

TWO DRAMAS AND TWO MUSICAL PLAYS ON THE HORIZON

Where Are the Players of Years That Are Fled?

A Brief Roster Designed to Show That Success in a Single Part Is All Too Frequently Merely the Pathway to Oblivion.

THE press agent ticked off a wee morsel of news the other day and sent it broadcast. It didn't amount to much. It said that Edward H. Robins, appearing in "Erstwhile Susan," had been engaged for a part in something or other. Of itself it was worth merely passing notice—until one recalled that the story of Edward H. Robins is the story of countless actors and actresses.

Edward H. Robins created the role of the hero in "The Easiest Way." Having created it, he played it for four seasons or thereabouts. In it he did excellent, almost flawless, work. Possibly he never was hailed as a great actor nor even received general recognition; the point is that he gave an excellent performance. Since the day that "The Easiest Way" closed Edward H. Robins never has been happily cast. "The Man Inside," "Erstwhile Susan"—probably one or two others—in none of them has his work been better than mediocre.

Without pausing to pore over records and exhume accurate and exhaustive data, there come to mind the names of a handful of players who have scored once and ever after floundered. Among them were:

Joseph Kilgour, also of "The Easiest Way." Marvellously cast as the man-about-town, he was hailed widely as a fine actor. His work in this play has been followed by indifferent performances in "Ready Money," "Potash & Perlmutter" and "Along Came Ruth." To-day he is in motion pictures and seldom heard of.

Maude Eburne, who made her hit as Coddles in "A Pair of Sixes." Following thirteen years of stock, it was freely predicted that she had arrived on Broadway at last. She played for a season or two in "A Pair of Sixes." To-day she is again in stock, in a city or town that has slipped the mind.

Frank Campeau—Trampas in "The Virginian." The play that made a star of Dustin Farnum sent Frank Campeau into oblivion, although it was generally agreed that Campeau did the better work. It so happened, however, that he was cast as the villain and Farnum as the hero. Since "The Virginian" the public has heard but little of Campeau. He has been appearing recently in motion pictures, and is at present rehearsing in Augustus Thomas's play "On the Rio Grande."

Helen Lowell, whose work in "The Lottery Man" was the talk of the town. Since then she has jumped from show to show, never rising above the histrionic horizon. To-day one rarely hears her name.

Franklyn Ardell, whose best work was done as the piano player in "The Family Cupboard." Several shows have since known him, including "Katinka." A few weeks ago he tried a sketch in vaudeville. More recently he was engaged for "The Blue Envelope," but is no longer in the cast. None of his work since "The Family Cupboard" has been sufficiently out of the ordinary to cause comment.

Gilda Varese, who was practically unknown to New York until she played the Portuguese woman in "Children of Earth." Her speedy rise to a position of prominence was then expected. Recently she has been traveling around the vaudeville circuit in the second edition of Mme. Nazimova's sketch, "War Brides."

Hale Hamilton, who created the title role in one of the greatest of American farces—"Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford." He has differed from many of the others in that he has had numerous Broadway opportunities since that time, but he has consistently failed to approach his work as Wallingford. He is now in Australia.

Allan Pollock, who won much favorable comment by his work as the king in "Hawthorne of the U. S. A." He has apparently dropped out of the world.

Ask the actor—any actor—and he will clear up these cases in an instant. "It's the part," he will tell you. "The part" is the name of the part. "The part" allowed the stuff that was really in 'em to come out. How do you expect people to make a hit in the kind of parts they're writing nowadays? It can't be done!

But it can. A part may be ever so bad, but an actor who is an actor will nevertheless shine through it. The drawing power of John Drew is based upon an easy example, is not based on the fact that John Drew once did excellent work in an excellent part. People go to see Mr. Drew because he is a real actor.

CONCERNING STAGE FOLK

DR. LOUIS K. ANSPACHEE, author of "The Unchastened Woman," is at work on a sequel to this play which has not diminished an iota. The same is true, to varying extents, of numerous other players. Contrary to the inflexible rule of the theatre, a player is not a star because his or her name appears in larger letters than that of the play. A star is one who can triumph in the face of the most discouraging conditions: a player who can create and hold a public despite all the handicaps that attend ever lived. There are a number of actors and actresses who can do this, but that number cannot be arbitrarily increased by the mandate of a manager.

