

# IN THE WORLD OF AMUSEMENT

## General Gossip

Actors, as a rule, judge the value of different parts by the number of lines. Several big successes, however, have been won this season by actors in minor roles. The most extraordinary case of this kind is that of William Elliott, who plays the part of the son in "A Grand Army Man." In this third act the player does not have a word to speak. In the last act all he has is one line. "Dad, I have been pardoned." Yet by his excellent acting he has won the artistic triumph of the day.

May Robson worked hard to make her new name play, "The Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary," a success. But the hit of the first night was made by Nana Saville, who played remarkably well the small part of a rough New England servant.

From California, which has sent us so many excellent actresses, comes Lillian Albertson. Miss Albertson has just closed her engagement with "The Silver Girl." Although she played a minor part in the play she made a conquest of all the critics, and the morning following the first performance here were many laudatory notices about this actress that there were about the star of the piece.

Coming out from a performance of "Classmates," it is amusing to hear the different persons in the audience referring to "Bobby." Now "Bobby" is not the role enacted by the star, Robert Edeson, but is played by Frank McIntyre. Although Mr. McIntyre's part is not nearly so long as the star's he hits the popular fancy and his entrances and exits are invariably greeted with applause.

That stars do not like to have honors taken away from them was shown last summer in "The Honey-mooners." As George M. Cohan would express it himself, he "likes to be the whole show." So when Gertrude Hoffman appeared on the stage and by giving several imitations scored the biggest hit of the evening the comedian was so upset that he forgot his lines and the next night audience for his failure to appreciate that he was "it."

In "The Orchid" Eddie Foy is advertised as the star, yet during its run in New York he had to yield first honors to a comparatively unknown actor, Mr. Beck as Prof. Zaccary sang a song, "Far Peru," and the dame with which he accompanied it took the house by storm. His trouble with Tris Franza in Chicago is well known.

Klaw & Erlanger, managers of the New Amsterdam Theatre in New York, have begun putting into effect a new scheme for selling tickets which they hope will do away with sidewalk speculation.

Theatre-goers who buy tickets at the New Amsterdam for Jan. 20 and later dates will receive their tickets in a thick sealed envelope, on which is printed the following:

"This envelope contains a license for the purchaser for admission and seats for 'The Merry Widow,' but the license will be revoked by the management if this envelope is opened by anyone except the ticket-taker at the New Amsterdam Theatre."

When the purchaser has selected his seats the ticket-seller immediately seals the envelope by passing a metal stamp through the ticket and envelope, this stamp being sealed with wax.

This week's Billboard, a well-known theatrical paper, contains a very flattering notice of Mr. George F. Driscoll, manager of Bennett's Theatre here.

Just to prove that all comedians, and particularly monologue comedians, do not exaggerate when they relate at length amusing conversations which turn upon a word misunderstood, Al Wilson offers the following as having occurred within his hearing in a department store:

It seems that a gentleman whose name was Jepson, had just made a purchase which he desired the clerk to send to his residence:

"What is the name?"  
"Jepson."  
"Jepson."  
"No, Jepson."  
"Jepson."  
"That's it. You have it. Six eighty-two Grand street."

"Your first name; initial, please?"  
"Oh, K."  
"O. K. Jepson."  
"Excuse me, it isn't O. K. You did not understand me. I said Oh."



JULIA MAY GIFFORD,  
Who will appear at the Savoy, with her husband, Bob Fitzsimmons.

"O, Jepson?"  
"No, rub out the O, and let the K stand."

The clerk looked annoyed, and then said, with some asperity:

"Will you please give me your initial again?"  
"I said K."

"I beg your pardon; you said O. K. Perhaps you had better write it yourself."

"I said O—"  
"No, now you said K."

"Allow me to finish what I started to say. I said Oh, because I did not understand what you were asking me. I did not mean that it was my initial. My name is Kerby Jepson."

"Oh."  
"No, not O, but K. Here, give me the pencil and I will write it down for you myself. There, I guess it is O. K. now."

"During one of my trips through Europe," says Charles Hawtree, "I found myself in a small village with no razors. They had been packed in my hand bag, which I had left at the hotel where I had stayed the day before. There was no barber shop in the place and I was in a quandary as to how I might get shaved. The innkeeper told me that there was a man in the village who occasionally shaved people, and I determined to risk a cut or two, and send for him. The amateur barber arrived and after a little hesitation he said to me: 'Will you please, sir, lie down flat on your back while I shave you, sir?'"

