

Gossip About Plays, Players and Playhouses

THE SERVANT IN THE HOUSE is a fine example of the modern trend of dramatic writing; it is successful because it presents a thought that is vitally interesting to the folk who now inhabit the world and who are making up a large part of the "ferment." It is in line with other writings. "Social unrest" has become a hackneyed expression and yet it is the accurate diagnosis of thinkers. All the great achievements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and their wonderful effect on the affairs of mankind—the sociological revolutions wrought by reason of the advance in thought, the direct benefit of invention and application of improvements to social conditions, with their resulting effect on the political status of the individual—have culminated in a condition that is described more succinctly by that phrase, "social unrest," than by any other. This unrest has enforced consideration in many ways and has engendered the attention of even the thoughtless to an extent that has caused the writer to wonder if the agitation were not going too far. It is not alone in the spread of the fallacies of socialism, so-called, that this is manifest, but in other and more serious aspects.

The church has felt the impulse, and is making efforts to meet the new phase of thought that encounters it at almost every turn. Dogmas are being recast; it is not intended or expected that the church will abandon the foundation of its existence, any more than that the general structure of society will be recast, but the general feeling that something is wrong somewhere and that some remedy must be had is so widespread that the thinkers are giving their earnest attention to the situation, to the end that out of the unrest may be brought good for all. The effort is directed to the end that the forces that are now working singly and unaided may be brought into harmony, and out of the use of purposes that are established will come a general forward movement, supported by the tremendous energy that is now dissipating its power in many directions and accomplishing little.

The little that has been accomplished, though, is for good. In the United States it has taken the general aspect of a higher and better conception of the duty that public servants owe to the people. In politics men are being more rigidly held to lines of honesty and probity in their conduct; public officers are expected to discharge their trust in the interest of the people as never before. The same is doing so on down through the whole line from the highest to the humblest the doctrine of interdependence is being forced home more and more. It is the great era of humanism as contrasted with the era of militarism and commercialism and industrialism and individualism, now fading, and the greater cause of humanity at large. All the triumphs of man in his contest with nature, all his efforts to win her secrets and subjugate her forces, puny though they may be, and insignificant their results when compared with what yet remains to be done, have been but factors in bringing about the conditions that make the new era possible. The world is small today, communication is swift and easy. An earthquake in Italy sets in motion work of relief in America before the dust clouds risen from toppling walls have settled. Steamers collide at sea and before the extent to which either is damaged is known, new boats on board help has been summoned from shore and from other steamships hundreds of miles away. A political dispute arises between two nations and before either can engage in war against the other the powers of the world are busy to secure an amicable adjustment. Every nation's activity has been so ordered as to bring him into closer and more intimate touch with his fellow men. The impulses of humanity were never so nearly in common as they are today.

It would be curious for wonder if the dramatists had not caught this note in life. Such plays which have dealt with human questions in a human way have been the pronounced successes for several seasons. Mere abstractions have been offered, some with a measure of effect and force, but the plays that have really made the consideration, even from the multitude, are those that have the vitality of concrete application. It is not the purpose here to defend the presumption of all or any of these. Some of them are indefensible, but the thought is uppermost that each has its value because it imparts to the social, moral or political, and adds its force, mild or mighty, to the equilibrium that is working to the betterment of the world. In this way the theater is doing its share to bring about the change all are striving for.

Specifically, the popularity of "The Servant in the House" rests almost wholly on the fact that it is offered at this time when the social unrest has the peculiar symptoms that are best reached by its doctrine of brotherhood. The lesson of the play is applicable directly to the proposition that the question of Cain has been answered in the affirmative, and that I am my brother's keeper. Being such, it is very essential that I should know how my brother fares in his daily walk. I am not permitted to cast him off or pass him by because of a foolish or selfish notion that his presence will hamper me in some of my ambitions. My brother is my brother, and if it is possible for me to help him, then I should help him. He may be a Dr. Man, but as such he is a "gentleman of necessary occupation," and his work is as essential to the continuation of social well being as is mine, even though I may be a learned leader of thought, proficient in exegesis, apologetics and other forms of theological erudition. Or, I may be the Dr. Man and he an intellectual giant at whose clarity of vision and potency of thought is lifting humanity higher and higher and nearer and nearer to divine perfection. Still, I am his keeper, and his welfare is mine, too. When this bond of feeling is established, and men come to realize that the real work is for the good of all, and that each is helpful to the other, then will the "social unrest" have taken on its highest possible form of usefulness, and in the generous rivalry to see who can accomplish most for all men will find the joy that is beyond understanding and beyond price.

