

Omaha Theaters and Managers in Review

MEMOIR carried many of us back to that October evening in 1881 when the Boyd theater was dedicated. General Manderson set the train of thought in motion, when he made reference to the occasion of the Brandeis on Thursday night, and contrasted the Omaha of today with the Omaha of that time. It was a wondrous spirit of civic pride as well as generosity in a public cause that led James E. Boyd to erect the pretentious and for the day magnificent structure that bore his name, and to dedicate it to the uses of a theater. It was still greater enterprise that induced him ten years later to construct a more costly and beautiful theater, yet standing, and of a higher order of usefulness. Mr. Boyd had been signally honored by his fellow citizens. At the time his first theater was dedicated, he was mayor of the city, and when his second was opened to the public he was governor of the state. It was a large conception of public needs as well as a desire to be of real service that led him to embark his money in the building of theaters. He once said to a friend, while talking over this subject, that he had not derived a great profit from the theaters he had built as he had anticipated, nor would he venture money in them as a mere business enterprise, but at the same time he expressed satisfaction that he had contributed so much to the social life of Omaha. He took a great pride in the first theater, and a still greater in the second, and gave to each much personal attention. But his connection with the business of the theater ended at the erection of the building and its furnishing. He did not manage either, nor was he interested save as landlord in their control.

It may not be out of place here to say a word of appreciation for the late W. A. Paxton, Jr., who was associated with Mr. Burgess in the management of the Creighton theater. This handsome theater was built by Omaha men, and it was much the inspiring presence of Mr. Paxton that made the formation of the company to build the theater possible. He did not get very deep into the business, but showed a very keen interest in the affairs of the stage from a purely artistic standpoint. His connection with Mr. Burgess in the management of the Creighton was his earliest venture in business, and he participated in the success of the theater and in the management of the Boyd until the firm of Paxton & Burgess was merged in the Woodward & Burgess Amusement company. Mr. Paxton had a small interest in the new company for a time, but his ranch in the western end of the state took up so much of his time that he retired from the organization. But he showed as a theatrical manager those qualities that endeared him as a man to all who came into close contact with him.

One would like to devote some time to a review of the men who have managed theaters in Omaha, who have given of their time and ability to the purveying of dramatic and operatic entertainments for the citizens, but for obvious reasons this will not be undertaken at this time. George Marshall, first manager of the Boyd, will be recalled pleasantly by all who knew him. Tom Boyd, who succeeded him, and "Doc" D. W. Hayes, who was afterward Mr. Boyd's partner in the control of the bill-posting magnate of Omaha at the time of his death, and whose name only recently disappeared under the encroachment of a greater organization, was also manager of the Boyd for a few months, and L. M. Crawford had a brief reign at the helm. Then it passed under the control of Woodward & Burgess, where it has been for the last twelve years, and still is. Messrs. Paxton & Burgess were the managers of the Creighton from the day it opened until it went into the hands of the Orpheum people, at about the time the Woodward & Burgess company took over the Boyd.

The old Grand Opera house on Fifteenth and Capitol avenue was presided over by Isaac Walker Miner, now the house secretary for the Elks, a newspaper man of the old school, who was active in the days when the aspects of Omaha justified the sarcasm of John G. Saxe. He was still at the helm when W. J. Burgess took the house at the time the old Boyd, renamed the Farnam street, burned. Mr. Burgess came to Omaha as representative of L. M. Crawford. He renamed the Grand, calling it the Fifteenth street, and went from there to the Empire, which was the Academy of Music under another name. At the Academy a host of enterprising and ambitious persons had tried their hands as "managers" after the Boyd was built, and stock companies of several sorts, variety shows and all sorts of amusements were furnished forth there. Billy Lawless was the original Eden Musee man in these parts and made a great success of his venture. W. W. Cole presided over the Trocadero when it was opened as a music hall and gave to Omaha its first regularly organized theater. Then came the Orpheum, with a competitor, the Trocadero could not meet, and Jake Rosenthal as its manager. Mr. Rosenthal went later to the Trocadero, which was given over to burlesque, and J. Rush Bronson came on at the Orpheum. One season for Mr. Bronson and Carl Reiter came, with his fund of stories that was never exhausted.

