

# THE THEATRE

## THE PLAYGOER

### Billie Burke as She Is and as She Might Be.

It will be a thousand pities if Miss Billie Burke is to be spoiled by her sudden star-oom. Miss Burke has natural gifts that are bestowed too rarely on actresses who red on the changed waters of comedy, but these gifts are in danger of distortion. The actress is being pressed too fast and too far. The American passion for "doing things" for "getting there," will ruin her art if she does not pause in her swift chase for success. It will be said, of course, that she is already successful. She draws the public. But that is the short view. Youth is Miss Burke's possession, but when youth passes public favor will pass if art has not given to this dainty creature the power to preserve and develop the charms and powers which nature has rained upon her.

Consider Miss Burke as she was when she played with the "New Yorks." Those who saw her only on the first night of that piece did not see her at her best. Billie Burke is not a good first night actress. She is like Ellen Terry in that respect. She is like Ellen Terry in other respects—Ellen Terry at Billie Burke's age, whatever that is. Like, even in unlikeliness, if you will. But Ellen Terry in her youth had advisers who knew what acting is, while Billie Burke appears to have no such advantage. She needs coaching, drilling in technique; she needs to be shown how. She acts too much with her nerves; she is too little under her own control.

Billie Burke has a lovely voice, which she is spoiling, at least as she can. And now is the time to study its use and preservation. She knows how to speak, as well, but too often she forgets this accomplishment when some business of the stage is pressing. You may not think it, but she has pathos. No other young actress that one thinks of can equal, if any can equal, her gift of pathetic expression, but the power to use it will slip away if she neglects its cultivation. In tenderness she could be without a rival if she chose to cultivate her faculty for expressing tenderness. Through the absence of a guiding hand she is running headlong along the road to starchy hardness. As Mrs. Dot she has starchy moments, but Maughams Mrs. Dot had none.

Billie Burke was born for high comedy, but she is telegraphing down the hill to farce. Her archness is inimitable, but when she is moved to anger or resentment she becomes peppery—red peppery—being forceful and irritating. Naturally a person of exquisite grace, she has taken on a jerky movement and a mincing gait which do not belong to any part in which she has appeared. Her diction is at times perfect; she can, if she will, make it perfect at all times. She is the most painstaking of actresses because she can do so much and yet fall far short of her ability to fulfill her promise. Her greatest need is repose. Nevertheless, she has the art of listening, of acting without words, of following intently the business of the scene. But she is running headlong along the road to starchy hardness. As Mrs. Dot she has starchy moments, but Maughams Mrs. Dot had none.

In voice, in figure, in beauty and grace and gaiety of nature Billie Burke is nearer the Ellen Terry of many—almost—years ago than any other young actress of our time. She can say things now as only Ellen Terry could say them then, do only what Ellen of the sweet twenties could do. Why, then, does she not say and do more of what she can do so well? The system under which she has been reared to early into stardom, and no one, so far as the evidence goes, is near her to say nay, to caution her in this, to insist upon that, to say not only "don't," but "this is the way," sullying the word to the action and the action to the word, and bringing out the best that is in the fact—namely, amazingly gifted girl. Billie Burke is worth all the pains that can be taken to develop her from a manner-brought novice into an artist of great skill. If she were to play five years with Forbes-Robertson she would become the most delightful comedienne of this generation. But she must consent to be trained, cut, polished. She is a glorious diamond in the rough.

But who shall harness a star to the breaking machine? Has Billie Burke the desire to become the most brilliant comedienne of her time? Or, having the desire, has she the will to learn? The system under which she has been reared suddenly among the stars is the chief spoiler of talent—even of genius, if genius there be. Miss Burke may think the system has made her, but it is really unmaking her. She brought to New York, three years ago, a rare and delicate nature so richly endowed that one marvelled again why the gods are so partial in their favor; she returns with no gain in art, no enrichment of her powers, no evidence that experience has brought government and a system which makes her a reigning star before she has learned obedience to a most exacting craft. Nothing falls like success. Nature made Billie Burke bewitching. It now the lady's turn to compensate nature with entrancing art. There is only one person who can do for Miss Billie Burke what nature has done for her. The hope is otherwise, for the opportunity is great.