It is worthy of note that the experiment of presenting a play for a week was proving a glorious success, until the Medicine Hat climate thrust its unwelcome presence on our attention. The first half of the week saw the Boyd theater well filled at each performance, and the interest in the play was growing steadily, but it did not warrant men in turning out in great throngs in such weather as prevailed on Thursday and Friday evenings. This is chiefly significant as proving that Omaha's importance as a "show" town is increasing, and that it is not unlikely that the city

will yet be removed entirely from the limbo of "one night" and be enrolled in that glorious company wherein the strong attractions stay in town long enough to give all who wish a chance to see them decently and in order. The building of another first-class theater in Omaha will make it possible to have two of the strong companies in Omaha at once, and if surface indications may be taken as a basis for judgment, that may be brought to pass. Omaha is growing intellectually and socially as fast as in other ways, and it will be found that the new theater has been needed by the time it is opened.

BENOIT CONSTANCE COQUELIN

Great French Actor Dies Very Suddenly at His Home.

During the week the dispatches from Paris brought word that Benoit Constance Coquelin, the greatest figure on the French stage, had died suddenly at his home. He had been at work for many days, preparing for his appearance in M. Rostand's forthcoming comedy, "Chanticleer," and only the day before his death had engaged in a lengthy rehearsal of the comedy. His death was due to acute embolism, from which he had long been a sufferer.

M. Coquelin had appeared in Omaha at once, on February 5, 1901, when he played "Le Tocsin" at the Boyd theater. He was the Boyd theater, making a presentation of Sardou's "La Tosca," that probably will never be forgotten by any who made up the great crowd that filled the theater on that occasion. It was typically French melodrama, presented by the greatest of French actors, supported by a company of actors personally chosen to assist the stars, and the result was a performance about as near perfect in every detail as could be wished.

The French press pays a high tribute to the genius of M. Coquelin whom it considers to have been one of the greatest theatrical figures of the age. Almost all the papers recall his last success in "Le Tocsin" and "Le Poison Affair." The Temps says:

"M. Coquelin will be mourned by every one by the authors, of whom he was a brilliant interpreter; by the public, of whom he was the idol; by the great and humble, and the little that has been accomplished, though, is for good. In the United States it has taken the general aspect of a higher and better conception of the duty that public servants owe to the people. In politics men are being more rigidly held to lines of honesty and probity in their conduct; public officers are expected to discharge their trust in the interest of the people as never before. The same is doing so on down through the whole line from the highest to the humblest the doctrine of interdependence is being forced home more and more. It is the great era of humanism as contrasted with the era of militarism and commercialism and industrialism and individualism, now fading, and the greater cause of humanity at large. All the triumphs of man in his contest with nature, all his efforts to win her secrets and subjugate her forces, puny though they may be, and insignificant their results when compared with what yet remains to be done, have been but factors in bringing about the conditions that make the new era possible. The world is small today, communication is swift and easy. An earthquake in Italy sets in motion work of relief in America before the dust clouds risen from toppling walls have settled. Steamers collide at sea and before the extent to which either is damaged is known, new boats on board help has been summoned from shore and from other steamships hundreds of miles away. A political dispute arises between two nations and before either can engage in war against the other the powers of the world are busy to secure an amicable adjustment. Every nation's activity has been so ordered as to bring him into closer and more intimate touch with his fellow men. The impulses of humanity were never so nearly in common as they are today.

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Benoit Constant Coquelin, known as Coquelin Aine, was the best known actor on the French stage. He was born in Paris, in 1832, and was the son of a baker. Deciding to go upon the stage he was admitted to the conservatory in 1850. He secured the first prize in comedy in 1860.

He made his debut at the Comedie Francaise in "La Deputee Amoureuse" the same year, and from 1860 to 1888 he created no less than forty-four parts. He left the Comedie Francaise in 1888 and toured Europe and America. In the United States he had a great success. In 1890 he returned to the Comedie Francaise as a pensioner.

He created his famous part, Cyrano de Bergerac, in 1887. He made a grand tour of America with Sarah Bernhardt in 1890 and appeared with her in "L'Alceste" in Paris in 1891. Of recent years he has been playing "Cyrano de Bergerac" and other roles in London.

