

ABOUT PLAYS PLAYERS AND PLAYHOUSES

Quite a number of Omaha people are now going about complaining that they did not know it was going to be so good, or they would have missed seeing Fay Davis and "The Whitewashing of Julia" for twice the price of admission. To those The Bee can offer no consolation. They are simply unfortunate in not having given a little more attention to the announcements made in the newspapers. They were all given fair warning that one of the best things offered this season was coming to the Boyd during the week, and if they didn't heed this warning they are alone to blame. Two things should have attracted them without explanation. One, the greater, that Henry Arthur Jones is the author of the play, and has never sent us a dull comedy. All his work sparkles with wit and glows with sparkling wisdom. Second, the Empire Theater company is the standard for America, and its representatives are always equipped with something worth while. It is not a matter of special consequence if the name of the play was a little obscure, or that the star was unknown here. To be started with the support of the Empire Theater company is, or at least ought to be, a sufficient guaranty of ability, and as to the name not telling the story, didn't we take "The Girl With the Green Eyes" on faith? And without a star in that part, too? It seems just a trifle out of reason for those who are now quietly kicking themselves because they missed a really excellent performance by a splendid company to give the excuse they offer.

To Restore Luster to a Tarnished Reputation—If the young woman who finds her good name has been involved in something indefinitely unpleasant and presumably compromising, will so manage her replies to the "inquiries" who insist on knowing the details that she will not be entangled into any admissions, and will enlist the efforts of a man who is socially powerful and sufficiently sophisticated to know a hawk from a handsaw, she will have made the start to social rehabilitation. To complete the cure, and make her name shine "like a good deed in a naughty world," her champion must discover that the head and front of the prosecution has been entangled in some sort of shady doings himself, and thus force him to cry quits. When this has been properly done, then the brightness of the noonday sun will pale before the effulgence of the restored halo of the heroine. N. B.—This is calculated solely for the latitude and longitude of Shantoubury; it may be necessary to vary the ingredients and modify the application in other localities. Experiment mildly at first, in order to get a line on the probable reaction of the components before going too far with the application.—From Henry Arthur Jones' "How to Have a Good Time and Still Hold Your Place in Society."

One is hardly justified in the conclusion that Mr. Jones has entirely abandoned the position he took earlier in his career, that it is quite out of the question for a woman to ever recover entirely her good name, once it has been lost. In the case of his plays he has given most powerful arguments why his position is logical. In "The Liars" he deals with the matter in the abstract, and in "Mrs. Dane's Defense" he handles it in the concrete, and through the medium of Sir Daniel Cartwright argues with logical eloquence against the possibility of woman ever getting back when once she has slipped down. In "The Whitewashing of Julia" he shows how the penalty may be evaded, in the absence of actual conviction. Mr. Jones bases his argument on the general proposition that Mrs. Burton-Porter is ever present and ever vigilant; she may occasionally appear in the form of Lady Pinkney, but she is there just the same, and she insists on being shown. The incident of Hon. Bevis Pinkney merely illustrates the fact that "things are seldom what they seem," and that the busiest stone throwers in this world are not always those who have fulfilled the conditions named in the entry blank. Also that while society may be never so jealous of its standard it isn't perfect yet.

Mr. Jones gives us a view of the ultra-conservative English circle, the sort that can afford to know people spiritually but not socially; a circle that appears absurd to Americans, especially when we recall the tales that are served to us in our Sunday cable miscellany, or think of the picture Mr. Sidney Grundy gives us in "The DeGenerates." But the two classes do exist, and between them is a medium in which ordinary mortals may live and have their being, undisturbed by the morbid innovations of the one or the virulent immorality of the other. Each of the extremes has its uses, if no other than to afford the satirist ready material for his pen. It isn't a new condition, either, for English writers have illustrated it for the public during these many years. One of the best illustrations of its absurdity was that given by Gilbert in one of his "Punch" ballads of pleasant memory. Recited in rhyme, the story tells of two Londoners, Brown and Jones, who were cast away on an island. On the side on which Brown landed were shrubs in plenty, but he could not abide them, at-

though very fond of oysters, and Jones fell on a side of the island where oysters were plentiful, yet oysters were his pet about in the food line, though he was partial to shrimps. Now, neither had known the other in London, and so each kept on his way, feeding on what nature sent him, until one day Jones, overreaching Brown in sailing, mentioned the name of Robinson, said: "I beg your pardon, did you speak of Robinson of Cavendish Square?" "Yes," answered Brown. "Did you know him?" And Jones knew Robinson, so through the mutual acquaintance they formed a friendship, and each had his favorite fodder and all was well until one day a boat put off from a passing convict ship to get water. The castaways went down to the beach to see the boat land, when, to their astonishment, they beheld Robinson of Cavendish Square dressed in convict garb, juggling at an ear. Black turned, and Brown went back to his shrimps and Jones to his oysters, for each felt that he could not afford to know a man who had known Robinson.

