Traveling Theatre in Kansas: The James A. Lord Chicago Dramatic Company, 1869-1871—Concluded

JAMES C. MALIN

VI. BASES OF DRAMATIC CRITICISM, 1870-1871

LEAVENWORTH

Long since it should have become apparent to the reader that a critic’s commentary upon theatre was a highly uncertain commodity. Always there is question about how much credence can be given to the press notices. Custom provided general practices about complimentary tickets for the press, and advertising, formal and “puffs” in the locals, and so long as both parties played the game, all went well. But, on occasion these relations became snarled. Some theatre troupes did not place formal advertisements in the papers, but depended primarily upon handbills and locals. J. A. Lord was usually quite successful in his press relations, but there were occasions when even his well managed system went wrong. The Leavenworth Times revealed a rift in February, 1871, in which Lord may not have been at fault.

Having opened on Monday night in “Ingomar,” the Times critic introduced himself on Tuesday morning, February 21, with the following:

We would like to have our readers understand, at the outset, that we shall not enter into a criticism of the different plays presented by this company during their engagement here. We know and can appreciate the difficulties attendant upon the management of a troupe organized as this one is. In the one fact of the organization not being permanently located, rests a great share of the trouble of keeping it up to that point of excellence which we know is the aim of that true knight of the buskin, Mr. J. A. Lord. . . . Mr. Lord we have seen upon the opera stage in Chicago, the same careful and studious actor as he appears to us here. In refusing to criticise the company, which is our right, we do so, therefore, solely for the encouragement of what we deem an excellent company. . . . the best troupe of theatrical performers which has visited this place in a long time is the verdict of the public.

No clue has been found about what really was “biting” the boy,

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but something further and more intangible occurred Wednesday night which was noticed in the criticism of the Times, February 24, Friday:

Notwithstanding the discourtesy shown toward the employees of the Times office on Wednesday evening, we have a kindly word to say to Mr. Lord, . . . [and his company]. We can hardly reconcile the discourtesy complained of with the handsome acknowledgements made by the management in the words of farewell spoken to the audience. . . . The forbearance of the press of this city in noticing shortcomings and the hearty support extended were acknowledged in pointed language. We hold that the least worthy of the many good theatrical notices given, was worth more than all the paltry admissions asked for. Having said this much we will now proceed to the more cheerful task of saying the kindly word we had set out to say and which is uppermost in our thoughts. . . .

The first critique by the Times man was a peculiar, patronizing, snob performance by which the scribe sought to impress his readers—and he did, but with his own bad taste. He revealed himself also in his insistence that the weaknesses of the Lord company stemmed from “not being permanently located,” in other words from being a traveling not a resident theatre. In this respect he was out of touch with the times, or unrealistic about the world in which he lived, and did not recognize that the choice was not between these two forms of organization, but between traveling theatre or no theatre. Otherwise, as pertains to the merits of the controversy, the data are too incomplete to permit a conclusion.

A second shortcoming in press reports of theatrical performance was a too-great reliance of many editors upon news handouts from the advance agent of the companies. A particularly effective phrasing or sentiment by some early critic might thus become the model for other papers for weeks or months thereafter. By following the itinerary of a traveling company these similarities or even identical eulogies can be spotted, and recognized for what they were. Still, although following precedent they might be sincere. More difficult for the historian to deal with, however, was the possibility that the theatrical criticism was written by the manager of the company. Lord was charged with this practice, particularly during the winter of 1877-1878, when difficulties between Seymour and Lord became a matter of public record. But where a town had more than one paper the individuality of the critics rounds out perspective, but contributes problems of interpretation, their variety and often contradiction adding zest to the task of the historian.
Ward Burlingame told one story on himself that may have had more than one counterpart. He claimed that at Leavenworth he attended a rehearsal of “Othello,” wrote his story of the evening’s performance, had it set in type, and went to bed. A sudden storm caused the show to be cancelled, but his story appeared nevertheless in the morning paper.1

The Leavenworth press of 1870 afforded some specific guidance in matters of dramatic criticism for the season of 1870-1871, although not always conclusively. The sober local of the Times, November 18, in announcing the opening of the theatrical season by the Lords, was indicative of a predisposition favorable to any really acceptable performance: “as we have had very little of the theatrical of late, they will be likely to draw large audiences.” Similarly, the report after the second night was prefaced by the statement: “for the first time in many moons’ a Leavenworth audience has witnessed talent worthy of their commendations.”

During the spring of 1870 the Commercial, May 1, had been quite candid in admitting limitations upon its qualifications to pronounce judgment on the National Theatre: “Although in a business point of view we are metropolitan, we must in all candor admit, that so far as high order of art or superior culture is concerned, we are only provincial, and especially in regard to the mimic art.” Later, during the Coullock week, June 20-25, the same paper was apologetic, June 23, about the small audiences: “It reflects but little credit upon the Dramatic taste of Leavenworth that acknowledged art is so poorly patronized.” The season being late June, ice cream socials had been popular among the churches and at the moment attention was being directed toward the success of the music festival of the South Leavenworth Musical Association to be held at the Fifth avenue chapel followed by fresh raspberries and ice cream. This is the type of competition with theatre that inspired the next remarks, including the bad pun:

It is said that the cream of society in this city affect a different style, and that the mode is to frequent assemblies where fruits in conjunction with cream, can be discussed, much to the satisfaction of the consumers, who have also the consolation of knowing that they thereby much advance the cause of religion, in whose aid the feast is generally given.

Be that as it may, however, it is especially worthy of regard, that while talent cannot “draw” on the stage, brass and extravagance does.

The counterfeit negroes' [burnt cork] grotesque and somewhat vulgar antics, will always create a furor of enthusiasm and a corresponding influx to the exchequer of the company, while real Dramatic talent plays to empty benches. If you want a crowd bring along your Circus and "Numidian Lion." There is no such place as Numidia and your lion may be a downeast beast, but he has got a mane and can pass, as lions go. Let us all then give in our checks, and be thankful that we have seen the lion.

But the press of Leavenworth was not unanimous in these evaluations of Leavenworth's aesthetic standards. Lest the picture of that city appear too negative, although in the minority of one against two, the Bulletin's view, December 2, is presented last because it is positive. The occasion was the coming of Annie Tiffany who was to appear December 6, 7, 1870, before Leavenworth's sophisticated audiences:

The theatre-goers who compose the Leavenworth amusement loving public are cold, critical and indifferent. It weighs nothing here for Fort Scott or Kansas City to eulogize, and foreign reporters to exhaust rhetoric in describing the charms of a particular "star." Leavenworth has been more highly favored with the presence of prominent actors and actresses than neighboring cities on the river. Our people have listened to Booth, Forrest, Jefferson, Owens, Mrs. Hosmer, Lotta, Laura Keene, Siddons and many others. In truth, the best talent of the country has appeared on the boards of the Opera House.

It would be difficult to document the whole of his list of stars, and it is not worth the effort. The main point of his contention, however, was obviously in error; that Leavenworth occupied a favored position on the river or was on such terms of familiarity with the great as to be conditioned artistically to their excellence as a criterion of taste in theatre.

**Lawrence**

At Lawrence the tone of dramatic criticism was in a markedly different key. With some variation in wording, the Journal repeated its dictum of the previous year: "Lawrence people, as a general rule, are more partial to the concert and lecture than the drama. . . ." The paper avoided an expression of editorial opinion, employing various circumlocutions: "Those who delight in the drama and comedy will have a rare chance . . ." or "The audience being judges, the acting last night was a success,"—or "Mr. Lord's troupe is certainly popular with the large class that attends." Undoubtedly, the editor was not among those citizens of Lawrence who delighted in or attended the theatre except as duty required. These were Lawrence's revelations of herself, and ap-
parently the box office confirmed the town’s lukewarmness about the drama. The Lord company limited Lawrence to two short visits that winter, or a total of 11 nights compared with Topeka’s 23, Leavenworth’s 21, and Atchison’s 14.

TOPEKA

The Topeka Commonwealth, January 14, 1871, adopted an air of humility, which might be described as that of a country boy who was aware of his limitations within the sacred precincts of the sophisticated city, but nevertheless held himself firmly to his own ideals:

We have not traveled the continent, except in imagination, (like most of those who boast of their travels), and, consequently, we must not be expected to entertain strong disgust for every dramatic troupe which comes to Topeka. We are unsophisticated enough to think that good acting consists in fidelity to nature, and when a character is rendered in perfect accordance with nature, it is as well rendered as it could be by one who has just returned from “a two years tour in Europe.” Hence, our more cultivated and more extensively traveled readers will please excuse us if we say that Mr. Lord has placed before our citizens some of the very best plays, and that all the characters have been well rendered. One thing is noticeable about the troupe, and that is that nothing unchaste has yet occurred upon the stage under Mr. Lord’s management.

ATCHISON

At Atchison the visit of the Lord Company of two weeks, December 12-24, 1870, was the occasion of the dedication of Corinthian Hall, the city’s new temple of entertainment. Louie Lord opened Corinthian Hall in “Dora” and ten other major roles over the season, and thereby became a legend in Atchison, or it may have been that Corinthian Hall became a legend, to which Eugene Field contributed at a later date by his poem “Corinthian Hall.” John A. Martin’s Champion & Press, the only surviving newspaper of that date in Atchison, was peculiarly noncommunicative about the information the historian would most desire concerning either Corinthian Hall or the reception given the Lords upon that memorable occasion which should have accounted adequately for the form in which the legend developed.

EMPORIA: CHURCH VERSUS THEATRE

At Emporia the reaction toward theatre in general and the Lord Dramatic Company in particular was the most remarkable of any town during their first tours of the troupe in Kansas. The Lords
were advertised to open a week’s engagement there on Monday, January 23, with the dramatized version of Tennyson’s “Dora.” The new public hall, on the third floor over a business establishment, had been opened with a dance on Friday night, January 19. The Topeka correspondent of the News wrote that: “The duett singing by Mrs. Lord and [Miss Woltz] is as fine as I have heard in many a day. The excellent manner in which they put upon the boards several of the leading American plays is attracting large and intelligent audiences nightly.” All this was set forth before the Emporia public in Friday’s issue of the weekly News, January 20. The Rev. Mr. Kelley, minister of the Methodist church, called a general meeting at the church for Sunday afternoon at 3 P.M. “to listen to a free discussion upon the subject of amusements.” The exchange of views on that memorable afternoon was reported in the News, January 27, 1871, apparently quite fully and fairly. In view of the fact that this is the only occasion found when such an examination of current thought was made a matter of record, it has been reproduced almost complete, along with an editorial. The report read:

The intention of the pastor, Rev. Mr. Kelley, in appointing this meeting was to obtain from the members of his church and such others as chose to participate, an expression of sentiment as to what was the duty of Christians as regards amusements, especially as to whether they ought to countenance those popular ones, the dance and the drama.

