

IN THE WORLD OF AMUSEMENT

General Gossip

William A. Brady, manager of Grace George, of Robert Mantell and of several well-known theatrical productions, is preparing to invade London with a number of his attractions. He is emboldened to make this onslaught upon the English theatre by reason of the great success achieved there last spring by Miss George in "Divorcés." Mantell will be sent to the world's capital; Miss George will return there at the close of the American season, and "Way Down East" will be shipped across the ocean for an English verdict.

During his London visit with Miss George and her company Brady had opportunity to contrast conditions in the theatres of England and of America. His observations are of a sort which no doubt, prove of interest to the American theatre-goer.

In their interior arrangements and service (said Mr. Brady) even the newest of the London theatres have disadvantages that seem strange to Americans. The cost of admission to the first-class boxes is more than in this country, but the conveniences, without reference to the play itself, are far from commensurate with the increased expense. The scale of prices in the west end theatres, reduced to American currency, is about as follows: Stalls or orchestra seats, \$2.50; front seats in the circle, \$1.80; back rows of the circle, \$1.44; upper circle, 90 cents; pit, 60 cents; gallery, 24 cents. Thus the best seats cost more than in the corresponding places in American theatres, while the rate for the cheaper seats is a trifle less.

Men ushers are not yet known to London. The duty of seating the audience still falls to young women, whose positions are modern developments of the orange women of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These ushers are not exact to taking a tip, and they always exact a sixpence (12 cents) for each programme. No stated number of girls is employed, but, instead, the force is increased or cut down in accordance with the volume of the patronage. There are no head ushers.

London has not yet contenance sidewalk-ticket speculation, but the public is as badly imposed upon as are New York libraries by speculators. A dozen so-called libraries control, if they wish, practically the whole supply of theatre tickets. The theatres openly acknowledge their business relations with these libraries, and furnish all the seats demanded, which are then sold at an advance on the regular price varying from a sixpence to four shillings (81). London seems to prefer the library system even with its exorbitant exactions, on account of the convenience it affords the public, which is able to open running accounts with the library proprietors.

Every theatre in London has its bar, where all kinds of drinks are sold, but few theatre managers are in control of this department of the playhouse. The privilege is on an annual lease. The revenue the bar privilege provides each theatre, however, is a considerable item, ranging from \$250 to \$500 weekly. In the case of a music hall this revenue often pays all the running expenses of the house. The proprietors of the bars control the programme privileges and pay the ushers, and are likewise responsible for the serving of tea and the sale of candies between the acts.

Many managers would prefer to supply their patrons with programmes free of charge, but the present system is so well established and bar proprietors cling with such tenacity to the programme privileges, that the theatre managers are powerless, except on the opening nights of plays, when, by common consent, programmes are supplied free of charge.

There is another individual in the London theatres who is unknown in similar places of amusement in this country. He is called a "pucker." His business is to watch over the pit and see that its occupants are crowded into the smallest possible space. He is an official of great responsibility, for at well-attended performances the skillful discharge of his duty will add \$50 a night to the box office receipts.

London safeguards its theatre audi-

ences as well as we do, with the difference that the cost falls upon the theatre manager. In each playhouse a fireman with absolute authority is stationed. His salary is paid by the theatre, though it does not control his actions. The policeman's duties are the same as at theatres in this country, and he assists in handling the rush for carriages when the audience is dismissed.

United States actors who appear in London invariably find that they must change their methods slightly to suit the demands of English audiences. On opening nights, for instance, they must "play to" the pit and galleries in order to win a cordial response. In America the actor's chief concern is to suit the tastes of the occupants of the seats in the orchestra.

Actors abroad are also annoyed by the persistency of audiences in refusing to come to their seats until about 9.30 o'clock, and owing to this tardiness nearly every play in London is preceded by a curtain-raiser, although Grace George had what is known as an "entertainer" precede "Divorcés." This first part is aimed to appeal to the tastes of the gallery and pit, occupants of which arrive at the theatre early and remain late.

Sam J. Burton, who is playing "Rastus," the old colored "uncle" in Miss Poynter's company of "Lena Rivers," had a peculiar experience some time ago on Broadway. A well-dressed woman, who did not, however, bear the evidence of prosperity, approached Mr. Burton at the corner of Broadway and Thirty-Ninth street and addressed him. She said that she had met him before, but that he had probably forgotten her. Mr. Burton made no response, although he was unable to recall a previous meeting. She said that she was in hard luck, and had been to a fortune teller. The clairvoyant had told her, that if she could borrow four bits from a black-eyed man (Mr. Burton's eyes look like burnt holes in a blanket), and bet it on the races, she would win big.

