

At the Theaters

During the coming week Missoula is to be the scene of a battle. For the moment the action in the relentless conflict being waged between the Shuberts and what is known as the Theatrical Syndicate is to be found in Montana. In all parts of the country these two powers in the world theatrical are at sword's points; in every section of the United States the Shuberts and the trust are striving each to outdo the other, each to cut-tail the power of the other and each to present its plays to larger audiences than the other. In the west the battle has been unusually fierce. The Clyde Fitch play, "Girls," has been selected by the Shuberts as their weapon, while the trust is presenting "The Right of Way." Both productions have been to the coast and back east. Both are coming to Missoula this week, "Girls" on Tuesday and "The Right of Way" on Thursday night. "Girls" is to rely on Missoula alone for its audience; at least will make no special effort to secure attendance from the outside. "The Right of Way" is to run a special train from Hamilton. Both are clever plays, acted by competent people. The situation is, to say the least, interesting. "Girls" has been playing to packed houses in the coast cities; critics everywhere have praised the show. "The Right of Way" has fared almost as well. This week Missoula can take sides in the greatest theatrical war ever fought anywhere, or can remain neutral by attending both.

CLYDE FITCH'S LATEST IS THE PLAY "GIRLS"

On Tuesday, April 20 at the Harnois theater for an engagement of one night Sam S. and Lee Shubert will offer Clyde Fitch's latest and most successful comedy, "Girls," which ran for one whole year at Daly's theater, New York. "Girls" gives a description of the struggles of three young women to earn a living, their brave beginning and their ultimate willingness to let mere man work out the problem for them.

The whole play is pure comedy of the first rank. It pictures the discomforts and makeshifts of studio life. One large room in a studio building is the home of three young women all out of employment, deeply in debt and looking for work. The eldest of the trio is an avowed man-hater, and talks loudly of man's inhumanity to woman and the injustice of the inequality of wages. Her two companions, for the sake of harmony in the family, pretend to agree with her. Because of her youth, her utterances are extremely laughable. At the end of the first act when they all prepare to retire for the night, the fact is disclosed that they are sadly in need of certain articles of furniture known as beds, and are forced to sleep (in turns) on a folding-bed, couch and Morris chair.

Suddenly a young man rushes into the room, slams the door behind him and locks it. Consternation reigns and explanation is demanded, but this really is the funniest situation in the play and it cannot be described in a few words; it must be seen to be appreciated. The real man-hater of the family proves her inconsistency and lack of conviction by falling in love with the intruder at first sight.

After two more acts of extremely funny situations the play ends in good old orthodox fashion with all the girls safely started on the road to matrimony, and everybody satisfied and happy. The production supplied by the Messrs. Shubert is remarkably characteristic in atmosphere and complete in detail. The cast, which by the way was selected by Mr. Fitch himself, is composed of prominent metropolitan players among whom are H. S. Northrup, Bessie Toner, Caroline Locke, Ethel Terry, Suzette Jackson, Mercetta Esmonde, Charles Brandt, Heelyn Benson, Karl Knapp, Pierre Young, Fred Stanton and E. A. Locke.

VETERAN ACTOR TELLS OF FAMOUS PRODUCTION

Since "The Old Homestead" was first produced in the old Boston theater in April of 1886 it has earned more than \$2,000,000; this is the statement of Denman Thompson himself who has written in the "Woman's World" of Chicago the story of this remarkable drama which won for the homely and wholesome play the record of greatest success of any ever produced in the United States except "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

"It has been performed so many thousand times and enjoyed by so many millions of folks that I have entirely lost track of the number," says Thompson, in his retrospective monologue. "Perhaps the figures might afford me some satisfaction if I had them—but not a tenth of the pleasure and comfort I get from reflecting that no human being—man, woman or child—have ever gone away from a performance of 'The Old Homestead' the worse for having witnessed it. On the other hand, literally thousands have told me, and other hundreds have written me, that they have been moved by it to a new sense of moral obligations—a sense which actually moved them to do something to mend the mistakes of their past and to keep the present clean and courageous."

"I like to think about this—and I'm not ashamed to admit it. Perhaps it would not seem so important and so pleasant to me if I were a young man today, with all the future bright and glowing before me, my heels full of ginger, my head full of plans and my heart fairly bursting with life and hope. But a little change has come over this particular 'Joshua Whitcomb' since the 'Old Homestead' was first staged: I am now 78 years old, and so I look at things a little more soberly than I once did. If I had to look back upon a play not clean and wholesome and sweetening, but

which had been produced as many times, seen by as many millions of people as 'The Old Homestead,' then I know my head would rest far less peacefully on the pillow.

"But my satisfaction goes beyond this negative point for thousands of assurances have come to me that 'The Old Homestead' has changed misguided and unfortunate lives and restored careless and discouraged men to a right sense of their human relations—particularly their relations to their fathers."

For illustration Thompson told of a young fellow, Maine born, who came to see him at a hotel in the northwest overcome with remorse for leaving parents who needed him, he having seen the sorrow of Uncle Josh—the role Thompson takes—for his Reuben. "When I saw how the absence and

Reuben from his wanderings in New York."