The player who scores an unusual success in a role is almost immediately spoken of as a candidate for "stardom." Sometimes they are "stars" for a night, only to fall and to fall far. In the history of the theatre, many have failed—failed to achieve the heights, that is—because they have not been built of the material of which real stars are constructed. The John Drews and the Maude Eburnes are greater than any single part.

The announcement of a spring tour by the Washington Square Players is a considerable interest. It is the first step toward that branching out that has been predicted for this ambitious gathering. This initial step, at the same time, has been looked forward to by some with not a little trepidation. Will the enlargement of their enterprise destroy that community spirit that has been largely responsible for the Players' success? Will a tour, undertaken largely for commercial reasons, work for or against the ultimate good of the Washington Square Players? We, for one, confess our inability to grapple with the problem.

At all events, busy days are ahead of the Players. The tour will begin on April 24, and in the interim everything must be made ready. In addition, two new programs are yet to be presented at the little theatre in Fifty-seventh Street. There might be some doubt about their presentation, but they have been paid for by subscribers and are in the nature of a debt.

Whatever one says about "The Melody of Youth"—and opinion is pretty well divided—it must be admitted that the author thereof has given himself a real good entrance. Everybody else has arrived before the footsteps of young Brandon Tynan are heard of, and there is a flurry among the females to see which shall welcome him. Enter George Glendon, who explains the accident that had befell himself and the young hero. Further alarms without—a breathless moment—enter Mr. Tynan. There is nothing like being one's own playwright.

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PREMIERES OF THE WEEK

"Pom-Pom" at the Cohan Theatre.

HENRY W. SAVAGE has not been particularly active as a theatrical manager in the course of the past season or so. He has had one or two attractions on the road, and recently dabbled with a drama that did not reach Gotham. Now, however, he comes boldly forth as the producer of "Pom-Pom," a new operetta starring the inimitable Mizzi Hajos (Mizli, hereafter). The premiere will occur at the Cohan Theatre to-morrow night.

So far as things theatrical can be at all certain "Pom-Pom" will be tremendously popular. In the first place, it has been hailed with acclaim in Boston; in the second place, it contains Mizli. The public that enjoyed "Sart" will be alone sufficient to make "Pom-Pom" successful.

More plot is promised with "Pom-Pom" than usually goes with a three-act drama. It concerns the adventures of a prima donna who is kidnapped on the night of her debut in the role of Pom-Pom, the pickpocket. Her break from jail and adventures among a gang of thieves provide the thrills, while Mizli and Tom McNaughton will furnish an accompaniment of comedy.

The music is by Hugo Felix who, from long residence, prefers to be known as a French composer, though he was born in the Hungarian domain. Annie Caldwell wrote the book.

Instead of the usual tenor-soprano duet, an insidious waltz sung by a contralto and barytone is to be introduced. Carl Gantvoort, lately of the Boston Grand Opera Company, and Rita Dane, a new personality, are featured in this innovation. Other names that figure the cast are Tom Walsh, William Eville, Edith Day, Charles Angelo, Eric Campbell, Ben Lewi and George Bruger.

Hippodrome Concert.

The regular concert at the Hippodrome to-night will be for the benefit of the Hebrew Infant Asylum. In addition to Sousa and his band and stars from "Hip-Hip Hoopay!" a long programme of vaudeville specialties will be staged.

"The Heart of Wetona" at the Lyceum.

DAVID BELASCO and the Charles Frohman company will join forces again in a dramatic production on Tuesday evening at the Lyceum Theatre. Their first joint offering was a revival of "The Celebrated Case" last season. The new work, it is perhaps needless to say, is largely a Belasco production, despite the hyphenated producing company.

"The Greatest Nation" at the Booth.

"THE Greatest Nation," by Marian Crighton and William Elliott, will have its New York premiere at the Booth Theatre to-morrow night. Besides having collaborated in the writing, Mr. Elliott assumes the leading role and is the producing director. With two successes, "Kitty Mc-

"The Road to Mandalay" at the Park.

"THE Road to Mandalay," created by a new comic opera, will come to the Park Theatre Wednesday evening. The piece mainly concerns the globe-trotting wanderings of a "hired business man," who is accompanied by his two daughters, and who matches his Yankee shrewdness against Oriental guile.

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Where and Why Plays of the Season Continue

A Theatrical Census Reveals an Unusually Large Number of Plays That Are Excellent, Good or Nearly Good.

LAST WEEK'S PLAY. "Pay Day," at the Cort Theatre. Will be reviewed in to-morrow's Tribune.

