

BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS



METROPOLITAN.—MAY IRWIN AND ONE OF HER NEW YORK COMEDIANS IN THE HOBBART COMEDY—“MRS. BLACK IS BACK”



BIJOU.—SCENE—2ND ACT MY TOM-BOY GIRL



ORPHEUM—ANNE DALE OF LEONE AND DALE

Bills of the Week

METROPOLITAN—May Irwin in the fast, clever comedy, "Mrs. Black Is Back," introducing, among other features, the star's latest repertory of songs; entire week, with matinees Christmas Day, Wednesday and Saturday.

BIJOU—"My Tomboy Girl," Charles E. Blaney's newest play, introducing Lottie Williams in scenes from New York and Dixie; entire week, with matinees Christmas Day, Wednesday and Saturday.

ORPHEUM—Modern Vaudeville, with Mrs. Stuart Robson and her comedietta, "The Saving of Mrs. Shaw," as the headliner; full week with daily matinees.

UNIQUE—Continuous Vaudeville, presenting International Theatrical company's attractions; three performances daily—one in the afternoon and two in the evening. Bill changes Monday.

DEWEY—Miner's "Americans," in vaudeville and burlesque; daily matinees, with ladies' performances Friday afternoon and evening.



UNIQUE—JIM DALTON COMEDIAN



ORPHEUM—MRS. STUART ROBSON IN "THE SAVING OF MRS. SHAW"



DEWEY—LILLIAN RAYMOND WITH MINER'S AMERICANS

Metropolitan—**"Mrs. Black Is Back"**
For the first time in several seasons, the most popular of all American comedienne, May Irwin, makes her appearance at the Metropolitan in the transcontinental comedy triumph, "Mrs. Black Is Back." The engagement is for one week, and begins tonight.

Edward E. Pidgeon says in his review in the New York Press:
"Broadway is glad 'Mrs. Black Is Back.' Boston saw her first, but New York will hold her for a while, judging from the tremendous home greeting she received in the Bijou theater last evening, when, in the plump personality of May Irwin, she stepped before a large and friendly audience. The enthusiastic welcome halted the opening dialog for several minutes. Miss Irwin, indeed, has come into her own again, after an absence of two years from the big town's incandescent aisle, where for so long she reigned the undisputed queen of comedy and crooning comic melodies. A jaded metropolis gives thanks to her and to George V. Hobart, whose combined labors have made 'Mrs. Black Is Back' the bright, breezy entertainment it is. It is one of the cleanest, funniest, snappiest and ticklingst conglomeration of comedy and cleverness the season has had, was the verdict of the veteran theater-goers who thronged the playhouse last night. Looking ten years younger, and still possessing all her old-time magnetism and effective knack of song reading, whether the subject be sweetly sentimental or reckless ragtime, Miss Irwin carried off the honors, altho surrounded by a company that was exceptionally good."

"Mrs. Black Is Back" is founded on a "tiny little lie," which Mrs. Black in a moment of vanity tells her husband regarding her age. She is married a second time and as she has a son by her first husband, it is necessary to subtract seven years from his age, altho he really is an athletic young giant of 17, and in college in England. There the lad is smitten with a violent juvenile passion for a young American girl, who, unknown to him, is the youngest sister of his stepfather. He follows her home and finds her visiting his mother. That woman is driven to the verge of insanity by the complications which pile up thru her endeavor to keep her secret from her husband, who is the professor in a young woman's academy near by. To add to her worry, she is pursued by a teacher of physical culture, to whom she owes several hundred dollars and the son, likewise, is hunted by a Mexican card-sharp, who has swindled him in the ocean steamship and demands the mother make good the boy's I. O. U. under penalty of appeal to Professor Black. Pelion seems piled upon Ossa to crush her before the unraveling process begins, but once under way the plot works out with a comic celerity that is one long laugh. Miss Irwin contributed several catchy songs, which are bound to become immensely popular. Those of the clever company who deserves special mention are Jane Burby as Mrs. Black's helress sister, and May Donohue, whose Irish character bit as the resigning cook was one of the many enjoyable features of a rare evening."

