



EDITED BY "Woodbine"

Eberhard's "Holiday in Coontown" are laying off in Indianapolis until after the Holidays. The show has had very good success throughout Illinois and Indiana.

Notes of McCabe & Young's Black Tribby:—Business continues big in North Dakota. The company got into Carrington at 10.20 at night and showed to a packed house, and to cap it all we arrived at Edmond at 12 15 p. m. to open the new opera house and showed to a packed house at \$1.50 per head. We then gave a concert after the show at 50 cents apiece after which we gave a ball and danced till the train pulled out for New Rockford at 9 o'clock next morning. Tom McIntosh, Little Harold McCabe and baby Lucia McCabe are doing an act that is the hit of the season. Prof. Brown joined the company last week. The Palmers and the Owens are doing fine work. The company will spend Christmas in Lebanon, N. D., where D. W. McCabe has arranged a big Christmas tree and reception for the company. D. W. McCabe is doing all kinds of work in advance and the ghost walks on time.



P. G. LOWERY
The Recognized Cornet Soloist and Band Master, Asst. Manager 4 Paw & Sell, Vaudeville Co also Manager Swain's Nashville Students.

Kansas City and Kansas Notes:—The Great Eastern show has closed. Mr. Shelby, leader of the band reports good business done by the company, and that their last stand was Saturday, Dec. 14 in Denison, Tex., from which place they jumped into Kansas City, their wintering quarters. They open some time in May. There is one barber shop here where most professionals can be found at all times, that is the place of Mr. Willis Jackson, on Grand avenue and Sixth street. Mr. Jackson is an old showman. He was one season with Calder's Minstrels, the Georgia Minstrels in 1873, and a number of other shows. In his prime he was said to be one of the best tuba and double bass violin players in the business. He regards to all professionals, hoping when in the city you will call. The Freeman is also on sale there. Gayer and West's Minstrels are in their last week at the Wigwag Theater. Roster of company.

The subject of this sketch was born in Dyersburg, Tenn., January 4, 1882. His parents died a few months later, but fortunately his grandmother and aunt took him to raise. In 1895 they moved to Memphis, Tenn., and three years later he was placed in school where he stayed but two terms, for, unfortunately, his aunt died and he



Gayer and West, Prof. F. B. Woods, manager; B. Ownes, stage manager; Comedians Billy Ownes and C. H. Williams; W. M. Fletcher, Challenge buck dancer; F. Henderson, "Omlsk Feebly;" Mr. Bemery's bass solo, "Down in the deep let me sleep," finally, "I'll bet it all," by Fletcher, Biglins and Williams; the great and only prima dona, Mrs. C. B. Woods, singing "Will you love when the lilies are dead. The olio is very strong, making the show on the whole a good one. Miss A. Foster, of the team of Foster & Henderson, is on the sick list. Mr. Bostick and wife are expected to join the "Honolulu Coons" company. Billy Ownes sends regards. Smart & Williams, Richard and Lottie Brown. C. C. Hill sends regards to George Rhone and Buddie Glenn. The Williams send regards to Messrs. Quinn, Oakes & Allen, and a merry Christmas to all.



GORDON C. COLLINS
The Clever Comedian. One of the Principals with Swain's Nashville Students.

THE 20TH CENTURY PERFORMER

Some men are born great, some achieve greatness, while others have greatness thrust upon them, is a saying that dates away back to the good old days when the public at large was eager to grasp any and all sayings of value. Just as a new century came comes the new performer eager to grasp all new ideas and very much the successor of the old firm "song and dance team." As from a dream the languid writers of color have awakened and have set their fertile brains to work on newer themes the far-famed minstrel, though much improved seems but a ghost in a haunted house, i.e., one that never walks, and yet he is a "king" (I mean the ghost) and would not stop to lay in am "Bus!" to molest a poor Knight of Burnt Pork. In this new century there is no one that can help noticing the rapid strides the profession is making and the eastern star, viz., success is but a short distance away. Special notice can be made of the style and manner song and play-writers of color are using their selection of themes, arts, etc. Messrs. Shaw and Dixon, a duo of young men stationed at Chicago are among the best of successful writers that find the single word title a success. Ruby, Quenelle and Lilly, and Grace are latest from their pens. Messrs. Dunbar and Cooke have out-classed all and placed before the public a real comic-opera song and acted by artists of color, with the polished Bob Cole at their head, and so we could use this entire column in speaking words of praise of the 20th century performer, but we beg a few words in a friendly way to this ever ready "George Washington" actorman who differs in one degree. Since boyhood you have been reading that little story, i.e., "Father, I did it with my little hatchet." Only "George" said he couldn't tell a lie. There is where the

