

'Song of Songs' Brazen Tale Of Illicit Companionships

Sudermann Heroine Transplanted to the Stage by Edward Sheldon Is Visualized by Irene Fenwick with a Tragedy So Real that the Auditor Feels that She Has Been More Sinned Against Than Sinning.

By JULIA CHANDLER MANZ.

The tragic history of Lily Kardos as revealed in Hermann Sudermann's ornate novel was transplanted to the local stage at the National Theater last evening in Edward Sheldon's five-act play, "The Song of Songs," which strikes the soul of the unfortunate girl until it is as naked and quivering before the eyes of an audience that is stirred in its sympathy, even while it shudders in horror of the tawdry tale.

In Mr. Sheldon's audacious drama this daughter of Greece, whose nature is tuned to idealisms too exquisite in their fabric to endure the sordidness of a mundane sphere, is found in a board-walk bazaar of Atlantic City oblivious to her surroundings in her spirituous search for the siren voice of love for which her temperamental father bade her listen in "The Song of Songs," which represented his sole bequestment to her.

Here the web of circumstances that are to ensue in her life begins to weave about her life, and a year later we find her at Tarrytown, N. Y., the wife of Senator Perkins, who has lured her to his side still believing in her birthright of love, and listening in her heart for its song to stir.

Misunderstood in her friendship for Richard Laird, circumstances weave the web yet tighter, driving her from the home of an inexorable husband to the protection of the man whose motives are unsuspected. Protecting piously, but still holding fast to her faith in the divine fire, Lily begins the second desertion of love in her life with Laird, which continues for four years until Stephen Bennett, dreamer and poet, touches his fingers to the lyre of her being and the beautiful "song of songs" sings in her heart.

But like many another who finds the golden thread but to lose it, the young heroine of the German poet-dramatist and American playwright finds her strength insufficient to overcome the hideous fate which rules her destiny. This time the grim trick is played by Philip Bennett, uncle and guardian of Stephen, who inveigles the girl into a drunken debauch which so disgusts her fiancé and so blinds him to the white heat of pure spirit that exists beneath the surface, that he consents to relinquish her, and we find her at the altar of the play accepting the fine, brave love of Richard Laird, which has lived all through her hectic career, offering the final solace in her hour of inevitable retribution and grief.

And Lily? She has heard the Song of Songs that somewhere in the world is destined at some time sing for every living creature, and knowing how wonderful is its theme, promises herself that even if the melody has died out utterly in her own life she will see to it that it sings for Richard Laird.

But despite the feeling that through this final course, Lily will find some measure of peace, the auditor who has followed her sordid story feels resentment in the fact that she is more sinned against throughout the play than herself sinning, and leaves the theater more absorbed with this idea than with the girl's deflection from her course.

The player-folk whom A. H. Woods presents to us in this highly emotional play remain, in the leading roles, the same as when the piece last season shocked the metropolis at the Fitting Theater with its brazen exploitation of illicit companionships.

Irene Fenwick visualizes the heroine with an intensity of emotion almost incredible for one of her years, imbuing the role with a realism so consummate, a technique so skilful that one is vitally impressed with the unutterable pity of her misdirected life.

As Richard Laird Cyril Keightley presents a sincere and manly character, injecting life into a character that might easily become theatrical; Richard Dix is convincing in the role of the poet lover; Thomas A. Wise measurably accentuates what little there is of comedy relief in an excellent portrayal of Uncle Perkins; Harold Kirkland gives a capital performance as Senator Perkins; and Florence Huntington offers a beautiful picture of Anna McKee.

The large supporting cast is entirely adequate; the specially arranged music by William Furst and the mounting is effective, while the play itself is dramatically absorbing.

Belasco—May Irwin in "33 Washington Square."

If laughter and merriment be exhilarating and hygienic, May Irwin certainly watching the robust comedienne smile and sing her way into the hearts of the audience at the Belasco theater last night in her old way—that is to say, in a wholly humorous way—we felt and knew that the Queen of the Thous-



IRENE FENWICK, National

sand Islands communicates a compelling sense of the joy of living.

Many of our American stars go to the show shop windows and select a play that may best suit their talents, and oftentimes they are not particular whether the tailoring is of a hand-me-down character or bears a smart custom cut so long as they are equipped. Not so with May Irwin. In "33 Washington Square," the lady from the St. Lawrence River has a vehicle which was written with no other object than to amuse, and it serves its purpose admirably.