Miss Irwin will sing her latest repertory of new comedy songs, which will be heard in this city before New York.

Bijou—"My Tomboy Girl"
Charles E. Blaney's latest play, "My Tomboy Girl," which was recently produced for the first time at Blaney's theater, Baltimore, with Lottie Williams as the star, is the Christmas week attraction at the Bijou, commencing with a matinee today at 2:30. The new play is said to have scored the greatest kind of a hit and affords Miss Williams the best opportunity for the display of her versatile talents she has ever had. No money has been spared by Mr. Blaney to make this play surpass all of his previous successful productions. It was written expressly for Lottie Williams.

The plot discloses Josie, a New York street waif, who has been stolen when a baby and placed in the hands of a poor woman by the villain who abducted her. She has been brought up

in the slums. The woman died without ever knowing who the girl really was. After the child had been left to her own fate she donned boy's clothes, in order more easily to earn a living, and also that she could better protect herself. Because she dressed as she did she is called Josie, the Tomboy Girl. She is, unknown to herself, a Virginian heiress. An uncle, gaining a clue to her whereabouts, comes to New York in quest of her. A scheming lover, desirous of gaining her sister's aid in marriage, and also securing her wealth, secures the assistance of a desperado to accompany him and frustrate the designs of the uncle. The lover recognizes Josie, and reports her to the police for masquerading in boy's clothes. She is arrested, but released by her uncle, Old Fury, who thwarts the plans of the villain and brings Josie to her Virginian home.

Failing in his scheme, the false lover returning south, abducts the sister who refuses his offer of marriage. With the aid of a negro guide Josie, who disguises herself as a man, rescues her sister from the captivity of the outlaw band, who have held her prisoner in their cave in the mountain and by her wits gains a happy ending to the play.

Other characters around which the plot revolves, are an old negro mammy, foster mother to Josie and her sister; a German baron, who falls in love with Josie; a little waif of 5 years of age; an outlaw, Black Jack; Diavola, an octopus, governess to the sisters, but who is made to believe by her mother, a negress, that she is Old Fury's niece.

Among the many striking scenes in the play is one of an old southern plantation, introducing all the unique melodies of plantation days. There are altogether twelve scenes, divided into four acts. Other scenes shown in "My Tomboy Girl" are West Twenty-third street ferry, New York city; Forty-second street at Times square, entrance to the subway; the cave of the mountain bandits, in Virginia; the Jefferson Market police court, New York, and a private apartment in the Waldorf-Astoria hotel, New York. Three interior scenes are laid in southern homes.

The music portion of the play is a big feature, there being many original musical numbers with choruses and incidental music, all prepared expressly for the production. A chorus of twenty persons is included in the cast, which altogether numbers fifty. In addition to the regular Wednesday and Saturday matinees, a special holiday matinee will be given tomorrow, Christmas day, starting at 3 p.m.

Orpheum—Modern Vaudeville
The personification of feminine jollity, Mrs. Stuart Robson, heads the bill of good Christmas cheer with which the Orpheum theater will greet its clientele during the week, commencing with today's matinee.

Those who so well remember that incomparable comedian, Stuart Robson, cherish fond memories of the impersonation of the spirit of light-heartedness inevitably associated with the name she bears. As all those who were happy in the presentation of "The Henrietta" know, Mrs. Robson is the embodiment of laughter. Laughter comes naturally to her and is so contagious that her audiences are instantly in accord with her.

When the creator of many comedy roles therefore decided to cast her lot, temporarily, with vaudeville, she secured, as a vehicle for her talents, a little comedy written by Edmund Day and entitled "The Saving of Mrs. Shaw," in which Mrs. Robson and her capable company have been more than successful. Mrs. Robson is a large woman, both as to artistry and avoirdupois and the Kansas City World makes this pat comment on her vaudeville offering: "Compliment could go no higher than to say she finds a big place on the stage for herself."

