

NEW YORK THEATERS

Mantell Opens on Broadway with His Stirring Shakespearean Tragedy of "King John."

Special Correspondence The Washington Herald.

New York, March 13.—"King John," Shakespeare's tragedy, which many people remember for the famous scene in which Hubert attempts to burn out Prince Arthur's eyes and is dissuaded by the boy's entreaties and tears from carrying out the heartless order of the King, was the play that followed the giddy English comedy of "Kitty Grey" at the New Amsterdam Theater on Monday evening, with Robert Mantell in the title role. The performance was received with conflicting opinions by the critics, but all agreed that William A. Brady has gone out of his way to provide a splendid production and to give it an acting cast as good as can be assembled. There was present a very large audience, which seemed prepared to accept the effort to revive this seldom-acted old tragedy, in the best of spirit. Mr. Mantell hardly added anything of distinction to his performance of the title role, but it remains to be seen what the general public will think.

This happens to be the "Zaza" season. There has not been a play since "Camille" that is used so much to exploit the virtuosity of emotional stars as this play of Pierre Berton. Mrs. Carter has revived it since her engagement began at the Liberty; Marietta Oly has just shown us the German Zaza, and now Mimi Agulias (nee A-yu-ya), the Sicilian actress, is making us acquainted with the Italian Zaza. Mrs. Carter's Zaza differs from both of these, though the American version is so little different from the original as reflected through the German and Etruscan (I admit I did not see Rejane) that one stops to wonder why it was necessary to import the old conclave so fond of her little the aunt of Zaza instead of her mother. Thus the American Zaza has been made to repudiate her own flesh and blood except in the second degree. Mrs. Carter makes her flighty lady of thirty-two or thereabouts; Oly makes her a sensible woman, but with a charming unrecurrent devotion, that you really feel intensely sorry for Zaza and confess to a degree of respect. But Agulias makes her all fire and flame. Zaza practices every art and strategy in the dressing room scene behind the curtain of the safe chanteuse to make Dufresne surrender. She is a perfect little fiend with her tricks of coquetry, her swishing of skirts, and her use of lingerie and concealed faces. She stands on the chair in front of her mirror and practices her ankles in pretty flexions and curves, and casts bewitching glances over her bare shoulders to notice the effect of her amorous diplomacy on the flattered but unreasonably Dufresne. She is a small volcano on the brink of a blow-up. Her Zaza altogether is a wild forest bird, and you instinctively pity Dufresne as you wonder what will happen to him when Mrs. Carter learns the truth about his duplicity to her. Your opinion of her increases when she shows such commendable restraint in her meeting with Mme. Dufresne and Toto, and from an utterly miserable wretch she revives like a drooping flower after a rain, in the next act, when hope again gets the upper hand, and she figures that after all Dufresne might prefer her to his latest and penitence. Her misery is complete when she is disillusioned, and she sinks down on the floor with a piteous moan when the parting comes.

I was rather proud myself to read in the papers the criticism after the Agulias Zaza at the Criterion—the Sicilians are giving a series of special matinees—opinions supporting my own lonely judgment in pronouncing her a great actress. Her Sicilian peasant roles were cast, and, after the first performance, none of the critics went to see her again. One "yours truly" sat through six performances without understanding a word that was spoken, but called attention to her exceptional powers, which, through her "Zaza," are now pretty well acknowledged.

Three of the plays which have recently been put on are already scheduled for retirement. Carlotta Nelson closes in "This Woman and This Man" at the Maxine Elliott Theater on Saturday night. This is really a play worth seeing, and deserved a better fate. If it goes on the road it will surely interest the average public, which likes a play with a sex problem. Perhaps it was not the psychological moment for this play to appear. There has been so much outcry against immoral plays that plays which teach a moral are often ignorantly confounded with the real offenders. One's judgment gets muddled. Anyway, I would go to see this play again if I had leisure. Its place at the Maxine Elliott playhouse will be taken by "The Bachelor," Clyde Fitch's latest comedy.

"Meyer & Son" is also drawing to a close, though the date of its retirement from the stage of the Garden has not been announced. That event, however, is not much over a week off, and in its place will come "The Conflict," a play founded on Balzac's story of the "Wild Ass Skin," sometimes called "The Magic Skin," dealing with a metaphysical subject.