Among the several speakers was a Mr. Detwiler, temperance lecturer:

As regards the dance it was his rule to explain to his children that, so far as the act of dancing was concerned, which is nothing more than the regulation of the movement of the body to music, there was nothing harmful in it, but that the tendency of dancing, and the associations that are inseparable from it, as it is universally conducted are irreconcilable with Christian godliness and destruction [live?] of sound morality. Several other speakers, among whom was the minister himself, followed Mr. Detwiler, all of whom maintained substantially the same position regarding both the dance and the drama as that enumerated by the first speaker respecting the dance, with the exception, perhaps, of Mr. Cunningham. This gentleman believed in making a proper use of all good things. He had no sympathy with long faced Christianity. There was no more impropriety for a Christian to laugh with the utmost heartiness, or listen to the representation, by competent dramatists, of a finely written story or poem than for him to do any other harmless thing. Conscience should be the judge. If he could honestly invoke the blessing of God in attending the theatre, or in doing anything else, he was justified in doing so. He did not believe it was his duty because some man was a bad man that he should on that account be debarred from hearing him render a beautiful poem in a faultless manner. Upon this principle he would be compelled to destroy most of
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his library, for the best of books are sometimes written by men whose lives were not at all exemplary.

Mr. Jay thought that the proper rendition of "Ten Nights in a Bar Room" would reclaim ten intemperate men to one reclaimed by ever so good a temperance lecture, with which sentiment Mr. Detwiler agreed. Mr. Kelley tho't that the tendency of both the theatre and the dance was demoralizing, and that so long as this was the case good men should not contemnence them. He didn't believe it possible to correct this tendency, . . . [He cited a man who attempted to run a theatre on correct principles and failed—success was possible only by yielding to depraved tastes.] He believed all good persons should refrain from giving them any support whatever. After a few remarks by other speakers the meeting adjourned.

The authorship of the following editorial cannot be determined, but Jacob Stotler and W. W. Williams were the editors, and H. W. McCune was local editor. In view of the fact that the discussion as reported was limited for all practical purposes to the single question of theatre the editorial was confined to that single subject:

The theatre is harmful when it degrades instead of elevates; when it excites the mind without instructing it; when it appeals only to the lower faculties of our being for the purpose of feeding their strong but sinful appetites, instead of administering food to our higher faculties, in order to awaken and quicken the best emotions of our nature as well as to increase our store of useful knowledge and to cultivate the best powers of our mind. That the drama has been too frequently in the past—and is to a great extent yet—the instrument of evil instead of good, all will admit; but that it is universally, and without exception, bad and only bad and cannot admit of any reform, and should, therefore, be unequivocally condemned and spilt upon by all good, christian men, is to be strenuously and bravely denied. The object of the drama is to represent on the stage in a manner that is true to life and nature the grave or humorous actions of characters who figure in the composition of some gifted author. To say that this object cannot be accomplished so as to interest, amuse and instruct without at the same time pandering to the depraved tastes of those who are fond of the obscene and indecent is to admit that men can never be made to love the good and the beautiful, can never cherish what is chaste, pure and elevating. It is asserting the doctrine of human depravity in its broadest and most qualified sense, denying all faith in moral progression. And to attempt to prove the truth of this assumption by asserting that all theaters are demoralizing in their influence, that there is not a single one in existence whose aim and tendency are to make men better and wiser, is simply to demonstrate one's bigotry, and ignorance. The history of the stage, it is true, is not what we could wish it to be; but neither is that of the church. But as the latter has been gradually loosening the bands of superstition, bigotry and narrowmindedness, so the theater year by year has been rising out of the meshes of obscenity, vice and vulgarity into an atmosphere of unexceptionable purity and decency. That there are theaters extant that are corrupt, vile, obscene and indecent is no sound reason for withdrawing patronage from those that are really moral and elevating in their tendency; no sounder reason, in fact, than to say that because
there are Christian denominations whose creed is narrow and whose practices are not conformable with the teachings of the Great Master, we should therefore have nothing to do with Christianity and no fellowship with Christians. There was a time when the church cried out with an alarming voice against the progress of science, believing that the light it feebly emitted in those early days emanated from the God of darkness himself, and was intended to overthrow Christian[ity] and submerge the world in endless darkness; but now the church looks upon science as the hand maid of Christianity. Every additional ray of light that emanates from the world of nature dispels one more wave of darkness that covers man’s mysterious relation to his Maker. So also is the prejudice that good men have heretofore harbored against the drama giving way to an acknowledgment of its benign influence and elevating character. No intelligent man has the right to say to another intelligent man that every theater is demoralizing, and that it will degrade and corrupt him if he patronizes it. We know that we have been benefitted by the drama—benefitted intellectually and morally. We have listened to Chas. Kean’s impersonation of Shakespeare’s characters and never before properly understood and appreciated the writings of that greatest of poets. We have had the best and kindliest emotions of our nature quickened into unwonted activity by listening to the faultless rendition of some of finely written composition, in which the best qualities of the human heart were strikingly exemplified. And as there are no pleasures as agreeable and rapturous as those of the imagination, and as the drama is calculated to most effectively awaken them, we have experienced some of our most pleasurable emotions in the theatre room. The drama has its place along with other arts. It has not reached its highest state of perfection, neither has any instrumentality of mere human invention. But it has done a good work in the past. It has been at times the only instructor of the people. It has often fallen into abuses, and under the government of bad men, it has sometimes been devoted to bad purposes and used for bad ends. But it was one of the earliest aids by which men advanced from barbarism to civilization, and without it, and its kindred arts, culture and taste would be unknown. Let its excesses be watched and confronted, just as all other excesses should be; but do not strangle it because, like everything else, it is not wholly faultless.

This was indeed a forthright defense of the theatre, but there should be no begging of the question—this editorial position and the absolute repudiation of the theatre by the Rev. Mr. Kelley were irreconcilable.

On the face of it the community should have been split wide open, but the data are too meagre to justify a conclusion that the question was taken so seriously. Reporting as of Thursday afternoon, the News local said the play “Ireland as It Is” drew the largest audience Wednesday night of the three thus far and all reserved seats for Thursday night’s “Our American Cousin” were already sold. The Topeka Commonwealth’s Emporia correspondent wrote on the closing Saturday night that the engagement was “highly success-
ful,” and “Notwithstanding the supposed opposition of this community to everything in the nature of theatrical exhibitions, Bancroft Hall was crowded every night.” The following week, Mrs. Mary A. Livermore lectured on woman suffrage at Bancroft Hall to a small audience. The News explained its views of the reasons: the Lord Dramatic Company had just closed a week’s engagement; and the unpopularity of the subject; but whether or not one agreed with her, it was the best lecture of the season: “It was better than a whole week of theatrical performances.” This suggests that possibly even the editors of the News were split on the relative influence for good between “Ten Nights in a Bar Room” and the temperance lecture.

VII. THE PERSONAL EQUATION

VERSATILITY OF MRS. LORD

Because of the great bulk of materials available about this long season in Kansas, 1870-1871, a procedure must be devised different from that employed for reviewing the first tour in Kansas. First to be traced is the emphasis upon the versatility of Louie Lord’s talents—the company’s formal advertisements always used the word “versatile.” After playing “Gilberte” in “Frou Frou,” and “Dora” in the play of that name, the Leavenworth Times, November 23, 1870, noted that “two characters could scarcely be more at variance. Her success in both stamps her as an actress of very superior talent and versatility.” Then November 26, after “Topsy,” the same paper insisted: “We never saw the character more finely rendered, and can hardly imagine how her acting in the part could be improved upon. She is as much at home in Topsy as in ‘Frou Frou,’ and plays both superbly.” Again, January 5, 1871, the Times printed a critique from the Joliet (Ill.) Republican which reiterated: “it was hard to believe that she who charmed all with her beautiful conception of Gilberte, could have been the mad cap Topsy of the night before. Truly Louie Lord is the most versatile Artist who has ever visited our city.” Of course, this was a company handout in Leavenworth, but the theme was effectively stated. On February 24, after registering complaint about alleged mistreatment of Times employees, the editor asserted: “Louie Lord in the full scope of her versatile talents is certainly not excelled in the West. . . .”

The critic of the Leavenworth Commercial, November 26, 1870, responded in a manner similar to the Times writer: “Mrs. Lord
possesses a variety of talent seldom, if ever, embodied in any one person now on the American Stage. ... Following a presentation of "Marco," on December 31 the same paper neatly complimented both Mrs. Lord and her rendition: "Reflective of so much and varied grace, the infatuation of 'Raphael' did not seem surprising to the audience. ...

After the fourth play of the first visit, and relative to "Topsy" in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," the Leavenworth Bulletin, November 25, 1870, concluded: "If any doubts were heretofore entertained as to the versatility of Louie Lord they were happily removed by the very versatile, clever and animated representation of that character last night." On January 5, 1871, the Bulletin also reprinted the Joliet Republican's verdict, obviously provided by the management.

At Lawrence the matter of versatility was not raised by either paper during the first visit, but the day before the second visit, the Tribune, February 12, 1871, wrote: "Mr. and Mrs. Lord are thoroughly read, and are acknowledged first-class actors. Louie Lord, especially, is very versatile. She has a peculiar aptness in assuming almost any character, and is a sincere and faithful worker. ... We expect a great deal of Louie, and we are sure we will not be disappointed." If this was the work of the advance agent Park Smith, it was well disguised. At Atchison, the only reference to versatility came on December 17, 1870, when the Champion was evidently following closely the advertising copy, but making a specific current application: "The occasion being a complimentary benefit to that excellent, versatile and popular actress, Mrs. Lord, Corinthian Hall was crowded...

The Topeka papers were the most generous in their variations on the theme of versatility. In announcing the first benefit of the season for Mrs. Lord, the Daily Record, December 9, 1870, put its comments in perspective: "Mrs. Lord has, in the two engagements which the Lord troupe has played here, appeared in every line of feminine character known to the stage. She has been a negro girl, an Irish girl, a Yankee girl, an Indian girl, and all sorts of a girl, and has in every part she has undertaken shown genuine ability." In "Frou Frou," for the benefit, she was to play "Gilberte," a French girl. After the first night of this engagement, the Commonwealth, December 6, 1870, emphasized: "This is the second visit of this troupe to our city. ... The characters ... rendered by Mrs. Louie Lord were immense, the best we ever
saw. Mrs. Lord is certainly a lady of rare and versatile talent, seldom embodied in one person.” This wording was similar to the Leavenworth Times notice of November 26.

