

THE STAGE and Its PEOPLE



Juliette Day in "Scrambled Wives" ALFRED CHERRY PHOTO



Blanche Yurka in "Americans in France" ALFRED CHERRY PHOTO



Vaud Hanford in "Crooked Gamblers" ALFRED CHERRY PHOTO



Lulu McCannell in "Poor Little Ritz Girl" ALFRED CHERRY PHOTO



James L. Crane in "Opportunity" ALFRED CHERRY PHOTO

Olive Vaughn in "Ziegfeld Follies" ALFRED CHERRY PHOTO



Margaret Dale in "The Charm School" WHITE STUDIO



Hal Skelly in "The Girl in the Spotlight" HERBERT BROWN

As We Were Saying—

By Heywood Brown

ONE of the interesting happenings of the new theatrical season will be the appearance of Miss Gilda Varese as a star in "Enter Madame." Again and again Miss Varese has taken a minor rôle or a secondary one and made it seem the most important thing in the play. In fact, we remember that she quite destroyed the intent of a propaganda play against radicalism by playing a young Red with such fire and fervor that the supposedly heroic persons in the play seemed like sticks beside her. New York has seen many examples of her extraordinary gift for passionate intensity. She blazed like a flame as the blind girl in the third act of "The Jest." She brought a touch of true tenderness to her part as the mother in "The Little Journey" and she clarified and vivified a rôle of great complexity in Gorki's "Night Lodging."

When John Barrymore was ill she played the leading rôle in "The Jest," and gave a new conception of the rôle, which was in some scenes at least as interesting as that given by Mr. Barrymore himself. This was no small achievement when it is remembered that Barrymore was the sensation of the season in the Benelli play. Now we are to see Varese as a comedienne in addition to everything else. Whatever the verdict on the new venture may be, it seems fair to say that no player in America has more fairly earned her stardom.

We think it is a pity that Owen Davis has turned from melodrama, or, at any

Theater in New York Is Far Ahead of London and Paris, Says Edgar Selwyn

EDGAR SELWYN, recently returned from London and Paris, brings back some interesting observations on conditions in the theater abroad.

"The stage in England—and that is to say London—is suffering reaction from the war," says Mr. Selwyn. "The theater is confronted with what is deemed a pre-war condition and at the same time with post-war expense."

"In the course of the war, when it became necessary to furnish mass amusements owing to the multitude of soldiers on leave in London, entertainment was not always the most delicate. Soldiers in the main stood for—perhaps were amused by—a certain degree of vulgarity. In those days of high tension the Tommies were not the 'Ironsides' of Oliver Cromwell, when Haig's men spoke to jazz it up a bit. But now, of course, after a rest from the abominations of war, an indelicacy on the stage smites cold disgust upon the auditorium. Yet theatrical managers apparently have not discerned it. Naturally the theater is not being supported. And, as I see it, the condition is due largely to bad plays."

"Two English plays are conspicuously successful, both of excellent type. They are Barrie's 'Mary Rose' and Galsworthy's 'Skin Game.'"

"The bad play is a managerial default. But the stage itself is lacking in fresh talent," Mr. Selwyn says. "English managers with difficulty find young actresses. Whatever the sphere the young women sought in the war, they have not returned in conspicuous number to the theater."

"The London reviews are poor imitations of our American reviews. And performers in this type of entertainment are mostly Americans. Indeed, three American girls are big successes in

Moffat Due Soon In 'Don't Tell' New Scottish Comedy

THE announcement that Graham Moffat and his wife are to make their first personal appearance on the American stage this season is full of promise to the playgoer. Mr. Moffat is the pioneer of Scottish playwrights who, during this decade, have struggled to establish a national Scottish theater.

Whatever the cause for the failure of Scottish plays to engage the interest of managers more generally, it cannot be because they have not brought in the money. The history of Moffat's career in the theater, with his "Bunt Pulls the Strings," "A Scrape of the Pen" and his recent opus "Don't Tell!" which has been playing many months abroad, shows that Scottish plays will draw.

William Morris, best known to American theatergoers as the manager of Sir Harry Lauder, is bringing the Moffats to the United States this season with their original Scottish cast. While they will first be seen in "Don't Tell!" it is not unlikely that Mr. Morris will arrange a season of Moffat plays in repertory fashion somewhat after that employed by the Moffats on their recent tour of the world, since the Scottish playwright has been endeavoring to start a movement in Scotland similar to the organizations of the Irish Players, the Horniman Players in Manchester, and even to our own Theater Guild.

