

English-Made Play About Divorce Has Broadway Thinking

By JAMES WHITTAKER

New York—(Special)—An English play with a purpose has come to the George M. Cohan theater, where it will try to prove that its great success in London has been due to its excellence as an entertainment quite as much as to its force as a protest against a strange medieval defect in English law and custom. In America where divorcemen and divorcees are as numerous as flies and enlightened, "A Bill of Divorcement" will not be helped to success by violent attacks by clergy and enthusiastic acclamations from Fabians and Shavians. It happens that the divorce laws of the state of New York provide that a woman must remain tied for life to a diseased or insane husband. But New York wives can get New Jersey divorces easily and with no greater addition to the expense of the operation than a few cents Hudson tube fares. In England, totally surcharged with water to keep foreign vices out and its own vices in, a woman is living-dead if she has the bad luck to draw a defective mate. The home she inhabits with the man she married may be his castle. It is her sepulcher.

Clementine Dane unwhites this sepulcher in her play. She might have done this brutally and awkwardly. A young author's greatest temptation comes when he discovers a stretch. It is so easy and thrilling to spread it. But Miss Dane has the same tact with which I have handled the delicate problem of "Ghosts." Only a woman or a genius could approach the rottenness which existed in the family of the Fairfields of Kent and cleanse it as tactfully, done and beautifully as it is done in "A Bill of Divorcement." Miss Dane is a bit of both. To put her play in motion, Miss Dane found it necessary to adopt a premise. The premise is explained in the theater programs. You are asked by the author to imagine that it is the year 1932, that slow-moving British reformations have finally amended the list of grounds for divorce to include disease of body and mind and that even the most conservative citizens have begun to accept the benefits of the reform.

The divorce is that of the mistress of an exceedingly well-to-do English country house, as an embodiment of fearful conservatism in cheerful, lasting interior decorating. Her former husband, having been pronounced incurably insane in that form which includes cessation of memory, knows nothing of the divorce nor of the new laws which permit the divorcee to marry, for that matter, of anything whatsoever since the day of 1910 when a shell burst close to him in a ditch in Flanders and left him a whimpering, giggling thing. Mrs. Fairfield and her 17-year-old daughter are in the midst of final preparations for a Christmas day remarriage of the former to the man of her second, more fortunate choice when the first husband, escaped from the London asylums, walks through the French windows into the living room and forthwith demonstrates himself as sane as any Briton by asking for tea.



Miss Darling ORPHEUM Music Visualization Series dancers with Ted Shaw. -BRANDEIS-



Grant Mitchell BRANDEIS - OCT. 26-27

Helen Sall - BRANDEIS OCT. 29-30-31

Gladys Vallee EMPRESS

Irene De Verdier GAYETY

Gayety theater. It is most often a disease of adolescence and quite harmless in that period. But mumps kill adults. Mr. Tarkington is in a bad crisis of bad play writing and we can tremble a bit for his talent.

Helen Hayes, the delicious younger of "Bab," is the wren of the title. She portrays a simple and rather annoying little Miss Fixis of a New England seacoast village whose occupation in the three acts is the choosing of exact and moral positions for all the furniture and all the characters. It is characterization which will not tank Miss Hayes for all of the delightful and simple skill which she lavishes on it. You may detect in these comments a certain bitterness. It is mostly the bitterness of displeasure with Mr. Tarkington that he did no better for Miss Hayes, who has a right to his best.

We could forgive Mr. Tarkington his windy elaborations of the "Way Down East" comedy principle, his several characters stolen from the farm rubric of Miller's compiled American humor and the eleven unfunny hired man seen on the disastrous stage of this early fall, but we cannot pardon him that he did not write Helen Hayes' appealing charm into Helen Hayes' part. It would have been so easy and pleasant to have written the play with a picture of Helen Hayes beside the typewriter.

The play about dogs, entitled "Beware of Dogs," composed by William Hodge and in which he and the dogs are now acting in the Broadway theater, is so innocent in its merriment that certain humorous references to the morals of the latter are spoken almost shudderingly by the former. This illustrates Mr. Hodge's method, which is to furnish amusement at once unobjectionable and not unobjectionable for some adult audiences. At the wrong end of every dog-leash is the owner. Mr. Hodge, as an upright and affable young lawyer, temporarily engaged in running a dog farm, finds trouble at both ends of the leash.