Upon their return to Topeka in January, 1871, the Daily Record, January 14, was duly impressed by “The Marble Heart” performance: “Mrs. Lord displayed, as ‘Mademoiselle Marco,’ that versatility of talent which has made her so popular here. It appears to make little difference to the lady what line of character she is called upon to play, whether it is the screaming ‘Yankee Gal,’ or some roaring farce or the heroine of a dramatic romance like the ‘Marble Heart,’ she always does her best, and that is always acceptable.”

The Commonwealth, January 12, showed more warmth in its praise: “That beautiful and graceful lady, Mrs. Louie Lord, appeared as Florence Trenchard [‘Our American Cousin’], and the ease with which she entered into the character she represented so well in this comedy, after having seen her in the sad, sad condition of the Octoroon, last evening, astonished us with the versatility of her talents.” The Commonwealth, January 15, 1871, characterized Mrs. Lord’s “Nancy Sikes” in “Oliver Twist” as “another illustration of that versatility of talent for which she is so justly famous.” And of “The Child Stealer,” five days later, it specified that Mrs. Lord “almost surpassed herself in her magic transitions from the miserable child thief to the repentant mother; from the humble mendicant at a noble’s door to the heroic mother vis a vis with a long lost daughter; from the lying, poverty stricken parent to the atoning, victorious mother. The ‘Mother and Daughter’ in the last act was truly a most affecting scene.”

**MRS. LORD, ACTRESS**

Evaluations of the quality and effectiveness of Mrs. Lord’s acting included many that indicated originality rather than stereotype, although there was necessarily much of the latter. After the opening play the Leavenworth Times, November 22, 1870, reported: “Leavenworth amusement seekers had a sensation . . . in ‘Frou Frou,’ as presented by one of the most charming and brilliant young actresses ever seen on the Opera House boards. We can’t describe her, but can only say that her like has not been here—since the last visit by herself. The way she represents that wild, giddy, naughty, fascinating ‘Frou Frou,’ is indescribable, and must be seen to be appreciated.” The following day, after “Dora,” the Times assumed a sophisticated attitude:
She is already a favorite with our people—and we think that past experience shows that to win the hearty support of Leavenworth theatre goers is not an easy exploit. Whether or not they are more faithfully critical than other people we do not claim to be able to decide, but many a bankrupt manager can give sorrowful testimony to the fact that they do not lavish their smiles upon everybody. Therefore we may say that Mrs. Lord is to be congratulated upon her success—richly merited, no one will deny.

Prior to her benefit in “Marco” the Times, December 30, insisted that Mrs. Lord had “established herself as a favorite on her first visit,” and the next day reported that “as the marble-hearted ‘Marco,’ [she] was airily and coquetishly fas[c]inating and abundantly justified the uncontrollable passion of ‘Raphael.’ The statue [shadow] dance in the opening was very effective. . . .”

On December 28 the Commercial reminded readers:

On former occasions we have taken great pleasure in calling attention to Miss Lord’s beauty and talented dramatic impersonations, and, as we clearly discern an immense improvement in her stage accomplishments, we unqualifiedly endorse her as the head of all female stars now traveling in the West. Simply and unaffectedly natural in style, she readily wins her way to the good will and appreciation of her delighted audiences.

And, in “Fanchon,” the next day’s paper reported: “The rendition . . . by the fascinating Louie Lord, was one of the most brilliant histrionic accomplishments of the Leavenworth stage.” Two days later: “The stony-hearted ‘Marco’ was played by Miss Lord with a degree of elegance and grace seldom seen on any stage. . . .”

On February 22, 1871, the Commercial resorted to a device used in dealing with Louie Lord by this paper before, and frequently by others: “Louie Lord, we need scarcely say, did her part [in the ‘Hunchback’] with her usual care and skill.” In bidding the Lords farewell at the end of their third engagement of the winter, the Bulletin, February 23, paid tribute: “Louie Lord is deserving of special distinction. She is an accomplished lady, and many of her impersonations deserve to take equal rank with the renditions of the best actresses of the Atlantic cities.”

In writing about Louie Lord the Lawrence Tribune exercised for the most part its usual restraint or disinterestedness in theatre as the case may be. Mostly the comment focused upon the company as a whole. On November 29, 1870, after the first show, the Tribune conceded: “Mrs. Louise Lord has a natural talent for the stage, that has been improved by study and practice until she is thoroughly proficient in her profession. The rendering of ‘Ireland as It Is,’ last night, was perfect. . . .” On the second and last visit
the *Tribune*, February 11, 1871, predicted: "Louie Lord will, no doubt, be as much appreciated as ever." Three days later the critic grudgingly, it seemed, wrote: "Louie Lord as Zoe, the octo-
ron, displayed that talent which we have heretofore been obliged
to acknowledge. She has a charming ease and grace, and at times,
when the text requires it, all the fire and spirit which intense emo-
tion and great passion give. The character suited her well and she
did full justice to it." On February 15, the critic himself appeared
in a more mellow mood which revealed some personal feeling in
the matter: "Louie Lord as Laura Courtland ['Under the Gaslight']
came fully up to our expectation, as a matter of course she always
does." After "Ingomar, the Barbarian," the *Tribune*, February 17,
1871, again exhibited some enthusiasm: "Mrs. Louie Lord, in the
character of the Greek maiden [Parthenia], elicited repeated ap-
plause. We have no need of testifying further to the merit of Mrs.
Lord, in Lawrence she is sufficiently well known and appreciated.
Last evening she called forth more admiration than ever; so correct
was the role rendered that we thought ourselves in the wilds of
Greece."

Upon their first return to Topeka the winter of 1870-1871, the
*Record*, for some reason, did not single out Mrs. Lord for much
special comment, but the *Commonwealth* made up for any appar-
ett neglect on the part of its rival: "The rendering of Dora, by
Louie Lord, would pass the severest criticism. She is evidently a
lady of no ordinary talent, and deservedly receives the applause
of the lovers of fine acting." Two days later, December 9, 1870,
the *Commonwealth* recorded that: "Mrs. Lord's acting in our city,
has elicited the warmest encomiums from dramatic critics. . . ." 
After her benefit the paper, December 10, became most enthusiastic
about the company as a whole for the presentation of "Frou Frou,"
but particularly about the star: "Mrs. Lord is certainly the most
natural actress now on the American stage. She carries the audience
with her throughout, and the universal sentiment, last evening,
seemed to be, 'Thou art an actress, born such, not made.'"

On the second visit of the winter to Topeka, in spite of the bitter
cold of January, 1871, the *Record* thawed out to the point of be-
coming a warm and vocal admirer of Mrs. Lord: her "Nancy Sikes,"
in "Oliver Twist" "was a powerful piece of acting. . . ." This
was printed January 15 and two days later the *Record* approved
"Mrs. Lord's idea of 'Fanchion' . . . as being the correct one.
She throws more dignity into the character and rants less than is
usual with ladies who essay the part.” After playing “Ogarita” in the “Sea of Ice” the Record recorded, January 21, that: “Mrs. Lord was called out, an honor never accorded her, or, we believe, any other actress in Topeka before.”

During this two-week run in Topeka, Mrs. Lord took two benefits, both of which thrilled the Commonwealth critic who, January 14, 1871, wrote of “Marco, the Marble Heart”: “all were delighted. . . . Mrs. Louie Lord was, of course, the star of the evening. Her personation of ‘Mademoiselle Marco’ was perfect. It is useless for us to attempt to praise her, or the performance throughout. Just let our readers take down their musty Webster’s unabridged, and commit the pretty superlatives therein, to memory, and consider us as using them all.” One week later the play was “The Sea of Ice”: The citizens of Topeka have never before, perhaps, had the opportunity of witnessing so fine acting. Indeed the performance of the piece is rarely excelled in our largest cities. Mrs. Lord sustained herself splendidly throughout the piece, but in the Arctic Scene in the 2nd act and all through the 5th act, she was certainly superb. We mean no fulsome adulation when we say Mrs. Ferren [author] never saw the day when she need be ashamed of the manner in which Mrs. Lord acquitted herself last night. . . .

After the close of the performance, the audience absolutely refused to leave until Mrs. Lord had appeared before the curtain.

At Atchison, superlatives were employed as generously as elsewhere although not the whole of the unabridged dictionary: “No actress who has heretofore visited Atchison has attained so high a place in the estimation of our people as Louie Lord. Natural gracefulness and most delicate culture lend a charm to every character she undertakes, and win the attention and esteem of her audience.”

MR. LORD, ACTOR

Early in J. A. Lord’s theatrical career it was said he came to realize that he did not have the power to fascinate, and so devoted himself assiduously to the promotion of the career of his wife Louie, of whom the Topeka Commonwealth had said at one time that she possessed “the sacred ‘fire,’” and at another time: “Thou art an actress, born such, not made.” The record of these winter months 1870-1871 is so complete that it does invite a testing of the exact quality of the public responses to Mr. Lord as an actor. The Leavenworth Times, November 22, commented on him as “Henry Sartary’s,” husband of “Frou Frou”: “admirably fitted for the part, in many gifts of nature, as well as by brilliant acquirements in the
dramatic art, which have seldom been witnessed here.” The following
day, after the presentation of “Dora, or the Farmer’s Will,” the
Times said:
Mr. J. A. Lord as “Farmer Allen,” won his full share of the applause, and proved
himself at home in his character. In fact we are inclined to think it his favorite
character, and we doubt if he is excelled in it. The audience was at times held
spell-bound, and at many points the drop of a pin could have been heard in the
house, as deathlike was the stillness. Mr. Lord is an actor of unusual power.

“Richard III,” came the third night, with Lord in the title role,
“played with spirit and appreciation.”

On the second of the season’s visits to Leavenworth, the Times
single out in its report on “The Octoroon” only Mrs. Lord and John
Toohy for special mention. Later, “Mr. Lowe [Lord] as Raphael
the infatuated sculptor [in ‘Marco, the Marble Heart’], added to his
previously awarded laurels.” In “Oliver Twist”: “J. A. Lord acted
the character of Bill Sykes to perfection.” No comment on Lord’s
acting resulted from the third run in Leavenworth.

