

OMAHA BOY IN HOLY LAND

Another Interesting Travel Letter from Max J. Merritt.

JERUSALEM OF PRESENT DAY

Significance of the Sacred Relics to Jews, Moslems and Christians Scattered Throughout the Entire World.

Another interesting letter, describing his journeying in the Holy Land, has been received by Mr. and Mrs. J. Merritt of this city from their son, Rabbi Max J. Merritt, now of Evansville, Ind., under date of Jerusalem, April 18. He writes:

"My first word after three weeks' separation from postoffice service, a separation as complete as if we were traveling in the heart of the Dark Continent, is that my arrival at Damascus dashed my hopes of receiving a letter from home even as did my arrival in Jerusalem after my trip through the desert. It may be that the postoffice service is responsible, for I have found that the Turkish post, like everything Turkish, is the last word in uncertainty and inefficiency.

"In America the chances are 1,000 to 1 that every piece of mail will be delivered to the destined receiver. In Turkish lands the chances are reversed and it is a gamble of 1,000 to 1 that mail will never arrive. So admirable has been the Turkish service in the years past that the French, German and English authorities have forced postoffice concessions from Turkey in Syria and Palestine, and each has established its own service. The French and Russian services give five and the Germans now give six. Cut rates in stamps! Doesn't that make you laugh? But if you could see what I have seen in this strange land, you would be constantly shifting from laughter to tears and back again.

"The German, backed by a home subsidy, is at present in the lead. It has cut the prices in stamps, and where the Turkish post gives four 3-cent stamps for the equivalent of 10 cents, the French, German and Russian services give five and the Germans now give six. Cut rates in stamps! Doesn't that make you laugh? But if you could see what I have seen in this strange land, you would be constantly shifting from laughter to tears and back again.

In Realm of the Ancient.

"In the last three weeks I have ridden horseback 400 miles through Palestine and Syria. I have crossed and recrossed the land from the Mediterranean to the Jordan four times. I have passed through Judea, Samaria, Galilee, over mountains, across plains, through valleys. I have traversed the Biblical stretch from Beer-sheba to Dan, crossed the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains on horseback, camped under the snowy peaks of Hermon and crossed the great plain of Damascus to this most ancient city in the world; this city whose historic records go back beyond the days of Abraham, when cities like Rome, Athens, Thebes and Memphis were yet undreamed of. Incidentally, I have galloped through the fields of the fertile plains of Philistia, and traversed the whole coast of Phoenicia, camping on the ruins of Sidon and Tyre, under the same stars that guided those intrepid sailors on the first adventurous voyages men attempted on the seas, with the heat of the Mediterranean brooking to lull me to sleep at night. And if never again I leave my hearth to satisfy the lust for travel, I have gathered enough material to spin out tales like those with which Othello charmed the ears of Desdemona and claim the rapt attention of the unadventurous. More and more I feel that this trip will yield returns in experience and illustrative material that will pay dividends of 1,000 per cent, and if the pictures I have taken all along the road turn out according to my fond hopes, I shall have returns in stereoscopic form that will yield actual and substantial dividends.

"I cannot hope to go into detail with reference to the cities and sacred spots that we have visited. That would find me writing a book, and the time that we spend in the places that we visit is all too precious to give to it what may be done at our prosaic leisure. After our wonderful interesting, but fatiguing trip through the desert of Sinai, we rode our camels through the main gate of Jerusalem and rested for a week of sightseeing in the sacred city. Jerusalem is today a city of 150,000 people, of whom 70,000 are Jews and the rest Mohammedans and Greek and Latin Christians.

Live on Traditions.

