

Amusements

Only one feature worthy of note marked the week theatrically in Omaha, the appearance of the Gordon-Shay Grand Opera company. This organization came unheralded, all but unknown—although some of the individual members had been to Omaha before—and merely slipped in to fill a vacancy left in the bookings at the Boyd by the sudden and serious illness of Mrs. Minnie Tittel Bruno. Some apprehension as to the success of the engagement was felt, owing to the shortness of the announcement and the well known indifference of Omaha people to anything musical that does not bear the hall mark of greatness. Curiosity as much as anything else drew a fair audience to the opening performance, at which "Faust" was given. This one performance, in spite of apparent shortcomings, fairly established the company in Omaha and the matinee on Thursday drew much better, while the evening performance of "Carmen" was a veritable triumph. Miss Rose Cecilia Eby, the soprano, winning one of the most enthusiastic and spontaneous ovations ever given in the city, while the whole company shared in the applause. This is a decided victory for art, both for the company and the city, and local musicians feel that better days are dawning. None of the other attractions at the Boyd was of a character to command more than passing notice. At the Orpheum a very good bill, with a single exception, which has already been noted, entertained the patrons of this house. So far there is no evidence that vaudeville is losing any point of popularity in Omaha.

Some superstitious patriots have taken objection to the recent criticism of "Alice of Old Vincennes" insisting that the sentiment of the play is both lofty and noble, and that it serves as an excellent illustration of the spirit that animated the Americans of 1776 in their efforts to throw off the British yoke. With all due respect for the opinions of these purveyors of the dramatic critic of The Bee must demur to their propositions. It is just because of a wholesome respect for the spirit that moved the colonists in their resistance to the decrees of George III and his advisers that the parodying of the cheap and tawdry wares of the patriotic novel type are rejected. One of the most regrettable features of the Yanko-Spanko war is the fact that, while its duration was too short to produce and its animus too uncertain to inspire a Francis Scott Key or a Julia Ward Howe, it did give birth to an intolerable list of intolerable gush in the form of "old flag" novels and "mother" songs. And these are being dinned at us from the stage in the guise of "revolutionary" or "patriotic romance" until the sober-minded citizen is disgusted with a condition that allows the cheap and tawdry wares of the patriotic novel type to be subjected to the same treatment as the best of our literature. Another horror threatens us in the line of book plays. Having apparently exhausted the possibilities of the modern "successes" both in the "historic" and the "romantic" type of novels, having scoured the field of foreign fiction again and again for a story or a plot, the playwright has turned at last to a forgotten era of American literature, and unless serious indications are wrong, has unearthed what the critics call "a true Assurance vein," one that "runs from the grass roots to the harem." Announcements made that two aspiring dramatists are working on a play to be made on the framework of E. P. Roe's novel, "He Fell in Love with His Wife." Now that they have started on this vein, the wonder is that the writers of plays have so long overlooked the Rose novel. Certain it is that they have a rich field for an old sort of a play, society, melo, romantic, any drama you like. Rev. Dr. Roe wrote his novels while his readers waited, and turned out stories based on events of the day with a facility that makes the efforts of more modern writers seem amateurish. "Barriers Burned Away," for example, would make "The Heart of Chicago" look like not over 30 cents, while "What Can She Do" would give any of our present-day problem plays a block the start and beat it easily. Then for a pastoral drama, one that has the heart interest, the rural atmosphere and the great moral lesson with all its embellishments and side lights. Rev. Dr. Roe didn't write the theater in mind when he wrote, but he did furnish a lot of fine plots, which are now ripe for the reaper's hand, and the doctor is dead and can't protest against the metaphorical putting forth of the stickle.

Coming Events.

George Sidney will make his first appearance as a farce comedy star at the Boyd this afternoon in the comedy, "Busy Izzy." The piece and the star have been given excellent newspaper notices throughout the country. The engagement includes tonight and tomorrow night. The company numbers forty-five people, among them such well known farceurs as: Annie Martell, Fred Wyckoff, Florence Akeley, Edward Clark, Lisle Bloodgood, Dennis Sullivan, Vestal, and the judging of Normans. The comedy is in two acts. The first represents a department store owned by Izzy Marks and the second a summer hotel at the seashore. Like in all farce comedies, there is little or no plot, but everything depends on the cleverness of the people. Twenty musical numbers are given, besides dancing, chorus and specialties. Mr. Sidney will be remembered as the Yiddish comedian with Ward and Vokes.

By request of the music colony of Omaha and the music-loving patrons of Boyd's theater, the Gordon-Shay Grand Opera company has been booked for a return engagement at the Boyd by Manager Burgess. The dates are Tuesday and Wednesday nights and Wednesday matinee. Four operas will be sung. Tuesday night a double bill will be given, "I Pagliacci" and "Cavalleria Rusticana." Wednesday afternoon "Il Trovatore" will be sung, and Wednesday night "Carmen" will be the attraction. Miss Shay will be heard in all the operas.

