

What is Going on in the Stage World Briefly Told

Why George Cohan Has a Vogue

Analysis of the Qualities and Characteristics Which Give This Young Performer His Amazing Popularity—How Miss Helen Ware Got Her First Successful Start in the Theatrical World.

YOUNG Mr. Cohan has publicly expressed the hope "that somebody however you may take my name seriously." A famous reply would be easy, for flippancy is about the easiest attainment there is. Without, however, devoting any more earnest exhortation to Mr. Cohan than he himself says he desires, it may be remarked that he is an interesting individual in several ways.

For one thing he occupies the attention of the public because of his extreme success in gathering the dollars. Anyone who makes much money and makes it rapidly is an object of interest to a large part of the American public.

But why the public has liked him so well is a thing more worth while. It is true that some of the dollars have come Cohan's way because he is a clever advertiser of himself and has had clever men hired to advertise him. But this will not account for it all. There are many other things which shine sometimes a little longer than a meteor, but not much more time, and the conclusion is inevitable that there is something else—that the theatergoers like Cohan to a considerable extent. If so, why?

The answer is in part that Cohan's musical comedies embody much of that clever rapid fire punning and play upon words which when done upon the stage, and done well, give enjoyment to many Americans. Punning and playing upon words in ordinary life is generally thoroughly detested, but in musical comedy it is different. Remember, for instance, that the dialogue between Mary the maid and Burns, in which the girl utters puns which the audience chuckled and chuckled. Again, in "Little Johnny Jones" and all the other Cohan efforts there has been much of this sort of dialogue.

An instance of this kind of play upon words is the following from "The Yankee Prince" is a good example:

Fiddling—I was always smart as a child. Mrs. Fiddling—You are still smart as a child.

Crane for Cleanliness

Eminent Comedian Declares that Plays Which Make Most Noise for Shadiness Have Failed Emphatically in the Long Run, the Audiences Insisting on Clean Dramas Being Offered on the Stage.

"Corruption wins not more than honesty," King Henry VIII. III.

THE sentiment of the great master playwright of all time is surely illustrated better than ever in our day," said William H. Crane in a recent interview.

"What I mean to say," said Mr. Crane, "is that the whole plane of society has been lifted to some extent. I do not pretend to be very close in estimating it, but civilization must mean something, and it relates to all factors of life. A pretty theater with artistic scenery, arranged for the comfort and pleasure of the audience, convenient in every respect for the purpose of the drama, seems almost in itself to result in refinement of the audience—perhaps in a few years, but the tendency of better living, better dressing, purer forms of literature in general is reflected in the stage, which in itself, I think, is more of a reflection of modern life than any other thing in the community."

"Do you take any part in the current discussion about the best way to estimate the value of a play?"

"I have my own ideas on that point," said Mr. Crane, "though I do not really go into argument on the subject. Where I start in the test is that, so far as the play goes, the author himself should have his intention fathomed in writing it, and the next, whether he had speech to express himself adequately. If his intention is impure, then the play will be of the same sort, and if the contrary is the case, within, of course, reasonable limits—for theories on that point are very much at variance with each other—the play will reflect the essential quality of the author's mind. But, as I say, I think one should start with what the writer tried to do."

"When you have a play which strikes its adroit turns, and its tinge of burlesque,

you as one full of humanity, what next do you require of it, as a dramatic artist?

"Well, I may say in general terms, I require that it shall be entertaining. Frankly, in the theater I do not care a straw for preaching or for instruction for their own sake. I am quite firm in the opinion that though 'art for art's sake' is a catch phrase that is not to be carried very far, yet in the particular field of the drama I feel that the play above all things must be entertaining. It should have an abundance of human feeling in it. It should be entertaining on its merits."