Undoubtedly Coquelin's genius was largely influenced and developed by hard work and his habit of taking pains. Of the latter attribute many illustrations might be given. Like the little incident when he was rehearsing "Guizot" in Paris a few years ago. In one scene the populace came to pray at the village cross, and in the same scene Coquelin had to deliver a long and difficult speech.

But the poet of the cross was not to his liking, and so it was moved to one side, and the actor gave his speech there. Then it was changed to another position, and he recited his part for the third time with the utmost care. Still perfection had not been attained, and again the cross was set up elsewhere, and the player went over his speech once more.

At least three further positions were tried, and thrice more was the speech delivered, and then Coquelin announced his satisfaction and the ideal spot had been found.

But for Coquelin, it is said, the late M. Faure never would have become president of the French republic. It appears that about 1875 Faure was a tradesman at Havre; now and then he visited Paris, and on such occasions seldom failed to go to the Comedie Francaise, where he made the acquaintance of Coquelin. One day the latter said to Faure:

"Come and see me between the acts, and I'll introduce you to some one who will be interested to know you."

The some one turned out to be no less a person than Gambetta, who afterwards persuaded Faure to take up a parliamentary career, and helped him toward the presidency of the chair.

ENGLISH DRAMA ON WAY TO DOGS?

British Critics Say So in Paris.

LONDON, Jan. 30.—(Special Correspondence.)—English critics have gone out of their way to take exception to the remarks of Jerome K. Jerome in Paris on the state of the drama in Great Britain. The famous humorist, speaking seriously, holds a most gloomy view, as must all except the most biased or invidious of observers, on the present condition of affairs in John Bull's island. To quote Jerome, who was but giving voice to the universal opinion the English stage "confines itself to beaten paths and is content with narrow and out-of-date methods. It repeats always the same sentimental stories set forth within a limited sphere of outlook and through the medium of characters which are purely conventional and without any reality."

Those here who take exception to Jerome's words lament the fact that he had not something better to tell his French audience. But who is to blame for that, pray?

Although Arthur Bourchier who is a

good actor and one of the most enterprising of English managers as well and who has just returned to London from a trip on the continent does not go so far as to make comparisons which are always odious to the British mind especially when they disparage the home talent, has something to say which so aptly fits in with the remarks of Jerome that I will quote it:

"I was much impressed when in Austria," continued Mr. Bourchier, "with the excellence of the theaters of Vienna and Budapest. I would place the actresses of Vienna quite as high as the great actresses of France. The men did not strike me as being quite so good. In Austria I was struck with the clever way in which the plays of two well known English writers had been adapted in musical comedies. I mean Mr. Zangwill's 'Merely Mary Ann' and Mr. Shaw's 'Arms and the Man,' neither of them, you would think, a piece likely to make a successful play."

"The lighting of the stage in Germany made a great impression on me. They light their pieces, in many theaters, absolutely like nature. For instance, if the scene portrayed is a room in an old castle, and the time is supposed to be sunrise, the stage will not be lit all over, as is the case with us, but the stage will be lit in darkness, and then those windows which are presumed by the management to face the east will gradually be brightened by the rays of the rising sun. Only those parts of the room which would actually in real life be affected are brought beneath the influence of the light, and those players whose position in the scene places them without the reach of the light speak their lines from the darkness. The effect is most weird, but, I consider, extremely artistic. Mr. Pinero alone, I believe, among English writers, has tried to get an effect in the same way. That was in 'Iris.' By the German method, of course, you lose the player's facial expression, and I question whether it will be considered an advantage by the majority of English playgoers."

"I saw a most effective instance of stage lighting in Berlin. It was at the performance of a travesty of 'Tristan and Isolde.' In one scene the characters sit round a supper board lit only with candles. All

those who, as guests, will be called upon to speak are seated round the table. The original 'merry widow,' and George Edwards, the manager of the production, Max Pemberton, the president of the club, will officiate. Tickets have been limited to 500 in number, and there is a brisk demand in theatrical circles in anticipation of a royal good time.

JOHN AVA CARPENTER.

