



Nat Goodwin.

Why Actors and Actresses Marry So Often.

Vanity, Luxury and Too Much Petting the Reasons, Says Clara Morris, Regretting the Hard Old Times When

Stage Folk Were Contented with Just One Wife and One Husband

By CLARA MORRIS.

GRACIOUS, married after five months; after four, even after three months of mourning! At that rate it is scarcely worth while for an actor to waste much on "the trappings and the suits of woe."

Miss Russell, Miss Peyton, Miss Jeffreys Lewis, Miss Fritz Scheff, Miss Maxine Elliott, Mr. Goodwin, Mr. Hopper, Mr. Mantell, Mr. de Bellville. Thirty-five marriages stand to the credit of these nine players. Why not offer a prize to the reader who can correctly distribute the thirty-five amongst the nine.

Then I go gasping on: Powers, Hillard, Sothorn, Faversham, Trux, Marlowe, Harned, Post, Hall—Oh, more and yet more who are coming along modestly, yet hopefully, with but two living husbands or wives to each account.

As I read this amazing list, I seem quite plainly to hear the voice of good old John Parsell, English college man and actor, indignantly crying out, in his beloved Latin: "O tempora; O mores!" They say that real artist, Frederick De Bellville, can, if aroused from sound sleep, repeat the marriage service in either French, German or English without stumbling.

That Mr. Hopper knows every quick-marrying joint located between our two oceans.

That Mr. Goodwin has secretly vowed to equal the royal record of Henry VIII, and only stop at six.

Can there be such a thing as a marriage germ? If so, the territory known as "behind the scenes" must be alive with them. At all events, our actors have changed for the worse in their attitude toward marriage. The old-timers, while not monogamists, were pretty generally satisfied with one wife at a time. They seemed, too, to regard her more in the light of "the woman Thou gavest me," and as "to have and to hold."

Actors seem not to bother about holding wives now. She is his to have, as long as she is pretty, piquant and entertaining—but not, oh, not, to hold through the years when familiarity has lessened interest and dulled love.

It was different with the men and women who wore such names as these: The Keans, Booths, Farrants, Ritchies, Conways, Macready's, Stoddards, Drews, Walcotts, Murdock's—if patience held I might draw out the line till it would suggest that awful list of the Greek ships in Homer.

Now these actors were content with one wife at a time. Some of them were twice married, but 'twas only after death had cancelled the first contract. Long before my time New York had a theatrical scandal. Oh, oh! the sensation it caused! Charles Mathews, English

comedy star, found a soul mate in the handsome wife of one Dolly Davenport, a member of Mr. William Burton's company.

The lovers fled to far Hoboken and were married—by what authority, Heaven knows; I don't. But, oh, the storm. The papers were rabid. Preachers foamed at the mouth. The public was shocked, the women whispered into one another's scoop-bonnets; the men bought no seats. The engagement was ruined.

Twenty years later the echoes of that scandal were still rolling about in the South and West.

Should that affair be duplicated to-day, what would happen? The public would say, wearily, "What, another?" There would be much ribald laughter. The papers would print it as a news item, treating it from jocose and sportive, or possibly a satirical standpoint, while if much should be made of it, the guilty pair would grin happily and call it a mighty good ad! "O tempora; O mores!"

Oh, the altered times! Oh, the luxury of men's manners! The book tells us that marriage is honorable, but do these merry gentlemen and ladies, who seem to carry property licenses in their kips, believe that their catch-as-catch-can ceremonies, their multiple marriages, are honorable?

Yet the thing that is most repellent in their conduct—most wounding to the sensibilities of the observant public—is the indecent haste of some actors to thrust into the limbo of forgetfulness the piteously helpless dead.

His breach of the marriage law is passed by with a shrug and a smile, but the breach of the law of love chills and repels the public he lives by.

I am reminded that the Bible sternly forbids us to "judge" one another, but we are certainly not forbidden to study, to try to understand one another, to place ourselves in that other's place. So let us be just, since the actor is, after all, only committing "the oldest sins, in the newest kind of ways," and if Mormon-minded, he is, at least, not a Don Juan, for though we have too many "widowed wives," we are happily short on "married maids."