"Thinking that it was probably the custom of the country, I stretched out comfortably on my back, and nearly went to sleep while the fellow shaved me, so light was his touch. When he had finished, I said:

"I am curious to know why you asked me to lie down to be shaved?"  
"Because, sir, was the ingenious reply. I never before shaved a live man."

"I may add that I sent for no more amateur barbers to shave me during that trip."

The theatrical business in the United States is very bad, judging from the following editorial from The Billboard:

"Calamity howlers have had something to howl about of late. Business, always bad at this season, in the amusement line, has been much worse than usual. Hundreds of companies have gone in off the road and thousands of actors have been thrown out of employment. Many expensive productions, that have New York and Chicago long run records, have been withdrawn because the business, though big as compared to that of the less popular shows, did not justify continuing."

We do not wish to appear pessimistic, but the situation as it stands to-day is serious indeed. Sanguinity may be gained from the contemplation of the prospect. Business is bound to become better immediately after the first of the year.

Many of the attractions that have suspended temporarily will again take the boards, and to much better patronage than some of the best are now enjoying.

The reasons are logical and manifold.

## Bennett's All Star

For the past week or so at Bennett's people have remarked with delight that the show gets better every week. There has to be a point to the superlative acts coming here, but it is not yet. A bunch of big type acts has been secured for next week. The headline attraction is Patrice, the celebrated comedienne. Patrice has made a name for herself in the legitimate field second to none for cleverness and polished comedy powers. She is dainty and forceful, and dresses lavishly in her present vehicle, "A New Year's Dream," which is a bright little act, with plenty of brisk turns to it. She is supported by a first-class company of Bowers, Walters and Crocker. Have been seen all this week at Shea's, Toronto, where they have given general satisfaction. They are a whimsical bunch, and provide plenty of fun by their antics.

The Country Choir is a quartette of excellent songsters, who introduce the good old songs and some good by play, which makes them a welcome turn on any bill. The Pittsburgh Dispatch says of them: "Daly's Country Choir is an excellent vocal quartette. It is a quartette that can sing, not a barber shop of rustic harmonies, but real music—music that only cultivated voices can handle. It is undoubtedly the best mixed quartette ever heard in Pittsburgh in vaudeville, and the audiences yesterday encircled the performers until they were thoroughly exhausted." Joe Flynn is a monologist and lets loose a pithy collection of chatter that is fresh and laughable. His business is to keep the people amused, and he knows how to do it. The Cincinnati Enquirer, speaking of a performance of his in that town, said: "Joe Flynn is not a joke artist, but a comedian. He is a comedian who keeps everybody in the jolliest of moods. The next act suffers by coming after Joe, because the audience has not had enough of him."

Belle Veola is a Parisian to the tips of her dainty toes. She sings and dances with that grace and charm for which French school is famous, and displays an animation which always pleases. Her songs are infectious, and invariably bring her volumes of applause and calls for encores, to which she responds, notwithstanding the exacting nature of her performance.

Amusement lovers will again open their purse strings for their pastimes as soon as the Christmas holidays are over. In the meantime amusement promoters and artists will have to rake and scrape for what they can get.

The expression "It is to laugh," which helped make Louis Mann famous, was originated by his mother, who died recently. Sixteen years ago Mrs. Mann went to see her son, who was then playing in "Honey." When he asked her how he enjoyed the play, she responded: "It is to laugh." He subsequently interpolated this line in "The Girl From Paris," and it became famous both in America and Europe.

The expression "ash," used by Sam Bernard in "The Rich Mr. Hockenheim," is an abbreviation of "sufficiency." Mr. Bernard says: "I had the idea that 'sufficiency' was getting played out, so I coined a new word."

The catch line in "The Merry Widow" is, "I am a rich man." He pretends all his remarks with: "If I may say so."

"Whatever that is," is the expression often used by Victor Moore in "The Talk of New York." The expression is quickly adopted by his hearers, which can be readily proven by those who listen to the people coming out after the performance.

