

Gossip About Plays, Players and Playhouses

ONE of the easily recognizable signs of the "social unrest" is the popularity of certain plays. Now and again an author sounds a note at the opportune moment and for the time appears a prophet and a seer. Seldom does one of these "timely" efforts possess real merit, either as literature or drama. It happens quite as often that they even lack accuracy. But it is their good fortune to come at a time when the public does not care especially for didactic instruction. It wants fuel for its developing sentiment, which, right or wrong, soon crystallizes into action and assumes the concrete form that gives it a place in history. Such a novel and such a play as "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Mrs. Stowe's work did more to fan the flame that heated the north to a point where its various elements might fight in opposition to slavery than any other single agency. The policy of her written word and its effect, as depicted on the stage, was beyond the eloquence of her gifted brother or any of the galaxy of orators whose tongues rang with denunciations of the institution that brought about the simple tale that moved so many thousands to a common impulse. It may not be that only of the plays dealing with modern political conditions will have a similar effect. But the application is similar and through its operation "The Lion and the Mouse" and "The Man of the Hour" have their voice.

Another player of note has been asked to elaborate into a thesis his expressed belief that the American people are not a happy people. He gave it as his reason for the popularity of the lighter forms of amusement. The thesis, if ever written, will be read with much interest by students. In many ways the assertion of the actor is supported by the facts. If happiness depends on light-hearted carelessness the American people are not happy. Life is still a serious business for them. They are sprung from men and women who grew discontented with conditions that surrounded them in their life in Europe. The Pilgrim Fathers did not come to America in search of happiness, but to find a place where their opinions could expand. For something of the same reason came the Cavaliers, and after them came the restless, discontented, active men who found their lives constrained by conventionalities and restrictions of government and society in the old world. And from the day that first European foot was set on American soil this continent has invited the energetic of all nations. In the American of today is fused the spirit of many

peoples, the restless, nervous activity of all the world, and it would be strange, indeed, if such a race of men and women could be happy in the general sense of that term. They have too much to do and are too busy doing it.

And, again, such people cannot lightly look on human suffering, even that of the minute world of the stage. Sorrow and shame, anguish of mind or pain of body, are not attractive to the American in any form. He is generously sympathetic and quick to respond, as has been attested many a time, but he cannot idly look upon misery even in a play. The lighter standard of European volubility and easily moved, may weep with the suffering hero or heroine and laugh a moment later over his drink at a café, but not the American. No, we are not a happy nation, if by happiness we are to understand indifference to human suffering or a capacity for easily shaking off a look of grief. The American is a tragedy of any kind. We prefer the light and frivolous at our theaters, for the reason that they do not make us think, much less weep. Life itself has too much of genius weep, and the American does not require the effort of the actor to remind him of this. Some day, when America and her nation has redeemed its promise and

achieved its destiny for mankind, it may be happy, but not now. It's too busy.

Coming Events.

Laughter will run riot at the Boyd theater tonight and Monday night when Max Figman will return in the Harold McGrath story "The Man on the Box." Both play and player were here for a brief visit last season and made a host of friends. Mr. Figman is one of those artists who win by sincerity of purpose as well as talent. The play is one of the few adaptations from a popular novel that has not disappointed the public. Grace Livingston Furness, who made the dramatization, adhered closely to the story and set it in an attractive dramatic frame, with lots of clever dialogue and a number of convincing dramatic situations. Mr. Figman is under the management of Mr. John Curt, who has supplied him with a complete production and a superior company, including Misses Fannie Marinoff, Bertha Kriehhoff, Madeline Dallas, Berenice Bucklin, and Messrs. Cameron Clemens, John Charles Brownell, Douglas A. Flint, Frank M. Rainger, George Centre, Herbert E. Denton, Ernest Orr, Marshall Franklin and John Pierson.

The flavor of merry Christmas pervades every line of the dialogue and every stage picture of "The Gingerbread Man." Kris Kringle and his reindeers, Jack Horner and his nursery rhymes and jingles, Wondrous Wise, Sallie Lunn and many others of the mythical land of Santa Claus are friends with whom we feel acquainted and with whose adventures we have always been interested. "The Gingerbread Man" is a succession of beautiful pictures, song hits, pretty girls and wonderful mechanical and electrical effects. It will be presented with a big cast, chorus and scenic equipment at the Boyd on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, with a matinee on Wednesday.

