About Plays and Players

JUST to remind us that the summer has slipped by, the Omaha theaters announce their intention to "blow in" next Sunday. The Krug has already been under headway for a couple of weeks, and the Boyd, the Orpheum and the Burwood propose to get going without further delay. In one way only does the approaching season offer a novelty, and that is one that will test Omaha's metropolitan pretentions. The Orpheum will do "two a day," and the Burwood proposes to hand out three shows each afternoon and evening of the week. Competition in the vaudeville line is responsible for this departure, and if it results in a higher grade of vaudeville, the move will be welcomed by the patrons. At the Boyd the high grade shows will be offered, and it is planned to keep the theater busy during the entire season. In furtherance of this the agreement between the Shuberts and the Klaw & Erlanger factions has been of much service, for it makes available for Omaha a number of high class attractions that have been shut out during the two years' war. During the week Manager Woodward showed a list of bookings which takes the time solid to the first of the year, with the exception of a week in October, and which offers some excellent inducements. For reasons of his own, he does not care to give out a full list of the shows he expects to entertain during the season, but he does say it is the best the Boyd has had in several years. One of the features of local interest will be the return of Mr. Sothern as a single star. Otis Skinner and others of that calibre are down, and all the new comedies and musical plays are to be presented. At the Krug the brand new as well as the time tried and fire tested thrillers will be seen, and many of the better class plays which are doing the popular priced houses are also promised. The Orpheum has taken a leaf from the book of its opposition, and announces "advanced" vaudeville, while the Burwood proposes to vaudeville at the rate of admission that can be reached by anyone. All in all, it promises to be a busy season at the Omaha theaters.

The silly season has ended with little that approaches sensational, probably the most noteworthy stunt in the line being that pulled off by Maude Feally at Denver. Maude got the notion into her sweet little head that something must be did, and she done it. She slipped out one night when Ma Feally wasn't watching and married a newspaper man, just one of the common or garden variety. Ma Feally says he couldn't even pay for his own cigarettes, but that's not so; even a journalist can do that. Annyhow, as Dooley says, Maudie went home, and the reporter turned in the copy on his night assignment and sought the seclusion of his own little chamber, there to dream of the days, etc. But he woke up. A low-down reporter for another paper, also of the common or garden variety, found out that something was diddin' in the marriage line, and went snooping around after the record. He found two pages in the marriage record at the court house pasted together, and with true reportorial instinct he scented the truth. Later the torn marriage license was discovered, and the county judge admitted that he had performed the ceremony under strictest pledge of secrecy. As if this was not enough material for the little comedy in real life, Ma Feally declared her Maudie had not wedded the reporter person, and Maudie supported Ma. Incidentally, it cropped out later that Maudie has a regular job in the way of supporting Ma, and that it was the prospective loss of her meal ticket that led Ma to object so strenuously to the wedding. At last a regular high grade journalist was turned loose on the job, and what he didn't discover he invented, and the papers fairly reeked with red ink and half-tone cuts for several days. It was up to the reporter person to do something, and he wrote Maudie a real cute little note, in which he said: "Maudie, I love you; come and share my hall room, or my lawyer will call on you." Well, Maudie has a rather comfy home of her very own, where she lives with Ma and Ma's own husband, and so she didn't burn up any pavement hurrying away to join the reporter at his humble but necessary boarding house. At this juncture, the journalist gave up the chase; the real reporters were already busy on something else, and at last accounts Maude was playing a stunt at Elitch's Garden, doing Mary Tudor in "When Knighthood Was in Flower." She will be on the road again next winter, and it's a cinch she has exploded one of the illusions of life.