"The Whitewashing of Julia" is an excellent type of that modern form of play to the perfection of which all genuine lovers of the drama have been looking forward. It is an epitome of good manners, of the correct thing in speech, and dress, and individual decorum; and its illustration of personality is made most perfect by the setting in which it is placed, that of perfect good taste, the quiet, elegant luxury of culture of the twentieth century. On its quiet, almost colorless, and yet delicately shaded background of eminent respectability are distinctly outlined a number of characters easily recognized by any who goes about much. Most of these are of the neutral type, just as most people are neutral; but several of them are decidedly positive, the ones who give form and variety and interest to real life. It is one of the peculiar features of human existence that the majority is willing to let the few do the thinking, and set the pace, content to follow if it does not go too fast, or interfere with personal comfort to too great an extent. And when the limit is surpassed in either direction, the indolent majority merely declines to be led by that particular leader any longer, and turns to some other, of whom the supply has never yet run short. This doesn't mean that all move in one direction; the lines of social cleavage are too distinct for that, and while the several sections may lack in homogeneity, a sufficient degree of uniformity is maintained to prevent absolute disintegration. Mr. Jones directs several of his sharpest darts toward this state of affairs. The self-satisfied are impaled on the petulant remark of one of the ladies that "evidence is so confusing. It is much more comfortable to have a conviction and stick to it than to have a conviction be absolutely lacking in basis." The worldly-wise are given some caution by "Uncle Bill" Stillingfleet, who tells "Teddy" Pinkney to be careful to keep on the right side of "that very fine line which divides the things a gentleman does from the things a gentleman does not do." While Mrs. Wren gives Mr. William Stillingfleet a gentle tip on personal behavior by telling him that "prudence is too good and useful a word to be left in the dictionary," insisting that it was intended for use, and particularly for the use of people who are "engaged."

In a number of ways Mr. Jones proves that he was thinking all the time he was writing when he produced the play by which Julia was so neatly whitewashed. He pillories the class that is willing to be led, and he exposes the hypocrite who seeks to hide his own misdoings by his eagerness to "uphold for others a high standard." And, after all, he gives a lot of our present condition in life by allowing us to see where we would be in case we resided in the chaotic atmosphere of Shantoubury.

Coming Events. This afternoon and evening at the Boyd theater "One Night in June" will be the attraction. It is a pastoral play; its scenes being laid in and around the picturesque old town of Barre, Vt., and its plot being one of much interest. Miss Grace Turner, the emotional star, is at the head of the company, which is said to be entirely competent, and which includes the clever child-actress, Little Genevieve. The simple announcement that the Bostonians will be here on a certain date is enough to arouse public interest, for this famous organization has been popular with Omaha people during the whole of its more than a quarter of a century of existence. Its engagement at the Boyd this season begins on Tuesday night, and will include three performances, with three operas. On Tuesday evening "The Serenade," so full of pretty music and attractive scenery, with a good story running all through it, will be the bill; at the Wednesday matinee, "Robin Hood," famous for its lyrics and its uncanny humor, its catchy airs, and its pretty settings, will be sung for the eighth time by this company. No other evidence of the excellence of this production of DeKoven and Smith need be offered than the fact that after it has

been sung so often by this organization it is still popular. On Wednesday night "The Queen of Laughter," a new number in the Bostonian repertoire, will be the offering. Henry Clay Barnaby is still leading the flock, and is singing as well as he ever did, while McDonald and Petheringham are with him yet, while the others of the company are easily up to the Bostonian standard. Miss Agnes Brown, the prima donna, is young in years, but has had excellent training, both for voice and stage purposes, and has been very popular wherever the company has appeared this season.