A. W.

### FLYING WITH BURTON HOLMES.

To-night, at Carnegie Hall, Burton Holmes, the "Travelogue Man," will invite his audience to fly with him in a Wright aeroplane. For seventeen years this well known lecturer on history has taken his fellow travelers by every known means of transportation—railways, camels, motor buses, elephants, horses and steamships—to the most remote portions of the globe; now he proposes to take them by means of motion pictures taken from a Wright brother's aeroplane on their flight through the air. Last year Mr. Holmes attended the aeroplane contests at Rheims, and by means of his pictures he will show to-night Curtiss, Paulhan, Latham and other record breaking "bird men" before and after flying and also in actual flight. He will also show Blériot in his flight across the English Channel.

The first half of the evening will be devoted to Mr. Holmes's travels in Sicily, whence he has returned with mind and camera filled with the scenes of beauty there created by Nature and man. "Sicily and Aviation Week at Carnegie Hall" will be given to-night at Carnegie Hall, and repeated at the Lyceum Theatre on Monday and Tuesday afternoons.

**DOROTHY DONNELLY.**  
In "Madame X," New Amsterdam Theatre.

**JOHN MASON.**  
In "None So Blind," Hackett Theatre.

**MISS ETHEL BARRYMORE.**  
In "Mid-Channel," Empire Theatre.

**MISS LEAH BATEMAN-HUNTER.**  
In "Twelfth Night," The New Theatre.

**JOHN EMERSON.**  
In "The Watcher," Comedy Theatre.

## SHAKESPEARE

### AT THE NEW THEATRE

Winthrop Ames, Director, Tells How Dramas Are Produced.

The New Theatre has produced two Shakespearean plays this season, "Antony and Cleopatra" and "Twelfth Night." It will produce a third, "The Winter's Tale," in March. The care with which these plays are prepared for presentation is very great; the difficulties encountered are enormous. There are no royalties to pay, but the expense of production is tremendous. Yesterday Mr. Ames told, for the benefit of Tribune readers, just what must be done before one of Shakespeare's plays is ready for production.

"First," he said, "we have to select our stage version. This sometimes agrees with the accepted literary version—particularly in the case of the shorter plays—but usually it does not. We have to go over the play line for line, cutting here and there in order to reduce it to what it may be presented within the usual time occupied by a modern performance. We cut with the idea of sacrificing nothing that is essential to a proper understanding of the spirit of the play. The prompt books of the Shakespearean plays in Shakespeare's day probably were all more or less cut, and the literary versions. So we feel justified in cutting the plays to suit our own uses. After we have determined our working stage version we go back to tradition to see what other producers have done.

"For 'Twelfth Night' we consulted at least fifteen prompt books, old versions used by actors of other generations and versions used by contemporaries. Each was compared separately with our own cuts. For one man's cuts we use a red line, for another a green line, etc. We thus get all the points of view of all the versions. All this is done in consultation with the stage manager.

#### HISTORICAL RESEARCH.

"Then the next thing to do is to find out what Shakespeare was talking about. Here begins the historical research. Our prompt book is full, from beginning to end, of explanations of Shakespeare's words in an effort to make the meaning clear. This fixes the 'accent' of the actors' lines. For example take Malvolio's reference to his watch in the fifth scene of the second act: 'I from the white; and perchance wind up my watch, or play with my—some rich jewel.' 'Watches at that time had just been invented. Malvolio boasted of his wealth when he referred to his watch.

"In 'Twelfth Night' there are quite a number of the old things that have been discarded. We have to determine so far as to get the music for the little 'chimes,' etc. Take, for instance, this catch of Sir Toby's in Act II, Scene III: 'Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone.' We have hunted up the full song, and we got it from the relics of Shakespeare's time. I don't know whether it was used in any former production or not. We have secured from different sources reproductions of all the musical instruments referred to in the play.