From Richard Mansfield's sick room come many conflicting reports, but the fact that he has been taken to his home is comforting to his friends, who earnestly hope for his complete recovery. The illness from which he has suffered is the best possible answer to the carpers who had pursued him with such venomous persistency during the last two or three seasons of his activity. It is now admitted that Mr. Mansfield had voluntarily placed himself under a most terrific strain and that he was able to withstand the pressure as long as he did is a matter for wonder. He accomplished more than any other actor of his time in the way of creations. For at least eight years he had essayed one new and important production each year, at the same time retaining all he had done before, so that he was not only carrying the load of the play he was offering as his novelty for the season, but of all the others he had mastered before. This proved too much for his physical powers and he broke down. He had set a time for his retirement, but did not reach it. Some five years ago, while chatting in a friendly and general way with this department of The Bee, Mr. Mansfield referred to his efforts and spoke of the time, which he felt was not far away, when his strength would not permit him to carry more than one or two plays. "I am doing what I can while I have the strength and the courage to do it," he said. On being rallied about this he pointedly said he knew his physical limitations, and doubted his ability to achieve a great deal more than he already had, but would keep on to the end. This he did, with fine courage and determination, and his collapse found him doing what many consider his greatest work in the fantastic "Pere Gynt." He had striven for artistic rather than popular success and had given many evidences of his fine ability. No modern actor had evoked the discussion engendered by Mansfield as Brutus, as Ivan, as Don Carlos or as Pere Gynt. He was praised inordinately and was condemned unsparingly. But through it all he clung to his ideal, and when his exhausted strength would carry him no further he had not lowered his colors. Richard Mansfield has many loyal friends and admirers who have watched with anxious solicitude during his sickness and who are glad that he shows symptoms of recovery.

The injection of vaudeville into life along the "tall grass" circuit is another departure for the coming season. It is announced from Chicago that the managerial organization controlling the theaters in the smaller towns of the west and northwest propose to give over three nights of every week to vaudeville. Just what effect this will have on the game, except to create a stronger demand for the services of vadeville performers is not apparent on the surface. That it will increase the opportunity for sketch teams and such like is sure.

Omaha friends of Carl Eckstrom will be glad to know he is to get his opportunity during the coming season. He is to have Wright Lorimer's part of David in "The Shepherd King," and will be featured in the piece. Between being "featured" and being "starred" is a difference so subtle that one must be an expert in the ethics of the stage to detect it. Mr. Eckstrom's name will be seen in large letters on the bill boards, and on the stage he will attract quite as much attention as if he were labeled a star instead of merely a feature. Last season, when Mr. Lorimer broke down, Mr. Eckstrom, who had been playing Jonathan, took the lead role, and was much commended for his excellent acting. It was due to Mr. Lorimer's sickness that the play was not seen in Omaha last season. In all probability it will be presented here during the coming winter, and Mr. Eckstrom's friends will be given an opportunity to see just how far he has progressed in his profession.

Dolly Davis is to go into vaudeville. She will be with George W. Leslie in a sketch called "Chums." The outline of the skit indicates that it is right in line with Miss Davis' talent and will give her a fine opportunity.

Roland Burke Hennessey has signed with Wright Lorimer for a term of years, but not, as you might imagine, as press agent or publicity promoter or anything like that. He is to be "literary adviser." The salary check will look just as good to Mr. Hennessey.

Coming Events.

