

The Latest Combination in the Variety Line—  
Sam T. Jack's Creole Burlesque Company.

Except in the minstrel line the Afro-American has held a very small place on the stage. It has been a number of years since Hayerly put the first Georgia Minstrels upon the boards, which for a time forced recognition of worth and appreciation the world over. But minstrelsy had its day and for the past four or five years has been on the wane. The stars, McIntosh, Kersands, Banks, Lucas, the Bohee Brothers, "Judge" Crusoe and many others having divided their forces or retired from the stage, is probably the cause of this lack of public interest. Mr. Cleveland has tried with some success to revive the colored minstrel business, and while he has a few of the original merry makers, Tom McIntosh being the manager, his company is made up mostly of new talent.

Probably the most refined and elevated Afro-American amusement company ever organized was brought together recently by Mr. William Foote for a tour of Europe. All of his stars are new in this line, and instead of making plantation melodies and peculiar dialect their forte, they have a sort of historical bearing in portraying the different evolutions from 1860 to 1891. With such stars as Mme. Marie Selika, leader of the burlesque opera, and her husband, Mr. Veloska, basso; Mme. Mamie Flowers, a noted soprano as leader of the choruses and Mr. H. E. Jones, as banjoist and guitarist, one can see that the organizer's intention was to elevate the character of the minstrel show and possibly draw a new interest.

The latest combination seen around New York in this line is Sam T. Jack's Creole Burlesque Company. This company is composed of all Afro-Americans and the program contains many names familiar to the musical and theatre going public. The company is what they call in theatrical circles a variety company and is made up of many New York city girls. They played to full and appreciative houses last week at Hyde and Behman's Theatre, Brooklyn. The performance commenced with a tropical revelry, introducing an excellent array of artists. The curtain rose amidst the singing of a beautiful melody, and displayed a galaxy of artists in graceful poses, with the customary end men to make the fun. Misses Florence Briscoe, Florence Hines, May Bohee and Mrs. Sam Lucas, as conversationists and soloists, gave a new impression of the possibilities of our girls in the variety business. Miss Bohee is a daughter of one of the Bohee Brothers and is destined to attain much prominence among theatricals as a serio comic singer. The DeWolf Sisters in sunset melodies, George Westerner and Fred Piper, punsters, Jones, Norris and Grant, fun makers, Irving Jones, premier knock about song and dance comedian, the four Creoles and Mr. and Mrs. Wesley B. Norris kept the audience highly amused for over an hour. The veteran Sam Lucas and his wife are splendid entertainers. Mrs. Lucas, besides playing many musical instruments, has developed into a contralto singer of much merit. Miss Florence Hines impersonated a male character in a manner that would do credit to any variety actor on the stage. The prize dancing by Burrell Hawkins, Irving Jones, Burt Grant, Wesley Norris and Misses Marie Valerie, Stacciona and Stabolo, with George Weston as banjo accompanist, was a feature that elicited much applause. "The Beauties of the Nile; or, Doomed by Fire," an ancient Egyptian burlesque, by twenty young women, nobles, soothsayers, fire worshippers and Nubians, was a gorgeous display of physical development. The grand Amazonian March, under the direction of Miss Florence Hines, with a superb tableau, concluded the performance. The entire company is well drilled and perform their respective parts with much exactness and precision.

W. H. CHAIR.