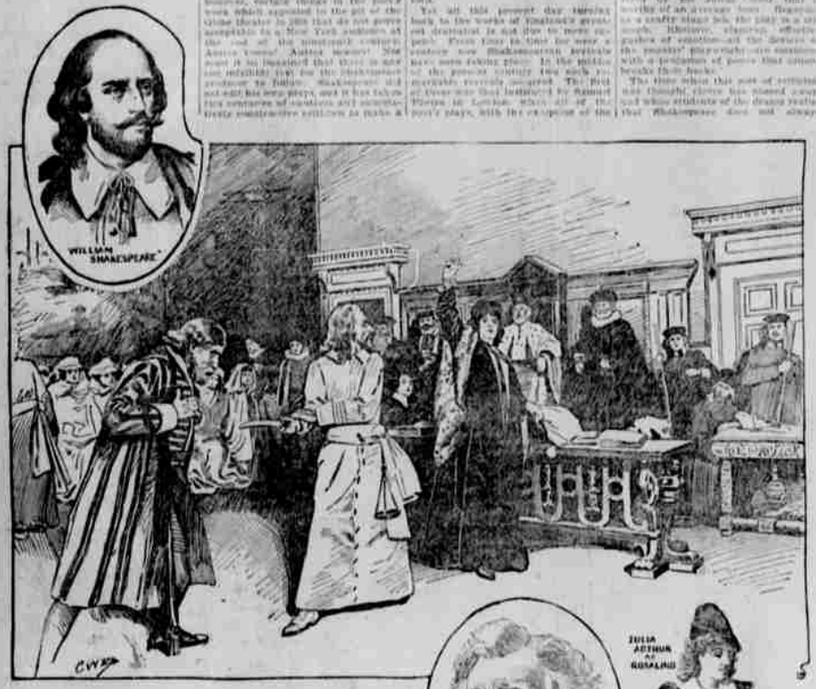
But during the present season a great change has swept over the theatrical world. The box office is heavy hold on. While the drama with an eye of scum. In fact, there has been that night in which a Shakespeare revival, not only in America, but also in England.

The turn of the tide dated took place first in England. When it was generally thought that Sir Henry Irving had a proprietary right to the Shakespeare dramas, Mr. Forbes Robertson, Mr. Beerbohm Tree, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Patrick Campbell and Mrs. Potter are now showing that can handle the great dramatist's plays with both financial and artistic success.

In our own country the return to Shakespeare has been even more remarkable. Contrary to the expectation has passed to what is called in the parlance of the box office, "paying business." But more notable than this has been the high artistic success which American actresses have achieved in these rare total Shakespeare plays.

Our new series of performances is marked by a humanity, a consistency and a consistency unique in the history of Shakespeare productions.

In Daly's presentation of "The Merchant of Venice" Miss Ada Rehan has scored a very great success, although certain critics have been objecting to the manner in which Mr. Daly has run in clothes with the poet's Bow. Whatever may be the merits of this, it has



TRIAL SCENE "MERCHANT OF VENICE"—ADA REHAN AS PORTIA.

SCIENTIFIC BASKET BALL.

How the Game Has Been Developed—The Champion Team of America—New Styles of Play.

(Copyright, 1899.)

Any man who can play through two 20 minute periods in a game of basket ball and be comparatively fresh at the end is a fine close rick for a life insurance company. There is no other game which is so fast and requires so much exertion in so short a time. Basket ball has attracted attention in it in this respect, as will all the world, that the game of basket ball is not nearly so hard on a fellow's wind.

For this reason basket ball has become recognized by athletes as one of the best possible means for lessons in training during the winter months in places where outdoor work is barred on account of the weather.

Basket ball as played nowadays by first class teams is very different from what it was when first invented, in the winter of 1891-2, by Dr. James Naismith of Springfield, Mass., to serve as a change in training methods in gymnasium work.

The game caught on at once, especially in the Young Men's Christian association, all over the country. Women's colleges soon saw the value of the game and adopted it to the needs of their students.

