THE DRAMA

Back in the Business.

I'm back in the business again, boys;
I'm back in the business to stay.
I've traveled from Texas to Maine, boys,
With never a copper for pay.
I'm back in the business again, boys;
I'm strolling on upper Broadway.
You all raised a shout
That I ought to get out,
But I'm back in the business to stay.

I've played every town in the States, boys
From Tampa to Kalamazoo,
I've oft had to "wildcat" for dates, boys,
And do all the billposting, too;
I admit that I've made grave mistakes, boys,
In trying this art to pursue,
But once a "profesh,"
You're caught in a mesh,
And there's nothing else you can do.

As a salesman I'm not a success, boys,
And bookkeeping's not to my mind;
As an author, you'll readily guess, boys,
I could never a publisher find.
I've tried hundreds of things, more or less, boys,
But in all I have had to resign.
As "Help Wanted" I read
I am forced to concede
That there's nothing at all in my line.

So I'm back in the business again, boys;
I'm back in the business to stay.
If they want good all-round leading men, boys,
I'll work from September till May.
Can you lend me a five or a ten, boys?
I've a few little bills I must pay.
What's that? You're just out?
How did that come about?
Well,—I'll see you again, boys; good day!

—David Miles, in Dramatic Mirror.

WITH ENTIRE FRANKNESS

Fun, With Some Artistic Drawbacks, and Singer Russo's Debut Mark the Boston Lyrics' Season.

Two weeks of clean and wholesome fun, with an exhilarating flavor of Italian bel canto from a young tenor who comes to us absolutely fresh and unspoiled—these are what the Boston Lyric Opera Company has given us. And as both happen to be rare commodities now-a-days in the amusement world, it would be churlish of us not to be grateful.

Russo's personality has proved an interesting study. He is a naive compound of the artist and the athlete. In his exuberance of enthusiasm for art, he puts little or no restraint upon himself. In addition to a voice of rare purity and power, he possesses remarkable lung capacity and breath control, and of these he has given frequent exhibitions. Some of these breath suspensions have been so startling as to send a cold chill down the back of timid listeners. Except for this extravagant, but delightfully ingenuous display of power, his vocalization is very nearly perfect. He is a tenor that will, no doubt, be eagerly sought by enterprising impressarios. His superb singing this past week of the "Lucia di Lammermoor" scena; the Manrico arias from "Il Trovatore"; the Duke's song, "La Donna e Mobile" and the tenor part in the great quartet from "Rigoletto," will long be remembered with delight.

Of course there have been things to cavil at in the work of the company—breaches of good taste that might, with a little study, be easily remedied. The fiasco of the fat Valentine who, in the "Faust" death scene, turned tragedy into farce, has not been duplicated the past week; yet every evening has witnessed some small contretemps that has stolen force from a thrilling dramatic situation.

An Example.

Take, for example, the great tomb scena, just referred to, from "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Tomba degl' avi miei, which Russo, in the role of Edgardo, sang with such impassioned power, Thursday night. The hero, while wandering among the graves of his ancestors, hears the toll of the castle bell; attendants bring him the news of Lucia's death, and in a frenzy of despair, after giving relief to his feelings in a tragic outburst of song, he stabs himself. It is a grand and gloomy aria, generally regarded as a crucial test for ambitious tenors, and Russo rendered it with noble effect. All would have gone well had not a particularly lank and cadaverous attendant, of towering height, been inadvertently placed in the foreground as the favored recipient of the unhappy Edgardo's ravings. Was it absolutely necessary that the shortest and the tallest in a company of 40 members should be so conspicuously brought together in this tragic crisis?

Other breaches of good taste might be pointed out—an over-liberal use of the rouge-pot among the women, for example. A little care would quickly remedy these defects, thereby materially improving the general effectiveness of the company.

