

Shaws Latest Effort Toward Great Reform

By JAMES WHITTAKER.

NEW YORK.—(Special)—It would be a nice point to decide whether the Theater Guild, struggling in the Garrick theater with George Bernard Shaw's cycle of dialogue philosophies named "Back to Methuselah," is doing the thing as a labor of love or for the love of labor.

It would be a nice point to decide whether Margaret Wycherly's voice as "The Voice of the Serpent," in the cycle, is the "strange, seductively musical whistling" which Shaw demands in the play script, or just plain talking out loud.

It would be a nice point to decide whether the guild has created the play Shaw intended, or something else.

But the nice points are pointless as soon as it is ascertained that Shaw never intended a play at all. This can be done by buying the Shaw book at a store and discovering that all the actable drama in it is the uncatalogued 100-page preface. The Guild produced the wrong end of the book. A balancing of the stage values of the five dull "Back to Methuselah" plays with the 50 brilliant bits of dynamic prose in the preface leaves the scale distinctly tipped toward the latter. For instance: The most essential thing which has so far happened on the stage of the Garrick—where the first week of the play has been devoted to its first two divisions—has been an incident in Shaw's apocryphal legend of the Garden of Eden, showing us Cain about to hit Father Adam with that of a lath whittled to represent a sword.

But, in the preface, we have a scene wherein God is about to hit Shaw with a thunderbolt. A reviewer had been relating to Shaw some instances of miraculous divine wrath and was particularly positive that blasphemy could call down a thunderbolt on the head of the blasphemer. Up got Shaw in the London parlor, blasphemous, and held his watch on God for five minutes, while the he-raped hot-gospeller hid underneath the furniture.

Which is the more dramatic? There can be no doubt about that. A thunderbolt is bigger than a lath sword. Also—yow never can tell—it might actually fall, as the theater management, having no control over deities, could not be sure whether the scene would end in applause or a dead actor.

In the preface, Shaw, getting into a towering rage about the crimes of vivisectionists, unburies himself forthrightly:

"I really do not wish to be abusive; but when I think of these poor little dullards, with their precarious hold of just that corner of evolution that a black beetle can understand with their retinue of two penny-half Torquemadas wallowing in the infamies of the vivisector's laboratory, and solemnly offering us as epoch-making discoveries their demonstrations that dogs get weaker and die if you give them no food; that intense pain makes mice sweeter, that if you cut off a dog's leg, the three-legged dog will have a four-legged puppy, I ask myself what spell has fallen on intelligent and humane men that they allow themselves to be imposed on by this rabble of dolts, blackguards, impostors, quacks, liars and worst of all, credulous, conscientious fools."

This is language an actor can bite into. Here Mr. Shaw said a mouthful. In all the pages of his five plays he never does better than say a pageful.

The plays are a little bit more amusing than they are exciting. In the last part of the evening in the Garrick there is some clever lampooning of Lloyd George and Asquith, of whom two of the characters of the cast are counterparts. A great deal of this amusement, by the way, comes from the actors, who have improved on the Shaw text by going outside of it for two cartoons in makeup and gesture of the Englishman.

But here again—in matter for mirth—the preface is richer than the work. Again such sly and meager laughter from playgoers who are well up on the international gossip as may greet Shaw's digs, in the latter, at the hen-pecked Asquith or the vote-necked Lloyd George. I put the rib-splitting sneer in the former, of Mr. Shaw learning how to ride a bicycle.

To quit this process of proof by pieces and come to a summing up, the matter of both the preface and the plays is the story of the theory of evolution, since the days it was a religion. And, in the preface, Shaw tells dramatically how it happened, in the plays undramatically why. Clearly the production of "Back to Methuselah" in the Garrick leaves an awful opening for some rival enterprise—a play which is titled "The Front to Methuselah."

Shaw calls his latest opus—and he refers to it once or twice, with sly melancholy, as a possible last opus—a "contribution to the modern Bible." The dogma he advances is that humankind has an expectation of longer life. Three score and 10, he argues, is a baby span, and civilizations, politicians, artists, messiahs and laborers die before they have struggled out of swaddling clothes. Let humanity extend the life span to 1,000 years and it will get astonishing results. Projects that now die because one generation cannot complete them and the next generation cannot remember them, will materialize.

The trouble with the earth, Shaw decides, after looking at it from the eminence of his 70 years of age, is not that humans can discover no ways and means but that they exert no will.

