

AMATEUR MINSTRELS SCORE GREAT SUCCESS

Benefit for Uniform Rank of Odd Fellows is Applauded to the Echo—Repeated Again Today.

Before half a thousand people, who came enthused and went away reluctant, the Macon Minstrels played their newest and best in benefit to the Patriarch Militant branch of the Odd Fellows last night. As promised beforehand, the performance was crammed full of originality and novelty. After the crisp and brilliantly carried first part, and the beautiful "Choir Boy's Dream," arranged by Wilbur Lawrence and carried through by J. J. Guttenberger and B. F. Miller, old friends appeared and possessed the stage again, and in new dress the best of former triumphs was repeated. The audience welcomed this, too, applauding to the full.

Macon is all friends to the Odd Fellows, but many who were neither Odd Fellows themselves, nor even cousins of Odd Fellows, went to the Grand last night, because they expected something worth while in itself. They found it, and from the tidings they carried to such as stayed away, a packed matinee house may well repair to the performance this afternoon, which closes the benefit.

Refreshing as an innovation, and successful as minstrelsy, the first part opened last night without a dusky face on the stage. The background was a garden. R. P. Orme was the host of the glittering occasion, and tables at either end of the stage were very arsenals whence hummed and crackled songs, quips, and the pat-pat of the dance, while comedians proceeded with grim faces and without pause to convulse the audience with their antics. Vari-colored lights flitted over the stage, and transformed it from one wilderness of enjoyment to another new wilderness. Through it all the guests, who were song birds, filled the house with melody. Scenes as crowded and well drilled, as this first part was from beginning to end, stand for more work and much more talent than an audience, which reaps only the agreeable fruits of the toil, is likely to appreciate.

Through the first part, and most of the second, the program was not only crisp, full of go and jubilation and hurrah that never became hurrah but instead, as was proper, broke into music and dance and left the audience to hurrah. The program was novel and had been worked out fresh from the beginning. The "Choir Boy's Dream" gave a touch of sentiment to the whole performance, and then came the negro minstrels—new, rearranged, with noth-

ing of stock or imitation about it, yet old, and after all the real minstrel, the true minstrel, and the minstrel which will last.

Messrs. Lawrence and Kelly appeared in their skit, "Abner Henningway's Farewell," Mr. Kelly being the black female impersonator. They had the house in a roar, and found it hard to get off the stage, as encores echoed from the scenery and fenced them in. Then Arthur Hightower became the boneless wonder, and after his evolutions on aerial rings, Miss Mae Donahue gave a dance which was encored and enjoyed.

The Odd Fellows' Militant drilled on the stage, and with their appearance, the audience came into its own. After the drill Arthur Dasher stopped before the curtain and explained that the object of the benefit was the sending of representatives from the Patriarchs, or the entire body of Patriarchs, to the great Toronto convention next summer. He complimented the performers, and the audience joined in with applause, and he ended by announcing that there would be a matinee at 2:30 o'clock this afternoon.

The finale was "Moonlight on the Suwanee River," and it was a delight. The scenic effects in this piece were very poetical, and the minstrels were in a delicious way black men and not black men, caricatures crammed with humor and with the pathos and melancholy of the "Suwanee River." The audience held its seats until the curtain was quite down, and if a half hour had been added to the scene they would have welcomed it with a cheer.