

At the Theaters



ALMA BELLWIN



EVA BAKER (Hippodrome) At the Metropolitan



HELEN DOWNING At the Orpheum



AUGUSTA GLOSE - At the Orpheum



Fred Niblo in 'The Fortune Hunter' At the Brandeis



Ida Emerson - At the Gayety



Susie Black with the Hippodrome, At the Auditorium

Edeson's New Play One Worth While

ONE of the notable events of the season was the appearance at the Brandeis of Mr. Robert Edeson in a play of his own making. Mr. Edeson has had much trouble in securing a satisfactory play, and finally, when no other course seemed open, he made one for himself. And he made a good one. He does not contend that it is a masterpiece of dramatic construction, nor that it marks an epoch in American play writing, speaking of it while here, he said: "If I were to lay this play away tonight it would be with affection; I would put it into a special cover, for it has taught me much." What the play abounds in, and what makes it valuable, is its intensely human aspect. Here and there this has been overlooked, apparently, in the effort to preserve some of the literary value of the book from which it was borrowed. But these lapses from drama to pure literature are not such as prove especially objectionable and detract so slightly from its acting value that they may well be set down as negligible.

As a sociological and psychological study, the play has much to commend it. In this regard it is far and away beyond "Strongheart." The Indian in "Where the Trail Divides" is not surrounded by any of the glamour that gives a halo of radiance to So-an-ga-ta-ha. Ma-wa-chu-wa is on his native heath, surrounded by those things he has always been familiar with, and unsupported by a false sympathy that is suggested by his presence in unnatural environment. He has "made good" as an Indian, and stands on his own footing. His love for Bess Landor is as natural to him as his breath. Waifa, picked up after the wave of massacre and rapine had swept over a frontier farmstead, grew up side by side, knowing only the joys of intimate companionship and nothing of the big world and its complexities. And the Indian shows this all through his course. One of the most persistent traits of the Indian character is that he moves in direct lines. His impulses are along the line of the shortest distance between two points, and the white man's tortuous philosophy and diaphanous sophistry are unknown to him. If he has ever practiced diplomacy, it has been in rare instances; he has seldom been accused of duplicity, and his so-called treachery is usually but the manifestation of his ubiquitous notion of strategy. He is set down as a liar because he lies just as a child lies, unknowingly. His simplicity is the more remarkable because he is a savage brought into juxtaposition with the highest product of enlightened civilization and suffering by comparison (there-with) whether Mr. Edeson had given this phase of the Indian's character serious consideration does not enter into the argument. It is enough to know that he makes it very apparent in his presentation of the part of How Landor, struggling with a problem that would have wrecked the mind of one less elementary in his emotions.

So it was natural that How Landor should look forward to marriage with Bess Landor, and that she should, for the time at least, have completely acquiesced in the program her adopted uncle had mapped out for her. Nor is there anything in the play to give one the idea that under continuing conditions the marriage would not prove happy. But the reorientation of the "eternal triangle" changed the flow of events, and with the appearance of the young man from the east, a new train of thought sprang up in Bess Landor's mind. She learned a little, a very little, about the big world outside of the Indian country, and she longed for more. Here is where How Landor's simplicity wrecked his happiness. He did not know anything about the world outside the reservation, and so could not understand the longings of the girl's heart for the larger and more attractive things of life. If he had known—but he didn't, and so that line of argument may be abandoned. What he did do was

distinctly the act of a savage. Here and there among the whites similar cases have been noted; more frequently the shifting from spouse to spouse is accompanied by something of friction, but it is accomplished nevertheless. The savage mind does not comprehend the intricacies of civilized procedure under such conditions and recognizes but two courses. It is either to kill or to set free. Ma-wa-chu-wa chose to set free the bird he had caged, but could not captivate.

In dealing with frontier life in detail, Mr. Edeson has transferred to the stage very accurately the conditions. He is supported by actual occurrences in most of his incidents, and his people are such as one is likely to meet at any frontier town. And his acting as well as that of his associates serves well to bring out the strength of the story.

Old Time Ways at the Music 'Alls

LADIES and gentlemen, I now claim your attention to the great George Leybourne. Order please.

That is the salutation one would have heard twenty-five and thirty years ago in the London music halls. The "chairman" was the man who announced the acts and saw to it that the audience did not exceed the limits in the way of adding to the esprit du corps of the occasion.

Walter Graham, who was at the Orpheum last week in a series of impersonations of music hall celebrities of the past and present, gave some interesting reminiscences of London half a century of yore. He was seated within a stone's throw of the tower of London and has played "the all" for the last thirty years.

George Leybourne was known as "The Lion Comique." When Mr. Graham first heard Leybourne had singers, there were no music halls as we now know them in London. Mr. Graham was 6 years of age at the time and the local was the Cremorne Gardens, where drinks were served and where people might wander around as they pleased. Manager Holland of the gardens "found" Leybourne and on occasions would exploit his protegee through the streets of London in a cartage drawn by four cream-colored horses. Leybourne was a favorite for twenty-five years, was known as "Champagne Charlie," and died in the workhouse, penniless.