"Bert" Gordon, welcomed the patrons at the opera of the Krug, and held forth there until the appeal of printer's ink became too strong and he slipped back into the publishing line, in the pursuit of which he has accumulated means that would permit of building a theater of his own in event he ever felt like managing another. After him came Charles A. Breed, who doesn't know you mean him unless you call him "Doc." In days that are almost prehistoric Jack Nugent that is mentioned now when a place of friends get together in a quiet place and talk over bygone days. The tinwood was opened under the control of its builders.

Hattie Carmontelle, Actress

Little Sketch of a Woman Who Has Spent Many Years on the Stage, Has Played Many Parts and is Still Making Good—Was Once a Member of a Minstrel Troupe and Did a Man's Work in the Opening Part.

THE early history of the theater of the female parts was played by men and boys. Even today there is no novelty in "female impersonators"; but to Miss Hattie Carmontelle, who plays Aunt Fanny, in George Barr McCutcheon's "Beverly," is due the unique distinction of being the only woman who has ever made a specialty of the colored male character. It was with the late Billy Rice, a minstrel fame, that Miss Carmontelle was engaged as "lead man," and she played opposite this favorite of a past generation for two seasons, being equally clever with the bones and tambourine. And to further complete her minstrel experience, she acted as interlocutor for a company of Miss Carmontelle's first appearance in fifty years. The professional stage was at the age of 7. In the part of "Little Eva" in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," at the old Fitt-

James E. Boyd's Civic Pride and Generous Spirit--Part of William A. Paxton Jr. in the Development of the Theater, in Omaha--Men Who Have Been Managers of the Local Playhouses--Social Development Indicated at the Brandeis

Messrs. Woodward & Burgess, and was managed by them for two seasons, when it was sold to Sullivan & Comstock, who tried vaudeville in it, and failed. E. L. Johnson represented the firm as manager, and after the house had stood idle for some time, he formed a partnership with Mr. Hills, and they took the theater under a lease, and installed a stock company. So well did their venture develop that they bought the house, and are now realizing the fruit of their enterprise. Sam Bear of South Dakota and Dick Ferris of California contributed much to Omaha's amusement by their stock organizations at the Boyd during several summer seasons, and other energetic impressions have engaged in similar ventures at other houses, such as the Lyric and the Bijou. Then we have had summer opera under the direction of Will Carleton and some others. It can hardly be said that Omaha has been neglected as a point for amusement ventures during the three decades that have slipped away since James E. Boyd first determined to erect the first theater of the west, and that was to be the first real theater the city ever had, and was far ahead of the requirement of the day.

This lengthy preface was scarcely needed to bring us to the real event of the week, to meet the first of French and American dancing into active life many half-forgotten events of nights at Omaha theaters, and out of the memories thus aroused came among others the names of those here arrayed. These were an eclectic lot of showmen, who, if they did not all succeed, at least all tried to do so, and each in passing left warm friends in Omaha. And now Mr. Burgess is back in the work, presiding over the most beautiful theater Omaha has, one that is not only a source of pride to the citizens, but which will long be the envy of other cities throughout the west. The congratulations showered on him on Thursday afternoon from friends really glad to welcome him back, and the intense interest he has shown ever since he entered into the new enterprise indicates his sincere satisfaction with the undertaking.

The opening of the Brandeis was an event that can only be truthfully described as "brilliant." It was an assemblage of the best of Omaha's citizenship, the culture as well as the wealth being represented in the great audience then gathered. It was a remarkably well dressed audience, too; this is a new thing in Omaha. It is probable that if a census of evening suits had been taken at the time the Boyd theater opened in 1881 not so many could have been found west of the Missouri river as were worn at the opening of the Brandeis in these matters of social nicety. The growth of the city is exemplified, not that clothes make either the man or the woman, or that the words of cheer and congratulation spoken to the Messrs. Brandeis were any more sincere than those spoken to James E. Boyd, but because folks are paying a little closer attention to the amenities of life, and are realizing a little more clearly the social obligations which sometimes take the form of "dressing up." In this and in other ways the occasion had something of the aspect of an epoch-making event. And that it was greatly enjoyed by all is admitted without further proof.

