

W. S. HARKINS TO PUT COMPANY OUT THIS SEASON

Now Organizing in New York;
Expects to Come to St. John

VARIOUS STAGE NOTES

Amateurs in Patriotic Efforts; Harry Lauder, Nance O'Neil, Digby Bell and Other Stars in Pictures Is Bernhard's Work Expected

A visit from W. S. Harkins with a talented company of player-folk and a list of new productions may be looked for by followers of the stage in St. John, and it is an announcement which should afford considerable pleasure. Writing to a friend in this city, Mr. Harkins said recently that he was then engaged in getting together a company, and that judging from the people already signed, he would have the best acting organization ever under his management. Considering the lengthy list of stars whom he has brought to St. John at different times during the many years he has been visiting here, this is an interesting assertion, but it may be relied upon by Mr. Harkins will have a company well worth while. He expects to be in St. John for a fortnight's engagement in the near future.

Grace George yesterday announced a prize of \$1,000 for a modern American play by a college student or graduate, to be submitted before June 1 next and which she guarantees a Broadway showing with customary royalties.

Nance O'Neil, famous emotional actress, has been persuaded to abandon her contemplated theatrical tour, and has signed with the Lubin Company for her appearance in a series of feature pictures to be released through the Vitaphone.

What will be the vehicles in which Miss O'Neil will make her appearance under the Lubin banner has not yet been definitely decided upon, and before making decision there will be careful consideration of the stock of motion picture rights at hand in the scenario department.

Carl Laemmle, president of the Universal Film Manufacturing Company, is quoted as believing that Sarah Bernhardt will not again be seen on the stage in the flesh. In a recent interview Mr. Laemmle expressed the conviction that Bernhardt realizes her inability to return to the speaking stage and in consequence was glad to have opportunity to appear in the Universal film, *Jeanne Dore*, hoping in this way to preserve to the future permanent record of her remarkable vitality. While Laemmle regards it entirely unlikely that Mme. Bernhardt will appear in America in December, as has been stated, he fully expects her to appear in other films, to be made on the French side.

Amateur Success

The presentation of "Men and Women," and "When We Were Twenty-One" at the Opera House this week by local amateurs, from the L. I. & B. Society under the able direction of J. R. McCloskey, Jr., won hearty praise. Both plays were given with skill and capability, and the cast in each acquitted themselves with particular cleverness. While each play had previously been presented by the L. I. & B. in this city this fact did not prevent a large audience at each production, and there will no doubt be a satisfactory amount for the patriotic fund as a result. The players are receiving congratulations upon their success. The specialties were attractive and the settings most pleasing.

"Back Home" the delightful comedy which Bayard Veiller has written around Irene S. Cobb's famous "Judge Priest" stories, which were enjoyed by thousands in the Saturday Evening Post has opened at the George M. Cohan Theatre, New York. The play comes to New York after a short but successful season in Boston, where it was taken for its premier.

Selwyn and Company have assembled an extremely capable cast for its presentation. Headed by John W. Cope as "Judge Priest" and Willis P. Sweetman as "Jeff," it includes Phoebe Foster, Sydney Booth, Richards Hale, Miriam Doyle, Robert M. Middlemas, Wallace Owen, Fred Goodrow, Violet Howard, Clifford Stark and a number of others. Kirk Brown, well known in St. John, will play leads with the Haverhill, Mass. Stock company.

The House Next Door

The presentation of Hartley Manners' famous comedy drama, "The House Next Door" by local amateurs has aroused keen anticipation. The production is being looked forward to with keen interest. The entire proceeds are for the Red Cross fund, and those interested in the welfare of our Canadian boys in hospital or at the front, can contribute their interests by attending while at the same time they will enjoy a dramatic treat which will be pleasing. Mrs. A. C. Wilson is directing the play; Miss Belle Amour is directing some of the patriotic specialties, and E. S. Peacock has charge of the features to be offered by the Glee Club.

Mistaken Identity

A recent ludicrous incident at the big two million dollar studio in East 170th street, now occupied by George Kline, put everybody in the big building in rare good humor one day last week. It was lunch time and a hundred or more of the directors, actors, office men and women and other employees were in the big dining room where lunch, prepared by the studio chef is served. A new waitress had been added to the commissary staff and she evidently had not been tipped to the fact that players occasionally came to the table in make-up, and when Harry Watson, of Billed and Watson, made up as a typical run-nosed tramp strode into the room and seated himself at her table, she gazed her astonishment, let a bowl of steaming soup slide slowly off of a tray and without stopping to pick up the wreckage dashed up to the chef.

"Did you see him? How do you suppose that tramp ever got in here?" she demanded. Meanwhile Watson had "got wise" that she really thought he was a tramp who had gotten in by mistake, and when she turned to look at him again as she spoke to the chef, Watson winked, smirked and made one of the grimaces that have made him famous in Kline film work.

"My God! he's crazy, too," fairly shrieked the maid as she made haste to

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get to the kitchen. Later it was made clear to the girl that Watson was in "make-up" after which she consented to serve him.

Harry Lauder's Visit

The coming of Harry Lauder, famous Scotch comedian, to the Imperial, is the leading event of theatrical interest this season. The demand for seats has been in keeping with the nature of the engagement, and the sale has been of a very quick order. Parties from outside the city are being made up for the purpose of coming to hear him and many reservations have been made for the visit of the famous Scottish player.