Here is the chorus of one of Leybourne's songs:

Champagne Charlie, is my name,
Drinking Moey is my game,
Good for any game tonight, dear boys,
Yes, I'm good for any game tonight, dear boys.

Who'll come and join me in a spree?
Yes, who'll come and join me in a spree?
Who'll come and join me in a spree?
Yes, who'll come and join me in a spree?

In those days (and today to a large extent) it was customary for the audience to sing the chorus on the second round. If the song pleased the people would shout, "bravo!" or "encore!" Then the "chairman" would announce like this: "Ladies and gentlemen, owing to the great success of our friend, George Leybourne, he has kindly consented to sing another song. Order, please!" The "chairman" of the music hall in those days served in something the same capacity of a referee at a prize fight today. He was the boss of the job. His word was a command and he was respected as a rule. He sat at a table and rapped vigorously when it was time

for the show to start.

Speaking again of George Leybourne, Mr. Graham relates that he was a sort of an idol with the "idle rich" of his day. After the Leybourne act it was considered a great honor to pay for a bottle of champagne and divide the "bubbles" with Leybourne. And it is stated that Leybourne accepted the honors with marked regularity.

Vance, another London favorite of several decades ago, is impersonated by Mr. Graham. Vance had a penchant for fancy clothes and silk handkerchiefs. He appeared in a glorious great coat lined with red satin, and it was nothing unusual for him to "go on" with a dozen silk handkerchiefs in his pocket. He would pull out one of his kerchiefs, wipe his mouth or nose with the same and then discard the fabric with a nonchalant air. He fell dead on the stage just as he had finished a chorus of one of his songs.

A chorus of one of Vance's songs went like this:

Slap, bang, here we are again,
Here we are again,
Slap, bang, here we are again,
Jolly dogs are we.

Walter Graham started his stage career at the age of 18 in the London halls, receiving 30 shillings a week at first. He relates that thirty years ago, when he started out, the halls were crude affairs compared with the London halls of today. Drinks were served in those days, as they are today in many halls, but the appointments were limited and the program consisted merely of songs, a few jokes and dances.

"My word, but things have changed in London since I was a boy. Now we have the Alhambra, Princess, Tivoli and scores of other vaudeville places in and about London." Mr. Graham said as he made some repair in his miniature music hall. He told of the alleged brutality of the American baggages man as evidenced in the recent destruction of his manikin orchestra of eleven pieces.

And, referring once more to Leybourne, Vance and Pat Peony, Mr. Graham says he is frequently called upon by former London residents, who tell him they are reminded of their childhood days when they hear Mr. Graham sing the old songs. Mr. Graham is booked to tour England, Scotland and Ireland upon his return to London next June.

Most Valuable Faculty.

The late William James, said a Bostonian, "used to smile at the brain tag that so often attacks the American business man. Prof. James had his own opinion of the average business man's hard work. He thought that brain tag came more frequently from an excess of whisky and tobacco than from an excess of mental application."

"Arraps of this he used to tell a story about a little boy who said his father: 'Papa, what is executive ability?'"

"Executive ability, my son," the father replied, "is the faculty of earning your bread by the sweat of other people's brains."—Washington Star.

THE official announcement that the Mendelssohn Choir of Omaha had made a contract with the Theodore Thomas Orchestra of Chicago, Frederick Stock, conductor, for the appearance of the famous orchestra in Omaha every year for the next five years, has been greeted with enthusiasm by musical people, and by the community generally.

To the writer of this column the news seems almost too good to be true, as for several years past he has called in vain at the Orchestra Hall to see the management with regard to Omaha dates. Time and time again this column has entered protest against the condition which prevailed, namely that the great orchestras visited Omaha merely at the Union depot on the way eastward or westward.

And the best of it all is that there seems to be a disposition on the part of everybody to help. Assistance has been most splendidly given by the prominent men of affairs in every case the members of the committee have been glad to meet a spirit of investigation, and in most cases a spirit of cheerful investment of sympathy and money to make the affair a success. Three different men without any request whatsoever said to the writer and his coworkers, "If you should not be able to get all you need, come back and see me; I may have some left," or words to that effect.

The Tuesday Morning Musicals club under the energetic leadership of its president, Mrs. Mary Learned, supported and worked for the guarantee fund most handsomely; so also did the Fine Arts club under the direction of Mrs. Childs, its president, make most strenuous efforts which were crowned with success.

When the proposition was presented to the director of the Mendelssohn choir—the name of said director is at the bottom of this column, if you are interested in knowing the director promptly put the matter entirely into the hands of his executive committee for action, as he was unwilling to urge or even ask them to assume such a large risk as was necessarily involved. But as the proposition came from the Theodore Thomas Orchestra, the Mendelssohn Choir, Major Lord, chairman of the executive committee and president of the organization, called a few sanguine enthusiasts together and after some deliberation and figuring, the entire committee decided it was worth trying.

