

About Plays, Players and Playhouses

HUMAN progress is slow and is usually attended by much of genuine pain. Just how slow it can be in a measure understood by the attitude assumed by some of the well-meaning people in regard to the theater.

Mr. David Belasco has sent out what is one of the most artistic and desirable of souvenirs in connection with the opening of his new Stuyvesant theater in New York. It is a neatly bound volume, containing a description of the theater and its decorations, and a program of the opening performance there by David Wardell in "A Grand Army Man."

Miss Hortense Allen, daughter of Captain Charles W. Allen, editor of the federal courts for Omaha, is given a very complimentary mention in the Dramatic Mirror in connection with her appearance at the students' performance of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York recently.

OLD TOPIC AT A NEW ANGLE Sec-Problem to Be Theme of New Play by Hall Caine.

LONDON.—Special Correspondence.—Hall Caine says he is going to start work on a new play shortly, and no wonder, considering the outcome of his last experiment in that direction. When he completely rewrote his stage version of "The Christian," a few months ago, for revival by the management of the London "Lyceum," most people expected it to prove the ablest of frolics, but both author and producers have been justified by what is unquestionably one of the biggest successes ever scored in the metropolis.

All of which must give something less than pleasure to Charles Frohman, who originally produced "The Christian" in London just after its big success in America, and lost a lot of money on it. The play then ran for about a fortnight, if one remembers correctly, but perhaps the fault lay with Herbert Waring and Evelyn Millard, who did not approach Edward Morgan and Viola Allen in the parts of John Storm and Glory Quayle. Or perhaps it was because the piece didn't convey a "great moral lesson" that the British public didn't take to it.

Music and Musical Notes CRITICISM is the Soul of Art, its natural corollary, its living force. Suppress it, and Art would degenerate into pure commercialism, and as there would be no standard, so there would be no value.

The above sentence, quoted from a writer in the London Observer of July 29th last year, is enough to make people stop and think. Criticism is evidently a necessity. Criticism should be a careful discerning between what is, and what is not, according to a certain standard. We are liable today to suffer from a too generous consideration of the person under criticism, and we are not unlikeli to degenerate into "reporting" instead of writing criticisms; of praising indiscriminately, for the sake of one's own peace, rather than passing judgment, serious judgment, "for the good of the cause."

Now, see the absurdity of the proposition. What makes Mr. Businessman discharge a man who is earnestly trying his best, but who falls through sheer lack of ability to comply with the standard? Simply the fact that there is a standard. The man could probably do very well in some other place where the standard was not so high.

Why is it that the medical profession has a state board, and refuses to allow certain men and women to practice? Is it not that these people are not up to a certain standard of what should be done? Is not the result of the whim or caprice of a few doctors who might get together and devise a standard, but it is fixed according to the best opinions of the best men in the profession everywhere, and is older than the state in which it is being applied. Why do they not allow anyone and everyone to practice "medicine" because they are "doing the best they can't" because there is a standard?

Does the Court recognize everyone who comes before it and wishes to defend or prosecute a case? Or does it not insist that before coming into court a man of law shall have a certain right there, because he has conformed to the standard which gives him "standing" in court? If this standard should be suppressed in court, where would the justice come? Suppose, for instance, the judges did not have to come up to a certain standard? Would not the public be degraded to pure commercialism, and would there be any equity or judgment?

As a rule, I think, you will find men on the bench who do the work of judges fully and well, and not "as well as they know how." A very unlearned and intellectual judge might preside as well as the most expert, and yet be a very poor judge indeed, and make much trouble for other courts in the case of appeals.

It must have put a small fortune into the Mansman's pockets, so it is not surprising to learn that the new piece which he is getting ready to write will be very "serious" indeed. "It will be a problem play," he said to me, "a great 'Woman's question'—a fundamental problem, one of those obstinate questions which have existed between the sexes for all time. If I told you," he added, "where my scenes will be laid, I should be telling you my story."

You must make what you can out of that, for Hall Caine would not say anything more. As a fact, I had only a moment with him between the acts of "The Christian," which he had come to town especially to see for the first time since its production. At the finish he made a speech—a very moral speech—to the audience which he assured me numbered over 4,000 people.

I am mistaken, however, for Hall Caine told me the heads of the most interesting thing in connection with his next play, and one which constitutes a new departure for him. This is that the piece will have no connection with any book, past or future. Heretofore, of course, he has told his stories in novel form to begin with and then he has adapted them for the stage, but this time the play will come first at any rate. At present he is busy with his revised "Life of Rossetti" (which promises to develop into a "Life of Hall Caine"), but he expects to complete this, shortly, after which he will tackle the great "woman's question" above referred to. It sounds like a theme after the London public's own heart—or at least a big section of the aforesaid public. But what American audience will think of it is quite another matter.

