

THE STAGE IN GOTHAM

THE two attractions of which all New York is talking just at present are "Ben-Hur" at the Broadway and "The Maneuvers of Jane" at Daly's theater. With reference to both productions opinion seems to be as far apart as the plays themselves. "The Maneuvers of Jane" is a light comedy of a farcical stamp, whereas "Ben-Hur" is a remarkably accurate transference of the novel of that name to the stage. The consensus of opinion seems to be that "Ben-Hur" is a great popular success, and that "The Maneuvers of Jane" by reason of its very indeterminateness will also do fairly well, though it is not at all likely that it will go down in stage annals as one of the best plays presented by the former Lyceum theater stock company.

"Ben-Hur" was dramatized by William Young, the author of "Ganelon," one of the plays in which Lawrence Barrett achieved distinction. Mr. Young's work has been done in a masterly manner, and it is to be regretted that the gentleman has not made more frequent contributions to the stage literature of the day. Nevertheless, "Ben-Hur" is a melodrama, a raw, uncompromising melodrama. There is never a moment when it rises to the dignity of either historical or romantic drama, but that is not Mr. Young's fault. It is a simple thing, in a novel, for an author to so minimize the melodramatic features of a story by pages of description that the reader will be deluded into the impression that he is getting a remarkably accurate picture of the times, but in a play all that is different. It is then necessary to use only the salient points of a novel, and when this is done it of necessity stands forth in all its melodramatic nakedness.

It would scarcely be worth the space it would occupy to consider "Ben-Hur" as a play, and it is practical certainty that if the novel had never been written the stage work would not have one chance in a thousand of success. But the novel has been written and has been read probably in this country by millions of people. These will all wish to see the flesh and blood embodiments of the characters of a novel which they have been taught to regard as one of the greatest stories ever written in English, and for that reason, coupled with the fact that we all like mechanical melodrama, the piece is likely to succeed. The costumes are excellent, rich and in good taste, the scenery is as good as any that has been seen on an American stage and the production is handled in a wonderfully prompt and accurate manner. The stage management, too, on the whole, is quite good, although the manipulation of the mob in some instances falls far below the high standard which prevails elsewhere throughout the play. Notably is this true in the first scene of the second act, on the galley, where the pirates rush down into the cabin and overpower the crew.

The greatest disappointment of "Ben-Hur" is the feature which has been advertised most extensively—the chariot race. The same thing was done at least as well in Neil Burgess' production of "The Year One" at the Star theater, nearly half a decade ago, and in the same gentleman's "The County Fair" the horse race scene was to my mind much more effective. We were told that we were to look for a number of new features in connection with the chariot race in "Ben-Hur"; that the wheels were made uneven, for instance, in order to give the impression of traveling rapidly over a somewhat rough arena. We were told that we should see Ben-Hur drive his chariot into the one containing Messala, and that the latter would be thrown from his vehicle, almost under the feet of the maddened horses, whereupon, we were informed, Ben-Hur's chariot would forge to the front and the race would end. So far as I could discover the wheels of the chariots revolved with painful smoothness, there was no collision, Messala did not fall from his chariot, and Ben-Hur's horses did not forge to the front before the lights were snapped out. It is true the spectacle of the eight horses galloping madly on the stage makes an inspiring sight for a few seconds, but as soon as one has the opportunity to become used to the scene and takes occasion to observe that with all the clatter the ground does not even appear to be moving under the feet of the fiery steeds the striking effect which is at first created is almost entirely lost.

Another scene which is a distinct disappointment is the one immediately following the fight in the cabin of the galley. Messala and Arris are seen upon a raft which rocks rhythmically to and fro, while the supers energetically agitate the canvas water. Some profile galleys of the Romans are seen well up toward the back of the stage, and when one points its prow in the direction of the shipwrecked men Ben-Hur announces that they are saved. Naturally that ends the scene. This same thing has been done in dozens of plays, and while Messrs. Klaw & Erlanger have the advantage of the large stage of the Broadway theater and are not compelled to economize in the production, it may at least be said that the effect was not strong enough to be so prominently featured in advance of the production.

