

THE PLAYERS' COLUMN.

Miss Lewis in "Therese Raquin."

Miss Lillian Lewis had her way, as most women have, and played "Therese Raquin" at the Ninth Street Opera House last night, despite the opposition, or alleged opposition, of her husband and manager, Lawrence Marston.

Although Miss Lewis does her best acting in this play, it can readily be seen why it was given only one evening in the week's repertoire. Those who saw it last evening are with Mr. Marston in his opposition to Lillian in this instance. In the middle of the third act, where the horrors began to thicken to an unprecedented density, some one made a break for the door and about a dozen, including several who would have been taken for men of iron, followed.

The moral tone of the play is not so bad as the physical. Zola's realism may be artistic, but it is awfully repellant when placed upon the stage. The idea of an intelligent woman being linked to a sickly, half idiot, while secretly in love with a robust young artist, is the first incongruity, but it is mild as compared with some of the complications which follow.

After murdering the sickly husband, the guilty couple marry, but their crime has killed their passion and they regard each other with a constantly increasing horror, which finally conjures up the ghost of the victim to confront them on their wedding night. In the midst of this frightful scene the mother of the murdered man comes on the scene and discovers their guilt through their own revelations. She is paralyzed by the shock and during the entire last act sits pale, motionless and speechless in the presence of Therese and her husband, a dumb witness to the tortures of the most poignant remorse ever depicted upon the stage.

When, at the last moment she regains her power of speech and action, rises from her chair and showers imprecations on their guilty heads, the effect is powerful as it is ghastly; terrible as it is repugnant. Small wonder that the courage which has always lacked the degree of self-destruction, here came to the rescue to end their miserable existence.

Zola's work is artistic, but his theme and his materials are not agreeable. His characters are of the common people, and every detail is made to conform to lowly life. Several of the minor characters, as well as the leading ones, are admirably sketched, and much of the comedy is interesting and wonderfully natural.

Miss Lewis has accomplished more in "Therese" than in any of her other characters. She should give more attention to character parts—but not to Zola. Mr. Elliott also excelled himself, which is saying much. Mr. Gibbs as Michaud, Miss Procter as Mme. Raquin, and Mr. Stein as Camille, all gave excellent support. The celebrated disrobing scene is more effective as an advertisement than as a feature of the play. Even before donning her robe de nuit Miss Lewis was

"Lady Lil!"