The Commercial’s comments on Lord, the actor, in the same three
series of plays opened: “Mr. J. A. Lord as Farmer Allen, rendered
the part thoroughly and was very effective in the tableaux in which
he takes so great a prominence.”—“Mr. Lord, as the humped-backed
King, was exceedingly effective and rendered the part with great
power. The tent scene was quite emotional and the passions which
filled the breast of the despairing monarch were faithfully por-
trayed.” In the second series of plays, after “The Sea of Ice” and
“The Octoroon” the comment directed at the manager personally
was “Miss Lord is admirably supported by Mr. J. A. Lord, as lead-
ing man, and a numerous and talented company.” After the “Marble
Heart” eulogy of Louie Lord, the Commercial had only this to say
of the others: “Both Mr. Lord’s Raphael, and Mr. Herbert’s Volage
were worthy of special attention.” In “The Child Stealer”: “J. A.
Lord plays his specialties skillfully.” In the “Hunchback” during
the third series, the critic wrote: “J. A. Lord, John Toohy and
Horace Herbert were well up in their parts.”

The Leavenworth Bulletin’s verdict on the leading man in “Dora”
was: “Mr. Lord’s personation of the old farmer was the most cor-
rect and natural rendition we have witnessed for some time. The
audience completely lost sight of the urbane manager, in the harsh
and determined conduct of the self-willed farmer.” When the
cast of “Our American Cousin” was announced with Lord as “Asa
Trenchard,” the Bulletin would have been pleased “to see Toohy
impersonate the 'Yankee Cousin.'

During the third series of plays, the Bulletin was not unappreciative of Mr. Lord, but its personal compliments were directed to other aspects of his activities.

As has been seen already the Lawrence papers were sparing in their theatrical news in any case, but particularly as applied to Mr. Lord as actor. His "Richard III" was commended by the Tribune, and he was considered equal to the requirements for the role of "McClusky" in "The Mormons," as well as for "Bill Sykes" in "Oliver Twist."

In Topeka for the first series of plays each of the papers really specified Mr. Lord for particular notice only twice. Both recognized his "Richard III" which is reserved for review under plays. The Record cited his "Dan O'Carlan" in "Ireland as It Is" as played "with his wonted power. . . ." The Commonwealth selected his Farmer Allen role in "Dora": "the part of the old man was admirably personated and powerfully rendered. . . ."

During the two-week long second visit to Topeka in January, 1871, the Record conceded to Mr. Lord "a dashing 'Captain Murphy Maguire,' and Mrs. Lord a sprightly 'Mrs. Delmaine.'" Toohy was given the best notice in connection with that play, "The Serious Family." In the "Marble Heart," "Mr. Lord played the poor sculptor to perfection, and that always careful gentlemanly actor Mr. Herbert was unexceptional as usual." So often Mr. Lord was given about the same recognition as the secondary members of the company. In "Oliver Twist" the Record said: "Mr. Lord as the ruffian, Bill Sykes, was excellent. The murderous look of the villain as he enters to murder the helpless girl, and his horror stricken face as he covers the dead body with a blanket to shut out from his eyes the horrid sight, was wonderful."

The Commonwealth was more generous than the Record in recognizing Lord, the actor: "Our American Cousin, Asa Trenchard' was extremely well rendered by Mr. Lord. He entered fully into the character . . . of a free and easy American, posted on all the outlandish lingo used on this side of the 'pond.' This was one of the most difficult characters in the play and its admirable rendition showed the artist's skill." In "Oliver Twist" "Bill Sykes' was well rendered by Mr. Lord." In reviewing "The Child Stealer"—"We must not omit to mention that Mr. Lord pleased his numerous friends last night better than ever before." As the third series, coming in February, 1871, involved other issues it will be deferred to the section on Mr. Lord as manager. Also the Atchison reaction is handled under plays and management.
OTHER PERSONNEL AND MUSIC

Other than Mrs. Lord, and Mr. Lord as manager, six principal members of the company received recognition by name from the critics; probably in this order: John T. Toohey, Jennie Woltz, Mr. Lord, Horace Herbert (Herbert and Miss Reynolds of the company were married at Junction City), and Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Graham. Toohey was the comedian, and in some plays received praise equal if not greater than Mrs. Lord herself, certainly more than Mr. Lord as actor. Yet he did not elicit the enthusiasms associated with Simons the previous season. Jennie Woltz occupied a unique niche in the company organization also that drew attention to her; primarily her music, but her improved skill as an actress was the subject of favorable comment. In “Othello,” Mrs. Graham played “Desdemona” and Mrs. Lord “Emelia.” In “Ingomar,” Mr. Graham played “Fagan the Jew” or the miser, a role so important that the play was sometimes referred to as “Fagan the Jew.” In other plays Herbert was second only to Mr. Lord in assignment to male leads.

The Topeka Record, January 17, 1871, paid the company a compliment that contained more, much more, than face value: “There was not a break or wait or stumble of any sort from the first to last. Mr. Lord has a fine company in one respect, they never get sick or sulky, or if they do the public never discovers it. We have no time to particularize, and only say that all did well.” All that was true, no doubt, but in composition the assignment of roles makes clear that the troupe was not assembled according to such a formula as was illustrated by the Mills Company, but with a view to having a corps of people competent to carry major parts if necessary. In spite of the unusually severe Kansas weather, however, and complaints on occasion that the heating of the theatre was not adequate to keep the audience comfortable, Mr. and Mrs. Lord were not ill, and no substitutions or cancellations took place. All these things taken together would suggest that the rather even handed treatment of these members of the company by the critics was generally sound. Except for the substitution of Toohey for Simon these members of the company had continued from the previous year.

The extent to which music and the dance contributed to the overall success of the Lord Company is difficult to evaluate. Louie Lord’s singing and dancing were included in the advertising of her accomplishments. For example, the roles of Topsy and of Fanchon (the shadow dance) called for dancing. Two of the duets sung
by Mrs. Lord and Jennie Woltz were mentioned by name: “The Wild Thyme” and “A Sigh in the Heart.” Only one of Mrs. Lord’s solos was advertised by name, “Par Excellence,” in connection with “Our American Cousin.” The Commonwealth, January 12, 1871, punished that her singing was “par excellence.”

Miss Woltz sang quite regularly an “operatic gem,” titles not given. A few of her songs, introduced into plays, were listed. During the 1869-1870 tour she sang “Like the Gloom of Night Returning,” in connection with “Under the Gaslight,” and “Five O’Clock in the Morning,” Parepa Rosa’s song, in connection with the “Hidden Hand” performance at Topeka. During the second tour in Kansas, two other titles were mentioned: “Those Evening Bells,” and “Song of the Kiss,” both in Topeka, December 10, 1870, and January 14, 1871. Of course, the “low comedy” man as well as the child actress were expected to provide both songs and dances. But so far as serious music was concerned, only Mrs. Lord and Miss Woltz, especially Miss Woltz, undertook that responsibility.

VIII. Reception Given Individual Plays

The tabulation of frequency of presentation puts the play “Dora” in the lead with six showings. The repeat performances were on different visits to Leavenworth and Topeka. As a play “Dora” did not induce the reporters to comment. Possibly the prestige of Tennyson was such that the play was taken for granted. The dramatization of the poem used was that of Charles Reade.

Of the plays presented on the Lord tour of 1870-1871, “Frou Frou” was the newest and after “Dora” shared with “The Mormons” the rank of being presented most frequently. Adapted in 1870 from a new French play by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy (1869), Augustin Daly had written and produced it in New York within the year of Lord’s use of it during this season. The Leavenworth Daily Times, November 20, called it a “sensational melodrama . . . as Frenchy as if it just escaped from Paris in a balloon. . . . Elegant new scenery, by one of Chicago’s most gifted scenic painters, will accompany the production of the piece here, and our people can enjoy its beauties and sensations as well at our Opera House as at McVicker’s or Niblo’s Garden.” Afterwards the Times reported “a sensation,” but focused upon praise of Louie Lord the actress rather than the play. The Commercial had nothing particular to

say about the play, but the Bulletin, November 21, reported that
"Mr. Lord assures us that he has all the necessary effects for pro-
ducing the piece in a thorough manner. . . ." Afterwards the
same paper called attention to the fact that this was the first time
the play had been acted in Leavenworth, and except for "the inex-
perience of the [local] Orchestra in the music of the play" the pro-
duction "passed off smoothly. . . ." But about the play itself:
"Frou Frou is certainly a remarkable piece. It is fascinating, but
hardly pleasing. There is considerable blood and excitement in
the piece, and several unnatural situations." Gilberte, a giddy
young thing, married a serious husband, had a lover whom her hus-
band met in a duel. Finally, Gilberte returned to her husband and
died in his arms:
The play would be thoroughly "Frenchy" if a suicide had been introduced. We
knew it wasn't American, as soon as the leading man declined the Carlruhe
mission. If it had been the English mission we could have forgiven him, and
still thought the piece natural. Some theatre-goers love tragedy. They adore
it while they weep, and many at the Opera House last night would have ap-
plauded the wholesale murder of all the actors on the stage, in play, and have
been gratified at the complete massacre of the Orchestra in reality.

Upon the second visit of the Lord Company to Leavenworth, the
Bulletin explained that those who had been "charmed" by Louie
Lord's "Gilberte" appealed to Mr. Lord for a repeat performance.
The request was granted for January 5, 1871, the Bulletin commenting
that: "The piece generally gets its patronage from people of
culture, or at least, people of a better taste, than crowd theatre
rooms to witness the 'Sea of Ice,' and 'Under the Gaslight.'" Appar-
tently this rationalization in advance was needed, because the
report on the following day admitted only "a very fair audience con-
vened at the Opera House," although the play was received with
"satisfaction." Leavenworth was the only Kansas town where Lord
gave a repeat performance of "Frou Frou."

At Lawrence "Frou Frou" was presented upon the first visit of
the season, but neither newspaper commented upon the play. Yet
the formal advertisement of the show pointed out that this was its
first production in the city. At Topeka the Record suggested that
"the novelty alone . . . ought to attract an immense audience."
The following day the report was that: "'Frou Frou' was received
with intense interest. The play will henceforth be a favorite.
. . ." The Commonwealth was more demonstrative: "The most
elegant and recherche dramatic entertainment ever presented in
Topeka, came off at Union Hall last night. . . . Most elegant stage dress and the best of acting was the order of the evening.”

