OUTPUT OF PICTURES SHOWS NO CURTAILMENT

Pauline Frederick "The World's Great Snare" Strand

Flora MacDonald "The Fall of a Nation" Liberty

Douglas Fairbanks and Jewel Carman "Flirting with Fate" Rialto

Ann Pennington "Susie Snowflake" Broadway

Dorothy Watson "Civilization" Criterion

THAT COCKTAIL EXPLAINED

Avery Hopwood Tells the Dramatic Significance of the Brew in "air and Warmer."

"WHEN I wrote the second act of 'Fair and Warmer,'" says Avery Hopwood, who wrote the second act of "Fair and Warmer," to say nothing of the first and third, "I proceeded on the assumption that 90 per cent of the persons who go to the theatre know how to mix a cocktail."

Thus does Mr. Hopwood indict the theatre-going public in his first paragraph.

"It was more of a risk than you might think," he proceeded, "and I pondered long before I took it. But it seemed that I was right, for far be it from this author to deny that the audience laughs nightly at the second act of 'Fair and Warmer.' Indeed, I have gone to the theatre many evenings just to hear them laugh—and, incidentally, to pause at the box-office on the way in to inquire the gross.

"Really, one of the best ways of finding out things about the public is to write plays about them, and to learn your lessons from sitting in the audience. What I have learned from 'Fair and Warmer' is that a lot of valuable information will go to waste if prohibition ever becomes national.

"It is no new thing, of course, for the spectacle of an amiably intoxicated man to excite laughter on the stage. As somebody said about my play, 'there is a blessed hour, in the course of a spree, when the victim is genuinely funny'—when his idiotic good humor is perfectly contagious, and a good risk for the playwright. Also, it is equally true that the endeavors of innocent persons to be wicked are nearly always funny. But the comparatively long time required to mix the cocktail was what made me hesitate.

"Once I saw a scene in which the making of a cocktail was supposed to be humorous, and I remember that I thought it inestimably dull. The playwright had arranged that sticks and stones, the inkwell, a part of the bar furniture and a flower from a lady's hat should all go into it. The audience was mildly amused—but it registered with me as a total failure. That was another of the disturbers of my peace when I had a cocktail scene of my own. I was haunted by that remembered dulness.

"But I had what I thought was one situation that would swing that scene if anything could. I had brought together two unsophisticated persons who had lived in an atmosphere of sophistication, who had heard the names of gin and whiskey and liquors flying about familiarily and constantly, but who had never had the necessary experience to make these things any more than mere names. As I go along I find that my respect for platitudes greatly increases. 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing' now figures in the action. In comedy and farce all danger is funny.

"My pair of innocents knew enough to be sure that one could drink gin with safety, whiskey without fatal results, liquers with comparative calmness, and so on. Out of the tails of their otherwise preoccupied eyes they had seen their spouses drink these things and survive them. If a precipice yawned beneath them they didn't suspect it.

"My question was: 'Will the audience get the full, terrifying effect of this mixture of gin, whiskey, vermouths, cordials, etc., and howl their heads off, or will they sit solemnly through it and wonder why I'm wasting their time'?

"The answer is that every audience has begun to titter at the very sight of so many bottles, and has been in an uproar by the time the cocktail was finished. I do not believe there have been a dozen people in that theatre this year who have not known how deadly it was to mix gin and whiskey. But I can imagine that a total abstainer would be pretty mystified by it.

"Come to think of it, I don't see why there shouldn't be a certain amount of amusement in just mixing a good cocktail. There probably would be to Eufopeans, who think all drink mixtures are certain death! It wouldn't surprise me to find that a Frenchman would laugh as much at a farce scene that depended on a mixture of gin, French vermouth and Italian vermouth, as an American would at my 'Fair and Warmer' brew.

"But a Frenchman wouldn't need to have a lot of special cocktail information. The mere fact of the mixture would be enough for him. For the Americans, I had to rely on just this special information. I need not add that I praise heaven that they have had it.