Meanwhile, as if to compensate playgoers here for having to wait quite a while for the Mansman's next play, he has to have one by his son, Ralph Hall Caine. This young man, though only 24, has been heard of already as a promising recruit to the ranks of London publishers, and it appears that in his spare time he had written a musical comedy. What is more, it has been accepted by a West End manager and is to be put on, with music by a youthful composer who also is regarded as a "comer" soon after Christmas.

The name of this musical piece has yet to be disclosed, but it is in two acts and the plot centers about a Parliamentary election, a rather new idea, for which I feel much thanks! This is not the only novelty in connection with the piece, however, for the management, though expressing untold faith in the attractiveness of the young composer's score, has determined to "brighten" it to the limit, if the thing can be done. Not a number will be left in that is not an out-and-out "winner," and to this end new melodies will be added weekly, replacing those that have failed to set the audience on fire. A goodly prize is to be offered, moreover, for the best words song submitted, the idea being to

disagreements (from the grand stand) as "kill him," "Take him off," "Where did you get him," "Möb him!" Strange, is it not? And yet, he was only doing it all to encourage some poor first baseman who was "doing the best he could," or to pat on the thankful back, some team which was "going all their might." See how we refuse to permit the suppression of criticism in our national game, but yet we want it suppressed in Music.

And Music is older than base ball, and it will live longer. And, really, a very great many people, in a very great many places, consider it a very serious and very intellectual and most fascinating study, and the greatest names of earth have been names of men who did it homage, with a few rare exceptions—not just to show that all great men are not entirely great, and therefore some few exceptions have not cared much for the Art.

We are perhaps prone to consider that we are not in a musical center—that may be, and again, may not be. But we are not yet setting the standard for the world; we are young yet. And meanwhile there is a great standard which has been set, and is being set, and will be set, and it were better to try to come to it than to try to bring it to us. Really, in all seriousness, don't you think so? Hadn't we better try to measure up to the great general standard of music as it is, than to try to bring it down to the local standard by the benevolent but unprofitable work of the suppression of criticism?

Criticism implies analysis and comparison. It does not suggest complacency and complacency. When one chooses a topic in music he chooses one who by analysis and comparison is up to the standard. Abolish the standard and any teacher is as good as any other. "As there would be no standard, so there would be no value."

In conclusion let me repeat once more the words of the London Observer of July 29, 1904: "Criticism is the soul of Art, its natural corollary, its living force. Suppress it and Art would degenerate into pure commercialism, and as there would be no standard, so there would be no value."

Next Thursday evening a recital will be given at St. Mary's Avenue Congregational church by Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Resler, assisted by Mr. Cusden. This recital will be the introduction of Mr. and Mrs. Resler to the musical public. A cordial invitation is extended to the musical public to be present. There will be no admission fee. Mr. Resler will sing a group of songs by Robert Franz, Robert Schumann and Franz Schubert, and also a group, not very well known here, including "Soldier's Departure" (Gieseler), "It is Not Always May" (Gounod) and "Song of the Bow" (Aylward), closing with the old favorite, "Alta Stella Conclente." Mrs. Resler (organist) will play a Lomax transcription of Moszkowski's "From Foreign Parts" (Russia) and a Gullman transcription of an "Andantino" by Chauvet. Mr. Cusden will play the favorite "Reverie" by Chopin and "Noches" "Gypsy Dance." The time, 8 o'clock.

Of all the short cantatas for Christmas that have come to my notice I have seldom seen one so effective, so interesting or so suitable for the average choir of any pretension as "Christmas Tidings," by W. Berwald (Olivet Company).

Mr. Josephine Hellman will give a free public piano recital, assisted by Charles Havlicek, violinist, at the Schmolzer & Mueller auditorium, next Friday evening, December 13, at 8 o'clock. I have just heard, with deep regret, that the Musical Art society is contemplating a discontinuance of public work. Mr. Simms and his society have achieved beautiful artistic success and the results of the work have been great. Must this society give up, because we have no standard? Or will Mr. Simms receive encouragement to keep it together? Cannot something yet be done to show Mr. Simms and the Musical Art society that they have not worked in vain? THOMAS J. KELLY.

secure, if possible, another melody as suggestive as the famous "Baldstein" which helped to make the fortune of "The Merry Widow." So the younger Caine's musical comedy effort is likely to be a success if pleasing melodies can make it one. It is not, by the way, exactly his maiden effort, for he has written a very successful operetta called "The Little Boy" (last man), in which he collaborated with no less a person than his father, and which was produced by amateurs for a charity.

