

What Ails Stage

Brady Admits Radio Is Not Only Thing That Is Cutting Down Seat Sales

By PERCY HAMMOND.

New York, Jan. 11.—No one seems to believe in William A. Brady's discovery that the radio is the cause of the present suffering in the dramatic business. Ever since he made his terrific announcement of the news-papers have been full of articles proving that the neurodynes and heterodynes are the least of the theater's ailments. Mr. Brady, like Mr. Bersec's dog, is of an "aboriginal prudency" regarding every newcomer with distrust. But in a letter to these dispatches the other day he admits that his critics are right and that the managers persist in harboring enemies much more harmful than the radio.

A majority of those who correct Mr. Brady tell him that the high cost of tickets is keeping the public away from the theaters. On Monday night, for instance, \$5.50 was charged for a single seat at "Mrs. Patridge Presents"—a good comedy, but entailing no great expenditure in production. The theaters' affiliation with the brokers and speculators is an ancient source of complaint, but never was resentment so deep as it is at present. In answer to Mr. Brady's outcry many people write in to say that they have abandoned playgoing because of the preponderance of bad shows. Others tell me that they refrain from the dramas on account of uncomfortable seating arrangements, ill ventilation of theaters and a general disregard on the part of the managers for the comfort of their patrons.

You would be surprised to know how many correspondents say that their chief grievance against the theater is discourtesy in the box office. Customers for the less expensive seats make their purchases at the ticket windows and there, they complain, they are subjected to indifference, insolence and humiliation. Disdainful young men treat them with an impatient contempt, especially when the women are popular. So, rather than have their feelings hurt or their ire roused, they seek other means of recreation. Following is a sample of the numerous protests against the unfriendliness of the theaters:

"Sir, can you explain why sellers of tickets at the box offices of theaters hold the public in contempt? 'Who do they frown when they serve a customer? 'Why do they snap at him when he asks about the prices and locations of tickets?"

"Is it one of the qualifications of a successful ticket seller that he or she be as ugly and unpleasant as possible when taking the theatergoer's money?"

"Are all ticket sellers dyspeptic, or do they work for nothing, or do they feel that the public gets too much for its money, or are they merely dejected because of the low state of the drama? THOMAS STEEP."

In no other line of merchandising is so little attention paid to amity between buyer and seller. I suggested this to a manager the other day as a reason for half-empty theaters. His answer left me with no reply. "What's the use?" said he. "If I have a show they want to see they'll come to it, and if I haven't they won't, no matter how polite I am."

Miss Blanche Bates is the star of a bright little serious comedy called "Mrs. Patridge Presents." The authors of which are two young and obscure actresses named Ruth Hawthorne and Mary Kennedy. It was so popular with its first audience that it seems safe to include it in a list of the season's "hits."

"Mrs. Patridge Presents" is a faithful widow of course, who has suffered from matrimony. Having been rendered unhappy by the wedding ring, she determines to make her progeny independent of wedlock's disasters. Her son must be a painter; her daughter must be a pianist. Mrs. Patridge is a woman of means upon the Broadway stage. Both of these offspring have other ideas. But Miss Bates is so lovely and hypnotic that she misdirects their careers and tries to send them to horizons that they do not care for.

Miss Bates represents this lovely lady as a handsome, benevolent, venturesome milliner and haberdasher, as well as a witty hen who clucks prudent advice to the sagacious contents of her eggshells. I have seen with much satisfaction Miss Bates play in many plays. But I believe that in "Mrs. Patridge Presents" she resembles so far as the stage will allow her to do so, a complete, interesting and human being.

Admirable also is the performance of Miss Sylvia Field, who is pathetically frightened by her mother—so much so that she hesitated for two acts and a half to abandon the drama for Sidney, a shrewd and handsome farmer of Westchester county. I liked the sophisticated cynic of Mr. Edward Emery, Jr., a wise and promising actor if ever there was one. I liked Miss Ruth Gordon, too, as she impersonated a naive little ingenue, quietly but eloquently imploring laughs. Miss Gordon was very good, and obvious. She split the difference between life and the theater almost as expertly as Miss Laurette Taylor does. I shall read in other journals that she was the first time that she was merely the shrewd and wise showwoman.

His role in the M. C. Levas production, "One Year to Live," completed, Antonio Moreno will leave Hollywood for New York within the next 10 days.

After a brief stay in Manhattan, Moreno will sail for France the early part of January to meet Rex Ingram, with whom he will make the trip to Spain to commence the picturization of "Marie Noire." It is expected that he will be the first time in years that Moreno will portray a native Spaniard, and the first time that he has ever played a star role in his native country. He will be absent more than six months.



