# THE NEW PLAYS

## "Stolen Orders" Big Melodrama With an Airship Sensation.

BY CHARLES DARNTON.

WAIT for the airship. As you love thrills, don't leave the Manhattan Opera House until you have seen the last of "Stolen Orders," for the highest thrill of all in the latest English melodrama from Drury Lane comes almost at the end. And the end, if you care to know, was reached at midnight.

In the matter of sensation Cecil Raleigh and Henry Hamilton's play attained its greatest height, naturally enough, with the airship scene. The craft itself was an interesting stage invention, but the fight between two men that took place in it was more fascinating still, particularly when both contestants tumbled over its side and went down to a more or less watery grave. Then a shot brought down the airship and the distressed heroine, who sobbed up comparatively dry and remarkably self-possessed a few moments afterward.

"Stolen Orders" was finally established as a big spectacular melodrama with a real sensation. The airship was unlike anything of the kind that the stage has ever revealed. It proved a scenic wonder, and, with the death struggle that went on in it and the heroine's perilous situation, it provided enough excitement to get on the nerves of the most hardened playgoer. At times the long story moved rather slowly, but stirring incidents quickened it at various points. For one thing, the modest young hero took a dive from the turret of a battleship that broke all stage records. John Halliday, who played the part of this young naval officer with discretion as well as valor and made an altogether agreeable impression, may consider himself a very lucky man that he doesn't break his neck.

It was also interesting, at an early point in the play, to watch the work of two burglars. Perhaps they should be classed as second-story men, for they gave a new touch to their gentle art—so far as my knowledge of it goes—by boring a hole through the ceiling and then lowering an umbrella to catch pieces of falling plaster. Rather a neat way of going about a job quietly, eh?

The plot settled down to business without delay. A clerk who had just lost his job in a money lender's office because he was betting on the races, decided, after a long and extremely loud talk with himself, to take his life. But he had no sooner put a dose of poison in a glass of wine than the ingenious work of the burglars gave him a new interest. He accordingly withdrew behind a curtain and awaited developments. One of the intruders is himself down through the hole on a rope and proceeded to open the safe. In it were jewels worth heaps of money. There wer also heaps of papers covered with dust. Now, the dust got into his throat, so he began looking around for something to drink. You know what is coming, don't you? Yes—he—drank—the—poisoned—wine! Well, his end was very sudden indeed, and apparently quite painful. The clerk came from behind the curtain and took in the situation at a glance. Then he took the jewels and went out to summon the police, who arrived just in time to catch the second burglar. The result was that this unfortunate specialist was sent to jail for twenty years, while the guilty clerk grew to be rich, respected and gray-whiskered.

The play then became, necessarily, one of those twenty-years-after affairs. There was talk of war, and Baron Kurdinan figured as a diplomatist whose activities had a certain significance. Incidentally, he was secretly associated with the clerk, who had risen in the world and taken the new name of Fournal. The Baron was particularly anxious to get his hands on the "sealed orders" that had been delivered to Admiral Gaveston, of the English navy, and to this end he paid particular attention to the Admiral's wife. When he learned that she was greatly in need of money he induced her to try her luck in a gambling house. But as bad luck would have it she not only lost heavily but the place was raided. The Baron, clever devil, got her out by telling the police she was his wife. Then she got herself and others into more trouble by taking the "sealed orders" out of her husband's strongbox on board his ship in order to exchange them for money with which to pay her gambling debts. Admirals from foreign ships who came aboard to attend a ball were all willing to be searched, but Willoughby, the young Lieutenant, balked at this proposition because he happened to have in his pocket a letter from the Baron to his sister that would have made her husband extremely uncomfortable and no doubt suspicious. Thus it was that Willoughby dashed up into the turret and then took a high dive. As for the "sealed orders" they came down with the airship—"from the hand of death," we were informed—and they hadn't even been opened!

The big battleship scene was effective. All the ladies wore headdresses that would have attracted attention on land or sea, while the various admirals made a great show. The Gurkinan Admiral, incidentally, was greeted by both applause and hisses. W. L. Abingdon, who gave the Baron a grand manner, wasn't a very bad villain, so he was only mildly hissed. In fact, the characters as a whole were not labelled in the usual melodramatic fashion. There was no hero in the bovious sense, while the girl who went up in the airship and came down with a rush didn't figure as a heroine up to that time.