Sam Burton has a heart as big as his two-hundred pound body, and unable to resist such a well-timed appeal, he gave the woman four bits. Several days passed and Mr. Burton saw no more of the lady, but one evening while "doing" Coney, she rushed up to him all smiles and happiness, and returned the four bits. The fortune teller had hit it right the four bits won, and she put the money on each succeeding race with the same good luck until she had enough money to restore her happiness. Mr. Burton afterwards learned that she was a dress-maker in one of the department stores.

Mr. Burton's one regret is, that he forgot to ask her the name of the fortune teller.

The Chicago American has the following to say about professional critics in Chicago and it applies to more critics in smaller places:

"The professional critic begins as a nuisance and ends usually as a conciliated donkey. The dramatic, musical and literary critics stand 'out' prominent among all self-satisfied donkeys."

Managers, playwrights, actors and actresses do at least the best they can. They work long hours, they study, they take pains, they think things over. They do what they can to please, amuse or elevate the public. And they hope for a reward.

"The self-sufficient, fatuous critic arrives. His aim is not to 'build up' by constructive criticism." His object is to make the world see what a wonderfully brilliant, satirical critic he is. He belittles the effort of hard working people. He discourages those that need encouragement and judicious praise.

"If he can succeed in bringing tears to the eyes of some poor woman who is desperately struggling to get on, if he can wound deeply the pride of a man who has never offended him, who is simply guilty of doing as well as he can, the assine type of dramatic, musical or literary critic feels that he has done a noble deed."

"There are exceptions to the rule. There are men engaged in criticism—very few—who really know what hard work is, and what it means. Some of these are regarded as men of knowledge and ability. Their severest criticism is taken kindly because it teaches and tries to teach."



GILLET'S DOGS AND MONKEYS.

They will be seen at Bennett's Theatre all next week.

Savoy's Good Bill

Theatregoers familiar with vaudeville will recognize in the holiday offering at the Savoy a week a bill of unusual excellence and strength. The topliner will be Albert Bellman and Lotie Moore, clever character artists, presenting a pleasing little sketch, entitled "A Bit of Vaudeville." A series of comedy and character sketches of types seen in New York daily are given. They are said to be character delineators of great ability and the humor infectious. The interpretation of the tough girl by Miss Moore has been pronounced by the critics one of the cleverest bits of character acting seen on the variety stage in many years.

Savoy patrons have been so cordial in their reception to good singing numbers that the management decided nothing would prove more pleasing as an added attraction of the holiday bill than a high class singing number. The Quaker City Quartette, one of the best known and most popular singing organizations in the country, should fill the theatre to the rafters. This act has been featured at the leading theatres in America and abroad the power and harmony of the singing being a feature.

The three Livingstons are acrobatic clowns, who have won renown both home and abroad with one of the greatest novelty comedy acts in the business. They perform many new and startling feats and keep the audience in a continual roar of laughter with their humorous trapeze work. Something new in the falls is also shown. The act has been featured all over America.

Bertina, a child wonder with the violin, should prove a treat to music lovers. She is not a trick violinist, depending only on good music to make people like her. She plays the violin exquisitely, with a beautiful shading and good understanding of the compositions.

Jordan and Harvey, the well-known impersonators, will be seen here in a new sketch by Aaron Hoffman, entitled "A Fixed Fight." They have just returned from a highly successful tour of England, other parts of the continent and Africa. They are said to have been the first performers to introduce Hebrew impersonations on the stages of these countries. Both have played prominent parts in well-known productions. Mr. Jordan was for many years with Hoyt's farces, being especially well remembered for his clever work in "A Stranger in New York" and "A Day and Night." Mr. Harvey has also met with great success in musical comedy and will be well remembered for his clever work in the feature role of "The Bell Boy." They are credited with being among the cleverest of all Hebrew impersonators, and are seen at their best in this clever sketch.

James Casey and Maggie Le Clair, one of the most entertaining teams of Irish sketch artists in the business, will be seen in their depiction of "Celtic Tenement Life." The comedy is of a refined nature and depicts humorous and unexaggerated scenes and situations that are frequently seen in the tenement life of New York. The portrayal of Irish character in this sketch is said to be a study true to nature without any way reflecting on that noble race. The comedy is clean, wholesome and bright and appeals to an intelligent audience. Besides being a success from a humorous standpoint, there is said to be a delicate strain of pathos that is occasionally discernible.

Bean and Hamilton have a pleasing barrel act. Another good attraction and the kinetograph make up the programme.

A BIG ENGLISH CHOIR COMING.

