

The Plays



MISS IRENE BARKER IN "THE ZIEGFELD O'CLOCK REVUE" New Amsterdam Roof



MISS WILDA BENNETT IN "APPLE BLOSSOMS" Globe

MISS IRENE BORDONI IN "AS YOU WERE" Central Theatre



MISS MARJORIE PRINGLE IN "RUDDIGORE" Park Theatre



MISS ETHEL BARRYMORE IN "DE'CLASSEE" Empire Theatre



RICHARD BENNETT and ELFIN FINN IN "BEYOND THE HORIZON" Little Theatre

Are Stage and Cinema Art's Siamese Twins?

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

It is not flattering to national pride that a play by a native author dealing with one of the great figures of American history should have been rejected after a brief hearing while an Englishman's drama of the life of a later hero is still in the high tide of its success. The scenes of Percy Mackaye's "Washington" are the shrines of American history. Mount Vernon, the Delaware, the Valley Forge and Yorktown—these holy to the American patriot, especially when the dominating figure of George Washington looms against their sacred background. Could an American playwright, with the assistance of other arts that serve the theatre, fail to interest his countrymen in this theme?

Evidently Mr. Mackaye was equal to the task. Critics so old-fashioned as to defer to subject and purpose in any artistic scheme which is so historical in its nature as this one was felt the necessity of a mood to appreciate. The attempt won sympathy. It was altogether worthy in the best sense of the word. Maybe for that reason its complete failure seemed the more deplorable and, moreover, the less excusable. But nobody could deny to any author setting out with such a purpose the aid of sympathetic appreciation. That it was altogether unavailing in this literary calamity does not make the desire to extend the glad hand any less commendable.

It seems that after all "Washington" failed more on account of its effort at humor than any weakness in dealing with the moments of serious interest. Why should every effort at folk interest, either in story or song, so often become merely silly? The old ballad singer Quilloon was a hopeless dummy throughout every scene in which he appeared. When he mounted a hobby horse and with the two children sang "Yankee Doodle" the bottomless pit of folly seemed to be fathomed. Maybe in the vastness of an out-of-door spectacle there might be room for something of the kind, but in a playhouse the effect is cruel. Throughout the play there was a dignity and sincerity in the serious episodes which might have gained a toleration for the work. Yet these were followed invariably by some outbreak of insanity from the appalling Quilloon and the day was lost, completely lost.

The cinema grows closer to the theatre in its business relations at least, and while these may not be the subject for comment from those who are supposed to view the artistic side of the theatre alone, there is an excusable relation between the two. Just now it is the call of the popular cinema which is the stage that seems newest in theatre enterprise. The scheme seems to be no more than a reversal of the process of transferring the well known actors of the theatre to the studio, which was one support of the picture play in its earlier days.

It needs no such support nowadays. It is doubtful if the aid was ever more than nominal since the players who have learned their technique on the spoken stage were never the most popular before the camera. The mimes who smile and weep, leap or shout before the camera just as they were taught to do by their first director are after all the best liked by the public. They do their duties according to the technique of the picture play and that is after all most effective in the circumstances. Now the technique of the picture play is to be brought before the theatre operators. This is just enough, since the technique of the other plays was in the first instance all that was available for the cinema in its inception. So the change is fair.

From Screen to Stage.

Presumably it is the technique of the photographic stage which Miss Theda Bara exhibits in "The Blue Flame." It is of course out of its place. Yet one must say that if such be the practice of the picture player in the spoken drama, it is not different in details from the methods of the amateur. In her performance there was no trace of professional certainty or skill from the use of well understood means. It was altogether colorless. Probably with the sensational conditions of this play, already cooled off, she will never be called on to act again in the spoken drama. She reveals not the slightest excuse for a place on the stage.

But there will inevitably be successors to the popular adulation of Miss Theda Bara. David Belasco already confesses that he has cast his eye on Miss Mary Pickford. It will be interesting to see how much he accomplishes with the most noted figure in one medium of representation who had gained little or no measure of success in the other. In the meantime the interest in his celluloid stars transferred to the theatre continues unabated. "Sacred and Profane Love" was tolerated but a few nights in London. Arnold Bennett's play met there with swift rejection. Here there seems no possibility of satisfying the public desire to see the drama. Of course it is not this inept, drawn-out specimen of amateur dramaturgy which is attracting the thousands. Nor is it the admirable acting of Jose Ruben as the afflicted pianist. It seems to be nothing more nor less than a desire to see the lovely Miss Ferguson after her long imprisonment. It can scarcely be said that this actress, popular as she is, increased her admirers by appearing in the cinema. There is nothing dramatic about the prices at the Morocco Theatre. They hover about the top notch. So it is not her new public accumulated in a cheap picture world that is turning out so loyally. It is the theatre-goer able to pay for what he wants.

