

MELODRAMA DEAD? NOT MUCH

WILLIAM A. BRADY FINDS IT IN ALL GOOD PLAYS.

The Experience With the Revival of 'The Lights of London' Confirms Him in His Opinion That Melodrama is What the Public Wants—A Change Coming.

"Unhand me, sir!" says the young man with the new mackie. "Ah, the curse of the Marigolds is upon you!" cries his antagonist, "and he goes for the pistol!"

"Oh, Roderick, Roderick," she calls, "where are you? Will you not speak?" The young man struggles with the curse of the Marigolds, but is too weak. He is found, gagged and blindfolded. In the struggle the lamp has been upset and it sees the flicker of running flame. In the queer light the struggle has gone forward. Roderick is left helpless under a table and his assailant sets himself to affixing the flames.

But he cannot. They run higher and higher and creep nearer and nearer the wretched Roderick. He has to save himself, so out the door he goes into the dark night. There is a moment of dreadful suspense. Then the voice comes again.

"Roderick, Roderick, will you not speak to me? Where are you?" By this time the flames are licking at his very heels. Annabel, the switchman's daughter, is not a minute too soon. She comes breathless after the long run from her father's shanty, for here the lover must be. She sees that the cabin is doomed, thinks that she must have saved herself, and is about to run out, but—

"Hi there, lady," comes a voice from the gallery, "pipe the guy under the table!"

It may be that Annabel would have found Roderick without the kindly information of the boy in the gallery. It may be that she would have seen his twisted form lying there within a hand's breadth of the flames. She might have seen him in the unsteady light of the fire. But as a matter of fact she did not. In a moment of fearful hesitancy, however, she turns back and sees something shining on the wall over the kitchen table.

"It is the picture of his old mother," she shouts, "and I will save it!" So she runs back, dodging the flames. She reaches up for the picture, cannot reach it and moves the table aside.

"Ah, Roderick, Roderick, here you are," she cries, "and it was your old mother saved you!" Whereupon she drags Roderick off stage with one hand and in the other she clasps the old, familiar picture.

This is melodrama. It is also well that she should be able to play a musical instrument. Two years ago a young woman who had studied the piano here for several years went to Berlin to take some instruction under the famous foreigners. Then she gave a concert in London. Nobody came but a few deadheads. Among these was a producer of English musical plays. He heard her play, saw how charming and lovely she was and told her it was a shame she did not have a voice. She replied that she did have a voice and would sing for him some day.

After she had delivered several songs in a way to prove that she possessed a charming though untrained singing voice and a great deal of intelligence and humor he made her an offer to join his company after she had left the stage long enough to study. She is taking singing lessons in London now, and when she makes her appearance in London it will be at a salary twice as large as she could earn playing the piano for a month.

In the same way the girl who sets out to be a serious violinist often succumbs before she has been long in her profession to the greater rewards of musical comedy. Hazel Dawn, who plays the leading role as well as the violin in 'The Pink Lady,' intended to make a career as a concert performer. She is an American, by name Hazel Toot, which is not nearly so romantic as Hazel Dawn and would never serve her stage purposes so well. Miss Dawn-Toot is not only an American but went with her father to Europe when he was sent as a missionary

for the Mormon Church. Her sisters are singers, and she discovered that she also possessed a voice for comic opera. With her violin, therefore, she took to the stage, and she has prospered there much more quickly than she could ever have hoped to do on the concert stage.

Beauty is of no great aid to the concert musician, judges of such things say. If she plays out of tune or if her interpretations are unmusical all the beauty in the world will not help her. Just how different

is the situation in musical comedy the most unpolished theatregoer knows. Thamarra de Swirsky and Maud Allan were pianists who took to the barefoot field when they realized the difficulties of making their way on the concert stage. Many women pianists realize after a short time that they must either teach or find some other field of employment. Yvette, who is a figure in the diverse delights of the Winter Garden, set out to be a musician, but nowadays only uses her fiddle as an accompaniment to her songs.

Mabelle Adams, who is still in vaudeville, depends on her violin playing for much of the success of her act, and like her associates she took up the study of the instrument seriously.

He has the big touch sometimes, the big appeal to human nature. 'Peter Pan' is melodrama of a sort, according to my way of thinking, picturesque, dramatic, melodramatic if you please, but still melodrama. So was the big success this year at the New Theatre, 'The Blue Bird.' There was the same picturesque quality that we used to find in 'Peter Pan.' The sicknesses, the grand-parents brought to life when the children thought of them, the idea of the dead, the unborn children, these were all melodramatic ideas.

