

# AFFAIRS OF THE STAGE

A certain London music hall bore the unenviable reputation of possessing absolutely the worst band in existence. On a benefit night a "star" had promised to do a "turn," and, in consequence, the hall was filled to overflowing. When the "star's" time had arrived, instead of that eagerly expected individual, the perspiring manager came before the curtain, holding a telegram in his hand. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I regret to have to inform you that the 'Great Gasser' cannot—(storm of hisses)—possibly arrive for at least another quarter of an hour." (Great applause.) "In the meantime, the band will play you a selection." There was dead silence for a moment, and then a small boy in the gallery shrieked out: "Mr. Johnson! Mr. Johnson! Don't let the band play, sir; we will be quiet; we will, indeed, sir!"

The latest form of theatrical enterprise in England is the giving away of wedding presents at the theatre doors. Notice to those intending to marry. The management will present to the first couple entering the early door a 22-carat golden lucky wedding ring.

This interesting announcement is made at the Standard Theatre, Shore-ditch, where Frederick Melville's "whirlwind" melodrama, "Her Forbidden Marriage," is creating a succession of thrills among cast and audiences. It does not matter whether you are getting married at Whitechapel Church or Westminster Abbey, you can get a wedding ring for nothing, with the author's compliments, simply by arriving first at the early door. A wag who waited outside the theatre last night suggested that the early door would be an ideal resting place for the "Shy Lady" and "Silent Worshipper" who have been prolonging their agonies in the columns of a daily newspaper for weeks past. The only conditions are that the bona fides of intending applicants must be given by proof of banns having been published, and the marriage must be solemnized during the next fortnight. The beauty and belle of Shore-ditch seem a bit shy of proclaiming their betrothal so far, for up to last night the ring had not been claimed. "I will do more than this," said Mr. Melville to a newspaper representative, "I will undertake to send my manager to the church, or go myself as a wedding guest, or act as best man. There has been a great outcry lately for genuine and wholesome drama, and I want the public to see that there is at least one author who is doing his best to provide it. Couples have already accepted the lucky ring at Oldham and Bradford, where we have been touring. My manager assisted at the nuptials at Oldham and helped to give the couple a hearty send-off. Outside the church the public took up the spirit of the thing, and gave them a rousing cheer."

Katherine Florence, who is with William Faversham in "Lettie," was leading lady with William Gillette when he produced "Sherlock Holmes," and with William H. Crane when he gave "David Harum." This is a novel record—three stars named William, and she is the wife of Fritz Williams.

Eleanor Robson will play Miss Hardcastle in an all-star revival of "She Stoops to Conquer," which Liebler & Co. are arranging at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York, at the conclusion of the regular dramatic season for a run of four weeks. Among the others identified with the production are Kylie Bellew as Young Marlowa, Henry E. Dixey, Arnold Daly, Clara Bloodgood, Mrs. Charles Calvert, Louis James, J. E. Dodson and Frank Mills.

Mrs. Fannie Rush, the aged mother of the late Isadore Rush, whose home is in Wilkesbarre, Pa., has not yet been told of the death of her daughter. Mrs. Rush is in such delicate health that her family fear that the shock would kill her.

Cecilia Loftus has appeared under Daniel Frohman's management ever since she left the vaudeville ranks, first as member of the stock company, next as leading lady with E. H. Sothorn, and finally as star in "The Serio-Comic Governor."

Mrs. Charles Walcot, who succeeded the late Mrs. Gilbert, with Annie Russell, is one of the "grand old women" on the American stage, and is sister to Mrs. Charlotte Morrison of this city. She was a member of Charles Frohman's stock company at the Empire, and also of that of Daniel Frohman at the old Lyceum.

The sprightly lines of comedy that have always made "The School for Scandal" so interesting have been retained intact in the musical version of Sheridan's masterpiece, which is the vehicle employed by Miss Lillian Russell for her starring tour this season.

The Russian giant, "Machnow," who is appearing at the London Hippodrome, is nearly 8 feet in height. He wears the largest hats ever made for a human being, his frockcoat cuts into sufficient material to clothe five average-sized men, and he cannot sit in an ordinary omnibus. His weight is 360 pounds. A gold ring which he wears on one of his fingers weighs nearly half a pound.

John Hare discusses with considerable freedom the present position of the stage with Herbert Vivian, in the February Pall Mall Magazine. Here is an

extract: "The British drama," says Mr. Hare, "is in a position of grave peril. Its very existence is menaced by the competition of musical comedies, which are often mere music-hall medleys, not plays at all. Another ground for discouragement lies in the paucity of dramatic authors. We have now only two of the first rank—Pinero and Barrie. Vivian: 'May not that paucity be due to the fact that managers will not look at new authors, will not risk experiments?' Hare (warmly): 'Not at all. There is nothing so preposterous as what is called the bitter cry of the unacted. Every manager knows what a gold mine a successful play is, and he would spare no effort to obtain one.'