That an expression can be disseminated largely by its use on the stage was shown by George Cohan in "Little Johnny Jones." Mr. Cohan heard the humorous phrase "twenty-three" and thinking it a good line used it. At first he did not use the numeral as a slang phrase.

DANGEROUS EXPLOSIVE.

Found in Room Occupied by Two Convicts at Montreal.

Montreal, Dec. 20.—Enough nitroglycerine to blow up a big building was found by Mr. Milton Hersey, city analyst, in a hand satchel taken from the room where Baillie and Hardouin, two dangerous criminals, were living at 28 Champ de Mars street. The two men were brought up before Judge Chabert to-day and pretended to know nothing about the explosive. Besides nitroglycerine there were a few sticks of dynamite, four detonators with fuses attached, a bottle of cyanide of mercury and a bottle of chloral hydrate, commonly called "knock-out drops." The men already stand convicted of robbery of furs.

JOHN MITCHELL ILL.

Is in a Serious, Though Not a Critical, Condition.

Indianapolis, Dec. 20.—John Mitchell, President of the United Mine Workers of America, was taken seriously ill to-day while attending the joint conference of miners and coal operators at the Claypool Hotel. He was taken to a room, complaining of pains in his side, where recent operations for abscesses were performed. A Roman Catholic priest and a physician were summoned. The latter, after an examination, pronounced Mr. Mitchell in a serious, though not necessarily critical, condition.

One of Adam's sons was the first able-bodied man.

## At the Grand

"Mrs. Temple's Telegram," a dramatized laugh in three acts, which ran for 300 nights at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, three months at Powers' Theatre Chicago, and two months at the Waldorf Theatre, London, Eng., will be seen here on Christmas at the Grand. It is a farce in the strictest sense of the word. There is not a dull moment in the play. It is all froth and it bubbles continually. Once the machinery for complications is set in motion it works to its fullest capacity, with the result that one ridiculous incident crowds the next, and on several occasions that happiest success of a real farce, the creation of a ludicrous anticipation of what is coming next, is supplied. The play is beautifully staged and the company presenting the farce is exceedingly clever and finely balanced. The New York production will be presented. Seats will be on sale on Monday.

On next Thursday and Friday at the Grand "The Fatal Flower" will be presented by a strong and capable company. The play is by Howard Hall, and it is said that he has never written a more human play, nor a more clever one than "The Fatal Flower," nor indeed any in which an experiment in oddity has proved more successful, and his creativeness of character has never been displayed more effectively. William Walton, supported by Florence Rossland, will interpret the leading roles. The cast otherwise includes such capable people as Charles H. Booth, Ella Cameron, Ina Claire, Bertha Reed, and others. New and elaborate scenery, representing picturesque Washington, D. C., will be utilized by the company, and it is promised that everything necessary for a first-class presentation of Mr. Howard Hall's play will be supplied on the occasion of its presentation in this city.

The Partello Stock Co. will close a successful engagement at the Grand this evening, presenting sensational drama, "We Never Sleep." The bill this afternoon is "The College Girl." A good sized audience enjoyed last night's performance of "Fighting Against Fate."

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" as presented by Ald. Martin's big company, will be the attraction at the Grand next Saturday afternoon and evening.

The pretty love story "Dora Thorne," in its dramatized form, is booked for the Grand next month.

Blanche Walsh, in the "Kruetzee Sonata," is an important Grand booking. She will be seen on January 3 and 4.

INSANE MAN DROWNED.

Suicide of John Strong at the London Asylum.

London, Ont., Dec. 20.—John Strong, inmate of the asylum, broke away from a party to-day and drowned himself in the reservoir of the institution. He dived through a hole in the ice and disappeared. The body was not found for 15 minutes. He was sent from Hensall a year ago as not dangerous.

NINETY-THREE KILLED.

Death List at Palermo Greater Than at First Reported.

Palermo, Dec. 20.—It is known that up to the present time 93 persons met their death and no less than 100 were injured by the terrific explosion last night in the military powder magazine at Palermo. The work of rescuing the wounded was continued until daylight under conditions of the greatest difficulty.

After the fire had been extinguished the troops used an electric searchlight. The lodging house for children, destroyed by the flames, has given the largest contingent of victims. There were many heroic rescues.