An English exchange says: "The greatest interest is being taken in Sheffield and Yorkshire musical circles in the Sheffield Musical Union's acceptance of Dr. Charles Ham's invitation to send their choir, which is admitted to be the finest in England, to Canada next October. The choir of 200 will be accompanied by 100 friends, including, it is hoped, the Lord Mayor of Sheffield and other influential people. The chief works of the Canadian tour will be the "Messiah," the "Elijah," chorals works of Bach and Boughton's folk song. Dr. Coward will conduct."

It is hoped a return visit will be paid to England in 1909 of a thoroughly representative Canadian choir, probably the Mendelssohn choir of Toronto. Sir Frederick Bridge, the eminent organist of Westminster Abbey, visits Canada in April next to tour through the Dominion and see for himself the recent improvement in Canada of church choral singing, upon which he is the greatest living authority.

At the Grand

Mr. Henry Ludlowe, a faithful student and clear interpreter of Shakespeare's plays, will make his first appearance at the Grand House on Monday evening in "Richard III." He will be supported by a cast of well known and experienced Shakespearean players, and surrounded by exceptionally brilliant settings. On Tuesday evening Mr. Ludlowe will be seen in "The Merchant of Venice."

Mr. Ludlowe is a magnificent physical specimen, a powerful and capable of every pitch and inflection, his facial play is admirable—almost reflecting the words before they are spoken like an overture or prologue to the passion and action. Mr. Ludlowe will not seek to attract attention and comment by innovations of any kind. He possesses those other rare qualities, being always earnest, conscientious and straightforward in his art.

Although in the prime of manhood, Mr. Ludlowe's career dates back to the days of former well known Shakespearean actors. In this school he was trained and with these brilliant men he toured the country, always spoken of as a young man with great talent; a hard student and one whose appreciation of the character he assumed was dictated by an artistic sympathy, whose reading was in perfect harmony, and gestures ordered in spite of a great future before him. Mr. Ludlowe, however, for the time retired. His ambition was to become a great Shakespearean actor, not an imitating rafter. Since then he has devoted himself to his art, becoming not alone one of the most popular men with the theatre-going public, but also an authority, not alone on Shakespeare, but on all matters pertaining to the stage.

The distinguished tragedian returns to the stage in the very fullness of his fine dramatic power, equipped as few have been, not alone at every point of his art, the fruit of years of careful study, but in all the magnificent nature of silver tones and the necessary voice to continue tours which he hopes will be awarded for an earnest, conscientious and able effort in behalf of the legitimate drama.

"His Last Dollar," elaborated and exploited under the progressive management of E. D. Stair and Geo. H. Nicolai, now in its eighth season of uninterrupted success, will come to the Grand for New Year's afternoon and evening, with David Higgins in the stellar role, supported by Mary Servoss and a strong company, including Thos. Reynolds, Frank Denithorn, Wm. Belfort, Page Spencer, C. P. Eggleston, Allan Bailey, Emma Salvatore, Alma MacLaren, Bill Wilson and Mrs. Malcolm. Augmented by its splendid scenic equipment, the play is one in which the authors, David Higgins and Dr. Baldwin G. Cooke, have by their united efforts, contributed to the stage a dramatic creation which has met with unbounded approval and is destined to live long in the hearts of play-goers.

The sensational reception accorded Blanche Walsh by New York theatre-goers in her new play, "The Kreutzer Sonata," will doubtless help to augment the patronage on her appearance at the Grand here on January 3 and 4. Miss Walsh appears under the management of Wagenhals & Kemper. The play has an incidental bearing on Tolstol's novel of that name, but has an analogy in the theme, character or plot. A less elegant, but more appropriate name for the play would have been the "Family Skeleton." Every family in which a tragedy has occurred has a skeleton and in order to find the real motive for the crime it is always necessary to unearth it, whatever it may be. Those who are afraid of ghosts or skeletons had better not go to see Miss Walsh on this occasion.

On January 6 at the Grand the great English artists, Laura Burt and Henry Stanford, late leading people with the lamented Sir Henry Irving, will be seen in "The Walls of Jericho," by Alfred Sutro.

"The Walls of Jericho" ran for over two years in New York, and has proven to be the greatest society success of recent years, depicting the sins of society and the curse of social gambling. It tells a story of the redemption of the frivolous wife from social sins, and in the play is a realistic gambling scene, in which the Hopes indulge their passion for bridge whist.

Al. Martin's big "Uncle Tom's Cabin" Company is holding the boards at the Grand this afternoon. The same bill will be presented this evening. Martin's "Tom" show is the best of the kind on the road.