"A Woman of Impulse" closes at the Herald Square on Saturday evening, but the next opening will not be until Wednesday night, when Ertha Culland comes to town in "The Return of Eve," with a new third act written since the piece was seen in Washington and elsewhere, and which was lacking to round off sundry rough corners.

Julia Marlowe will close her engagement in Mary Johnston's metrical play of "The Goddess of Reason" at Daly's Theater March 23, and will be followed by E. H. Sothern in a repertoire of classic plays, although it is not improbable that he will revive "Lord Dundreary" for a week.

Fannie Ward brings her engagement in "The New Lady Bantock" at Wallace's Theater, to a close to-night, and on Monday her place will be taken by the English suffragist play, "Votes for Women," in which Miss Matthews appeared in London more than a year ago, and which is thought to be of timely interest just now. Mary Shaw will be seen in the principal role.

Vaudeville events are again rendered dignified and illustrious by two or three figures of interest this week. At the American Music Hall Laurence Irving, son of the late Sir Henry, and his wife, Mabel Hackney, opened this week in "The King and the Vagabond," which is Mr. Irving's own adaptation of Banville's "Gringolre." Laurence Irving is the author of the dramatization of "Rodion the Student," which Sothern presented several years ago, and another play in which that actor has been appearing in his Western tour. At the Colonial May Irwin made her first New York vaudeville appearance in George Ade's "Mrs. Peckham's Carouse," which she played as a curtain raiser to "The Mollusc" early this season at the Garrick. This is a clever piece for vaudeville, but which anybody with a slight sense of humor can enjoy at all times. And last, but not least among the events of the week, there is James J. Jeffries, the undefeated, who met with a tremendous ovation

at the Lincoln Square Theater Monday afternoon. The honors done to that great man would flatter a king's brother, and following closely upon the engagement of Harry Lauder promises to prove another tremendous money-maker for the indefatigable William Morris, who is thus fighting the vaudeville trust with a real fighter for his champion.

Nance O'Neil, who passed under the management of the Shuberts early in the season, is announced to make her re-entry into vaudeville in this city next week, appearing at the 125th Street Theater in a one-act piece, entitled "The Roadward." Lack of a suitable play is assigned as the reason for her retiring from the Shubert fold.

Mrs. Leslie Carter's stay in "Kassa," at the Liberty, is scheduled to terminate about the middle of April, when she will go on tour. In the meantime she will give two more special matinees of "Zaza." Percy Haswell, who has been gathering laurels as Otis Skinner's leading woman in "The Honor of the Family" for the past two seasons, is to be jointly featured in a comedy, entitled "Foreign Exchange," with H. B. Warner, the son of Charles Warner, who recently committed suicide in this city, and who is now the leading man with Wilton Lackaye in "The Battle," at the Savoy.

The New York critical fraternity is likely to exercise a sharp discernment when Henry Miller next comes to town with a new play, all on account of his unpalatable reference to the craft in two interviews in other cities, referring to them as "cancer critics" and "popgun critics," and in other left-handed complimentary terms. There has been something of a general revolt among managers against the flippant tone of some of the theatrical reviewers in town, and it is believed in some quarters that it has had the effect of tempering the ferocity of some of them, so that in time, perhaps, there will be a modification of the contemptuous tone in which many of the attractions have been dealt with.

The Liberty's answer to this week that Israel Zangwill's play, "The Melting Pot," will not be brought into New York until next season. The piece is credited with a hit in Chicago, where it played a longer engagement than in any other city in many years. FRED F. SCHUBERT.

Charles Frohman and Billie Burke. It is a very interesting thing, and one absolutely undisputed, among theatrical people that there is no theoretical understanding that is not absolutely understood by Charles Frohman, the famous manager who has recently added Miss Billie Burke to the constellation of stars that already includes Maude Adams, Ethel Barrymore, William Gillette, and John Drew, and scores of other celebrities. The insight of the magnate enables him to gauge aright the intent of every person who approaches him. This is the rare faculty with which nature has endowed him, and it is the keynote of his prodigious success in his business. As a student of human nature his is a high attainment. No exterior has the slightest effect upon him. He is proof against physical beauty or gaudy raiment. He is not affected by the presence of influence or a celebrity, and his intuition in that instance is just as keen. This is due to the fact that he has hundreds of characters vitzalized in his mind, and that he never looks at any human being, whether child or millionaire, merchant or prince, without seeing in any station of life, but he mentally casts them one and all in parts in certain of his plays.