"A prompt book like ours means searching through from fifty to one hundred books and reading innumerable press clippings. We have to determine even the accents and pronunciation of queer words before a rehearsal is thought of. When we have finally determined our stage version we rough out the 'business' of the play. We do this by playing through the play with little figures dressed like dolls. In this way it is easy to determine exits and entrances and just what we need for scenery. We work out the 'business' as we go along. We can usually tell when we discover the 'business' as Shakespeare intended it by the smoothness with which the characters move. From playing out the drama with dolls the scene grows in our mind; we work out a scenario, we select there, a chair at this point, a couch there. Then we call in the art director, Hamilton Bell.

#### THE ART DIRECTOR.

"He is given the ground plan, showing a table here, a door there, a couch there. Meantime he has been reading the play to get its period and deciding on a period for the play. Most Shakespeare as played is not in the period. 'Twelfth Night' he has set in Illyria, and he makes it about the period of Shakespeare's life. He selects his costume books, etc., sends abroad for photographs, hunts up architectural pictures of the period and place.

"We say to him, 'Here is the scene.' We discuss and modify our plans. Then Mr. Bell makes a little colored model, showing exits and entrances and the type of architecture he wants. We set that up like a little theatre and play the play all over again with our dolls. Then we correct the models. Then Mr. Bell gives the scene painter the rough models in color and asks for the finished models. When these are ready he has the scene painted on the actors who have been cast for the play. "Shakespeare requires a long cast and a finely balanced one. You can't get a well balanced performance without people competent in every part from beginning to end. Casting a play is very hard. Perhaps three-fourths of the success of a play depends practically on no thought. The producer actors are immediately determined upon. But when you come to the minor characters you find your difficulty. You have two men who seem to be able to play a part equally well. Who shall take it? A man plays best the part that is nearest his own personality. Casting at best is but guesswork beyond a certain point. Sometimes an actor gets a part that he thinks is right in his line, and he can't play it at all. At other times he takes a part with reluctance and finds that he plays it very well. Of course, in casting, lines are immediately drawn—physical lines. One must be physically adapted to a part. Generally the stage manager will make a cast without my knowledge. In the meantime I have made mine. We then compare our casts, and after discussion agree on the final one. Very often we consult the actor himself before we decide. Sometimes we have to go outside to get an actor, as the company is limited in number and therefore in personality.

"Each actor is given his own lines with all the business indicated. He has read the play, of course—very likely he has played it. He may like the cuts that we have made and he may not. He will have a suggestion to make. He may throw away more of our suggestions than he will use. He may have the old tradition or the fresh point of view—which is always a good thing. We add lines and change them, and finally determine just what we will do.

"Shakespeare has no stage directions—that is what makes the various productions so interesting. Nobody knows what Shakespeare's stage directions were. Once in a while you have a very interesting exception—you seem to run right on the trail—

Continued on next page.



**LAURETTE TAYLOR.**  
In "Alias Jimmy Valentine," Wallack's Theatre.

## THE COMING WEEK

### NEW PRODUCTIONS.

Monday Night, Jan. 31.—At the Empire Theatre, Miss Ethel Barrymore in Piner's "Mid-Channel."  
Monday Night, Jan. 31.—At the Savoy Theatre, Frank Keenan in "The Heights," by William Anthony McGuire.  
Monday Night, Jan. 31.—At the New York Theatre, Max Rogers and Maude Raymond in "The Young Turk," a musical play.  
Tuesday Night, Feb. 1.—At the Belasco Theatre, Charlotte Walker in Eugene Walter's "Just a Wife."  
Wednesday Night, Feb. 2.—At the New Amsterdam Theatre, Dorothy Donnelly in "Madame X," by Alexandre Bisson.  
Thursday Night, Feb. 3.—At the Hackett Theatre, John Mason in "None So Blind."

### COMEDY AND DRAMA.

**ACADEMY OF MUSIC**—Chauncey Olcott in the second and last week of "Ragged Robin," a romantic Irish drama by Rida Johnson Young and Rita Olcott. Mr. Olcott shares honors with the fairies and melts the heart of a pretty Irish maid by means of his wandering love songs.