The presentation of "The Climax" for closing the career of the Boyd as Omaha's leading theater may have been but coincidental, but it was singularly appropriate. The theater was opened by a remarkably strong acting organization presenting one of the greatest modern melodramas, "Alabama." To call this play "sweet" is not to misuse the adjective, for it was, and will be for a long time a real delight, and the wonder is that it is not enacted often enough. All the story of the play glows with romance, the strife of brothers, the love of a woman, and back of it the bitterness of politics give it a real interest and progress of events. It was Augustus Thomas's first success, and while he has done much more ambitious work since, he has never quite equalled the human touch he gave to "Alabama." And the little

At the Omaha Theaters

Two Musical Plays to Fill the Week at the Brandeis--Woodward Stock at the Boyd--Krug Show of Attractive Plays and the Orpheum Will Have the "Road" Now, While the Gayety Puts On Extravaganza.

THE Goddess of Liberty is one of the latest musical plays from the prolific pens of Will M. Houghton and Frank B. Rowland, with music by Joseph E. Howard and has registered an impression upon the Chicago newspaper critic and playing public unparalleled in the history of Chicago theatricals. The original cast, chorus and production, same as produced at the Princess theater for 30 consecutive performances with Sallie Fisher and George Parsons, supported by F. O'Malley Jennings, Johnny Fogarty, Francis Young, Ollie Artell, George Day, Augustus Carney, Mabel Fredericks, Dan Hall and Fred Hagan. The brothers, who have been such a feature in the former successes by these authors, are still conspicuous, also forty fascinating show girls are seen in it. The play is in three acts and four scenes and is laid in the Berkshire Hills, Mass. The last act is in an apartment in New York City at Claremont, overlooking the Hudson. The scenic effects are elaborate, and one of the features is the realistic rain storm. There are twenty song numbers, many of which

are termed "hits." "Don't Choose a Gibson Girl," "Where Are They Now?" "Taxi Taxi," "Lonely," "If All Moons Were Homonyms," "Keep Me Young in Your Heart," "Dixie's Wagon," "The Goddess of Liberty," "Let's Pretend You Love Me" and a dozen others. The attraction comes to the Brandeis theater for an engagement of four days commencing tonight. Matinee will be given Wednesday.

When the curtain is raised on the new de Koven and Smith comic opera, "The Golden Butterfly," which is to be seen at the Brandeis theater for three performances, commencing next Friday evening, with Grace Van Studdiford, opera-givers of this community will witness a light opera success by these authors, are still conspicuous, also forty fascinating show girls are seen in it. The play is in three acts and four scenes and is laid in the Berkshire Hills, Mass. The last act is in an apartment in New York City at Claremont, overlooking the Hudson. The scenic effects are elaborate, and one of the features is the realistic rain storm. There are twenty song numbers, many of which

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Another bit of interest in connection with the offering of "The Climax" is that it has brought to the front another comedian of parts. Mr. Howard Lange has not long been known to fame; it is only a little while since he was doing the "viper" in a "pastoral" called "The Village Parson," earning his bread and butter thereby and waiting for the chance. This came with the role of Luigi Goldfranti, and he is now listed among the first of American comedians. No more of the cheap for him, for he has made good. His performance of the part of the old Italian singing teacher is as far ahead of David Warfield's Music Master as the Music Master is ahead of Warfield's Auctioneer.

The selection of "The Climax" to open the Brandeis was hardly as fortuitous as on other occasions when theaters have been dedicated in Omaha, but this was due solely to the exigencies of the occasion. "Arsene Lupin" is lacking in certain elements that must be shown in a really strong play. But the event had the merit of excellent acting, for Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Herbert, Mr. Harbury, Mr. Elliott, Mr. Dodd, Miss Keane and Mrs. Wheatcroft are the nucleus of a company of unusual merit, and their work was of the most delightful character. Mr. Courtenay and Mr. Herbert lift their parts well above the plane on which the play is cast, and endow the characters of the thief and the detective with qualities that make them most fascinating. Miss Keane is doing something that is really magnificent; she submerges herself in the requirements of a comparatively minor role, having but little opportunity to show her own individuality in the last act the reason for her being in the cast. Until that one great scene in the smoking room of the duke, Sonia could well be played by a super; Miss Keane has the good taste to not try to make the part stand out, and thus the splendid exhibition of artistic performance when the time comes is all the more powerful. Mrs. Wheatcroft has a fine scene in this act, too, that adds a great deal to the general effect of the piece. But "Arsene Lupin" is to be tolerated more by reason of the polite curiosity it arouses as to what manner of man French buffoons might be than for any genuine dramatic quality. In fact, it has no genuine dramatic quality.

