

ABOUT PLAYS PLAYERS AND PLAYHOUSES

At least two things happened in Omaha during the last week that are worthy of remembrance. One of these was the visit of Joseph Murphy to the Krug theater. Here is a living exemplification of a man finding his calling. Mr. Murphy has the capacity for acting other parts, but the public really likes him in his character of the good-looking, warm-hearted Irishman, and he is as popular and successful now as he was twenty-five years ago, when his plays were new. His audiences here were large, in fact, "capacity" at every performance, and his admirers hope to see him again and again, and always in "Kerry Gow" or "Egan Rhee".

The other event was the return of Marie Watwright in a classic comedy. It is comforting to think that the Omaha people who didn't go to see this clever and charming woman in what is admittedly her best character will never know what they missed; for there is the bias of ignorance. And yet it is a shame that an artist so well known and recognized as having ability should be so poorly patronized in a city of the size and pretensions of Omaha. Not that Miss Watwright's engagement was a financial failure, but she should have been greeted by overflow houses at each performance. The merit of her acting deserved it.

Miss Watwright has long been considered the peer of any of the long list of eminent comedienne in the role of Viola. In many of its aspects it is here by nature. It is a mistake to think that she has not her capacity for the embodiment of the moods of that daintiest of Shakespearean heroines. Her girlish outlines have vanished before the march of time. It is true, and her figure has the roundness of mature age, but not to the degree that interferes with her carriage, while her voice retains its purity and its interesting quality, and her movements have the grace and sprightliness of youth, and her mind is still as active with the pure fun of girlhood as ever. She gives a most illuminating interpretation to the simple character drawn by the great poet and fully sustains the same when long ago in the role. Her support is not the best she has ever had, but each of the actors associated with her is capable of giving something like intelligence to the portrayal of the part in hand, and the result is that the performance is far above the mediocre, while Miss Watwright's own share in it is worthy to be listed among the classics.

The play that got the money during the week was "The Eternal City." Those who have the interests of the stage truly at heart will feel inclined to return devout thanks that it isn't the "eternal" Hall Caine. It is entirely to the credit of the American critics that in no city has Mr. Caine succeeded in gaining endorsement for this latest of his literary offerings. A splendid acting organization gives warmth and color of life to his creation; yet it ought not to be called by that name, for it is not a creation, but rather a collation. Mr. Caine has borrowed ideas and situations, even characters, without saying by your leave, and has projected his whole scheme against the screen of a century hence, so that he is free from danger of successful challenge on a chronological ground, for no one can forecast the conditions of the year 2001 with any more accuracy than can the Manxman. But his fault is too palpable, and he is almost inclined to forgive him on account of his temerity, were it not such a direct affront to the public intelligence. No one who has seen "La Tosca" or read "Rienzi" need ask where Mr. Caine got his inspiration for "The Eternal City." His principal characters are not identical, but they are so nearly alike that about the least of his own merit. Roma is in some of the classic aspects an improvement on Tosca, but she doesn't present the distinctly human qualities of the Sardou woman; and the two names, Scarpia and Bonelli, are so nearly alike that about the least of his own merit. Roma is in some of the classic aspects an improvement on Tosca, but she doesn't present the distinctly human qualities of the Sardou woman; and the two names, Scarpia and Bonelli, are so nearly alike that about the least of his own merit.

In the treatment of the conditions all the difference possible between a master of the art of writing for the stage and of one who is not yet out of the elementary stages of the craft may be noted. In the Sardou play we have the mobility of perfect continuity and the fluency that marks a well constructed play, frankly melodramatic, but never lame. In "The Eternal City" we get a plot that needs the constant prodding of the author to make the elementary stages of the most patent expedients are resorted to in order to complete the connection between incidents. Sardou leads up to a crushing climax, Caine gives a climax in every scene, and winds up with the flattest of flat anti-climaxes. San Angelo, that dread fortress whose gates are as forbidding as the entrance to the Inferno, is used by both as the scene for the final consummation of their plots, but what a contrast between the ends. Sardou's terrible termination comes on a gun platform in the early morning, a fitting close to the tragedy he has

brought, and a scene so impressive that it is never forgotten. Caine closes his in a loggia of the castle and deliberately upsets the entire fabric of his play by a sudden change that is characteristic of his work, his submission to a popular prejudice in favor of a happy ending. So weak is the closing scene of "The Eternal City" that it almost moves to laughter, and certainly destroys any impression of merit or strength that may have been made by what goes before it. Logic of his own facts are all in solid array against Mr. Caine's conclusion, and he has done manifest violence to his plot by his ending.

