

### TALK WITH BEERBOHM TREE

New Actor Knight Ranges from Wit to Philosophy.

TITLE NOT YET REALLY IN USE

Two Advisers Who Help Out the Interview Keenly Interested in Skyscrapers, but Not Sure of American Plans.

LONDON, July 31.—There is an air of great dignity about His Majesty's theater, Haymarket. The porter, a resplendent personage whom you mistake in the beginning for one of the Royal Fusiliers at least, advises at your departure a taxi rather than a hansom with a manner that would grace a court function. English women who shop in the forenoon with trains to their bows drop them when they approach the bit of pavement that fronts the establishment so as to get into the picture properly. Messenger boys going by tilt their foolish little caps more rakishly over their big ears and chauffeurs tout triumphantly.

In the delicate frigidness of the Empire reception room stage ingenuities ask each other if it is really true, as Wilde said, that a woman who would tell her age would tell anything and when you mention the reason for your appearance to one of the employes he stutters "Sir-Mister Tree," for the new dignity has not reached the facile utterance of everyday utterance. Incidentally you learn that while it is quite proper at this moment to say "Yes Sir-ee" when Sir Herbert addresses you he will not be invested with his new honors for another week, having been merely formally notified of his coming reward, after which he will be welcomed to all court ceremonies and levees, an honor which has been bestowed from time to time upon Squire Bancroft, Henry Irving, John Hare and Charles Wyndham.

Radical that he is, one of the members of the Tree company said that all the honors lumped together did not amount to the O. M. (Order of Merit) which George Meredith had and that really "so far as I can see the only good a 'sir' does an actor is the knowledge that it pleases mother." It certainly pleases as well the corps of theater attendants, whom it has invested with a halo of superiority.

On the Way Up.  
So far as can be discovered in a casual inspection the only weak point in the magnificence of the whole establishment is the possession of a tiny elevator, which is introduced as an "American lift," and which you work yourself by means of a pressed in thumb. You don't know why, but it stops when it gets there, which may be the reason it is called American. The termination of your journey is high up for London, the sixth story, and you wait Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's word of welcome in a charming corner facing an oak door studded with big black nails. You are visibly impressed, and if it were not that you are allowed another moment's respite in the dome you would feel yourself absolutely unequal to the occasion.

The dome consists of a suite of rooms, terminating in the sanctuary of "Sir Herbert," where he works and receives guests and professional compatriots. It is a pleasant room with a semi-workaday aspect, big easy chairs and leather covered couches. The writing table has a fresh bouquet and is peppered with coroneted envelopes. There is a tireless telephone very much in evidence, which rings continually the information that there is a line of impatient people waiting to stand in your footsteps. While it is being told with rare patience that Sir Herbert is "rightfully occupied," you note the small inner suite beyond the reception room, where during the busiest season Sir Herbert lives, never leaving the theater, day or night.

One Feature of the Dome.  
There is one artistic feature of the dome which deserves special attention and which is later pointed out to your notice by its admiring owner. This is the line of wall panels, representing in the outer room scenes from the tragedies of Shakespeare and in the inner a corresponding number from the comedies. Behind his chair is the Falstaff, by some critic designated as Beerbohm Tree's best bit of work. The mural decoration was done by Charles Buchtel, whose paintings of Tree as King John, Malvolio in "Twelfth Night" and Isadore Izard in "Business is Business" are masterpieces of clever portraiture. The originals of these are in the actor's possession, and he also calls attention to a water color by a well known Japanese artist, representing a typical crowd of first nighters, pit and gallery, watched by zealous hobbies, entitled "Outside His Majesty's Theater."

It is during the busiest of the busy season, when the fifth annual revival of Shakespearean plays, with a new one every night, is on the docket, preceded and succeeded by two weeks of "The School for Scandal"—a series that has been London's most popular success—the few minutes' interview is accorded, and it is natural that the first impression of Sir Herbert is that of a very tired man, which even his great height and generous sized figure does not counterbalance. He is not essentially different from the Tree who visited America twelve years ago and today admits with a sigh that he "only got as far as Chicago." He stands six feet one inch and has lost all right to play the lean and melancholy Dane, judging from physical proportions alone. He is clean shaven, is slightly bald, has pale eyelashes, which shade very remarkably eyes, of the color of turquoise matrix normally, which change expression and tint, from the sapphire of a pleased hospitality to the gray green of cynical outbursts against the submerging teeth who believe themselves fitted to be playwrights because they own a bottle of ink, toward whom he is particularly bitter.

Playwriting Not Easy.  
It is of them he says some time during the interview. "It is only the smaller things in literature you imagine that they can turn out a play as easily as they cover a sheet of paper with scribbles. When the play is produced they recognize what an undertaking it is and that you don't often find a good one any more than you often see a comet, a great poem, or a great painting. Playwriting is the most difficult of all arts. You can afford to try experiments in America perhaps, for you have a theatergoing public drawn from a population of eighty or 100,000,000." A poetic looking young man has drifted in and called himself serpentine in a deep chair. If you have committed the mistake "mentally of looking you blot out your error, for frequently as your questions Sir Herbert turns with childlike trustfulness to him and asks "What do I think about So and So?" and the poetic faced states without a moment's hesitation just what Sir Herbert does think, and Sir Herbert says that he does think it.

Having adjusted him to the scheme of the interview, you start anew when the door opens and a new comer like himself

### At the Omaha Theaters

William Morris About to Break Into Omaha with Another Vaudeville Theater.—Silent Drama at the Boyd, Mixed Program at the Burwood and Drama at the Air-Dome.

