Evening World

COMIC PAGE
Wednesday, January 15, 1919

Daily Magazine

THE NEW PLAYS

"The Woman in Room 13" Highly-Sexed Melodrama

BY CHARLES DARNTON

UNLUCKY numbers aside, "The Woman in Room 13," paged, so to speak, by a police chief last night at the Booth Theatre, is likely to bring a thrill to the tenderloinish heart.

Samuel Shipman and Max Marcin have written a play that may be described, perhaps, as highly-sexed melodrama. As for the popular appeal it may make there can be little question. Even a sugar-coated pill is not thoroughly disguised. Yet there is real drama in the prologue—by far the best part of this melodrama. Here we have husband and wife confronting each other in an open fight. The husband has other women in his life, and the wife has found another man who loves her with all the honesty of his soul. Both are compelled to be honest, and it is only when the husband orders her to "get out" that the situation assumes an ugly and obvious form. Yet the prologue is so direct, so brutally strong, that it commands attention.

The four acts that round out the play are "tricky" inventions. The more or less harmless villain pursues the wife he has lost as a private detective, and strives to take her back from the man who has taken her from him. This is sportsmanlike, and it brings the thrill of melodrama. The play has no emotional appeal. Tears will not be shed over the wife nor the two husbands who figure in her life. All are rather hard characters—that is, hard so far as sympathy goes. The "good" man who has annexed the wife of the "bad" man is made a prey to suspicion when he believes she has gone to the room of a philanderer who has given him an enormous increase of salary in order to get him out of town. Accordingly, the second husband, Paul Ramsey, kills Dick Turner, believing that Laura is in Dick's room. The plot is so simple that it could not deceive a child. Of course, it is another woman, the sophisticated Edna Crane, who has made her way to Room 13. (Hotel clerks are so careless!) Then there's a badly-managed screen scene of the criminal courts in which the guilty husband is given a verdict of "not guilty" with a reminder of the Thaw case. In the end the play means nothing more than a melodramatic trick.

Janet Beecher was sincere and wholesome as the heroine of the proceedings, and Lowell Sherman gave an excellent performance as the husband who turned detective. In the role of a dubious lady who came down the fire-escape after the murder, Gail Kane stood like a "living picture" in a dramatic scene that left little to the imagination. For the good of the play Miss Kane should have worn clothes more suitable to the winter season. Kenneth Hill acted like a gentleman as the philanderer, and the other members of the cast lived up to the somewhat questionable requirements of "The Woman in Room 13." But there still remained the need of a moral shower bath.

About Plays and Players

By BIDE DUDLEY

OTTO HARBACH, Abe Levy and Rudolf Friml have joined forces to produce for Broadway consumption a new musical comedy entitled "The Little Whopper." The book which is based on Louis Allen Brown's play, "The Bigamists," from which Marguerite Clark's film, "Miss George Washington," was made, is by Mr. Harbach and the writer of this column, as are the lyrics. The music is by Mr. Friml. Dean S. Deitrich is designing the scenery. The piece will be put into rehearsal in the near future and will open a preliminary tour early in March, after which it will be brought to New York.

"The Little Whopper" is in a prologue and two acts. It is a musical comedy of youth. This will be the first venture of Mr. Harbach and Mr. Friml in the field of producing. They have written and composed many successes, however. Mr. Levy has been associated with a number of Broadway productions, but his name has never appeared in connection with them. With Max Flohn he now controls five big attractions on tour.

FRITZI SCHEFF TO STAR.

Fritzi Scheff will be starred in the Boston company of "Glorianna," opening at the Tremont Theatre Jan. 27. Originally John Cort intended to star her in the New York company, but a vaudeville contract precluded this. In making up the Boston company Mr. Cort has drawn on the New York organization, which means the cast will be a strong one.

THE "SCANDAL" CAST.

Besides the featured players, Charles Cherry and Francine Larrimore, Walter Hast has engaged for his "Scandal" company William David, Carl Lekstrom, Henry W. Trader, Alice Putnam, Imbelle Madigan, Mary Cecil and Frank Gregory.