"Jerusalem lives on its sacred memories and traditions, and when I say lives, I mean actually that everyone in Jerusalem, in some way or other, capitalizes religious traditions, so as to make a living out of it. Of course, that excludes the owners of the bazaars, where the food stuffs are sold. Out of the 70,000 Jews in Jerusalem, for example, about 50,000 live on the 'chaluakah,' the money gifts sent by pious Jews throughout the world, as an offering to the sacred memories of the past, and for the maintenance of the Jewish dependents who flock here from all parts of the Jewish world. Likewise the Greek and Latin churches support thousands of lame, halt, blind and dependent followers. The various Protestant churches have missions of all sorts for the support and conversion of those who seek their offices. There are no stores in the American sense of the word, the fewest of manufacturers, and these only for sacred articles and souvenirs. Nothing, in short, that makes for the vigorous and independent building up of a commercial center. Religion is the chief interest of Jerusalem. In the great central square by the Jaffa gate one sees a motley throng, the followers of the prophet with the inevitable 'turbans' or red fez, Greek priests in long black robes with curling hair made like a piece of stove pipe, with a wide bell at the top; friars and monks, with coarse, brown, loose flowing robes girdled at the waist with a rope, and bare-footed or sandaled; Russian Jews with long coats, fur caps and earlocks coming far down over the ears, and the inevitable mob of beggars and mendicants, blind, halt and lame, in their gaudy, oriental rags, and never ceasing the cry for 'bakheesh.' One could take his place at a point of vantage and watch that crowd for hours with a never-failing interest. But Jerusalem is so packed full of interesting things that one never halts for a moment. It contains the shrines sacred to Jew, Christian and Mohammedan, and one interested in them all has a task in making the rounds.

Interest to the Jew.

"For the Jew there are the spots that are connected with the great records of the past, the Temple area, on which Solomon built the first house to the living God, the tomb of David, the sepulchres of the Judean kings and an hundred other places at sight of which there rests

MUSIC

OMAHA GIRL WINS HONORS AT OBERLIN.

WITH this number the music department of The Omaha Bee will begin its summer vacation. With studios closing, or nearly all closed, and with teachers and pupils alike being the away to other pursuits, the utility of the music department in the summer months of a Sunday newspaper may well be questioned. Pan will pipe as usual through the sylvan glades, and from him all who seek may get inspiration and courage for the coming season of musical activity, but the temples of the city will not ring with gladness notes until another term of hot weather has passed. Miss Rees is already in the east on her vacation, and has decided to put over her announced organ recital until fall. She is visiting in New York and vicinity, and reports by mail that she is greatly enjoying her visit. Her plans contemplate a return to Omaha in July, and about September 1 she will resume her work on The Bee. On Saturday work was received from her that she had successfully passed the necessary examination and had been admitted as an associate in the American Guild of Organists. On her return to Omaha she will take up the duties of organist at the First Congregational church.

Miss Emily Ryan has just placed an Omaha quartet with Signor Tolomea to sing with his Royal Italian band over a chautauqua engagement of six weeks. The quartet consists of Miss Clara Siefkin, soprano; Miss Stella Brown, contralto; Mr. Arthur Bowes, tenor, and Mr. Ralph Hurst, basso. Miss Siefkin, who was director of the First United Presbyterian church choir for three years, is the daughter of Adolph Siefkin, 423 Miami. Miss Stella Brown is the daughter of Vincent Brown, chief railway mail clerk between Omaha and Creston, Ia. Mr. Bowes, who was with the International Harvester company, is the son of Attorney Harrison Bowes, 527 South Twenty-first avenue. Mr. Hurst, who was in the employ of Thomas Kilpatrick & Co., resides at 2132 North Twenty-ninth. This quartet has been preparing all winter and has a repertoire of Italian, French, German and English songs and Signor Tolomea, upon hearing them, pronounced them one of the finest quartets he had ever had the pleasure of engaging.

An organ recital is to be given by Julian Raymond Williams at the First Methodist church, Twentieth and Davenport streets, Monday evening at 8:30 o'clock. Young Mr. Williams after graduating from the Omaha High school last year spent a year at Northwestern university in Chicago, where he completed his studies in music under Peter C. Lutkin. He also played at the First Methodist church at Elgin, Ill., and taught music both at Elgin and at the North Shore School of Music at Chicago. Mr. Williams will be assisted by Miss Blanche Bolln, soprano, and by Frank Maeh, jr., violinist.