On Friday and Saturday evenings and at a matinee on Saturday the "Four Cohans in Running for Office" will be the attraction at the Boyd. This is said to be the funniest musical comedy now on the stage. It is presented by a company of seventy-two people, with the Cohans at the head. Josephine Cohans is dancing and her singing grows are one of the features, and George Cohans' singing of his popular songs is another of its strong lines. Mrs. Helen P. Cohans is another and Della Niven, late prima donna with the Wilbur Opera company, is in the forces. Jerry Cohans is comical, and the other side patrons of the playhouses as a constant comer in former years. "Running for Office" has been styled a rural comic opera by many writers and, in a way, the term is most correct. The scenes of the play are all laid in Tigrerville, Vt.; it is not on the map, but is in the play, nevertheless. The characters are in keeping with the surroundings and not overdrawn, as in most cases where the author depicts rural atmosphere. A flourishing village in Vermont lends itself to the author quite as well as if it were in New York state. George Cohans pictures life there in a most alluring light. The musical numbers from his pen are most tuneful and have already become popular. "If I Were Only Mister Morgan," "Sweet Popularity," "I'll Be There at the Public Square," and "I Want to go to Fare, Papa," are selling briskly and one hears them whistled wherever the company has played.

"Nobody's Claim," a thrilling drama of life in a Rocky mountain mining camp, will hold the boards at the Krug for the first half of the week, opening with the matinee today. The play abounds in sensational situations and intense climaxes. A band of outlaws brings about most of the excitement, for they are repeatedly foiled in their work by the unexpected appearance of the hero and the heroine. The locale of the story gives opportunity for beautiful scenic effects, and this is taken full advantage of by the producers. Among the more realistic scenes is one of an express train passing over the stage at a high rate of speed. The company presenting the play is said to be a competent one, including Miss Bernice Howard, Gaud Holden, Little Alice Berry, Norman Gilbert, Jack White, and others.

Next Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights and Saturday matinee the Krug will offer another of the popular musical-comedy attractions, the booking being "Mlle Fi Fi," one of Anna Held's earliest successes. The company presenting the play is headed by Mary Howard, who in recent years has been meeting with success in this line of entertainment at the New York Casino, Hammerstein's Victoria and the Chicago Weberfeld house. Miss Howard, like many others now associated with musical comedy, is a native of the burlesque stage. In "Mlle Fi Fi" she has the support of a very large company, including Allen Curtis, Frank Damsal, Jack Darlington, Mike Bernard, Fanny DaCosta, Marie Masserney, the Cardovine sisters, Irene Watson, and a host of others. The management promises some gorgeous costumes and beautiful scenery. "Mlle Fi Fi" is nothing but fun and music, there being more than twenty musical numbers on the program.

Eight acts, all new to the local patrons, for even the performers contributing them, with three exceptions, have never appeared before in Omaha. On Tuesday night, the Orpheum, Wilfred Clarke and company will present his adaptation of the French, entitled, "No More Trouble." It is described as a playette of unique conception, laughable, and possessing a condensed and coherent plot. Mr. Clarke is a nephew of the late Edwin Booth, whom he supported, together with Lawrence Barrett. Other stars he has been associated with are Barry Sullivan and Ada Rehan. His support includes Archie Gillies, formerly with "Ran Tins," Miss Louise Stephens, who supported Amelia Bingham, and Miss Theo Carew, who has been seen with the Augustin Daly forces, May Irwin and others. Tony Wilson and Heloise, the originators of the bouncing bed turn, which they will introduce, also give an exhibition of daring and difficult feats on triple bars. Lew Sully, the noted minstrel, well known and popular here, will furnish an assortment of funny stories and some new songs. The Werner-Amoros troupe, a recent European importation, are pantomime comedians and jugglers, who style their skit, "An Artist's Studio." Dancing is the specialty of La Petite Adelaide, a dainty and shapely little actress. Mrs. Amoros, a young woman of rare person charm, will give an original trapeze performance, while her co-worker, Mile. Charlotte, will do acrobatics on the stage below. Among the prominent numbers will be Harry Le Clair, known as the "Bernhardt of Vaudeville." His impersonations of famous actresses, and displays of wealth of beautiful costumes. The kinodrome pictures will be entirely new.

