

Interesting Chat and Stage Gossip for Playgoers

In Which We Meet Our Old Friend Zakkuri

George Arliss Discusses Villains and Villainies and the Tricks of the Stage

By Harriette Underhill

It was 10:30 in the morning, with the rain pouring down, when we went over to the Booth Theater to interview George Arliss. This means that we waited very much to do that particular interview. We dislike all mornings and especially rainy ones. But don't let any one tell you, if you don't like to get up in the morning and start earning your daily bread and jam, that it is because you are lazy. Our doctor told us that it has something to do with the thyroid gland and that one's compensation is usually the possession of long, silky hair and nice, smooth skin.

We explained this to the autocrat at the stage door when he told us that our interview time had been changed from 7:45 p. m. to 10:30 a. m. "But we were not consulted or we never should have made it for that time." "I can't get at Mr. Arliss to tell him now, he's busy," said the autocrat of the stage door.

An Old Acquaintance is Pleasantly Renewed

We never had seen Mr. Arliss to speak of since "The Darling of the Gods." Then he was the suave, murderous Zakkuri, not unlike The Raja of Bukh in "The Green Goddess," and we were carrying Blanche Bates's parcel on the stage. He laughed when we told him that we still stood in awe of him and that no "ensemble lady" ever quite loses her reverence for a star.

We arrived at the theater five minutes ahead of time and the autocrat of the man seemed to say, "See, I told you!" And then Mr. Arliss came in and we went in his reception room and sat down on some chintz chairs. "Now, what do you want me to say?" asked Mr. Arliss.

"Say anything," we replied, "and it will be interesting." What we wanted him to do was just to act as though he were not being interviewed, and talk. But he said: "I have no hobbies. I'm not enthusiastic over anything. I have no wrongs to right; I'm quite pleased with things as they are."

"Then you would not, if you could, shatter it to bits and remold it nearer to the heart's desire?" There is something about Mr. Arliss that makes you feel romantic and sort of as though you wanted to quote poetry or have him bare his soul to you and tell you of a secret sorrow that is blighting his life.

We are not the only one who feels that way, either, for when we told K. Wright, the music critic, that we had been to interview Mr. Arliss, he clasped his hands and said: "Wasn't it thrilling!" But Mr. Arliss doesn't feel so about it at all. He said: "Oh, no; it's a very pleasant work, and I don't think it is I take a little aspirin. When a man doesn't think rightly it's because he doesn't eat rightly." But we refused to be sidetracked.

How could Lucilla, the girl in the play, resist you? I should think she would have been delighted when you wanted to marry her instead of saying: "Don't touch me, you beast!"

The Raja is a Fascinating Villain

"But the Raja was a villain, you know, and he probably would have killed her later, anyway." "And such a villain! The most fascinating one I ever met. Don't you love to play the Raja?"

"Of course, villains are more interesting to play than heroes, and then, to be a leading man one must have a certain amount of good looks or charm or a fine voice."

"Well," we interrupted, "you certainly have that. Why, even in the big Booth Theater one can close one's eyes and still hear every word you say." "I mean that they shall," replied Mr. Arliss. "I have no patience with actors who turn their backs to the audience, with the explanation that a room has four walls and that it is foolish to face any one of them. A room has four walls, but a stage hasn't, and no actor should forget that there are a lot of people out in front who paid \$3 apiece to hear what he is saying."

"Bravo!" said we, mentally.

"Why, what would happen if an actor really lost himself in a part, as you so often hear it expressed? He might take a walk around the block while he speculated on how much in love he was with the heroine or he might go under the stage to brood over his coming revenge on the hero. Make your audiences lose themselves if you can,



Joseph Schildkraut



Edward Thayer Monroe



in "Madame Sans-Geze"



in "Kismet"



as "Schmitzler's Anatole"



in "Sappho and Phaoz"

Sincerity Will Always Gain Public Support, Says Ervine

In a new edition of his play, "John Ferguson" St. John Ervine has a number of interesting things to say upon the present state of the English theater and about play writing.

"John Ferguson" had an original production and an extended American tour by two companies, besides its recent revival by the newly formed Repertory Theater. Augustin Duncan staged the original production and created the title role in this country. Dudley Diggs, of the Theater Guild, created the part of Jimmie Caesar in the original American production. And in the recent revival J. M. Kerrigan, who was Jimmie Caesar in the original Irish production, resumed the part.