Intense interest is shown in the appearance of Mme. Sembrich, who is to be heard at the Boyd Theater evening under the direction of Louden Charlton. No greater singer is to be found in the world today, Ernst Meyer, the Russian critic, wrote an exceedingly interesting feuilleton about her during the occasion of her last visit in St. Petersburg. He recalled the playing of Paganini, the singing of Catalani, Spontini, Schroeder-Devrient and Patti, but no one surpassed the impression made by Sembrich. He asks, "Wherein lies the strength of her voice? It is in the naive beauty of her song, the lovely cantabile and the wonderful coloratura, not exceeded even by Patti or Hina di Muraski, her flawless intonation and the bell-like quality of her top tones. In her style she combines all that is good in the Italian and German schools."

Put two men in full armor, give the taller of the two, who is nearly twice the height of the other and who is the "bad man," a sword, one of those big, two-handed affairs of knightly days, which is as nearly as tall as the hero, and let these two plumed knights fight a duel to the death, supposedly, surrounded by a crowd of two or three hundred ladies and gents, and one has the principal ingredients Charles Marlowe has utilized in his duel scene at the end of the second act of "When Knights Were Bold," in which Francis Wilson is making so great a success this season. Mr. Wilson is Sir Guy De Vere, and the other knight is Sir Brian Ballymore. In a dream Sir Guy is his own ancestor and the duel is fought more than 700 years before he is born. After a series of thrusts and parries, which are most mirth provoking, Sir Guy becomes tired of the weight of his armor, and getting out of it as best he can, goes after Sir Brian in the most approved up-to-date style with his fists, putting the redoubtable Irish knight "down and out," unable to take the count. It is said that there isn't a single duelist in the world who can't finish the comedy, and that in Sir Guy De Vere Mr. Wilson has a role offering him more and better opportunities than any he has played since the days he headed his own comic opera company. "When Knights Were Bold" has proved to be the big laughing success of the season. Earlier in the season the comedy ran for five months at the Garrick theater, New York, and since that time is said to have been exceptionally successful in every city in which it has been produced. Mr. Wilson's drolleries are inimitable; there is no other comedian before the public who is apparently able to extract so much humor out of situations. Charles Frohman has given Mr. Wilson a most excellent supporting company. His leading woman is Mary Boland, and others in the long cast are all well-known players. Charles Frohman will present Francis Wilson at the Boyd opera house for two nights, beginning next Friday, with a Saturday matinee.

A noteworthy attraction comes to the Krug for two days, starting matinee today.

When James Kyrie MacCurdy, a prominent New York character actor, will present "The Old Clothes Man." The production, under management of the Rowland & Clifford Amusement company, is said to be one of the best equipped companies ever sent from Chicago. Mr. MacCurdy is now in his fourth season with "The Old Clothes Man," and the interest evinced by theater patrons seems unabated.

At the Krug theater for three days, starting Tuesday night, "The Shoemaker," with Mr. Lew Welch as the star, will be offered. As Morris Goldberg, a poor, misguided mender and maker of shoes, Mr. Welch is invested with a role that reflects his capability as an actor and comedian to a remarkable degree. In all of the four acts there is not a monotonous period. The action is rife throughout and interest is held from the rise to the fall of the final curtain.

"The Slave Girl" will be the attraction at the Krug theater for two nights and Saturday matinee, starting Friday night, April 3. The piece is well cast and carries a magnificent production.

This week's offering at the Burwood, "The Butterflies," a modern society comedy by Henry Guy Carlton, was originally used as a starring vehicle for John Drew with great success. One will not fall asleep at "The Butterflies," as it is a charming play, thoroughly delightful from beginning to end. Mr. Ingram will be seen in the part originated by Mr. Drew, that of a society man, who only buckles down to life's stern problems when his money is gone. Miss Lesling will play Miriam Stuart Dodge, daughter of a match-making mamma. She should be at her best as the ingenious society girl. Miss De Trace has her first opportunity in the subordinate role, Susanne Green, a rollicky, good natured girl, with an eye for business. Excellent roles are given the balance of the company. Today will witness the last two performances of the gorgeous spectacle, "Quo Vadis," which has been attracting large houses throughout the week. The Burwood's new leading man, Wilfrid L. Roger, comes direct from the Shubert Theater Stock company, Kansas City. He will open Monday, April 6, in "The Only Way," a dramatization of Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities."

