

# Gallery Gods and Their Guardians



W. H. WARREN, THE CHESTERFIELD OF THE NEW BOYD.

**W**ITH the row of dazzling footlights and its parallel row of scarcely less dazzling bald crowns far below him and with the sham sky very near above him, the gallery god, arbiter of an actor's fate, sits every night to pass judgment upon all whom inclination and the theatrical trusts may bring before him.

He is an old institution and he knows that his power is recognized. He refrains from lighting his cigarette indoors and he removes his head covering the moment the ticket taker pounds gently on the back seat, but he does these things because they are part of the code of etiquette for his exalted tribunal and are to be respected just as is the "hear ye, hear ye" of the district court room.

In London and some other cities of the old world the patrons of the gallery line up before the theater doors as early as 5 o'clock in the evening and they bring lunches and liter-

ature with them to while away the long hours of waiting. The American god cannot spare that much time. He knows that the gallery doors open at 7:15 so he goes at 7:35. If he goes a minute earlier he is the first one there, but within five minutes other deities have arrived and become so numerous that the line behind him extends far around into the alley. When the door opens this line carries him inward and upward as would a wave and at the middle landing of the half dozen flights of steps he buys his ticket by the same dexterous method that the postal clerk on a fast mail train collects a pouch at a country station where the engine only whistles the crossings.

## The Role of Gallery Gods.

Reaching the summit, he thrusts his cardboard into the waiting palm of the ticket taker and begins a descent on the other side. The descent takes him as far as the front row of the gallery, or as near the front row as he can get. He scrambles over other gods' legs without hesitation and without apology and when he is seated he buys peanuts, popcorn or chewing gum and is ready for the show to begin.

If it proves operatic in its tendency he wearies and wishes he hadn't come. If it's a problem play he frowns at the blind idiocy of the woman who didn't know any better than to go wrong, and condemns her on the spot. If it is a melodrama he waits in breathless silence for heroic Pauline to outwit the crafty villain who conspires for her papa's coin, and applauds vociferously when she makes good. Her lover, too, will get the encouraging hand if he prove manly enough to wade through seas of blood and mountains of fire for her, or for his aged mother, or for his sister's honor, but if he have not the courage for this, or if he betray even by his laugh the faintest trace of femininity, the gallery god promptly catalogues him as "punk" and will have none of him.

If the play is tragic, he wants it tragic from pest to wire, and somebody has to die every thirty-seven seconds to keep him properly in touch. If it is Irish comedy, he doesn't care whether there is any plot at all—he asks is fast business, plenty of red whiskers and trousers that bag all over. If it is musical farce he demands that a soubrette with black hose and frisky heels be the first one on and the last one off, and that she say smarter things than anybody else in the piece, and that somebody sing something about his 'mother deah,' or his old New Hampshire home, or the green back yards of Indianapolis, every little bit. If it is burlesque, he will applaud when it is good and sometimes when it is



L. C. ST. CYR, GALLERY WATCHMEN



W. BAILEY, AND TICKET SELLERS AT THE CREIGHTON ORPHEUM THEATER.



EUGENE BROWN.

merely vulgar. If it is a production by local talent he will laugh every time anybody makes a "crack" at people he knows; and if it is a lecture, he will most likely take his hat and "sneak for the door."

## How He Handles Vaudeville.

At the vaudeville theater it is the same way. For vaudeville is only homeopathic doses of the legitimate, hunched like the bottles in a traveler's medicine case. The acrobatic young woman in flaming tights and the man who used to be Patti's tenor are all the same to him—all he asks is that they do their respective "stunts" well, and not to be too long about it.

Those who have never soared to the lofty pinnacle of the gallery gods have but vague conception of the appearance of the place. Its acoustics are good, at least in Boyd's or the Orpheum, but the rear seat is at least a half-block from the performers. The seats pyramid as abruptly as the cellar steps under a farm house, but they are broad and comfortable. On them the god may recline or sit, just as he chooses, providing the crowd is not too large. In New York the habitues from a certain district have a terrifying way of dashing into the gallery in football formation, but the Omaha Alpine climbers have the reputation of being more decorous and the only call for

a policeman this winter was necessitated by a stockman from Wahoo, who was overburdened with the juice of joyousness and grew too enthusiastic over a soloist to wait for her to finish the song. The management of the Orpheum has taken the precaution, however, to place upon the walls this offer: "Five dollars reward for reporting to the office anyone who hisses or mars an act during performance." Also there is the information that "Whistling and stamping of feet are strictly prohibited." But if the gallery god is to be forever criticised for what he does do, he must also have some praise for what he doesn't do, as the heads below furnish an almost irresistible and constant temptation to drop things over the balustrade.