The action of the play revolves about the efforts of a proud society leader to maintain her position in spite of certain financial embarrassments. Mrs. Depeyster, of 23 Washington Square, when about to make her annual European trip learns that her income has been temporarily discontinued. Fearing for her social prestige unless she sails, she consults her faithful housekeeper, Matilda, who suggests that her mistress remain at home and pass as Matilda's sister from Syracuse. While a cousin of Mrs. Depeyster goes abroad to impersonate her on the trip, the lady herself remains in seclusion in her mansion, with only Matilda in possession of the secret. No sooner, however, has this supposedly satisfactory arrangement been made than complications as rapid as they are humorous ensue.

In order to avoid detection by her son, Mrs. Depeyster has to leave her home, and with the ever faithful Matilda seeks refuge in a cheap boarding-house. There they are not only treated as servants, but an amiable forger, who is impersonating a clergyman to escape arrest, fixes his fancy on Matilda, and believing her to be a crook proposes that they rob Mrs. Depeyster. Just as Matilda and her supposed sister seem about to become the unwilling tools of the crook, he succeeds in making a hasty flight home.

In their unceremonious entrance, however, they have been observed by some diligent policeman, who naturally mistakes them for burglars. These suspicions are no sooner proven groundless than the forger, who has pursued them, arrives on the scene. His assurance and resourcefulness is most amazing, but he is finally tripped up, and upon the sews arriving that Mrs. Depeyster has died in Paris the lady herself is compelled to come out of her hiding place, everything is straightened out, and the curtain falls with Matilda in the coachman's arms.

The part of Matilda is somewhat of a departure from the roles Miss Irwin has appeared in here before, but just as funny, and during the course of the play she sings several Irvingesque songs, including her old favorite, "Don't You Be Like that Foolish Frog," and the newer favorites, "I Have Been Floating Down the Old Green River" and "My Old Kentucky Home," with all her old-time gusto.

Next to Miss Irwin's performance, perhaps the most notable feature of the evening was the commendable manner in which William Collier has staged the comedy. There was an absence of noise and rushing about. Points are made legitimately and convincingly. Leonard Hollister made a hit as Dr. Pycroft, the amiable forger-clergyman, although he was inclined to overdo it. Julia Ralston had many a success prior to last evening in parts which offered her greater opportunities than that of the masterful second-house lady, but certainly none of these past portraiture has been more effective, or in better keeping with the frame in which it is placed, than this one. Frances Gaunt was a convincing Mrs. Depeyster, and George Clark, Aldrich Bowker, Clara Handick, and Charlotte Carter also fitted well into the picture. The three interior settings and the drop showing the exterior of Mrs. Depeyster's house at "No. 33 Washington Square" were quite satisfactory.

Polka—"A Pair of Sixes."

You've got a laugh coming from start to finish if you go to see "A Pair of Sixes," Edward Pepple's three-act farce, in which the Polk Players are producing this week. Few funnier offerings have

been seen at the Avenue playhouse, and few better opportunities have been given to the several individual members of the company than are afforded them by the Pepple show.

Nettleton and Johns are partners in the Eureka Digestive Pill Company. They are as happy as a German frankfurter and a French pea. Finally, owing to their constant bickering, their lawyer is called in to dissolve the partnership. He hits upon the happy solution of dealing a poker hand, the loser to act as butler to the winner for one year, and the winner to have sole charge over the pill business in the meantime. Johns loses and proceeds to "bottle." His sweetest, learning the truth, advises Johns to appear to make love to his partner's wife, whereupon Nettleton will be only too glad to release him from the disagreeable bargain. Her conviction was most fortunate, but it caused a lot of disturbance before it worked. And in this working out ludicrous situations pile up on each other and clever lines exude from all sides.

A. H. Van Buren has a grand opportunity as Johns, and he realizes every bit of it. He is excellent during the business-office scenes, but his work as the butler, when he is forced to swallow the bitterest of pills by working for his over-lording partner, even to the point of his salping, is fine. His every line is a signal for a scream. Last night's audience was in a constant uproar whenever he was on the stage. Greatly admired him in the fun-making is Mark Kent, who plays the grouchy Nettleton. He makes a fine foil, being especially good in the second and third acts. Ben Taggart, as the lawyer-friend, adds just the right touch to the performance. He could easily be admitted to the bar on his last night's showing.