Bennett's All Star

Those who attend Bennett's Theatre next week will find that the aim of the management has been to give a full measure of comedy. The show will be punctuated by first class dancing and singing and a mild dash of the strenuous to complete the true aim of every vaudeville show—variety. This week's bill has proved itself a great drawing card and capacity houses have been played to. The Ninety-First Regiment were the guests of Hon. Col. Moodie at the theatre last night, and the house presented a very splendid spectacle with the uniformed men and the decorations around the boxes and balconies.

The New York Herald says of Torcat: "Torcat, the great French comedian, was warmly applauded last Sunday evening at Proctor's Fifty-Eighth street Theatre. He was presented on that occasion with a splendid wreath of laurels from la Belle Torcatjada and others."

The sister act is to be expected on every bill at a vaudeville theatre and there are plenty of good ones available for distribution around the Keith-Proctor circuit. But though there may be plenty of room on the top for the superlative, the number that has got there is very limited. One of these latter is the Elinore sisters. They command the biggest salary in vaudeville and those who have seen them say that they are worth every cent of it. The team dances and sings in a most refreshing manner, having youth and plenty of energy to assist them. They work, too, as if it were a pleasure to them, which vivacity soon seizes hold of the affections of the audience.

Gillet's circus of monkeys and dogs is a wonder, so it is said. The Philadelphia Item says of it: "Gillet's dogs and monkeys were marvelously well trained and exclusively his own ideas and training. Not a human being appears at any time during their performance, yet they go through various stunts like human beings. The police patrol, drunken dogs, chicken thief, all show remarkable training. The setting is original and represents a dog village with the various trades represented. It was a novel act in its entirety and different from their last visit here. It not only pleased the children present, but the older folks had their laugh over the various antics."

The act of John B. Hymer and Elsie Kent promises to be one of the gilt-edged combinations that Keith & Proctor have supreme control of. Mr. Hymer, who is one of the best delineators of negro characters on the stage to-day, in the sketch that will be introduced by the two, plays the part of a waiter in a small hotel in the backwoods of Tennessee, while Miss Kent portrays a stranded actress.

Good character imitation is always pleasing, and Bennett's has made a name in this city for enabling theatre-goers to see some of the best instrumental aggregations in vaudeville. Dora Ronca is a neat little gypsy who formerly starred with the Zingari troupe, which made such a name for itself. Her violin playing is a model of technical skill and daring interpretative ability.

Phil and Natty Peters, comedians, are famous as funmakers, and their act is likely to prove one of the most entertaining in the show. There are lots of jokes in their pack and they peddle them at a rare rate. Good character imitation is always sure of finding a warm spot in the hearts of any audience. So much is read about actors and literary celebrities that one jumps at the opportunity of seeing them pictured in the flesh. Charles Lennox Fletcher is the king pin of impersonators and his act will be both interesting and instructive. The Bennettograph will be supplied with a brace of sensational and pretty films.

A GREEN MANAGER.

Warren Whitney, musical director of "The Irish Senator" company, tells about one of these "stage" managers in a Kansas town who had been in the business about a week. He was informed by one of the "stage" managers that the show got a date there. This one did not even know that an afternoon performance was termed a matinee.

Whitney asked the man what attraction had preceded the one with which he was connected. Upon being informed that it was the "March King," he had been there, Whitney asked: "Did he play matinee or night?" "No, just plain music—an' nothin' any of the folks knew, at that."

The Concert and Recital Problem.

The giving of concerts and recitals is becoming more and more of a problem the world over. Hamilton has not reached the worst stage in its development, but even here it is not always the thing of ease that it seems to the casual observer to be. Few of the concerts and recitals given by instrumentalists and singers who are not widely known prove financially satisfactory. The great majority of afternoons or evenings of music arranged by local players and vocalists no more than pay the actual expenses incurred, and not infrequently the concert giver has to contribute anywhere from \$10 to \$100 to cover the deficit. It also happens from time to time some of the widely known and loudly heralded "big folk" do not draw audiences large enough to save their managers from loss. The big ones themselves usually receive their regulation amount, for, as a rule, they are assured a fixed sum by the manager who imports them or by the piano firm whose instrument they play. But this is wholly apart from the amount the public pays into the box office.

The reason for giving recitals? Usually for advertising purposes—to introduce talents or personalities unknown to the larger circle of music patrons, to get newspaper reviews which can be used in circulars and which help in the securing of other engagements and of pupils, and to demonstrate to the public what has been accomplished or is being accomplished by the concert giver along the line of musical progress. The performing of music for music's sake alone is not often the motive for the prompts. Publicity for gain of fame and cash is the customary incentive. If the recital or the concert prove successful so that all expenses are paid, the giver is apt to be content; if it does not the bills, then he makes up the deficit and charges the amount to advertising.

