

Mutt and Jeff--Mutt Thought He Wasn't on Speaking Terms With the Colonel.: By "Bud" Fisher

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THE STAGE IN THE NEW YEAR; ITS PROSPECTS

Competition of The "Movies" Against The Spoken Play

NOTES OF SCREEN AND FOOTLIGHTS

Canadian Stars Score Success—English Peer in Overall—An Appreciation of Lauder—The Harkins Engagement—Varied Gossip of Green-Room

Theatrical speaking the dawn of the New Year in St. John does not cause a feeling with local play-folks that it will be much of an improvement on the dying twelve-month so far as their being privileged to see some of "the best that's going" is concerned. By far the most noted productions of 1915 in St. John play houses have been in motion pictures. With the camera and screen still the idols and steadily increasing in popularity through the year, not only this city, but the maritime provinces as a whole, it may well be expected that the speaking stage will be compelled to be content for a time with the ordinary traveling attractions, with at rare intervals a stellar production.

The fault is not in any managerial direction. Nothing would more delight the managers of dramatic playhouses in these parts and to bring this way some of the higher class attractions, but with economy the watchword in amusement circles, with the fear of promoters across the border of being shelved in Canada and with the extra efforts being put forward to cater to the "movie-fans" it is hardly to be hoped that the new season will see any of the so-called A. 1 dramatic productions playing this territory.

Aside from the fact that economy is bearing down upon the big-budgeted entertainment, there is little to induce the bigger attractions to venture on this route. With the possible exception of the local Opera House, it is difficult to secure bookings in adjoining towns which would make a provincial tour profitable. The available theatres in neighboring centres are booked with stock or pictures and do not care to deviate from their regular policy. Thus it is that though enquiries are made from booking offices as to time in these parts, it is only occasionally that something real good comes along for there is little inducement offered in the way of a paying tour. And whether it is from desire or necessity, the fact remains that the engagement which is most satisfactory from the box-office viewpoint now is that which is accompanied by the lower seating prices, the public flocking to such attractions while others of a higher and better class are met with slim encouragement.

There is no likelihood that the motion

pictures will so affect the spoken drama as to cause its annihilation, any more than the art of printing has abolished preaching or lecturing. True, at present the "movies" are the rage, but the real beauty of expression, the natural desire of humanity to view the whims, emotions and fancies of mankind in real life are to be found in the spoken drama, and though the screen-play is now the vogue, the footlights must again come into their own, and the competition between the two branches of the stage art be lessened.

The motion picture has come to stay, but while now it occupies in these parts a more prominent place with theatre-goers than the stage, the reaction must follow when the objections previously noted are overcome, and then will the spoken play rank on even terms with the silent drama in the power to draw the throng.

Little can be expected in 1916 in this respect. With the war continuing there will be even a greater tendency to tighten the purse strings for amusements and the result will be necessarily the same policy as to the medium or lower priced stage attractions through the maritime provinces with the motion picture productions ever improving in artistic touch and enactment, continuing to provide entertainment for the masses.

When the era of economy has passed a return of the better-class companies and attractions may be expected and there is no doubt that the old-time patronage will be evidenced though with no lessening of the popularity of the photo-play.

Harry Lauder

Because of the interest attached to his recent visit to St. John, the following concerning Harry Lauder, who was at the Shubert Theatre there last week, should be of interest. It is an appreciation of E. H. Crosby, dramatic editor of the *Boston Post*.

Mr. Lauder is one of the few entertainers in the world who is practically the entire show. To be sure, he brings with him some attractive vaudevillians, but they are simply to give the audience a certain period of time for the money expended. Harry Lauder is the bright particular star, and the others merely satellites. There is much food for contemplation as to just the reason for Mr. Lauder's world-wide popularity. Without affirming positively the causes, there are probably many which have brought him to his present unique position on the stage of this country and England.

In the first place, Mr. Lauder has the happy faculty of portraying with a high degree of fidelity certain Scotch types easily recognized by natives of Scotland, as well as by those who have traveled through the country, and genuinely amusing to such as witness the impersonations for the first time.

"Every nationality on earth possesses certain characteristics, and when these are accentuated, not exaggerated, they become amusing even to their own kind and kin. We see the same in the 'dawn and dusk' of London called, was worthy of the stage, and in a comedy phase.

"Mr. Lauder, being a close student of his own people, has been able to give in an imitative manner some of their eccentricities. He is also a composer of songs that strike the popular fancy of everyone, and he is wise enough to know how far he can go and not become ridiculous. Anyone who has witnessed the impersonation of Mr. Lauder will quickly understand his skill as a delineator and comprehend why he ranks as an artist. Lucille and her cockatoos are very enter-

taining, for the bird displays a marked degree of training, and it requires but little mental effort to realize that it accomplishes all claimed by its prepossessing mistress."