The whole bill promises to be a glad-some Christmas affair. Increasing the enjoyment offered at the Orpheum by the Christmas-New Years crowds, will be Edwin Latell, a black-face musical monologist, who can be funny without being vulgar. Of him the Denver News says: "He is so brimming full of good, clean wit and humor that it bubbles

and swells until the brim is reached, and then runs over."

There may be no rhyme or reason in the hilarious laughter created by the antics of Clayton, Jenkins & Jasper, but there is a certainty that the risibles are invariably carried by assault when the two men and the mule make their appearance.

An artist from the Tyrolean Alps is Mirzl von Wenzl, who is both a stunning blonde and a brilliant singer of her native land's songs, while Henry Leone and Ane Dale, in their "Lesson in Opera," will also exploit some rare voices.

The bill will be completed by the Juggling Normans, whose amazing performance with the Indian clubs is a source of never ceasing wonder; Galbraith & Ferrel, "the red head and the coon" is a topical travesty called "A Little Rehearsal." The kindredrome is also featured with the sensational film called "The Train Wreckers," a worthy successor to "The Great Train Robbery."

Unique—Continuous Vaudeville
The Unique will be right in the procession Christmas week with one of the best vaudeville bills in the history of that popular little theater. This is made possible by the fact that the Unique now has the exclusive right to the bookings of the International Theatrical company, which formerly played all of its attractions at the Lyceum.

Now that the Unique has a clear field in the realm of popular priced vaudeville, bigger and better shows than ever will be the rule, according to Manager Elliott, who is elected over the prospects for big business with the bill to be presented tomorrow afternoon.

For today's performances, the "Three American M's," and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Young's famous fiddling stunt, will be the attraction.

The new bill will be chock full of comedy, as an effort has been made to secure acts conceived in humorous vein. Of these, the one which has been selected as the top-liner will be presented by Burgess, Daniels and Burgess, star acrobats, who introduce the famous London burlesque, "the singing barmaid and her admirers." This is a European novelty, of which only the nicest things have been said.

The Four Ellsworths, in a comedy sketch, is another high-class attraction which comes well recommended. The Ellsworths are veteran comedy artists, and their new vehicle is said to be the best they have ever appeared in.

An interesting feature is promised in the lightning painting stunt of Stan Arden, the chap who makes oil paintings in a minute. This is an artistic and beautiful exhibition of skill which has won much favor.

The Rafferty's, in a clever Irish comedy sketch, and Jim Dalton, a lone comedian, who "never needs help," are other fun-makers in this week's offering.

Irene Little, a talented young singer, who was formerly a great favorite with Unique audiences, will play a return engagement Christmas week, appearing with Harold Beckrow and Herman La Fleur in singing a Christmas anthem. Many beautiful scenic effects are produced in this act.

Dewey—"Miner's Americans"
All that is new and novel in vaudeville and burlesque has been incorporated in the performance of Miner's Americans, who open their engagement at the Dewey today. Manager Miner, with his long experience in this line has spared neither time nor expense in putting on the "Americans" this season. "A Yankee Doodle Girl," in two acts by Barney Gerard, was written for laughing purposes only. There is not a dull moment thruout the entire

performance. There is a clever plot, in which a rich American farmer wants to marry his daughter to a nobleman, she is in love with a young American millionaire and objects to marrying any one else. They meet two bogus foreign noblemen and after a series of events, some of which are extremely funny, the rich man decides that "a Yankee Doodle boy" is good enough for him. The play thruout is entirely American.

Manager Miner has secured the highest and best acts only for the olio. Those who appear here include Fisher & Clark, Joe Goodwin, May Butler, and as an added feature, the phenomenal and sensational melodramatic moving picture, "The River Pirate"; Galbraith & Ferrel, "the red head and the coon" is a topical travesty called "A Little Rehearsal." The kindredrome is also featured with the sensational film called "The Train Wreckers," a worthy successor to "The Great Train Robbery."