Nowhere is the contrast in methods so marked as in the death of the baron. Scarpia's end is finely dramatic, while Bonelli comes to a death such as one would look for in one of Theodore Kremer's "penny dreadfuls." Again, set over against one another the methods by which the harassed women are entangled into the denunciation of their lovers. La Tosca is tortured, the agony of her lover under the "inquiry" of the police agents, wringing from her the admission Scarpia sought; while the secrecy of the confessional is violated in order to entrap Roma in a mass of diplomatic lying and duplicity that may be brought to give the information sought by the relentless police. And what a difference in the ending of these situations. How strong and human is Scarpia's cry of triumph, "The dead to the dung heap, the living to the gallows!" while Roma merely hears the cry of despair from the holy father who discovers that it is his own son, he has put in properly. The strength of the one is lost entirely in the puerility of the other. This comparison could be carried on indefinitely, and never to the credit of Hall Caine.

Mr. Caine's earlier works were of the pure fiction; he didn't claim realism, simply contenting himself with romance, and of the kind they are excellent examples. He early won from one of England's brightest writers the remark that "Hall Caine writes at the top of his voice," and has felt constrained to maintain that reputation at all hazards. In "The Eternal City" he keeps it up with nerve-racking fidelity; every act is a shriek, and up to his final collapse, his pitch is far above the compass of the ordinary mortal. But one wonders why. Once at least Mr. Caine undertook realism, his tale of "The Christian" being admittedly aimed at the shame and abuses of London religion and politics, but his hero proved so unstable and unworthy that his argument lost force. He amended the story in some particulars when he made it over into a play, but couldn't even then resist his penchant for happy endings. His most apparent fault seems to be that while he keeps always within the range of the possible, he rarely descends to the level of the probable. Once, in "The Manxman," he got very near to humanity, Philip and Kate and Pete all breathing strong with natural emotions and impulses. But in "The Eternal City" he has gotten away to the realm of the fictitious and sticks to it with persistency.

His Italian politics of the twenty-first century bear a most striking resemblance to the conditions of the early part of the nineteenth century, the events that led up to the Garibaldi revolution being more than outlined in his projection. It may be that he has been misled by contemplation of the activity of the anarchists in Italy during the last few years, but it is hardly reasonable that he should mistake the excesses of these cruel criminals for a reflection of public sentiment. Italy was never more free than under Humbert, and yet he was marked and slaughtered by a red, not because he was a tyrant, but because he was a king. The gentle Empress Elizabeth of Austria, whose whole life was one of protest against the allegations on which anarchy rears its horrid fabric, was stabbed to death in the principal city of the oldest and most secure of republics, the one to which the oppressed and detected political agitators of Europe have long retired for sanctuary. Twice has a president of the United States and once has a president of France been stricken down by an assassin during a time of profound peace, all in furtherance of the creed of the anarchist, that protests by murder of the people's leader against the existence of order. Certainly these facts have not led Mr. Caine to the conclusion that the cause of humanity as represented by civilization is likely to retrograde, so that the conditions that made a Scarpia possible, or a Rienzi necessary, are to recur again. It is charitable to conclude that Mr. Caine's latest story and play belong to the "pot boiler" class, and have no serious purpose.

Coming Events. "Old Otsson," one of those dialect plays that never grow tiresome or old, will be the attraction at the Boyd this afternoon and evening. The company is rehearsed and directed by Ben Hendricks, who created the part, and is said to be entirely competent to the enactment of this favorite of farce comedies. Fay Davis, an actress unknown in this country until last year, but for seven seasons one of the most popular women on the London stage, will be seen at the Boyd on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and a Wednesday matinee, this week, appearing in Henry Arthur Jones' latest comedy, "Whitewashing Julia." The play was one

of the greatest successes of the English stage last season, and has recently finished a five weeks' engagement at the Garrick theater, New York. Last winter Miss Davis made a decidedly favorable impression as the leading woman of William Faversham's company, presenting "Impudence." At the beginning of this season Charles Frohman featured her in a dramatic production, "The Girl in the Blue," and George Alexander's London production, and, in fact, had never been seen on the stage anywhere but in England, she is an American girl, born in Maine and brought up in Boston.

