



Dance to Father Neptune, given recently by the Neoller School of Classic Dancing at Brighton Beach, N.Y.

MUSIC AND PLAYS

Those Vanished Illusions.

HOW the modern stage realist has destroyed some of our most cherished stage illusions is well set forth by Mr. Alan Dale, in the current issue of the Theatre Magazine.

When the stage starts to give away its own secrets, says this well-known critic, I suppose it is a sign that it no longer considers those secrets worth guarding.

Do you remember the good old "storm" effects? They used to thrill me, in spite of myself. The thunder and the lightning were more terrifying than the real thing. With the darkened stage and the roar of the elements, I used to watch that poor old heroine trot forth into the night, with her persistently unborn child, and melodrama clutched me vigorously. The wonder of a well-regulated stage storm held me for years, and the illusion was complete.

Came the day when "Zaza" was produced with tremendous success. In that play, we were carefully shown exactly how the effects of the storm were managed, and the instruments with which they were brought about were actually displayed upon the stage. We heard the storm, as we viewed with our own eyes the methods of its elaboration. This was the end of my interest in stage storms. Naturally I had known that they were produced by some clever mechanism, but I had never been initiated into its mysteries before that time. It was very instructive, of course, and at that particular period it was novel—I think that the "press-agent" of the day called it "new and novel." But once the illusion of the storm for me. Now, when the elements rage, and the sweet gell rushes out into them, in her maternity cape, I see before me the revelations made by "Zaza," and the effect of it all is hopelessly ruined.

You may say that we have no illusions; that we are too sophisticated to indulge in such ingenuousness; that we are now perfectly willing to turn into derision the things that at one time were almost sacred to us. If we are all that—and I don't admit that we are—it is due to managerial recklessness, and to the "get-rich-quick" policy that has the interests of the one moment only at heart.

Perhaps the stage illusion with respect to woman has been the strongest and the one to endure most potently. You see, it is immediately concerned with the matter of sex, which is incessantly vital. Yet in the last two seasons, every effort has been made to batter this most necessary illusion. We have seen the lovely girls, who formerly inflamed our imaginations, pressed in spite of ourselves, in all their garish uncomeliness. They have paraded over our heads, across the very seats in which we sat, and we

have been made to realize that they were poor, raddled, rouged things, tired from incessant rehearsal, and scarcely able even to smile at us as it was intended they should do. We could view the stitches in their garments, the fibre of their stockings, and the texture of their wings.

Once in the far distance, they were enchanted maidens, weaving spells around us, fantastic and unrealizable.

* * *

Actors Should Sing.

WE often hear of noted actresses who sing well, and of prima donnas who are great actors.

We do not, as a rule, reflect that singing may be an essential part of the education of any great stage performer. Miss Marie Tempest, who was heard last in this country in Had-den Chambers' Great Pursuit, sets forth her opinions on this to an interviewer. She speaks from experience when she says:

"There is nothing like singing for giving a woman poise; nothing like it for correcting a faulty diction or improving a good enunciation of her language. As people grow more and more in the habit of an applied psychology, the value of breathing—whether you call it Yogi breathing, or refer to it in veiled and mysterious terms as an exercise having something very fundamental to do with the solar plexus, or whether you are simply a sane, sensible person trying to do

your best with that equipment which it has pleased heaven to bestow upon you, you place more and more emphasis upon the value of proper breathing.

"Were all actresses drilled in the fundamentals of singing—of which breathing is the first and final element—we should hear no gasping, panting, stumbling readings of the lines of Shakespeare, for example. Have you not again and again been afflicted with agonies in listening to young actresses who can't, to save their immortal souls, phrase a single line of Shakespearean verse, without a shortness of breath that robs the divine cadence of its melody and its meaning? That's because the poor girl has never learned to phrase in singing.

"Show me an actress whose diction is like that of the good little girl in the fairy tale, from whose lips fell pearls and diamonds, and I will show you an actress who learned to sing before she learned to act. Show me one—"

Miss Tempest's heated eloquence had shaken her prettily arranged hair out of place, and she paused for a moment to pat her marcel waves into shape again, and to light another soothing cigarette before she finished her uncompleted challenge.

"Show me an actress from whose lips in slovenly syllables fall sentences as ugly as the toads and scorpions of the other fairy in the same story and I will show you a girl whose yesterdays were not spent in song.

"With us in England the list of actresses whose diction is beautiful because of a training in comic opera is a brilliant one. Not very long, but brilliant. Here to-day you have out Constance Collier, who graduated from the Gaiety Theatre, and little Billie Burke, who phrases and pronounces her lines with a clearness and precision learned during her novitiate in musical comedy.

"On the French stage there's Jeanne Granier, Jane Hading, and Mme. Re-jane, each of whom speaks her language with classic purity and charm because of her faculty for pure diction acquired in singing. So that I feel that my good long yesterdays as a prima donna were something of a preparation for to-day's acting.

"More," she cried, emphatically, "much more. A voice, since you credit me with having one—a voice is always a tyranny. It registers each mood, it reflects each emotion of a singer. If something goes wrong with the scenery or your entrance isn't a success, your throat dries up, and all the art, all the knowledge, all the will-power you possess won't control the wicked little vocal chords that refuse to obey your orders and produce the effect you want them to accomplish."

The Coat of Many Colours

(Concluded from page 4.)

from the political map of this country, and the utter disregard of the sentiments of the West in favour of radicalism based upon more autonomy. The News has become a rock—not necessarily in a weary land. And there are some rocks on which storms seem to be very fond of breaking.

If the United Empire League of the Colonial Institute could manage to establish enough Newses in places like New Zealand, there would never need to be any Imperial Parliament or Imperial Council—except to call together the editors once a year on one of the seven seas. But an Empire held together by the centripetal forces of newspapers would have to have as its outpost editors men like Sir John Willison. And it happens that men of his catholicity in Imperial affairs are rather scarce. Furthermore, all the editors would have to be Tories. And even Imperializing Tory newspapers must sometimes publish news and have circulation; unless the affairs of the Empire are to be left in the hands of the highly enlightened few, leaving the unilluminated many to beat up all sorts of disintegrating movements—like decentralization.

Never mind; if Quebec and the

prairie provinces don't behave themselves in the Empire; if British Columbia develops too much Pacific-Coastism, and if the Maritime Provinces persist in remembering that once upon a time they didn't want Confederation, Lord Northcliffe will see that they are all furnished with free copies of the Toronto News, with The Times as a premium. In which case the Toronto News may succeed in getting along without what it has strong symptoms now and then of valuing much more highly than it used to do—the news.

LESS THAN NOTHING.

"I don't think I deserve zero on this examination," said the pupil, as he took his geometry papers.

"No, I do not either, John, but that was the lowest I could give you," said the teacher.

SHE WAS.

"Now, my angel—"
"Not a word," said his wife. "You can't josh me. You came in soused last night and I'm just going to put it down in my diary."

"Ah, my recording angel."



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