“The Mormons” was given at each of the four towns on the first round, and repeated at Leavenworth on the second. The Commercial, November 26, 27, 1870, termed it “the best comedy now out,” “which drew the largest crowd . . . . seen there for many a day.” The Bulletin was virtually silent on the subject, but the Times said all seats were filled and some people stood up. It was more frequently applauded than any previous piece of the season. “The old Opera House has seldom had a more delighted audience.” Upon the repeat performance the Commercial, January 3, 1871, reported only “a fine audience” was presented with “the excellent comedy the ‘Mormons.’ . . .”

At Lawrence the Journal, December 3, 1870, revealed clearly its hostility toward the Mormons by saying about the play in prospect: “They will undoubtedly be taken off as they deserve to-night. This is certainly sensational enough for any and all. . . . The ‘Endowment Ceremonies’ and a secret marriage will be enacted.” The following day there was no further comment. The Tribune’s parting reference was: “Louie Lord was particularly attractive, and gave us an amusing and clear insight into the domestic life of a Mormon family.”

The Topeka Record, December 10, 1870, assured its readers: “Tonight will be devoted to fun exclusively, two side-splitting farces being on the bill, viz: ‘The Mormons,’ and ‘Turn Him Out.’” Afterwards the same paper pronounced the play “a queer mixture of tragedy and comedy, and it is difficult to tell whether fire or blood is the leading ingredient—there is certainly plenty of both. The play was well received and would doubtless bear repetition here.”

The Commonwealth was more direct:

Another tremendous gathering greeted the fifth and last appearance of this troupe last night.

The infernal system of polygamy, as practiced in Salt Lake City, was exhibited in glowing colors. Mrs. Louie Lord’s address to the women’s convention was received with thunders of applause. The Danites were completely outwitted and h—he was to pay.

Atchison’s response to “The Mormons” was similar to that of Topeka and fully as outspoken. The Champion, December 18, 1870, recorded a crowded Corinthian Hall and “the audience was delighted with the excellent rendition. . . . Mrs. Lord sustained the characters of Chattirena and Sergeant M’Judgin in admirable
style. Mr. Lord was loudly applauded for his faultless impersonation of ‘Whiskey Jake.’"

The fourth play to be considered was another that was presented in the four cities on the first time around—Shakespeare’s “Richard III.” This was the Lord’s first Shakespeare production in Kansas. The Leavenworth Times, November 23, 24, 1870, had little to say but to repeat that it “was given to a full house and was played with spirit and appreciation.” The Commercial was slightly more specific: Mr. Lord “was exceedingly effective and rendered the part with great power. The tent scene was quite emotional and the passions which filled the breast of the despairing monarch were faithfully portrayed.” The Bulletin had misgivings before hand:

To-night the great Shakespearian tragedy “Richard III,” will be placed on the stage, and it yet remains with our people to see what the company can do with a play of this magnitude. Richard is a famous part and a difficult one to render. Practice and study are necessary for a proper rendition of the character together with a correct appreciation of the genius of the author. Many actors who have gained recognition and won deserved applause in minor pieces, have failed in representing the characters of the great author, Shakespeare. The history of the drama is strewn with such wrecks. We are assured that the play has been produced by this Company in other cities, and been pronounced a gratifying success by the critics. At least we hope to see the effort witnessed by one of the largest audiences that ever assembled in the Opera House.

After that introduction to both the Bard of Avon and to the mid-19th century competence to produce his plays, it is disconcerting to have no report from the same hand after the event.

The Lawrence reception of “Richard III” was recorded in the papers for November 30 and December 1, 1870, the Tribune announcing the play “with appropriate scenery. . . .” After the event, both papers undertook to discuss it briefly, something that they seldom accorded theatre. They agreed that the audience was good, the Tribune going even a bit further:

Last night this star company produced Richard III to a large and appreciative audience, the leading character being sustained by the popular head of the company. Mr. Lord rarely gives a “Shakespearian night” to audiences which favor his company in the far West, for the reason that lighter theatricals are generally more to the taste of frontier theater-goers. Last night, however, he entertained his patrons with one of the most difficult impersonations in the whole range of acting. Richard—the gross, brutal, bloodthirsty, ambitious, villainous tyrant and usurper—was a part very hard to sustain under the difficulties that exist here for want of scenery, mechanical effects, etc. Lord flung much spirit, taste and force into this part, and won much approbation for his painstaking. He was well sustained and made a better Richard than we have had in Kansas since Wilkes Booth.
The *Journal* exercised customary diffidence in matters theatrical by not expressing any editorial verdict on the performance confining itself to straight reporting: “The rendering of such a play requires more than ordinary talent. The audience being judges, the acting last night was a success.” This was the occasion for the second admission about Lawrence, however, which may convey a polite doubt about the competence of “the audience being judges”—“Lawrence people, as a general rule, are more partial to the concert and lecture than the drama; yet Mr. Lord’s troupe is certainly popular with the large class that attends.”

At Topeka the *Record*, December 7, 1870, introduced the bill for the evening with one sentence: “To-night, for the first time in Topeka, will be presented the great drama of “Richard III.”” The following day the theme was elaborated:

Last night witnessed the first presentation of “Richard III” in this city, and we believe the first performance of any of Shakespeare’s dramas. We confess that we had misgivings as to success of the venture, but were agreeably disappointed. The audience was the largest which has greeted the Lord troupe since their arrival, and the play was excellently given throughout. Mr. Lord’s “Richard” was a fine rendition improving with each successive act. The “ghost scene” was especially fine, as was the combat with Richmond. Mrs. Lord’s “Queen Elizabeth” was meritorious. The scene in which the Queen parts with her children brought tears to many eyes.

The *Commonwealth* dramatic critic reported the “Richard III” performance in his unsophisticated, wide-eyed, “country boy” outlook, which he expounded so candidly a few weeks later:

Our astonishment was greater than our pleasure at the rendering of Richard, III, by this troupe last evening. Although the concert of the Musical Union drew many away, Union Hall was full, and the acting was superb. This presentation of Shakespeare’s Richard the Third, is entitled to more than ordinary notice.

Mr. Lord was seriously questioned by dramatic critics as to his ability to present this drama, but with all his natural modesty, he was confident, that success was certain.

If Shakespeare “was himself again” his most imaginary conceptions of that blood-stained, traitorous villain, would have been stamped with the living reality by the acting of Mr. Lord. This is not a drama that requires magnificent and gorgeous scenery, therefore the acting is brought out in bold relief. Never before, in Topeka’s long history, was such magnificent stage dress presented to the admiring audience.

Mrs. Louie Lord, as Queen Elizabeth, exhibited all those womanly traits of wife, widow and mother.

There was no boisterous demonstration by the audience, but every one seemed perfectly satisfied with the rendering of this most difficult drama.
The identity of the *Commonwealth*'s dramatic critic is not available, but quite possibly S. S. Prouty himself, at that time one of the editors, wrote the more extensive notices. The old Free-State radical had acquired a reputation of sorts for scholarship, and always he had more than a passive, although at times a somewhat pretentious, interest in the aesthetic aspects of existence. Thus, in view of the style of some of his identified writing, and his known range of interests, the dramatic criticism relating to the Lord Company may well have been his. But, confessed unsophisticate that he was, his comments made sense. He disagreed with the Lawrence *Tribune* about the importance of scenery and mechanical devices of the stage which that paper thought were imperative. Instead, the *Commonwealth* discounted them summarily—the nature of the play itself threw the responsibility upon the actor.

The second play to be presented from the stage of the new Corinthian Hall in Atchison, December 13, 1870, was "Richard III," and possibly the glamor of the new playhouse was a greater stimulant to the *Champion* critic than the play:

Tonight, that sublime tragedy, "Richard III," will be presented and as the Company are prepared to present it in better style than it has ever been presented in our city, the Hall should be crowded. Louie Lord will appear as Queen Elizabeth, and J. A. Lord as Richard III, supported by the best stock company that has ever visited the State.

Corinthian Hall is capable of seating about 800 persons, and is the finest in the West. It is elegantly finished, neatly arranged, and comfortably seated. The ceilings and walls are frescoed in exquisite style, and the stage scenery is rarely beautiful, varied, and attractive. Withal, Corinthian Hall is an institution our citizens may well be proud of and should patronize.

Go to-night and see the matchless tragedy, Richard III, and the most elegant hall in the West.

The *Champion* next day reported that: "Corinthian Hall was crowded . . . by an intelligent and appreciative audience," and the play "was produced in fine style, with costumes and scenery."

Mr. Lord sustained the character of Richard well, and elicited loud applause by his careful and faithful rendition of his difficult character. Mrs. Lord, as Queen Elizabeth, was true to the great author's conception of the character. Her acting was superb. It is very rare that a more finished performance on the stage is seen than was her rendition of Queen Elizabeth last night.

In featuring Mrs. Lord as Queen Elizabeth, the Topeka and Atchison writers were following the precedent set by Lord's formal ad-
vertisements in the newspapers: “J. A. Lord’s Chicago Dramatic Co. / at Corinthian Hall / First / Shakespearian Night / in Atchison / Louie Lord, / In her classic rendition of / ‘Queen Elizabeth!’ / Richard III / or the Battle of Bosworth Field.” With appropriate modification as to place, this was the standard form. The actor who was to fill the role of King Richard was not specified, but during this season it was always Mr. Lord himself. Already, Mr. Lord had clearly dedicated himself to the promotion of the career of his girl-wife Louie, “an actress, born such, not made.” How much did he modify the text by omission or rearrangement, if any, to justify billing Louie as star in “Richard III”? If only a prompt book for that season were available! If the play was presented as written, was her prominence in it nothing more than his devoted glorification of her, or did sheer artistry and the power to fascinate which she possessed, and he lacked, justify featuring her Queen Elizabeth? No one in Kansas commented on this peculiarity, yet the Topeka and Atchison papers accepted tacitly her right to such distinction. “Richard III” is usually viewed as virtually a one-man show, the play and the cast serving as little more than the setting and foils for the hunchback king’s monologue.

The reception given “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” is always a puzzle. At Leavenworth the Times, November 24, 1870, in announcing that: “Louie Lord will play Topsy,” continued: “that alone will be sufficient attraction to fill the house from pit to dome. This play is full of points and effects and the Lord Troupe is so constituted that every part will be properly filled. It is a good play for Thanksgiving night, and will form a fitting close of the day’s festivities.” Before “a large audience,” the same paper reported, Louie Lord as “Topsy” won another marked victory over the people of Leavenworth. We never saw the character more finely rendered, and can hardly imagine how her acting in the part could be improved upon. She is as much at home in Topsy as in “Frou Frou,” and plays both superbly. The piece was well played throughout, Mr. Lord eliciting great applause as “Legree.” People who said that Uncle Tom’s Cabin was “played out” came away . . . enthusiastic in their praise of “Topsy,” and in fact the whole piece.