THEATRICAL NOTES.

The company to support Thomas W. Jones in "The Fortune Hunter" will include Mary Ryan, Eda Bruna, Forrest Robinson, Sydney Ahnsworth, Hilda Hamilton, Walter Horton, George Loane Tucker, John Charles Brownell, Grant Mitchell, Horace James, Ogden Stevens, Charles Fisher, Edgar Nelson, Amy Summers, and Mrs. A. P. Warren.

How necessary is a New York verdict? None of the following plays now being presented on tour to full houses have been near New York: Israel Zangwill's "The Melting Pot," Nethersole in "The Handwriting on the Wall," Tim Murphy in "Cupid and the Dollar," and Arnold Daly in "The Pickpocket," who will count those plays which are trying to eke out an existence on the strength of a New York production?

Dore Davidson will sail for London, England, on March 27, prepared to tour "The Man on the Box" through the English provinces. This play has been reconstructed to fit the requirements of an English audience, the central characters have been converted into English men and women residing in America, who become involved in the regular manner, a few minor characters still retain their original form. The company to be employed will be made up in London.

Tim Murphy was found in the smoking-room of the Plover Hotel in St. Louis the other day with a copy of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" in his hands, a finger holding the place, while his eye vacantly sought the ceiling. He denied that he intended to play Falstaff. "When I play one role for a long time," he explained, "I find that my memory needs exercise, and I memorize" role every month or so—just shabby gymnastics. But it is a pleasant task. In this way I've memorized something over 200 roles which I have never acted and never expect to."

A. G. Delamater formed a partnership with William Norris for the purpose of making first-class theatrical productions. They have secured the dramatic rights to "Levechy of Graustark," by George Barr McCutcheon, author of "Brewster's Mill," and as soon as the dramatization, which is being made by a well-known playwright, is completed, will produce the play in the first-class houses with a good cast and production. George D. Baker, who is at present featured in the part of Grand Lorry in "Graustark," will star next season in a new romantic play, as yet unnamed, under the management of the Graustark Company, Incorporated.

Margaret Anglin and her sister, after a pleasant month in Egypt, which was divided between Cairo and a trip up the Nile as far as Khartoum, have now gone to the Riviera for a few weeks. It is Miss Anglin's intention, subsequently, to motor from Monte Carlo into Italy. She hopes to be in Rome for the Easter celebration at St. Peter's. The distinguished actress writes in the highest spirits, and she seems to be thoroughly enjoying her well deserved vacation. Although it is Miss Anglin's intention to ultimately appear in some of the Shakespearean comedy roles, no immediate plans have been formulated for that purpose, as the first play she will produce when she resumes her professional engagements in America will be "The Awakening of Helena Ritchie."

Additional Theatricals on Page 6.

COMING ATTRACTIONS.

In his latest play Clyde Fitch tells how "The Blue Mouse," a Salome dancer for \$2,000 a month, gets a clerk promoted to the post of division superintendent of a trolley line. What is said to be one of the cleverest companies of farce players will relate the story of "The Blue Mouse" at the Belasco Theater next week, when the Shuberts bring the sensational German-American success to this city for the first time.

The clerk, Rollett by name, loves his wife and desires to improve their condition. His superior, Lewellyn, president of the Interstate Railroad, is also married, but to a shrew, which fact seems to inspire him to flirt with every pretty woman he meets. Therefore, Rollett hires "The Blue Mouse" to impersonate his real wife and flirt with Lewellyn, paying her highly if she will capture him the position of division superintendent. Here is opportunity for suggestiveness, but so masterfully has Mr. Fitch handled the story that any thought of the gross is removed and the audience reaps only hearty laughter. Of course, Mrs. Lewellyn is drawn into the trouble as well as the real Mrs. Rollett and her father. The first act shows the meeting of the railroad; the second takes place in the "inner apartment" of the Blue Mouse. It is during this act that Mr. Fitch has arranged an auction sale which is highly diverting and so much out of the ordinary as to prove one of the novelties of the play. In the cast of twenty-five are Elsa Ryan, who will be seen as the Blue Mouse; Robert Dempster, Albert Gran, Lily Hall, Sam Reed, Ralph Morgan, Marie Gerard, Howard Morgan, and Effie Warner.