John Birch, who is better known as "The Man With the Hat," has an offering that would be a success for its novelty if nothing else. With the aid of what he characterizes "a cheap company" scores of old hats of all sizes, shapes and colors. Birch gives a screaming funny satire on the vaudeville melodrama. Birch made a big hit with this act last season.

The musical Buckleys, a fine musical attraction: Virginia Grant, who possesses a fine contralto voice and sings a well selected variety of songs, another good number that remains to be booked, and the kinetograph will make up one of the most pleasant vaudeville feasts theatre-goers have enjoyed this season.

RURAL DRAMAS.

Denman Thompson, who many years ago resided near this city, is an old man on a farm near Swansea, New Hampshire, and he has more money than he could use if he lived twice as long as it is likely that he will live, yet he is back on the stage this year playing "The Old Homestead." And although there are plenty of society dramas and modern plays that cannot get time in the theatres throughout the country in which audiences most do congregate, nobody has heard William A. Brady or Joseph Grismer complain that they cannot get time for "Way Down East."

The Shuberts bitten with this desire to get into line with the rural plays have made an elaborate revival of "Shore Acres" with Digby Bell and the scenery and properties which James A. Herne, the creator of "Shore Acres" used when that play was carried across the ocean to fail in London.

Joseph Murphy, as crafty and as canny an actor as ever lived, now has gone into vaudeville with a piece called "The Kerry Blacksmith," which is a condensed rural drama, the scene of which is laid in Ireland.

There have been rural dramas before Denman Thompson in a sketch called "The Female Bathers," introducing the character which he later elaborated into Joshua Whitcomb, but none of the predecessors of "The Old Homestead" ever made half the money which that old timer has earned.

Few playwrights know more about making money than does Clyde Fitch. He realized that there is money to be had in rural plays and he wrote "Lover's Lane," which was produced at McVicker's theatre in Chicago several years ago and which still is being used in the stock company theatres.

Head of the musical team which will appear at Bennett's next week.

## Savoy's Good Bill

A wide variety of entertainment will be offered at the Savoy Theatre Christmas week, the management having spared no expense in gathering together a programme which displays a splendid array of strength. Almost every act is a headliner, Bob Fitzsimmons, "the grand old man" of the square circle, will be the chief card, presenting with his wife, whose stage name is Julia May Thirford, their clever sketch entitled "A Man's A Man For A That." This is a refined sketch and the story unfolded is said to be one that compels attention until the curtain is rung down. Miss Gifford makes a most attractive stage figure and possesses a voice that is heard to good advantage. She has a repertoire of classical gems sure to take. The dialogue is bright and bristles with humor. In the dialogue Lanky Bob tells how he came to enter the ring and this is said to be founded on fact. He was one of twelve children. His mother struggled to keep the home and one night Fitz, why by the way lived in Australia, saw an opportunity to win some money in a sparring exhibition. His opponent was a school boy who in turn was fighting for money to send his consumptive mother away for treatment. Fitz knocked him out and handed the purse containing over \$500 to his antagonist. He went home and told his mother who burst into tears of joy at his manly act. "There are two kinds of men in the world," says Fitz to his wife during the sketch, "fighters and quitters, which would you rather marry?" and of course the answer from his partner is "the fighter." He incidentally gives a wonderful exhibition of bag punching.

"The greatest acrobatic act I have ever seen," is the tribute of William Morris, who books the Savoy's shows, referring to the Georgettys, who have been creating a sensation at the New York theatre with their wonderful offering. Those who know Mr. Morris are well aware that an act has to be worth it to receive such a compliment from him, and judging by press criticism, the Georgettys fill the bill. The feature of the attraction is the appearance of a seventy-five pound midget, who acts as a top mounter and leaper in quite the most remarkable routine of hand-to-hand feats that have been seen on this side of the water. The midget begins immediately on the opening of the act with his spectacular stunts and is scarcely a minute. The turn aroused New York audiences to an unusual demonstration of approval.

One of the most entertaining numbers on next week's bill is the Doric quartette, composed of Doris Moore, Turner, Riemer and Metcalf. Doris Moore attaches itself to the appearance of this act because it is a Canadian singing organization, and because the members are well known to many Hamiltonians. This quartette was originally formed by Mark T. Lester, a prominent Toronto Mason, to supply the musical for some of the lodges in that city, and as such became known throughout the whole of Canada. On entering the ranks of the many quartettes at present in vaudeville, the same success attended their offering, which is received with flattering receptions wherever they appear. The quartette has just completed a most successful tour of the principal theatres of New York and the surrounding States and has been pronounced to be one of the finest quartettes on the road. This will be their first appearance in vaudeville on their native soil. At the first of the year they leave for an extended tour of the western States.