The Leavenworth Commercial announced “‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin,’ which for fun and humor cannot be exceeded. Miss Louie Lord will be the inevitable Topsy and will illustrate the part fully in song and dance.” The verdict afterward seemed to indicate the same trend, that Mrs. Stowe’s antislavery story had been turned into mere “fun and humor.” The commentator admitted:
We were much astonished at the excellent manner in which it was put on the stage and played throughout by the members of this excellent Company, which is without exception the best Troupe that has visited this city for years. The character of Topsy, rendered by Mrs. Louie Lord, was immense, the best we ever saw, and, as many expressed themselves, far superior to Lotta. Mrs. Lord possesses a variety of talent seldom, if ever, embodied in any one person now on the American Stage, and her character of Topsey will at all times ensure a crowded house. . . . The audience showed their approbation by such applause as is seldom heard in the Opera House.

The third of the Leavenworth papers, the Bulletin contained the advertisement of Louie Lord as Topsy “with Songs, Dances and Banjo Solos.” As so often the case, this paper was the most uninhibited in its appraisals:

Last night the Opera House was densely crowded with an intelligent and delighted audience to witness Louie Lord’s famous impersonation of the celebrated character of “Topsy” in Mrs. Stowe’s story, Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Every theater-goer knows that the play is old, but it cannot be denied that age improves it. A curiosity to see a new “Topsy” attracted people last evening, and we believe every one left the Opera House fairly satisfied with the manner in which Topsy was given, if not enthusiastic in praise of the rendition. If any doubts were heretofore entertained as to the versatility of Louie Lord they were happily removed by the very versatile clever and animated representation of that character last night.

At Topeka “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” was the vehicle used for Herbert’s benefit, and the Record urged:

Don’t fail to attend. . . . Of the merits of this drama it is not necessary to speak; but there are one or two salient characters in it, on which much of interest centers. Of these, Topsy is one, and as rendered by Mrs. Lord has seldom been equalled. The character of Gumption Cute is also one of the most pronounced in the whole play, and though by some considered a minor one, yet requires an artist to do it justice. Mr. Herbert takes this part on this occasion, and his rendition of it has been such as to call forth the hearty and deserved commendations of those who have seen him play it. Added to these with Addie Corey as Eva, no stronger cast can be given. . . .

The audience was “one of the largest . . . of the season” and Herbert was in one of his happiest veins and as Gumption Cute kept his audience in a thorough good humor during the whole performance. His rendition of this character is another proof of the readiness with which he adapts himself to any line in which he may be cast. He is one of the most valuable members of the troupe. . . .

The Commonwealth was more restrained and definitely sophisticated (certainly not the country boy in the big city approach): “We saw the play some seventy nights in New York and are of the
opinion that Mrs. Lord, as Topsy, up to the time that she went north with Miss Ophelia, was as good as we ever saw. All the rest of the acting was good." The Atchison Champion, December 21, 1870, dealt again in superlatives, which by mere repetition, without discrimination, became largely meaningless.

Some conclusions appear to be in order about "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The bare fact stands out sharply that in spite of the superlatives of the newspapers, Mr. Lord, as the responsible manager of his company used the play only three times out of 70 in the four tours. Lawrence did not have it that season. What was implicit in the first tour about the transformation of the old antislavery play into mere "fun and humor" was made explicit during this tour. To accomplish such a result, two characters were made to carry the effective leading parts, Topsy and Gumption Cute. During the 1869-1870 season, the low comedy man, J. A. Simon, used the character "Marks" for the same purpose. The further shift in focus to sensation and suspense in the escape of Eliza Harris with blood hounds baying at her heels was made later under different auspices. If actors' scripts or prompt books were available for a considerable number of companies and over the last half of the nineteenth century, these transformations and shifts in focus for the audiences more and more remote from the antislavery agitation of the 1850's could be traced and documented. More elusive but hardly less important would have been the unique variable of individual actors, each of whom must necessarily employ the techniques that were peculiarly his own.

The vogue of "Ten Nights in a Bar Room" and the seriousness of the liquor question during the Civil War generation require a brief note on the reception of this play. It was not presented at Topeka during the season until February 10, 1871, and the third visit of the Lord Company to the state capital, and during the session of the legislature. The Record of that date explained the situation:

To-night will be produced "Ten Nights in a Bar-room." We have always claimed that this play, as presented by Mr. Lord on a certain Saturday afternoon during his first visit here, was the most impressive dramatic performance ever witnessed in Topeka. Mr. Lord in his speech before the curtain last night said he had been requested to give a matinee with the "Ten Nights" on the bill, but circumstances prevented, and he should do the next best thing and oblige his friends by giving it as the regular performance. We doubt not a crowded house will greet its representation.

The reports of the next day on the performance, although in
praise, were peculiarly elusive. In view of the Record’s setting of the stage, they suggest a feeling of anticlimax. The Record stated:

Mr. Lord, in his last engagement in Topeka, for some time at least, appears to be meeting with his usual luck, viz: to have larger houses with each successive evening. The audience . . . last night was one of the best of the season. Of the merits of the performance we do not need to speak, as our regular theatre-goers, and many who are not “regular,” are perfectly familiar, not only with the play itself, but with the Lord troupe’s rendition of it. It is enough to say that the play was presented in a perfectly satisfactory manner.

The Commonwealth appeared to be of a divided mind about the play as comedy or tragedy. To those familiar with the play as given and with the local situation, this dichotomy may not have appeared contradictory:

Ten Nights in a Bar Room was played by Lord’s dramatic company last night to a large audience. The miserable, degraded and terrible life of a drunkard was presented in six pictures, painted to life. The drama is full of the horrible effects of dram drinking. The bar-keeper, the gambler, the sot, the desolate home, the pleading and sorrow-stricken wife, were all acted with a wonderful adherence to nature. Mrs. Lord, as “Mehitable,” was perfectly side-splitting, and when she got on “the r-a-i-l-r-o-a-d K-e-e-r,” thunders of applause greeted every stanza, and a rapturous encore told of the appreciation of a delighted audience. John Toohey though [playing] a besotted drunkard to all intents and purposes in his young days, after his reform, showed himself from beneath his rags, to be “a man for a’ that.” John is an excellent comedian and well deserves the hearty applause which greets his appearance. Mr. Lord, Miss Woltz and Addie Corey, the drunken father, the devoted wife and loving child [respectively], did excellently. The death scene of the child was very affecting, and drew tears to the eyes of hundreds. The father’s vow to drink no more was a very fine piece of acting.

At Lawrence the following week, “Ten Nights” was not used, but in the three-night engagements at Leavenworth and Atchison, the plays were “Ingomar,” “The Hunchback,” and “Ten Nights.” As “Ten Nights” was the final show in each case comment upon it in particular was almost lost in the general farewell notices for the Lord Company. The Commercial, February 22, 1871, did remark before the event, that the billing of this piece was upon request. The Champion, February 26, emphasized again the comic feature: “No piece heretofore produced, by this or any other Company, in this city, was more pleasing than that of last night. Louie Lord as Mehitable Cartwright, provoked the wildest mirth, and proved herself as immatiable in the role of a Yankee girl as in almost every impersonation she attempts. . . .”
Among the customs of the period was the use of afterpieces—usually short farces. Program making for the legitimate theatre included entertainment of the audience between acts when scene and costume changes might require a substantial time. Apparently, Jennie Woltz’s songs usually occurred at such points, or the child actress, or the comedy man appeared. But besides the featured play, it was customary to close the evening’s entertainment with an afterpiece, a short comedy or farce—the accent of course was on something light to put the audience in a good humor.

During these first tours of Kansas by the Lord Company, these afterpieces, if and when presented, were not always listed in the advertising or commented upon after the event. Those used during the tour of 1869-1870 included “Jennie Lind,” “Kiss in the Dark,” “Laughing Hyena,” and “Our Gal.” Among those used during the tour of 1870-1871 were “Our Gal,” “Turn Him Out,” “The Funny Family,” “Pauline Sanford,” “Katy O’Sheal,” and “Husband of the Future.” The substance of these pieces was never summarized and probably they contained little, but some had already proved durable, and a few were to remain in the theatre repertory for some time to come.

IX. MR. LORD, MANAGER, AND HIS COMPANY

Mr. Lord, as actor, had been treated with restraint by the dramatic critics, although with very high praise for a few roles. Even the most favorable notices, however, lacked the spontaneous enthusiasm evoked by Louie Lord, or even the reception accorded Simon, during the first Kansas tour. But the estimates of Mr. Lord as manager were quite different. Instead of dealing with this aspect in the sequence in which the company entered the state on this second tour, possibly it is more appropriate to take the towns in the order of final leave taking. In following this sequence, however, there is no intention to magnify Lord’s one major blunder of the season—the engagement of J. K. McAfferty as leading man.

In 1870, the village of Topeka, transformed from one of 750 into a substantial urban community of 6,000 population within a decade, was recording a remarkable number of firsts in dramatic entertainment, and necessarily, other things as well. No doubt many individuals included in this great influx of people had seen their share of stage productions, but as a city, the record of theatre was short. First performances in Topeka were claimed for “Dora” on Decem-
ber 6, "Frou Frou" December 9, 1870, "Our American Cousin" January 11, "The Child Stealer" January 19, and "Ingomar" February 6, 1871. More unusual was the claim that "Richard III" was not only a first, but that it was the first Shakespearian play to be staged in Topeka. Yet, technically, Topeka had had a railroad since 1865. Effectively, a connected network of railroads as well as population were required before traveling theatre companies moved from the river towns into the interior.

Of the three engagements at Topeka the winter of 1870-1871, the first opened under rather strained relations between the city government and Mr. Lord about license fees. Accordingly:

Mr. Lord between the play and the afterpiece, made a neat little speech in which he took occasion to polish off the city fathers for asking such an exorbitant sum for license, raising in his case, from $20 last winter to $50 this. The sympathies of the audience were evidently with him, and we trust the authorities will see the impropriety of taxing our amusements out of existence.