PLAYS CONTINUED. "The Earth," "Major Barbara" and "The Liars" will be represented in Grace George's programme for the week at the Playhouse. "The Earth" is a bright play about yellow journalism.

"Erstwhile Susan," at the Grand, provides Mrs. Fiske and John Cope excellent roles. It is a comedy about the Pennsylvania Dutch, and the excellent stage management of the aforementioned actors for its dramatic lapses.

"The Little Minister," at the Empire, is a revival of Barrie's delightful play, with Maude Adams again as Lady Babine. It is one of the treats of the season.

"The Boomerang," at the Belasco, is no less successful than "The Great Lover." Of fragile weave, the acting and stage management are responsible for its popularity.

"The Great Lover," at the Longacre, comes under the heading of "Excellent." It is a comedy about the opera folk, and its inherent merit and the acting of Leo Ditrichstein make it necessary to buy seats far in advance.

"The House of Glass," at the Candler, is a police melodrama that moves a trifle slowly, but gets there.

"Macbeth," as James K. Hadden and Viola Allen play it at the Criterion, is not quite the grand tragedy that this work should be. From a scenic standpoint the production is magnificent.

"Pride of Race," at the Matrix Elliott, is a drama of miscegenation, in which thrills and dull moments alternate. The play has not been popular.

"Margaret Schiller," at the New Amsterdam, is a wonderfully bad play by Hall Caine. Miss Fitzgerald acts it, however, which helps to balance the scale.

"Just a Woman," at the Forty-eighth Street Theatre, is a drama about a Pittsburgh millionaire and a country room. It contains an unusual punch.

"Common Clay," at the Republic, is akin to "Just a Woman" in that it comes to its climax in a courtroom. The play has been tremendously popular.

"Treasure Island," at the PUNCH and Judy, is a good dramatization of the Stevenson classic. Young and old will enjoy it.

The Washington Square players, at the Bandbox, offer "The Clod," "The Roadhouse in Arden," "The Tender" and a pantomime. "The Clod" is the best of the quartet, and the bill as a whole does its share toward carrying these ambitious players to popularity.

"Robinson Crusoe, Jr.," at the Winter Garden, is not entertaining for the intellectual, but it is nevertheless enjoyable. Al Johnson is the star and chief of the cast.

"Sibil," at the Liberty, brings John Sanderson, Donald Brian and Joseph Cawthorn once more to the fore.

"The Cohan Review 1914," at the Astor, is George Cohan's sketch-off on the hit of the year. It can laugh at it from beginning to end and never be ashamed.

"Very Good Eddie," at the Princess, is a quiet and easy musical play that is meeting with considerable success.

"Stop! Look! Listen!" at the Globe sets out to win the audience by its money's worth. It is a "production," with Gaby Deslys among those present.

"Katinka," at the 44th Street Theatre, gives one every reason to expect a musical comedy. It has met with considerable success.

"Alone at Last," at the Shubert, has a long and successful run. It will make way in a few weeks.

"The Blue Paradise," at the Casino, has Cecil Lewis in a Mayfield and some good melodies. It is enjoying a season's run.

The Hippodrome show contains everything that the most fastidious theatre-goer could request.

The Ziegfeld "Midnight Frolic," at the New Theatre, is a crackling after-hours show.

neer, who, however, is strongly disliked by the Indians because of his attitude toward them. Unknown to Wetona, John Hardin, an Indian agent, whom the Indians love, is in love with the girl, but at the crucial moment in the story there occurs the birth of true love in Wetona's heart.

In the cast are John Sherman, William Courtright, Lowell Lewis, G. G. Carleton, Langdon West, Leonard G. Ulrich, Ethel Benton, Isabel O'Sullivan and others.

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The plot gives the producers opportunity for spectacles and ballet effects which have been enjoyed by William J. Wilson, who was formerly at the Hippodrome. W. H. Post wrote the book of the piece and William McKenna the lyrics.

In the cast will be Herbert Corbell, Frank Pollock, Leola Luce, Max Horgan, Lawrence Grant, Eddie Easton, Stanley G. Bridges, Robert Easton, Isaac Kirke and John Robertson.

LENORE ULRICH, "THE HEART OF WETONA," Lyceum

IRENE FENWICK, in "PAY DAY," Cort

GRETCHEN EASTMAN, in "ROAD TO MANDALAY," Park

ALICE HARRIS, "THE COHAN REVIEW 1916," Astor

They are prying into their minds' depths.