The newest Mary Tudor is Roselle Knott. It is she who is starring in "When a Kinghood Was in Flower" this season. The play will be seen at the Boyd on Friday and Saturday evenings and at a Saturday matinee this week. Charles Major, the author of the book, pays the actress the compliment: "No one need hesitate to recommend the play as Miss Knott gives it a really great performance. There is only one word. She has beauty, strength, fire and sweetness, and all are needed in Mary. I was delighted with her." The young romantic actor, Frank Sylvester, will enact the role of Charles Brandon.

The attraction at the Krug for the first half of the week, opening with today's matinee, will be "A Ragged Hero." The scenes of this play are laid in New England and the climaxes thrillingly realistic, the comedy uproarious, the characterization natural and the ending logical and pleasing. The principal character is a "knight of the road," who has fallen from high estate as the result of the perjury of a villain who has abducted his daughter. Both he and his wayward child are redeemed before the story closes and he is instrumental as well in bringing to justice a culprit who succeeded in the early scenes of the play in fastening his crimes upon another.

Lincoln J. Carter's latest melodrama, "Too Proud to Beg," will open at the Krug for three nights and Saturday matinee, beginning next Thursday night. The heroine, who is thrown on her own resources with her two children after it is reported that her husband has been murdered for her sake, spurns the villain's advances and his offer of gold, preferring starvation and death to a lathouse marriage. The husband makes his appearance in flesh and blood after a serious illness as a result of being dragged out of a fire in which he was trapped. At this juncture his two children are stolen by the rejected suitor and the husband starts at once to find them. Being a detective he disguises himself in several different roles, locates their hiding place and rescues his babes. The cast includes Miss St. George Huseby, the Boylan children, late of the "Eight Corners" family, George Eckhart, Marie Nelson, L. F. Lorraine, Stella Boylan and many others.

"The Girl with the Auburn Hair," whose annual engagement is one of the events of the season at the Orpheum, comes to the popular vaudeville house for the week beginning matinee on Tuesday. Both of these successful singers is still withheld from all the announcements, but the beauty and impressiveness of the turn is surrounded with an air of reverence that distinguishes it from any other in vaudeville and in a large measure accounts for its phenomenal success, as it is a play, and it is a play, many people that are not regular patrons of the theater. The setting showing the interior of a magnificent cathedral is an elaborate and effective one and the grand organ pealing a rich accompaniment to the anthems of the singer makes a remarkably pleasing musical offering. Edmund Day and company, presenting "Shipmates," will be another of the principal features. This distinguished actor-writer has never appeared before at the Orpheum, although a number of his bright playettes, in other hands, have preceded him. World's trip, including Perry Ryan, Lulu Ryan and Emma Wood, are the initial bidders here. They call their play a play of novelty and surprise. Stinging and dancing is a salient feature of their work. Josephine Gassman, a favorite here, and her three pickaninies will contribute comedy, dance and song. The well known comedienne, Lottie Wilson, renders German dialect songs and stories, while Gillman and Murray are a pair of lively singing comedians. The kinodrome pictures will be entirely new.

George Winter came in from the road on Tuesday and will be in Omaha most of the time until the opening of the Ferris summer stock season. Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin expect to sail from New York for England on May 20, and on June 1 will leave Paris for an automobile trip of eight weeks. It is now definitely announced that Mr. Mansfield will open the season at the New Amsterdam theater, New York in a dramatic version of "Parafal" next fall. Omaha will have plenty of opportunity to judge of the merits of "Parafal" in good season. Walter Damrosch and his company will interpret the music of the opera in April and next season Mr. Mansfield will offer the play and the Savage English Opera company will give the opera in English.

Ben Greet is now quoting Ben Johnson to discredit the New York critic who didn't praise his production of "Twelfth Night" as "Shakespeare would have done it." Ben Greet's idea of Shakespeare without scenery is very nice, but isn't at all popular. His excellent company of players has proven potent to recapture twentieth century people to sixteenth century environments. Henry W. Savage has leased the Garden theater in New York, the Frohman lease having expired, and will devote it to vaudeville in the future. This will give New York a permanent home for opera in English, which Savage has made so popular here. Manager Charley and his French opera company got as far as Baltimore on their tour last week, but were not the "ghost" for the singers haven't seen that individual since the company went out, but quietly succeeded to the fact that the American people would rather pay to hear a Patti post-mortem than a real live singer. Fritz Schramm awaits the surprise of the season so far. It was expected that she would be clever in musical comedy, but her best friend looked for the immense success she has achieved. She has more than made good. Nat Goodwin threatens to get a Jap for a valet now. His Englishman robbed him of his valet every night, and the good Goodwin was forced to have his man locked up, but couldn't give up his valet. He would like to see the thief get away with only a nominal punishment.