In England Edward Terry is known as the most public-spirited actor in the United Kingdom. He is also known as the richest actor in England, but he does not confine his philanthropies to theatrical circles by any means, but is prominently identified with many of the important charities of Great Britain. He is past grand treasurer of the Masonic lodges and has even had a lodge named after him. He carries with him so many Masonic emblems, jeweled medals, decorations and collars that it is said that no man could possibly wear them all at one time, unless he was at least 12 feet tall and 6 feet wide. As an afterpiece to "The House of Burnside" Edward Terry plays "Bardell vs. Pickwick," the delightfully humorous sketch by Dickens of the trial of the breach of promise suit which the widow Bardell brought against the glibly and amiably old Pickwick. Mr. Terry plays the part of the brow-beating Sergeant Buzfuz. The incriminating letters from Pickwick to Mrs. Bardell are read, and during this reading it is said that Sergeant Buzfuz's changes of expression and modulations of voice are delightful. "The House of Burnside," which, in addition to "Sweet Lavender," will be presented by Edward Terry on his coming visit to the Princess, is an adaptation by Louis N. Parker of George Mitchell's Odeon success, "La Maison." The scene is laid in Hull instead of a French seaport town. Richard Burnside is a successful shipowner, proud of his honor, proud of his house, above all, proud of his name. The note of the drama is struck in the early part of the first act, when Burnside has a friendly but yet real dispute with his chief clerk, friend and the father of his beloved daughter-in-law, Robert Parmlinger, as to which of them has the better right to the grandchildren. It is the shipowner's theory that the paternal grandfather, inasmuch as he supplied the name, is more important than the maternal ancestor. This prepares one for the shock. By an accident the proud, stubborn Burnside discovers that he is not related to one of his grand children. His daughter-in-law, neglected by her husband, had a lover. This lover, who has just died in South America, was the father of one of the two. But which?

Bertha Gailand is one of the few stars who refuses to spoil the effect of their acting by raising the curtain at the end of an act and taking a call with the other members of her company inside the picture that she and they have worked to make seem a reality. That is the reason for the use of a set of beautiful green silk plush draperies which Miss Gailand in "Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall." The players respond to the expressions of approval from the audience by appearing between the silk folds, and by so doing separate themselves from the scene they have been acting. Speaking on the subject, Miss Gailand recently said: "I remember when, as a child, I went to the theatre for the first time; and, leaning forward in my seat, watched an exciting act ending of a thrilling play. The theatre, the footlights, the audience, all were forgotten. To me it was a glimpse of another life. Then the curtain rose by response to a burst of applause, and all was changed. Friends and enemies stood hand in hand, bowing and smiling. To me they seemed to say: 'Don't take us seriously; this isn't real life, it is only acting! Those of us you think enemies are the best of friends, and we stage lovers are not at all fond of each other. After that the play was ruined. I could not again forget that it was the mimic world I was gazing on, I saw the make-up, the scenery, the artifice of it all.'

The hero of "The Brighter Side," the play with which E. S. Willard will open his engagement at the Princess on May 8, is a man of middle age, who, after squandering a fortune in dissipation, earns another by his genius as an inventor.

C. Leslie Allen, Viola Allen's father, who appears with her in "The Winter's Tale," has been actively engaged as an actor for 51 years. Mr. Allen, as is known, is an oldtime Boston favorite, and was born and raised in that city.

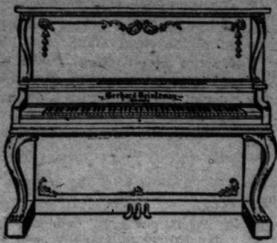
George Ade, the author of "The College Widow," is wintering in Porto Rico.

Valadon, the European necromancer who is appearing with Kellar this season, is a well-known European magician, and for five years was the feature at the most famous home of magic in London, the Egyptian Hall.

Sir Henry Irving has accepted the invitation of F. R. Benson and the memorial committee that he and his company should play "The Merchant of Venice" at the Stratford-on-Avon festival Monday evening, April 24.

"Leah Kleschna," one of the season's dramatic prizes, goes to Mrs. Patrick

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Campbell for a London production, but it goes to her by arrangement with Charles Frohman, and not thru the Shuberts.