WHEN William Morris began his wild career as a hustler of the vaudeville "trust," he incorporated himself and then began to dot the prairies with new theaters. Morris has secured control of houses in New York, Chicago, and some of the other large cities, where he hands out a line of vaudeville that is said to surpass even the "advanced" type on which Kiaw & Briarley burned their fingers a few months ago. He is now busy with a vaudeville scheme that shall belt the world, and announces that he has theaters enough to permit him sending an act on a world-girdling tour, booked solid from the time of leaving New York to the return. All right. But he has included Omaha in this circuit, and his advance notices say he has a house in Omaha. All right again. Only no one in Omaha knows where it is. This omission is to be corrected, though, for Mr. Morris advances man is just on the eve of building another fine theater in Omaha, something the like of which we have never seen. Definite announcement of the location and other details will be made later. All right. Mr. Morris will find Omaha a live wire on the vaudeville proposition, just as Mr. Beck did, and Messrs. Sullivan & Conside did. If he can get his shows in here, he will find plenty of people ready to fall for their things. They have stood for about everything that can be offered in the way of "super acts," "song pluggers," "chaasers," and the like, and one or two more will not make much difference. But Mr. Morris will be welcomed to all court ceremonies and levees, an honor which has been bestowed from time to time upon Squire Bancroft, Henry Irving, John Hare and Charles Wyndham.

"The Silent Drama" is still drawing the crowds, and proving that the people really do like that sort of entertainment. Pictures of a high order are always welcome, and when they show real folks doing real things, they become doubly interesting. The pictures shown last week had a number that were of uncommon interest, including the first picture of the Wright brothers at their aeroplane experiments at Fort Myer, the big automobile race on the Indiana track, and others of that nature. Then the dramatic pictures, shown were also extremely good, one of western life being especially realistic. The program for today will be in keeping with the past, and in a cool and comfortable seat at the Boyd the spectator will witness a show that he will never regret.

What is said to be one of the best arrangements of the popular summer time brand of vaudeville is drawing such fine crowds to the Burwood this summer is the program prepared for the first half of the week, starting this afternoon. In a moving picture way there will be many new films displayed and covering the entire

squarely into the chair on the other side and laughs himself gently into the conversation. He is in a way as important an aid, apparently, as the pre-Raphaelite who has been acting as pacer to that of Sir Herbert's. His name is mentioned.—Mr. Comyns Carr—and by the help of his notes and the mnemonics of the other, the interview goes on to its legitimate conclusion.

American Plays in England.  
Sir Herbert has been asked why it is that so few American plays succeed in England, and he responds once before the pre-Raphaelite one can tell him what to say: "You people in America think nothing of traveling. You come here with as little care and thought as a New York man would cross a ferry to Brooklyn—is it? The consequence is that you are more or less familiar with our life, and when we send plays to you they do not depict conditions that are absolutely strange. But we don't go out there very much. We make our wills and take leave of our friends when we do. You know a lot more about us than we do about you, and the purely American play that we do send invariably depicts realities with which we are absolutely unfamiliar. It is a play of conditions that have merely local significance."

"They don't get outside the cab radius," interpolates Mr. Comyns Carr, and the pre-Raphaelite murmurs: "Just within the shilling fare."

You venture a suggestion that realities are supposed to be local, but are corrected immediately by Sir Herbert. "That is the unfortunate part of realities; they are so essentially local—like organic diseases. Ideals, on the contrary, are not, and when the American playwright begins to send us plays with more idealistic tendencies, perhaps, who knows? We may understand them better."

Then courteously, as if the alleged ignorance concerning matters American may have wounded, Sir Herbert asks concerning the one fact that apparently has impressed itself on the English consciousness.

Interested in Skyscrapers.  
"Your skyscrapers," he asks, feelingly, "are they—er—taller than when I last heard?"

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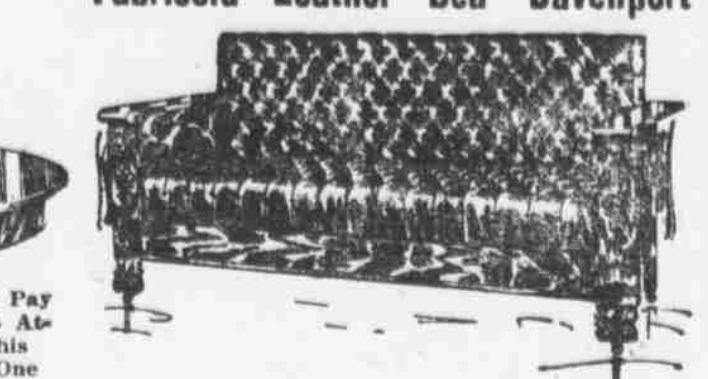
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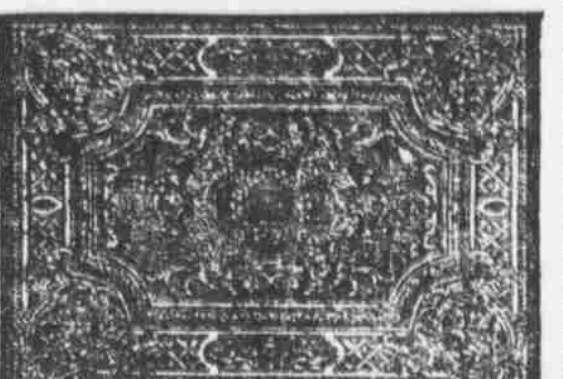
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