

# Gossip About Plays and Players

**H**OLY week is no week for the theaters, as has been simply proven by experience again and again. It is next to the week before Christmas as a time when the theaters will not pay to see a performance on the stage. The last week in Omaha was no exception to the rule, and had business was noted at each of the houses. The engagement of the Richard Carle company in "The Mayor of Tokio" for the first two nights at the Boyd saw a fair attendance, while the Chauncy Olcott engagement on the next two nights was notable for its small patronage. The Krug would have been dark the last half of the week, but for the efforts of the small band of actors, who are temporarily making Omaha their home. They put on a play in emergency order, but failed to excite any special interest on part of the public. The Burwood had a good bill, but its patronage was light, while the bill at the Orpheum drew about half the usual attendance at that theater. Now that the days of Lent are at an end, and with some of the best offerings of the season to be seen at the play houses, it is the hope of the managers that the public will show more interest in the theaters. The bookings for the rest of the season are good, and those who do go will be well entertained.

Sarah Bernhardt is returning to Chicago for her second farewell appearance there this season, her engagement beginning at the Auditorium on Monday evening, April 15. She has accumulated since leaving the Windy City last fall probably the largest fund of experience that ever fell to the lot of an established artist. No established star was ever exploited just in the same manner as she has been, and it is somewhat remarkable that she should have submitted to the methods adopted by the Shuberts. Behind an ostensible purpose to bring to the people the greatest of living actresses, despite their differences with the "trust," the Messrs. Shubert succeeded in adding to their coffers, and incidentally to the purse the great Frenchwoman will carry home with her, such a sum of dollars as could not have been gained by purely legitimate methods. At Omaha, for example, the time tried and fire-tested play of "Camille" was enacted before what up to that evening was the largest audience ever assembled in the west to see a dramatic performance. At Kansas City the next night at the Convention hall a new record was made, and a few weeks later at Dallas, Tex., in a single week, a sum of money was taken at the door. Figuring on Omaha's experience as a basis, several thousand people were disappointed at each of these places, for the conditions under which Mrs. Bernhardt was exhibited were such as could not conduce to even a good performance. The history of the great audience assembled at the Auditorium on the night she appeared here might as well have been in another building, so far as the play on the stage was concerned. The Kansas City Convention hall afforded no better conditions, and the conditions at Dallas are such as to make one laugh almost at the gullibility of the Texans, who crowded to the circus tent and paid their dollars for the privilege of saying they had seen Bernhardt under a "big top."

In what way has the cause of art been benefited by this exhibition? How has the cause of the Shuberts, as opposed to the syndicate, been furthered? It would seem, crediting the public largely with ordinary intelligence, that art has suffered, and the syndicate been strengthened in its position. Sarah Bernhardt is artistic to her finger tips, and essentially sybaritic as a result. When she played in Omaha three years ago, with M. Goussin as a companion star, her dressing room at the Boyd theater was especially prepared for her. It was denuded of everything to the bare walls, and these and the floor were scrubbed and cleaned, and then the richest of draperies and most luxurious of furniture was introduced. Her dressing room might be comfortable and might be surrounded by those things that would contribute to her mental condition necessary to the presentation of the roles she was to undertake during her stay at the theater. And this sort of preparation was essential, or thought to be, wherever she went. In Paris, at her own theater, she is surrounded by a luxury such as no other actress ever knew, and prepares herself for her performances with the utmost deliberation under the most elaborate of sensual conditions. It is possible that this woman, so luxurious in all her tastes and habits, so accustomed to artistic surroundings, and thoroughly imbued with the atmosphere of a life oriental in its sensuousness, could possibly give a perfect performance in a circus tent, or a convention hall, where the apparatus of her dressing room would be those at which a bar-stormer, used to the hardships of one-night stands in the tall and uncut, might justly complain because of their inadequacy? It hardly seems likely. That Mrs. Bernhardt was, even under the influence of prospective dollars, to do it at all, marks her as a "good fellow," and one can easily believe that she looks on the experience as one vast lark, and will so relate it when she comes to that chapter in her very charming memoirs. But, what has she done for art or for the freedom of the theater?

She has proven, more than ever conclusively, that one of the aims of modern art is the dollar. The Shuberts have marked themselves as no whit better in this regard than the syndicate they so loudly denounce. The tent tour did not last long, for Mrs. Bernhardt's great well-earned triumph was to get her route, and then the public very likely got some return for the money paid at the door. But the \$7,000 paid at Omaha, the \$10,000 paid at Kansas City and the \$12,000 taken in at the tent door at Dallas can only be regarded as a tribute paid to the commercial end of Bernhardt's tour under the Shubert management. In the final analysis one doesn't see such a marked divergence in the methods of the so-called "independents" and the alleged "trust." Each seems to have an eye to dollars before art.