The working principle which Colonel Thompson has adopted for his company is that the public demands a large repertory, rather than finished art. Eleven complete operas, without counting repetitions, or special acts introduced to make a double bill, constitute the repertory for the two weeks' season just concluded. It would be manifestly absurd to expect carefully planned details or smoothness of performance with such a repertory as this. Doubtless, the jingling of silver dollars at the box office is a substantial argument in Colonel Thompson's favor, yet there will be many found who hold to the view, that a smaller repertory and a more polished art would meet with encouragement and support from the people.

MERIWETHER.

PADEREWSKI COMING.

Manager Heilig Secures the Great Pianist for April 11.

Through the untiring efforts of Manager Heilig, he can at last positively announce that Paderewski, the great pianist, will appear at the Marquam Grand on Wednesday evening of this week. The sale of boxes and seats will begin at the box-office of the theater tomorrow evening. This achievement has been brought about through an arrangement with Messrs. S. H. Freidlander & Co., of San Francisco, who are conducting Paderewski's tour on this coast.

Pianists come and go; each has a following of some sort—large or small, as the case may be—but Paderewski stands alone; he is a figure by himself in the musical world. The reasons for this are various, although if you were to ask his admirers of the emotional sex why they place the long-haired player, like an idol, on a pedestal, to be worshiped in rhapsodical ecstacy, the answer would come in adjectival phrases, of wild appreciation, of no critical value whatever. They cannot, or they will not, believe that Eugene d'Albert is equally as good in a Beethoven sonata, and that De Pachmann has a finer gift for the sensuous music of Chopin, and they fail to realize that if d'Albert and Paderewski were placed behind a curtain, they would be absolutely unable to say with certainty who was the player.

Paderewski made his appearance at a favorable moment. In the beginning of the present decade, there was no great pianist looming there in the public eye. Rubinstein was the last of the giants, and

Ignace Paderewski.

he had practically retired from the platform. The golden fruit was hanging ripe upon the tree, although it was not for the first comer to pluck and eat; only he who was favored of the gods could touch the magic bow that guarded its treasure, as securely as the belt of fire encompassed the sleeping form of Brunnhilde.

The "Fearless Youth."

Then Paderewski, the "fearless youth"—Paderewski, with his sandy circlet of lusterless hair; his strangely interesting furtive gray eyes; his pallid complexion and figure lithe as a willow wand, came within view, although at the beginning only a few realized his power. He wooed and he won, and now he leaves the wooing to his patrons, and there is a scramble by them for places, at so many big round dollars a head, and his admirers sit at his feet as though he were, in sooth, a god.

They listen in ecstatic silence—breathing is not absolutely forbidden, although that vital function of nature has to be controlled, with due regard to the player's pianissimi—but no other movement of the animal body is permitted, indignant "s-shs" promptly follow the unpremeditated rustle of a lady's silk dress during a performance of Chopin's sonata. Paderewski places his trust in Beethoven and Chopin, two composers who cover, between them, the finest range of pianoforte literature.

First of all we tread with him the carefully cut paths of classic art, as represented by the Beethoven sonatas, and then we follow the beckoning hand of the Polish composer, with whom we share the fairy revels of his fantasia in F minor; dream of nightingales and somber woodland shadows, through the nocture Op. 27, No. 2; harken solemnly to the B flat minor sonata, with its fateful funeral march, and then pass onward to the playgardens of pianoforte music; pirouette to the lively measure of the etudes, Op. 25, Nos. 3 and 5, and dance gally to the enchanting strains of the mazurka in B minor and the favorite valse in A flat, Op. 42. A soupcon of Litz, and the concert is over.

As a Drawing Card.

It is indeed remarkable and speaks Paderewski's power as a drawing card, that his popularity is, in no wise, diminished by the heavy demands that have been made upon it in America. Most of the great European pianists have visited this country during the last few years, but although they had the spice of novelty in their favor, none was able to achieve a success that could be compared to his. Paderewski still holds his former impregnable position in the hearts of lovers of the piano.