On paper the cast looks like a strong one, as may be seen by a glance at

the following allotment of the principal roles:

Ben-Hur.....	Edward Morgan
Messala.....	W. S. Hart
Simonides.....	Henry Lee
Arris.....	Edmund Collier
Balthazar.....	Frank Mordaunt
Gaspard.....	F. S. Thorpe
Ilderim.....	Emmett Corrigan
Malloch.....	Frederick Truesdell
Horatius.....	Charles J. Wilson
Metellus.....	William Frederic
Drusus.....	Paul Gerson
Cecilius.....	Henry Devere
Sanballat.....	Robert Mansfield
Chorazin.....	Charles Craig
Centurion.....	Henry Monroe
Officer of the galley.....	William Ford
Esther.....	Gretchen Lyons
Has.....	Corona Riccardo
Mother of Hur.....	Mabel Bert
Tirah.....	Adeline Adler
Amrah.....	Mary Shaw

Mr. Edward Morgan, I am afraid, has become a confirmed repressionist. This would not be a deplorable circumstance if he would take the pains to use judgment in the employment of his "repressive" method, but when a man goes through an entire six act play with a manner which seems to warn the audience that he could let himself out if he chose, the role which is intrusted to him must suffer. In short, there is not enough color in Mr. Morgan's Ben-Hur. He is entirely too repressful; he does not act as a young Jew smarting under a sense of the grievous wrong done him would act. He does not act as the adopted Roman who has had his enormous fortune restored to him and who sees the opportunity at hand to gratify his revenge would act. He does not act as the ardent lover who has his eyes opened after having had them nearly closed by a siren would act. In short, he does not act as any young man of the period would act.

Miss Gretchen Lyons was a sweet Esther, though her performance also might be improved by the employment of a little more force in several scenes which seemed to demand it. Corona Riccardo made a pleasing contrast as Iras, but she erred on the other side in overacting it, as also did W. S. Hart as Messala, although the latter was not so great an offender as usual in that respect. The worst performance in the play was given by Henry Lee, the man to whom was assigned the important role of Simonides. It is possible that there are actors in this country who are able to play the part worse, but it requires even a sort of ability to give so absolutely incorrect, inartistic and unattractive a performance as Mr. Lee gave. At times Simonides, who is supposed to be a venerable and thoroughly worthy old gentleman, became almost a comedian through the misdirected efforts and absurdly sonorous intonations of Mr. Henry Lee. It seems in-

comprehensible that the management will permit him to continue this burlesquing of the role. They should compel him to correct his methods immediately, and this, it seems probable, they will have the good sense to do.

At Daly's theater what was formerly the Lyceum theater stock company is now appearing in Henry Arthur Jones' four act comedy entitled "The Maneuvers of Jane." Mr. Jones usually writes entertaining plays, and this, his latest effort, is no exception to his general rule. But there are degrees of "interestingness," and in that quality "The Maneuvers of Jane" does not, from the Jones standpoint, rank abnormally high. As is usual, too, in a Jones play, "The Maneuvers of Jane" abounds in bright dialogue and delicate satire, but even in those respects it is scarcely up to the Jones standard. The story is not thrillingly novel, and yet it seems to me to read much better than it acts.

Mr. Nangle, a wealthy widower, who we are given to understand by the vaguest sort of inference, is probably a rather sly old dog, has a daughter, Jane, who is a headstrong, impetuous creature. No one is able to compel obedience from her; she does precisely as she pleases and seems to glory in her willfulness. Her father induces Mrs. Beechiner of Chaney Lodge to take the young lady in hand for a period of six months. To this arrangement Jane violently objects, until she learns that George Langton, her sweetheart, is to become steward of the estate. Naturally enough, she is then perfectly willing to remain at Chaney, and her maneuvers are principally devoted to the throwing of dust in the eyes of the old folks. Finally things come to a crisis, and George Langton suggests to Jane that they elope. This they do, agreeing to meet at a small inn. Jane's female friend, who was also to have met her there, is detained by a boating accident, while George failed to keep his appointment on time, owing to the necessity of getting rid of the prying young daughter of Mrs. Beechiner, who has sworn to tell all that she knows of the maneuvers of Jane and George. In consequence, when George finally appears at the inn, he and Jane have a violent quarrel and everything is called off. This is at the end of the first scene of the third act, and of course all difficulties are cleared up in the final quarter of the play.

One of the characters in "The Maneuvers of Jane" which is in a measure episodic, but which is nevertheless necessary to the proper complication of the incidents, is Philibert, Lord Babchild. This is played by Mr. Ferdinand Gottschalk, a magnificent eccentric character comedian who enacted a similar role in "The Amazons" at the Lyceum the-

ater. His performance was one of the best seen in New York in some years.