"Perhaps I am old-fashioned about insisting on clean plays, but it is so I feel that there are a good many who feel as I do and, in fact, if you look over the history of plays for the last twenty-five years you will find that those plays which have made the most noise because they were most shady in some particular or other have ultimately failed most emphatically. As you go through the whole list of successful plays on the stage at this moment—no matter whether tragic, comic or midway—the audience that can be relied upon to pay a fair price to hear them, are audiences that want things clean, and they pay for those that are clean. They are practically the only plays which make much of a success and not merely run for one season but are called for year after year. You find no piece of the unclean kind that has a continuing popularity."

Theatrical Notes.

Gertrude Dalton, who plays Beth Elliott in the James Forbes comedy, "The Traveling Salesman," enjoys the distinction of having been at one time leading woman for the only star who ever made Chicago a one-night stand—Tim Murphy.

Eleanor Lawson of "Such a Little Queen" company, before becoming an actress was a teacher in an Indian school in southern California. Miss Lawson is soon to give a play in New York written by one of her Indian pupils, which will be played by Indian actors recruited from the students at the Indian school at Carlisle, Penn.

Clara Lipman, (Mrs. Louis Mann), who has been in retirement since 1907 when she played her London engagement in "Julie Bonbon" will return to the stage before the new year to star in a new comedy entitled "The Hills of Troy," by Alexander Blount and George Thorne. The play is an adaptation from the French, the original production having had a long run in Paris, where Jeanne Granier created the leading role. Clara Lipman will appear under the management of Louis Mann.

Robert Edeson has begun a tour in "The Noble Spaniard," W. Somerset Maugham's farce, at New London, Conn., accompanied by the original New York cast which includes Gertrude Coghlan, Macey Harlan, Vernon Chase, Cordelia Graydon, Ann Murdock, Maggie Holloway Fisher, Cyril Chadwick and Desiree Lazard. Mr. Edeson's appearance in the far west in his present vehicle will be the first time he has made such an extensive tour since he played the foot ball here in "Strongheart."

At the Omaha Theaters

"The Third Degree to Play One Week at the Boyd, Beginning Tonight—Eleanor Glyn's "Three Weeks" to be at the Burwood for Four Nights—Will M. Cressy at Orpheum and Porter J. White at the Krug.

"THE Third Degree" begins an engagement of one week at the Boyd's tonight, and it is expected that this Charles Klein's latest play, will prove as great a success as the other popular ones which have been in New York and Chicago. To the few who may know the true meaning of the title of "The Third Degree" it may be said to concern that phase of the unwritten law which falls in favor of the police in their frequently employed method of gaining a confession from a supposed criminal. Mr. Klein has taken a rather delicate subject for dramatic material, but it is said that he has overcome the difficulties in an entertaining and pleasing manner. Although other dramatists have dealt with the subject of hypnotism, Mr. Klein is remembered to have been the first of our own playwrights to use hypnotic suggestion in the story of a play, when in 1897 his "Dr. Helbraff" was produced.

"The Third Degree" tells of the social undoing of Howard Jeffrey, Jr., through his marriage with a true, womanly-spirited shop girl. The boy's ultra-aristocratic father cuts him from family ties with a paltry allowance, which causes Howard to face extreme need. In search of funds, he comes to the art studio of a "frat" mate who still owes him a college debt, in the hope of a loan. While feeling his cups, he falls fast asleep on a sofa. His friend, bankrupt and desperate, steps into an adjoining room and, fulfilling a threat, commits suicide. The police arrive before Jeffrey learns of the crime and he is seized as its perpetrator, put through a long and sweating by an unscrupulous police captain and finally made to confess murder. The influence of a sincere wife in the battle for her husband's life clears him and wins for her the affections of her father-in-law.

"The Third Degree" comes here direct from the Hudson theater, New York, and the Illinois, Chicago, and Henry D. Harris presents the first cast, including Helen Ware, Lida McMillan, Ralph Delmore, James Seely, Malcolm Duncan, Fraser Coulter, Walter Craven, Earl Williams, William Herbert and others.

