

About Plays, Players and Playhouses

ROMANTIC drama seems to be passing; at all events, the experience of the managers in Omaha during the week would so indicate. Down at the Krug "When Knighthood Was in Flower" bloomed for four nights and almost blushed unseen. At no time were the audiences sufficiently large to embarrass any of the people on the stage who might want to talk over private affairs during the progress of the play. At the Boyd "Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall" displayed her charms, which were not inconsiderable, but without attracting to any one performance more people than might be comfortably entertained at a tea party. This can only be accounted for on one hypothesis: The public has changed its mind. A few years ago the announcement of either of these plays would have packed a theater, no matter whose name was connected with the leading role. At this time no one seems to care for them. It is not a reflection on either Miss Wood or Miss Gallatin that they received no more respectful hearing while in Omaha. Each is capable and clever, and each gave a well considered and carefully worked out presentation of a girlish character of a sort that appeals to most people. Each was surrounded by a company of capable, capable actors, and each had the appropriate environment and atmosphere for the play. But neither was listened to. What is true of Omaha seems to be true everywhere, and the "historical romance" that is neither historical nor romantic has had its day.

With its breath from the great meadows of the west, the tang of the alkali dust, and the exhilarating taste of its ozone, the fresh air and the sunlight, came "The Virginian." It is hardly needed here, where we have all but the alkali dust as our daily portion. Omaha is of the west, western. Here life is broad and free and open, and its affairs are carried on man to man, just as they were in Wyoming in the day of the Virginian. Some of the refining influences of civilization have come to us along with the telephone, and the trolley cars, such as bath tubs and billiard tables and evening suits, but they have not as yet cramped our natures or "warped us from the living truth." It is still possible to stand upright and draw a good, deep breath of fresh air in Omaha, air that tingles and titillates in the blood as champagne. And as only the earlier settlers are old enough to be grandfathers, we have not been able to accumulate either ancestors or traditions. That is why we can sympathize with the Virginian. And right here enters the feeling that too many people lost sight of when watching the progress of events in that play. Molly Wood had ancestors.

It is hard enough to be a tenderfoot, but to be the hero of several generations of ancestors in the bargain is a handicap that only a few could overcome. Miss Wood was placed in a decidedly awkward predicament from the very first. She had brought to the west certain very well defined notions, absorbed enough from the viewpoint of one who had known nothing but the west, but perfectly reasonable from the outlook of one who had known nothing but the east. Society, for her at least, meant certain well behaved persons, who proceeded along their daily walk in a circumspect way, paying such the tribute of profound respect to the conventions that had established themselves as laws even less mutable than the Median code, and living their lives in a circle growing ever narrower. Customs that had grown up with passing years had encompassed her and beliefs that were traced on a foundation of heredity could not be shaken off easily. The grandmother whose name is associated with Bennington and the glorious battle fought there was born again in Molly Wood, with the addition of positively fixed notions as regards gradations of society and a sense of duty that had become sterner in its passage down through the female line. Miss Wood knew what was her due, and felt herself to some extent obliged to exact it. Hence "the Vermont turndown."

Molly Wood's experience has been repeated many times. It is no more novel than are other features of the story, so familiar to us all. She could no more live in the atmosphere of the west and feel its vivifying effect and not expand under it than she could live at all and not breathe it. That is the mission of the west. Its life has been one of expansion. Strangers coming to us have expressed surprise at the freedom of life they have found. Many a change, they might be better ordered, but in time they learn our ways and do as we do, and wonder that they ever did differently. So it was with Molly Wood. Slowly but surely her preconceived ideas underwent a change; she went back to Bennington, but there she heard Bear creek calling, and back she came to the new life. The west had won her. She had learned all, but hardly knew it till that day when Trampas put matters past meddling between himself and the Virginian. Back in Vermont on such an occasion the proper course would have led the hero to the nearest justice of the peace or other magistrate with jurisdiction, whence a peace warrant would have been issued against the lawless and bloodthirsty villain; the latter would have been haled into the presence of the law, and there would have been obliged to enter into undertakings with good and sufficient security, that he would not pursue his murderous purpose or otherwise disturb the peace of the commonwealth and especially that of one of its citizens, to wit, the Virginian aforesaid, for a space of time to be determined by the magistrate, failing in which undertaking he would be by the operation of the law locked up in the town calaboose until he had cooled off to a degree that would render him a safe person to be allowed at large among the peaceful citizens of the community. This was the procedure with which Miss Wood was most familiar. That sort of law did not prevail in Wyoming, and Molly Wood knew it.