"This question of proper technique is one which I find generally misunderstood. Technique is not a mould into which an idea is poured, but every idea ought to secrete its own technique. One reason for the lack of originality on the modern stage is the tendency to become formalistic."

Dr. Anspacher is perhaps the most learned of our playwrights, as he is the possessor of no less than four university degrees. He got his A. B. at the College of the City of New York, and his M.A., Ph. D. and LL.D. at Columbia. He has lectured on metaphysics, ethics, philosophy and psychology.

He has written a number of other plays, among them "The Embarrassment of Riches," "Anna and the Archduke John," and "The Woman of Impulse," in all of which Kathryn Kidder, his wife, played the lead. Still others are "The Washerwoman Duchesses" and "Our Children."

After admitting all his academic titles, it was only natural that Dr. Anspacher should adopt his lecture-room attitude. "Here is a handy thing to take away with you," he said, "I am quoting myself: 'Drama is the greatest social force in the world, because drama is, and always will be the literature of the unreading public.'"

"THE FIRST NIGHT" is the subject who of a short talk by Viola Allen, who is the Grady Mabeth in James K. Hadden's production of the great tragedy. Miss Allen's remarks have to do with the psychological influences which haunt the mind of the artist at the opening performance of a Shakespearean play.

Contrasted with the comparatively mild nervousness of the ordinary first night, says Miss Allen, the horror of a Shakespearean premiere is appalling. "Immediately the curtain rises you are sensitive to the fact that there are hundreds of persons in front of you with preconceived notions of how each character should appear, each line he read, each scene be set. You feel that there are some among them who have come with the determined purpose of comparing this performance with revivals that have gone before. You are aware that that friendly interest of curiosity in something new is lacking; a hungry spirit of hypercriticism seems to charge the atmosphere.

to details, and, casting perspective aside, ceases to view the production as a spectacle.

Miss Allen has a prophecy to make, which is that in a year every one will admit that Mr. Hadden is the best Mabeth on the stage. "The public is rapidly becoming educated to that belief now," she said, "but, of course, it will take some time. You may remember that Booth played Hamlet for ten years before he received general recognition."

ON March 20 it will five years since the opening of the Winter Garden, and Al Johnson will be the only member of the original company on hand to celebrate the epochal stimulus injected into the drama on that momentous occasion.

Al was in his dressing room when he sentimentally ruminated on the approaching anniversary. "Yes," he said fondly, "five years . . . it's a long time. I suppose I've improved about 800 per cent. (Laughs.)"

For what do you think? Now he has a dressing room all his own and a regular valet (with the "O" distinctly crossed). Also, he wears a green crepe de chine suit. And he has a big fur coat, just like the stage bankers wear! But that's only a modest percentage—say 347—of Al's self-confessed improvement. The balance must be charged up against Humanitarianism. Al is now moved by a cosmic urge no less fundamental than the Progress of Mankind.

Time was when Al played to a strictly stag audience, y'understand, but gradually the other day the place was full of 'em. Want to see the great and the parrot and the jungle on the island. It's wonderful the way things are progressing! Just wonderful, that's what it is!

A tie, you'll observe. By the way, I forgot that Blue Chow dog. By just the width of the dog the decision must go to Miss Ruth Sh—hold on! Perhaps Martha Hedman has something to set up against the dog—a cat or an elephant or something. H'm. Certainly demands an investigation.

came to him naturally when he was touring the South with Lew Dock-stader.

"We used to go to these nigger revivals," he said, "and watch them 'git religion.' You know how they moan and cry and go off their nuts. Well, I suppose I got my line from their stuff. But I don't know. It seems natural to me."

OF course, Ruth Shepley is a charming person, and it is true that she is one of the few Blue Chow dogs in this country, and she may be the only actress in America who is learning to play an ukulele, but, after seeing "The Boomerang," there is one better reason for interviewing her.

And that is to discover who really is the better looking—Martha Hedman or Ruth Shepley.

This monumental consideration has been a stumbling block for many; but to an analyst, statistically inclined, with a good idea how to compile batting and fielding averages, the task dwindles down to the ordinary. Observer:

Table with 2 columns: TEN POINTS FOR PERFECTION, MISS HEDMAN, MISS SHEPLEY. Rows include Face, Eyes, Mouth, Teeth, Hair, Complexion, Profile, and Total.