

IF "A FULL HOUSE" BY UNRECOGNIZED AUTHOR FAILS, IT WILL NOT BE ANY FAULT OF CAST

Farce Is Woven About Time-Worn Methods to Win Laughs, Even so Far as to Include Stumbling—Theme Might Have Been Worked Out Differently With More Success—What Charles Frohman's Stars Will Do, Now That He Is Dead, Is Problem.



BY LLOYD F. LONERGAN.
 NEW YORK, May 22.—(Special).—
 Unknown authors are having their chance this Spring, perhaps because managers have found that the well-known writers cannot be depended upon to fill their houses. This has been shown again in the case of "A Full House," written by Fred Jackson (his maiden name for the royalty stakes) and produced at the Longacre Theater.

No one can deny that the play has an excellent name, for "A Full House" is what every manager is hunting for. The offering, however, is a rather loosely written farce and embodies much comic material that has been the standby of farce writers for many generations.

The story starts out with a plot. A lawyer, who seeks to recover love letters to a chorus girl, gets by mistake the handbag of a burglar containing a stolen ruby. An experienced writer would have made the search for the jewels the clearly-defined theme of his three acts. Mr. Jackson fails to do this. Of course the police are called in, there is necessarily the visit of the thief to recover his luggage, and the inevitable quest for the gems hidden in the stockings of a servant girl searching for the reward for them.

The second act, however, is built up out of single episodes, some of which are often amusing enough to keep the spectators in constant laughter.

Just the same it was interesting to watch the piece as it progressed from one physical and acrobatic stunt to another, and realize how the central idea would have made excellent fun if it had been adhered to. But the author seemed content to have single incidents follow others with which they were not connected. The characters tried every old device to produce laughter, including stumbling into one another and falling over each other's feet. It was a hit-itay method throughout. The tempo was enough to make speech incomprehensible and the action was rapid rather than plausible. One of the women characters, shrieking in

hysterics, was carried across the stage and up a flight of stairs by half a dozen other performers, while a policeman supplied humor by saying that it was possible for the characters in an apartment to come in, but impossible for them to go out.

The cast was much better than the vehicle. George Parsons is an expert player of farce, his air of naturalness and lack of exaggeration making him especially valuable in such plays. May Vokes, in her special line, is always amusing, and Herbert Cortell scored as a fat thief. Hugh Cameron pleased as the policeman, while excellent work was done by Elizabeth Nelson, Maud

Gordon, Edgar Norton and Ralph Morgan.

If "A Full House" does not live up to its name it will be the fault of the author and not that of the actors.

Now that Charles Frohman is dead, what will become of the stars who have appeared under his management?

The public announcement is that business will continue just the same, probably under the management of either Daniel Frohman or Alf Hayman and John D. Williams. The stars will have to be consulted, however, as none of them is under contract, and many of them, it is known, have been anxious to retire before this, but remained in harness because of the pleadings of "C. F."

It was a peculiarly happy family, that of the Frohman stars. All of them had been developed under his management and they comprised a united family. The work was pleasant, the

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remuneration sure and none of them ever thought of going elsewhere.

It would not be surprising if at least three of the best-known took this occasion to retire from the stage. It was only William Gillette's affection for Charles Frohman that induced him to return to the stage this Winter. John Drew, it is an open secret, has been ready to return to private life for the last three years. It is increasingly difficult to find plays for him, and he has never found any for himself. During the last season he has had two plays, and neither of them satisfied him.

When all is said and done, it probably will rest with Miss Maud Adams as to the outcome of the Frohman situation. She is by long odds the greatest drawing card on the stage today, but she is weary of life behind the footlights. Probably she would never consider the matter of appearing for another manager, but she may agree to continue her career if the close associates of "C. F." take up his work. On the other hand she may decide to retire outright.

The three stars named above have plenty of money, and the financial rewards of the stage have little attraction for them. If sentiment wins they will be seen again next year; if it does not they will retire to private life. It safely can be said that under no contingency will they appear under any management than the Frohman estate.

Ethel Barrymore and Billie Burke are two other of the "senior stars," if they can be so classified. Miss Barrymore may go on in vaudeville, where she has established herself as a favorite. Miss Burke, who is the wife of the Ziegfeld, if she makes a change, probably will be under the management of her own husband.

Otis Skinner and Ann Burdock were to have continued next season their run in "A Celebrated Case." What effect Mr. Frohman's death will have upon their plans is not known. Hattie Williams is the sister of John D. Williams, and her brother probably will continue to direct her. Blanche Bates and Marie Dore were to have played with William Gillette in "Diplomacy" next season, visiting a number of cities not visited this year. The chances are that Mr. Gillette will not resume his starring tour, and this may affect the plans for the play.

Other Frohman stars are Joseph Brian, Julia Sanderson and Joseph Cawthorne, who, in "The Girl From Utah," have made the most successful tour of any musical farce in this country. Since leaving New York business has averaged \$18,000 a week, and it had been intended to keep the attraction going for at least another year. The chances are that this will be done by the Frohman estate, while all other plans are problematical at the present time.

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