On Friday evening, June 20, pupils of Louise Jansen Wylie will be heard in song recital at the First Baptist church, Twenty-ninth and Harney streets. The program will begin promptly at 8:15 o'clock.

News has just been received from Oberlin of Emily Wentworth, former pupil of Max Landau, having played the piano in a conservatory recital, which was pronounced not alone creditably, but surprisingly well done. Miss Wentworth is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. Wentworth of Dundee. This is her first year in Oberlin. Her many friends in Omaha are looking forward with expectancy to her future, as first year pupils are seldom able to take part in recitals and but few ever meet with so much commendable praise.

Mr. Louis Klebba, an Omaha young man, who has been studying voice culture with Madame Baroness of New York, is in Omaha on a short vacation and will sing the offertory at the 10:30 a. m. high mass at St. Patrick's church, Sunday, June 15.

The New Music Review for May publishes the articles upon the influence of Wagner, in America, upon England and France.

"In America the names of Theodore Thomas, Dr. Leopold Damrosch and Walter Damrosch loom large in the promotion of his music. Theodore Thomas, at his famous May festivals in Cincinnati, gave many and lengthy portions from the different operas, and did much to cultivate a taste for it in this way. Dr. Leopold Damrosch inaugurated the Wagnerian movement, which has proved far-reaching in its influence upon our art life. Walter Damrosch took up the work after his father's death, performed many operas in different parts of the United States, and succeeded in securing Lill Lehmann, Max Alvary and Emil Fischer, who shone as stars of the first rank for seven years. Later Mr. Damrosch gave many expository lectures and recitals of the Wagnerian music, which aided in the spread of the interest in this composer. Since then the Metropolitan company has given many Wagnerian performances every year.

It is an interesting point in this connection to mention the present conductor of the opera there—Arturo Toscanini, who, although an Italian, is considered one of the greatest interpreters of the genius of the great German the world has had or probably ever will have. Mr. Toscanini is not only great in his interpretations, but has a prodigious memory, being able to conduct ninety-two complete operas, with every instrument, every soloist and the chorus, through every note, change of rhythm and incessant play of light and shade, absolutely from memory, with no reference to the printed score.

"While Wagner was still considered a semi-lunatic in Germany, we Americans paid him \$5,000 to compose an opening number with which to open our Centennial at Philadelphia in 1876. Of that trifling Wagner himself said, very justly, the most beautiful thing about it was the check for \$5,000.

"In England the names of Edward Dannreuther, the founder of the society, and Hans Richter, the great director of Wagner operas, who is still alive and spending the twilight of his years at Bayreuth, are foremost. Today British composers in all the larger forms show the influence of Wagner and Liszt. The influence upon the chorals is also noticeable and has resulted in a more detailed study of each individual part not only by singers and conductors, but also by listeners, who now demand a more studied standard of performance than formerly. In France the influence of Wagner upon composers is considered intellectual rather than musical, inasmuch as many of these seem to have been affected far less by the example set by his actual music than by his philosophy, or by certain merely systematic parts of his creative methods, adopting for instance, the leitmotif and Wagner's method of using it, and the use of symbolic and legendary subjects. A strong reaction against the influence of the great German took place about ten years ago. When Saint-Saens pointed out that the whole French school was liable to lose its hard-won independence through the fascination of these works. However, even at the present day there are no surer attractions than a program which contains excerpts from Wagner scores, in favor of which the allotment of symphonic music is often curtailed.

But this is the last symptom of past excesses and has nothing to do with the legitimate admiration of Wagner's genius to which France, like the whole world, pays tribute.

Pointed Paragraphs

An ostrich can eat tanks, but it can't lay a carpet. After a woman makes up her mind she does something else. There's many a hitch, likewise, in the business of a teamster. What a lot of unlicked kicks the average man has coming to him! A proposal never seems just right to a girl unless it is backed up by some moonlight scenery—Chicago News.

Omaha Quartet Goes on Road



Photo by Reinhardt Studio.