The height of stage realism is said to be shown in Charles Dillingham's production of "The Prima Donna," in which Fritz Scheff will be seen at the Columbia Theater for one week, beginning Monday, March 22. The first act represents a small cafe chantant in one of the suburbs of Paris, with the soldiers and pretty girls drinking at the tables and the variety performers going through their paces for the delectation of the audience and then passing a tray for the voluntary contribution which forms their only emolument. Although the scene occupies a time of only about six or eight minutes, yet it costs Charles Dillingham about \$400 a week to put it on, for he imported Renee Dyris, a concert singer from Paris, to give the proper atmosphere, and also engaged Phil Branson, the best light opera tenor that America has ever had, to play one of the other characters. This attention to detail has always been an integral part of the Dillingham productions, and throughout "The Prima Donna" it is manifest that the management has attempted to be true to life in all things. The result, of course, has been one of the greatest musical successes of the past decade.

Charles Frohman will present Mr. John Drew at the New National Theater next week in "Jack Straw," the comedy by W. Somerset Maugham, the British dramatist. Mr. Drew comes from the Empire Theater, New York, having but recently concluded one of the most successful engagements he has ever played in that historic theater.

"Jack Straw" is the first of the plays by Mr. Maugham produced in this country. It was followed by "Lady Frederick," which Miss Ethel Barrymore is now appearing. These two plays have stamped Mr. Maugham as one of the

cleverest and wittiest dialogue writers now furnishing material for stage purposes. In "Jack Straw" there is a vein of satire, too, that gives it strength and purpose, and shows Mr. Maugham as a keen but kindly observer of human nature.

The central figure in "Jack Straw" is an eccentric prince, who is discovered in the first act masquerading as a waiter (if you can imagine the dignified John Drew as a waiter) in a swagger London hotel. To assist his friends, who by the way, have no idea he is a prince—play a joke on a snobbish lady, he agrees to impersonate a nobleman, and assumes the name and title of the Archduke Sebastian of Pomerania. As such he is introduced to the snobbish lady, and promptly falls in love with her pretty daughter. As a result, when the time comes for the denouement, the perpetrators of the joke find themselves fooled as much as any one, for the prince makes known his real identity and proves his right to the royal title he has been bearing.

Chase's next week will present a stupendous collection of polite vaudeville novelties, the whole bill being composed of almost entirely new features and attractions, comprising W. H. Murphy, Stanche Nichols and company in their latest successful travesty skit, "The School of Acting," described as far funnier than "From Zaza to Uncle Tom;" the distinguished American emotional star and brilliant society comedienne, Valerie Berge and company in Willis Steel's new comedy of stage life entitled "The Morning After," the famous Big City Quartet, under the direction of Henry Leonard, sec.; the Chas. Aberson Troupe of Comedians in their amusing antics, concluding with the burlesque race, "A Mile in 13 Seconds;" the celebrated Helms, America's greatest juvenile protean artist; Al Lawrence, late comedian-star of "Little Dottie Dimples" company, in mimetic reviews of passing times, celebrated and otherwise; Charles Newbold and Annie Carroll, in "An Interrupted Angling Party," and the motion picture of "The Life of a French Sailor." The advance sale of reserved seats opens to-morrow.

A number of novelties, unique stage effects, and an entertainment out of the ordinary are promised in "Tony, the Bootblack," which is underlined as the attraction at the Academy for the week of March 22. The new piece is described as a melodrama of exceptional interest and strength and should prove a sterling vehicle for Dave Genaro and Ray Bailey, the well-known vaudeville headliners, who are the stars of this latest thriller, which is in four acts and twelve scenes. The locale of the offering is in New York and the plot revolves around the sensational kidnapping of a wealthy heiress by the notorious Black Hand gang. There is a careful blending of comedy, pathos, and heart interest combined, of course, with plenty of stirring situations and hair-raising climaxes.

Chase's closes May 22 Next. Chase's will close its doors this season on Saturday night, May 22, and the theater will be rented for commencement, concerts, lectures, entertainments, etc., beginning May 24 and ending June 28, when the annual summer renovation and rehabilitation will begin. The time of opening has not been announced. Among the entertainments to be given at Chase's during the rental season are Miss Cora B. Shreve's Dancing Carnival for three nights and the commencement exercises of the law department of Georgetown University.

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