Music and Musical Notes

THE last week has shown a few gleams of brightness for the music lovers of Omaha. The most artistic event of the week was the concert given by the Musical Art society, which had known nothing but the west, but perfectly reasonable from the outlook of one who had known nothing but the east. Society, for her at least, meant certain well behaved persons, who proceeded along their daily walk in a circumspect way, paying such the tribute of profound respect to the conventions that had established themselves as laws even less mutable than the Median code, and living their lives in a circle growing ever narrower. Customs that had grown up with passing years had encompassed her and beliefs that were traced on a foundation of heredity could not be shaken off easily. The grandmother whose name is associated with Bennington and the glorious battle fought there was born again in Molly Wood, with the addition of positively fixed notions as regards gradations of society and a sense of duty that had become sterner in its passage down through the female line. Miss Wood knew what was her due, and felt herself to some extent obliged to exact it. Hence "the Vermont turndown."

turned to America recently, where he will continue his functions as the official accompanist of Mme. Nordica. The prima donna's engagements in the United States this season will be among the most remunerative she has had in her career and her appearance with Harry Witt's San Carlo Opera company is awaited there with the highest anticipations.

In an article in the current number of the Broadway Magazine Elinor Leathrop, discussing the interesting subject, "New York Girls Singing in Grand Opera," makes some astounding revelations in regard to the barriers which were formerly placed before the American singer, ambitious for a grand opera career. In writing of the case of Elinora De Marchesi, the American singer, who was a member of the Metropolitan Opera House company under Maurice Grau, but was never given opportunity to appear in an important role. The writer says: "She had, on a few hours' notice, sung the role of Azeucena to Emma Eames Leonard in 'Trovatore' in Philadelphia, and notwithstanding her success in this Mr. Grau had little confidence in American singers unless they had long years of European experience. He once said: 'You had had the most remarkable voice I had ever heard, no matter how much talent you showed, I would not engage you for New York unless you had had the same success in Europe. Make an appearance there, no matter in how small a city, then come to me and I will see what I can do for you.'"

The musical department of the Woman's club will meet Thursday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock, when an Italian program will be given under the direction of Miss Blanche Sorenson. Among the numbers will be a trio from Verdi's "Otello," sung by Mrs. J. H. Jennison, Mr. L. G. Kratz and Mr. F. L. Green; "La Primavera," Ardite, Mrs. Wagner Thomas; "O Mio Fernando," Donizetti, Miss Sorenson; "Good-Bye to Summer," Fosse and "Happy Song," Del Riego; Mrs. C. S. Sabaugh; "Concert Etude," Martucci, Miss Paulson; "Concerto, No. 2, Allegro," Viotte, Miss Cahill and Miss Ellis. Mr. Charles S. Haverstock will also sing.