Goals from Stangleland. On Wednesday last Mrs. Langtry and her company sailed from New York for England. Barnum & Bailey's circus opened the season in New York last week and the Ringling Brothers in Chicago. Mr. Mansfield's business in New York was enormous and is said to have been the largest on record in that city. Andrew Carnegie has again emphatically denied that he has any intention of endowing a "national" theater, but that doesn't stop a lot of dreaming of the prospect as though Mr. Carnegie had already drawn the check. The company engaged by Fred C. Whitely for his new musical comedy, "Fifteen Four," includes Eddie Foy, Joseph C. Milton, John Slavin, Tommie Stone, Maurice Dorey, May Robson, Amelia Stone, Grace Campbell and Hilda Hollins and Abbie Strang. On Monday, April 4, at the Knickerbocker theater, London's longest produced production of "The Shepherd King," in which Wright Lorimer will have the role of the youthful David. Much money has been lavished on the production and a strong cast secured to support Mr. Lorimer. Hal Davis and two old favorites of the Woodward Stock company, will be seen at the Orpheum for the week commencing Sunday. They will present a sketch entitled "Fals," by Edmund Day, who has written the most successful of his plays with Miss McCauley have met with big success in vaudeville. A big amateur program will be given in conjunction with the regular vaudeville program at the Orpheum on Saturday night, April 2. A number of "amateurs" have already volunteered. Any others with footlight aspirations who desire to present a program requested by Manager Reiter to make application at the box office. Clay Bennett is the latest to break out against "syndicate" domination. Having been given several opportunities to make good and now being firmly convinced that for some reason the people do not care for Fritz Rudolph's vaudeville, he has announced his intention to retire from the stage to a ranch of several thousand acres in Texas. Maybe there he will escape the "commercialism" he complains of. On Thursday night April 7, the Gate City Dramatic club, a local organization, will be an extra attraction. The club will give a usual. One act of "True Friends" has been selected as the play to be presented. It will include the Misses Belle Knowlton, Anna Gruber, Gailie Mustain and Carrino Klein, Messrs. Charles H. Wagner, Albert Franklin, Byron McEldon, John Klein, Joseph Hassel, Clinton Smith, Clement Smith and Master Roy Klein.

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

One of the most intelligent music-lovers of the city of Omaha—a gentleman who finds time to study music, in spite of a flourishing business, demanding his personal attention—talked with me the other day about singers and singing in a manner which set me seriously a-thinking on a few things in connection with that branch of the heavenly art.

And the one particular gem of thought which he advanced was this: "Why do singers want to sing their extreme tones? It seems to me that when a man or woman with a so-called high voice sings, he or she is sure to aim for an exhibition of very highest notes of the voice, and the same rule applies, by inversion, to those who are contraltos or basses."

And seeing that I was in the presence of a thinker, I put on my dunce's cap and asked him what was the answer. He said: "Do you know why? It is because they want to show off. There is, in my judgment, the reason why so many people are not interested in music. The musicians, who should be educating, uplifting, expanding the ideas of the listeners, are spending their hours of study in learning to show off."

And I reflected upon this thought, then, and many times since, and I have written the lines which I love, and which are, in these March days, God's Aeolian Harp. I have asked the question: "Why do we not try to be simple, to develop the vocal center, instead of the sides; why do we go to 'extremes' why do we want to show off what we can do, instead of studying our middle tones, those which we use in speaking, and give a message in our own natural voice, instead of showing how high or how low we can go in the gamut?"

We are not feeding the people. We are "blind mounds, that scarce themselves know how to hold a sheep-hook, or have learned aught else, the least that to the herdman's art belong."

The people are willing to pay for food. We give it not, and wonder why they do not pay. We ask why music is not supported by the people.

We must "show off."

And alas! It is a sad but true statement that "the hungry sheep look up, and are not fed." And the tall trees, the foremost Aeolian harp of the God of Nature, answer me thus:—"You musicians are not proprietors of your art. You are Ministers. A Minister is a servant, one who ministers. The call is yours. The call is to ministry, not to proprietorship. You have mistaken your calling. You can not appropriate your Art. You must serve it. You are servants, and the servant is not greater than his lord, but you make yourselves greater. You are ministers. The 'chic' of your Art is not so great as the Art itself. Your wheels go round, but you do not progress. You are showing off your machinery, not your power. Quit it. Be Ministers. In service you will win. You must serve. Interpret each note, in every way possible, but do not pose, boast or strut. You came 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister.'"

But to return to the friend who started this. Commenting further, he said: "The art of a singer is his interpretation and delivery of these things which will touch the heart. Why singers do not realize this, I do not know. But I have often thought what a useless thing it is to sing words of no meaning, and particularly those which you can do in the extreme compass of the voice. Why not sing a few exercises at a concert to show how high, or how low, you can go, and then let the audience, satisfied as to your compass, listen to you in a few ballads or songs, in which they will get a message, a comfort, because your real self has spoken. How few singers do this! And how warmly they are appreciated when they do! But they must show off the high tone or the low one, and not the middle tone, which is what they can do in the extreme compass of the voice. 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