DIPPY DOODLEUMS.

"Mother, dear, will you please bring a bad egg into my room? I feel like opening a window."

"A bad egg! Why, Doodleums, Mother Bumpkins isn't acquainted with any such eggs. In fact, it has been a long time since she kept a hen."

"As I suspected! Fate is against me. For two years my life has held a void I couldn't avoid. Now I intend to become a moving flicker star."

"Hush! This is too much; you are too little. Ever since your father acted the role of the villain in 'Squeezing the Lemon' I have suspected your ambition. Oh, my gentle Cutey-Cutey, don't make it necessary for Mommalums to land on you."

"Here, this will never do! Change the subject, please, and keep the change. Remember, Grandma was a lady except when drinking."

"All right, Lovey Bug! Have your way! Now signal to the pitcher, Puggie Loveums; Mother wants a high ball."

A CLEAN RECORD.

A well known actor met Job Hedges the other day and they began discussing travelling salesmen.

"They're all talkers," said Mr. Hedges. "I knew a travelling man once who had been on the road twenty-two years and never lost an argument."

OBSERVATIONS.

Butter and egg prices are lower in Chicago now, but there's the railroad fare!

The Luxemburg Republic lasted only six hours. Probably staged for some movie concern!

Bill Hohenzollern is growing a beard to have something to do. He intends to braid it when it's long enough.

A commission has been appointed in Wilkes-Barre to care for a squirrel in one of the city's parks. The little animal has been hungry lately and has been attacking the members of the City Council by mistake.

GOSSIP.

Dixie Hines is ill with pneumonia at the French Hospital.

Rosamond Carpentier has taken her family name. She is now Rosamond Cotlins.

"Everything" celebrated its 250th performance at the Hippodrome yesterday. It's still going strong.

Twenty-five midgets saw "The Little Jos-ey" at the Little Theatre last night. Then they dined at the Little Club.

William and Gordon Dooley will have important roles in the new Winter Garden extravaganza, "Monte Cristo jr."

A special performance of "Fillie" will be given at Henry Miller's Theatre Sunday night for men in uniform.

Stuart Walker will open his season of short plays to-night at the Punch and Judy Theatre. There will be matinees Thursday, Friday and Saturday of each week.

The final performance of "The Gondoliers" will be given at the Park Theatre by the Society of American Singers to-night and to-morrow night.

A THOUGHT FOR TO-DAY.

A Mount Vernon man has the worst case of insomnia on record. He can't even sleep in church.

FOOLISHMENT

I know a young woman in Rye,
Who's terribly fond of prune pie,
She'll eat enough pieces
To feed all her nieces,
And then merely murmur and sigh.

FROM THE CHESTNUT TREE.

"Well, Bill, I hear you're in love."

"Love? Say, whatcha talkin' about? I'm married."