In 1896 the athletic clubs, which until then had not given the sport due recognition, took it up and it was no longer a national game, but as it is to the credit of the Y. M. C. A. for having first taken up and fostered basket ball and introduced science into the game so also it is a fact that the association contains the best teams. The fast team representing the Twenty-third street branch of the Y. M. C. A. of New York is undoubtedly the banner one of the United States. Last season they played 40 games, winning every one. Some of the other teams of the association throughout the country are also very strong.

There are, broadly speaking, two styles of play now general. One is the passing game, which is the one fostered by the Y. M. C. A. The other is the dribbling game. This form of play as now carried on is done almost exclusively by men catching the ball, bounding it on the floor and running rapidly toward the opponents' goal. A heavy man who is a rapid runner by this means can generally succeed in getting down the field and having a try for goal no matter what the opposition may be.

The greater part of the roughness complained of last season arose from the use of this (Beatrice) dribbling, there being no way to stop a man progressing in such a manner with the ball except by unfairly getting in his path and being run down.

If the game were played outdoors on turf, the dribbling style of play might be tolerated, but in gymnasiums where falls are so a hard floor, sometimes against apparatus, it is out of the question.

Basket ball is almost entirely an amateur sport, though there is a league which is practically professional and which numbers teams in Philadelphia, Trenton and Millville, N. J. It is called the National Basket Ball league, and its rules differ only slightly from those of the A. A. U. These play, however, in a case instead of native boundary lines, according to the A. A. U. rules.

The distinctive feature of the game is that the field of play is surrounded by a wire net, so that the ball never goes out of bounds, and the play is only interrupted for fouls. This makes the game so extremely rapid one and is very exhaustive for the players, for twice the time of those of play there will not average over one minute in two spent in rest. It is the kind of game that called for professional teams for the purpose of exhibition, but is too severe and exhausting for the ordinary amateur player. The professional game, too, calls for but one official on the field, whereas the A. A. U. rules necessitate three.

Another difference between the two sets of rules is that in the amateur game any number of players may have hold of the ball at one time, whereas, according to the professional regulations, but two may touch the spheroid at the same time. Mr. W. H. Reed, Jr., the manager of the champion team of the Twenty-third street branch of the Y. M. C. A. in New York, said, in reply to my query, that he thought the professional rule was the better one, as it gave less chance for rough play.

Mr. Reed, in the way, is an authority on basket ball matters and is very enthusiastic regarding the future of the game. He says that the season has so far averaged in present high position is not due to the individual excellence of the men composing it, but to the splendid team work that has been done by them.

He says that the game is the ideal one for indoors whenever there is room for it and that it is much more certain than the aim of the Y. M. C. A. in fostering attention to develop the man all around, is contributable to the prevalent idea of making an athlete a specialist in some one branch of sport.

The game is very popular in the national guard, and there are some very strong teams among the militia companies. This seems to be the case especially in regard to the separate companies in the towns along the Hudson river. Their armories form an ideal playing ground, and the men find it a splendid variation from the tedious method of repeated drills.

Several changes in the game have been advocated, the principal one being championed by Dr. Dudley A. Sargent of Harvard university and Mr. O. M. Martin of Youngstown, O. The changes as suggested by these two gentlemen would make radical innovations in the style of play, but they differ but slightly from each other. Their purpose is to make the game less severe and to allow more players to take part. Dr. Sargent would divide the playing space into three divisions, the players in each section being required to stay in their own part. This is a great reason would abolish mass plays and greater players has of an advantage over their more mediocre adversaries. Another suggestion is that receiving a ball from an opponent's hand be considered a foul. These changes would lessen the spectacular interest and are not likely to be adopted by the professionals at any rate.

CHARLES E. EDWARDS.

W. H. Reed, Jr. (manager), W. C. Reed.

THE CHAMPION BASKET BALL TEAM.

STORIES OF THE STAGE.

A variety performer says: "Few would believe that the apparently innocent delays here and there in a vaudeville show are really an effort on part to save an much of a salary list, but such is the case. The delay in shifting the numbers of each turn, the walking from one side of the stage from one side to the other to change these numbers, the many little preludes and apparent impromptu constantly indulged in by the piano manipulator, the slow and tedious efforts of clearing the stage after an act, the slow changing of drops and scenes are all regularly held out to gain time. One is satisfied at the actual time thus gained at the expense of an indulgent audience.