While "John Ferguson" has been well received in this country it has languished in London, according to reports. Mr. Ervine's remarks on conditions in the theaters and management in general are rather effective, whether one agrees with them or not.

"The peculiar success of 'John Ferguson' in America—a tragic piece played in a fashionable theater in (New York), by an unfashionable company—seems to have upset many established beliefs about the kind of play the public wants," says St. John Ervine. "There is a curious faith held by theatrical managers that the more empty a play is the better will the generality of audiences like it, and large sums of money are expended annually by these managers in the production of puerile plays in the hope that one of them will be sufficiently silly to make the fortune of its producer."

"It is not my business to teach the theater manager his business, but I sometimes wonder whether his theory would be supported by a study of

but keep a watch on your own whereabouts all the time. Tricks must be employed to conceal this knowledge from the audience and the best audience hundreds of women who could feel the part. There are, of course, that is why so many of them are sure that they are born actresses. But just let them try to make other people feel it. That is another matter. They do not know the tricks."

Our doctor, who is a psychiatrist, says that when all of your sympathy is with the villain it's because you are suffering from inhibitions—that you are really being very good yourself.

"Ah," said Mr. Arliss, smiling, "a regular old-time Zakkuri smile, 'more tricks! One may employ them off the stage, you know, as well as on.' We didn't ask him what he meant by this, but we are hoping for the best. We did ask him, however, what the terrible

theatrical balance sheets. We are often told of the great sums of money made out of this or that driving review, but are told singularly little of the bankruptcies that have also been caused by driving reviews. I imagine that if an accurate financial statement covering the history of the theater, either in America or in England, were prepared it would be found that the amount of money irretrievably lost on 'popular' pieces would be far in excess of the amount lost on 'unpopular' pieces, in proportion to the capital invested in each, and I should not be astonished to discover from such a balance sheet that the 'highbrow' drama had more or less paid its way, while the 'lowbrow' or 'no-brow-at-all' drama had not done so.

The Evolution of a Star Joseph Schildkraut

Joseph Schildkraut is one of those people, wise enough, as some wit has put it, to choose the proper ancestors for himself. With a Rumanian father, a Hungarian mother, a Turkish grandfather and a Spanish grandmother, he had a fying start when it came to the matter of temperament. All this, to say nothing of the fact that his father is Rudolf Schildkraut, well known in Europe and America as an actor in German and Yiddish. As a child he not only saw the best which the theaters of Europe had to show, but he lived in the atmosphere of art and artists.

His father had left his native country when seventeen because he wanted to be an actor, and there was little opportunity in Rumania. He hesitated between Russia and Germany as the countries offering the best chances, finally choosing Germany. He returned to Rumania later for a number of years, and it was while he and his wife were living in Bucharest that the son Joseph was born. When the boy was about two years old the elder Schildkraut returned to the Berlin stage.

Made His Debut in "The Wanderer" in Berlin In 1910 Rudolf Schildkraut came to New York to head the German company at the Irving Place Theater. He brought his family with him, and Joseph Schildkraut, who had decided that he, too, was to be an actor, entered the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. He could speak no English when he enrolled at the school, but he learned it rapidly, and when the family returned to Europe three years later he could speak the new tongue as if he had never known any other.

It was on October 23, 1913, that the younger Schildkraut made his debut as an actor. It was at Max Reinhardt's Kammerspiele in Berlin, and the part was that of the son in "The Wanderer." In the course of that first year on the stage Joseph Schildkraut played such parts as the fool in "King Lear," Oberon in "A Midsummer Night's

Dream," the duke in "Twelfth Night" and Romeo in "Romeo and Juliet." Toward the end of that season Sir Herbert Tree was in Berlin and was so impressed with the young actor that he gave him a contract calling for several parts to be played in English in London, but the outbreak of the war automatically cancelled the contract. He was virtually a prisoner of war because he insisted on his allegiance to Rumania, but he was given freedom to come and go about his work, and remained with Reinhardt until 1917, playing the leading parts in "Redemption," "The Doctor's Dilemma," "Widowers' Houses," and other Shaw plays, besides appearing in plays by Hauptmann and Wedekind.

Horse Ranch No Place To Study Character, So Overman Ran Away

Lynne Overman, who is reviving memories of "wet days" in "Just Married," the farce at the Shubert Theater, lays a share of his success to the fact that as a boy and youth he had opportunity to see many sides of life outside of the theater.