At the Theaters



Townsen's Hawaiians - At the Gayety

Mr. Jacob P. Adler, the greatest and most renowned player of the Yiddish stage, who heads his own company of players direct from the National theater, New York, and who will appear in this city at the Brandeis on Tuesday evening, is claimed to be the most famous Yiddish speaking star of this country. His work has appealed not only to the Yiddish speaking people of New York City, but has attracted the attention of and has been commented upon by the dramatic writers of that city. Jacob P. Adler will be seen with an excellent company of players under the personal direction of Edwin A. Reikin in his best plays, written specially for him by Z. Libin and the late Jacob Gordin.

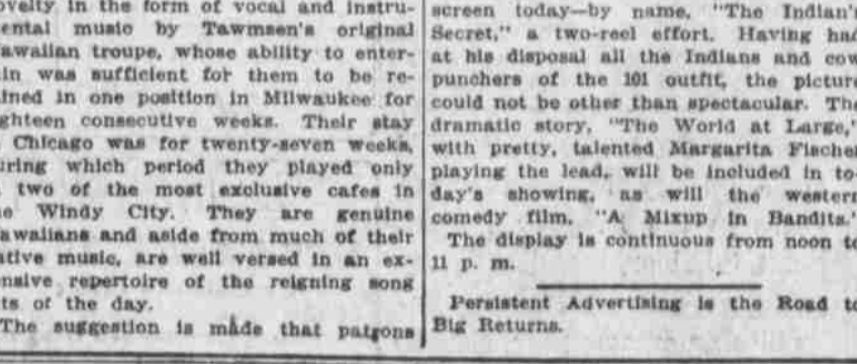
Today's bill at the Empress is headed by Imhoff, Conn and Coreene presenting "The Army Surgeon," a comedy sketch. This is an elaborate scenic comedy that has been worked out carefully and proven very successful in the east. Norwood, Norwood, "the newsboy and the coon," give a little portrayal of street life in New York, mixed with many songs and much comedy. Hardie & Dorothy, the eccentric sisters, have pleased everyone and will doubtless continue to do the same. The vaudeville is completed by Monahan, "the grasshopper on rollers," in a real novelty skating and acrobatic act. A number of special feature photo plays have been booked for the first part of the week. There will be shown Selig's latest and greatest animal picture called "Alone in the Jungle." This picture has caused a great deal of comment in the picture world and is said to be the most sensational animal feature ever made. This Pathe Weekly is shown every Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The last half of the week, "The Royal Engineers," a superb foreign production, will hold first position on the picture program. A number of one-reel pictures, including many good comedies and one educational subject, will be shown. Four complete performances daily and with the photo plays, make a continuous show from noon until 11 p. m.

Starting with this afternoon's session, aside from offering the most satisfactory display of motion photography in Omaha, the Gayety management will present a novelty in the form of vocal and instrumental music by Townsen's original Hawaiian troupe, whose ability to entertain was sufficient for them to be retained in one position in Milwaukee for eighteen consecutive weeks. Their stay in Chicago was for twenty-seven weeks, during which period they played only in two of the most exclusive cafes in the Windy City. They are genuine Hawaiians and aside from much of their native music, are well versed in an extensive repertoire of the reigning songs hits of the day.

The suggestion is made that patrons attend the performance this afternoon if possible as better accommodations will be available than during the evening, for with so unique and high class an attraction added to the known excellence and superiority of the Gayety's display of "movies," which in itself is sufficient to pack the theater all the evening, it can but result in overwhelming crowds tonight. The Hawaiians will change their selections from time to time and it is announced that they will be retained for as long a period as patrons enjoy their music.

With such universal approval and satisfaction was the film production of the veteran, Lincoln J. Carter, received last Wednesday, still another of his quick action stories will be displayed on the screen today—by name, "The Indian's Secret," a two-reel effort. Having had at his disposal all the Indians and cow punchers of the old outfit, the picture could not be other than spectacular. The dramatic story, "The World at Large," with pretty, talented Marjorita Fischer playing the lead, will be included in today's showing, as will the western comedy film, "A Mixup in Bandits." The display is continuous from noon to 11 p. m.

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