A well varied, bright, snappy and altogether excellent bill, headlined by Marcel's reproductions, with living models from the Latin Quarter, Paris, of famous masterpieces in statuary and painting, is promised at the Orpheum for the week, starting with a matinee today. Some of the subjects to be shown in this beautiful exhibition, in color and plastic art, are: "The Fishermen of Galilee," "Cupid and Psyche," "The Wife and the Drum," "The Combat of Hector and Achilles," "Aurora," "Washington and Lafayette at Valley Forge," "The Volunteers," "Angelus" and "Evangeline." Among those to come here for the first time will be Agathe Dolores, who, with her company, will present a lively, satirical farce, entitled "Cupid at Home." Nine Bedouin Arabs do the gymnastic pastimes of their native desert. A mixture of clowning and athletics will be contributed by the eccentrics, Caron and Farmer. In a sketch called "Hints in Soldier," Koblent and Marshall make their initial bow, and for favor Jacob and his three pet assistants will do a variety of gymnastic and other stunts. Shields and Rogers, with a novel larrikin turn, and new kinodrome pictures, complete the program.

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Music and Musical Notes

WHEN I was writing on Thursday last I happened to glance at a little musical calendar lying upon the desk and discovered that just eighty-one years ago on that day there passed away from this earth one of the great beacon lights of musical history, the immortal Beethoven. Ludwig Van Beethoven died on March 26, 1827.

And it occurred to me that a lesson or two from the life of the great master might profitably be drawn in this column, together with a short sketch of some of the lesser known things in connection with his existence and perhaps a bit of encouragement from his own words, for we have several beautiful sentiments on record.

Away back in the sixteenth century near the city of Louvain in Belgium the records show that there was a family of Van Beethovens, who were simple Flemish peasants; (Van not being a sign of nobility in Dutch), and that these peasants were not richly endowed with this world's goods as evidenced by the fact that they enjoyed on Sundays the rare treat of a piece of fried or boiled bacon with their meals, subsisting on beans during the week.

Whether, after the Boston tradition, this had anything to do with the mentality of the great-great-grandson who made music famous, history saith not.

But about the year 1660, so Philip Hale tells us in a very comprehensive sketch of the great composer's life, one of these farmer people left the farm and the old folks and went to Antwerp to try his fortune.

He married, and his son Guillaume, or Wilhelm, grew in stature and esteem and became a wine merchant.

In turn, Wilhelm married and had eight children, a complete octave, as it were, and one of them, named Johann, was a tailor and among many other suits which he made was the suit which he paid to a most estimable and charming person who did not believe in race suicide and whose name was Catherine de Herdt. She justified her unbelief by bringing into the world no less than twelve children; not a baby's dinner, but a tailor's dozen.

One of the sons of this marriage, whose name was Louis, was brought up in the Antwerp choir and received a good musical education. In 1733 he was appointed a musician of the court of the elector of Cologne at Bonn.

He must have lived a terribly luxurious life and it appeals one to think what he could possibly have done with his money, for he drew the princely and munificent salary of \$100 per annum.

This, you will notice, gave him thirteen dollars and thirty-three cents a month! After deducting household expenses, you can easily see that he still had a fine and large allowance for personal expenditures and for those delicacies and frivolities which a man on that income might naturally be expected to indulge in.

He then married and prospered, becoming "Herr Kapellmeister."

But, alas, his wife, Maria, could not stand the pressure of success (he had also added a wineshop to his studio) and she took to imbibing with top great regularity, and died.

The son, Johann, born about 1740, inherited the family name—and the maternal third—and, to make matters worse, became a tenor, a court singer, and married a charming, attractive, soft-hearted, 19-year-old daughter of the head cook!

Louis, or Ludwig, the elder, objected, of course, to the match and blamed the poor boy, not being acquainted with the adage that "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach."

The young couple, however, were not dissuaded in their determination to bring into the world a great genius, and on December 16, 1770, Ludwig the Great came into this sphere, with the themes and emotions of the "nine great symphonies" incubating in his infantile brain.

From his own father, Ludwig Van Beethoven received his first lesson, and as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children did not then have a branch at Bonn, the child was obliged to practice for hours at a time when he had attained the age of 4.