**ASTOR**—The farce hit of the season, "Seven Days."

**BELASCO**—Charlotte Walker will act the part of the wife in the latest play of her husband, Eugene Walter, "Just a Wife," which will be given its New York premier on February 1. The play, like "The East Way," deals with the problem of sex, but in a somewhat different way. The wife marries for money. The husband marries to hush up a scandal with another woman. Through six years the man is "loyal" to both women. The wife has understood, and has contemplated the triangular relation. After six years she sees that a continuance of such a life is impossible for her. The end is left in doubt. Miss Amelia Gardner will have the role of "the other woman." The men's parts will be played by Edmund Breese, Ernest Glendinning, Frederick Burton and Bobby North.

**BIJOU**—Cyril Scott in "The Lottery Man," an amusing farce in which the title character offers himself as a husband to the winning coupon holder.

**COMEDY**—"The Watcher," a spirit drama by Cora Maynard, splendidly enacted by Percy Maxwell, Cathrine Countess, Thurlow Bergen and John Emerson.

**CRITERION**—Francis Wilson in his own tender and amusing farce-comedy, "The Bachelor's Baby."

**DALY'S**—Maxine Elliott in "The Inferior Sex," an impossible comedy by Frank Statton, in which all the players do exceptionally well. Miss Elliott was never more beautiful, and she seldom has acted so well.

**EMPIRE**—After several months' absence from the stage Miss Ethel Barrymore will be seen again at the Lyceum Theatre tomorrow night in Sir Arthur Piner's "Mid-Channel." The play is named for the well known reef in the English Channel between Folkestone and Boulogne, over which troubled waters always flow. The parallel is shown in the married life of the Blundells, Theodore and Zoe, the latter of whom Miss Barrymore impersonates. Charles Dalton takes the part of Theodore. Others in the cast are H. Reeves Smith, Eric Martin, Charles Wright, Edwin Arnold, A. Romaine Callender, Phoebe Coyne, Louise Ritter, Nina Levering and Marianne Thurber.

**GAIETY**—John Barrymore in one of the season's successes, "The Fortune Hunter."

**GARRICK**—Otis Skinner in "Your Humble Servant," a comedy by Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson.

**HACKETT**—John Mason will be seen here for the first time in his new play, "None So Blind," an American drama, by Ernest Poole. The story tells of the career of John Howe, a civil engineer, who devotes his life to the building of a bridge over a two thousand foot canyon in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. So hard and long does he work that he is stricken blind. Not discouraged however, he impresses his wife and others into service and drives them as he has driven himself.



**VIOLET M'MILLAN.**  
In "The Young Turk," New York Theatre.

Unknown to her husband, Mrs. Howe (Mabel Roebuck) has written a novel, "The Top of the Mountain," which arouses the admiration and love of a literary critic who has come to the Rockies in an effort to recover his health. Howe recovers his eyesight as the result of an operation, but he does not reveal the truth to his wife. He watches for a time what is going on in his own household. Developments from these observations provide the main interest of the play. The last act shows a mountain peak at break of day and offers unusual opportunities for scenic display.

The cast consists of Mr. Mason, Miss Roebuck, Ivy Trautman, Thomas P. Jackson, Ethelbert Hales and David Proctor.

**HUDSON**—William Collier, in "A Lucky Star," a funny play by Anne Crawford Flexner, in which pretty girls and chaperons figure on a motor boat in Holland. Ruth St. Denis will give special matinees of Hindu dances.

**LYRIC**—Clyde Fitch's last play, "The City," as rough cut as a mountain peak, as primitive as animal man. Powerfully enacted by Tolly Marshall and others.

**LYCEUM**—Miss Billie Burke as a charming young widow in Somerset Maugham's amusing comedy of English life called "Mrs. Dot." Fred Kerr, as the cynical one, shares the honors with Miss Burke.

**MAXINE ELLIOTT'S**—"The Passing of the Third Floor Back," Jerome K. Jerome's play, in which Mr. Forbes-Robertson preaches weekday sermons and works miracles before the eyes of appreciative audiences. By far the most finished, the most helpful and the most beautiful dramatic performance of the year.

