

WE DESIRE to wish our many friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy Century. We also wish to let you know that we are in a far better position now than ever to cater to your holiday wants—whether it be of foreign or domestic production, we have it here, and, consistent with first-class goods, at prices that are equally as low as any house in this or any other State.

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Musical Gossip.

THEATRICAL.

Eight Bells at the Lyceum.

An unique and amusing piece of stage mechanism is the ship scene in "Eight Bells," which opens at the Lyceum this afternoon and evening. The scene shows the cross section of a ship with the passengers on deck and in the state-rooms. Presently a storm arises and the ship rocks and rolls with increasing force until finally it turns completely over several times.

Lester Walter Company.

At the Academy of Music, beginning next Monday evening, the Lester Walter Stock company, supporting the young romantic actor, Lester Walter, will open a week's engagement in a strong repertoire of scenic productions. The opening play, "A Prince of Russia," is a romantic drama of Russian military life and will be staged with special scenery, brilliant mechanical effects, handsome costumes and a strong cast of characters.

Cyrano De Bergerac.

Francis Wilson comes to the Lyceum, Dec. 29, for one night, and, as usual, he has something new for our musical consideration. Cyrano de Bergerac, the great dramatic success of last season, has been transformed into a comic opera by Victor Herbert, the successful composer and Harry B. Smith, the most prolific librettist we have ever known.

PLAYS AND PLAYERS.

The theatrical business is one of the very large straws that point to the course of the winds of prosperity. This season has thus far furnished a rich harvest for the showman of high and low degree. The actor who a year ago was obliged to walk ties, so to speak, now travels in a Pullman and wears real diamonds in his scarf pin.

of the drama are usually first to feel the effects of enforced public economy, and all save the leading lights of the histrionic world, who play only to patrons of wealth and affluence, cheer upon careers of vexation and disaster or temporarily disappear. But with the return of good times the army of exponents of the theatrical art increases with a rapidity that is astounding.

The dramatic version of Henry Sten-Kiewicz's "Quo Vadis" received its initial production at McVicker's theater, Chicago, Tuesday evening. The dramatization is by Stanislaus Strange and the main incidents of the book closely. The scenery, by D. Frank Dodge, of New York, received a large share of the applause.

Thomas Q. Seabrooke has decided to abandon the farce, "Who Killed Cock Robin?" "The truth is," remarked the famous actor, "our audiences have done the killing. The piece has been a disappointment to me to us all. We thought it would be a bright and sparkling farce. It was a success in Paris. It ran there 200 nights. J. Cheever Goodwin translated it for me, and his success in the past at similar work have been so great that we all looked for a brilliant play in "Who Killed Cock Robin." I don't think the fault lies with the translator or the actors, for our company is an excellent one throughout.

The business Viola Allen has played to the hilt has broken records at every theater, without exception, that she has appeared in. In Chicago the record was broken for the length of the engagement at the prices that she played. In St. Louis following, in playing to \$12,000 on the week the record for the entire country was broken for one week's engagement at regular prices. Likewise in playing to an average of over \$12,000 in the cities of Detroit, Cleveland and Pittsburgh, the theater records in these cities were broken at Miss Allen's prices. Thanksgiving night Miss Allen's business broke its own record. The takings for this night were \$2,285, just \$5 in excess of the largest house to which she had previously appeared, which was in St. Louis. Miss Allen is playing a lengthy engagement in Philadelphia to the capacity of the Walnut Street theater.

In spite of the close approach of Christmas the business that James O'Neill is doing this week throughout Pennsylvania is nothing but remarkable. The house is sold out in every city before the company arrive, and local managers all over the country are awaiting for return dates for James O'Neill in "The Musketeers." The new year will see Mr. O'Neill again at Her Majesty's theater, Montreal, Canada, where "The Musketeers" was first produced. After that week Mr. O'Neill plays an engagement at the Boston theater, Boston, Mass.

the "standing room only" sign appears in front of the lobby. This play is a companion to "Shore Acres," and is expected to make as great a success in New York next season as it has in Boston this.

Sarah Cowell Le Moine, who will begin starring early in January, in her new play, "The Greatest Thing in the World," will appear in four of the most magnificent gowns that have ever been seen on the American stage. Mrs. Le Moine has always been known as having beautiful costumes, but in this case she will outdo any of her former efforts.

MADE A FALSE CONFESSION.

Admitted a Crime in Order to Save Himself.

From the New Orleans Times-Democrat.

"When I was considerably younger and greener in this business," said an old railroad detective, who had been asked to tell a story of his experience, "I lived at a certain hotel, which it is not in the least necessary to name. One rainy, sleety night in early winter I came in very late, and going directly to my room, was surprised to find the door ajar. I had on a pair of old rubbers, so my approach had made no noise, and peering in I saw a man heading over my open trunk. I didn't stop to meditate, but was on his back in a couple of jumps, and who should it turn out to be but the porter, a young white man, much liked by everybody in the house. He was so startled that he couldn't say a word, and there was the evidence plain as day. The trunk had been forced with a chisel, which lay on the floor; the contents were tumbled about, and sticking in the lock of the door was a skeleton key made out of a piece of copper wire. When the porter found his tongue he begged me not to turn him over to the police. He said that his mother, who was dependent on him for support, was sick and in destitute circumstances; that he was unable to earn enough to provide her with necessities, and his desperate need of money had tempted him to the act. I knew you wouldn't believe me if I told the truth," he said, and would be dead sure to have me arrested, but I did think there were some chances of working on your feelings by pretending to confess. I remembered hearing you remark, 'said he, 'that you always felt sorry for a man that owned up.' So he tried that plan, and, as you already know, it worked. I was satisfied that what he told me was absolutely true, and, taken altogether, I believe that was the queerest case I ever had anything to do with. The last I heard of the young man he was living in Atlanta and doing well. The car thief got seven years'."

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old Edith was lighted up with unusual beauty, and her dark eyes had a dreamy, far away look that prompted her mother to ask: "What are you thinking about, darling?" "Oh," replied the little miss, "I was just wondering whether you chewed your pudding or swallowed it whole."

Near Grohmann, Pa., there is a lake of boiling mud about two miles in circumference. Immense columns of steam rising and are constantly arising and descending.

Children's Sayings.

Here are some children's sayings gathered by the Chicago News: "What kind of a dog is that, pap?" asked small Johnny, as he observed the big animal chasing his own tail. "That's a watch dog," replied the father. "And will he go as soon as he winds himself up?" asked Johnny. It was the first time the little 4-year-old Willie had ever seen a snake, and as it writhed and squirmed along he ran into the house to tell his discovery. "Oh, mamma!" he exclaimed, "come here, quick; here's a tall wagging without any dog." The other evening at dinner the face of 4-year-