"By deliberately prolonging two minutes here and three minutes there an average gain of one hour a performance is made. One hour in a vaudeville performance, when one or two turns are omitted in one hour a performance of 8, 10 and 12 minutes receive from $50 to $60 a week, is rather an important bit of saving in a week's time. Years ago, when it was economic to employ a stage manager to handle a vaudeville performance, to cause a stage wait meant a loss to disabused.

"The stage manager of yore would be sadly embarrassed in the new vaudeville, with its 'time savers' and other innovations, but the particular position has been done away with, as many other points which went toward making a great performance, and the stage carpenter is now dubbed the stage mechanic instead. Thus the ever indifferent public, paying without question for the best the market affords, is 'hunkered' out of at least an hour's performance."

Mme. Modjeska, the famous actress, lives on a ranch which lies at the foot of Santiago peak, in California, 15 miles from a town or railway. She is an enthusiastic farmer and takes great pride in her live stock, of which she has a large number. Her herd of Shorthorn is numbers over 400, and she has a singularly well proportioned flock of Angora goats. These animals she has found to be very profitable.

Having invested in the ranch a large part of her savings from her theatrical earnings, she naturally looks closely after it to see that it pays a proper dividend on the capital.

Another branch of her undertaking is bee raising. She has 600 hives of Italian bees and gets a great deal of honey every autumn, the mountain meadows around her homestead being carpeted with the flowers of the white sage, which are credited with producing the most flavored honey in the world. Mme. Modjeska rises at 4 o'clock in the morning and is out all the forenoon superintending the management of her cattle and bees.

"I was manager of a big vaudeville company once upon a time," said a veteran showman, "and one of our stars was a clever 'lightning cartoonist.' He would stand before an easel hung with sheets of manilla paper and dash off portraits of celebrities in less time than it takes to tell it. Occasionally he would do one upside down, and the certainty and celerity with which he worked kept me astonished until I got on to his trick. He would first take half a manilla paper and make his drawings very carefully in a solution of Canada balsam, which is a sticky gum, invisible in a few hours away. When he appeared on the stage, he carried a small sponge in his palm covered with powdered charcoal, and, as he passed his hand over the paper, the stuff stuck to the prepared lines and made them black. He didn't really touch his pencil to the paper at all. It was a good scheme and very difficult to detect. He used to get $50 a week."

Amateur Boxing Tournament.

The amateur boxing and wrestling tournament which will be held in New York on Thursday, Jan. 26, and Saturday, Jan. 28, under the direction of the Amateur Athletic union, is going to be a success. Entries are rolling in not only from this city, but from Philadelphia, Boston, Pittsburg and Chicago. Entries are expected from the Chicago Athletic association and the New York Athletic club.

Sixty For Harvard Tennis Players.

Twelve Harvard men were ranked among the 24 tennis players who have been classified by the tennis committee of the National Lawn Tennis association.

TOPICS OF STAGELAND.

Oberammergau is making ready to perform the Passion play in June, though the consent of the Bavarian government has not yet been obtained.

"Trilby," said John Drew to Dangs the author, "is now the one play in which Mr. E. F. Keith will make scarcely all, or a fortune."

Mme. Adelina Patti will sing Sieg-Wolfram, Tannhauser as her farewell to the opera in Paris in May at either the Opera or the Trocadero. New York, and James H. Hackett appears at Saratoga.

Augustin Daly is to bring the London "Sorts of Paradise," and Ball Curtis at 2 p. m. will read selections from "The Christian."

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Arthur Crispin

New York

Cornell's New Captain.

At a meeting of the Cornell crew football team Daniel A. Reed, left guard, was elected captain for the coming year. Twenty other candidates were E. H. Sweeney, '99, of Ithaca, N. Y., formerly the winner of 100 at Cornell in 100 and then played on the football team for three years. Before the election each member of the team received a watch charm in the shape of a silver football, with the name of the player and the position he played engraved on the back. On the front is a cut engraved "C" surrounded by "100," which is intended to take the place of the usual "Cornell Football Team."

Penney to Beat Cadets.

A race has been arranged for next spring between the Pennsylvania crew and the crew representing Annapolis.

Pennsylvania, Colleges, Wash-Sem., N.Y.A.C., Alaska, Hebes, Wilkes-Barre.