Two days later a local said: "The statement by Mr. Lord has had its effect." Individual members of the common council interviewed favored his contention. At leave taking from their first round of the season the Commonwealth, December 11, asserted that "their stay here during the past week has been a perfect ovation." The Record, December 11, insisted the audiences had increased "every night from the first." In a curtain speech: "Mr. Lord announced that he should return with his company during the first week of the Legislature."

As happens rather frequently, January brought the stormiest, bitterest, cold weather of the year. The Lord Company opened its two-week engagement January 9, 1871, and apparently the storm climax was reached January 11, 12: "Yesterday morning [January 12] the storm spent its strength in sleeting, accompanied by a very high norther. In the afternoon it snowed furiously and the wind drifted the snow upon the streets and sidewalks. . . ." The Record, next day, in reporting on both the storm and the performance of the play, "The Serious Family" admitted:

A more hopeless time than last night for a theatrical performance was never known in this city, . . . That Mr. Lord should play at all on such a night is evidence of his nerve, if nothing else, and when we put the proper construction on the act, which was actuated by a desire to keep an engagement with the public, whatever the loss to himself, too much praise cannot be awarded Mr. Lord for his conduct. There was, after all, a better house than could reasonably have been expected. The Governor [James M. Harvey] represented the "Administration," and both houses had members present. About half-a-
dozen ladies showed their courage by turning out, thus practically doing away with one of the objections to female suffrage [recently rejected twice by popular vote], for if ladies will face a storm like that of last night to go to the theatre, a rattling of pitchforks will not deter them from going to the polls.

The play selected for the evening was the well-worn yet always acceptable "Serious Family," and we could not see but the company gave it with as much spirit as if they were playing before a crowded house.

The Commonwealth report provided the necessary data to round out the picture:

It required considerable courage to venture out into the clouds of wind-tossed snow, but those who did venture to Union Hall were amply repaid by witnessing the admirable rendition of the two very good comedies.

First was played "The Serious Family" intended by its author, as a thrust at that straight-jacket, Puritanic, be-happy-by-making-yourself-miserable style, of religious fanaticism, too prevalent even in this enlightened age. The parts were admirably rendered. The company never played better. Mr. J. A. Lord, was peculiarly happy and at home in his character—the open-hearted "Captain Murphy McGuire,"—and his dramatic genius shone with all its brilliancy.

"Mr. Aminidab Sleek," the pious, was played with an excellent appreciation of the character, by Mr. John Toohy.

That example of long-jawed piety, "Lady Sowerly Creamly," was impersonated in perfect detail, by May Graham.

Mrs. Lord played well throughout, but it was in her happy rendition of "Our Gal" [the afterpiece] that her versatile powers were exhibited to the most advantage. Seeing her but a few minutes before as the fascinating widow, "Mrs. Ormsby Delmaine," endeavoring to win the heart of poor "Charles Tofren," one could scarcely believe he saw the same person in "Miss Jemima."

Altogether this was the best entertainment given by the company since its arrival in the city.

The play for Saturday night, January 14, was "Oliver Twist," about which the Record had this to say: "The Lord troupe achieved a triumph last night over the elements themselves, and the house was crowded to witness the performance of 'Oliver Twist.' The play was, we think, one of the best so far given in this city by Mr. Lord's company, and reminded us of the successful rendition of the 'Ticket-of-Leave Man' by the same company last winter." Apparently the prolonged severe weather was building up tensions, which reacted to establish a remarkable accord between the actors and the small audiences, all of whom braved the discomforts of the cold to carry on. Thus each night seemed to create an intimate and memorable performance. On Monday the situation continued, unbroken by the Sabbath interval, to include the "Fanchon" show:

There are few sights more gratifying to the theatre-goer than Union Hall
last night. Outside it was dark and snowy with some traces of the late “cold-snap” lingering in the air, inside all warmth and light, a well-filled house and a “taking” play well played. “Fanchon” as we remarked the other night has been a “stock-piece” here and it must have required all of Lord’s proverbial “nerve” to essay it again, but he did, and with excellent success.

It was during this long period of severe winter weather, and on this occasion that the Record concluded: “Mr. Lord has a fine company in one respect, they never get sick or sulky, or if they do the public never hears of it.” The Commonwealth summarized the plot:

[In the play] “Fanchon” and “Landry Barbeaud” are over head and ears in love with each other, but according to the rule in such cases made and provided, old “Father Barbeaud” is opposed to their union because “Fanchon” is poor. She flees from her lover, but returns after a year’s absence, and the old story was told over again, not at five o’clock in the morning, but at a suitable time of day, and old “Barbeaud,” according to another rule in such cases made and provided, of course melts at last, and, the curtain falls upon the whole “Barbeaud” family, saying “Holy be the Cricket,” who, without money, brings blessings and happiness to our hearths.

The following night, January 17, the play was “The Ticket-of-Leave-Man,” with substantially the same cast as when it was played here last winter, when it was the great dramatic success of the season.” But the spell was broken—“a good house” and a good performance. Nothing more. Four more plays were offered before the close of this series, which built up to a new climax on January 21:

The last, and perhaps the best, performance of this company in Topeka. . . . The piece was “Under the Gaslight,” a play more popular with most audiences than previous ones, on account of its scenes and incidents being entirely modern and pertaining to our society.

This was an interesting comment on audience taste, but raises some questions if generalized as an accomplished fact. The most of the theatre fare of the next decade hardly provided confirmation. Even if pointing a trend, that itself was scarcely new. From different decades there were “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” and “Ten Nights in a Bar Room,” and many other examples.

Both Topeka papers made a special point of paying their respects to Mr. Lord and to his company. The major point of emphasis by the Record was:

They have made many warm friends here, both as actors and in private life. One very marked feature of all their performances is the entire absence of any of those indelicate allusions and smutty remarks which some actors and actresses too, seem to think necessary, but which this company ignore altogether, and for their care in this respect they can be commended.
The Commonwealth, January 22, covered a wider range in commendation of the Lord Company:

We wish to make one or two remarks in reference to this company in a general way. There is not a poor actor in the company and we repeat without hesitation what we said yesterday, that no better stock company can be found anywhere, and the stars inferior to Mr. and Mrs. Lord are many times more numerous than those superior to them. The company is composed entirely of ladies and gentlemen, which can by no manner of means be said of most companies that travel. Mr. Lord not only has great pride in his profession, but also in the personal honor and reputation of himself and all the members of his company, and would do nothing to tarnish either. He not only presents a pleasing variety of modern plays, but he scrupulously avoids anything offensive to the taste or the severest morals. And we believe that, should he remain with us three weeks more, he would continue his variety, and not once violate propriety or good taste. We say this much because we think that when a really good company comes among us, we ought to encourage such by simply saying it is good, and when a poor thing asks our patronage, it is an outrage for us to deceive the public by praising it.

The company return here in February, when they will play three nights in Costa’s opera house. Mr. McAfferty will be added to the company, and the plays will be Ingomar, The Hunchback, and Shylock. Look out for Louie Lord as Parthenia, Julia, and Portia.

The farewell editorial in the Commonwealth, January 22, 1871, had stated that upon their return for the third time that winter, Lord’s Company would play in Costa’s Opera House. The building in question had been under construction for some time and S. S. Prouty, senior editor of the paper, because of his interest in theatre was credited with inducing Costa to provide a theatre. The opening was set for January 26, or four days after the Lords went to Emporia, and the entertainment was in the hands of amateurs. Thus, although technically the Lords did not open the Opera House, their season beginning February 6 marked its opening as legitimate theatre.

The feature that distinguished this visit was the engagement of Professor J. K. McAfferty, formerly of Racine (Wis.) College, but at that time with the Episcopal Seminary at Topeka, where he was professor of elocution. Whether or not he had been known to Topeka and Lawrence a decade earlier has not been determined, but he had visited the towns of the Missouri river elbow region in September, 1860; Atchison September 14, and Leavenworth the following week, when he gave “readings from the poets.” At Leavenworth, the Times, September 25, listed “Nothing to Wear,” “The Raven,” “Famine of Hiawatha,” “Power of Fashion,” and “The Maniac.” The following week the report on his performance emphasized that he
was "without mannerisms which has become too intolerable in
dramatic representation."

All that had been some ten years before his appearance upon the
Topeka dramatic horizon with J. A. Lord as a young tragedian
starting at the top. The first play, February 6, was "Ingomar" of
which McAfferty had prepared his own translation from the Ger-
man. He was assigned the title role, Mrs. Lord playing her ac-
customed "Parthenia." The Record wrote enigmatically: "Mr.
McAfferty had no reason to complain of his reception." The Com-
monwealth was more explicit in differentiating major aspects that
were good, but condemning others, though softening the adverse
criticism by explaining that there was nothing in the weaknesses
that practice could not remedy. The Record commented further
that: "It seemed strange to see Mr. Lord out of the 'leading busi-
ness,' nevertheless he played with energy and effect, the part as-
signed him, that of "Tymarch,'" Also the papers both asserted that
comment upon Mrs. Lord was superfluous.

The second play was "Othello" with McAfferty in the title role,
Lord as "Iago," Mrs. Graham as "Desdemona," and Mrs. Lord as
"Emelia." The verdict of the Record on McAfferty was that:
The character was, as a whole, well rendered. . . . His Othello . . .
was good, but not what it will be when he has courted Desdemona and killed
her afterwards, say a hundred times. Mr. Lord's "Iago" was devilish enough
for the "hardest case" amongst Shakespeare's villains, and was one of Mr. L's
best renditions. Mrs. Lord's "Emelia" was a beautiful piece of acting, and we
are glad to say a good word for Mrs. Graham's "Desdemona." This lady
looked as well as spoke her part, and has every reason to feel proud of her
success.

About McAfferty's "Othello," the Commonwealth was very brief—
"the acting, with a few exceptions was good." About the "Hunch-
back" the next night, the same paper reported, also succinctly: "The
characters were well sustained throughout, all things considered."
The Record was brief also, after admonishing the public that those
not in attendance were missing "the best acting ever seen in To-
peka, . . . the 'Hunchback' was so rendered as to satisfy a
critical audience."

The fourth play was "Our American Cousin," and the Record
had this to say: "The Opera House contained a fine audience last
night, assembled to welcome the Lord back to his wonted position
of 'leading man' . . . ." The Commonwealth critique was forth-
right, if somewhat left-handed:
The play was well cast, and every one did well, which is more than can be said of previous entertainments. We are satisfied that Mr. Lord will do well to adhere to his own company. The contrast last evening was marked.