Too Many Grandchildren

WHEN William H. Crane and the late Stuart Robson severed their business relations after a continual professional career covering fourteen years behind the footlights, there were many players who wondered at the separation. The dissolution of the partnership occurred in Chicago at the close of their last season in Bronson Howard's play, "The Henrietta," and the separation was a perfectly amicable one. A newspaper reporter, however, who persisted in thinking there had been trouble, begged Crane for a statement. The comedian looked seriously at the interviewer, and replied:

"It was really quite a simple matter that brought about our separation."

and by the poor actors, of whom he was the benefactor."

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I was the one who kicked, and when you hear the facts, you will not be surprised, unless you think I am over-sensitive. You see, from the beginning of our partnership, I was forever playing Robson's father in all the plays we produced. I was the father of the fact that I was his junior by ten years. When we arrived in Chicago I discovered that he had a married daughter in the city who had two children. Then I rebelled. I told Robson that although it would have hurt my feelings to do so, I would have continued to play his father so long as I knew nothing about the grandchildren, but I was darned if I would play father to a man that I knew was a grandfather twice over."

the other lights of the theater are cut off, and the effect is wonderfully realistic. One feels that the thing is an actuality, and that there is a real gain to the strength and life of the play. Altogether, I do not think the management of the leading comedians have much to learn from England. Their arrangements are perfection."

Bourchier is to produce Bernstein's "Barnum" in London shortly. His version closely resembles that of Gillette, which was produced in the United States and which is almost a word for word translation of the original, despite the criticisms which have been made upon it.

A "Merry Widow" dinner is to be given at the Hotel Cecil on January 31 by the O. P. club in honor of the principals of the Boyd's theater production. Among

Critic Turns Actress



JANET PRIEST.

Janet Priest, watch-charm comedienne and star of "Purl," who will be seen as Norma at the Krug next week, is a coo and a purr, a kiss and a song. Priest is the only dramatic critic on this wide old earth who had the courage to try to do what she told others to do: the only critic who even went on the stage. It was in Minneapolis where Miss Priest had criticized an actress and an actress came to the place, and among his various gifts to the townspeople he even gives them the very church in which he preaches God's word to them. But because he offers the protection of his home to a young woman who has been deserted by her husband, the women of the village, headed by the town busy body, Mrs. Brown, proceed to make life miserable for Rev. Singleton and all the members of his household. Rev. Singleton (to be played by Mr. Grey) is one of those noble, generous souls whose heart is filled with kind of human kindness. Her household consists of Aunt Matilda, a distant relative by marriage; she manages his household and everybody

BOYD'S Theater

TONIGHT Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday MATINEE Wednesday

THE DISTINGUISHED COMEDIAN
Mr. Tim Murphy
PRESENTING HIS COMEDY SUCCESS

"OLD INNOCENCE"
BY CHAS. KINGSLEY—Splendid Production—Beautiful Costumes.
Cast includes DOROTHY SHERROD

Thursday, Friday, Saturday—MATINEE SATURDAY
CHARLES FROHMAN Presents

Wm. H. CRANE

IN HIS GREATEST LAUGHING SUCCESS
FATHER AND THE BOYS

George Ade's Funniest and Best Comedy—4 Months at Empire Theater New York
SEATS ON SALE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1st

Monday and Tuesday Evenings, February 8 and 9
Direct From a Sensational Success in Chicago, New York and Boston
HENRY S. HARRIS—Presents

Robert EDESON

IN HIS BEST PLAY
The Call of The North

by GEORGE BROADHURST

those who, as guests, will be called upon to speak are seated round the table. The original "merry widow," and George Edwards, the manager of the production, Max Pemberton, the president of the club, will officiate. Tickets have been limited to 500 in number, and there is a brisk demand in theatrical circles in anticipation of a royal good time.

JOHN AVA CARPENTER.

COMING TO THE OMAHA THEATERS
Plays that Will Be Offered Here During the Week.

Tim Murphy will open his engagement at the Boyd tonight and stay until after Wednesday, with Wednesday matinee. The original "merry widow," and George Edwards, the manager of the production, Max Pemberton, the president of the club, will officiate. Tickets have been limited to 500 in number, and there is a brisk demand in theatrical circles in anticipation of a royal good time.