The House Next Door

The presentation of the well-known comedy drama, "The House Next Door," which was so successfully given here a few weeks ago by local amateurs, is to be repeated in Fredericton tomorrow with performances afternoon and evening at the Opera House. The proceeds will be in aid of the Red Cross Society. Leaders in patriotic endeavor at the capital have fostered the repetition of the play there, and it is to be given under their auspices.

Otis Skinner plays an actor in the new play called "Cook of the Walk," by Henry Arthur Jones, which has been successfully produced both in Washington and Baltimore. He is an actor of the old school, ambitious, but unsuccessful, and when he gets the chance to act "Othello" to the "lady" of a famous actor-manager it is the fulfillment of his greatest ambition. But in order to obtain this distinction he has to condescend to the rescue of the famous actor, who has become involved in an intrigue with a young girl, and persuaded him to give her a rendezvous.

Mrs. Edvina, Canadian soprano, recently sang at the Shubert Theatre, where she was called in hurriedly by the management of the Metropolitan Opera House to take the place of Mme. Torg, who was too ill to sing in "La Tosca." She made a distinct impression upon several of the leading critics of New York and upon the attitude of those who were not so favorable a paragraph by Mephisto in Musical America may throw some light. He says: "And here is a question I would like to put to some of the critics, a few of whom have notoriously abused Teutonic irregularities. Why, when German artists come here and make a debut should the utmost sympathy and consideration be expressed, especially if they are suffering from a cold or from nervousness at a first appearance, and the same sympathy and consideration be withheld when they are not? There is every reason to believe that the English singer who is suddenly called from Chicago and asked, with little or no rehearsal, to sing a very difficult and exacting role, and then virtually make her debut at the great Metropolitan Opera House, is in a position not unlike that of the English singer who is suddenly called from Chicago and asked, with little or no rehearsal, to sing a very difficult and exacting role, and then virtually make her debut at the great Metropolitan Opera House."

The Harkins Visit

The return of W. S. Harkins with a talented company to the Opera House has proved popular with local play-folks and the productions given have been well received. There is every reason to believe that the engagement will be a success from all viewpoints. The leading members of the company, Mr. Selman and Miss Lotus have particularly won favor with stage-goers here, as have some of the other members of the company. On the whole it may be said that the company is balanced well of the war, and it is both in their interest and in the interest of their families. When the war is won and over 100,000 men return to Canada seeking re-employment, they will each be able to draw from the government a very substantial sum to tide them over the first difficulties. It will ensure a gradual restoration of equilibrium so far as the unemployment situation is concerned at the end of the war, and will go a long way towards solving one of the greatest problems with which the government will be confronted in finding immediate means of livelihood for the men of the disbanded army.

Joseph Riopelle of Ware is probably the most active man of his age in Massachusetts; he has just passed his 103rd birthday, and he still does his share of work around the place. He saws and chops wood, takes care of the hens, cuts brush and does other chores. He enjoys a pipe or cigar. Mr. Riopelle had ten children, three of whom are living, also five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

today, but her name was not even known to the "fans" who idolized her. Strangely enough, it was the spectacle of the theatrical producers entering the moving picture field, bent upon changing the conditions therein, that brought about a new era in which "utility" methods characteristic of the theatre created the most lucrative outlet for the actor in amusement annals. Immediately salaries were doubled, trebled and in some cases increased tenfold. Directors of theatres, managers, former stage managers, not one of whom had ever earned more than \$100 a week, were granted contracts for fifty-two weeks at \$250 to \$500 a week, while three erstwhile actors, all of whom were penniless when in desperation they applied for "work" in the studios, are now veritable pillars of the industry itself. All three (D. W. Griffith, Mack Sennett and Thomas Ince) now earn \$100,000 a year. Each is a millionaire, and they are the artistic heads of a mighty film organization capitalised at \$4,000,000, specializing in photo spectacles, to see which the public is willing to pay the highest prices which obtain for the spoken play.

Billy Sunday's Friend

Dodson Mitchell who plays the role of Elijah Bradshaw in "The Eternal Magdalene," has received a somewhat unusual request from a man in Syracuse, N. Y., who signed himself V. E. Simpson. The request has already been complied with. Mr. Simpson wrote:

"Dear Mr. Mitchell—I heard the admirable address you delivered the other night when attending a performance of 'The Eternal Magdalene' and I approved heartily of the sentiments expressed in the purpose of the play for you to tear it up at the end of the last act, but if you have a copy of it and it is as good as to lend it to me, I should like to make use of it. As you may know we have just enjoyed a very successful series of meetings conducted by Billy Sunday and I feel that we are all much better for it. That address of yours is directly to the point of the agitation that is now going on here and I think it would do a world of good could it be printed. The speech to which Mr. Simpson referred is one that is prepared by Elijah Bradshaw to be printed in the daily papers following a visit of a general agent to the city in which he lives. In it he refers to the silly sentimentality that prevails in certain circles where the women who live in segregated districts are under discussion. He gives it as his own conviction that the best way to the downfall of these particular women. All that concerns the community is that they do exist and that the community would be better off if they were banished from it.