George Cohen has a melodrama idea, too, only that he introduced it into musical comedy. And you see what a success he has made out of it. He invented melodrama in musical comedy.

"Remember what the people like in a picture gallery here do you find the big crowd? You don't find one in front of the little picture of 'Dawn on the Marshes.' You find 'em in front of the battle scene. There's something vital, you know, the big appeal, that's what catches human beings. And it's melodrama."

"I think I can say this much, that melodrama is at the basis of all fine plays. It goes on forever. They'll revive 'The Lights of London' thirty years from now, and the first night audiences will laugh just as they do now. But the crowds will come again, just as they do now. And the same thing with 'The Two Orphans.'"

"Melodrama is hard to play. It takes as good actors as there are, for you need big men to put big ideas and big emotions across the footlights."

"No, we're not through with melodrama. It'll last and be well done just as long as human nature is what it is now and has been. There's not much change in that, you know."

Mr. Brady went on to say that theatre managers are abroad now looking in Paris and Vienna and St. Petersburg for the latest musical novelty.

"They're scouring Europe," said he, "for freak musical productions. They'll find them. They always do. And they will please the crowd that like pink tights and red lights and lots of funny business. But they're on the wrong track."

"There is a special kind of audience which can hold a show for three or four nights, but can't make great successes. The great successes are built upon human emotion and not upon momentary appeals to passion."

"What are the great successes? 'Ben-Hur,' 'Way Down East,' 'The Old Homestead.' Every one of these is melodrama. They appeal broadly to deep, wholesome emotion."

"I hear theatre managers nowadays scream about their galleries. They tell me that the balconies and galleries aren't filled; the orchestra is all right, but the cheap seats don't sell."

Mr. Brady said that this wasn't owing to the moving picture shows.

"People are getting tired of moving pictures already," he said. "What they want is the big appeal. I believe that even the cheap shows will come to life again, for folks want the spoken word and miss it in the films. There is a wave of melodrama every seven years. It's been due for some time now, but the moving pictures have held it off. But it's coming."

"There have been some good melodramas already this year. Count the big successes and you'll see that they are melodramas or that they embrace melodramatic ideas. 'Alias Jimmy Valentine,' for instance. 'Jimmy Valentine' is essentially a melodrama. I suppose that when 'Jimmy Valentine' is revived thirty years from now first night audiences will laugh just as they do at old melodramas now. But it will be a success nevertheless, because 'Jimmy Valentine' has a deep appeal, an appeal of the sort that is perennial."

"When I put on 'The Lights of London' at the Lyric a few nights ago the first night audience laughed. The next morning it was told that it wouldn't last the week out. But it did, and the house is filled every night."

"When they were rehearsing for 'The Lights of London' the actors didn't want to say 'Unhand me, villain!' in the old way. But I told them that in my melodramas I wanted to have the hero jump off the same old bridge, I wanted to have the same old andante played in the same old way, and the personages in the play talk just as they used to talk."

They told me that it's not natural to say lines in that old-fashioned way, but I told the actors that men don't pause before a mirror and straighten their neckties when they're excited. They act naturally and they talk very much as the old days used to talk in melodrama."

"When it came to 'The Lights of London' I asked them to play their parts the old way, and of course the first night audience laughed. They always do. And it's a wonderful public. It comes to see and keeps coming. This public has the human touch isn't the first best public. It's the common human sense, the sense with clean tastes, who can appreciate the big emotions. The old days had mostly of this sort of public."

"What about melodrama? I don't know how to tell you what melodrama is. I can only tell you this much: it's dramatic, it's emotional, it's appealing roughly to the human nature."

"I can only say that even I have had

Musical Comedy's Recruits From the Concert Stage



MABELLE ADAMS AS THE GYPSY VIOLINIST

HAZEL DAWN AS CLAUDINE IN 'THE PINK LADY'

THAMARRA DE SWIRSKY AND MAUD ALLAN AT THE WINTER GARDEN

It is not always enough nowadays that a young woman who wants to make her way on the stage should be beautiful and young and know how to act and sing and dance; it is also well that she should be able to play a musical instrument.

Two years ago a young woman who had studied the piano here for several years went to Berlin to take some instruction under the famous foreigners. Then she gave a concert in London. Nobody came but a few deadheads. Among these was a producer of English musical plays. He heard her play, saw how charming and lovely she was and told her it was a shame she did not have a voice. She replied that she did have a voice and would sing for him some day.