Another attraction of merit will be the offering of those well known fun-makers, Raymond Finley and Lottie Burkholder, who have been a big hit on the advanced vaudeville circuit. There act shows some of the humorous things on the vaudeville stage, and consists of travesties on familiar vaudeville frivolities and follies. It is just brimful of good crisp fun, and is sure to be well received.

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MISS E. PARKER,  
Who will be seen in "Mrs. Temple's Telegram" at the Grand on Christmas day.

## About Lightning Change Artists.

Some ten years ago there appeared in London, England, an Italian "quick-change" artist, who introduced on the variety stage an amazingly clever and novel performance. His name was Fregoli, and he received a fabulous salary for playing comedies and sketches by himself, impersonating the whole of the characters, and changing his costumes with such lightning rapidity that it almost seemed as though he was never absent from the stage during the whole of his performance.

Curiously enough, there are appearing in the metropolis at the present time two of Fregoli's country women who are creating possibly quite as much interest as Fregoli did himself on account of their remarkable ability as quick-change artists. One of these, Mme. Fatime Miris, a young lady only twenty-four years of age, is being paid a salary of £250 per week by the London Hippodrome, where she is now giving her performance.

In a quarter of an hour she plays a comedy entitled "La Marquise Divine," sustaining the whole of the seven characters, and making in that time seventy-eight changes in the comedy is three seconds. But Mme. Miris is not merely a quick-change artist, she is also an excellent actress and vocalist, and versatile to a degree.

This is apparent as one watches her delightful impersonations of the loveliest Marchioness Divine, the amorous Baron, and Giletta, the lady's maid, not to mention the coachman and the cook, the changes which Mme. Miris makes in her voice and mannerisms being no less extraordinary than her lightning changes of costume.

Her most wonderful performance, however, was when, single-handed, Mme. Miris produced "The Grisha" a short time ago in Rome, representing herself all the fifteen principal parts, and changing her costume 175 times. Although this performance lasted three hours, at no time was Mme. Miris off the stage for more than ten seconds. Is it surprising that people accuse her of having a double? Needless to say, the accusation is absolutely without foundation, and the Hippodrome management are prepared to pay £1,000 to anybody who can prove that Mme. Miris is in any way assisted by such a double.

"I have twelve trained assistants," behind the scenes," she remarked, "each of whom may be said to have a certain part of my person to clothe. You probably noticed that the scenery of 'La Marquise Divine' is provided with four doors through which I can make my exit or entry. My assistants know exactly which exit I shall use after speaking the lines of each character, and immediately I disappear from the audience one will definitely remove my hat, wig or whiskers, for instance; another my coat or gown; another will take whatever I have in my hands, and so on. As soon as one thing is taken off, another assistant will replace it with what is required for the next character. All this takes place while I am walking round the back of the scenery to make my next entry. Of course, all my garments are made with special fastenings and springs, so that they can be donned or torn off in an instant."

Within a stone's throw of the Hippodrome—namely, at the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square—one may see another lightning change dress exponent—a little lady only 12 years of age, who is "billed" as Fregolina, but whose real name is Miss Tina Parri. In spite of her youthfulness, however, Tina has proved herself an artist of extraordinary talent and versatility. She opens her performance with a single one-act drama, in which she plays four widely-contrasting characters. This she follows with quick change impersonations of an Italian comedian, a country girl, a priest, a French comedienne, and a musical clown, and concludes with half a dozen impersonations of famous composers—Vagner, Liszt, Verdi, Rossini, etc., conducting orchestral selections from their own works.

Her "turn" being limited to just over twenty minutes, Tina is not able to show Empire audiences all that she can do, but she said she would like to give selections from comic operas, as she did in Italy and France, where her performance lasted for an hour and a half. When only five years of age she saw Fregoli's performance in Italy, and there and then decided to become a quick-change artist.

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FLORENCE ROSSLAND,  
Leading lady in "The Fatal Flower," which is coming to the Grand.