At the Boyd Thursday, Friday, Saturday evenings and Sunday matinee Charles Frohman will present W. H. Crane, a most welcome visitor, for the first time in "Father and the Boys," by George Ade, a comedy which leaped into instant popularity on the occasion of its original production, and which was speedily acclaimed as the best and most diverting stage output of the Indiana dramatist. It has really covered its author and its chief exponent with a great deal of glory. Now, in its second season, it has been received with genuine enthusiasm wherever presented, and it has to its credit, among other achievements, a run of four months at the Empire theater, New York. No better or more congenial role than the central figure has been offered Mr. Crane in many years. In fact, it is a typical Crane part, played in Crane's own inimitable comic manner, with his genial personality to back it, and simply bristling with all the familiar and lovable Craneisms. In it occasionally there is the faintest suspicion of pathos, but no strong dramatic moments. It is for the greatest part comedy pure and simple, and comedy of the hilarious kind to be expected from Mr. Crane when he has the right kind of material; and Mr. Ade has supplied Mr. Crane with just what suits his methods and personality, and his audiences as well.

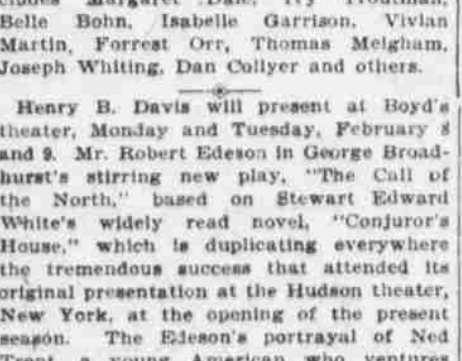
"Father and the Boys" deals with the terminating phase of everyday life—the breach which comes between a father and his two sons owing to the fact that the old gentleman, who has accumulated a fortune in the city, cannot get away from the simple habits acquired when he was a country lad, while the boys who are college bred, with a strong leaning towards athletics and society, cannot assimilate with father whom they consider hopelessly behind the times. Then father, to teach the boys a lesson, does a little swift sprinting himself, and goes at such a rapid pace that they are powerless to hold him in, nor will he consent to slow down until he has brought them to their senses.

"Father and the Boys" will be presented with a splendid scenic outfit and with the original supporting company, which includes Margaret Dale, Ivy Troutman, Belle Bohn, Isabelle Garrison, Vivian Martin, Forrest Orr, Thomas Melham, Joseph Whiting, Dan Collier and others.

Henry B. Davis will present at Boyd's theater, Monday and Tuesday, February 8 and 9, Mr. Robert Edeson in George Broadhurst's stirring new play, "The Call of the North," based on Stewart Edward White's widely read novel, "Confessors House," which is duplicating everywhere the tremendous success that attended its original presentation at the Hudson theater, New York, at the opening of the present season. The Edeson's portrayal of Ned Trent, a young American who ventures into the wilderness of northwest Canada to avenge the cruel murder of his father, is hailed by the critics as the highest standard of acting the popular star has yet achieved.

"Lover's Lane," by Clyde Fitch, which will be the Burwood's offering of the week commencing this afternoon, tells the story of the narrow prejudices that existed in a small rural community. A young minister comes to the place, and among his various gifts to the townspeople he even gives them the very church in which he preaches God's word to them. But because he offers the protection of his home to a young woman who has been deserted by her husband, the women of the village, headed by the town busy body, Mrs. Brown, proceed to make life miserable for Rev. Singleton and all the members of his household. Rev. Singleton (to be played by Mr. Grey) is one of those noble, generous souls whose heart is filled with kind of human kindness. Her household consists of Aunt Matilda, a distant relative by marriage; she manages his household and everybody

Coming to the Krug



MISS STEPHANIE LONGFELLOW IN "GRAUSTARK"

George Barr McCutcheon, one of the most prolific writers of fiction of the present day, turned out a rare story for stage purposes when he gave to the public his great success, "Graustark," which will be the attraction at the Krug for three nights starting Thursday, February 4, with a matinee on Friday and Saturday. One of the principal charms of the performance lies in the excellent work of Miss Stephanie Longfellow, as Princess Yvette, the heroine of the play. Her work is sympathetic at all times, but there is injected just enough coyness and humor to give a contrast to the more serious moments. Miss Longfellow is a grandnee of the immortal bard, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who gave to American poetry, "Hiawatha," and herself a writer of more than passing notice.