In the meantime the managers of the country who operate the theaters are being bedeviled by the various parties to the argument. The Shuberts are dangling their lines of goods before the managerial eyes and urging them to make no contracts that will prevent his having what they can offer. The "trust" magnates threaten him with excommunication if he deals with the Shuberts, and show him what a fine line of things they can offer in the way of legitimate attractions. And theaters all through the west are dark because neither of the warring factions can redeem the promises they make, and the manager, as he watches his rent and other expenses pile up, earnestly prays that something will happen to split the combinations that are playing havoc with the show business in the country and bring it back to the time and place where something can be depended on besides trouble. The wisecracker on Broadway spend much time telling the public how peace can be restored and the theater again be elevated to its prominence as a factor in the social life of the people, but none of them show any sign of doing anything toward putting theory into practice.

**Coming Events.**  
"The Little Gray Lady," which comes to the Boyd on Sunday evening for four nights and a matinee on Wednesday afternoon brings to this city one of the most positive successes in New York and Chicago this year, the play having had two unusually popular runs at the Garrick and Studebaker theaters in those cities. Channing Pollock, the author, by writing "The Little Gray Lady," has established himself among the foremost playwrights of America, and has shown not only an unusual knowledge of technique and construction, but both in the matter of theme and its subject he has displayed marked originality. Mr. James K. Hackett in making the production and staging the piece, has also met with almost equal commendation, and "The Little Gray Lady," with a cast including Pauline Frederick and Ola Humphrey, as well as a number of other prominent players, has been accepted as one of the best contributions to native drama in the last decade. The story deals with the simple romances of a group of clerks in the Redemption department of the United States treasury at Washington, and has to do with their simple romances and temptations in a simple manner, with an exceptional charm of situation, characterization and dialogue. It is gratifying indications of American taste that the two positive successes of the season, "The Little Gray Lady" and "The Lion and the Mouse" are both simple plays of American life, written by young and very prominent American dramatists.

with the matinee today, the Three Seldoms will present their plastic poses, reproducing studies in marble by the leading sculptors. They come from the Berlin Academy of Arts and are described as being perfect specimens of humanity and so expert at posing that their work has received much favorable comment everywhere. Elizabeth Murray, one of the acknowledged successes as a female monologist, will return with a new store of songs and stories. Some extraordinary gymnastic stunts are promised by Kenos, Welch and Metro, who can cap the climax of their sensational feats with some "doings" on the "revolving arch," which they invented for the purpose, and which are said to make the hair stand slightly on end, so perilous are some of the acts. A number which will appeal to those with musical tastes is the Argenti Trio, three Italians with beautiful and well trained voices. In "A Woman of Few Words" Frank Rae and Gustie Broache are said to have found a sketch suitable to their peculiar personalities. As an imitator of birds and a whistler par excellence, Fred will be remembered by those who have seen him. He promises some new ideas for this engagement. Edwin Lavine and Lillian Waltons will present "The Gas Inspector and the Prima Donna," a sketch which is said to be very funny. The kinodrome with its pictures will finish what promises to be one of the most entertaining bills of the season at this popular play house.

"The Mandarin," a celestial comic opera in two acts, will be heard for the second time in America at the Lyric theater on Thursday, May 3. It will also be given on Friday, May 4, and matinee on Saturday, May 5. The opera is offered by All Saints church for the benefit of the Parish Aid society, which has as its special care the furnishing of the new church, and the repairs to and enlargement of the organ. The production will be under the direction of Mr. E. K. Smith, who has recently directed the performance of "The Mikado" for the Omaha Guards a year ago, and also "The Chimes of Normandy" for the Eagles last December. "The Mandarin" must not be confounded with the musical farce comedy of the same name produced by Jeff D'Angelis some years ago, and which proved a distinct failure. It is an English composition and ranks with the best of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Mr. Kinross has a better chorus than in either of his previous productions and the best of Omaha's vocal talent will be found in the cast, including the well known tenors Hamilton, both of whom made a decided hit upon their previous appearances. The opera is a delightful one in plot and the music is of the light and catchy order, and bound to become popular. The costumes

will be rich and characteristic. W. E. Chambers will be associated with Mr. Kinross in this production and will have entire charge of the posing and ballets in which the opera abounds. Irrespective of the very worthy cause for which it is given, "The Mandarin" will be such a high-class novelty that it will outshine many of the more pretentious professional performances for which a larger sum will have been charged for admission. None will regret hearing "The