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MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

Pardon the retrospective thoughts of one who loves his former home. This is the first Sunday morning after the commemoration of the day which is called after the sweet St. Patrick. Fritz Schramm awaits on the music of that beautiful country which always smiles through her tears and which is enshrined in the hearts of thousands of Americans with a love and a veneration which amounts to a religion.

Ab, beloved, when you have heard the beautiful and successful comedienne at the vaudeville show, who wear red whiskers and outlandish gear, think not that you have seen anything Irish. When you have heard the "Ballyhooley" type of song, call it not a touch of Erin. Let us walk in that beautiful vale of Avoca this morning and see where these three rivers meet in peace and tranquility and then let us hear the poet sing. Or would you take a glance at yonder young minstrel who is pouring out the burden of his lovelorn soul to his fair one, for whose sake he has forsaken the great cities, such as the "arbustus by the borders of Lene."

And there, the old castle, what memories! How strange it all seems! Castles in Ireland. (Why, you say, methought there was nothing there save peat, potatoes and porridge.) Old ruins, how many tales could you tell of those who loved you in the days when Valor, Love and Wit walked together and held sweet concourse. How many songs of hope and of courage and of faith have rung through your senses.

Land of song, of melody, of poetry, of art, of religion, of beauty, what would I not give this morning to listen to the music of thy heartbeats, with my cheek resting on thy cloak so green! Thank God for thee!

With joy and gladness we look forward to the advent of Mr. Walter Damrosch and his superb orchestra in the concert production of "Parafal," which is announced to take place at the Boyd on April 11.

The wave of interest in this great music-drama of the great Richard Wagner, which swept the continent from north and south, east and west, has found its way to Omaha, and will scatter some of its force on a receptive shore. Mr. Damrosch is always a favorite in this part of the country. Some of us remember with great pleasure his fascinating lectures on the music-drama which he gave here about nine or ten years ago. His clear, impressive style, his easy, unaffected manner and his thorough knowledge of his subject make him a delightful and explicit teacher. Add to this his capable conducting, his splendid body of instrumentalists and a well chosen group of singers, and methinks there is ample prospect for a good musical affair which will interest, attract and enliven, and which will give the hungering ones something to think upon and look forward to.

The Bee always takes delight in welcoming to Omaha recently disposed musicians, and it is with a glad and cordial welcome that we greet the coming of Mrs. Schumann-Heink, who will be here until the 25th of next week. Mrs. Schumann-Heink is a violinist of marked ability and possessed with a very musical mentality. She played at the Woman's club on Friday morning and made a profound impression by her artistic and musicality work.

Mrs. Schumann-Heink will sing at Lincoln Monday night of next week, March 22. And she will not sing in Omaha. There is a club of energetic, ambitious and fearless musical women in Lincoln. It is called the "Matinee Musicale."

Mrs. Schumann-Heink, one of the world's best singers, will appear under the auspices of this club in Lincoln. Why will she not appear in Omaha?

In connection with this recital by Mrs. Schumann-Heink I feel obliged to recognize thus publicly a splendid idea of Mr. Wolfsohn's, the New York manager. I received in this morning's mail, over a week before the recital, a circular announcing the artist and her accompanist, Miss Josephine Hartmann, and not a word of the usual gush on the inside pages, as to Mrs. Schumann-Heink's great popularity, her numerous appearances before so-called royalty and titled nobilities, alleged, (all of which amuses me when I see it used as an inducement to Americans). But instead, the program, and the words of the songs appeared in both German and English. This is up-to-date artistic advertising.

Things are going as merrily as a "Bridal Bell" out at the Church of the Good Shepherd. They are figuring with several eastern firms with regard to installing a fine pipe organ. And I am told that the music of the church has been excellent of late.

On Wednesday evening of this week the choir of Trinity Cathedral, under the direction of Mr. Lampman, will give "The Night of the Cross" by Dudley Buck. Mr. Lampman expects to have between eighty and ninety singers. Mr. Lumbard, Mr. Wilkins, Miss Anna Bishop and Mrs. Lampman will take the principal parts of the work.