William F. Courtenay as the young hero, George Langton, gave a magnificently virile and natural impersonation. Here is an actor who is head and shoulders above any leading man that the Lyceum theater has ever had for juvenile roles where good looks, sincere methods and an earnestness which is never for a moment forgotten are important factors.

Miss Mary Mannering was a great disappointment in the early scenes, but, beginning with the complications in the second act and continuing to the end, she was thoroughly satisfactory, and in the quarrel scene at the end she gave us a taste of her real quality. There are many persons in this city, sincere well wishers of Miss Mannering, who contend that this sterling young actress is growing careless, and while this is doubtless not strictly correct it does seem to be a fact that she does not devote as much attention to differentiation as she formerly did, and when we reflect that it was this quality as much as anything else that made her such a favorite with New York theater goers it would seem to be the part of wisdom for her to heed this well meant criticism.

Arthur Crispin
New York.

VAUDEVILLE IN LONDON.

An American vaudeville performer writes from London: "Several foreign acts are billing themselves as American acts over here. And why? Perhaps it gives them prestige. Anyhow it must be acknowledged that America sends over very few dead ones."

"Beau Brummell," "Arms and the Man," "The Devil's Disciple," "The Merchant of Venice," "Richard III" and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Hilda Spong, the English actress who was seen in "Trelawny of the Wells," will have the chief feminine role in "Wheels Within Wheels," R. C. Car-

ton's new comedy, to be given shortly in New York. The color question is worrying theatrical managers in Washington, particularly as it takes the form of damage suits. "Love is the greatest thing in the world" is the line from which Mrs.

THE forthcoming battle between "Kid" McCoy and Peter Maher is exciting an unusual amount of interest among sportsmen, because it is understood that the winner will be in line for the championship of the world, now held by James Jeffries. There is considerable discussion among the experts as to the probable outcome of the bout, and the fraternity is fairly well divided as to the merits of the two men.

Those who think that McCoy will win base their opinions on his remarkable cleverness as a boxer, as well as on his undoubted hitting abilities. This intimate knowledge of ring tactics displayed by the "Kid" has astonished many followers of fistie affairs. McCoy has acquired his wonderful cleverness and generalship by the hardest kind of work. He has deemed nothing too trivial or too menial if it could possibly be used as a means to the acquisition of some new point in the art of boxing. During his career he has at one time or another been attached to the retinue of nearly every prominent fighter. While serving in some humble capacity he would carefully pick up every scrap of knowledge he could and, if possible, he would learn by boxing with his man.

Hard punches and knockouts were of daily occurrence, but McCoy took everything as it came and pluckily stuck to his self imposed task, happy in the consciousness that he was treasuring up knowledge that would bear ample fruit in the future.

In adherence to this plan he attached himself to one fighter after another, until now there is hardly a prominent boxer in this country whose every move and trick is not an open book to the ubiquitous "Kid." Tommy Ryan, one of the cleverest living boxers, has been used by the foxy McCoy to gain knowledge. Fitzsimmons' every device is known to him, as are the styles of Jim Hall, Frank Bosworth, Frank Erne, Dan Creedon and Steve O'Donnell. The last named is said by Corbett to be the cleverest man he ever met.

How McCoy has made use of the knowledge thus gained may be gathered from the fact that he afterward met and defeated nearly all the men he had previously studied when a comparative novice.

Even now McCoy does not consider that he knows all that is to be learned in connection with the game, but is ever on the alert for new tricks and hitherto undiscovered points in matters fistie. His action in offering to train Corbett for his fight with Jeffries for The Police Gazette belt, emblematic of the heavyweight championship of the world, seems to me to be in line with his former plans. A fight between McCoy and Corbett is not a remote possibility, especially if the latter should defeat Jeffries, and McCoy evidently wishes to get acquainted beforehand with all the tricks and artifices of the ex-pompadour.

Peter Maher is a tough proposition for any fighter to go up against. That he is so regarded is amply evidenced by the sedulous care taken by Jeffries, Corbett, Fitzsimmons and others to avoid making a match with him. It is a saying among the fraternity that any one Maher can get at to hit he can whip, and past events have proved the correctness of the expression. The big Irishman is a tremendously hard hitter and knows how to use his ability in this direction. He has courage, as was shown by his challenging and beating Joe Goddard after the latter had knocked him out. In addition to his great strength Maher is possessed of a considerable knowledge of boxing, and he is all the time adding to this store.