"I always was a great hand, even as a little fellow, for investigating life," he said last night at the Shubert Theater. "To begin with I was born on my father's horse-racing farm at Trenton, Mo. I learned all about the horse and the people who were devoted to him. It seemed to me even then that the horse managed to impoverish most of those who followed him. He certainly did me, for at the age of twelve years I decided that I knew all about the horse and so I ran away from home determined and certain that I was to make a fortune at the racetracks. I didn't. In a few weeks' time I was riding through the West and Middle West as a jockey. When winter came my father sent out agents for me, found me and returned me to school. Every summer after that I ran away to see the world. And I saw it. "So by the time I was seventeen and decided on the stage as a career I had met many kinds of people. This later proved to be the best sort of preparation for stage work. The man who knows his theater and nothing else has small foundation to winning a success as a portrayal of character."

He may play it many times, but the repertoire system assures him of the chance to create other parts all the time.

In the European theaters, also, special productions of worth-while plays which may not have a wide popular appeal are always being given. These plays are put on with as much care and artistic integrity as if they were expected to have long, money-returning runs. They are of invaluable opportunity to a young and ambitious actor.

Mr. Schildkraut came to America last year, making his debut on this side of the Atlantic in "Pagans." Although the play was a failure, he made an impression on the critics and the audiences who saw it.

When the Theater Guild decided to produce Franz Molnar's "Liliom" it offered Mr. Schildkraut the title role—that of the roughneck. He accepted, and the story of the success of the play and of Mr. Schildkraut's part in it is well known. "Liliom" was produced on April 20. Mr. Schildkraut has signed a contract with the Theater Guild for one year to appear in its plays. He also is appearing in motion pictures under Griffith.

Oscar Shaw, Breezy Comedy Man of "Two Little Girls in Blue"

The merchant who has made a success in life by studying the characteristics of those with whom he comes in contact might very well say of Oscar Shaw, the breezy comedian in "Two Little Girls in Blue," at the George M. Cohan Theater: "What a fine salesman he would make!"

He really typifies the glib, breezy, cheery salesman who would find it easy to sell you lemon colored kid shoes when you wanted horse slippers. And if one said that trade surely lost a shining light of a salesman when Oscar Shaw went on the stage he or she who said it would be right, because that is really what he was when the call for the stage was heard by him and answered.

He was a traveling salesman trooping up and down the rail-bedded highways, hitting small towns and large and intriguing the merchants of every capacity to buy. When one considers the matter well it is not such a strange thing that he went from that position to the stage, because it is not such a far step from the putting in good humor the merchant who dares to be disfranchised from his customary resentful gloom and the amusement of a whole household, who come for the express purpose of being pleased.

It is said that Oscar Shaw, the salesman, was renowned throughout his circuit for the amusing stories he told and the lonesome evenings in a one-train town that he made pleasant for his fellow hotel guests marooned there overnight. He tried out the old jokes and songs and dared to dally with the new ones. So when the chance came for him to go on the stage in a real musical comedy he had the courage to take the step, and the resulting success led him to bid goodby to the sample case.

He has played up and down Broadway, and for two years was with the Ziegfeld "Midnight Frolic" and for three years at the Alhambra Theater in London. Other attractions in which he was seen are "Leave It to Jane," "Rose of China," "Very Good Eddie," "The Half Moon" and "The Girl and the Wizard."

He is further known to fame as champion golfer of the Great Neck, Long Island, Golf and Country Club. He is a Great Necker by residence.

To Shoot Windsor Castle

Bryant Washburn, while working on "The Road to London," an Associated Exhibitors' Production, wanted to "shoot" some of the exteriors on the grounds of the castle at Windsor. Officials of the royal court when approached were shocked and said that such a thing had never been done. They were still more shocked when Mr. Washburn told them that this was the very reason why he wanted his request fulfilled.

The officials being persistent in their refusal, Bryant Washburn became impatient and said: "Well, if you people won't let me do it I'll apply for an audience with King George. It is a good sport and won't put as many obstacles in my way as you fellows seem to."

The officials thought the young Yankee looked as if he actually would approach His Majesty King and Emperor George V with the request to be allowed to make a "movie" on the royal grounds and finally granted the permission.