It was in that year that he wrote and produced two one-act Scottish plays at the Glasgow Athenaeum Hall, "Annie Laurie" and "Till the Bells Ring." These were his first character sketches of real Scottish life portrayed by Scottish actors. Moffat's determination to establish Scottish drama in a national sense was reflected in an article in a Glasgow weekly publication which said: "Despite the wealth of our literature, the beauty and variety of our song, and the inexhaustible field of our traditional lore, it has been a matter for comment that Scotland has no drama of her own. Strange as it may seem, when it is remembered that the leading dramatist of the day is a Scotsman who made his name by writing in the homely tongue of his much-loved 'Thrums,' Scottish plays pure and simple could be counted upon the fingers of one hand. This is a state of affairs that has brought expressions of regret from more than one home-loving Scotoman, but Graham Moffat, the Glasgow representative of that family whose name is indissolubly associated with Scottish entertainment, has gone further than to express regret. He has assiduously set himself to create a Scottish drama."

"I was nursed in an atmosphere of that sort of thing," said the playwright. "My father was the pioneer of Scottish recitation and, like my brothers and my sister, I inherited his love for the work. It was always a difficulty to get sketches for my entertainments unless I wrote them myself, and gradually I developed the idea that I might carry the sketch further. I saw no reason why the work done for the platform could not be more effectively carried out on the stage. Indeed, it is easier to write a piece for five or six characters with

What in New York Theaters

- BOOTH—"Not So Long Ago." Period comedy.
- BROADHURST—"Come Seven." Blackface farce.
- BRAMHALL PLAYHOUSE—Gellie Players in Irish drama.
- BIJOU—See new theatrical offerings.
- CASINO—"Lassie." Scotch musical comedy.
- CENTRAL—"Poor Little Ritz Girl." A Lew Fields musical comedy.
- CENTURY—"Florodora." Revived after twenty years.
- CENTURY PROMENADE—"The Century Revue" at 9 and "The Midnight Rounders" at 11:30.
- COHAN—"Silks and Satins." More summer entertainment.
- COHAN & HARRIS—"Honey Girl." "Checkers" put to music.
- COMEDY—See new theatrical offerings.
- CORT—"Abraham Lincoln." Poetic, historical drama.
- CRITERION—"Humoresque." A motion picture.
- FORTY-EIGHTH STREET—"Opportunity." A play of Wall Street.
- FULTON—See new theatrical offerings.
- GAILEY—"Lightnin'." Frank Bacon in comedy of Reno's divorce industry.
- GLOBE—George White's "Scandals of 1920." Summer entertainment.
- HENRY MILLER'S—"The Famous Mrs. Fair." Henry Miller and Blanche Bates.
- HUDSON—"Crooked Gamblers." An Al. H. Woods play of high finance.
- KNUCKERBOCKER—"The Girl in the Spotlight." Victor Herbert musical comedy.
- LIBERTY—"The Night Boat." Musical, farcical comedy.
- LITTLE—"Foot-Loose." Story of an adventures.
- LYCEUM—"The Gold Diggers." Ina Claire in a comedy of chorus girl life.
- NEW AMSTERDAM—"Ziegfeld Follies." Fourteenth of the series.
- NEW AMSTERDAM ROOF—Art Hickman's band. Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic.
- PLAYHOUSE—"Seeing Things." Farce by Margaret Mayo and Aubrey Kennedy.
- SELWYN—Ed. Wynn Carnival. Girls, music and comedy.
- VANDERBILT—"Irene." Girl and music comedy.
- WINTER GARDEN—"Cinderella on Broadway." Extravaganza.

the paraphernalia of the theater behind them for two on a concert platform, the sole furniture of which consists of a chair, a table and tumbler of water.

"My first play was written long before I had developed ideas at all in regard to the Scottish stage. It was called 'The Fifth Act.' It was then a member of the Glasgow Junior Dramatic Club, which produced it. On the first night of the great event we found we had forgotten to get a policeman's costume. However, a brilliant idea struck me. Calling a policeman, we got him into the dressing room. We presumably dealt with a 'tease.' We explained our predicament to him, but he was an unsympathetic 'bobby' and called us 'impudent devils' when we suggested that he might undress and oblige us with his uniform for a short time.