When McCoy and Maher meet in the ring, I expect to see McCoy the aggressor in the opening rounds of the encounter. His aim will be to land good, solid punches on the Irishman with the possibility of knocking him out, hoping at the same time to avoid punishment by his own shiftiness of leg and cleverness of hands. If he finds he can get at Peter and still keep out of reach of the latter's blows, he will keep on with this method of attack, hoping

to wear Maher out. If, however, he finds that he cannot stave off Maher's punches, he will change his tactics and endeavor to get the decision on points. Maher is not a rusher, and I doubt if he will try to mix it up with the "Kid" in the first few rounds. He will try to win by warding off the latter's attack, hoping to land one of his terrific punches at an opportune moment and thus put his opponent out of business.

While it is well known that Maher is one of the hardest hitters of the present day heavyweights, McCoy's ability in this line must not be underestimated. Unlike the majority of pugilists, McCoy does not increase the force of his blows by following them up with the weight of his body. His most effective jabs are delivered with a short arm, and, although seemingly light, yet by some means known only to himself he is enabled to impart a force to them that would seem impossible. McCoy has the advantage over Maher in the way of intelligence, and in the event of a sudden emergency arising in which quick thought followed by immediate action will be necessary the American's intellect will stand him in better stead than the slower working thinking apparatus of the burly son of Erin.

To make a long story short, the encounter will resolve itself into a battle between a wonderfully clever boxer who is both quick on his feet and capable of delivering telling blows and a very hard hitter who is endowed with a fair knowledge of boxing and can be aggressive to the point of viciousness if he wishes.

Sam Austin

FOOTBALL AS MENTAL EXERCISE.

Dr. F. C. Armstrong, coach of Pratt Institute and a practicing physician in Brooklyn, has this to say of making a football team:

"The first thing I do is to sift out the cigarette smokers. These chaps all have weak hearts and are no good. Their wind is short and they lack stamina. What I want is a lad with a good heart, one, say, that has the average beat of from 72 to 80. Oftentimes, however, you will find a boy with a beat less than 72 who is all right. The better test, therefore, is by the pulse. Then he must have lungs that will expand two and a half inches at the very least, and most of my lads can expand three and a half, and many four. The next requirements are strong legs and back. If he has all these essentials and is moderately intelligent, he can play football. I don't care whether his muscles are bunched and tight or loose and flabby. It is a silly notion of many persons that only those are strong who can show a great bunch of muscles. Well, I have seen college football players who could play through a game with a sprained ankle and broken nose, tear a hole in a line big enough for a train of cars to pass through and tackle with the ferocity of a tiger. Yet those fellows, when stripped, showed flat muscles and not much development. Hinkley of Yale and Simms of the University of Pennsylvania, the most terrific ends one could hope to see, were of this sort. Their strength was latent rather than apparent.

"With all the physical requirements equal, the lad with the most intelligence will make the best player. It is a fact not generally appreciated that one of the principal advantages derived from football is mental. The brain works in unison with the body. The nerves act as a lot of telegraph wires running to separate muscles. The stimulus is sent over them, and as the muscular tissue develops the brain tissue develops at an equal rate."

It is said that there were 243,000 pictures taken of the Jeffries-Sharkey fight. The films measure eight miles in length and the raw material used cost nearly \$20,000.

PETER MAHER AND "KID" MCCOY.



Sam Austin, the Well Known Pugilistic Authority, Tells How They Will Fight.