He later studied with a certain Prof. Pfeiffer, who, with Johann, the boy's father, would spend much time, thratting, quenching, at a tavern, and returning conscience-stricken because the boy had missed a lesson, would drag him from his bed and keep him at his instrument till daybreak.

Young Ludwig also practiced the violin, and learned the three "R's" reading, "rhythm" and "rhetoric," but not very successfully, for it is shown that the fact of his withdrawal from school at the age of 12 caused him much subsequent grief and embarrassment. His "laundry lady" gave him severe criticism upon his addition and subtraction. While father drank and "sat around all day," everybody but him busy at work, mother—the dear, patient mother—sewed and mended and kept the baker's bill paid.

Well, time is long and space is short, and after having studied with other, and perhaps more gentle, teachers we find the young musician on his way to see Mozart. Mozart listened at first impatiently to the playing of Beethoven, but later when he produced a fantasia on a theme, Mozart said to the people who were present: "Pay attention to this youngster, he will make a noise in the world one of these days."

Then came the friendship of the Count Waldstein and the Brunning family, particularly the sweet daughter, Elizabeth. Beethoven was not blind to the charms of the fair sex. He loved well.

And then hurrying along we find him studying with Haydn at Vienna, of whom he once said: "It is true he gave me no lesson, but he taught me nothing." Haydn,

in turn, spoke of him sarcastically as "the great Mogul."

After having had the adulation of the Viennese, who easily forgave what they called his "fascinating rudeness," and smiled indulgently at his using the "unfortunate" of a toilet, and after changing his lodgings from the bare-walled desert of a room, in which Cherny met him, for more comfortable quarters, and after many love affairs, in the year 1801 his deafness began to grow upon him more and more.

He tried every possible and probable cure of every nature, hygienic, local and general, and it is to be noted that we find him writing: "I will, as far as possible, defy my fate, though there must be moments when I shall be the most miserable of God's creatures. I will grapple with fate; it shall never drag me down!"

We will not here enter into the many interesting facts concerning the works of the great master, nor will we touch upon the many peculiarities and asperities of his manner, which estranged friends, physicians and others who did not understand the man or his melody.

The and affliction which his genial soul suffered was enough to turn the motions of his spirit into the darkness of Erebus; so let those things pass, as being mere symptoms of the distressing thorn in his flesh.

Those who want to follow up the subject will find it easily in any musical library and the biography is fascinating reading, but the present writer has tried to do, so far, has been to bring the matches Beethoven into close human touch with those who love him, and those who know him not—for to "know him was to love him."

But, what has left to those who are discouraged in their musical progress, who feel the lack of sympathy, who are working against handicaps, who are longing for opportunity, who seem to meet with nothing but obstacles in the pursuit of the "vision splendid!"

Listen! You who could do so much better if you had not been prevented by circumstances; you who have not the facilities for study and progress; you who are working away with might and main, seeing only misunderstanding and not appreciation; you who feel the call and see nothing but "lions in the way!"

Listen! Listen! Here are the words of the great Beethoven. Memorize them: "Let the children of nature take comfort in finding one like himself, who, in spite of all the impediments of nature, yet did all that lay in his power to obtain admittance into the rank of worthy artists and men."

Great master, I thank you for these words of rebuke and encouragement. We will think of you, and be thankful. We will strive, and we will not be despondent. We will learn of you, and take heart. Gratias tibi! THOMAS J. KELLY.

Musical Notes.

For the first time the music lovers of Omaha will have the treat of hearing the great singer, Marcella Sembrich in song recital on Thursday evening of this week. Mme. Sembrich has been heard here twice before, once in "Don Pasquale" and once in "Lola" but never before in a straight song recital.

PART I.

Ballade Chopin
Etude Lisapouso
Aria from Traviata Verdi
Mme. Sembrich
Romance—Plus Blanche (Huguenot) Meyerbeer
Mr. Van Hoose

**Songs—(a) Frelle Schumann
(b) Widme Schumann
(c) Si mes vres avaient des ailes Hahn
(d) Love Has Wings Rugsis
(e) The Love With the Delicate Air Dr. Arne
Mme. Sembrich**

PART II.