"I did compromise with myself on one point. Although I saw to it that nothing should go into my cocktail that was not legitimate for cocktails—that is, nothing that didn't at one time or another go into various cocktails—I did resolve that I wouldn't spring strange new rums and absinthe specialties on them. I wouldn't tamper with my luck. Also, I wouldn't exceed the limits of possibility. For instance, I omitted beer—though it might have got a laugh. I made that cocktail an exact, scientific matter. I felt I could risk running a martini, a Manhattan, a Clover Club and a Jack Rose all into one shaker—but I couldn't drink this beer!

"The result is, I think, that my audience feels I haven't taken any unfair advantage. I have put two ignorant young persons in front of a wheel cellarette from which they have seen hundreds of cocktails made. I have given them just the materials from which taey have seen these cocktails made. The resulting disaster is precisely what would happen in these circumstances. Having played fair, I felt, then, I could trust my audience for as much as they could give me.

"It is the audience which plays 'Fair and Warmer'—the audience which knows just what a man-trap my innocents are walking into, and which, when the line comes, 'If this is a cocktail, what must a horse's neck be like?' halts the performance for the longest, loudest laugh I have ever heard in all my attendance at my own farces. I shudder when I think how nearly I came to losing it!"

THE WYNNTER GARDEN

THE Wynnter Garden? Well, why not? For is not young Mr. Ed Wynn at present an important part of "The Passing Show of 1916," and is not "The Passing Show of 1916" at present being performed within the sacred confines of the building at Broadway and Fiftieth Street? Answer: Yes.

While such a change would hardly be viewed with glee in some quarters—somehow or other the countenance of Al Jolson flashes in mind at this point—Mr. Wynn himself owns that his life ambition is to star in his own show in a theatre named after him.

It has taken Mr. Wynn no less than thirteen years to reach a point where he could make known this ambition.

At the age of sixteen he discovered his histrionic personality as a member of the Mask and Wig Club of the University of Pennsylvania.

"Shortly after that my father met with reverses," said Mr. Wynn, with that quietly restrained, humorous vocal inflection, "and I told him I was going on the stage. 'No; you don't go and disgrace my name on the billboards,' shouted my father. 'All right, I'll change my name,' I retorted. 'No; you don't do that, either! For then, if you're a success, no one will know you're my son!'"

So Mr. Wynn started an eleven-year vaudeville career. During that time, he declares, he never repeated an act once to an audience, never used material of any kind that he didn't compose himself. In addition to writing his own acts, he found time to compose numerous vaudeville sketches.

Mr. Wynn's remarks relating to the task of the comedian are worth attention:

"The task confronting the comedian on entering upon the stage is one to stagger a brave man. A certain portion of the audience comes to forget cares, worries and griefs. They arrive harboring a hostile attitude. Another portion slinks in for a quiet rest after the continual conflict of modern family life. Nearly half of the people are groggy with food. All of them expect not to be annoyed.

"When I go upon a stage I set myself the hardest job I can find. I search my audience for some snoozer or person whose attitude assures me he is bored to death by the performance. I never have the slightest difficulty in finding some such person in one of the first five rows. I immediately concentrate all my personality, my entire stage presence, all my craft on this individual. I know that if I am successful in arousing him the rest of the audience, less torpid, will follow easily.

"I have always found that the biggest laughs come from the satirizing of something that the public in general is conversant with, presented in a natural, rather than a grotesque, manner. The day of the red-nose comedian has passed, and I always try to give a refined presentation of what I burlesque."

For many years Wynn was known as "the Boy with the Funny Hat," as his surest laugh consisted in squeezing a Panama into a succession of ridiculous shapes. For the last two years, however, he has discarded this bit of business, and relies more on the spoken word—verba dicta, as the lawyers have it. His favorite stunt is to have some one ask him a question and give an answer which has nothing whatever to do with the case. This simple makeshift, Mr. Wynn avers, causes a profound and cataclysmic peal of laughter fairly to rend the atmosphere.

For instance, if some one asks, "How are you feeling?" and you answer, "How could I with the elephants sneezing so prettily in Central Park?" you are bound to be proclaimed a humorist.

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