Between the vices of the dogs and their owners Mr. Hodge stands, a patient object of snarls until the time comes for him to make a Hodge end to a Hodge play. Then he turns on human and canine tormentors and lashes them into submission with an old-time Hodge speech, full of the Hodge quiet, facile and nasal irony. Enfolded the Hodge girl in his arms, he speaks the moral of his essay on dog-rearing: "Never again!"

The coming of Grant Mitchell in "The Champion" to the Brandeis Wednesday and Thursday matinee series of the theater, will prove one of the important events of the theatrical season. "The Champion" is a special musical score, matinee, variety, and a play in three acts. The story is interesting, the situations are unusual, and the play is a masterpiece of the kind. It is a play that will be remembered for a long time.

GLADYS CLARK and Henry Bergman are announced for the Orpheum next week. They will be assisted by the Dale Sisters, Robert Williams, Robert Lee Allen, Harold Howard, Horace Cooper, Robert Arvon, Henry Warwick, F. Kaye, Tom Williams, Clara Verdier, Destree Stempel, Phyllis Tullman and Adria Hill.

At The Theaters

Law Lost a Light When Mitchell Took Acting for Career

Grant Mitchell, who is scoring a great success in "The Champion" coming to the Brandeis next Wednesday and Thursday with matinee Thursday, had no intention of gaining fame and fortune on the stage when he went to Yale. Instead it was all cut and dried that he should become a lawyer, so after graduating from Yale he went to the Harvard law school and took his degree.

Mr. Mitchell found the practice of law in his home city, Columbus, O., very tedious and his clients were few and far between. He soon tired warming an office chair without materially increasing his income and so he decided to go on the stage—not particularly because he was fitted for the theatrical profession, but because he thought there was more money in it.

He went to New York and took a course of training in the New York academy of dramatic arts and some time later found himself carrying a spear in Richard Mansfield's production of "Julius Caesar." This was his stage debut. His next engagement was with Clara Bloodgood in "The Girl With the Green Eyes." This was followed by two seasons with Francis Wilson in "Cousin Billy" and "The Mountain Climber." A tour with Lillian Russell in "The Butterfly" and one with Maxine Elliott in "Bettina" were next in order and Mr. Mitchell closed with the latter in time to join "Girls" and create one of the principal roles.

In "The Call of the North" with Robert Edeson Mr. Mitchell played the role of Rev. Archibald Crane and the next season he went back to Miss Elliott and toured in "The Chaperone." Then Mr. Mitchell came into his own for he joined the Cohan and Harris forces and since then his rise has been rapid. "The Fortune Hunter" was the first of several successes and this was followed by "Get-Rick-Quick Wallingford," in which he created the humorous role of Eddie Lamb, the hotel clerk.

In "It Pays to Advertise," Mr. Mitchell was cast in the role of Dohney Martin and played this for two seasons. "A Tailor-Made Man" made Mr. Mitchell famous and his role of John Paul Bart was a character creation long to be remembered. Mr. Mitchell succeeded George M. Cohan in the title role of "A Prince There Was," and then last season Mr. Harris starred him in "The Champion."

Cliff Nazarro a Snappy Lad With His Own-Ideas

Cliff Nazarro, peppy and versatile juvenile, who is appearing this week at the Orpheum theater in association with the Darling sisters, began his stage career at the tender age of 6. He had heard Al Jolson sing and, in an unbelievable style, he imitated him so cleverly that he was given his first job impersonating the blackface musical comedy star. He has never allowed his admiration of Jolson to wane, because it was "Al Jolson II" that he always wanted to be, and still does. Yet in his teens, this snappy little entertainer has made a reputation for himself as a singer and dancer of musical comedy experience. He has an extraordinary voice, pleasing and sympathetic in style and quality.

Laughable as it may seem, it is nevertheless a fact that this "kid" has developed temperament. And this attribute, which usually is to be found among grand opera stars and not among juvenile performers, Cliff has to have a tiff with one of Broadway's most successful musical comedy producers. It is now past history, but humorously recalled his youngster told the impresario he would not take the character in a forthcoming production unless it was made a principal role. "I've passed the stage where I am to be among those present," he told the manager. "You can find some one, most nicely, who will be contented with that part but not I." And this youthful star walked out of the manager's office—head up in the air—and hid himself to the office of his brother, Nat Nazarro, theatrical manager and vaudeville performer, and asked for an engagement.