Why do they do it? "Must be a queer lot of duffers," commented a new arrival to me recently, "Five wives to one husband. My word, if thought they were spoofing me, don't you know. This Mr. Goodwin of yours is a regular screamer!"

"As a comedian?" I asked. "No; as a husband!" And he looked pained at my laughing. That very evening a grave, stern legal



Lillian Russell, Who Holds the Lady's Trophy for Husbands.



Fritz Scheff, Who Has Taken Unto Herself Her Third Husband.



Maxine Elliott, Who Was One of the Numerous Mrs. Goodwins.

De Wolf Hopper, Who is Only One Behind Nat Goodwin in the Race for Matrimonial Championship Honors.



Mrs. Virginia Hicks Sothorn Courtenay, a Last Season Stage Bride.

might declared boldly: "An actor is an exaggerated ego; his marriages are often impudently illegal, and the result of combined vanity, vulgarity and physical attraction. A passion without tenderness or reverence—the vanity of being called irresistible; the vulgarity of profiting by notoriety."

I really did feel that was the limit, and I brought into action that weapon known as woman's tongue, and taking for my text "You can't make one shoe fit

every foot." I held forth with hot sincerity until I was forced to pause and take a breath or die for want of it.

When he basely took advantage of my necessity and coldly commented, "All that is special pleading for these people, and, besides, you do not speak from reason but from the heart." "Who has a better right?" I snapped. "These people, as you call them, are my people, and it is not fair to condemn them from crass ignorance. Try to understand, and you will forgive, if you can't justify."

"I held no brief for any actors—but if I did, I could at least speak for forty years' knowledge of them."

And in the act of withdrawing, my visitor sent back this Partisan shot: "And out of this depth of knowledge, can you bring excuse, or even explanation, of the marrying madness of your people? Pardon me if I doubt it."

Now, I ask myself if he was right. If I have fallen so far back from the band that I can no longer mark the time to which we are marching? Certainly the "world do move" and "circumstances do alter cases," but human nature? Ah! Human nature is the same to-day as it was yesterday, and as it will be to-morrow.

In the "good old days" that were so often had old days there was no "good old Summer time" for actors. No roof gardens, no open air performances, no Summer resort theatres—only a nightmare period of idleness. But when they married they doubled their joys, and halved their expenses.

Salaries were light, work very, very heavy. Change of bill every night. Rehearsal every morning. Costumes to prepare and parts to study or to "re-cover" each afternoon. To be brief, the old school actor had no time for dissipation. Never could it be said of him: "Lightly from fair to fair he flew, And loved to plead, lament and sue."

Even to-day we have steel true marriages between the descendants of old-timers. Witness the Hollands, Seymours, Drews, etc. We are solemnly admon-

ished to marry, go forth and multiply. But by transposition, I fear the actor's rubric reads: "Go forth and multiply thy marriages."

Now be it known, the player is poor company for just one person on earth—himself.

Remove a gleaming little goldfish from the water, and you hold on your hand a dull, flabby, gasping thing—its flashing grace of movement, its glitter and glory of color, all gone, and he will be a perfect symbol of the actor out of his element.

Put him in a crowd and his spirit will leave the whole mass. There he will glow. He will talk well. He will listen well, sing well. He will, in short, be sympathetic to all.

But in solitude he finds his Waterloo. He who entertained the crowd, cannot entertain himself. He is bored to extinction. Nor does he find pleasure in dissipation—actors are not dissolute. Hence the writing on his wall needs no interpreter. The word of fire is marriage.

To the Arab grant his camel, his small, sun-scorched tent and his prayer rug, and straightaway any halting place on the mighty, almost trackless desert becomes "home, sweet home" to him. But the actor goes the Arab one better, for, give to him but a pretty, loving wife, and his trunk, and they will make home for him, whether in New York, Medicine Hat or San Francisco. Marriage is natural enough—but why these unseemly repetitions?