Hammerstein is the kind of man Melba likes, as she said after her first interview to some friend. "I want to see her after the interview has been arranged. 'How much do you want per performance for ten performances?' 'Four thousand dollars each.' 'All right,' said Oscar, 'got a match? I want to smoke and walk around the block; where's my hat?' 'The hat's here and Hammerstein's walked around the block to think the matter over.' When he returned he said: 'All right, how much do you wish in advance—how much cash?' Melba said \$20,000 was the least she would accept. Hammerstein took his own money and drove down to the Credit Lyonnais and came back with the \$20,000. 'You're the kind of man I like, Hammerstein,' said Melba. 'Nellie,' said Oscar, 'you're the kind of woman I like' and the deal was concluded so far as that went, but Melba began to send for Hammerstein one and twice a day to 'advise' him on his other engagements and Nordica will sing with Russell and his San Carlo company! Thus is history following upon history. By the way, Melba settled an annuity of \$500 a year for life on her son and furnished a house in Ireland completely for him, his wife's family being of Irish ancestry. Nordica's visit to Paris, while not eventful, was busy to a last limit. She spent considerable time at Jean de Reszka's house, with Sara Bernhardt, with Matrice Graz, with Belone and at the ambassador's. There was no attempt made to molest her, for through the United States ambassador to Great Britain and the co-operation of Ambassador McCormick here, the person who was supposed to contemplate the step was kindly advised that the government would not tolerate any nuisance, especially on the part of any one who was not a citizen. Hence Nordica felt at ease and had a good time in Paris. Simmons, the accompanist, who was ill here from appendicitis, re-

turned to America recently, where he will continue his functions as the official accompanist of Mme. Nordica. The prima donna's engagements in the United States this season will be among the most remunerative she has had in her career and her appearance with Harry Witt's San Carlo Opera company is awaited there with the highest anticipations.

The most sensational melodrama, "A Midnight Escape" which will be offering at the Krug for two nights, starting Tuesday night, January 29, is a drama of New York life that has never been offered locally. It abounds from first to last with startling situations, and from a scenic point of view promises to be one of the season's most pretentious offerings. As for the story itself, there is much of love and pathos throughout the whole, and the theme is one of heroic deeds on the one hand and most villainous crimes on the other.

Another new star in the constellation that illumines the abbreviated drama in vaudeville will be introduced at the Orpheum today and will constitute the bright particular headline feature for the ensuing week. Mr. Julius Steger, supported by William H. Parsons, Miss Lina Pantzer, Clara Beasey's cats, played up as a crack act in their line, come here for the first time. Among those to be welcomed back are the famous xylophonists, the musical Avolons and Lina Pantzer, assisted by "Tommy" on the bounding wire. Miss Pantzer is said to be good to look upon, Knight Brothers and Sawtelle are down for a neat dancing novelty, Ollie Young and brother, showing their remarkably clever hoop rolling, and new kinodrome pictures complete the offering.

The report of Elinora Deuse's health improves and that she is practically out of danger. She has been removed from Genoa to Nervi, on the Riviera.

KODAK Exhibition One week, beginning Monday Evening, Jan. 28th, and daily thereafter from 2 P. M. to 10 P. M. at Chambers Academy Display of 300 Pictorial Enlargements, including many prize-winning photographs and a series of pictures kodaked by HER MAJESTY QUEEN ALEXANDRA. BRILLIANT LECTURES DAILY AT 3 AND 8 P. M. By DR. DIXON. Dr. Dixon's Lectures are magnificently illustrated by Lantern Slides and Moving Pictures. COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS may be obtained of any of the following named Kodak dealers: THE BENNETT CO., 16th and Harney Sts. ROBT. DEMPSTER CO., 1215 Farnam St. HUTESON OPTICAL CO., 213 So. 16th St.

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AMUSEMENTS

Opheum 'Phone Douglas 494. Week Commencing Sunday Matinee, Jan. 27 To-day 2:30--To-night 8:15 MODERN VAUDEVILLE Julius Steger In "The Fifth Commandment." Dillon Bros. Comedians who sing their own songs. Clara Beasey's Cats Musical Avolons Premier Xylophonists of Europe and America Lina Pantzer On the bounding wire. Assisted by "Tommy." Knight Bros. & Sawtelle Twentieth Century Dancing Novelty Ollie Young and Brother America's Most Marvelous Hoop Rollers. KINODROME PRICES--10c, 25c, 50c.

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