The Chicago Police Department are going to use motion pictures for the prevention of crime. Chief Healey stated that "movies" have already been taken of several noted criminals in different poses before the camera. The purpose will be to display the pictures in the different police stations at roll-call. The chief believes that this system should be installed as a regular feature of police business.

Digby Bell, popular light opera star of a few years ago, is playing with the Universal Film Manufacturing Company to play Father, the William H. Crane role, in that company's motion picture version of Father and the Boys.

"The Oldest Actor"

During the Boston engagement of "Back Home," Solita Solano, dramatic

critic of the Boston Traveler, turned up some uncommonly interesting facts concerning Theodore Hamilton. Theodore Hamilton, who plays Gilson-Gill in "Back Home," is the oldest actor on the American stage today, having been born in 1886 at Baltimore, Md., writes Miss Solano. His experiences would make a more interesting book than any novel of fiction. It was when Mr. Hamilton was a printer's apprentice at thirteen years that he knew Edgar Allan Poe in Baltimore. The poet was accustomed to dropping into the printing office every afternoon—to drink of a bottle of whiskey with some cronies. It must be admitted. Then in 1901 mood, he would chat with the boy. Not long afterward he died and young Hamilton was one of thirteen—and the only one living now—to stand at his grave at the burial service.

In 1909 Mr. Hamilton served in the civil war in the 1st and 8th Virginia and fought at Bull Run. That famous battle was at its height when Gen. Longstreet rode along the edge of a wood. There he spied Hamilton standing by

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him a tree, loading and firing as rapidly as he could.

"What are you doing there?" shouted the general.

"Don't bother me, general, I'm killing a Yankee with every bullet," answered Hamilton. It was only after the battle was over that he discovered he had placed seven cartridges—the old-fashioned kind that were bitten apart before use—upside down in his musket and all were unfired.

"I don't mind admitting that I was scared to death," laughs the actor. "Thirty-three years afterward the Spanish war broke out. One day Hamilton met Gen. Longstreet.

"Are you going to fight again, Hamilton?" asked his old commander.

"I'm thinking of it, sir."

"Well, if you go to Cuba you had better take your tree along—they are scarce there, I'm told."

When Mr. Hamilton had been but a short time on the stage he appeared with Ida Vernon, playing Romeo to her Juliet—the first time either of the neophytes had read a line of Shakespeare before an audience. This was in 1893-94 in Mobile, Ala. These two are the only ones of that company now alive.

Hamilton had the good fortune to play with Edwin Booth and appeared in "Hamlet" with him 128 times at Booth's Theatre, New York, doubling the parts of the King and the Ghost. He has in his possession a letter written by John Wilkes Booth, the brother of Edwin, the night before he assassinated Lincoln.

Mr. Hamilton toured the country with Julius Brutus Booth, the third brother, Julius's son, Sydney, is now playing the hero, Robert Carter, in "Back Home."

"The oldest working actor," as he calls himself, wishes to die in harness. He is still active and has a wonderful memory, being able at any moment to give a date-year and month—with absolute accuracy.

It is a poor type of man or woman who is not most interesting in his, or her own environment—that is, if the environment is one that permits expansion of personality. What gives home its supreme element of joy is not its elegance, or beauty, or even its comfort, for unfortunately, many homes lack comforts obtained in other places. The home's trump card is the inestimable privilege it allows of being oneself, of rioting in freedom of speech, of exercising personality along natural lines.

That home is most pleasant to visit where guests feel at liberty to be as completely themselves as the courteous restraints of good breeding allow, and that host or hostess is most successful who call out, instead of suppressing, the individual characteristics of those about them, who can win strangers and members of their own household into laying aside the veil of reticence and becoming living, pulsing personalities instead of colorless automatons.

Personally the writer does not believe in suppressing anyone. Children should be restrained but not suppressed. Often a child's eagerly enthusiastic recital of a day's outing in the woods with a camera will happen to be far more interesting than any item of news the adult members of the household may have chanced upon through the day's news.

So long as the child tells his story intelligently and without unduly "encroaching" upon the group conversation, let him talk and accord him respectful and sympathetic attention.

The same roof recently sheltered the writer and a lad absorbed in nature studies, who had organized a satisfactory club of boys of his own age in the town in which he lived. The latest work of members was taking a bird census. They were dividing the township in districts, were visiting the gardens, orchards and

woods, counting nests and noting their kind, and thus were really getting accurate statistics as to the number and varieties of birds in the township. Incidentally, the child casually remarked that that town would hurt a bird or rob a bird's nest. Since, child as he was, he spoke with authority and knowledge, his conversation was eminently worth listening to when he was discussing birds.

But people cannot talk enthusiastically or freely unless they find sympathetic listeners, and there should be cultivated everywhere a spirit of appreciation for other people's interests and concerns. The writer once asked a clever woman why it was so easy to confide in some persons and so difficult to speak a personal word to others. She replied that people naturally told things to those who showed interest in listening to what they had to

say, while they became as inarticulate as an oyster or as frozen as an Alaskan river in winter when with those who seemed totally indifferent to their affairs or who gave careless attention to their speech.

"Conversation need not be personal to be interesting; in fact, the wider the range of conversation, the more entertaining the talk. As a notable writer once phrased it: 'The family was pleasantly quarrelsome,' by which was meant, as we understand it, that the household was given to spirited argument and free debate. Democracy is the ideal for nation, state or city, and democracy should be the ideal for family life. Not lack of official head or firm government, but co-operative spirit instead of submissive or rebellious silence and service—in short, home rule with individual representation.—Baltimore Sun.

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