On Thursday night a star and a play new to Omaha will be introduced at Boyd's theater. The star is Katherine Willard, and the play is "The Power Behind the Throne." It is a romantic drama and is said to be interesting and full of strenuous climaxes and situations. The story of the play is as follows: Aria, the daughter of the court musician, is loved by one of the barons of the court, but he is loved by a scheming duchess, who, in order to win him from the young woman, has her parents cast into prison. To save her aged mother and father the young woman writes a letter at the dictation of the duchess, in which she describes herself as a waif. The letter is given to the baron, who gives up the girl and promises to wed the duchess. He later repents and returns to his first love, and all ends happily. Miss Willard is supported by a company numbering twenty-five very clever and experienced artists. The staging of the production is said to be very elaborate.

Funny little Frank Daniels will be seen at the Boyd in his new musical comedy, "Miss Simplicity" for three performances, starting Friday night. He will be surrounded by a cast of over 100 people, which includes Frank Turner, Douglas Flint, John Wheeler, Harry Halliday, Grafton Baker, Kate Hart, Mal Lowery, Florence Holbrook and Isabelle d'Armaque. Grace Orr Meyer is the prima donna of the company. "Miss Simplicity" is said to be the best vehicle Mr. Daniels has ever had for the display of his talents as a lavish producer. The play is said to be a thoroughly modern, up-to-date composition as to its story and environment, the atmosphere is that of the Paris of today and the costumes are for the most part pictureque variations of the very latest and most swaggy

Parisian styles. In his new role of "Blossoms" Daniels is nothing more antique than a trolley car conductor and his first stage step is to do with the latest development of modern invention, the automobile. Later he becomes the valet to a London swell of the period, who is slated for the kingship of a Zenda-like kingdom, and still later "Blossoms" becomes the substitute ruler himself. Throughout these changing conditions "Blossoms" life is a burden of large and overpowering trouble, and equally, of course, all this trouble is the material with which Frank Daniels makes his audiences laugh.

The presence of Valerie Bergere on the bill opening matinee today at the Orpheum, as far as headlines are concerned, makes it one of the most notable of the season and a perusal of the rest of the roster shows a number of names whose coming will be very agreeable. Miss Bergere's last visit to this city was in the "legitimate" and as "Madam Butterfly" she made a strong impression. She was seen here also as Cora in "Naughty Anthony," another Belasco production. In "Billie's First Love," a playette by Grace Greiveldt, she is said to do another nicely fitting vehicle, and one that affords her emotions for the application of her versatile art running the gamut, from light comedy touches at the opening to a climactic mad scene. Supporting Miss Bergere are Menifee Johnstone, as a fault-finding, love-making husband, and Miss Belle Stoddard as a heartless French actress. An acrobatic "stunt" will be contributed by the three Nevares, two brothers and a sister, who perform some difficult and daring feats, among them tricks of their own. Mehan's comedy dogs will furnish another specialty for the little folks and in fact for all classes to whom animal intelligence and cunning appeal. Josephine Sabel, the winsome and lively little woman, will have a number of songs, while a music bill of a different and unique nature will constitute the offering for the Miles Staverford quintette to make their initial bow. They hail from England. Their instrument is the banjo, with which they make use of the wooden resonators that are a peculiar feature of the English "joes." They play classical and popular numbers with a finish and attain results that are really remarkable. The Dillon Brothers are parodists who aim their efforts at the risibles. Entirely new moving pictures will be projected by the kinodrome.

On the evening of December 23 Miss Mary Munchhoff, known as the Omaha girl all over the continent, gives her initial concert in her home town. Miss Munchhoff today occupies a place among the front rank of the world's singers. With her youth and the shortness of her career in public this fact is doubly remarkable and she is the first American born singer who has scored such sensational successes in Europe, and not only Omaha, but the whole United States, may therefore justly be proud of her. Mrs. Marchesi, the renowned instructor of Paris, was her teacher. The quality of her voice combines soulful sweetness with that peculiar vibrating penetrativeness of a Stradivarius violin, and it is said by eminent critics both here and abroad that her high notes are of a golden purity and beauty of sound. In her voice the echoes of the most flourishing epoch of Italian vocal art are reawakened. It is no small achievement for Miss Munchhoff to have gained recognition and fame in a country where hitherto the branch of coloratura singing was not considered the highest form of vocal art, but in this country, Germany, where many looked upon it as a trick, Miss Munchhoff can claim the distinction of having raised it to the proud dignity of an art and many of the most influential critics today consider her the leading exponent of the art, not excepting Melba, Sembrich and Nevada.

The appearance of Arthur Hochman at the Kountze Memorial church on Friday evening, December 19, will be an event of note. He is now creating a great furor in the east. Mr. Hochman has just returned to a great expense in bringing this great artist to Omaha. August Spanuth, one of New York's greatest critics, says: "Aside from Paderewski and Joseph Hoffman, Arthur Hochman is the pianistic success of the season." Hochman's program will consist of works from Tschekowky, Saint Saens, Brahms, Sauer, Chopin and Liszt. The reserved sale of seats will be on sale at Mandelburg's, Sixteenth and Farnam streets.