Mrs. Lord was herself again. . . . Her easy manners, grace and studious care are very attractive, and always win the hearty recognition of the audience.

Mr. Lord had billed "The Hidden Hand" as the final play for Saturday night, but late Friday night decided to substitute "Under the Gaslight." No reason was given. Only "a fair audience" turned out for this 23rd and last performance for the company in Topeka that winter. They left with the good will of all, their itinerary being indicated as Lawrence, Leavenworth, Atchison, St. Joseph, Chillicothe, and Macon, Mo., and thence home to Chicago.

At Lawrence, Mr. Lord played the leading man roles as usual, but on the last two nights, in "Ingomar" and the "Hunchback" McAffertey acted the title roles, with praise. Incidentally, the Lord Company was accumulating its own peculiar list of firsts in Kansas. On its first visits to Lawrence in 1869-1870 the theatre used was Frazer's Hall. On the first visit of the season of 1870-1871 the company played in Liberty Hall which had been dedicated upon the first night of their second engagement of the previous season. On the return engagement of 1870-1871, they occupied Frazer's Hall again. The point was that the competition of the wholly new Library Hall had compelled the owners of Frazer's Hall to remodel it. Although not so large as Liberty Hall, the claim was made that in its new form it was more effective than its rival. The J. A. Lord Company, in effect, on its Lawrence engagement of February 13-16, 1871, opened Frazer's Hall to its new lease on life. Thus is observed clearly the inter-relation among the several factors of competition; an effective railroad service, the increase in patronage for places of entertainment, and the competitive process between places of public amusement for business at the local level.

The plays at Leavenworth and Atchison, both three-night engagements, were "Ingomar," the "Hunchback" and "Ten Nights in a Bar Room." In the first two of these plays at each place, McAffertey took the leading roles, but note should be made of the fact that "Othello" was not offered. At Leavenworth, the Bulletin, February 18, announced.

the manager will have the pleasure of introducing to our people Mr. J. F. McAffertey, a young tragedian of some celebrity. We have never seen any of Mr. McAffertey's impersonations of prominent characters, but have heard him [September, 1860?] read "Poe's Raven" and other selections. He is certainly a good reader, with a clear full voice, while his articulation is faultless. There-
fore, we have a right to expect something from the young tragedian in the heavier parts, and shall observe his first appearance here at the Opera House Monday evening, in the role of Ingomar, with no little interest. He will be admirably supported by the talented lady, Louie Lord, as Parthenia.

Two days later the public was further prepared for the new actor by emphasis upon his own translation of the play from the German which would be used: "Mr. J. K. McAfferty will represent the rough barbarian Ingomar, Louie Lord will impersonate the gentle tamer of the barbarian, and everything will be nice." The other papers were less elaborate in their introductions. The Sunday Times, February 19, said: "The company has had a valuable acquisition in the person of J. R. McAfferty, the popular tragedian." In view of the fact that the new actor had no background of professional experience in theatre to cite, this billing of him as the star, relegating the Lord Company's real star to the status of supporting actress, was certainly more than any young beginner could rightfully ask.

After the performance of "Ingomar," the Bulletin reported in a two-sentence paragraph that the piece "was very well received. . . ." The Commercial introduced its one-sentence notice of the play which "delighted the habitues of the theatre," with a eulogy of Leavenworth and the Lord Company:

It is an unerring index of the enterprise and prosperity of a city, when theatricals succeed. In Kansas City, with the current stars in the dramatic firmament, none have paid expenses. With Leavenworth it differs—where pre-eminent talent appeals for patronage, it invariably receives it. In no instance is it so remarkable as with the oft repeated successes of the Lord Troupe.

This was the occasion when the Times printed the patronizing explanation of its self-imposed restraint on adverse criticism as stemming from the handicaps of traveling theatre. At the close the critic praised Louie Lord first, and then added: "The tragedian, McAfferty, was excellent as the barbarian, Ingomar."

After the "Hunchback" performance, the Commercial commented quite favorably on Mrs. Lord in particular, and on Mr. Lord, Toohey, Herbert, and Woltz; and the Times handled it this way: "Hunchback was presented last night to a very fair house. We must say that Louie Lord made an exceedingly fine representation of the character of Julia. To-night the management present the great Temperance Drama of 'Ten Nights in a Bar Room.' Mr. McAfferty does not appear. The full strength of the company will be brought out. . . ." What more need be said? In its final editorial the Times, after airing its grievance about the discourtesy shown its
employees regarding tickets, praised Mr. and Mrs. Lord and Toohey, and closed with a masterpiece of understatement. "The engagement of the three nights just past has not added to the surplus earnings of the management to any considerable extent. We hope it will be different next time." The same paper carried a local: "A. K. McAfferty proposes to abandon the stage." In the Bulletin's parting message of February 23, Lord was praised for bringing to Leavenworth "the best pieces and presenting the most talented performers offered during the present winter. Louie Lord is deserving of special distinction. She is an accomplished lady, and many of her impersonations deserve to take equal rank with the renditions of the best actresses of the Atlantic cities."

At Atchison, the Champion, February 24, 1871, after "Ingomar" pronounced McAfferty "a great addition to the Company." Two days later its verdict on the three nights was "a brilliant engagement," and on McAfferty, "a fine tragedian and distinguished elocutionist." But the Champion had not proved itself an outstanding exponent of dramatic criticism.

That Mr. Lord blundered in engaging McAfferty cannot be ignored, but nothing comparable in bad judgment has been found elsewhere in his career. Probably the reputation of the company was not seriously injured by the episode. The critics at Topeka and Leavenworth recognized where the deficiency lay, and differentiated as between McAfferty and the Lord Company, his weaknesses and the regular organization's competence. The Commonwealth had been kindly and yet blunt: "Mr. Lord will do well to adhere to his own company." From that perspective, the incident may have had its constructive side in demonstrating so effectively that his troupe was composed of truly superior artists functioning as a harmonious whole.

X. Appendix

In order to save footnotes, the following calendar of plays presented by the Lord Company on their tour of Kansas during the winter of 1870-1871 is compiled for reference, together with the list of newspapers available in each of the towns visited. The notices of the plays, with few exceptions, appeared in the press on the day before, on the day of, and on the day following its presentation. The reader who wishes to verify references may thus find the article or advertisement used in the text with the minimum effort.
Traveling Theatre in Kansas

Calendar of Plays, 1870-1871

Leavenworth, November 21-26, 1870.
November 21 Monday "Frou Frou."
22 Tuesday "Dora," and "The Funny Family."
23 Wednesday "Richard III."
24 Thursday "Uncle Tom's Cabin."
25 Friday "Our American Cousin."
26 Saturday "The Mormons," and "Turn Him Out."

Lawrence, November 28-December 3, 1870.
November 28 Monday "Ireland as It Is," and "Our Gal."
29 Tuesday "Our American Cousin."
30 Wednesday "Richard III."
December 1 Thursday "Dora," and "The Funny Family."
2 Friday "Frou Frou."
3 Saturday "The Mormons," and "Turn Him Out."

Topeka, December 5-7, 9, 10, 1870.
December 5 Monday "Ireland as It Is," and "Our Gal."
6 Tuesday "Dora," and "The Funny Family."
7 Wednesday "Richard III."
8 Thursday (No Performance.)
9 Friday "Frou Frou."
10 Saturday "The Mormons," and "Turn Him Out."

Atchison, December 12-17, 19-21, 23, 24, 1870.
December 12 Monday "Dora," and "The Funny Family." (Dedication of Corinthian Hall.)
13 Tuesday "Richard III."
14 Wednesday "Ireland as It Is," and "Our Gal."
15 Thursday "The Serious Family," and "Katy O'Sheal."
16 Friday "Frou Frou."
17 Saturday "The Mormons," and "Turn Him Out."
19 Monday "The Octoroon."
20 Tuesday "Uncle Tom's Cabin."
21 Wednesday (No Performance.)
22 Thursday "Fanchon, the Cricket."
23 Friday "Marco, the Marble Heart."
24 Saturday "Oliver Twist."

Leavenworth, December 26, 1870-January 7, 1871.
December 26 Monday "The Sea of Ice."
27 Tuesday "The Octoroon."
28 Wednesday "Fanchon, the Cricket."
29 Thursday "The Serious Family," and "Our Gal."
30 Friday "Marco, The Marble Heart."
31 Saturday "Oliver Twist," and "Turn Him Out."
January  
2 Monday  "Dora," and "The Funny Family."
3 Tuesday  "The Mormons," and "Our Gal."
4 Wednesday "Under the Gaslight."
5 Thursday  "Frou Frou," and "Husband of the Future."
6 Friday  "Don Caesar de Bazan," and "Ireland as It Is."
7 Saturday  "The Child Stealer," and "Pauline Sanford [Sanford?]."

Topeka, January 9-14, 16-21, 1871.

January  
9 Monday  "Dora," and "The Funny Family."
10 Tuesday  "The Octofoon."
11 Wednesday  "Our American Cousin."
12 Thursday  "The Serious Family," and "Our Gal."
13 Friday  "Marco, the Marble Heart."
14 Saturday  "Oliver Twist," and "Turn Him Out."
15 Monday  "Fanchon, the Cricket."
17 Tuesday  "The Ticket of Leave Man."
18 Wednesday  "Uncle Tom’s Cabin."
19 Thursday  "The Child Stealer."
20 Friday  "The Sea of Ice."
21 Saturday  "Under the Gaslight."

Topeka, February 6-11, 1871.

February  
6 Monday  "Ingomar."
7 Tuesday  "Othello."
8 Wednesday  "The Hunchback."
9 Thursday  "Our American Cousin."
10 Friday  "Ten Nights in a Bar Room."
11 Saturday  "Under the Gaslight."

Lawrence, February 13-16, 18, 1871.

February  
13 Monday  "The Octofoon."
14 Tuesday  "Under the Gaslight."
15 Wednesday  "Oliver Twist," and "Turn Him Out."
16 Thursday  "Ingomar."
17 Friday  (No Performance.)
18 Saturday  "The Hunchback."

Leavenworth, February 20-22, 1871.

February  
20 Monday  "Ingomar."
21 Tuesday  "The Hunchback."
22 Wednesday  "Ten Nights in a Bar Room."


February  
23 Thursday  "Ingomar."
24 Friday  "The Hunchback."
25 Saturday  "Ten Nights in a Bar Room."

NEWSPAPERS

Topeka Kansas Daily Commonwealth, Daily Kansas State Record.
Atchison Daily Champion.