Since his reappearance in this country, last December, he has created the usual furore in musical circles. Every place that he has played the houses have been packed. In Chicago recently he had to be rescued by stage hands from a mob of women at the Auditorium. Neither the turning off of the electric lights, nor the lowering of the iron fire screens that separate the stage from the auditorium, served to stop the onslaught on him. Music and Paderewski these women must have, and for a full hour after the programme of the regular concert was over, they kept the exhausted master of the keyboard working for his freedom. He was only released when everything else had been unsuccessfully attempted by stage hands rushing in and carrying the piano off the platform.

"HAVE YOU SEEN SMITH?"

Davis' Company of Funmakers Begin at Cordray's Tonight.

One of the brightest modern farce-comedies, "Have You Seen Smith?" will open a week's engagement at Cordray's Theater tonight. It is in the hands of a capable company of comedians, and has been doing an excellent business this season. There are several pretty women in the cast and much new, funny business is provided. The attraction has acquired an important place among the laugh-producers and is making a strong bid for a top seat. The fantastical exploits of several personages, in the course of the evolution of the farce, cause many amusing complications, and the disentanglement affords an opportunity for comical situations and interesting tableaux. Incidental to the plot is introduced a plenty of songs, dances and marches of every description. Several musical novelties will be heard.

"PUDD'NHEAD WILSON."

Burr McIntosh to Appear in Mayo's Play at the Marquam.

Burr McIntosh, supported by a clever company of players, will be seen at the Marquam Grand Friday and Saturday nights and Saturday matinee of this week, in Frank Mayo's dramatization of Mark Twain's beautiful story, "Pudd'nhead Wilson." Mr. McIntosh will appear in the role of David Wilson, or, as he is better known at Dawson Landing, Pudd'nhead. Ashton Stevens, dramatic critic on the San Francisco Examiner, in reviewing the production of the play, with Mr. McIntosh in the title role, at the California Theater last week, says:

"Like 'Old Homestead' and other successful American plays of dialect and character, 'Pudd'n'head Wilson' has become an established tradition. The same acting characterizes every production of it. Any innovation would be resented. The public knows as much about the piece as the actors do, and the public wants it served each season in the same style. Everything is cut and dried for the players. They have but to stick to the traditional gestures, intonation and make-up, and the play and the audience do the rest. The most important figure in the performance of this sort is the stage manager—the actor-driver, you might call him. Unseen and unheard from the front, yet it is his hand that turns the crank and presents the pictures. The stage manager knew his business at the California Theater last night, and the players knew theirs. And one of the cleverest and most truly American plays in the meager literature of our stage was given an interesting and intelligent, if not brilliant, performance. 'Pudd'nhead Wilson' is about as clever a blend of melodrama and satire as ever has been turned out.

"Burr McIntosh wins easily. This is the first time I have had the luck to see him, and I regret that it is not a part that calls for original expression, for he would seem to be a first-class actor, with a big, bounding, magnetic personality and the rare art of expression. Mr. McIntosh knows the value of suggestion. His action leaves something to the imagination, and it tells.

"Frances Graham Mayr plays Rowey with the right ingenuousness, and Nina Morris gives a vivid Roxy, even if she misses something of the traditional pumpkin-colored laugh."

"What Happened to Jones."

Harry Corson Clarke, always a favorite in Portland, will be seen at the Marquam Easter week, presenting, for the last time, Broadhurst's successful comedy, "What Happened to Jones." Mr. Clarke is now arranging for the production of a new comedy, called "What Did Tompkins do?" which was written for him, and, under his own supervision, and the name of which was suggested by himself.

"MR. SMOOTH" NEXT WEEK.

Willie Collier With His New Farce, Billed for the Marquam.