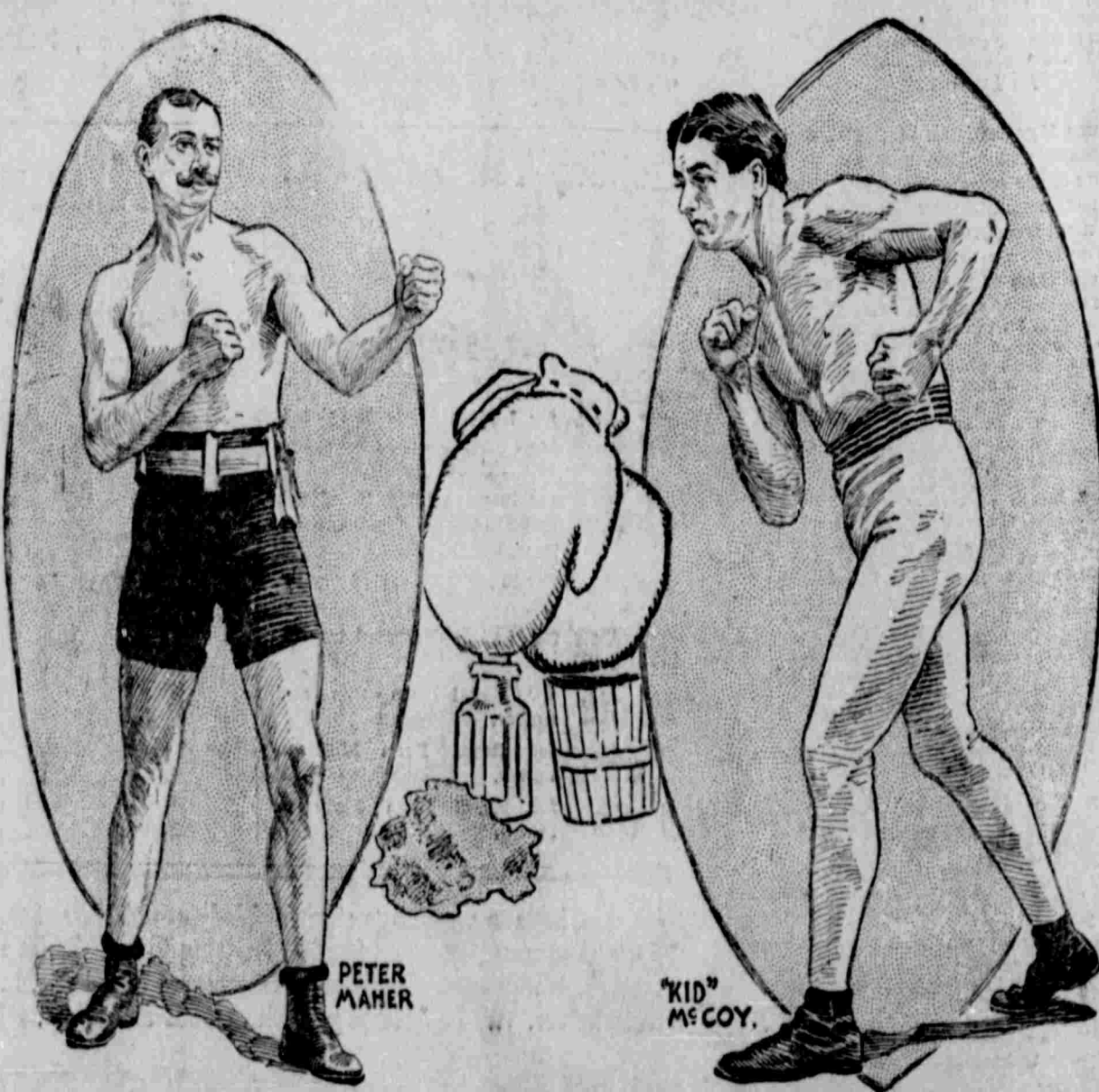
"BEN HUR" ACT I
ARREST OF BEN HUR AT THE INSTIGATION OF MESSALA.



MARY MANNERING



EDWARD MORGAN



PETER MAHER

"KID" MCCOY.

FROM THE AMUSEMENT WORLD.

The first of the Transvaal war plays has already been produced in London. It is called "Queen of Country."

The theatrical managers of San Francisco have combined for the purpose of social and business intercourse

and for charitable purposes with relation to the profession.

In Germany the question of insurance against storms, inundations and other forces of nature is being considered, and the principal companies have been re-

quested to report their views to the government.

The Hanlon brothers have engaged the three Guitanos, comedy acrobats and pantomimists from the Winter Garden, Berlin.

Richard Mansfield will not have a new play this season, but will revise

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ton's new comedy, to be given shortly in New York. The color question is worrying theatrical managers in Washington, particularly as it takes the form of damage suits. "Love is the greatest thing in the world" is the line from which Mrs.

Henry C. De Mille and Harriet Ford's new play, in which Sarah Cowell Le-moyne will make her stellar debut in January, takes its unique title. The four Cohens are going starring next season under the direction of L. C. Behrman in farce comedy. "Sag Harbor," James A. Herne's new

play, is such a big success that it may run all season in Boston.

Louis Mann of "Telephone Girl" fame reiterates his resolve to play Shylock this season, with Clara Lipman as Portia.

Kate Claxton is getting together a company to play the "Two Orphans."