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Metropolitan—After a highly successful engagement in Australia Andrew Mack has returned to America and will be seen in this city for one week, beginning Sunday evening, Dec. 31, at the Metropolitan opera house.

He will present his very successful play "The Way to Konmare," which will be seen during the early part of the week. For the last half of the week Theodore Burt Seyre's comedy, "Tom Moore," will hold forth.

The same company which has been so long associated with Mr. Mack will appear here and that this popular comedian will receive adequate support is practically assured. The Melbourne Times speaks of Mr. Mack's first appearance in that city and says: "A flattering reception was given to Mr. Mack and his company at Her Majesty's theater on Saturday night, when they produced for the first time in Australia 'Tom Moore.' There was a genuine freshness about the piece and the company, and the great audience was responsive."

"The play is built upon the incidents in the life of Ireland's national poet, Tom Moore. The incidents, of course, are idealized, and the author has seen to it that the poet occupies a leading position in the events of his day. The play may not be strictly accurate from a historical point of view, but he would be a poor playwright who clung too close to the musty records of the British museum."

"Mr. Mack proved to be a bright and finished actor. He does not rush his work and his deliberation and repose are a delightful contrast to the usual stage Irishman. He possesses a sweet, light tenor voice, and during his performance won enthusiastic applause for his rendering of 'Love's Young Dream' and 'The Last Rose of Summer.'"

There is no doubt that in his own particular line Mr. Mack is a master. At the close of the night's performance he was presented with a large floral Irish harp."

A revival of Charles H. Hoyt's great-farce comedy success, "A Texas Steer," with Tim Murphy in his original role of Maverick Brander, will be the offering at the Metropolitan for the half week commencing Sunday evening, Jan. 7.

"The Castle Comedy," a romantic play dramatized from the novel of the same name, will be the vehicle used by Walker Whiteside during his engagement of three nights and matinee at the Metropolitan, beginning Thursday night, Jan. 11.

Other January bookings at the Metropolitan include "The County Chairman," "The Liberty Belles," Hav-

erly's minstrels, "The Girl From Kay's" and Whitney's production of "Piff, Paff, Puff."

Bijou—There are said to be no less than a round dozen musical numbers of exceptional quality in "The Errand Boy," the musical comedy production, in which Billy B. Van, the well-known eccentric comedian, is starring this season, and which will be the attraction at the Bijou New Year's week. There are several of them, such as "Gloriana," "Say, Sal, Do You Want to Be My Gal?" "Mary Canary," "Happy Jappy" and "The Battle of the Daisies and the Ferns." They are full of snap and go and have the right ring with which to inspire whistling. There are other features connected with this musical comedy innovation which cannot fail to find hearty appreciation—notably the color schemes utilized in the beautiful costume creations. Mr. Van is surrounded by a company of sixty people, and the production is said to be one of the most pretentious on tour.

"A Son of Rest," with Billy Swore, late of "The Wizard of Oz" company, in Wills' old part, will come to the Bijou in the near future.

A military pedant, stationed at Fort Hamilton, N. Y., once wrote to Augustus Thomas, criticising the use of the old Sharpe's carbine by the cavalry men in "Arizona." He said it was a pity that Mr. Thomas had not paid the same attention to the details of arming his soldiers that he had evidently bestowed upon their uniforms and drill. Mr. Thomas promptly replied and called his attention to the fact that while several infantry regiments had received the Krag-Jorgenson rifles previous to the outbreak of the Spanish war, the only cavalry regiment to be equipped with the new small caliber arm before arriving at the camps of concentration was the First United States volunteer cavalry, "Colonel Roosevelt's famous Rough Riders. The officer was courteous enough to acknowledge his error. "Arizona" comes to the Bijou soon.

The many whistleable musical numbers, together with the laughable situations that follow each other in rapid succession have been potent factors in making Eva Tanguay in "The Sambo Girl" one of the greatest successes of the year in the musical travesty field. Miss Tanguay and her fellow funmakers will appear at the Bijou.