The actor who can best represent a character, who can best express the human emotions, is most applauded, most praised. The more versatile he becomes the more he is admired. Thus, his one object in life is to act something quite perfectly, and if he has not a part on "hand he will even act himself."

Thus the man becomes lost in the actor, who is flattered and kow-towed to. Vanity grows apace. He becomes very selfish. Thus adulation, large salaries, few parts, long runs and much idleness give us an actor who feels himself above those conventions, those moral laws to which other men submit themselves for the sake of the welfare of society at large.

Believing the world takes him at his

own high valuation, he treads upon the corns of the public, without apology, and marries and marries and re-marries, and has so much fun with God's Holy Ordinance that one wonders how long it will be before he gets gay with the Burial Service.

And the women of the stage, "Why do they marry so often?" There it comes—the expected word. "Halt! Who goes there?"

"Friend."

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

Not much—I can't—I have not got it. Neither has anyone else.

What woman ever gave the countersign that would admit another into her real mind?

Her heart—perhaps. Her mind—never. Which is not to be wondered at, for if a woman cannot understand herself, who may do it for her? Perhaps these supposedly amorous ladies are, after all, more in love with Love than with a lover, or perhaps

"This expectation that makes a blessing dear."

Then when the lover is lost in the husband, as often happens, it's a case of "Hop light, Lou" and try it again.

At all events most actresses seem to marry "for better"—never "for worse," "for richer," never "for poorer," for though all are short on patience, they are sure to be long on exactions.

The spirit of giving is still in the air, so I should like to suggest to the friends of our Messrs. Nathaniel and DeWolf Hopper something neat in the way of gifts: A locket—not loud or gaudy—to be worn on the watch chain, each locket containing the composite photograph of all of the gentlemen's once dear wives.

Touching, isn't it?

Flattery, and that idleness that ever sets the devil's dimples dancing, have changed our actors for the worse. Yet so long as they retain the time honored old qualities of generosity, warm, quick sympathy and bright good fellowship, they will charm as they have always charmed.

Still, I glance at that long list of inconsequent marriages and again I send forth my parrot repetition of Parsell's cry, O tempora, O mores!

Here's the New Baby-Trimmed Hat.

BABIES throughout the ages have had to undergo being carried in odd places, but the babies of certain Peruvian tribes probably take the prize for having the queerest perambulators. Below the Rio Grande everyone carries everything he or she can upon the head. The custom extends clear to the Horn. The Peruvian mamma, when she wants to take baby out for an airing, takes a basket that looks like an inverted peach basket hat. It is lined comfortably with feathers. In this nest she places the baby, elevates the whole curious nest to her head and takes her walk. She never touches her hands to the affair, except to lift it on or off. The baby is lulled by the slight movements of her walk, much more hygienically than the civilized babies are by the violent cradle rockings.

At the same time it is not alone the baby who benefits. The mother, too, finds several advantages of a purely personal nature in this arrangement, to which, perhaps, the custom owes its origin. In the first place a fine, upright carriage of the body—back straight, neck like a graceful pillar and head gracefully poised upon it—is sedulously cultivated by some semi-savage races, as



How the Peruvian Mother Carries Her Baby.

well as by all young women of Latin descent, as the Spanish and the Italians.

These women of the working classes always carry their burdens on the head, which necessitates an erect, well-poised torso and head. The works of the old art masters contain many graceful figures of young women carrying amphorae, and heavy pieces of pottery in other forms, on their heads or shoulders. The effect is the same when the Peruvian mother carries her baby that way. It is impossible for her to walk ungracefully with that weight balanced on her head.

Incidentally it will be noticed that the Peruvian baby's feather-lined basket provides a fashionable sort of headdress that is by no means to be despised; quite as effective, in fact, as some of the latest importations from Paris.

Fashions in babies are numerous and interesting among the half-civilized races of the world. North American women and Eskimo mothers carry their babies on their backs and they usually develop strong backs. In this way it is easy to "mind the baby" and go about your work or amusements at the same time.