The appearance of Mr. Samuel Bege, the wonderful mandolinist, will be one of the features of the Young Men's Christian Association's concert course. Associated with Mr. Bege are Mr. Caveny, chalk talkist, and Mr. Hyman Meyer, who is a very funny and very artistic musician. I have been told many times of some of the clever things he does at the piano, and the concert of entertainment which these three gentlemen will present tomorrow night at the Boyd will be very enjoyable.

THOMAS J. KELLY.

Ten trips a week to the St. Louis exposition will be voted to the most deserving by Bee-readers. Save your coupons.

FIGHT FOR MONKEYS REMAINS

Scientists to Divide Up Those of Consul, the Famous Chimpanzee.

(Copyright, 1904, by Press Publishing Co.) PARIS, March 18.—(New York World Cablegram—Special Telegram.)—If there were seven cities that put in claims to the honor of being the birthplace of Homer, there are three others which now long to be the final resting place of Consul, the famous chimpanzee, who, strangely enough, has lost none of his popularity by dying. The dispute for possession of his mortal remains has led to a division and each of three cities will have a share. Berlin has been permitted to retain the brain of the Simian, and there the savants will devote their time to the study of the precious gray matter. The Museum of the Jardin des Plantes will have the skeleton for the benefit of its scientists, while the stuffed skin of the monkey will go to London for the British wisecracks to ponder over.

The skeleton is to be exhibited in the galleries of comparative anatomy beside that of Josephine, the female chimpanzee, who knew how to thread a needle and sew. A Paris newspaper calls this gallery "The Pantheon of Monkeys."

MAY BE RIVAL OF HER HUSBAND

Frau Sudermann Writes a Play Which is Pronounced a Great Success.

(Copyright, 1904, by Press Publishing Co.) BERLIN, March 18.—(New York World Cablegram—Special Telegram.)—Frau Clara Sudermann, wife of the celebrated German actor-dramatist, has just made her debut as a playwright and her initial effort has been crowned with success. The critics are unanimous in the verdict that she has a great future in this line of work and are unstinted in their praise of her first play. The piece has the title of "Lazy Mary" and the chief character is supposed to be living as the daughter of a reformed demagogue. Frau Sudermann's diction of this character, the critics agree, is quite equal to her distinguished husband's best work and follows him closely in analytical style. "Lazy Mary" and one Herr Willis are supposed to fall in love with each other, both ignorant of the fact that they are brother and sister. The brother eventually discovers their relationship and is led to disclose his discovery to his sister. Thereupon they resolve to end all by taking poison. The play is morbidly sensational throughout, but despite that fact there is much strength to it.

OPERA SEASON PROMISES WELL

Many Subscribers Enroll, Though Opening is Not Until Early in May.

(Copyright, 1904, by Press Publishing Co.) LONDON, March 18.—(New York World Cablegram—Special Telegram.)—Although the Covent Garden opera season will not open until May 2, a large number of subscribers have already enrolled themselves for boxes and seats. Among the takers of boxes are: J. Pierpont Morgan, Mrs. J. V. Mackay, Lady Duchess of Marlborough (formerly Mrs. Hammerly), Mrs. Bradley Martin, Lady Gray Egerton (May Wayne Curly), Mrs. Adair, Mrs. L. V. Harcourt (Mary Ethel Burns), Mrs. Arthur Paget (Mary Stevens), Mrs. Donalds, Mrs. Ralph Vivian (formerly Mrs. Marshall O. Roberts), Mrs. Newhouse, Mrs. Parkinson Sharp and Edgar Speyer. The season will last twelve weeks, closing July 25.

AMERICAN THEATER IN LONDON

Manager Proposes to Exchange with English Manager Touring in United States.

(Copyright, 1904, by Press Publishing Co.) LONDON, March 18.—(New York World Cablegram—Special Telegram.)—Theatrical Manager George Murgrove says: "I propose to establish in London a kind of American theater in which I shall produce by arrangement with Henry Savage, who directs English companies in America, whatever musical comedies he produces in the United States. I am doing this because I do not consider that the English actors and actresses possess or seem to cultivate the American 'go' or atmosphere so necessary."

PLATT WILL FIGHT FOR PLACE

New York Senator Not Disposed to Quietly Surrender Leadership of Party.

(Copyright, 1904, by New York Herald Co.) NEW YORK, March 18.—(New York Herald Service—Special to The Bee.)—Senator Thomas C. Platt, according to trustworthy information, will assert himself again as the republican leader in New York, and fight for the control of the republican state machine. It is also stated that Senator Platt will tell Governor Odell that he must stop his warfare upon the senator's friends.

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