Louis James is dead; this news came from Helena Saturday morning, the great actor having died there suddenly on Friday evening from heart failure. He was touring the west, playing "Henry VIII" and other classic dramas, and had been meeting with great success all season. Mr. James' career was so long and varied that a brief review can give no adequate idea of his service to the stage and through it to the public. He was a man of excellent judgment, sound perceptions and excellent taste, and devoted himself with a single-minded purpose to the better things of the drama. At the time of his death he was in his sixty-eighth year, being a native of Illinois, where he was born in 1842. For forty-six years he was in the theater as an actor, and the range of parts he played is so extensive that no attempt will be made to recite them. His home was at Kansas City, where he will be buried.

The new Howland Clifford musical melodrama, "The Phantom Detective," which will be seen here at the Krug theater for four days, starting with a matinee Sunday, is an entirely different theatrical idea, and during the action of the play many rather mysterious mechanical effects and startling illusions are introduced by "The Phantom," Frank Polson, the weird detective who is prominent throughout the play. The scenic environment is also cleverly constructed, giving additional opportunity for "The Phantom's" wonderful tricks.

The Kansas City Star, speaking of "Beverly," has this to say: "The company is excellent. Miss Gertrude Fowler, as the American girl who is perforce compelled to assume the role of the princess, revealed a fine artistic quality that was more than equal to the demand made upon it. Hattie Carmontelle, as Aunt Fanny, gave us another of her inimitable sketches of the southern mammy. As the Princess Yelive, Miss Edith Shayne revealed true dramatic quality. Raymond Whitaker was sufficiently romantic as Prince Danion, the de-throned ruler of Dawsberg, and the other music roles were excellently filled. The play, beautifully staged and the large audience, apathetic at first, were stirred to real enthusiasm by the unfolding of the story. 'Beverly of Graustark' is a thoroughly interesting and wholesome play and ought to be popular during its engagement." At the Krug theater for three days, commencing Friday.

The Orpheum road show, with an aggregation of stars which has made a famous record throughout the circuit, appears this week. Two numbers there are of head-line importance, the one being "La Titcomb," or "La Belle Americaine," the other a popular dramatic artist, appearing in Mrs. Oscar Berlinger's gem of vaudeville plays, "A Bit of Old Chelsea." Miss O'Day has been chosen by Martin Beck for the first of the new vaudeville classic. Four other players make up the cast. "The Singer on Horseback," La Titcomb, last year's prevailing European sensation, has been imported by Martin Beck as a feature of this season's road show. Her performance consists of five sections, including songs, scenic dancing and introducing her riding with artistic and effective lighting. La Titcomb is an American girl, but this is her first appearance in this country. "A Night in Monkey Music Hall," presented by Maud Reiche, is a remarkable exhibition of animal training. Melville and Higgins in "Just a Little Fun" give just what the times imples.

Robert Higgins is a comedian of the Eddie Foy type, and Miss Melville is one of the genuinely funny women of the stage. One of the most brilliant and artistic performers ever seen in vaudeville is Hyman Meyer, Harry Fox, who comes from a great success on Broadway, and the Miller-ship sisters, distinguished for their dancing, give a diverting act. An eccentric symphonic performance is given by the three Messengon brothers, who perform fully dressed in street attire. The kind of drome will introduce a sensational feature in motion pictures. The length of this series is estimated at 300 feet and it presents a complete and thrilling western drama, "The Heart of a Cowboy." The Orpheum Concert orchestra will furnish special music at each performance.