Valse caprice on two motives from Liszt
Lucia Zadora
Grand duo from La Boheme Puccini
Mme. Sembrich and Mr. Van Hoose
Songs—(a) How Much I Love You La Forge
(b) When the Roses Bloom (G.) Louise Rolland
(c) Autumn Salter
Mr. Van Hoose

**Valse—Voce di Primavera Strauss
Mme. Sembrich**

Mr. Ellison Van Hoose is considered one of the foremost vocalists in Omaha. Mr. Zadora has a splendid reputation and has been studying intensely with the Berlin idol of the piano.

Here follows the program of the recital to be given by Mrs. Shury of Omaha, soprano, and Mr. August Moller of Lincoln, violinist, tomorrow evening at the Lyric theater:

PART I.

Concerto—D major Paganini
Mr. Moller
(a) Aria—Flauto Mozart
(b) Immer Leiser Ird Mein Schluemmer Brahms
(c) Komm Wir Cornilus
Mrs. Shury

(a) Ave Maria Schubert-Wilhelmy
(b) Slavonic Dance Dvorak
Mr. Moller

PART II.

Songs—(a) Aria—Depuis le Jour (Lovelace) Charpentier
(b) My Heart Sings Chamade
(c) Serenade (Vivace obligato) Gounod
Mrs. Shury

Bohemian Airs Moller

Songs—(a) The Spring Has Come White
(b) Bohemian Folk Song Sembrich
(c) Nymphs of Riviana Sembrich
Mrs. Shury

Accompagnists, Mrs. Edith Wagener and Mr. Vernon Spence of Lincoln.

The Robert Caselden school will give its ninth public recital on Tuesday evening, April 7, at Schumacher & Muelter, 220 Broadway. An unusually attractive program has been prepared for the concert. The school orchestra will be headed by Mrs. J. A. C. Kennedy, pupil of Fred Ellis. Following this concert Mr. Caselden will give a violin recital, with orchestra accompaniment. Four of the principal works of violin literature will be presented: The A major concerto by Mozart, the D minor concerto by Beethoven, the B minor concerto by Wieniawski, the B minor concerto by Saint-Saens. Mr. Caselden will play two movements from each work. The orchestra will be directed by Mr. Max Lind.

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One thing must be borne in mind when considering these plays. The simple mind reasons along straight lines. The great American public, for whose edification the drama under discussion has been prepared, has neither the inclination to follow the reasoning on an ethical proposition through the labyrinthine processes of a trust attorney's refined reasoning, nor the inclination to follow the reasoning on an ethical proposition through the labyrinthine processes of a trust attorney's refined reasoning, nor the inclination to follow the reasoning on an ethical proposition through the labyrinthine processes of a trust attorney's refined reasoning.

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AMUSEMENTS. AMUSEMENTS.

BOYD'S THEATRE

SUNDAY AND MONDAY

MR. JOHN COBT PRESENTS, AMERICA'S FOREMOST COMEDIAN

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THE MAN ON THE BOX

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Prices \$1.00 to \$3.00—Gallery Seats on Sale

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CHARLES FROHMAN PRESENTS

Francis Wilson

IN HIS GREATEST LAUGHING SUCCESS

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FUNNIER THAN CHARLEY'S AUNT.

Seats on Sale.

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WAGNER AND KEEPER, OFFER

BLANCH WALSH in

The KREUTZER SONATA

A DOMESTIC DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

Wednesday and Thursday, April 8-9

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LILLIAN RUSSELL in "WILDFIRE"

Friday and Saturday, April 10-11. Sat. Matinee

MR. WILLIAM A. BRADY PRESENTS

GRACE GEORGE

ASSISTED BY E. KEEVES SMITH in

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A THREE ACT COMEDY BY VICTORINE SARDOU

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LEW WELCH

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In Hal. Reid's Masterpiece

THE SHOEMAKER

2 Days, Starting FRIDAY, APRIL 3

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AMUSEMENTS. AMUSEMENTS.

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Henry Guy Carlton's Mirthful Society Comedy

THE BUTTERFLIES

AS PLAYED BY JOHN DREW AND MAUD ADAMS WITH TREMENDOUS SUCCESS EVERY EVENING—MATS. TUES., THURS., SAT. AND SUN.

TODAY—Last Two Times of QUO VADIS.

Starting Monday, April 6—The Burwood's New Leading Man, Wilfrid L. Roger, in "THE ONLY WAY."

FRANK R. ROBERSON, TRAVELOGUES

Monday, April 6 Russia Affair
Thursday, April 8 Imperial India
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CARON & FARNUM

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