Sidney Bracy, the English comedian, who appears as the clown with Viola Allen in "A Winter's Tale," is the son of Henry Bracy, general manager and stage director for W. C. Williams in Australia.

Mr. and Mrs. Kendal are to go to London in the autumn. They will again be seen at St. James' Theatre, for a three months' season, beginning in September, while George Alexander is on tour.

It is an odd fact, not heretofore referred to, that Miss Viola Allen has, during her career on the stage, never appeared in any play in which she did not assume the leading feminine role.

Miss Marie Stanwell, the heroine of "Escapes from the Harem," thrillingly enjoys her ride on the back of the huge elephant used in the play, which she capes from the harem of the Persian king.

George Thatcher, who plays the impetuous negro, Sassafras Livingston, in Henry W. Savage's western, "County Chairman" Co., is said to be among the wealthiest actors on the stage.

A good demonstration of the truth of the well-known proverb that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin" is found in the success of "Quincy Adams Sawyer," both as a novel and as a play.

Plans have been filed at Albany for a new theatre in the Bronx Borough. The seating capacity will be 1500 to 1800. M. Wyner of London is to be the manager. The new house will be ready about Aug. 15.

Daniel Frohman and the Rev. Dr. W. C. Shanon of the Bloomingdale Reformed Church, New York, have taken the matter of a Mrs. Gilbert memorial in charge and will soon make a report.

Messrs. A. L. Erlanger and John J. McNally sailed for Europe Feb. 7. Part of their time abroad will be spent in the Emerald Isle in search of "color" for "The Rogers Brothers in Ireland."

Lionel Barrymore is to be starred later in the spring by Charles Frohman in a Clyde Fitch dramatization of the book "Voltaire."

Louisville citizens, it is said, are raising a fund to fence in and preserve the original Mrs. Wiggs' cabin in the Cabbage Patch.

Maurice Campbell's production of Ibsen's last play, "When We Dead Awaken," will first be produced at New Haven, Feb. 24.

Captain Robert Marshall's new play for Wyndham's Theatre, London, is to be called "The Lady of Leads." It is said that the main incident is a parody on "The Lady of Lyons."

Mrs. Patrick Campbell will resume her tour March 6, in Chicago, in "The Sorcerer."

Miss Georgia Calne has signed with the Shuberts, and will appear in "The Earl and the Girl" after a long rest.

Miss Marie Cahill, the feminine star of "It Happened in Nordland," will be starred next season under the management of Daniel V. Arthur, in a new musical comedy.

Viola Allen lately confided to an interviewer that "Cymbeline" might be the next Shakespeare production in which she would appear.

Both "The Eternal Feminine" and "A Wife's Strategy" have been laid aside, and Miss Margaret Anglin is to have a new play, as yet unnamed, with which she will open in Chicago on Feb. 27. The Royalty Theatre, London, reopened Feb. 11 with a double bill—"The

Diplomatist," by Sydney Grundy, and "A Case of Arson," a one-act play, adapted from the Dutch.

John Kendrick Bangs, the humorist and editor of Puck, has shown his cleverness as a librettist by turning "The School for Scandal" into "Lady Teazle" for Lillian Russell.

Frederick Lewis, in George C. Hazelton's play of Edgar Allan Poe, called "The Raven," is scheduled for a New York production beginning Easter Monday.

Sam S. Shubert, the theatrical manager, has sailed for Europe to make arrangements for opening his new London theatre, the Waldorf, in April.

Bernard Shaw's "John Bull's Other Island" was revived Feb. 7 at the Court Theatre, London.

I. Zangwill arrived in Boston simultaneously with Annie Russell and her company, and he will attend all the rehearsals of "Jinny the Carrier" at the Park.

B. C. Whitney's production of "The Show Girl," laden with humor and wearing the mystic cap which E. A. Barnett designed for her, when the Boston Cadets brought her out, will smile upon the amusement seekers at the Strand in a few weeks. "The Show Girl" has received careful attention and money has been expended without stint on the costumes and scenery. A typical Rice chorus, dazzling as to beauty and jingly arrayed, has been provided and a cast of principals said to be better than any Mr. Whitney has so far selected. The cast is headed by Hilda Thomas, with the following well-known metropolitan favorites: Sam Mylie, Lou Hall, Estelle Bird, Sid Forester, Josephine Floyd, Bert Wainwright, Max Sweeney, Charles Parcor, Blanche Bertram, Louise Langford, Edna Glover, Tom Shea, Edna Sweeney, Ida Scott, Herbert Mustard, Nellie Wilson, Raymond Belmont, Nellie Dowdell, the Apollo Quartet, the Rainbow Sisters, the Dancing Dandies and thirty singing and dancing girls.