The results have exceeded anticipation and it is now assured that the Theodore Thomas Orchestra of Chicago will be the Mendelssohn Choir's support for the next five years, with no other appearance in Nebraska.

It is probable that after all, the winter concert, which was to have been given in February, will have to be abandoned, owing to the impossibility of securing a suitable audience at a reasonable price. But this will all be planned for in the scheme of concerts for next season, as the winter concert, at which the music is intended to be all unaccompanied, must be one of the features of the Mendelssohn Choir's annual presentations; it is part of their original plan of work, and development and cultivation of the art of pure choral singing without instrumental support.

In last Sunday's New York Sun, Mr. Henderson relates the difficulty of ascertaining any important news with regard to the "forthcoming production of Giuseppe Verdi's opera, 'Scottiander.'" He contrasts the condition of work that surrounding the presentation of Puccini's "Girl of the Golden West." He says: "The local Italian newspapers were also brimming with the glad tidings of the progress of the score. Every time that Puccini flung an



FRANK LA FORGE AT THE BRANDEIS

to which they were accustomed was inevitable."

The "Literary Digest" of last Saturday had a highly interesting collection of opinions about the "Girl of the Golden West," expressed by leading lights of musical criticism. Amongst other things, the following sentences are quoted from the pen of Mr. Krehbiel (New York Tribune): "Signor Puccini has achieved surprising, let us say even amazing, effects with his harmonies and his orchestration; he has failed utterly to suggest the feeling which is native to Mr. Belasco's play. And that circumstance will have a great influence on its future. The opera was as finely and truthfully mounted as anybody could have expected. Its music was superbly sung under the sympathetic direction of Signor Toscanini, and it was as convincingly acted as foreigners, trying hard to obey Mr. Belasco, could possibly act it, but it was a little American as would have been a play dealing with the moral reclamation of a Shillean handi." The literary magazine already referred to also prints a picture of a lynching scene, a scene which was not in the original play by Mr. Belasco; and under it these words: "The librettist here introduces a lynching scene amid the redwood trees; the tenor sings a song and the soprano appeals for his life. This to Italian eyes must have seemed a necessary American touch, though Mr. Belasco's play got along very well without it."

When one thinks of the vigorous type of people who are associated in our minds with those gold-mining days, it must have seemed strange to witness what Mr. Lawrence Gilman alluded to as "the stage full of red-shirted miners, posed in attitudes of lachrymose abandonment under the redwoods, or weeping upon each other's shoulders."

To hear the whole thing done in Italian must of itself have been peculiar.

How far is this hystero-dramatic use of the great Art of Music going? It is now largely a question of the Science of Music, coupled to the most weird, the most tragic, or the most pitious passions of man's lower nature. That seems to be

the case just now. Science of Music rather than Art of Music. Robert Browning will have to be revised; instead of "Why rushed the discord in but that harmony might be prized?" We might nowadays say: "Why rushed the harmonies in but that discord might be prized?" Distinct dissonances, peculiar progressions, startling resolutions, colossal tone-masses, intangible tone-spectres, where will it end?

The moon and the stars of melody and harmony must retire in favor of the "aurora borealis" and the "aurora australis"; nothing less than these will suffice in the present-day firmament of music.

Meanwhile, be it remembered, Grand Opera and Music Drama are not All of Music. And then there are yet left the Masters, and the passing of the years makes their position more secure.

THOMAS J. KELLY.

Musical Notes.

Tonight (Sunday) Miss Mary Muenchhoff will sing and Mr. Max Landow will play piano and Mr. Anton Stechele, violin, at the Holy Family church, corner of Eighth and Izard streets. The concert which is given for charity will have the following program:

Improvisation.
Mr. Max Landow.....Schubert
(a) O. Had I Jubal's Lyre.....G. F. Handel
(b) Komm, Quesser God.....J. S. Bach
(c) Mein Glandiges Storchchen.....Schubert
Chaconne.....J. S. Bach
Mr. Anton Stechele.....Peter Cornelius
Christmas Song.....The Christmas Tree.
(a) The Shepherds.
(b) The Kings.
(c) Christ the Friend of Children.
(d) The Infant Christ.
Mary Muenchhoff.
Laigo.....G. F. Handel
Ave Maria.....Emilio Pizzi
Mary Muenchhoff, Mr. Anton Stechele, Mr. Max Landow.

Mme. Marcella Sembrich, soprano, will give the following concert on Tuesday afternoon, January 3, at the Brandeis theater. Mr. Frank La Forge will act as accompanist and give some independent selections. The program follows:

Aria from Brani (Erminiolani).....Verdi
Three (a) Du bist Die Ruh.....Schubert
(b) Ungeduld.....Schubert

(Continued on Page Seven.)

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