"OKEH" the new ARROW FORM-FIT COLLAR
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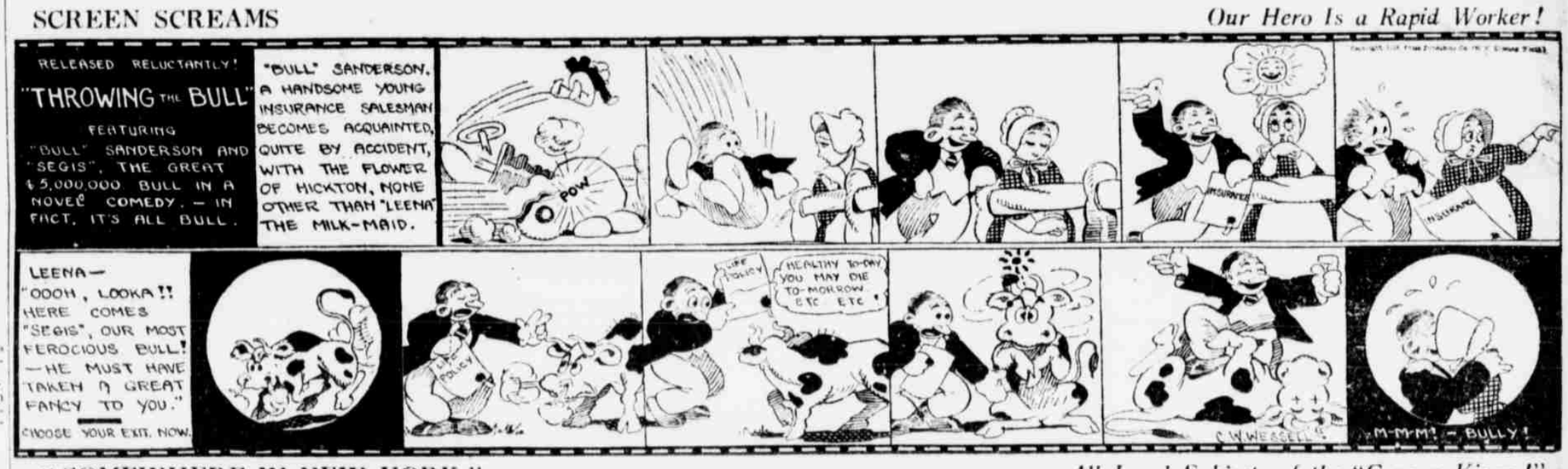
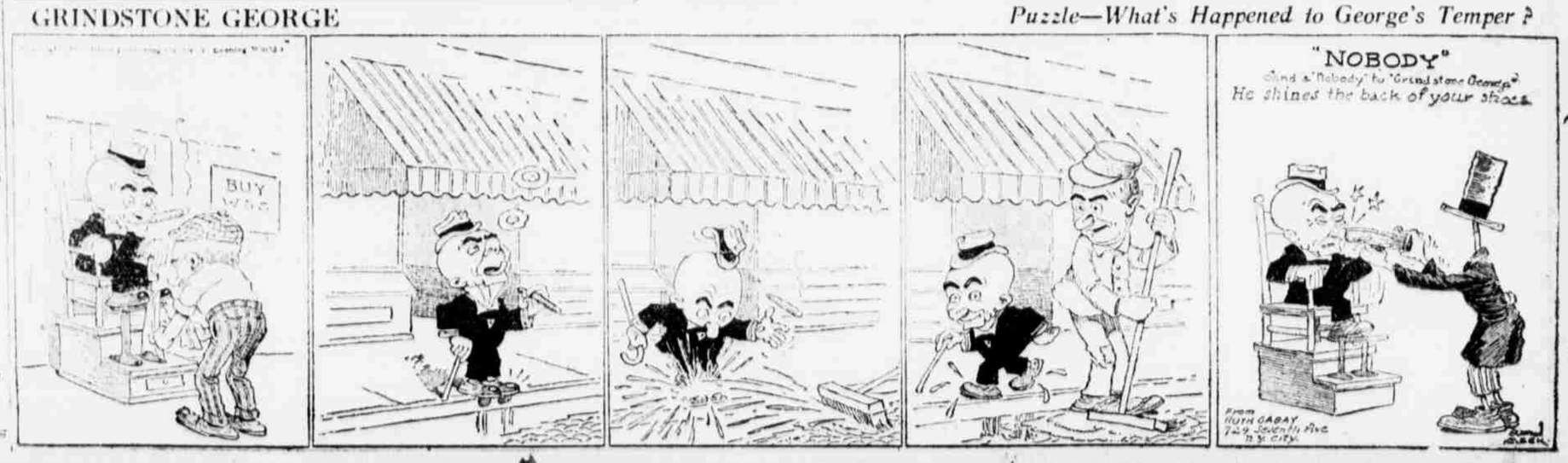
LITTLE MARY MIXUP — *Or, Maybe, He's Got a Nice Soft One!*

JOE'S CAR — *Isn't Joe's Trip West Serene and Delightful, Though!*

SCREEN SCREAMS — *Our Hero Is a Rapid Worker!*



"SOMEWHERE IN NEW YORK" — *All Loyal Subjects of the "Coupon Kings!"*

GRINDSTONE GEORGE — *Puzzle—What's Happened to George's Temper?*