But the getting of audiences is becoming more and more difficult as time goes on. Here "papering" of the houses does not obtain to such extent as it does in some places. There are, of course, many musical entertainments given here to which free tickets are scattered broadcast, but this is not the case with the majority of the recitals that have place among the best of the season brings. But "papering" is liable to be a dangerous policy to pursue. For the old saying "once a deadhead always a deadhead" holds good to-day just as it did when the first manager gave it utterance. The man, woman or child who has gone once on a free ticket to any entertainment is never ready to part with money for admission thereafter. And the giving out of free tickets results therefore in a distinct lessening of the paying propensities of the public. Let a theatre do as did one of the houses in Chicago a season or two ago—distribute free tickets liberally for the first night of each week—and soon the business and the house suffers materially. The audiences come, but they come only on the free nights, for people soon learn, as they learned in the case cited, that by waiting chance would be had to see the performance for nothing—the passes would arrive before the end of the engagement was reached.

The plan for using the students as concert room fillers is now to be tried in New York. The envelopes are requested and the manager is trying the using of them in its entirety and different from their last visit here. It not only pleased the children present, but the older folks had their laugh over the various antics."



MISS LOUISE DE VARNAY.

Who will appear in "Dora Thorne" a the Grand on Thursday evening next.

can from Berlin, Paris or London. The "phenomenal successes" of this debutante concert giver in the European capitals is generally of this purchased kind. He or she has paid for appearance, and the managers and hall owners have been the only profitters by the proceedings. A few lines of "notice" in the papers there, a paid paragraph or a long "write up" in the American musical journals which are the leeches of the musical profession, sucking the life blood out of nearly every one connected with the profession, expensive cablegrams to the "folks at home," and then a long struggle for further appearances—these are the "tricks" the concert giver in the European capitals has for his money and his labor. And it would seem that similar conditions are beginning to obtain in New York since the "Deadheads Wanted" system is being tried out there. How soon will it come to Hamilton?

How serious the conditions are getting to be in Europe is shown by a paragraph which appeared recently in the Tageblatt of Cologne, Germany. It states that a song recital had been arranged to be given there by Hans Pfitzner and the opera singer Moest. Now, Hans Pfitzner is a man of some importance in Germany. He is a composer of not little recognized ability, and he is the director of the Conservatory of Music at Strassburg—a position of worth. For this concert in Cologne had been arranged to give a programme of the latest songs—compositions not before heard there. He had engaged Moest, who is a singer popular and approved, and it naturally was expected that the music lovers of Cologne would avail themselves eagerly of the opportunity to hear such a singer in a programme of new songs by a popular composer, who himself was a man of high standing and who would assist in the concert. The day of the recital came and not a single ticket had been even so much as inquired for, to say nothing of being sold! Mr. Pfitzner arrived, and when told of the conditions refused to let the managers distribute free tickets, and the concert was canceled.

That such conditions obtain in Germany in one of the principal music centres of the empire shows how overcrowded is the concert field and how out of all proportion is the number of professional musicians to the demand existent for their services.

The Pfitzner recital, or non-recital, had an amusing sequel, however. The recital was to have been given in one of the large salons of the Hotel Disch. The evening when it was to have taken place the manager of the hotel was approached by one of his waiters, who said a gentleman had arrived who demanded that the great salon should be brilliantly illuminated, and also the ante-room that adjoined it, and that supper for one should be served in the salon. Herr Disch went to see who the remarkable individual was, and found himself face to face with a gentleman who introduced himself as Herr Hans Pfitzner, of Strassburg. The latter explained that inasmuch as he had engaged the salon and the ante-room for the evening for his recital, he felt that he had a right to use it, and he wished his supper served there. Herr Disch explained to him that he was ready to satisfy his demands, but that inasmuch as the managers who had had the direction of the recital had been to the hotel, and, owing to the canceling of the evening, had asked for and secured a reduction of the rental charges from 100 marks to 60 marks, Herr Pfitzner would have to pay the extra 40 marks if he wished to use the salon for his supper place. The composer concluded he had given out enough for his recital, and consented to have his supper served in the regular dining room.

"I want it understood," said a wife to her husband, "that I am a woman of few words." "Yes, I know," replied the husband, "but don't you think you are overworking them a trifle?"

HENRY LUDLOWE AS RICHARD III.

He will be seen in that role at the Grand on Monday evening.