In general, this part will be played by the Omaha favorite, Edith Spencer. "Simplicity Johnson," called by the gossip "a poor house rat," is the part originated by Maude Monroe, and will be portrayed by Burwood company, Aunt Mollie, a deaf old woman and Uncle Bill Walters, both having been saved from the horrors of the poor house by the minister's generosity, will be played by Miss Jeffery and Mr. Clisbee. Miss Down will be the deserted wife, protected by the minister, and Miss Elliott will be Mary Larkin, beloved of the pastor. Miss Stearns will display her versatility on the eccentric comedy role of Molly Mealy, the village school teacher. Mr. Todd will play Herbert Woodbridge, the one character from the city, and Mr. Connor will be Brown the village grocer. Mr. Ingraham is cast for Deacon Steele, and Mr. Bacon will be the bill-poster and town "foo ball." A large corps of auxiliaries are enlisted for the production, and artists Fulton and Wolff have done themselves proud in the scenic embellishment. Matinee will be given today, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

For the first four days next week the Burwood will present the laughable farce, "Our Bachelors," one of the funniest acts ever written. The last three days of the week will find the theater occupied by David Belasco's own company, in a stupendous production of the known success, "The Warrens of Virginia." The Belasco company is headed by the eminent actor, Frank Keenan. The production necessitates the use of two sixty-foot cars for its transportation. During these three days the Burwood company will enjoy a vacation.

"A Millionaire Tramp" will be presented at the Krug today and Monday by a splendid company. The play contains an original story with lines that produce both tears and good cheer. Considerable special scenery is carried, the chief setting being the Church of the Holy Cross in Act II.

"On Trial for His Life," a new military play by Owen Davis, will be the attraction at the Krug theater for two days starting Tuesday, with the usual matinee on Wednesday. It literally reeks of the atmosphere of the Mexican mountains and far southwest, where most of its four acts and twelve scenes are laid. A dozen Zouaves, who are experts in their line and who give a military drill which is an attraction in itself, are employed in the production. Six of the best groomed and withal well trained army horses direct from Fort Worth are also used. A. H. Woods, who owns the drama, has staged the play in his usual careful and characteristic style.

George Barr McCutcheon's "Graustark," in dramatized form, is to be the attraction at the Krug theater three nights starting Thursday, February 4, with a special Friday and Saturday matinee. The popularity of the book is not more than the impression made by the play. The pretty story of the American following half around the world the woman he so madly admires and finally wins is hand-

led by the writer in a most entertaining manner. The play is presented by an exceptionally clever company, headed by Miss Stephanie Longfellow.

The twenty songs with which the three acts of Owen Davis' "School Days" are interspersed are said to be of the sort that has made the fame of Mr. Edwards as a composer of popular airs. They will be heard at the Krug theater when "School Days" is presented.

A new European display of daring billed as "Castellano and Brother" will be seen shortly at the Orpheum. It is a remarkable cycling act, introducing a double somersault in mid air, and has everywhere created a marked sensation.

Orpheum patrons will this week have an opportunity of seeing the skill with which Will Rogers handles the lariat. He performs the most remarkable feats with ease and mingles a native humor with his performance. The musical act presented by the Staleys and called "Staley's Transformation" is a distinct novelty. It is in two scenes, the one a blacksmith shop, the other a drawing room. The change is made in a flash. The sketch of the week is "Mr. Timid," presented by a company which includes Julia Kingsley. The Staleys present a novel acrobatic act and not the least pleasing feature of their work is the smiling ease with which it is performed. The well known comedians, the Swor brothers, will give a black-face turn, in which they have been received with marked favor. The act of Clivette and "The Veiled Prophetess" is one in

The BEE BILL of the DAYS

THIS WEEK'S ATTRACTIONS

Boyd's Theater....."Old Innocence"
Krug Theater....."A Millionaire Tramp"
Burwood....."Father and the Boys"
Orpheum Theater....."Lover's Lane"
Staley and Birbeck's....."The Musical Blacksmiths"

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BURWOOD

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Just This Week!
LOVER'S LANE

Production complete in every detail
Maude Monroe, "Simplicity Johnson"
MATINEE: TODAY, TUES., THURS., SATURDAY

Next "OUR BACHELORS"
COMING—THURSDAY, FRIDAY, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 12, 13
DAVID BELASCO'S "THE WARRENS OF VIRGINIA" FRANK KEENAN

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and the Belasco Theater, N. Y. Company, as played 300 nights in N. Y.
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