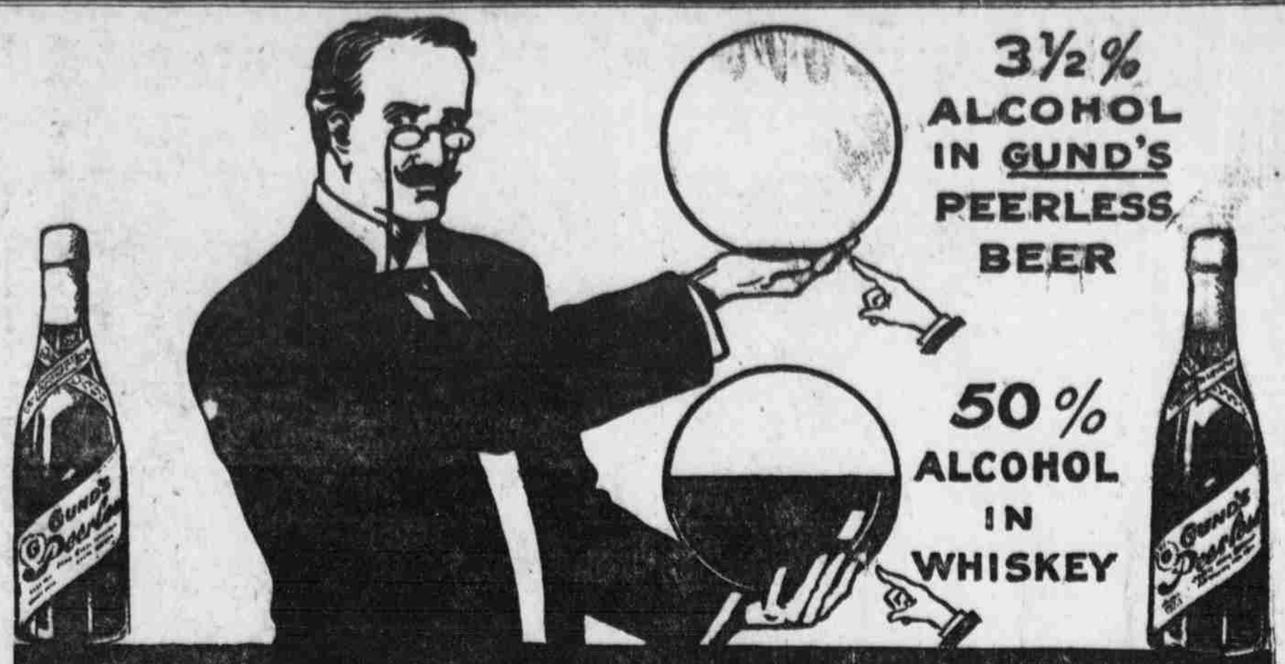
The first attraction at the Boyd theater for the season will be the William H. West Minstrel company, under direction of Sanford B. Ricaby, which will be offered for a matinee and evening performance on Sunday, September 1. This organization is well known here, having been seen annually at the Boyd for several years. Mr. Ricaby has kept it up to a high standard at all times, and this season promises all that has made it a popular success in the past. It is especially strong in the way of vocalists, and its comedians and dancers are of the best. Its vaudeville features are strong. The engagement is for the two performances only.

The formal opening of the dramatic season at Boyd's theater will occur next Monday, when Walter N. Lawrence will present "The Three of Us," with a company that comes direct from New York. There is no doubt but Miss Crothers' play is one of the most original and enjoyable seen in years. Its characters are those seen every day in a mining camp, where hopes are fluctuating—now high, now low—and an hour or day may bring fortune or ruin. It is in such a place that Rhy Macchesney has toiled for years to keep herself and her two younger brothers on a mere shadow of an income. She steadfastly refuses to sell the mine their father left them, because some day, she feels sure, it will make them all rich. The elder brother, at the cub age when every boy needs stern discipling, has great dreams; he yearns to be a train robber, but gains the money he craves by eavesdropping when Rhy's lover tells her of the value of their mine and sells the secret to an unscrupulous admirer of the girl. Bound by a promise into which this reprobate has tricked her, Rhy is placed in the position of having betrayed the secret. She goes to his quarters at midnight to beg her release, and is there surprised by her lover. This scene the author, Miss Rachel Crothers, has treated in a new and surprisingly effective manner; the upshot of it shows how extremely capable of self-protection is a certain type of girl today. Matinees will be given on Labor day and on Wednesday. The sale of seats opens on Thursday, August 29.

Something new is the cry of the theatergoer all over the country and this year Kilroy & Britton have something new for those who patronize the Krug theater. A melodramatic production of the scenic kind, a play filled with powerful scenes, stirring action and dialogue relieved by a chorus of pretty young women presenting a series of special music, written for the play and scintillating comedy is what Lem B. Parker includes in the new novelty melodrama, "The Cowboy Girl," which comes to the Krug theater for four days, starting Sunday matinee today.

It will seem like clasping hands with an old friend to greet "Quincy Adams Sawyer," that clean, wholesome and thoroughly entertaining play, when it comes again to the Krug theater next Thursday for four performances. The story, the characters, scenes and situations of the bucolic drama are so familiar now as to need no further description. Those who did not see the play when presented here before have at least heard all about it, for seldom has anything been presented to this city that left such a good impression. Since "Quincy Adams Sawyer" was last given here, it has had its famous run at the Academy of Music in New York, where it packed the theater to its utmost capacity.