## What the Gods Look Like.

Sunday nights are the big nights in the gallery, with Saturday nights a lagging second. The personnel is heterogeneous and a part of it is dusky, but it includes some clerks and others who cannot afford habitual attendance at the downstairs prices, yet who are considered very competent critics by theatrical folk. And they are critics to be respected and given attention, too. No player in drama or comedy feels that he or she can afford to ignore the gallery, though the receipts from that

quarter will not represent at the prevailing prices of 10 and 25 cents more than 5 or 10 per cent of the gross earnings of the house. Clara Morris, who is off the stage now and, therefore, can afford to tell just what she believes, has said: "After the play, the actor turns most anxiously to the press, but while the play is on he fears most the inexorable gallery."

The capacity of the Boyd gallery is given as 700, and that of the Orpheum as 900. The price of seats never changes except on rare occasions, such as the visit of Irving or Bernhardt, when they were jacked-up to \$1. The privileges of the place do not include smoking, but when no women are forced up there by circumstances the god may remove not only his hat and coat, but his collar and any other uncomfortable garment that wouldn't be so conspicuous in its absence as to occasion disturbance among those occupying neighboring sections of his "divan," "roost," or "perch," as they are commonly referred to.

At a banquet that followed the "Lamb's Gambol" in Chicago, not long ago, a prominent actor is reported to have proposed this toast: "To the 'top of the house!' Perhaps it's as high as our prayers for success ever go—and perhaps it's as high as they need to."

## Last Words from Baldwin Before the Long Arctic Night

By Evelyn Briggs Baldwin, (Commander Baldwin-Zeigler Polar Expedition.)

(The Baldwin-Zeigler Polar expedition begins its northward march over the ice in the early part of April. It is the hope of Mr. Baldwin, who is in command, that they reach the pole within the next four months. The following article was prepared by him shortly after his first winter camp was established on Alger island and was sent back with the last word that has reached civilization since his departure. It gives the latest news to be had of his expedition for some time to come, together with his plans for the long winter night through which they have just passed.)

**L**IFE within 600 miles of the north pole has little attraction for the man who likes the comfort, the pleasures and the warmth of a home, but our party did not seek these regions as a resort, and, consequently we shall not be disappointed with our surroundings. I must say that conditions have not been so bad, thus far, as we expected to find them, though we had to brave many dangers and pass through several trying experiences on our way up to and through the channels of the Franz Josef group of islands.

I remember reading the story of Kane's expeditions, and the part which tells of his struggles through the long Arctic night is most horrible. His equipment was of the poorest, most of his dogs died of bad food, every one of his men was dreadfully afflicted with the scurvy, snow blindness, frostbite and all sorts of kindred ills.

"I feel that we are fighting the battle of life at a disadvantage," he wrote, "and that an Arctic day and an Arctic night ago a man more rapidly and harshly than a year anywhere else in this weary world."

Now, of course, we shall not have any such experience to relate when we return to civilization. Indeed, I am afraid we shall feel that all the glory of extreme suffering belongs to previous explorers and that we shall have very little to write about, unless we actually reach the pole. For the whole expedition, I wish to say that down to the present our experiences have not been remarkable. Save for an occasional sickness and two or three slight accidents, every man has been in good condition. I was unfortunate enough to slip and fall one day while out hunting polar bear and was confined to my cabin for a day or two. Otherwise, I have had excellent health. We have been able to store away a large part of our provisions at different camps and our dogs have survived in a much larger proportion than was the fortune of any

previous expedition. We have lost very few of the original pack of 427.