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Combining Food and a Show in a Theatre

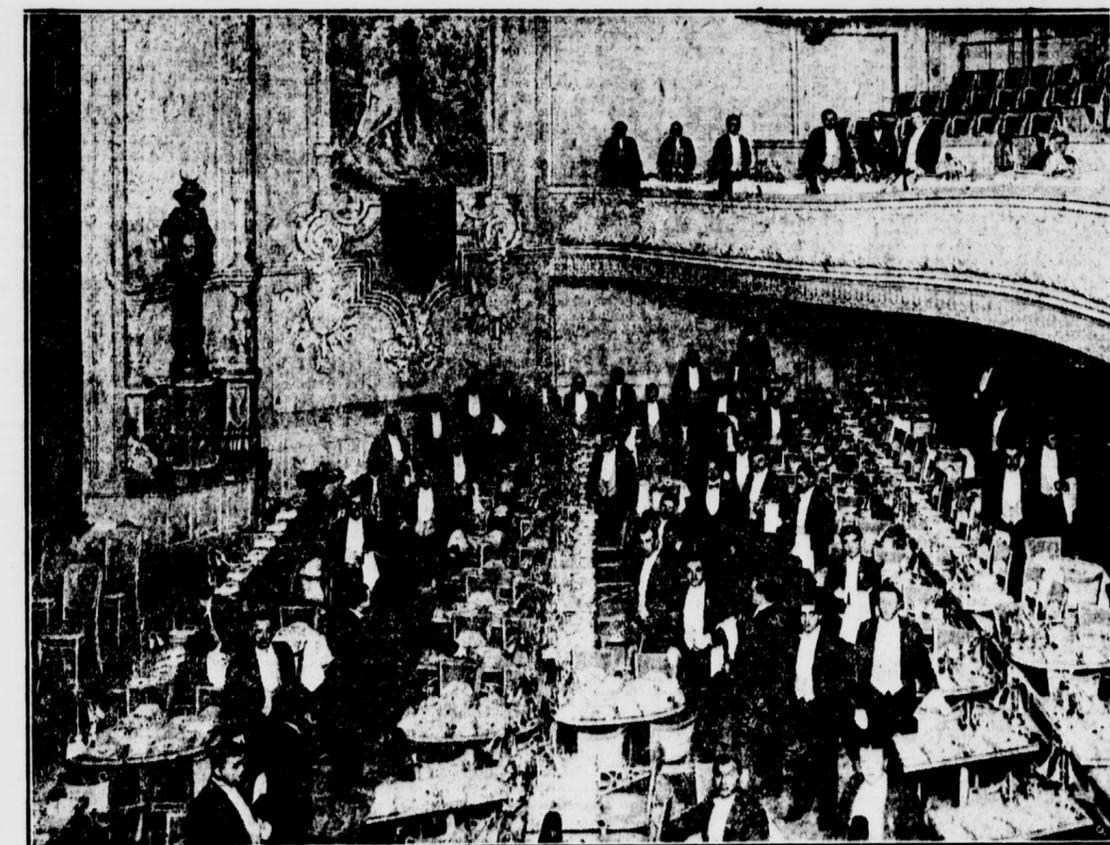
The union between all the arts which Richard Wagner dreamed of did not contemplate the art of the cook. But that has been in a measure realized in this city. You don't find one in front of the little picture of 'Dawn on the Marshes.' You find 'em in front of the battle scene. There's something vital, you know, the big appeal, that's what catches human beings. And it's melodrama."

The new combination of an eating house and a theatre is more novel in this city than it is abroad. In Paris and Vienna notably at Ronacher's in the city of the Danube there are restaurants in which one may eat while watching the

show. There is even in the humblest German tangle the name for a music hall—a space set aside at which the public may eat and drink while the performance is in progress. All the cafes concerts along the Champs Elysees are provided with their balconies on which one may sit and eat. But in all these places the restaurant is merely incidental. At the West Forty-sixth street establishment it is not the whole thing, but a full half of it at least.

This attractive little interior in rose and gray, with gilt added here and there to point the decorative scheme where it otherwise might be flat, seats only 800 people, including all its facilities. The auditorium comprises besides the parquet a balcony and a gallery. In the parquet there are only seats at the tables. There is a row of boxes extending along the front of the balcony, in which there are accommodations for four persons at a table. It is back of them that there are accommodations for the visitors who do not want to eat. The gallery is also given up to those who want merely to see the stage.

The arrangement of the tables down stairs is shown in the picture. In general two persons dining at a small table sit next and not opposite to one another. In some cases, as the illustration shows, these tables face the stage. In others they are placed at right angles to the stage, in such a way that both diners may see the stage. Some sit facing the footlights, and others, designed to accommodate four or six, are placed at the end of the lines of tables. All are so situated that the view of the stage is clear.



