

Curtain came down early on theater troupe

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Instead, at the end of the first act, Robert Harris suddenly appeared in front of the curtain and announced that "owing to illness in the company the play would not go on, and that the box office would refund the money to the theatre patrons as they passed out." Not satisfied with Harris' polite excuse, the *Telephone* reporter apparently paid a visit backstage.

He reported a different story from the manager of the company. "... since going out on the road, two of his leading people had taken ill and

the characters had to be taken by new people and are not yet well up in their acts. He had no explanation to make for the absence of special scenery that was so abundantly advertised."

The reporter noted that the cast was upset, one actress commenced crying and declared she was leaving the company. It is unlikely that she did so, since the show had been booked into Bedford, Mitchell and Salem.

On Nov. 8, the *Telephone* reported that Harris had reduced the admission price for a performance of *The Squaw Man* at the Stone City Opera House in Bedford. Through his attorney, J.K. Barclay, Harris issued

a statement. "When the show appeared in Bloomington he did not know until the performance began that the company was such an incompetent one . . . He did not think it fair to cancel both contracts with the company, and at the same time he wanted to play fair with Bedford theater-goers." He went on say that by reducing the admission, Harris was "doing the best possible for all parties concerned."

Harris also took exception to some rather unattractive comments by the Bedford *Democrat* about how the situation was handled. It was a dark moment in an otherwise satisfying career in providing entertainment for audiences in the area.