The chief reason for all these good reports is simple enough. We are equipped with the very best supplies possible to secure—enough to last us twice as long as we expect we shall need them. Indeed, everything was done before we left civilization to make our stay in the Arctic not a bit more disagreeable than a winter in Labrador.

From the time of our arrival at Cape Flora and the meeting with our supply ship, the Frithjof, we have been busy making a suitable base of supplies at Camp Zeigler on Alger island and in establishing another temporary camp farther up the channel. By degrees we shall make progress northward until the hardening of the ice pans and the coming of the long night shall compel us to establish a final winter camp. This we hope will be well beyond

the 81st parallel. The labor of moving forward is very difficult. Supplies have to be taken here and there and stored at convenient stages. Our very large equipment has increased our present troubles, a thought which is not so unpleasant when we think of the future that these supplies will make pleasant and agreeable.

## Our Thrilling Experience.

Our most thrilling experience in moving our stores and dogs occurred just before the Frithjof departed. We were making our first Arctic camp on Alger island, had already successfully landed four boats of dogs and had returned to the America for the fifth and sixth loads.

In addition to the dogs going ashore this time several additional members of the party took their places in the boats. We had no sooner cast off the lines from the steamer when I noticed that the tide had set in and was running very rapidly in the

opposite direction to which we were trying to go, while the wind had risen and was ruffling the water in a threatening manner. We began to be carried away from the ship and the shore and I immediately gave the order to return to the America. All hands labored hard at the cars, but to no effect.

Realizing our position, we made known our danger by the blowing of the boat-swain's whistle and making other signals of distress. A light boat put out from the America, but the two men in it were of little help in stopping the drift of two heavily loaded whaleboats. In a short time all three boats were being driven rapidly away. There were no more available boats on the America and nearly all the rest of the expedition members were on shore. Two boats from Frithjof, our supply ship, were at the time discharging loads of walrus meat at the selected camp, and, in response to our repeated signals

of distress, one of these boats came to our rescue. All four boats fastened together then attempted to stem the tide, but it did not take more than a moment or two to convince us that the combined efforts of all at the oars were powerless.

There were now twenty men and more than a hundred dogs adrift at the mercy of the waves. We signaled again and again, hoping to bring the one remaining whaleboat to aid us. We could see that its men unloaded their cargo of walrus meat as rapidly as possible, but, instead of coming toward us, they pulled toward the Frithjof. For a moment we could not understand the situation. Presently the curling smoke from the funnel of the supply ship made it clear. Watchful Captain Kjeldsen was on the bridge and as he passed to and fro it could be seen that he had his eyes on us, and, although the anchors of both our steamers were deep in sand, we knew that the Frithjof would come to us as soon as the men from the returning boat could weigh its anchor. As for the America no help was to be expected from it, as there were not enough men on board to raise its anchor.

## Anxious Moments.

I could not help glancing frequently toward the one remaining boat, as from my position in the stern of the last heavily laden whaleboat I observed the strokes of the oars as the sturdy Norwegians pulled toward the Frithjof. But soon the men on the steamer were seen rapidly bending at the windlass as they heave the anchor. The Frithjof, too, swung to and fro, as evidently it endeavored to assist the men to raise the heavy weight from the sand beneath the angry waters. At last its stately masts and the crows' nest changed places with the objects on the shore and we knew that the Frithjof would soon be under way.

Fortunately no accident deterred it. It swung around to one side of us and got ropes to our line of boats just in time to save us from being carried into the waves, which would surely have caused serious if not fatal consequences to some of us. Even yet our danger was not over, for, although the Frithjof was under slow speed, such was the strength of wind and tide against us that it seemed for a moment that our small craft would fairly be jerked to pieces. The last boat in the line, in which I sat, caught a heavy wave on one side and was thrown so violently about that we felt that nothing could save us from capsizing. We were the cracker of a long whip.

The lines were of strong material, however, and did not give way. The dogs, like



Ray Goodhue. Charles Connor. Saville Butler. Belle Horton. Omar Horton. Vera Gates. George Connor. Fred Young. Emma Goodhue. Don Catchadall. Ada Patterson. Alfreda King. CHILDREN WHO "CAKE WALKED" FOR BENEFIT OF SUPERIOR (Neb.) PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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