Good old Connie Edisa, with her funny cackle, was a constant joy as a susceptible widow, and Franklin Ardell shared the comedy scenes with her in the role of a glib young American palmist. Charles M. Hillard played Fournal with good effect, Ivy Marshall brought skill and a certain degree of distinction to the role of the Admiral's wife, and Clarence A. Handyside made the Admiral as possible as the circumstances would permit.

The huge stage of the Manhattan offered every facility to the production, a fact that was realized most of all, perhaps, when two automobiles drew up in front of a house. But it was the airship that made "Stolen Orders" a real thriller.

### WILLIAM FARNUM TO ACT ON SCREEN AT ACADEMY.

William Farnum, declares William Fox, displays the most extraordinary work of his career in "The Wonderful Adventure," a photo-drama from the pen of Capt. Wilbur Lawton, which will be shown at the Academy of Music Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. He assumes a dual personality throughout the picture, exacting a greater demand upon his powers of character portrayal than in any of his former successes. He is both a respected man of affairs who comes under the spell of an adventuress and becomes a drug victim, and a rough and rugged man of the plains.

Mr. Farnum is frequently shown in the same room with his double, in close contact and animated conversation. The secret of the process by which this is accomplished is closely guarded by Mr. Fox. It is stated he expended $25,000 in experiments before he was successful.

At Mr. Fox's Riverside Theatre, Ninety-sixth Street and Broadway, "The Regeneration," the screen adaptation of Owen Kildare's story, will be the attraction for four days beginning Sunday afternoon.

### "THE TEMPTERS," AT GARRICK THEATRE.

"The Tempters" will be the attraction at the Garrick Theatre. In addition to two burlesques, "Married for a Day" and "Circus Life," a travesty on "Uncle Tom's Cabin," will be given. Among others in the company are Bertha Gibson, Max Field, Sidney Rogers, George Betts, William Harris, George Harrington, Ruth Everett, Fern Wayne, Mlle. Faustina and Nonie Reynolds.

### VAUDEVILLE OFFERINGS AT THE LEADING HOUSES

Fritzi Scheff, in new songs, will share headline honors at the Palace Theatre with Alexander Carr, who will be seen in "An April Shower." Among others will be Frank Fogarty, the Dublin Minstrel; Muriel Worth and Lew Price in dances, and Paul Morton and Naomi Glass in "Before and After."

The Colonial Theatre will have Wilton Lackaye in "The Bomb" as its chief feature. Constance and Irene Farber in bits of vaudeville, Jack Ryan and Harry Tierney in new songs, George East and company in dances, Herbert Williams and Hilda Wolfus, pianists, and Rae Eleanor Ball, violinist, will also be on the bill.

At the Alhambra Theatre, Eva Tanguay, with new songs, will top the bill. Others will be T. Roy Barnes and Bessie Crawford in "The Magazine Man and the Lady," Eddie Leonard, assisted by Austin Mack and company in "The Minstrel's Return," Robert Emmet Keane, "The American Englishman;" Edwina Barry in "The Home Breaker," and Irene and Bobby Smith in songs and dances.

Proctor's Fifty-eighth Street Theatre for present week end is offering Mlle. Nanna's Parisian company in dances, Catalana in songs, Tom Waters and Hattie Lorraine in "The Turk and the Widow" and Ruth and Kitty Henry, comediennes. Proctor's One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street Theatre has Kincaid's Kilties, a Scotch revue; Newport and Stirk, comedians; Jordan and Doherty in songs and dances, and Richmond and Mann in songs.

At Loew's American Roof the first half of the week will be Gabby Brothers and Clarke, jugglers; Mario and Travette in operatic selections, Holmes and Hollister in "Looking for Betsy," Lemaire and Dawson, comedians, and the fourth chapter of "Neal of the Navy" on the screen. The feature for the latter part of the week will be Robert T. Haines's Players in "The Man in the Dark."

# ENTERTAINERS WHO WILL BE FEATURED NEXT WEEK IN VARIED LIST OF AMUSEMENTS

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