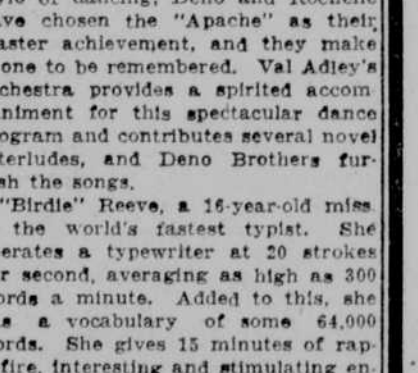
Laura Arnold, IN "BLOSSOM TIME," COMING TO BRANDEIS



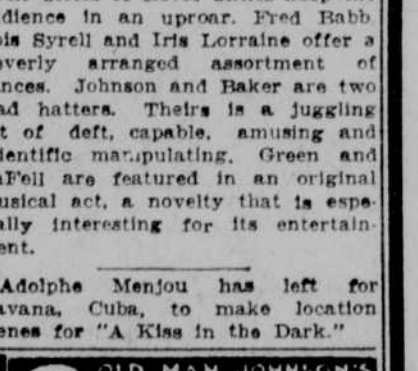
Violet McKeel, AT GAYETY



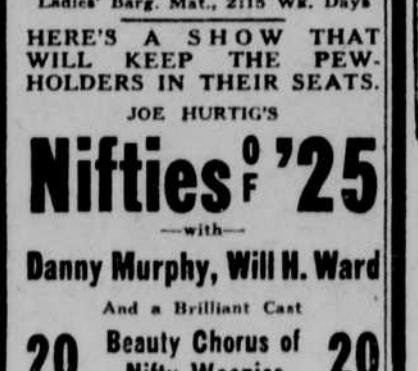
Chick Sale Will Make Fun for the Orpheum This Week



Edith Barry, AT WORLD



Birdie Reeves, AT ORPHEUM



Lillian Bessent, AT EMPRESS

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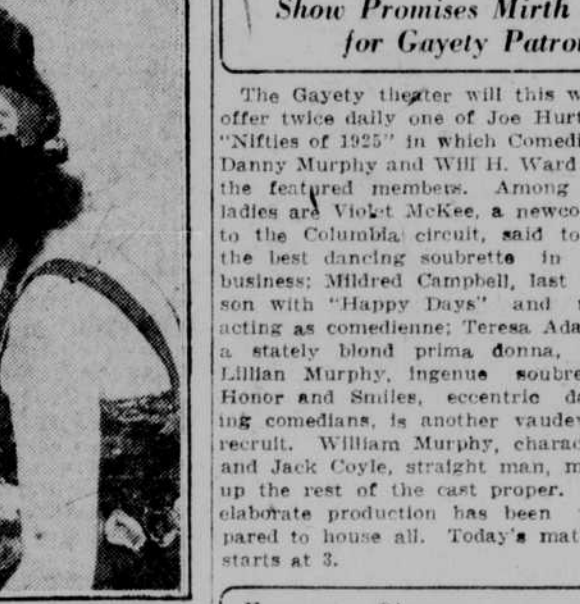
At Theaters



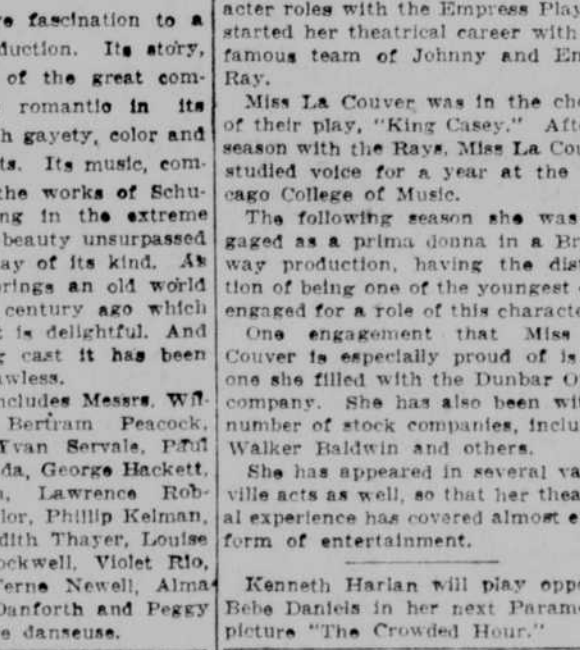
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Chick Sale, AT ORPHEUM

Charles (Chick) Sale is one of the best examples of cleanliness that the stage affords. In a day when censors are abroad in the land, ready with blue pencil and shears to make stage and film conform to critical standards of morality, he remains untouched by censorship. In fact, the appearance of "Chick" is often heralded from the pulpits and congregations are encouraged to attend the theaters where he is entertaining with his inimitable rural types.

Mr. Sale is at the Orpheum theater this week and he is truly "the man who makes us laugh at ourselves." He is the teacher in charge of the Friday afternoon entertainment, who asks his audiences to regard themselves as pupils in school, and he takes them back to childhood days with his genre paintings of life in the rural centers of America.

Another Joe Hurtig Show Promises Mirth for Gayety Patrons. The Gayety theater will this week offer twice daily one of Joe Hurtig's "Nifties of 1925" in which Comedians Danny Murphy and Will H. Ward are the featured members. Among the ladies are Violet McKeel, a newcomer to the Columbia circuit, said to be the best dancing comedienne in the business; Mildred Campbell, last season with "Happy Days" and now acting as comedienne; Teresa Adams, a stately blond prima donna, and Lillian Murphy, ingenue comedienne. Honor and Smiles, eccentric dancing comedienne, is another vaudeville recruit. William Murphy, character, and Jack Coyle, straight man, make up the rest of the cast proper. An elaborate production has been prepared to house all. Today's matinee starts at 3.