He goes into the matter of human will at length. Its existence is proved, he ventures, by the biologic phenomenon of "conscious evolution." Of this term, having no confidence in the reader's powers of understanding, he gives a whole play and half a preface of explanation. It is evolution backed by will—God helping the monkey who helped himself to become a man and willing now to

Theatricals



The Flapper Line Peek-A-Boo Choristers at the Garrick



Lillian Gish in Orphans of the Storm - Brandeis



Lydia Barry at the Orpheum



Emily Miles Passing Show 1921 coming to Brandeis

What Theaters Offer

"THE Passing Show of 1921" made its debut at the Brandeis last Sunday night. It heralds another of those entertainments fabricated at the New York Winter Garden. Willie and Eugene Howard are the stars. There are two acts of 25 scenes, in which are promised abundant comedy, singing and dancing, together with a large chorus of belted and numerous eye smiling sets. Among the principals are Corie and Peggy Masters and Brown, Schroed and Arson, Will Philbrick, May Boler, Ina Hayward, Emily Miles, Harold Atteridge, Quinan and Jack Rice. Harold Atteridge wrote the book. The music was written by Jean Schwartz with incidental music by Al Goodman and Lew Pollack. The scenery was designed by William Weaver of the Garrick theater, London.

FOLLOWING it triumphs at the Brandeis theater during the past two weeks. D. W. Griffith's "Orphans of the Storm" will be continued a third and positively last week beginning with today's matinee performance. At nearly every presentation of this screen epic, last week, enthusiastic onlookers, enthralled by the marvelous of the picture that with the famous old play "The Two Orphans" as the basis, had as picturesque background as the French Revolution, cheered and applauded during the tremendous exciting and emotional scenes brought before their eyes and imagination by Griffith's wizardry. The most scenes including the storming of the Bastille and trials before the people's tribunal, are Griffith at his best. The magnificent setting showing the interior of the king's palace, the gardens of the Marquis de Praille during a night scene, the quaint streets and buildings of old Paris, are all so realistic, so realistic, and authoritative as to make one doubt that they could have been specially constructed for a mere screen production, however ambitious in "Orphans of the Storm," Mr. Griffith has indeed surpassed all his former triumphs on the screen.

JOSEPHINE VICTOR, one of the most popular stars of the vaudeville stage, comes to head the show which opens this afternoon at the Orpheum. She is making her first appearance in Omaha, and is accompanied by a company of unusual merit, she is to appear in the four-act comedy, "Juliet and Romeo," which is written by Harry Wagstaff Gribble, who has provided Miss Victor a role in which her grace and attractiveness may be best displayed. Johnny Muldoon, Pearl Franklin, and Lew Rose precede her in the featured attractions, described as a comedy of song, dance and music. Lydia Barry is also to be featured, as comedienne and vocalist she is one of the established favorites of the vaudeville stage. "Listen, Bertie," is the title of the act of the "nu" variety to be contributed by George Lane and Ezra Byron. Raymond and Schram call their song offering "A Syncope and a Funiculus" and accomplish a series of unusual feats. Jim Dump, the urbane member of the group, is also the clown. He provides hilarious amusement. Beautiful gymnastics are displayed in the act of Beatrice

help man to become superman. It is disagreement within the camp of evolutionists with the Darwinian legend of automatic selective evolution. It is shortly Shaw's "survival of the fittest" erected to combat Darwin's "survival of the fittest." The plays are part, with H. G. Wells' earliest and latest works and (on this side of the Atlantic) with Roosevelt's "strenuous life," of that system of living the over-ful life which has fascinated the contemporary Anglo-Saxon. The world, for Shaw, Wells, Roosevelt and all their unconscious disciples—Edison, with his four-hour sleeps, the above-average American business man with his 14-hour days—is so full of a number of things that they are all as unhappy as kings.

The philosophy of achievement, is to me antipathetic. I take myself as a standard instance. I believe I could set myself up as an anti-Shaw with an anti-Bible if I had any talent for preaching a gospel of non-achievement. Such a Bible would be founded on the premises that humans achieve too much—that the trouble is not that they live so short that they have no time to get out of troubles, but that they live so long that they have time to get into them; that too many books are written, too many battles lost and won, too many civilizations started and ended, all for the one reason that too much life is lived. In the ideal world this Bible would teach, there would be short and much less active life, at least half spent in charming leisure and given to labor only when there was true occasion for such unnatural effort. Human achievement would be then reduced to an important minimum, restrained and winnowed by a maximum of philosophic inertia, and mercifully stopped by early demise.

Skinner may have a new dress suit. That is to say, Bryant Washburn is considering a reproduction of the popular magazine story that raised him to stardom a few years ago and started the vogue of light comedy dramas on the screen.

There is a new heirress to the considerable estate of Thomas Mix. She arrived the other day and has already been named Thomasina. The child's mother is Victoria Forde, who retired from the screen when she married the star of western pictures.