Checkers is offered by the Boyd for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights and a matinee on Saturday, with its company practically the same as it was last season. Hans Robert, in still "Checkers" and Dave Graham repeats his success as the imitatable "Push" Miller. Lydia Dickson plays Cynthia, the chore girl, and Clara Armstrong is Sadie, the spritely chum of the heroine. Pert, the lovable heroine, is played by Stephanie Longfellow, the grand piece of the post. Miss Longfellow, though a very young girl, is described as possessing considerable skill and a very great deal of personal charm. The genial judge, sterling gentleman of the old southern school, is a character which has been entrusted to George Hiller, who has played Colonel Moberly in "Alabama" more than 90 times.

"Texas," a comedy drama, will again be presented at the Krug theater for two days, beginning with a matinee today. The play has been a success in New York and in the larger cities of this country the last two seasons.

"Two Merry Tramps" musical comedy by Beale Bennett and Jerome Travers will be played at the Krug theater two days, starting Tuesday, December 10. John Caylor as Artie Voovine, alias Prince Newfoundland, who is mistaken for a real live prince, and who is on a lark retains his humorous impersonation ably assisted by Fred Pfhart as Clarence Banjo.

Next Thursday, Friday and Saturday the new comedy drama, with music, "Anita, the Singing Girl," which opened its career this season, comes to the Krug theater. The title role is assumed by dainty Eva Westcott, of vaudeville and London music hall fame, who is assisted by an organization of twenty-five people, including a chorus of show girls.

The top liner of the new bill that starts the week at the Orpheum with a matinee today is "Charles's Aunt," an adequate company in the one-act comedy "A Game of Cards." Among the new comers are Lee Amatis four comely German girls, said to be fine vocalists and accomplished pianists. Another turn in harmony will be contributed by Dumond's Minstrels, picturesque Italian street singers and musicians who scored heavily here several years ago. The three Yoscarys, also from Italy are neat, graceful and finished gymnasts. Acrobatics of the fast, difficult, and daring order is the specialty of the four Farros. Adolph Zink the diminutive comedian is the original "Little Man" comedian, who later shared honors with Jerome K. Sykes in "Foxy Quiller," will present impersonation of Fay Templeton, Sarah Bernhardt and other notables. While doing his trickery, the talkative juggler La Tosca unravels a budget of his witticisms. The kinodrome will project some of the newest motion pictures.

The Burwood will present a bill headed by Wright Huntington and company in "A Stolen Kiss." Another act of note is that of Lillian Berry Reid and company who will present a musical sketch, The De Graw Trio will present a comedy acrobatic turn, "Mystery," billed as the English Human Camaleon" will be on hand with a bunch of surprises. Donovan & Arnold, comedy sketch artists, do and say things that are remembered and talked about. It will be the first appearance in Omaha of Kathleen Vole, a sweet singer. The new illustrated song by Charles Hicks, entitled "The English Human Camaleon" will be on hand with a bunch of surprises. Donovan & Arnold, comedy sketch artists, do and say things that are remembered and talked about. It will be the first appearance in Omaha of Kathleen Vole, a sweet singer. The new illustrated song by Charles Hicks, entitled "The English Human Camaleon" will be on hand with a bunch of surprises.

School teachers, ministers and the public in general will be deeply interested in the announcement that the Jewel theater has secured the films for the great Passion play exhibition, depicting the sacred play held in Oberammergau every five years, to which thousands journey from all corners of the globe. This is the only set of films in the world that shows all of the play from beginning to end and were obtained at great expense. All over the country, wherever exhibited, this reproduction has elicited most favorable comment from the clergy and educational institutions, and Omaha are afforded an opportunity to witness for a small admission fee what others have spent thousands of dollars to see. All this week the pictures will be shown several times daily at the Jewel theater.

On Monday evening, December 15, the Crighton University Dramatic Association is to give its annual play. This year the association will present "The Man from India," or "The Yellow Robe," a comedy in three acts. The success with which this play has been enacted by university students in such cities as St. Louis, Milwaukee, Boston, New York and Philadelphia, has prompted the student body to desire its presentation at Crighton. The members of the class have been hard at work for the last month and a half, in a careful study of their parts, with the result that the friends of the university may look forward to a presentation that will compare favorably with any of the noted

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