

# ACTOR, MANAGER AND PLAY

## FIVE CITIES READY TO PAY HANDSOMELY FOR OPERA.

MR. WALLACK'S PLANS—MR. MACKAYE'S NEW PLAY—OPPOSED TO BENEFIT PERFORMANCES—MISCELLANEOUS.

There appears to be a very widespread desire through the country to witness the performances of opera given by the company now engaged at the Metropolitan in this city. The organization is to visit only five cities when it starts out upon its travels. The tour will include Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, and the management decided, in order to secure the success of the enterprise, to exact from each city a guarantee that the receipts should reach \$10,000. This has been done in the different cities by opening a subscription sale, and in Chicago and St. Louis the result has been extremely satisfactory. In Boston the \$10,000 required has been subscribed, and in Cincinnati the first day's sale exceeded \$4,000. In Chicago the subscriptions already amount to \$40,000, and there have as yet been no single seats placed on sale. The money thus far taken is for season tickets. The conduct of the scheme in that city was peculiarly Chicagoan. The manager of the Columbia Theatre went to a dozen of the leading men of the community, and, after pointing out to them the strong advisability of having the city respond largely in a case of this importance, asked them to personally assume the task of circulating the subscription paper among their friends. This touched their pride as citizens of the Western metropolis, and inside of a week they had raised the enormous amount mentioned—enormous, that is, in the light of an advance sale of tickets. St. Louis has also reached the guarantee required, as might have been expected by any one taking into account the large German population. The returns from Philadelphia are considerably ahead of the amount demanded by the management. It is proposed to take all the scenery and properties used in the Metropolitan representations through the whole of this tour. After it is finished the company will come back to New-York for its Spring season.

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It appears after all not to be quite definitely settled as yet that Miss Coghlan's new play is to be produced by Mr. Wallack during the season. There is, however, a provisional arrangement

Durand"—which is attracting a great deal of attention and which has occasioned considerable amusement to the bright young manager and his friends. It is probably the most unspeakably bad piece of theatrical printing that has been executed for a number of years. It represents the scene at the close of the second act where the husband declares himself to be innocent of the crime alleged against him. The floor looks exactly like a sheet of ice, the shadows of the different personages being brilliantly reflected upon it. The face of the husband is so unutterably villainous that it would unquestionably hang him in any frontier community. All the attitudes of the different characters are quite beyond description, and everybody who sees the picture bursts into a roar of laughter. Mr. Frohman says it is the most valuable piece of theatrical paper that has thus far come into his hands. He declares that in Boston and Philadelphia people have been known to walk four or five miles for the sake of showing their friends this thing, which has gained widespread attention as a curiosity. The work was done by a New-York lithographing and printing firm, and every theatrical agent in the metropolis has been up to Mr. Frohman's office to look at and laugh over its many absurdities.

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My private correspondence from London contains a good many interesting points this week, and the most important of them is the artistic failure of Mr. and Mrs. Kendal and Mr. Hare in their production of "As You Like It" at the St. James's Theatre, of which they are the lessees and managers. Mrs. Kendal is regarded in London as an omnipotent being in regard to theatrical affairs, and hitherto no well-regulated Englishman has ever been found who would admit for a moment that she could play anything badly, from Meg Merrilies to Fanchon. It is now said to be felt, however, that in undertaking a part of the girlish calibre of Rosalind, she has exceeded the limits of even British admiration, and she is accordingly berated. Mrs. Kendal is a lady of affluent physique and mature years, and in her boy's costume she is looked upon as a not too radiant being. Mr. Hare's Touchstone is spoken of as being far more dreadful than it was imagined he could possibly make any characterization, and the Orlando of Mr. Kendal, who has been hitherto regarded professionally as a weak attachment to his successful wife, is declared to be the only good thing about the performance. The great personal popularity of the Kendals will, however, in all probability insure the monetary success of the revival, though the unexpectedly severe reception accorded it may deter other researches in the Shakespearean line. The other leading sensation of the amusement line in the English capital at this moment is a horse which walks a tight rope. The cord upon which this intelligent animal balances itself is not exactly a piece of twine, being some nine inches in diameter, but the performance is regarded as none the less remarkable. The horse occasionally tips over and falls into a net which is spread so as to catch him, but upon these occasions he eagerly returns to his post and tries the trick over again. Blindfolded or with open