son and Main streets, in front of C. L. Byrd's jewelry store, which supported them both for three years. In 1894 he lost his grandmother, and having saved quite a sum of money, he decided to quit the boot-black business and he then went to work at the Grand Opera House, and while there he learned considerable about the stage. His first



AUGUSTUS STEVENS, FEMALE IMPERSONATOR.

was compelled to abandon school and start to labor to support his grandmother. He first found a position in a clothing store, where he worked quite a while. From there he next found a place in a factory where he stayed for an indefinite period. Becoming tired of manual labor, he decided to open a boot-black stand at the corner of Madi-

son and Main streets, in front of C. L. Byrd's jewelry store, which supported them both for three years. In 1894 he lost his grandmother, and having saved quite a sum of money, he decided to quit the boot-black business and he then went to work at the Grand Opera House, and while there he learned considerable about the stage. His first

difference comes. We have in our midst a vast number that continue to do it with their little hatchets, but can really tell a — my pen refuses to write the word. We have thought of this matter quite a number of years and have come to the conclusion that the little hammer you knock with is only dangerous to the wielder if every knock is a boost. Some poor unfortunates ought to be at this hour a resident of Jupiter or Mars. The 20th



century performer is the nerveless carriage of acting vehicles. We are glad to note the success of each vaudeville artist. There is a mania predominant, i.e., to beat the head of one's own company. The list will be worth mentioning. As 20th "centurians" (mine) we have the unbleached American, the two real Coons, the "Black Patti," the "Black Swan," and a number of titles beyond my reach. We wish to thank dear "Tat" for his interest in our welfare, at times we almost imagine we are friends, but how could we be when we have never met. We would suggest that you write a pamphlet entitled "I Did it with my little hammer." I have several new poems but your pen is mightier than my sharp hatchet. All other names diminish to a microscopic finish when brought into comparison with "Chester" Bronzefield

A REVIEW OF THE STAGE

BY SYLVESTER RUSSELL

After twelve months of more or less observation of the distinguished element of Afro-American actors, a second annual review in the Christmas number of "The Freeman" is again presented.

During the past and present seasons there has been a few surprises worthy of note, with some incidental features herein recorded with regret.

The chief topic for regret is the shelving of "A Trip to Coontown" in the height of its popularity and the dissolving of partnership of its two stars, Bob Cole and Billy Johnson. It is rumored, however, that Bob Cole will star in a new play next season, which, if true, will be a highly interesting advent from two standpoints, viz., the ability of this star to shine in a new role and the merits of his new comedy.

Bob Cole, without further explanation, can be said to be the foremost comedian of his race, and for this reason, if Billy Johnson were to support him in his new venture, it would be better for both, in these days when popularity is so soon to wane.

Earnest Hogan, the popular comedian, has promised the public and notified the profession in general for the past season of his forthcoming tour as a star.

Mr. Hogan made an enjoyable run on the New York Theatre Roof Garden (Cherry Blossom Grove) last summer, and the world now stands ready to see him as a star, but the professional attitude displayed by Mr. Hogan in a recent theatrical advertisement was indeed quite obnoxious.

W. S. Cleveland who had the good

colored shows commended for genuine race songs by colored writer Sidney L. Perrin's, "My Dunah Al John's and Elmer Bowman's Way Back and Sit Down" were sections which swept the count while Will Marion Cooke and Will Coole have contributed musical numbers to prominent Broadway productions.

The good behavior of the girls of the big cities companies—been commented upon, but their smooch-up criticism—little more now and less red paint is advisable.

Tom McIntosh is a good comedian who was generally considered bad because he stayed on the stage too long. Skinner Harris and other good comedians do the same thing.