Much has been said and written about the play, "Three Weeks," booked to appear at the Burwood, for four nights, starting this evening as to its being moral or otherwise. No book, even among the "six best sellers," has been so widely read or discussed, not only in America but in Europe, and it is a fact that perhaps a majority of those who have read the book have done so with the one idea of whetting their appetite for sensationalism. But to the reader who thinks, who tries ever so little to delve beneath the surface of things, the novel shows that Mrs. Glyn had a purpose and a great one, for it leads up to the greatest question that is confronting every throne in the old world today, as well as the leaders of society in our own country—the marriage of royalty, of state and convenience, the marriage where no thought or pride of love is entertained. Such a marriage, Mrs. Glyn believes, is immoral every sense of the word and is the direct cause of more unhappiness and the wrecking of more souls than any other condition in our social lives.

If there be any unpleasant scenes of suggestions in the book, they are absolutely none in the play. Only the plot has been used in the dramatization, and the play is as far from unpleasant suggestions as "Romeo and Juliet." The production is magnificent, the scenery, the costumes and the music being conceived by one of the greatest masters of stagecraft in the profession, and the cast has been selected with a view to fit perfectly the rather unusual types that the play demands. There will be a special women's matinee Wednesday.

John William Mackenzie Thackeray's "wrote of eobs" there have been many changes rung on this brand of plot, and each new writer that has tackled the subject has found something more to say. The novel's attack being made is from

Music and Musical Notes

THE following letter was sent by a Chicago contractor to the editor of the Chicago musical paper, and it has a decidedly unique ring to it, it may prove interesting:

"Dear Mr. —: For some time past I have been thinking—

"What does it profit others when I sing songs, thinking more of the musical setting than the words.

"From time to time I have gone to listen to our great artists, hoping, longing, to hear something helpful, and an always disappointed.

"If one of our public speakers should talk in a rambling way, thinking only of the beauty of the speaking voice,

"His personality might be charming, his delivery good. He might be even so great an orator, but if he did not say something worth while we would go away pitying that man, sorrowing because he, to all outward appearances, so capable, should be so lacking!

"When we hear a pianist we expect to hear a song without words.

"When we hear a vocalist we expect to hear a song with words. We ought to hear songs that are chosen carefully, prayerfully—great consideration given to the words, that they might help and cheer and be an uplift to all who hear them.

"I wish to say the purpose of my work will be to give programs this year that are composed of songs selected from our best composers, as to verse and music. I will, in other words, sing only songs that have a message.

"For when God gave us our voices he expected us to say something when we speak, and what is singing but speaking in a singing tone? Very truly yours for service."

The name of this contractor does not make any difference, but the idea is a good one: whether singing is but speaking in a singing tone or whether it is not, the fact remains that when God gave us our voices he expected us to say something. Yes, he expected us to say something worth while; he expected us to have something to say. And we would all be wise to follow the example of the Chicago contractor.

The following very pertinent remarks were made recently in an article by Mr. W. J. Henderson, musical editor of the New York Sun. Mr. Henderson usually does make pertinent remarks, and these are on the old, old subject of American abroad. Speaking of the various teachers in Berlin, Paris and other cities, he laconically adds, speaking of one representative American teacher, "Would they study with him if his studio was in Forty-third street?" He then proceeds to say: "There is a lot of nonsense about this going abroad to study. Another opportunity to find out just what the American students desire is offered by the engagement of Milka Ternina, one of the greatest dramatic artists that ever trod the stage of the Metropolitan opera house, as the principal teacher of singing at the Institute of Musical Art. She is already at work there and the question arises whether ambitious young American artists should study with her. Will they rather wait till she returns to Europe and then spend thousands of dollars to follow her instruction, which for many of them can now be reached at the expenditure of a few-cent carfare?

"Here is a chance for would-be opera darlings to learn their calling at home under the direction of a past mistress of the art. It will be interesting to note whether they seize the opportunity or pass it by and cross the ocean to study under one of the American teachers who went over there simply because being there makes a better business proposition."