"I can't get along with the boss about our new show," he told his brother, and I want you to place me in vaudeville, where I will be of some consequence and what I do will be an important part—not just a part of a picture."

So the present vaudeville act was arranged, and the Darling sisters, who are under the elder Nazarro's management, were made the other two-thirds of the act. These sisters came to vaudeville from a New York cabaret, where their dancing and singing attracted many managers very much, but Nat Nazarro most, and he put them under contract.

Kind to Animals. Doris May, blithesome little star, is the main supporter of an animal hospital in Los Angeles. If she had the money to do it she says she would build an animal hospital in every city in the United States.

Bryant Washburn has been engaged by Goldwyn for the leading male role in "Hungry Hearts."

What the Theaters Offer

TED SHAWN, American man dancer, and his company of dancers from "Dankshwa" will appear at the Brandeis theater for two special performances Monday and Tuesday nights. Mr. Shawn is on his way to New York for his coming engagement at the Metropolitan Opera house. Among the artists who assist him are Louis Horst, concert pianist, and Misses Martha Graham, Betty May and Dorothea Bowen. Mr. Shawn offers a series of religious, romantic, pictorial and barbaic dances, beginning with his Protestant church service in dance and closing with his Astec ballet, Xochitl, for which Homer Gunn, the composer, wrote a special musical score. Music, visualizations, dance interpretations of well-known concert numbers and series of French, Spanish, Oriental and barbaic dances are included in his program.

WITH a splendid cast and perfect production, "The Bird of Paradise" will be presented at the Brandeis theater, matinee and night, Saturday and Sunday, October 29 and 30.

MADAME BORMY HAMMAR, Norwegian actress, formerly connected with National Theaters of Bergen and Christiania, Norway, and Ros Allen, formerly of the Central theater, Christiania, will make their first appearance in Omaha at the Brandeis theater Monday and Tuesday nights, October 31 and November 1, in "The Master Builder," by Henrik Ibsen.

MADAME HAMMAR and Mr. Fjell will be assisted by cast including Janet Dexter, Joseph Stanhope, Robert Fuller, Jeanne Deloup and Florence Leslie. The plays will be given in English, with the stars speak clearly and distinctly.

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Fads and Fancies

Charles Ray's favorite sport is fishing—any kind. Helen Chadwick, Goldyn beauty, sings and paints in water colors. Reginald Denny is fond of boxing—not as a spectator but as a participant. Little Rita Rogan is collecting dolls and in just one year has acquired 34. Rockcliffe Fellows cultivates orchids and digs clams. Doris Kenyon is keen on golfing and rarely misses a collegiate football match that's played within reasonable distance of wherever she may be.

George Randolph and Lilian Chester are in the antique business. William Nigh is a character student and spends most of his time between pictures studying types. R. William Neill's hobby is his two and a half year old daughter.

Has a Real Poker Face.

Billy Elmer, the former prize fighter, who retired from the ring to become a movie actor, and who, incidentally, has been very successful at it, is playing the role of Poker Face in the Pauline Frederick production, "Judith of Blue Lake Ranch." Elmer has a poker face all right, but if he ever sat in a game he'd probably bluff all the other players to a standstill.

Advertisement for Orpheum theater featuring Joseph E. Howard & Co. and Cliff Nazarro & Co. Includes showtimes and ticket prices.

Advertisement for Brandeis Theatre featuring Ted Shawn, Louis Horst, Martha Graham, Betty May, and Dorothea Bowen. Includes showtimes and ticket prices.

Advertisement for Grant Mitchell in 'The Champion' at Cort Theater. Includes showtimes and ticket prices.

Advertisement for Tony Sarg's Marionettes at Cort Theater. Includes showtimes and ticket prices.

Advertisement for TWIN BEDS. Includes showtimes and ticket prices.

Advertisement for The Traveling Theater featuring Mme. Borgny Hammer and Rolf Fjell. Includes showtimes and ticket prices.

Advertisement for THE BIRD OF PARADISE. Includes showtimes and ticket prices.

Advertisement for Emmy Destinn at Empress Rustic Garden. Includes showtimes and ticket prices.