The Orpheum will drop into line to fill its popular place among local theaters next Sunday, September 1. The box office will be opened tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock. The most notable change in the policy of the house will be the number of performances given weekly. Last season it was ten, while this season it will be fourteen, a matinee and evening performance daily. The old billing phrase, "modern vaudeville," has been dropped and in its stead has been established that of "advanced vaudeville," which General Manager Beck says defines a purpose that was adhered to in making the bookings for the coming season in a manner that resulted in the engagement of a most excellent line of attractions. Over $4,000 of Orpheum money has been used up during the summer season beautifying the interior of the theater, which, it is safe to assert, now possesses one of the handsomest interiors of any western play house. The color scheme pursued was ivory and old rose, while most of the ornaments are wrought in floral design. The lyre was also extensively used in the ornamentation, while figures representing comedy and tragedy greet the eye upon entry to the lobby. Charles Gossa painted six sets of scenery during the time the house was closed and plans to add several more right away. During the last week numerous inquiries by mail, on the telephone and at the box office were made relative to the reservation of seats for some particular performance each week, which probably resulted from the uniformly big business and many disappointed late comers last season. As heretofore, patrons may have seats reserved for a particular performance each week until 7 o'clock in the evening on which the tickets are dated for.



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Recent Progress in Field of Electricity

Telegraphy in China.

SOME nine years ago the central government of China took over a moribund system of telegraphy run by a private company through a small section of the empire. Reconstruction of the system was very slow for obvious reasons, but it now has reached a fair degree of efficiency, and is paying liberal dividends to the government and the shareholders permitted to retain their holdings at the time of the conversion. An official report shows that the total receipts of the system for last year were $1,597,176, United States gold, and the expenses $951,639. According to the showing the gross profits for the year were $646,537, and that, too, from a working capital of $1,322,000. And after paying the government royalty of $129,977 the administration was still able to pay the private shareholders a dividend of 10 per cent; all of which goes to show that the telegraph, like the railways, has come to be regarded by the Chinese as a public necessity, and likewise the telegraph, like the railway, has a great future in China.

The telephone also, while still in an undeveloped state, is destined to play an important part in the development of the new China. Wherever the telephone has been used by the Chinese it has made a lasting place for itself, and at the present writing there are many systems in various parts of the empire being talked of and organized, many of which are certain to be installed, and since the Chinese do not manufacture telephonic or telegraphic supplies, there should, in the near future, be an extensive market in China for this line of goods.

Electrically Driven Pendulum.

An electrically driven pendulum should, according to the statement of Herr Lippman, the famous German inventor, fulfill the following conditions: The restitution of kinetic energy should take place when the energy is all kinetic, i. e., when the pendulum passes through the vertical; the "electric stiking" should be abolished, i. e., the adhesion betwen two points at which the circuit is broken; the equal swings of the pendulum must not be disturbed by the electric contact; and the quantity of energy imparted at every oscillation must be constant and independent of the state of the battery.

Most of these conditions are fulfilled by a pendulum designed by the above inventor. A permanent horseshoe magnet is attached to the bob of the pendulum, and one arm of it passes at every swing into a coil through which a constant quantity of electricity is sent just at the moment at which the pendulum is passing through the vertical.

The manner in which the constant quantity of electricity is obtained from a possibly inconstant battery is very ingenious. A balancing arm bears at its ends two coils which fill up the spaces between the poles of two horseshoe magnets. The arm is of soft iron, and when a current traverses either of the coils it becomes the motor coil and receives the current from the battery. It is attracted by the electromagnet against the force of a spring, and thus brings about a definite displacement of the other coil in its magnetic field. The induced current caused by this displacement traverses the coil which receives the magnet attached to the bob, and this gives to the latter the impulse required.

With a strength of ten volts, the current required is only of the order of a milliampere, and the amount of zinc consumed in a whole year will not exceed twenty grammes. Even so, however, the efficiency of the apparatus is amazing, considering that the power required is only a forty-millionth of a horse power.

Wireless Telephony.

A recent demonstration in New York City of the possibility of telephonic communication without wires directs attention afresh to a line of experiment to which much study has been devoted in the last five or six years. It also emphasizes the limitations to which the art must obviously be subject, even thought great improvements should, as is probabe, be effected.