The view of the cinema is more encouraging in its own direct form than in any relation to the theatre. It is

not to be disputed that the form of the art is simple. It is expressed in one medium. It is even independent of speech and of song, whereas both drama and opera are not so self-contained. Music in the revelation of a so-called picture play is incidental, not in the least essential. But speech and music are indispensable to drama and opera. The cinema may exist by its own medium alone.

And it is in this form that it is most admirable. Any union of the two is nearly always fatal. We had the cinema dramatized in "Three Faces East," for instance, and were surprised at first by its swiftness, general obscurity and altogether incomprehensible thrills. All the writers of melodrama were temporarily affected by this gift of speech to the scenario. Even as expert a writer as Samuel Shipman tried the process in "The Woman in Room 13." Its general effect was to put the characters in the story before the public in silhouette rather than in the round. But its vogue passed away and when Paul Anthony Kelly tried the trick once more in "The Phantom Legion" its old power was gone. The transfer to the spoken stage of the actresses who have become popular in these picture plays is but a temporary phase of the frequent attempts to unite the two arts. They are never happy in the event. "The Blue Flame" contains scenes that might set an audience tingling with excitement were they shown as moving photographs. As acted and spoken drama, however, they arouse derisive laughter. They are no more engrossing than "The Queen of the Opium Ring," which A. H. Woods used to offer to the patrons of his melodramas, and he would not think of bringing out one of them now.

To Act for the Tear Duct.

The return of Miss Dianche Yurka to the local stage is a reminder of the slight patience which theatre-goers of the present day feel for the representation of so-called "emotional" scenes. Miss Yurka is an altogether admirable actress in such parts. She can impersonate feminine distress naturally, without exaggeration and with appealing simplicity of method. She established her ability in this field so long ago as the production of "Daybreak" at the Harris Theatre. There was a time when the possession of such talents would have won her an exalted position on the stage of this country. She is not the only woman to realize that, after all, the kind of talents that were so much appreciated in the past do not carry an actress far to-day nor establish her firmly in the theatre world.

Miss Dorothy Donnelly acted the title role in "Sime X" in a way that would in the days of the great popularity of the hysterical Gallic drama have put her in the first rank of American actresses. Yet when the vogue of the play came to an end there was little memory of the famous achievement. Emily Anna Wellman in "The Gully Man" at the Astor Theatre three years ago played in remarkably effective manner a brief scene of fevered emotional stress. She would also in the past have been made enduringly famous by such an accomplishment. The memory of Nance O'Neil's brilliant acting in "The Lily" departed with the play.

But the progress of these actresses would in the past have been simple. Having shown the ability to play such roles, others would have been found at

Plays That Continue.

- "Lightnin'" Gaiety
- "Eat is West" Astor
- "Happy Days" Hippodrome
- "Scandal" Thirty-ninth Street
- "Adam and Eva" Longacre
- "Claremont" Hudson
- "The Gold Digger" Lyceum
- "The Storm" Forty-seventh Street
- "De'Classee" Empire
- "Apple Blossoms" Globe
- "The Little Whopper" Casino
- "His Honor Alo Polak" Bijou
- "Passing Show of 1919" Bijou
- "Ruddigore" Park
- "The Blue Flame" Shubert
- "Wedding Bells" Harris
- "Irene" Vanderbilt
- "The Night Boat" Liberty
- "Aphrodit" Century
- "My Lady Friends" Comedy
- "Monsieur Beaucaire" New Amsterdam
- "Abraham Lincoln" Cort
- "The Sign on the Door" Republic
- "The Famous Mrs. Fain" Miller's
- "Smilin' Through" Broadhurst
- "The Acquittal" Casino
- "The Purple Mask" Booth
- "The Passion Flower" Belmont
- "Mamma's Affair" Fulton
- "As You Were" Central
- "The Night Boat" Liberty
- "My Golden Girl" Nora Bayes
- "Breakfast in Bed" Eltinge
- "Beyond the Horizon" Little
- "Suzanne" Knickerbocker
- "The Wonderful Thing" Playhouse
- "Sacred and Profane Love" Morocco
- "The Letter of the Law" Criterion
- "Jane Clegg" Garrick
- "Tick-Tack-Too" Princess
- "The Hotentot" Colan
- "Sophie" Greenwich Village
- "Book Who's Here" 44th Street
- "Richard III" Plymouth
- "Musk" PUNCH & JULY
- "Nine O'Clock Revue" and "Midnight Frolic" New Amsterdam Roof

moreover, is the task of the comedienne. Miss Cowl has become an adept in comedy and acts with equal skill in both phases of her art. Miss Emily Stevens, on the other hand, in her attempts at the delicacy of comedy, artificial comedy at that, does so more than impress the spectator with her skill as an actress of dramatic characters. One need not touch the serious ladies, to begin with, so lightly. One may, indeed, pound somewhat heavily on the emotions and yet do no harm to illusion.