New Vitaphone Special

Jim Paige will be starred in a new Vitaphone picture based on "The Prodigal Judge," the story by Vaughan Kosta.

"Atlantide" a French Picture Of Desert Life

Novel by Pierre Benoit Has Been Filmed with New Effect in Black and White; American Touch

By Wilbur Forrest

PARIS, June 10.—Can the French masters of so many arts—regain their original place in the art of making moving pictures? After the initial exhibition of "Atlantide" here the verdict must be that the American and German producers, now leading, will be forced to render acknowledgment of serious competition, provided, of course, that the French keep their cinematographic stride just set.

"Atlantide," Pierre Benoit's novel which won the honors over all French novels of 1919, places the scene of France's greatest picture production in the heart of the Soudanese desert. Here, the thin desert air, gives photography a new effect in blacks and whites, which, according to competent observers, has seldom been equalled. In its technique and detail there is to Americans a touch of D. W. Griffith, though this film is entirely the product of French experts—the General Society for the Industrial and Commercial Development of Cinematography.

The production stars Mlle. Stacia Napierkowska, the beautiful Russian actress, as Antinea, a regal and unique "vamp" whose web is the marvelous majesty of the African desert, catching the victims and drawing them toward her mysterious castle, where she sits as Queen of the Hoggars, the remaining survivors of Atlantis, the submerged continent. Over these vast sweeps of glittering sand, breaking occasionally into clear-cut rocks, one sees troupes of French Colonialists and groups of traveling natives cutting the thin desert air against the horizon in amazing outlines. Cavalcades of camels appear at great distances as if through powerful glasses.

Luring White Men Into The Desert to Die

In the mean time the beautiful Queen Antinea, possessing all the fascination of Cleopatra or Helen of Troy, waits in her desert palace while faithful emissaries lure her victims into the hidden web, over sands and through winding rock passages to her throne room. White men who travel the great sand seas are the pawns of this desert queen. Once having gazed upon her all thoughts of home and duty flee and the dupe is content to remain near her forever.

But Antinea is the reincarnation of revenge upon man. As soon as the scouts have brought word that another white man is within the web the first is banished to wander into the desert until the pitiless sun dries him up and takes his life. It is then that the sand wastes are searched for the body, which is embalmed and recast into a golden statue to remain mounted in a niche of Antinea's marble hall, a magnificent circular sails decorated in blood red marble after the modes of ancient Egypt.

There is no lack of acting talent in this new French film masterpiece. Georges Melchior as Lieutenant Saint-Avit, of the French Colonial forces, plays the lead, seconded by Jean Angelo, as Captain Morhanges. The play finds the two young officers on special military duty in the vicinity of Antinea's palace. They have wandered within the web and are caught and dragged by the Queen's ever-watchful scouts. They awake to find themselves in luxurious captivity. Saint-Avit succumbs instantly to the charms of the queenly vamp, but Morhanges, whose heart is in his religion, remains aloof from every effort to charm Antinea for the first time in her life is experiencing the passion she has so often created in others, and finding no response in the heart of the handsome ascetic she decides on revenge, Saint-Avit, the willing slave, is induced to murder Morhanges. It requires murder to wake the young lieutenant from the spell cast over him by Antinea. Horror of what he has done turns him against her and he manages to escape into the desert, aided by Tanit-Zerga (Marie Louise Iribre), the Queen's personal attendant.

Rivals in Length Griffith's "Birth of a Nation"

The escape of Saint Avit and Tanit-Zerga is depicted in scenes of terrible reality. First the camel and then the girl die of thirst, and eventually Saint Avit is found unconscious by a band of native soldiers, who carry him to the nearest camp. After a long siege of fever the young lieutenant recovers, and the scene shifts to the Paris boulevards and restaurants. But the lure of the enchantress in the African desert reaches into the heart of Saint Avit in the French capital. Haunted ever by the call which he knows means death, he seeks another military mission. Back in Africa, he sits with a fellow officer in a bungalow at the edge of the desert and tells the story of the terrible death of Morhanges, the ascetic, who refused to wither to the charms of Antinea. Suddenly a native appears and beckons to Saint Avit. He rises and follows into the desert. It is one of Antinea's servants.

"Atlantide" is a production which rivals in length Griffith's "Birth of a Nation." It is something different in motion pictures, and will doubtless go to America. It is the come-back of a country which up to 1913 was supreme as the motion picture producing nation of the world.