Jean de Reszke has a flourishing vocal school in Paris. He teaches from 9 a. m. till 7 p. m. He has hundreds of American pupils. But suppose he were engaged to teach at the Institute of Musical Art. Would he have them then? Watch the Ternina experiment."

No one would not Godowsky, as related before in this music column of the Bee, was not crowded with pupils in Chicago, nor had he to injure his health playing a vast number of American cities. Not that any of us heard of it. He played one time at the Creighton theater (now the Orpheum), and it was fifteen or twenty-one people who were present? Something like that anyhow, and Mr. Joseph Gahn became indignant, and then the more he thought about it, the worse it seemed to him, and the upshot of the matter was that Herr Joseph went out with a subscription paper and sold sub-

Music and Musical Notes

scriptions and brought Godowsky back to Omaha and this time he played to a full house. Later the present writer of this column took a "flyer" on Godowsky at a recital at the Boyd, and the artist's drawing powers were then large enough to fill the house. But students and reviewers do not make one grand rush to Berlin to study with one of Godowsky's assistants, more than likely, for he has assistants, and he himself is frequently on concert engagements.

John McCormack, the new Irish tenor, seems to be the sensation of the musical hour over across the water. The writer heard many things of this promising young man two years ago, and a year ago last summer, heard him in a small part. The Irish tenor will doubtless come to the front, and see to it that McCormack gets a big welcome when he comes over. He is only twenty-five, and the youngest tenor who ever took a leading role at Covent Garden, when he began three years ago at that historic home of opera. The press dispatch states that he has sung often this year in any other capacity at the Covent Garden opera, and that he has made many of his successes as co-star with Teatrassini.

Now that he is a success, the press in England speaks of him as the British tenor, to which he strenuously objects, demanding that he be spoken of as the Irish tenor. I wonder, if he were a Scot from Edinburgh, would they speak of him as the British tenor, "aye moon." I wonder. Methinks there would be a mixture of Scottish accents down Fleet street next day.

A good joke is being told, a really-true joke and not a press agent's "yarn." It is said that one day McCormack sang for a manager, and he was offered "two-a-week in the chorus," that is, two pounds a week, or about \$10. A few months afterwards McCormack's manager was speaking of this same manager about as the manager, and the man who had offered the \$10 a week in the chorus, said "By the way I could use that young fellow now in a small part." Imagine his surprise when McCormack's manager pulled out the morning paper and pointing to the musical advertisement, read: "See this, Covent Garden, Royal Opera, Rigoletto, tonight, in the cast of characters, the Duke, Mr. John McCormack. That is the young fellow you thought worth two-a-week in the chorus."

Mr. Joseph Gahn has been covering himself with glory and all sorts of fine bright press notices about his work in Colorado Springs and thereabouts. So enamored is he of the place that he seriously contemplates remaining there. Mrs. Gahn has returned from visiting in the city with her mother and has joined Mr. Gahn.

The program for the Teresa Carreno piano recital at the Young Women's Christian Association auditorium on Monday evening, November 8 (tomorrow), is as follows: (This is the first of the Hopper concert series of this season). The artists will play the Chopin sonata Op. 35 in four movements; the second number will be a Rondo, of Beethoven, Vogel als Prophet, of Schumann, and the Erl King, Schubert-Liszt. The third number will be the MacDowell sonata, Op. 39, and the last number will be Liszt: Sonata del Pelegra, Irrichter, and E major polonaises. (Note to managers and program makers: The Bee will print programs only when sent in, in the above style, and none will be printed if sent in program form. If the program is extended in any way, the program free of charge, it should be a simple matter to arrange this. The rule will be strictly enforced.)

Mr. Max Landow has returned from Germany and has begun work again. He had a brilliant success in Berlin, and has brought the papers to prove it. It is very gratifying that he did not stay over there. (Now, if only some other people had brought the papers back, we would have been spared much controversy about the poor, innocuous pole.) And yet they say that musicians are not practical. And these tributes which Mr. Landow received were from real critics on real newspapers.

THOMAS J. KELLY.

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OMAHA BEE

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