Empress Singer Has Had Varied Career on Stage. Maybelle La Couver, playing character roles with the Empress Players, started her theatrical career with the famous team of Johnny and Emma Ray.

Empress Players to Put Lena Rivers into Real Life. The popular old novel, "Lena Rivers," has been made the basis for the musical comedy production being offered at the Empress this week. The title role is played by Helen Burke. Lillian Bessent will surprise Empress patrons by playing the part of Lena's grandmother, Joe Marion has just the sort of part that he plays best, that of "Life Slocum," a country hick. The story of "Lena Rivers" tells a love romance that is one of the most convincing ever written. Played in two scenes, the new bill promises to prove one of the most attractive in the long series presented by the Empress Players.

Ward Has Made Village Wise Man Basis of Character. Will H. Ward, comic with Danny Murphy in Joe Hurtig's "Nifties of 1925," which will be the attractions at the Gayety theater this week, is a familiar figure to all patrons of Columbia burlesque. Ward, whose brilliantly held pace has distinguished over the circuit for many seasons, this year presents an original character known as the "Village Cracker." Ward, discovered this character in a Vermont grocery store in a little town where he spends his vacations.

Ward, who under the name of Norma Kopp, was the delightful sourette of "The Wizard of the Nile," "The Idol's Eye" and so many other of the Frank Daniele productions of a score of years ago. It seems to be the fashion among our leading stage comedians at the present time to absorb their own pretty daughters into their companies. Really, everybody is doing it. Fred Stone started the fashion with his fair daughter, Dorothy, in "Stepping Stones," and now there is quite a list of them—Will Danforth being merely the latest in the line.

When demure little Virginia finally gained her father's and mother's consent to go on the stage, her little brother—age 12—began to reveal not only the sly waggishness familiar in his father's fun-making, but gave evidence which made his long suffering sister proclaim him a "veritable limb of Satan." The young fiend's admonitions, delivered with mock serious face, as to how to conduct herself on the stage, when at last she should appear before an audience, convulsed his parents while they drove "Finally" with rishia nearly frantic. "Finally," with reliance on her "first professional appearance on the stage," a telegram was brought back to her dressing room, where she stood trembling with trepidation awaiting her first cue.

Aldrich Finds His Models on Streets of Any City. Charles T. Aldrich, whose character comedy impersonations at the World this week will be found quite out of the ordinary, takes all his types from real life.

Brother's Advice to Sister About to Sing First Time. Virginia Danforth, who is the sprightly kitten of the "Blossom Time" cast coming to the Brandeis theater for one week starting next Sunday, January 13th, with matinees Wednesday and Saturday, is the only daughter of Will Danforth, the leading comedian of "Blossom Time." Miss Danforth, now in her first year on the stage, will recall to many a gray-haired fellow, her beautiful mother, who, under the name of Norma Kopp, was the delightful sourette of "The Wizard of the Nile," "The Idol's Eye" and so many other of the Frank Daniele productions of a score of years ago. It seems to be the fashion among our leading stage comedians at the present time to absorb their own pretty daughters into their companies.

Charles T. Aldrich, whose character comedy impersonations at the World this week will be found quite out of the ordinary, takes all his types from real life. For 29 years Aldrich has been regarded as one of the foremost entertainers in his field. He selects all his character impersonations from real life, believing that in this way he can come nearer entertaining the average theater goer. "It is the things that happen every day that are the funniest," opines Mr. Aldrich. "Go down the streets of Omaha any time of the day or night and I warrant if you are observing you will find many people and many things that will hand you a laugh. It is equally true that one sees sorrow and grief out in the open, but these are the things that should be passed by unnoticed. Look on the bright side of life has always been my motto and by bringing this theory into my entertainment, I have been fortunate in being able to appear with a fair degree of success in all parts of the world."

BRANDEIS THEATRE THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY. SCANDINAVIA'S GREATEST PHOTOPLAY. The Song of the Blood-Red Flower. With a celebrated cast of Swedish and Norwegian actors. Lara Hanson, Edith Erastoff, Greta Almoth, Axel Nelson, Lillebil Christense, Doris Nelson, Louise Fahlaner, Hjalmer Peters, Nils Lundell.

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THE CITY OF YESTERDAY. The one and original character comedian, CHARLES T. ALDRICH. Originator of the novel effects presented in his extraordinary act.

Orpheum Week Starting Today's Mat. CHIC SALE. FRANK & TEDDY SABINI in a New Version of "I QUIT". BABB, SYRELL & LORRAINE "A MEDLEY OF STEPS". BIRDIE REEVE "THE FINGERWIT". JOHNSON & BAKER in "PRACTICE". GREEN & LAFELL MELODY SPECIALISTS.

Empress Players offer a musical comedy version of the novel known to millions—given a superb stage presentation. "LENA RIVERS". A wonderful love story—A consistent dramatic plot—A great comedy element.