"On this question of Scottish plays I feel strongly, and look forward to seeing the establishment of a theater for the encouragement of such productions. Certainly, I believe to play Scottish pieces successfully we must have out-and-out Scottish actors who have not lost the traditions and the accent of the homeland."

"Concerning Mr. Moffat's newest play, 'Don't Tell!' in which he will make his debut as a player in this country, 'The Glasgow Herald' says: "Mr. Graham Moffat has again successfully 'pulled the strings.' 'Don't Tell,' while by no means a variation of the 'Bunt' theme, is in the 'Bunt' vein. It does not probe so deeply into

Hal Skelly Arrives; Admits Wife 'Did It' Despite Stage Lines

HAL SKELLY, ladies and gentlemen! Ladies and gentlemen, Hal Skelly!

He has arrived! Not on the Manhattan Express from Chicago or Kansas City, but he has arrived on Broadway in what they term it around the theatrical producing offices "a blaze of glory." Hal has arrived! He is the principal comedian in Victor Herbert's new operetta, "The Girl in the Spotlight." He rides up to the stage door in his own Cadillac coupe, and has a valet to take his coat as he sheds it in his dressing room and to hand him his costume and everything.

This is not unusual, you say. But if you had seen Hal four years ago playing the lowliest "small time" vaudeville theaters in the furthest corners northwestward of the United States and glad as a schoolboy to get the opportunity, you would realize that Hal ought to be given a lot of credit for being the chief fun producer of the Knickerbocker Theater's luring musical comedy production.

Hal isn't much of a person to boast about his own work, but his friends up and down Broadway do enough talking for him. His rapid ascension to the throne of success has inspired his friends to such a degree that they are constantly dropping in on him backstage at the theater and shaking their heads and mopping their brows and saying, over and over again: "Hal, how in the devil did you do it?"

To which the tall, good natured, Iowa reared lad responds: "It's just natural, folks. I can't help it. Don't blame me. Sure, I'll sign a photograph for you. Name, please."

But this doesn't mean he is a tall "apostage," as they call it, over his remarkable climb to the upper parts of the theatrical ladder in the last few months. On the contrary, he is just the same Hal, they say, as when he was playing "Way out West," and that is the one reason all his friends keep dropping in on him to say "hello" and "good luck" to him.

If it were as easy as Hal says it is to become a headliner in vaudeville, and, better still, a featured artist in one of Broadway's successful musical comedy or operetta productions, there would be few left to see the shows. Every one would be doing something on the stage—being applauded each night as he is, or receiving sums of money each week such as he receives.

For his recipe is a very simple one on the face of it. The young man says that if actors would pay more attention to details and do simpler things to amuse the public, they would get much further in their profession. In fact, he says, simplicity is the key to stage success.

"The trouble is with most of our comedians, or men and women who try to amuse, that they try to do too much that is unusual," he says. "Another very great fault lies in their belief that they must inject vulgarity into their work. The modern Broadway audience likes to be amused with

Collierizing Tinney

Or, Perhaps, Tinneying Collier. Is the Process in "Tickle Me"

ENTERING the half darkened Lyric Theater these nights as it is now in its fourth week of rehearsals, when Tinney, the star, and Collier, the director, are on the stage, there will be guffaws enough to cause Mr. Hammerstein (Arthur, the producer) and Mr. Hammerstein (Oscar Jr., the co-author) to sit back and smile away a few evenings themselves.

Not all of Tinney's remarks could well be told in print. As for Collier's, the less said about some of them the better. But those lines that are not going to be included in the performance at all, but which drift out over the footlights these nights, as the stage is upset and the supporting cast runs back and forth behind the dimly lighted sets, would make a musical comedy book within themselves. Yes, there would be material enough for two or three such productions, no doubt, if one could bind them all together and remember them and set them down in a notebook for reference.

But there is. The agreement which they have reached hasn't anything to do specifically with "Tickle Me," so far as can be discerned, but has to do with acting generally.

The knowledge came to both of them the other night when, after remonstrating with Collier as to how a certain line should be spoken, Tinney remarked: "You talk like a college boy. What's your fraternity, anyway?"

