

VAUDEVILLE

are at rest as far as thinking is concerned. It is something for the eye first and last. It is something for the ear now and then, only very seldomly, however. For me, they are the saviours of the dull-est art in existence, the art of the stage. Duse was quite right about it. The stage should be swept of actors. It is not a place for imitation and photography. It is a place for the laughter of the senses, for the laughter of the body. It is a place for the tumbling blocks of the brain to fall in heaps. I give first place to the acrobat and his associates because it is the art where the human mind is for once relieved of its stupidity. The acrobat is master of his body and he lets his brain go a-roving upon other matters, if he has one. He is expected to be silent. He would agree with William James, transposing "music prevents thinking" into "talking prevents silence." In so many instances, it prevents conversation. That is why I like tea chit-chat. Words are never meant to mean anything then. They are simply given legs and wings, and they jump and fly. They land where they can, and fall flat if they must. The audience that patronizes vaudeville would do well to be present at most first numbers, and remain for most or many of the closing ones. A number, I repeat, like the Four Danubes, should not be snubbed by any one.

I have seen recently, then, by way of summary, four fine bits of artistry in vaudeville—Ella Shields, James Watts, the Brothers Rath, and the Four Dan-