The seldom combination of an eminently successful play, an electrical and scenic production of infinite grandeur and a cast of surpassing excellence, as in the case of "Sherlock Holmes," which will be the offering at the Grand Opera House shortly, ought to turn the tide of local theatrical interest, very much in its direction. A dramatized story, by that rare genius Sir A. Conan Doyle, is in itself a special treat, and the fact of William Gillette having made such a play possible, should add still further to the attractiveness of a performance, which promises to command the admiration and respect of all classes of theatre frequenters. One entire year in London and three hundred nights in New York is about as strong an inducement as could be advertised, but such is a part of the brilliant record attained by "Sherlock Holmes."

The new sensational melodrama, "The Child Slaves of New York," is booked for the Majestic this season. The first scene, which is in the nature of a prologue, will be entirely in pantomime. The night of December sun is flooding the dreary stretches of an Alaskan landscape; two comrades have discovered in the frozen wastes of the north a gold mine of fabulous value. It is sufficient of avarice, but the demon of one of the envy creeps into the heart of his comrade, and he attempts the life of his comrade, who, for months, has braved with him the dangers of the north. Believing that no eye but that of God holds him, he steals away, leaving his former companion reaches the wounded man, who looks with sorrow at the retreating form of his friend, and vows there under the midnight sun, to be revenged. The story of the play takes both these characters to the great metropolis, where the betrayed man ac-

complishes an awful but just vengeance. The scenery cannot be described—it is magnificent, and must be seen to be appreciated. The flashing of the aurora borealis, the snow-white caps of the eternal mountains and the awful solitude of the land beyond the slightest degree of latitude, where nothing exists but the hardy Esquimaux and the terrible polar bear with his equal ferocious rival in the land of the fabled the wolf; the terrific cold, the scene of the cashing ice floes and the glittering bergs of frozen sea water, are reproduced in a way never seen before, and it is most scenes impossible that painted wood and canvas can be so realistic as that human genius could accomplish these things.

An early offering at the Majestic will be the latest success in the melodramatic line, "After Midnight," which, true to its name, is a vivid picture of the dark side of life after the hour of midnight in a big city. The most important scenes are laid in New York's notorious "Tenderloin," where millions of dollars flow like water every year in riotous dissipation, and where the most expert criminals eke out a luxurious existence. The story of the play is said to be an interesting one, taken from life, with many exciting developments and thrilling climaxes, picturing events that have figured prominently in newspaper paragraphs and in the police records. The cast is headed by the clever and versatile young actor, Jack Webster, supported by a big company of twenty-five, prominent among whom are W. F. Canfield, Adolphe Lestina, Mark Harrison, George H. Whitman, Joseph Redman, Master Billy Cavagnu, Arthur Wells, Mabel Garrison, Ella Ringquist, Louise Barthel, Johanna Brook, Ella Beldin, Edna Toler, Eloise Davis, Minna Perry, Marie Stanwell and others.

Origin of Phrases.

According to a writer in "T.A.T." "Go to Bath!" dates back to the period when insane people used to be sent thither in order that they might benefit by its mineral waters. The reproach implied by the phrase, therefore, is that what you say is so silly you ought to go to Bath and get your head shaved.

The phrase "Go to Jericho!" is a euphemistic way of saying get out of my way and stay out, and is derived from the Biblical injunction given by King David to his disgraced envoys, "Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown."

"There are two versions of the well-known 'Sent to Coventry.' One is that the town was a stronghold of the parliamentary party in the civil wars, and that all troublesome and refractory Royalists were sent there for safe custody. Another is that the citizens of Coventry had at one time so great a dislike to soldiers that a girl seen speaking to one was instantly stoned. No intercourse was ever allowed between the garrison and the town; hence, when a soldier was sent to Coventry, he was cut off from all social intercourse.

The phrase "To ride to Putney on a pig" recalls the feat of a notorious 18th century King Charles II's court, who actually performed the task for a wager. Later on, in 1770, Jane, Duchess of Gordon, emulated the performance—again for a wager—in Edinburgh, riding the animal the whole length of the High street in broad daylight.

By "Bristol milk" is meant strong drink, forced hospitably on visitors by their hosts. In the old days of hard living it used to be a point of honor with the rich merchants of the city to send their guests to bed drunk.

Origin of "Yankee Doodle."

Johann Leewalter of Berlin, has traced the tune of "Yankee Doodle" to 1773, at Waseburg, the central depot of the Hessian troops, employed as mercenaries in the war of American Independence. Leewalter is an eminent authority on folk songs.

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