**NEW AMSTERDAM**—Henry W. Savage will present here next Wednesday evening Alexander Bisson's emotional drama, "Madame X," which has been playing in Chicago for twenty weeks. The players include Dorothy Donnelly in the name part, William Elliott, Malcolm Williams, Charles C. Brandt, Christine Blessing, Cecil Kern and Deirdre Doyle.

**NEW THEATRE**—"Twelfth Night" will be given on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and Wednesday matinee; Thursday matinee and Friday evening; Saturday and Sunday matinees, "The Nigger"; Saturday matinee, "The School for Scandal."

**SAVOY**—Frank Keenan will be seen here to-morrow night in "The Heights," a problem play by William Anthony McGuire.



**FRANK MILLS AND WILLETTE KERSHAW.**  
In "The Heights," Savoy Theatre.

The scenes are laid in a London lodging house and in a hut in the Italian Alps. The time is the present. The principal characters are an idealistic girl and a primitive man. The girl finds that she has been a bit too idealistic, and the man, who has believed in neither God nor virtue, is saved by her love. The cast includes, besides Mr. Keenan, Willette Kershaw, Frank Mills, J. Harry Bentrimo, Mrs. Charles G. Craig and Hilda Keenan.

**STUYVESANT**—"The Lily," Mr. Belasco's powerful play from the French, with Miss Nance O'Neil, Julia Dean, Charles Cartwright and others in an exceptionally strong cast.

**WALLACK'S**—"Alias Jimmy Valentine," Paul Armstrong's thrilling detective-crook play, in which H. B. Warner, Laurette Taylor and others do very clever work.

**WEBER'S**—Henry Lee will be seen here this week in his impersonation of world celebrities, past and present. He will give daily matinee and evening performances beginning to-day and ending next Sunday night.

### MUSICAL PLAYS.

**BROADWAY**—Nora Bayes, Stella Mayhew and others in Mr. Field's "lavish production" of "The Jolly Bachelors," which

**MABEL DWIGHT.**  
Hippodrome.

**ALHAMBRA**—Miss Gertrude Hoffmann will give an hour's impersonation of leading dancers here next week. Simon and Gardner will present "The New Coachman." James Thornton will tell funny stories. Bert Levy will draw caricatures.

**AMERICAN**—Fourth and last week of "Ma Gosse," the play of Paris underworld life, in which Miss Edna Mollen and Gaston Silvestre have the leading parts. Also Fred Niblo, in monologues; Taylor Granville, in "The Star Bout"; Burkhardt, Sharkey and Getler, in character songs, and "Rinaldo," the wandering musician.

**COLONIAL**—"Linkelapeli's Christmas," by George Hobart, which was given by the Lambs, will attract large audiences to this house during the coming week. Nat M. Wills, "The Star Bout"; Dr. Herman, the electrical performer, and Gus Edwards's School Boys and Girls will also be present.

**COLUMBIA**—The Fads and Follies Burlesque Company will present "The Green Sod Club," a burlesque in two acts, beginning to-morrow afternoon. The Golden



**MISS HELEN HOLMES.**  
In "The City," Lyric Theatre.

troupe of Russian singers, dancers and instrumentalists will head the vaudeville bill.

**EDEN MUSSE**—"The World in Wax" and special Sunday afternoon concert by the Hungarian orchestra.

**HAMMERSTEIN'S**—Lionel Barrymore, McKee Rankin and Phyllis Rankin will be the principal attraction here in a one-act dramatic skit, called "The Jail Bird." Others on the programme are Lillian Hall, the character singing comedienne; Stuart Barnes, McKay and Cantwell, in a satire, "On the Gay White Way"; and Mile. Eugenie Fougere, the French singer. Sunday concerts as usual.

**HIPPODROME**—The three great spectacles, "Inside the Earth," "The Ballet of Jewels," "A Trip to Japan," and the circus, in ten acts, continue to draw large crowds twice a day at this unique and popular house of amusement.