Willie Collier and his supporting company will appear at the Marquam, in the successful farce, "Mr. Smooth," on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week. Play and company have been making a big hit throughout the country, and will come from a successful engagement in San Francisco, where the critics have accorded much praise to the production. Mr. Collier is known in Portland, and his performance in "The Man From Mexico," at the Marquam last season, won him no inconsiderable praise. Reports of his new play that have reached here seem to indicate that it is funnier than its predecessor. Mr. Collier is himself the author.

In "Mr. Smooth," a young man, with more nerve than anything else, introduces himself, under the name of another man, to a rich, retired banker. The man whose name he has taken turns up at an inopportune time, and the hero is kept busy dodging detectives and inventing stories to keep from getting found out, while he wooes and wins the banker's daughter. Fortune favors him, and he comes out of the scrape, at last, with his heart's desire and a fortune into the bargain. The complications are cleverly wrought out, and Mr. Collier dispenses the fun as he goes along. He is said to be outrageously funny at times and always without apparent effort.

Besides Mr. Collier, there are several other good people in the cast, who will contribute largely to the entertainment. A bookmaker, with all the slang of the race-course and the betting ring forever on his lips; a society girl, in all her fuss and feathers; a retired banker, with more money than brains; a pronounced old maid, crabbed and sour, and a couple of eccentric servants help to make fun.

Minstrels at Cordray's.

Barlow's Minstrels (white), one of the strongest minstrel organizations in the country, consisting of 40 people, and having two bands, will play a week's engagement at Cordray's, beginning Sunday, April 22. The company has been doing an excellent business on this season's tour and has been playing to big houses in the Northwest. A feature is the big street parade which the organization makes.

Objected to Being Supplanted.

One of the features of "The Village Postmaster," when the play was brought out in New York, was a trained baby pig. The size of the animal had a bearing on the story and the lines. The author, it appears, had forgotten the fact that pigs grow rapidly, and the result was that as the run there grew in length, the pig increased in width, as well as length, so that the management was at its wit's ends within a few months to secure a new member of the cast to take the part of this porcine player.

As the rural drama stayed on one stage almost 200 nights, the pig was a hamfatter in both senses of the term before the curtain fell on the metropolitan engagement. Another pig was secured in time, but the discarded four-footed actor squealed like all possessed, when taken away from his accustomed haunts at the side of the stage.

DIXEY AS GARRICK.

"Adonis" Makes a Hit in Robson's "Oliver Goldsmith."

Aside from Mr. Robson's personal success in "Oliver Goldsmith" and from the dainty, sketchy charm of the play itself, there are two features of the performance at the Fifth Avenue that play-goers can be grateful for—the Doctor Johnson, of H. A. Weaver and the Garrick and Twitch of Henry E. Dixey.

Mr. Weaver is a splendid old-school actor, whose telling characterization of the crusty yet kindly doctor it would be impossible for any of our modern "character old men" to match or duplicate. His ripe, fine methods are a treat to observe and his presence on the scene arouses regret that there are few artists of his class left us.

Mr. Dixey is the artistic antithesis of the veteran Weaver, but that does not mean that his acting is not equally praiseworthy. He does not suggest Garrick, as he has come down to us in portraits and contemporary record, but he contributes a thoroughly delightful study of character, nevertheless, while, in broad contrast, he "doubles" the boozy bailiff with excellent comic effect. Mr. Dixey has been noted so long as a capital mimic and graceful entertainer that his appearance in "Oliver Goldsmith" comes as a timely reminder that he is an actor, too, and of remarkable talent.—The Usher, in the San Francisco Mirror.

Soon Over.

"I love to hear you play," he said,
"My reasons? Well, the chief
One is that when you play for me
Your pieces all are brief."

—Baltimore American.

No Doubt of It.

The New York police will have a great deal of support in their theory that certain kinds of music are criminal.—Baltimore American.

JOHN T. TIERNEY, IN "HAVE YOU SEEN SMITH?"

MABEL WILLIAMS, IN "HAVE YOU SEEN SMITH?"