In the play, of course, Bradshaw sees great light and eventually is moved to change his attitude on the question and tears up his prepared statement. A copy of it, however, has been sent to the Syracuse correspondent.

KEEP HALF OF SOLDIER'S PAY FOR HIM AT OTTAWA

Ottawa, Dec. 30.—Action has been taken by the government to secure for each Canadian soldier at the front a nest egg in the way of accumulated pay on his return to Canada at the conclusion of the war. It is understood that an order-in-council has been passed retaining a considerable portion of the monthly pay due the soldiers who have not assigned their pay to relatives in Canada, and who are now overseas, where there is no need for any immediate expenditure, and practically no opportunity for the expenditure of their whole monthly pay.

The men actually at the front receive only \$6 per month in pay, while officers are restricted to a maximum of \$75 per month. The balance is placed to their credit and when they secure leave an amount up to \$100 of accumulated pay is allowed them, if they so desire.

Under the new arrangement it is expected that nearly half of the regular pay will be held back until the final settlement at the end of the war, thus ensuring a sort of compulsory saving on the troops, which is both in their interest and in the interest of their families. When the war is won and over 100,000 men return to Canada seeking re-employment, they will each be able to draw from the government a very substantial sum to tide them over the first difficulties. It will ensure a gradual restoration of equilibrium so far as the unemployment situation is concerned at the end of the war, and will go a long way towards solving one of the greatest problems with which the government will be confronted in finding immediate means of livelihood for the men of the disbanded army.

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NOT SO EASY NOW FOR WALLINGFORD

Honest Advertising Campaigns in Co-operation With Government Are Killing "Get-Rich-Quick" Schemes

Washington, Dec. 30.—Honest advertising campaigns undertaken by business organizations, publishers and advertising men in co-operation with the post office department are sounding the knell of "get rich quick" and other fraudulent enterprises, according to the annual report of the solicitor of the department.

"It is clear," says the solicitor, "that the strict enforcement of the law is having a deterrent effect upon many promoters who have hitherto relied for a livelihood on the conduct of schemes to defraud through the mails. The schemes now being brought to the attention of the office are, generally speaking, not so flagrant as those presented during the preceding years of this administration, and it is now the exception rather than the rule to find the promoter of a business against which a fraud order has been issued attempting to resume such business under another name."

The decay of this once thriving industry, the report continues, has been brought about not only by the post office department but by the newspaper and magazine publishers, advertising oracles and made the fraudulent schemes dangerous and unprofitable.

Lotteries, however, thrive still in new guises. "These," the report explains, "are of such infinite variety that their detection would be an endless task. They range from the simple raffle for small sums to the most stupendous enterprises involving hundreds of thousands of dollars each, and aside from the lottery feature many of them abound in fraud. Included among the latter are so-called bond investment schemes, home purchasing plans, endless chain enterprises and other selling enterprises of great magnitude.

"One recent stock selling scheme involved the raising of \$18,000,000 and came stealthily on the stage, and knelt dagger in hand, behind a clump of blue ribbons. The hero emerged from a large bunch of lilacs, and as soon as he perceived him she fell upon, stabbed him twice and sank half-conscious into a very handsome algerette. This may sound a trifle queer, but the lady in front of me came in late for the performance and became so intensely interested that she forgot to remove her hat, and that's how it looked to me."

"Yes, I am inclined to think it was very good," he replied without any marked degree of enthusiasm.

"Can't you describe it to me?" she continued, beaming radiantly.

"Why," explained he, "the heroine

NEW YEAR NINETEEN SIXTEEN

"Fling out the old Bring in the new This year I wear The Best Good Shoes."

To our many patrons we extend our every good wish for the coming year.

GEO. A. SLATER, Limited
MONTREAL
MAKER OF
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provided for the distribution of \$500,000 in prizes. In another the first grand prize was alleged to amount to \$100,000.

The solicitor also calls attention to the fact that the law prohibits the mailing of dunning postcards. This time honored institution, the postcard dunn, still thrives.

"Ah, do tell me something about the play last night. They say that climax at the close of the third act was simply grand," she said.

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