**KEITH & PROCTOR'S FIFTH AVENUE**—Denman Thompson will celebrate his return to vaudeville here, after an absence of twenty-five years. He will play "Joshua Whitecomb," in which he made himself famous. Andy Rice will give his laughable Hebrew parodies. Robbedillo will walk on wires. Others who will perform are La Petite Mignon, the three Keatons, the Six American Dancers, the Camille Trio and Juggling Bannan.

**PLAZA**—Severin, the French pantomimist, will be seen here in "Conscience," a dramatic play in four scenes. "Juliet" will give dainty impersonations of stage favorites. Middleton, Spellmeyer and company will play "A Texas Wooing." Rafayevsky's dogs will perform.

**"ANTAR" AT MONTE CARLO.**  
The production of M. Antoine and the stock company of the Odéon of "Antar," the heroic Arab play adapted and translated by Chekri-Diam Elmond, with music by M. Rimsky-Korsakoff, at the Théâtre de Monte Carlo, was an original and daring venture that has turned out successfully. Antar, "the cloven lipped," the "father of heroes," the great warrior and poet of the Orient in the sixth century of our era, is the hero of a romance that in Arabian literature fills a place analogous to that of the Celtic legend of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table in English literature. Antar, whose marvelous exploits occurred in Arabia at about the same time as those of King Arthur in Brittany, Wales and England, was a "nigger." His father was a pure bred Arabian chieftain, Sned-el-Abst, and his mother was a negro slave, captured in Nubia. Antar, friend of Mahomet, was the most famous fighter, as well as the foremost writer, in Arabian history. He is the author of one of the seven poems being read at the entrance to the Kaaba at Mecca and his "romances," composed in rhythmic prose alternating with verse, which fill sixty MS volumes, are as familiar to Arabs to-day as are the works of Shakespeare to English speaking people. Antar's romances surpass the "Arabian Nights" in interest and beauty. Chekri-Diam Elmond has been guided in his translation by Dr. Hammer, who first brought Antar to European notice in 1882. The drama, in five acts, deals with the passionate love of Antar for his fair cousin Abia, which evokes the hatred of Antar's step-mother Shammea. The military achievements of Antar during the forty years' war between Arabia and the tribes of the peninsula are narrated in epic verse. There is graceful dancing and also a series of plastic poses in the third act, the "dansen du feu." The music of M. Rimsky-Korsakoff is light, descriptive and times brilliant, but is merely auxiliary to the drama. "The Happy Tramps"; Dr. Herman, the electrical performer, and Gus Edwards's School Boys and Girls will also be present.

**WEST END**—Andrew Mack and Christie MacDonald in "The Prince of Bohemia."

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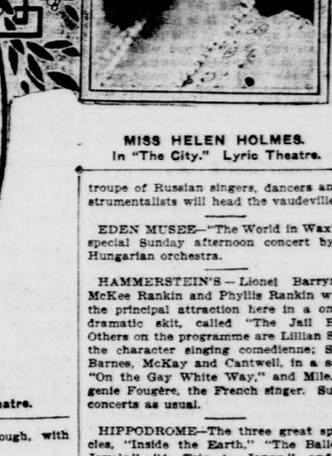
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Plaza Music Hall.



**MRS. JIMMIE BARRY.**  
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**DENMAN THOMPSON.**  
Keith & Proctor's.



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**BEN GREET AT THE GARDEN.**  
Ben Greet and his players will begin a ten weeks' season at the Garden Theatre beginning February 14. His repertory will include "She Stoops to Conquer," "Everyman," "Macbeth," "The Rivals," "The Merchant of Venice," Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus," "Julius Caesar," Gilbert's "The Palace of Truth," Hawthorne's "Wonder Book" plays and Bulwer Lytton's comedy, "Money."

The final week will commemorate the 36th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and "Hamlet," "As You Like It," "The Gentlemen of Verona," "The Tempest," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "Twelfth Night," "Romeo and Juliet," "Much Ado About Nothing" and "Julius Caesar" will be played. A long list of subscribers has been secured.

**MISS MICHAEL ELLIOTT.**  
Miss Michael Elliott, the classic dancer, will tour the country under the management of W. S. Bigelow, Jr., of Boston. Miss Elliott's latest appearance in New York was at the Plaza Hotel on January 19.

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