Among the attractions that will visit the Bijou this season is Sir A. Conan Doyle's and William Gillette's "Sherlock Holmes," the famous detective play.

Orpheum—Evidently the Orpheum theater proposes to usher in the new year with a bill whose strength will set a good pace for the weeks to follow. Heading the bill will be Francesco Redding, one of the best actresses now in vaudeville, in a bright sketch by Will Cressy, called "Her Friend from Texas," of which the celebrated "Chicot" former critic was the New York Morning Telegraph, and known as "the Alan Dale of vaudeville," says: "It was as good a bit of high comedy as we have had in some time."

The Eight Bedouin Arabs, who were such a sensation last season, are on the bill for that week, as are Estelle Wardette and company in her own sketch, "A Honeymoon in the Catskills." Miss Wardette will be supported by Jules Kusell, the former leading man for Gus Henge. There will also be four musical acts of high variety on the bill.

The Italian Doria Trio, a woman and two men, will present a beautiful fantastic novelty, "A Night in Venice." Miss Marion Garson, described by a critic as "a little girl with a big voice," will sing ballads, the Twin Sisters Dionne will prove revelations in mandolin playing, and the Three Funny Mitchells, whose dark hued humor made such a hit last season, will come back with a new repertory of coon songs and dances.

Auditorium—Sara Bernhardt
With no sign of diminishing powers, Mme. Sara Bernhardt continues to progress, with astonishing success, upon her farewell American tour. She will reach this city Thursday, Feb. 22, and her appearance will constitute the principal dramatic event of the season. Her engagement will be at the Auditorium and will consist of three evening performances, with Saturday matinee. The repertory will be "La Sorciere," "La Tosca," "Camille" and "Adrienne Lecouvreur."

At an age when most theatrical celebrities are thinking of retiring, this wonderful woman still sways her audience as in the days of her youth. Her history is a romance. She was born at Paris in 1847. Her father, after having her baptized, placed her in a convent; but she had secretly determined to become an actress, and in her course of study at the conservatory she so distinguished herself that she received a prize which entitled her to a debut at the Theatre Francaise. She selected the part Iphigenie, in which she appeared on Aug. 11, 1862; and at least one newspaper drew special attention to her performance. She afterwards played other parts at the Theatre Francaise, but soon transferred herself from that house to the Gymnase.

After a tour in Spain, Sara returned to Paris and appeared at the Odéon, where she created a number of characters. At the end of 1872 she appeared at the Comedie Francaise, and with first distinction that she was retained as pensionnaire, and afterwards as sociétaire.

In 1880 Emile Augier's comedy "L'Aventuriere" was revived at the Comedie Francaise, and the author conferred the part Clorinda to Sara Bernhardt. After the first representation, however, she was so enraged by an uncomplimentary newspaper criticism that she sent in her resignation to M. Emile Perrin, director of the theater, quitted Paris and went to England, where she gave a series of representations, causing a veritable sensation in London society.

It was at this juncture that Sara accepted the offers of a manager for a tour in America. From America she returned to Paris where she revised all her old successes, and where, in 1888, at the Odéon, she produced a one-act comedy from her own pen, entitled "L'Aveu."

Minneapolis, which missed "The Darling of the Gods," one of the greatest successes of recent years because it had no independent theater when the attraction was last in this section, is to see the play during the week commencing Jan. 8. This famous drama of old Japan, written by David Belasco and John Luther Long, will be presented at the Auditorium by David Belasco's company, of which Miss Percy Haswell and Robert T. Haines are the principal members.

"The Darling of the Gods" is a remarkable scenic production and the spacious and thoroughly equipped stage of the Auditorium will offer ample facilities for displaying the oriental gorgeousness of the settings.

MRS. STUART ROBSON ENJOYS SON'S LETTERS
The greatest pleasure, next to success, given Mrs. Stuart Robson during her initial western tour in vaudeville is

the receipt of letters from her son, and this fact the principal on the Orpheum theater bill for this week cheerfully admits.