Jules Lombard, the famous old basso, is to be remembered on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday. The following correspondence will explain how it came about and why it is to be:

OMAHA, Neb., April 15, 1906.—To Mr. Jules Lombard: My dear Sir—Learning of your intention to leave Omaha for residence in Chicago, I have been requested by members of Trinity Cathedral church where you have sung so long to tender you the services of the cathedral choir for a testimonial concert to be given at such time as you may see fit to designate. Of course you will be at liberty to engage such other or other parties as you may desire to your liking, and as shall add interest and importance to the event. The choir will do all in their power to make the proposed testimonial a pronounced success, and hoping for an early acceptance of this tender of friendship and esteem, I am most sincerely yours,  
Choirmaster Trinity Cathedral.

OMAHA, April 15, 1906.—Mr. Ben Stanley: My Dear Sir—Trust that you will find it something better than mere words. I take pleasure in accepting your very kind and generous offer for a testimonial concert for my benefit, and have decided to name the 15th of the present month, which will be my seventy-fifth birthday, as the date, and Creighton University hall, at Twenty-fifth and California streets, as the place for the proposed musical entertainment. Please express my appreciation and gratitude to the members of your choir, whose assent made your kind proposal possible and to those of your congregation who have shown a kindly interest in my fate. It may not be inappropriate to add that I do not leave Omaha of my own choice, but because it is the will of the Lord, and I remain, the home of my heart, but to respond to an imperative call of obligation and duty. My services elsewhere will serve others first. "We rest that we sow." Yours very truly,  
G. LUMBAR.

Just what "The Duke of Duluth" means Mr. Nat Willis and his numerous, frisky associates, mostly girls, will explain at the Krug theater for four nights and two matinees, starting this afternoon. The cast, including the well known actress, has laid its story, such as it is, in the usual supposititious locality, this time named the land of "Wot." To this land of dancing chorus girls and singing lovers comes Mr. Willis in the character of his familiar hobo, and in explaining to the inhabitants how he came there in the first place, he mentions the fact that he is Darling Doolittle from Duluth. Later he is made a duke by the authorities of "Wot," hence the title of the play.

"East Lynne" will be the bill at the Krug on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, April 13, 20 and 21.

**Gossip from Stangeland.**  
Maude Adams will play the 26th performance of "Peter Pan" at the Empire theater, New York, on April 22.

Billie Taylor, the American girl, has had her consideration an offer to make a tour of the United States next season.

William Collier, who is now playing his second engagement in Boston this season, will return to New York at the end of the month to play there.

Joseph Wheelock is rounding out a program of engagements in Omaha, including "Just Out of College." This is Mr. Wheelock's first starring season and he has interest in good measure.

William H. Crane comes to New York on April 15 for a run at the Hudson theater. He will play "The American Lord," by George H. Broadhurst and C. T. Dazey.

Henry V. Savage, during his recent trip to Europe, secured the American rights for Puccini's opera, "Madame Butterfly," and Richard Taubert's "The Merry Widow," which is creating a sensation in Vienna.

The very many friends and admirers of Miss Adeline are pleased to know that she is able to put out another show when she appeared at the New Amsterdam a week ago to see Richard Taubert and "Don Carlos" was her most cordially greeted by many who knew her.

Sam Bernhardt, who returned to New York on Easter Monday in "The Hocking Girl" with Hattie Williams and all the other fun-makers. It was to this merry company that Oscar Hammerstein has secured another great star for his Manhattan Opera company in Melba, who was signed to play the American impresario in Paris last week. It must have been a mighty flattering offer to win Melba over to the new operatic organization.

John C. Fisher and his all-blonde company will open soon in a revival of "Floradora," which has never been given in the Cuban capital. After a short stay there the company returns to Atlantic City to play a summer engagement on "the boardwalk."

Francis Wilson has scored an enormous hit in New York in "The Mountain Climber," which was written by the author of "Are You a Mason." It gives Mr. Wilson the opportunity to show his opportunities he has ever had and he is crowding the Criterion at every performance.

Manager Henry B. Harris evidently believes in showing a good thing along when he has it. The producer of Charles King's latest play, "The Lion and the Mouse," is arranging tours for four companies in that play next season. He has two companies in it now and will add the other two in the fall. The territory will be so divided that no one will conduct with the others.

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