Thompson relates how back in 1850 he left home and his parents' himself, though he was only 12. "It has come to me since that youth is rather cruel in its selfishness," he says; "though as I walked down the road with my carpet-bag in hand the tears and anguish of my father and mother were soon forgotten when I went past the store and blacksmith shop." In Boston he joined a circus and became a performer. Later he slid back to the commonplace of ribbon clerk in a dry goods store. Then he was given a part in "The French Spy" and later played Uncle Tom in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." But rheumatism seized him and compelled him to think out a play in which he could depend upon something besides the nimbleness of

"CLASSMATES" TO COME TO HARNOIS ON MAY 5

The charm of Duncan Irving, the chief character in "Classmates," which will be played by Norman Hackett and a large company at the Harnois theater on May 15th lies not so much in what the order characters say to him as in what he really is and does. "Classmates" is not a "talky" play, but an acting one, and Duncan Irving does not rely upon the good word of his friends for his position in the drama, but upon his own sterling qualities. No man can see him in one act of the play and not know him to be a man of sweet and fine honor. His eyes and his words carry conviction to everyone that he is the possessor of a clean and honest soul. Duncan Irving as a man is inately critical. A reticent man as to his own thoughts and feelings, he takes an inward measurement of everyone with whom he comes in contact—often the reverse of what

Harnois theater for one performance on Tuesday, April 22. Sir Gilbert Parker's stirring drama, "The Right of Way" with Guy Standing and Theodore Roberts in their thrilling impersonations of Charley Steele and Joe Portugais, under the management of Klaw & Erlanger will be the attraction.

The dramatization of what has been pronounced the greatest novel of the decade was made by Eugene W. Presbrey, the successful adapter of "Raffles." The story is told in five periods or episodes. The first shows Charley Steele at the height of his success as a lawyer and leader of his social world in the city of Montreal. He is a man without a heart, a doubter, a wrecker of men for selfish reasons. There is quick transition in the second episode, showing Steele seeking his recreations in the mire of the river tavern on the banks of the St. Lawrence. A blow, and his memory is wiped out. Here playwright and novelist part. Sir Gilbert never answered the question of Steele's redemption. He left his readers with the impression that Steele died a suicide and debauchee. Mr. Presbrey shows his salvation through faith and love. The production is on the same magnificent scale as all of Klaw & Erlanger's attractions, and the supporting company is recognized as being one of the finest ever sent out of New York city. The acting of this



GUY STANDING AND THEODORE ROBERTS IN SIR GILBERT PARKER'S GREAT DRAMA, "THE RIGHT OF WAY"

indifference of the son wrenched the heart of Joshua Whitcomb," this young fellow told him, "I saw myself in the place of Reuben, the son, and my own father in the place of Uncle Josh. And when it came to the dream in the play I was so mellowed that I cried like a child. And I just thought that somehow it would be a comfort to talk it over with you—perhaps a satisfaction to you to know that you had accomplished more for one lonesome and anxious father and in a certain old homestead down in Maine than any preacher has been able to—for I'm going to get in close touch with that home and keep so near to the old folks after this that they'll know right where to find me, at any rate." He did as he said he would, "and the father and mother were about as happy about it. I guess, as Joshua Whitcomb at the return of

his legs. He knew the Yankee character in Swanzy, his old home. Captain Otis Whitcomb, together with the sweet temper, great heart and unworldly wisdom of one Joshua Holbrook. Tried first as a short vaudeville sketch, and later as a three-act drama, this play, "Joshua Whitcomb" was a success. Denman Thompson and J. M. Hill, a Chicago merchant, divided \$400,000 profit from it between the summer of 1875 and 1881. But Thompson had to have a new play and wrote "The Old Homestead," retaining the character of Joshua Whitcomb, however. This was done on the road in 15 days. The first week's receipts were \$11,000; in New York 250,000 people saw it in its first three months, the receipts averaging \$1,624 daily. Thompson says: "I have played its principal character so many hundreds of times that I

had been supposed. It hurts him to acknowledge defects in others and he has the impersonal sense of justice which allows for good qualities in those who are ungenial to him. And so, even to his rival, Bert Stafford, he is chivalrous to the danger point. But once his honor is aroused, once he finds that it is his father's good name that Stafford is dragging into the mire, all caution, all restraint leave him and he strikes a blow that ruins his life.

"THE RIGHT OF WAY" IS DRAMATIZED NOVEL

One of the best acted plays ever presented here will pay a visit to the

organization has been recognized by the press of the United States to be one of the greatest triumphs ever presented to the theater-going public.

INTERESTING IS LIFE OF AUTHOR OF "GIRLS"

Clyde Fitch, whose 50th play, a comedy called "Girls," will be an attraction of the week in Missoula has had an interesting time of it since he began writing for the stage. He was Richard Mansfield's secretary when he wrote "Beau Brummel," his first attempt at play-writing, and his success was the more remarkable

(Continued on Page Eleven.)

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In Their Famous Impersonations of

CHARLEY STEELE and JOE PORTUGAIS

Prices: Box seats, \$2; first six rows, \$2; lower floor, \$1.50; balcony, two rows, \$1.50; balance balcony, \$1; gallery, 50c.

Seats go on sale Wednesday, 9 a. m. Reservations can be had by letter accompanied by check or money order. No seats held after 7 p. m. Thursday.

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