"I adore him—Stuart, the younger, even if he is at the awkward stage now," she says. "But, heavens, he was a terror when he was a tot! He simply kept me in a furor every minute, but now—he's such a manly little fellow, the only 12 and I'm as lonely for him as any mother can be the first time she is separated from her son."

"It was absolutely necessary to put him in school. I couldn't drag him around the country with me, for he must learn something. So I nearly broke my heart, and his, when I stowed him away in St. John's school—just outside New York—and came away into the west for these ten weeks. That's why I think so much of his letters, and I suppose I may be pardoned for that. Here's a characteristic one: "Dear Mamma—I hope you are well. I liked the book you gave me. I am wearing my overcoat every time I go out. I played pool all afternoon. Give my regards to the company and Otto. I hope you will get good money. Your loving son."

"Can you think of any more characteristic soliloquy for the son of a theatrical family than that? I hope you'll get good money! It's the very nub of the business. Here's a typical Thanksgiving letter from a gangling boy who is more in athletics than society:

"I pray, don't let me go to Mrs. Blank's for Thanksgiving. I will have a much better time here and I just hate to go there. I wish you would send me a postal from every place you play at. I will go and see the dentist when he comes here again. I wish your ten weeks were over and we were going to Cohasset. I will go to town to the hotel for Thanksgiving dinner. It would make me miserable to go to B.'s. I hope you will make a hit. Your loving son."

"That last 'hope' hit the bullseye with me—and little Stuart did not have to go to the Blank's for Thanksgiving dinner."

LYCEUM WILL OPEN DOORS ON JAN. 7

Ralph Stuart Stock Company Will Give "By Right of Sword."

The Lyceum theater will again open its doors on January 7, the Ralph Stuart Stock company having been selected to entertain the Lyceum's patrons during the remainder of the season.

The pretty theater has been in the hands of painters and decorators, and is in genuine holiday attire for the auspicious occasion. Manager J. C. Speers says that he is now able to answer innumerable replies for news concerning the future policy of his playhouse.

"A stock company composed of first-class actors and actresses, presenting the best standard plays at popular prices, will be the permanent attraction at the Lyceum," says Mr. Speers. "The Ralph Stuart company is one of the best stock aggregations in the United States. Mr. Stuart is a young actor of magnificent promise, and the intelligent character of his work, his fine presence and his superb reserve power have been remarked by competent critics all over the country."

"The first play presented will be Mr. Stuart's great success, 'By Right of Sword,' a fine composition, dramatized from A. W. Marchmont's clever story. It has been indorsed by the press everywhere as a play second only in romantic interest to 'The Prisoner of Zenda.'"

WHERE ARE THE DRINKS?

Southerner Misses the Christmas Beverages Everybody Has in South.

"I'm waiting for some good old Christmas drinks, if you have them here in the north," said a Georgia man who now calls Minneapolis home. "This was my first Christmas in the north, and while everything else is all right, I miss some of the preparations and preliminaries that we used to have in the south."

"Down there, the Christmas drinks appear at least two, and sometimes three, weeks before the day itself. At all the first-class places they have big bowls of Christmas mixtures—everybody calls for them. There is the old reliable 'Tom and Jerry,' about forty kinds of punch, apple toddies, peach toddies and the rest of the toddy family, egg-nogs and twisters, mulled wines and ciders, and, in fact, all sorts of cheerful Christmas drinks."

"I have found one or two Tom and Jerry's up here, but have looked in vain for some of the others. Christmas would not be Christmas down there without them as a preparation, and I sort of miss them. I had my mouth all made up for some of them, to tell the truth. A friend of mine, tho, in the West hotel, has promised to do something for me, so I hope to have a Christmas, after all."

The mikado of Japan is a good hunter and fisherman and an excellent shot with a rifle. His devotion to lawn tennis is marked and he is an excellent wialder of a racquet.