The career of David Bispham, the well known baritone, who is to sing here Thursday evening, March 10, shows what indefatigable work and faith in self can accomplish. Several well known masters sought to dissuade the singer from entering a professional career, but nevertheless he went doggedly ahead, working, practicing, until the sought-for end was accomplished. Today no American singer has scored greater artistic success. "He holds a record of achievement unequalled by any singer now before the public," declares an eastern musical writer. "He has commanded universal praise alike in oratorio, in opera and in song recital, and the character of his program reveals the high standard from which he never descends." For ten successive seasons Bispham was a member of the Royal Opera company, singing each summer at Covent Garden, London; while for several years he was a member of the Metropolitan Opera company, New York. His repertoire includes fifty operatic roles, in English, French, German and Italian. He was the first to sing the part of Falstaff in England, where he appeared with Verdi's original cast from La Scala, Milan.

BRANDEIS THEATRE GRAND OPENING WEEK 4 DAYS--STARTING TONIGHT MATINEE WEDNESDAY.. MORT H. SINGER ANNOUNCES THE GODDESS OF LIBERTY WITH Sallie Fisher ; George Parsons The Original Co.-Star, Cast, Chorus and Production Same As Produced 800 Times Princess Theater, Chicago. BEST MUSICAL COMEDY IN OMAHA THIS SEASON PRICES--25c, 50c, 75c, \$1.00, \$1.50 -- WED. MAT.--25c to \$1.00.

2 DAYS--STARTING Friday, March 11 MATINEE SATURDAY GRACE VAN STUDDIFORD IN THE GREATEST COMIC OPERA SUCCESS THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION As Presented in New York. COMPANY 75 PEOPLE. SPECIAL ORCHESTRA. The Greatest Musical Event of the Year! Seat Sale Monday, 9 A. M.

5 DAYS--Commencing Sunday, March 13 MATINEE WEDNESDAY HENRY MILLER'S ASSOCIATE PLAYERS IN The Servant in the House WITH CRESTON CLARKE, L. MERIE HUDSON COLLIER and an All Star Cast. PRICES 25c to \$1.50. Seats Thursday.

Friday and Saturday Nights, March 18 and 19 SATURDAY MATINEE. OLGA NETHERSOLE FRIDAY NIGHT--"THE WRITING ON THE WALL." SAT. MATINEE--"CAMILLE," in the Costume of 1837. SATURDAY NIGHT--"SAPHO." ENTIRE METROPOLITAN PRODUCTION COMPLETE IN EVERY DETAIL. Seats on Sale Monday the 14th. Prices \$0.00 to \$5.00. Seat reservation may now be made by mail if accompanied by remittance.

BOYD--TONIGHT--MAT. TODAY WOODWARD STOCK COMPANY THE COLLEGE WIDOW PRICES--Nights, 50c, 75c, 1.00, 1.50, 2.00; Mats., 10c and 20c 25c. Seats One Week in Advance. Next Week Starting Sun. Mat.--WHEN KNIGHTHOOD WAS IN FLOWER.

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Max Pigman, who is taking Henry Dixey's part in "Mary Jane's Pa.," was married recently to Lotta Robertson, his leading lady last season. Olga Nethersole has just accepted an invitation from Edmond Rostand, author of "Cyrano de Bergerac" and "Chanticleer," to become his guest at his castle in the Pyrenees next summer, when she will re-

KRUG THEATER PRICES: 15c-25c-50c-75c MATINEES Wed. and Sat. 10c, 25c, 50c 4 DAYS--STARTING... Matinee Today The Melodramatic Musical Success Augmented Company of Superior Players THE PHANTOM DETECTIVE Chorus of Prettily Costumed Show Girls GREAT QUARTETTE OF SINGING COMEDIANS SEE THE DEN OF REAL LIONS 3 DAYS Starting THURSDAY Return of the Season's Success The Original Studebaker Theater, Chicago, Production of Geo. Barr McCutcheon's BEVERLY Dramatized by Robt. M. Baker from the Novel "BEVERLY OF GRAUSTARK" The Most Effective Drama Now Before the Public NEXT SUNDAY THE ISLE OF SPICE