Listen what the white folks say. Just jolly a coon along. If you want to die. He'll stay on the stage too long. Too long—That's no lie.

The Black Patti Troubadours seem to be the best singing organization of the season, the chorus being quite a perfection.

The solos rendered by Miss Sista Jones of the Black Patti are about as good as ever selected here, and is much better than in the past. The songs and a voice to equal her among our female singers—most notably in the "The Hottest Coon in Dixie."

The cake walk including Jani's Grobe, will continue to be popular as well as the Troubadour quartette, which has too much classical music. The show on its original lines is as good as ever. Leslie Triplett as Hotta created a new trend but good Filippine. Barney is also on the bills so the company arranges a ball-dog now.

THE HOTTEST COON IN DIXIE. The above named play is an Afro-American musical comedy by Phil R. Miller, its proprietor, but can be fairly seen that Bob Kelley has created his own act and won the play around him with much of the material used in "A Trip to Coontown" was originally put together by Bob Cole, Billy Johnson, Jesse Shipp, Ed Brown and Bob Kelley. It does not seem strange that Mr. Kelley should use some of his former ideas over again. As a matter of fact Mr. Kelley made a worth-while hit. His monologue is intelligent and interesting throughout and he is now distinctly to the fore as a comedian. In a play he has labored for years to attain.

Joe Rogers and Lola Lunnhimer are prominently in the cast. These two are very friendly and very fine. Miss Lunnhimer is a well trained, first-class singer and character actress. Some of the music is by Acrow and seemed to please.

SONS OF HAM
Williams and Walker's latest vehicle is a good edition of "Sons of Ham" an Afro-American, improbable musical comedy by Steach A. Cassin and Jesse A. Shipp.

A review of this play must necessarily bring it into comparison with "A Trip to Coontown." Cassin and Shipp have woven together some excellent work pertaining to college life but they have failed to weave the net around the stars. The love scenes are evasive and incomplete. The changes in the first act have sent the stars farther away from the plot than ever. The first entrance of the stars on the college grounds thirty days after a "max" (as seen last season) was quite the proper thing and far more interesting than a street vaudeville entrance. Bert Williams and George Walker are interesting and bound to be good in any sort of a coon play, but in a play of this class their well known vaudeville specialties should be dropped entirely. The stars simply waltz around the play as two impossible students.

The Zulu Babe is a special treat and shows what unusually clever work Williams and Walker can do with new ideas. Jesse Shipp is an excellent actor when he does not enter into the joy of his own acting of pious parts. The Reese brothers and Fred Douglass can boast of being expert athletic acrobats.

Pete Hampton and George Catlin as the old man and Chinese respectively were good. Miss Anna Ross is a little overdrawn, red-faced mummy, who could be more true.

Misses Lottie Williams and Alice Mackey were pleasing. What a pity Miss Mackey is not singing Acrow's "My Samoan Beauty" and so displaying her beautiful contralto voice. Miss Ada Overton takes advantage of a great chance than ever to display her versatility as a soubrette. Her wardrobe that ostentatious blue gown is very rich and very pretty, for she is Mr. George W. Walker now.

When Lloyd Gibbs sings "The Story of the Rose," a waltz song changed to a long meter tune, everybody looks a leader. Acrow and wonders who a ranged it. Mr. Gibbs has a splendid tenor voice and the dear public sigh. Mr. Gibbs please do sing everything a little faster. There is a tableaux scene in the play which is too long and

fortunate in securing William H. Windom, contra-tenor singer, for the opening of his Chicago Minstrels, stated a few years ago that he did not like Windom's voice. Mr. Windom's voice is a rare one, it is his natural voice and can't be termed a real falsetto. He also knows how to sing a ballad better than most men do, or any other singer Mr. Cleveland could hire.

Billy Eldrige, who died last winter, was a much admired comedian and Mrs. George R. Wilson's death was pathetic and everybody was sorry for her two sweet children, the prettiest and cutest little cake walkers upon the stage.

The song-writing business seems to be flourishing. The colored writers must be praised for coon songs that are not altogether insinuating and the

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R. R. CHURCH'S AUDITORIUM
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