"Do you want this show to go on?" promptly inquired Collier.

"If it's all the same to you, yes," replied Tinney.

"Then don't call me a college boy," returned Collier. "They're all 'hicks' when it comes to acting. Give me the actor that never saw a shirt-tail parade. Give me the fellow who made his way himself."

"At last!" shouted Tinney. "We agreed!"

And thereafter there ensued a most cordial exchange of ideas between these two men whom a large part of the theatergoing public have called "the funniest in the business." The other members of the rehearsing cast stood about wide-eyed. The pretty young girls in pantaloons and some without even pantaloons, but lacy garments designed for comfort in the summer weather, giggled and nudged one another as they sat behind the scenes awaiting their next call to rehearse. The impossible had happened. Collier and Tinney had agreed. Frank and Willie were smiling at each other. Director and star had found common ground. And then as soon as Collier saw the amazement everywhere he spat out a very short stub of a fat cigar. Tinney dashed the remaining atom of Gargantuan weed into the orchestra pit with a swear word, and back they went to the rehearsing and more arguments.

It is really humorous, if they don't know you're listening, to hear these two comedians at work. If "Tickle Me" is as filled with funny lines when the curtain rises on the opening night as it is now in its fourth week of rehearsals, when Tinney, the star, and Collier, the director, are on the stage, there will be guffaws enough to cause Mr. Hammerstein (Arthur, the producer) and Mr. Hammerstein (Oscar Jr., the co-author) to sit back and smile away a few evenings themselves.

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And some of these lines they "find" each night as they go through their lines are going to be used in the production itself. Tinney will interpolate certain lines and jokes he finds while at work with Collier, and funny little laugh producers conceived by the director will be included in the dialogue.

Tinney in the play, will be Dardanella, the king of Somewhere-when, and in his own style will just about "rule" the performance of "Tickle Me" from the opening curtain until the finale. If there are those who think because the comedian is to head the cast he will appear late in the middle or last act and quit the piece long before the final curtain comes, they are mistaken. He is the play itself, and he is being drilled by Collier and the two Hammersteins, as well as the assistant directors, each afternoon and night, and it is said his part will be heavier than he ever has carried. Not heavy in quality, if it should be noted, but heavy in quantity.

"Speaking of college men of the stage" came the voice of Tinney on one side, his little, strong cigar poked almost directly beneath our chin, and the voice, simultaneously, of Collier, from the other side, his fat cigar stub protruding somewhere just beyond our eyelashes, "there aren't very many of them that ever made good on the stage. Now, you know what we mean—we mean very, very good. Of course, there are a few. We give credit where credit is due."

They had proceeded to this point in

New Theatrical Offerings of the Week

- MONDAY—At the Bijou Theater Robert Milton will present "The Charm School," a new three-act comedy dramatized by Alice Duer Miller and Mr. Milton from Mrs. Miller's delightful aerial story dealing with the experiences of a handsome young bachelor who inherits a finishing school for young ladies. The cast includes Marie Carroll, Sam Hardy, Minnie Dupree, Rapley Holmes, James Gleason, Margaret Dale, Blyth Daly, Ivan Simpson, Nell Martin, Florence McGuire, Morgan Farley, Carolyn Arnold, Frances McLaughlin, Camilla Lyon, Theodora Laroque, Mary Mead and Constance McLaughlin.
- TUESDAY—At the Comedy Theater Leo Ditrichstein and Leo Shubert will present "The Americans in France," the latest comedy by Eugene Brioux. It is a post-armistice play which seizes upon the environment and influence of Americans in France and draws character contrast between these Americans and a limited group of French people. The cast will include Blanche Yurka, who will play the French sister; Frank Kingdon as the French father, Wayne Arey as the American captain, Jefferys Lewis, Madeleine Durand, L'Estrange Millman, Franklin George, William Bain and Master Richard Dupont.
- THURSDAY—At the Fulton Theater Adolph Klauer presents "Scrambled Wives," a new comedy by Adelaide Matthews and Martha M. Stanley. Romance is set in a series of laughable complications. Roland Young and Juliette Day head the cast, which also includes Marie Chambers, Glenn Anders, Elsie Bartlett, James Lounsbury, Betty Barnicoat, Louis Albion, Margaret Hutchins and William Lennox.