Orpheum ADVANCED VAUDEVILLE WEEK STARTING TODAY THE Orpheum Show Direction MARTIN BECK Martin Beck presents, IDA O'DAY And Company of Selected Players "A Bit of Old Chelsea" By Mrs. Oscar Berlinger. First American Presentation of "A NIGHT IN A MONKEY MUSIC HALL" Presented by Maud Reiche. Melville and Higgins Eccentric Singing and Chattering Comedians in "Just a Little Fun." SYMPHONIC CLEVERNESS WITH A DASH OF COMEDY HYMAN MYER "The Man at the Piano." HARRY FOX AND MILLERSHIP SISTERS In "Artistic Nonsense." THREE BROTHERS MASCAGNO Presenting, "Fun in a Drawing Room." ORPHEUM MOTION PICTURES Always the newest in motion pictures New Musical Feature Extraordinary ORPHEUM CONCERT ORCHESTRA 15-Talented Artists--15

IF IT'S AT THE GAYETY IT'S GOOD Devoted to Strictly High Grade Vaudeville TWICE DAILY SIX MAT. TODAY The "Candy Show" WEBER AND RUSH'S PARISIAN WIDOWS Presenting Two Musical Abundities, "The Actors' Boarding House," and "Tuesdays in a Department Store." And When it Comes to New VAUDEVILLE Kitherto Unseen in Omaha, OH, L-O-O-O-O-K! Musical Bells BEN PIERCE Hickman & Bentley Margie Hilton Niblo & Spencer DEAR READER: Of "The Parisian Widows," last Monday's Kansas City "Times-Examiner" says: "Refreshingly entertaining and funny." "The Journal" says: "Especially good." I think you will endorse those three verdicts. E. L. JOHNSON, Mgr. Gayety Theater. Sat. (Mat. and Night) only, March 10, THE WM. GREW CO. PATTES in "IS MARRIAGE A FAILURE?" Popular Prices Seats Selling

Direct from European Music Halls La Titcomb "The Singer on Horseback" Novel Electrical Effects Famous Abroad as "La Belle Americaine." Seats for Entire Week On Sale Prices 10c, 25c, 50c and 75c.

MR. DAVID BISPHAM Thursday Eve.--March 10th. Y. W. C. A. Auditorium TICKETS \$1 and \$1.50, Now Selling 303 BOYD THEATRE.

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"Jean Valjean" A CHARACTER SKETCH BY Dr. R. Scott Hyde SINGING BY THE POPULAR T. K. QUARTETT Y. M. C. A. Sunday, March 6th, At 4 P. M.

latter part of Mary. The three Farnum boys will be seen in the three leading roles; Dustin, who first saw light of stardom as "The Virginian," will be seen in the title role; William, that sterling actor who is at present with Viola Allen, will be the loyal but misguided Steve; Marshall, who is at present making a hit in the part of Trampas in "The Virginian" throughout the west, will be seen as the bad man.

hearse "La Samaritaine" with him, using the English translation, made by the author's son, Maurice Rostand, for her. Nethersole expects to use the drama next season. Orrin Johnston has been engaged by Henry B. Harris for the leading male role in "The Children of Destiny," which is to be produced toward the end of this month. Johnston began his present season in the hope of becoming an opera company star and was originally designed for the title role in "The Gay Hussar." But his voice gave out at the last moment and so he returns to the legitimate. The music department of the Woman's club will give its annual opening day program before the club Monday afternoon at 3:30 o'clock at the First Congregational church. Those taking part will be: Miss Evelyn Hopper, soprano; Mrs. Lloyd E. Hoffer, contralto; Mrs. Murray G. Cook, violinist; Miss Marie Meek, pianist; and Mr. Ben Stanley, organist. The members of the Tuesday Musical have been invited to attend and are requested to present their membership cards at the door.

Gossip from Stagland

Elise Ferguson, who is starring in Channing Pollock's successful comedy, "Such a Little Queen," recently, while playing an engagement in Philadelphia, was invited to visit a school girl friend of hers who married, and is living in that city. Her friend has a bright little child, a girl of 5, who insisted on sitting at the luncheon table with her mother and Miss Ferguson. Upon Miss Ferguson politely declining to have a second helping of oysters en brochette, of which the little girl was particularly fond, she naïvely remarked to the star: "I don't think you're an actress." "Why?" inquired Miss Ferguson. "Well, Uncle John, who knows lots of actresses, says they're always hungry."

The Kirke La Shelle company is planning for a revival of "The Virginian" at one of the New York theaters some time in the