But the playing of comedy as it is acted, for instance, in the present day by Miss Marie Tempest, scarcely an actress of this generation is more delicate and feathery, more polished and subtle than the portrayal of the deeper emotions. Possibly it is in reality much more of an art with less than the natural force to depend on. Yet even the best of the great ones of the past were often judged rather by their acting of the lighter phases of famous characters than by the more serious. Mme. Helona Medska, for instance, won the admiration of critics in "La Dame aux Camellias" more by her delicate playing of the light comedy episodes to be found in the original play than by her manner of taking the regulation hurdles. So the genius of high comedy has always been sufficiently respected, although the emotional actresses were more honored in the past than she is to-day.

EURIPIDES'S "MEDEA" AGAIN.

Beginning to-morrow afternoon at the Garrick Theatre the "Medea" of Euripides will be presented by Maurice Browne, with Gilbert Murray's translation. Miss Ellen Van Volkenburg will play Medea. Others in the cast will be Moroni Olsen, Janet Young, Henry Stillman and Ralph Roeder. The scenery and costumes were designed by Raymond Johnson. There will be special matinees on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

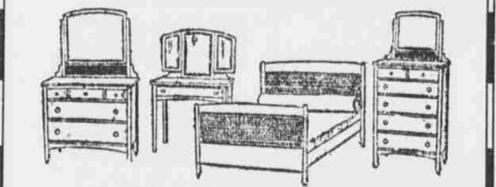
ON THE CITY CIRCUIT.

John Drew will appear to-morrow in "The Cat-Bird," Rupert Hughes's comedy, at the Shubert Rivera, supported by Miss Janet Beecher, Arthur Barry, Miss Ruth Findlay, Miss Sydney Mason and the others of the original company recently run at Maxine Elliott's Theatre.

Coming to the Columbia.

Dave Marion, known to patrons of burlesque through his impersonation of "Snuffy the Cabman," will bring his company to the Columbia Theatre this week. The title of his current production is "Stageland." Babe La Tour, Will H. Ward, Miss Agnes Behler and Sid Gold support him in the various burlesque, vaudeville and musical numbers.

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Pianist Wins Her Way in Vaudeville

Miss Edythe Baker, a pretty pianist, who is featured in Harry Fox's new vaudeville act, will play the piano at the Royal Theatre this week. Nineteen years old, she came from Kansas City, Mo., a few months ago alone and without a friend in New York, seeking a career as a concert pianist. A volunteer act got her a hearing and this got her a contract to make piano records for two years. Since signing the contract she has composed and recorded two numbers and has undertaken a vaudeville engagement in New York.

Others on the programme at the Royal will be Miss Belle Baker in songs characterized by the Lovenberg Sisters and Sime Neary in a revue; Eddie Kane and Jay Herman and Signor Frisco. Stars on bills at other vaudeville houses are:
PALACE—Joseph Sandley and Miss Ivy Sawyer in "Bills and Pieces"; William and Gordon Dooley, retained for a second week; the House of David Band, also retained; Harry Langdon in "Johnny's New Car," and Miss Lily Lena, an English comedienne.
RIVERSIDE—Miss Tricia Friganza, the Moscont Brothers and family, Miss Elizabeth M. Murray and Georgie Price, COLONIAL—Miss Alice Lloyd, Miss Dolly Comstock, Ray Laymond and Percy Westlich and Frank Dobson in "The Streets."
EIGHTY-FIRST STREET—Miss Amelia Stone and Armand Kalix, the photoplay "The River's End," with Lewis Stone and Miss Marjorie Daw and Homer Dickinson and Miss Gracie Deacon.
ALHAMBRA—Miss Sophie Tucker, William Sabury's "Frivols," Aileen Bronson and Joe Cook.
AMERICAN—Aaron Hoffman's comedy "Hearts and Flowers," a farce with music; Henry and Moore in "At the New Stand," and Douglas MacLean and Miss Doris May in the picture "What's Your Husband Doing?"
TWENTY-THIRD STREET—A Seymour Brown, "The New Teacher"; Frank and Toby Shell and Miss Louis Glau in the photoplay "The Lone Wolf's Daughter."
The usual Sunday concerts will be given at the various vaudeville houses, in addition to the Century Theatre and the Manhattan Opera House.



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