None of the dramatic "shows" which have lately formed the Theatregoer's sole fare have seemed worth detailed criticism. That the theatrical show has its own place no one denies who believes in innocent laughter, in mere diversion for its own sake, or in a beautiful spectacle, though it appeal only to the eye, but the show relieves us of serious thought both during the performance and after, and suggests for discussion only a few questions: Does the modern farce equal that of a generation ago? Compare, e.g., The Silent Woman, which Mr. Willard perpetrated as a curtain raiser, with the Robertsonian one-act plays,—with Lend Me Five Skillins, which Mr. Jefferson revived last fall. Do the modern ingenious spectacular effects, even when as good as those of the Sleeping Beauty, equal the personal grace and skill of the old-fashioned ballet and premiere danseuse? Does cleverly deceptive machinery take the place of the minor but beautiful art of dancing? Has the modern light opera as permanently pleasing and comical songs as the old, and is the modern opera as free from vulgarity as Gilbert and Sullivan? Compare the Prince of Pilsen with Pinafore.

In the next fortnight two substantial plays appear. Mrs. Fiske brings the tragic drama built up by Paul Heyse upon the Biblical Magdalen story, as amplified in medieval legend. Mr. Sothern brings Hamlet.

No Shakespeare play is of more interest, because it is his most thorough and detailed character study, and because a line of actors from Shakespeare's own time down have preserved so conservatively traditions of Hamlet acting that probably we see the play to-day given,—except for scenery and costume,—substantially as Shakespeare's company gave it, when the poet himself played the ghost. With all the controversy, too, about "the mystery of Hamlet," no play is clearer in its main purport. The young prince, most brilliant, refined and winning of Shakespeare's heroes, heir acknowledged to the throne, favorite of the people, and accepted lover of Ophelia, "the expectancy and rose of the fair state," has laid upon him by a spirit come from the dead a grim and bloody duty. With all sorts of real and improvised scruples and under the protection of feigned madness, he puts off performance of his duty long after every reasonable scruple has been removed, until his delay has cost the life of the father of his betrothed, of two courtiers, of Ophelia herself,—and her death the sinful one of suicide,—of Ophelia's brother, of Hamlet's own mother, and, finally, of Hamlet himself. The most bitterly ironic scene in dramatic literature is that last spectacle of the prince fencing to amuse the king he should long since, on first sight, have killed. The moral duty at first delayed, then, when Hamlet knew the king was seeking his life, degenerated into self defense; and in the last scene, when Hamlet learns his own life is doomed, self-defense becomes a sort of mere revenge.

Mr. Sothern seems an actor of solid rather than of brilliant parts; but his Hamlet is studious and conservative, and the performance, as a whole, is likely to be one of the best worth-while in the whole season.

Freshman Drill.

On the second Wednesday preceding the Interscholastic Drill, there will be held a company and individual drill among the members of the Freshman Battalion. In this drill the men will be divided into two squads, a Junior squad and a Senior squad, for those who have never drilled before entering the Institute, and for those who have had previous training. A thorough knowledge of the manual is the only preparation necessary. The entrance fee will be 25 cents. Winners in each squad will be given medals for their excellence. The winning company probably will be given a dinner at the Union, to which all commissioned officers will be invited.

The contest will undoubtedly be a very interesting and exciting one, and every man should try to make it a success in all ways. To defray expenses an admission fee of 25 cents will be charged to visitors.