

ASHEVILLE MIRROR OF PLAYS AND ACTORS

The audience that greeted James Young last evening at the Grand opera house was charmed with the delightful rendition of Hamlet by this noted young actor. No actor who has visited Asheville in years, with the exception of Frederick Ward, has made a more favorable impression than Mr. Young and his excellent company.

Miss Irma Johnson was charming as Ophelia and she at once captured the audience by her grace and sweetness of voice. Handsome bouquets of roses were showered upon Mr. Young by several of Asheville's young ladies.

Local play-goers have always extended a cordial welcome to the comedies of Charles H. Hoyt, but the presentation of his most artistic success, "A Milk White Flag," at the Grand next Wednesday, will command more than ordinary interest. "A Milk White Flag" is a production more pretentious than anything that this popular playwright has yet offered to the theater-going public. The cast is composed of the best talent in the profession, and will number about fifty performers, including a military band under the direction of Prof. Frank Camp. All the scenery used in the

and gives it a dash and vim that is seldom seen exhibited in a role of the sort. Mr. John Dunne is the colonel, whom Napoleon looked like. There could not be a better man in a better piece than Mr. Dunne in this character. There are many exceedingly pretty and shapely girls in the chorus, and in their different and elaborate costumes form many pleasing stage pictures. The full military band will discourage sweet music throughout the performance. It is a production that will please each and every one. It teems with bright lines, particularly Hoyt's in their sharpness, and the follies and foibles of the dress parade soldiers are satirized with humorous and, to use a paradoxical expression, kindly severity. Fun bubbles, effervescent in every line. Summarized and can be called "Hoyt's altar of roses," the sweetest of his condensed, "A Milk White Flag" extract.

Charles Hoyt's gift does not lie in the way of construction. His plays are all groups of incidents, not at all interdependent. In a good play, every incident, every episode even, is necessary to the perfect whole, like the most insignificant stone in a mosaic. Where Mr. Hoyt's genius is manifest is in his character drawing. In this he has no superior, if by a perfect character drawing is meant the reproduction of clearly recognized types. He does not bother himself much with analytical social duties. He does not probe beneath

the weather hundreds of people braved the storm last night and visited the Park opera house to witness the performance of Gorton's big minstrel. Burnt cork minstrel is always well received in this city, and the show last night was a treat to all. Everybody had a good evening's laugh. The curtain went up on the usual minstrel first part, but the specialties introduced were



MARY MARBLE, In "A Milk White Flag."



MARY MARBLE AS THE ORPHAN.

production is carried by the company, having been brought from Hoyt's New York theatre, and is said to be the best ever seen by a "road" company. Charles Hoyt's pieces are not modelled on classic drama; they do not follow Shakespearean lines; they are less formal and more frivolous than the old comedies; they are not so suggestive as the latter day "purpose plays," or so theatrical as modern melo-drama. But they all have a story to tell and tell it plainly; they satirize the fad or fancy of the moment; they abound in humor and not infrequently scintillate with true wit, and they present cleverly drawn types of character well contrasted, and what is more important—they succeed. "A Milk White Flag" has its shaft of wit directed at the National Guard. One of the chief characters of the play is a fin de siècle American woman, who knows her rights and means to maintain them. She becomes a little tired of her lord and master's vagaries, and finally when he shows plainly that he esteems "Four Queens" above his helpmate's piece of mind, she characteristically sets things in operation to free herself. But this is not all. She is eminently a practical woman, and when the local military company wishes to secure the corpse of her suddenly deceased husband she turns it over to them and saves burial expenses, but also insists upon a sum of money for the turning over the cadaver. It is easy to imagine just why Mr. Hoyt ex-

pects such care in the selection of a woman to play this part. It must be done in a tragic travesty style, which is shading too much or too little might make offensive. But Mr. Hoyt feels that there can be no danger of such a happening with the role entrusted to the dexterous and experienced hands of Miss Lansing Rowan. He selected her for the part out of all the prominent actresses whose work was known to him, and she has even gone so far as to change the part and make it even more prominent. Pretty and clever Mary Marble, is the soubrette, and none more clever than she is to be found upon the stage of today. She plays the orphan in this play

of a high order and exceedingly funny. The songs were new and up to date. "Hank" Goodman was the favorite, but each artist met with his share of applause. A column might be devoted to the praise of the performers, but space forbids. Suffice to say it was a clean, bright, up-to-date show in every respect, and every member of the company is an artist."

Klaw and Erlanger, of New York, who largely control the southern theatrical circuit, have taken a lease of the Tulane College property, in New Orleans, La., and will immediately begin the erection of two theatres there. One of the theatres, to be called the Tulane, will be a high-priced house, and the other, the New Crescent, will be for popular price attractions. Both houses will be opened in the autumn.

There seems to be nothing definitely settled regarding the rumored new comic opera company, with Lillian Russell and Jessie Bartlett Davis at the head. It appears to be settled that Mrs. Davis will remain with "The Biscuits," while Miss Russell tells interviewers that she knows nothing about the alleged plan. Attractions of the first-class, whether operatic or dramatic, are getting scarcer and scarcer, and the probability is that even greater difficulty will be found in filling the time of the principal theatres throughout the country next season than has been experienced this season. The supply is not equal to the demand, and artificial conditions have checked natural development.

The New York Dramatic Mirror says: "There are signs of a reaction against the scum of indecency and depravity on the surface of metropolitan amusements. The wholesome sentiment that pervades other American communities has rebuked and rejected much of the smut that has been vomited by Manhattan's managerial experts in pornography, and that will do much to check its original exploitation here, for most productions are made for ultimate touring purposes. Besides this, the New York Press is beginning to cry a halt on the wholesale prostitution of the stage by the unscrupulous dollar chasers, and



JNO. W. DUNNE, In "A Milk White Flag."

through its medium the value of the respectable and conservative elements of our population is being heard. A cartoon in an afternoon paper the other day pictured theatre parties of the near future arriving at the playhouse in masks, to conceal their identity. It may come to this should the dramatic debauchery continue much longer."

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