Plays and Playlets. It is now reported that Louis Mann is having Clyde Fitch "doctor" "Hoch the Consul." How bad the play must have been if Fitch can improve it. Blanch Bates in "The Darling of the Gods" has made almost as much of a furor in New York at the Belasco theater as Mrs. Carter did in La DuBarry. Last night Isadore Rush resumed her role of Lady Holywood in the "Florodora" company now playing at Denver, replacing Eleanor Falk, who returns to New York. Eugene Hayden is playing Madge Chesington in Dan Daly's production of "The New Clown." She plays the season's principal actress with Louis Mann in "Hoch der Consul." Mr. Willard has produced the "Cardinal" in New York with much success. This is the piece he declined to play in Omaha last season, giving us "The Professor's Love Story" instead.

Musical

In connection with an article which appeared in this column last Sunday I received some letters which have gratified me very much, and one or two written by persons who either deliberately or carelessly or innocently misread the article. The article was a reminder that hard work is absolutely essential to any stage success.

One correspondent asks me to compare with the stage life the life of one who is compelled to drag through existence and struggle daily as the wife of a man, she suggests that the "hope of success" on the stage is "something, whereas the living on in a state of practical slavery to one person, the mother of children, the keeper of a household is a hopeless and cheerless task. Here she is deluded, and I am truly sorry for her, whoever she may be. But will she, can she get relief on the stage? I think not.

We never can form a correct estimate of anything if we take abnormalities for criteria. Let us then look at the normal side.

The woman who loves her family finds no drudgery in her work. "Love suffereth long and is kind." In the lexicon of love there is no such word as "drudgery" for where could the word be derived? The word call certain things "sacrifices," but love does not! What ordinarily would be sacrifices, or duties, become privileges when love is king.

Ask the successful actor or actress why

success comes. The answer will be hard work! Then ask, why work hard? The answer will be "because I love my work." If it so be that they answer not thus, then ask them why they do not give it up?

There are many people who say: "Ah, alas, we are me; were I in other circumstances I could do so much better." And then I am reminded of that line of old Horace:

"Et nihil res, non me rebus, subjungero color," which being translated almost literally means: "And I try to bend circumstances (or conditions) to myself, not myself to circumstances (or conditions)." And in a freer style the translation might read: "If I can't work out success in the sphere in which I am placed, I can't do any better proportionately in any other." Think it over.

This, you say, is a plea for letting well enough alone, a plea for contentment under all circumstances and conditions, a plea for being satisfied with one's lot, however ungenial, a plea for the stifling of honest ambitions.

"Not! Not! Far from it. It is a plea for faithfulness to that which is least!"

You remember the parable—and all the parables reflect reality—of the nobleman and his servants, and you remember these words: "And he said unto him, 'Woe! thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.'" "It is achievement on the spiritual side of things! * * * This extension is achieved, this growth toward higher things is attained by our habitual attitude of mind. It develops the trust and love and goodness; it is stunted by every envious thought, every unjust or unkind act. And then, reviewing the whole subject of what one can do even in his own present condition, we must not forget that wishing never makes things go, but a will, and a whip, and a curb, and a bit in the mouth, will make for progress. We cannot accomplish any results when we "wish" ourselves better off, but we can when we "will" such a thing. And every act of will must be preceded by faith.

As Henry Wood says: "Belief in the power within is the key which unlocks vital energy. Faith in a thing must precede its accomplishment. To stimulate belief we must open up our own possibilities and keep them in view." "Not, my timid friend, it will not make you conceited or egotistical; it will only open your eyes to what 'you' may be in your own present conditions. Remember what Horace says! And while I am on the subject of the pursuit of a will-of-the-wisp prospect, if one were situated differently, let me say a word to those who are encouraged to disparage their present work in looking for another sphere. And that word is this: "Be faithful in your present work." The successful men of the world are those who have succeeded in the burdensome toil. They have not spent their time in worrying over lost prospects or in thinking upon what might have been had they been situated differently. They are the people who have left each working sphere with the absolute knowledge that if "things took a bad turn" they could go back to their first work and find employment because it was done well. Such persons very rarely have to go back and when they do they find the position waiting for them.

Love your work! It is all an attitude of mind! And do not forget that he who is faithful in that which is least shall be made a ruler over ten cities. Anticipate the judging! Cut out all affectation! Think not of what people are saying about you! And work for the work's sake! Then you will be crowned with success. These conditions are simple and by the elect they have been found not only all-indusive, but also warranty of success.

After all, as Milton says: The mind is its own place, and in itself Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

The visit of Arthur Hochman on Friday of this week will be undoubtedly a treat to those who love the piano and its field of composition. Mr. Hochman has challenged the criticisms of the eastern critics and he has satisfied the most exacting. His temperament, technique and talent are sure to be most interesting. He will make one only appearance at the Kountze Memorial church.

Miss Mary Munchhoff will sing to a crowded house on December 23, judging from present indications. THOMAS J. KELLY.

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