The Man Killer

(Continued from Page 8.) when Parr angrily waved him to be silent, then turned on Oliver. Oliver reached over to the billiard table and held up the "shiv." "That shiver," he explained, "The one I extracted from the Honorable Cecil's thumb," he added unpleasantly. "Well! What about it?" snapped Parr. "It was painted red, man! The gate pole was white." "Well! Well!" snarled Parr. "I looked for something red," said Oliver. "I found it. There it is! That man! Damn him! He nailed the horseshoe to it—and deliberately brained the poor devil with it, in cold blood. Then he tacked the horseshoe back into place! High Gun wasn't the man killer! There's your man killer—that sniveling wretch in the corner." Oliver made an effort to control himself. "If you don't believe me," he cried, "look at that man! You can see the nail holes—even if he did try to batter them out."

A shriek came from the corner. "It was that woman—she made me do it—she hypnotized me!" A glassy silence followed this outburst. Mrs. Fimmie rose quietly. With fingers that did not tremble she extinguished the live coal of her cigarette in the ashes of the tray beside her. This done to her satisfaction, she daintily brushed her hands and looked expectantly at Parr. Parr gave her credit for nerve. She could gaze without a tremor at the hideous weapon that had reduced the stalwart man to a blubbering confession.

"Well, Mr. Commissioner," she said in level tones, "what are we waiting for? Why prolong it?" Zabriskie drew the abominable Cecil to his feet and led him down the room. As he passed the woman the man turned on her one beseeching look. She drawing back as if afraid her garments would touch him, gave him back a glance of unutterable disgust. It was not the foul murder of her husband, for which she must now stand accused before a court of justice, that daunted her; it was the shaming realization that one of her own kind had brought to the mire with such a yellow cur as the Honorable Cecil.

(Copyright, 1921.)

Corinne Says She Wants a Real Man

Broad-shouldered, deep-chested, rounded and supple, a clear complexion and cream complexion, softest flashing brown eyes, and a face whose expression changes rapidly with her mood; that is Miss Corinne Arbuckle, prima donna of the "Peek-A-Boo" company, at the Garrick theater this week, who bewails the fact that of all her admirers, not one seems to understand her or take her seriously.

"What is the matter with them?" she asks, "or is it myself? Am I different from other women? I receive innumerable attentions, and many ardent letters; but when I try to reciprocate, no one takes me seriously. Ah, who is me! Unless something unforeseen occurs, I fear that I am doomed to an unwedded existence for the rest of my days. Oh, Romeo, where art thou?"

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Lillian Gish Is of French Ancestry



Lillian Gish

The family name of Lillian Gish's ancestors was de Guiche, according to investigation into her ancestry. Lillian was born in Massillon, O., and entered pictures when she was 14 years old. She was called by Paul Helleu, the French painter, one of the five most beautiful women in America. This demure star appears with her sister, Dorothy, in "Orphans of the Storm," a Griffith masterpiece adapted from "The Two Orphans." The picture is in its third week at the Brandeis theater.

Edith Roberts' next appearance is still in doubt, owing to the continued illness of the rigid director, Cecil De Mille, who returned from Europe in such poor health that he will be unable to pick up his work for several weeks, according to word from Los Angeles.

Practically no foreign automobiles are being imported into Germany.

Vaudeville & Pictures Empress

NEW SHOW TODAY MAYRE DELIGHT & CO. In "Clever Bits of Minstrelsy" FRANCES PARKS & CO. Electrical Revue

AL BEATTY & EVELYN In "Chrysanthemums" BILL PRUITT "The Cowboy Caruso"

Phonoplay "DON'T TELL EVERYTHING" Featuring Gloria Swanson Wally Reid and Elliott Dexter

Schooler Is a Real Wizard in Realm of Music

As fine a musician, pianist especially, as has ever graced the vaudeville stage, is David Schooler, who is coming to the Orpheum theater next week in a musical act, entitled "Music Hath Charms," which was written by him and Herman Timberg. There is a company of five supporting Mr. Schooler, and their presence and the parts they play add considerable color and diversity to the offering, but as far as David Schooler is concerned it is his masterful interpretation of classics that is the keynote of any act in which he is associated.

Mr. Schooler is unbelievably young, a frail little fellow, but a serious-minded wizard who reaches prodigious heights in his work. The tempo of his renditions would tax a speedometer and his faultless technique is picturesque. This alone would prove a highly entertaining act.

The Thomas H. Lee studio is busy assembling a cast for the next picture to be directed by John Griffith-Edwards. It is entitled "Finding Home," and is to include a distinguished array of players, several of whom have occupied stellar positions.

The Tuesday Musical Club presents MATZENAUER CONTRALTO

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MARGOT ASQUITH

Wife of the former British Premier, who has started the civilized world by her lectures and writings To Lecture at the Brandeis Theater 4 P. M. Thursday, March 23 Tickets on Sale Thursday, March 16 Prices—\$2.00, \$1.50, \$1.00, and 50c.

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