THE RESTAURANT THEATRE.

WHEN ANGELO DIGS FOR MARIA IN THE BRONX

In the upper part of The Bronx, where the Bronx River flows between the hills upon which Woodlawn and Wakefield are situated, there is a stretch of soft meadowland. Here it is that some Italians have for several years been giving an interesting exhibition of intensive gardening and truck farming on a small scale.

"The Italian Gardens" is the name which the commuters on the trains of the Harlem and New Haven roads have given to this stretch of tiny gardens extending along the river's bank for over a mile. There is probably no other spot just like it in all New York.

Building in that part of The Bronx has been confined so far entirely to the hills, leaving the valley a sort of man's land. Through this valley the little river flows with many a crook and bend, carving queer garden plots and watering them as well, for in times of much rain the river overflows its low banks and all but inundates them.

The Italian gardeners have laid out their patches along the banks of the river without any idea of regularity. Some gardens are large and some are small, depending upon the owner's idea of how much he can take care of in his leisure hours. Their garden work is done after their backs have been bent all day long over the spade, so that this gardening by the river is no light task for them. The women frequently help, however.

What is apt more than anything else to attract the attention of the passerby to this strange stretch of little gardens is the way each gardener has marked off his patch. The most popular kind of fence is made by sticking brush into the soft ground and binding it together with twine, forming a hedge about four feet high. Some of the hedges are made of nothing more substantial than reeds bound together in the same manner.

In each little fenced off in this manner one can see a shelter of some kind. It may be only a trellis with a few vines over it or it may be a small but with an arbor in front of the door. Such shelters are essential apparently to the proper garden from the Italian's point of view.

These arbors are generally placed in the middle of the tiny patches separated from one another by these fences. Commuters as dusk approaches often see there a picture of pastoral life, something which bears a close resemblance to the peasant life of the Old World. In the arbor sits the wife with her children while outside her husband will be busy cultivating his little plot or Angelo and Maria may be resting together in the middle of the garden.

Here and there throughout this strip of gardens trenches have been carefully dug and an extensive irrigation system installed. Let the usually placid Bronx rise at all and the trenches fill with water. Only the ordinary vegetables will be grown in these little gardens, corn and onions being those most favored. Some of the Italian gardeners live in tenements a mile or so away, but seldom are they seen working along the river in the evening hours without their families watching them from the tiny arbors.

The Unnecessary Question

From the Youth's Companion. "Had a puncture, my friend, and the passer by an air of interest. The chauffeur looked up and swallowed his feelings with a huge gulp.

"No, sir," he replied, "I'm just changing the air in the tires. The other lot's word out, you know."

THE KAISER IN PALESTINE.

Traces of His Repeated Visits Everywhere Found by the Tourist.

Wherever red roofs appear in Palestine it betokens European invasion. Red roofs are encroachments of the modern—advance guards of western "civilization."

Many streets in Haifa might almost pass as a part of a German village. The rows of prim red-roofed cottages, each in its neat garden, are in no degree Syrian. There were Germans in charge of the carriage to Nazareth; there were German hotels. Even the American Consul was German.

It is impossible not to notice evidences of the Kaiser's interest in Palestine. At each visit the Kaiser pays to the Holy Land a bit of good road is built, writes Ruth Bryan Owens in the National Monthly, and after taking the drive to Nazareth we hoped for the comfort of later pilgrims that the Kaiser might pass that way.

In one place is a tablet erected by the Kaiser to the Sultan, at others thrifty German colonies; here a road, there a fountain presented by him, then on the Mount of Assumption the guide pointed out the legendary footprint of the Master impressed in the rock and also the impression left by the prophet Mohammed one observant traveler noted. "And now where is the footprint of the German Emperor?"

A Good Excuse in Missouri.

From the Kansas City Journal. Leaving his farm near Blue Springs, John Bolger came to Kansas City Monday to serve as a juror in the Circuit Court.

Things had to be attended to during his absence so he had a "city feller" to look after the place. Court hardly had convened yesterday before Bolger confronted Judge Joseph's clerk.

Tame Mountain Sheep.

During correspondence in the Times. Any one who wants to start a lynching in Curray could do it by killing one of the big mountain sheep that come down to the town for food in cold weather.

They are to be seen every winter morning near the railroad station and are being kept very tame. People have approached them closely enough to obtain good snapshots. The citizens of Curray look upon the sheep as community pests and winter the Curray Commercial Club provided food for them regularly.