At present it is practicable in the metropolis for people who use the device which Bell gave to the world to conduct many thousand conversations at the same identical instant, relates the New York Tribune. The number could be increased indefinitely, too, by supplying the necessary wires and operators. For the other system of telephony a single conductor, the ether, must serve. It is not incredible, inded, it is highly probable, that eventually the way will be found to utilize this solitary resource for several telephonic messages at one time. Tuning, on which Marconi, Fessenden and other electricians have proposed to rely to prevent interference in wireless telegraphy, may yield equally satisfactory results in wireless telephony. No one is yet bold or learned enough, however, to say how many different wave frequencies it will prove feasible to employ simultaneously. Perhaps the assortment will never exceed six or eight, but in any case the restriction will put wireless telephony at an enormous disadvantage as compared with ordinary telephony. The embarrassment will be aggravated, moreover, by the necessity for sharing with wireless telegraphy the use of the same conductor. The success of a local exhibition of the wireless telephone the other evening was impaired, for instance, by an invasion of Hertz waves from the Brooklyn navy yard and at least one other wireless telegraph station a few miles further away.

Thus far the distance covered by the new system of communication has been insignificant. On the occasion just referred to it did not exceed a quarter of a mile. Both by improvements in the apparatus employed and an increase in the power of the wave generators, it should be possible greatly to extend the range. Still, it is too soon to cherish any but modest expectations on this score. One of the American electricians who are at work on the invention thinks it reasonable to hope that transmission by wireless telephony will ultimately be increased to "one-third to one-half the distance covered by wireless telegraphy." Well, if the latter is going to prove superior in that respect to the former, it ought to prove such a formidable rival as to secure most of the business were both to operate in the same field. The outlook for wireless telephony, therefore, is not exactly encouraging.

Electric Steering Gear.

Messrs. Siemens Brothers have a new electric control for steering-gear for paper mills. The equipment consists essentially of two parts. There is the mechanism in connection with the steering engine. At each of these two stations there is an electric motor, the two motors being electrically connected by a flexible cable. The steering-wheel is mounted on a standard, and when it is turned by the steersman it causes a vertical shaft to revolve. The vertical shaft carries at its lower end the lower bevel wheel of the differential hunting switch. The upper bevel wheel of this switch is operated by the motor, through worm gearing, and the smaller bevel wheel is connected to and operates the switchgear. The small bevel wheel therefore rotates when the steering-wheel is turned, contact is made between the controlling station, the actuating station and the ship's generating station, and the apparatus begins to work. The apparatus is brought automatically to rest.

Electrical Novelties.

An electric elevator has been installed in the cathedral at Berlin for the exclusive use of Emperor William of Germany. A private elevator in a church is an innovation.

Lewis R. Wheeler of Tacoma, Wash., has invented an electric device for use in tuning musical instruments, or for general use in indicating the pitch or frequency of vibration of sounds.

The electric luncheon is already quite fashoinable in New York. Many a hostess pours tea for her guests from an electric teapot and serves after dinner coffee from an electric percolator. After the theater a light lunch is prepared in the electric chafing dish.

An anti-seasick chair has been invented by Dr. Breudel. The seat of the chair is kept in constant motion by a small electric motor, the short motions of the chair seat relieving the sickening swing of the boat.

Music, conversation and telegraphic signals have been successfully transmitted by wireless methods and heard through an ordinary telephone receiver. Dr. Lee DeForest recntly gave a successful demonstration in New York.

A large railroad company has adopted an automatic pumping outfit for filling locomotive water tanks. The work is done by electric motors and when the water falls to a certain level the pump starts automatically and stops when the tank is full.

An instantaneous electric water heater has been perfected. The heater is about twenty inches long from inlet to delivery pipes. A few seconds after turning the switch hot water can be drawn from the top of the heater. The cost of a pail of hot water is about 1-10 of a cent.

Abandoned the Struggle.

"Didn't you ever have any ambition in life?" asked the austere matron standing in the kitchen door.

"Wunst, ma'am," said Tuffold Knutt, sighing deeply. "I have not allus led this butterfly existence. Many years ago, ma'am, I tried to raise a pair o' side whiskers, but they wouldn't grow. Since then I hain't had no heart to do anything."

This mournful story failing to awaken her sympathies, he shambled on to the next house.—Chicago Tribune.

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