Peggy Cameron has the difficult task of stepping into the shoes of Miss Ritzenhouse, who is absent from the week's performance owing to a sprained ankle. Miss Cameron handles her role capably. She just bubbled over and made herself a most lovable sweetheart last night. Marguerite Starr, as Mrs. Nettleton, carries off a large share of the honors—anyway she knows how to cry and to go into hysterics. An excellent bit of comedy is done by Blanche Frederic as Coddies, the maid. Her English dialect is fine, but that adds not a smidge to her excellence in the role. Betty Farrington, John M. Kline, Charles Andre, Ralph Remley, J. Hammond Daisey and Cecil Bowser perform most acceptably the smaller parts of the first act.

Mitchell Coker has provided two excellent sets for the performance. By no means a small share of the program for Henry F. Smith's twenty-two-piece orchestra.

B. F. Keith's—Vaudeville.

There is a marked variety of interest in the bill at Keith's this week, the several leading features reaching out for novelty in widely different directions. Dances in the winner in the contest, Desiree Lubowska seems to have really found an untrodden field for the exercise of her eccentric talent and peculiarities. Her terpsichorean explorations include a futuristic routine based on some well-known black-and-white caricatures, an Egyptian, "Dance of Mourning," in which she discloses the graces that have lurked unseen in the angles of hieroglyphic sculpture, and a "Peacock Dance," exhibiting Lubowska's conception of feminine vanity.

Dorothy Jardon gives a series of character songs of the popular sentimental type, including two of Harry von Tilzer's, with a bold and brilliant manner and a regal flamboyance of costume in keeping with her striking style of beauty. Julia Blanc, who is well remembered in Washington for her excellent work in eccentric character parts with the Columbia stock company, appears with a competent company in a comedy of the South, in which she has the role of an old negro "mammy," whose wits enable her to rescue the son of her old master from the sheriff.

"Milo" who is billed only with a big question mark, and the names of the makers of the shoes, hats, and costumes used, has such a good surprise to spring that it would be a pity to spoil any one's fun by telling more of the story. It is the most laughable thing in the program and won the most applause from last night's audience.

George E. Belmore and William De Graaf Lee offer an interesting gymnastic turn with apparatus of their own invention. Bettie Bond and Jimmie Casson add something to the musical interest of the bill in "Songland." Francis Dooley and Corinne Sales in a new version of their act, called "That's Billy," contributed much amusement. Crossman's Entertainers, including eight artists, give an instrumental and vocal production.

Gaiety—"The Midnight Maidens."

"The Midnight Maidens" make merry at the Gaiety this week in a straight gig and music show, supplemented by several entertaining vaudeville numbers, the general result of which was satisfactory to the patrons who were present in large numbers at yesterday's performances. Of course, there were many who decried the substitution of the "second-hand" musical presentation and who preferred the old-time burlesque, but the company has a long list of excellent principals and a lively chorus.

Pete Curley and Joe Buckley, both old-timers of real merit, are the chief fun-makers as ludicrous happy-go-lucky-butlers, and the story is told of their visit to Panama and elsewhere, where there is grasped an opportunity for the display of splendid scenery depicting our navy and the canal.

Norma Bell is one of the distinct beauties on the circuit, and besides has histrionic ability, and it is she who carries through the thread of the story which in this case is essential to the success of the offering. Her aside offering is a delightful Argentine lango, which was encored time and time again. Good dancing, as with her effort, always pleases to a high degree. Hilda LeRoy has a good voice and her "Montevideo" hit, and together with her several other catchy songs add much to the fullness of the evening.

Of the many vaudeville stunts, Calvert, Shane and Eiland take the lead in their specialty songs and cake-walking attitudes. John Larkin, dubbed "Jolly," deserves the mononym and also the very complimentary comparison which he is given to the famous Bert Williams. Larkin is a capital genuine darky comedian and his rendition of "Liza" is his best in the judgment of the seaholders.

The show is bright throughout, the music is especially well selected, and the entire newness of costumes and scenery is a pleasant attribute.

Cosmos—Vaudeville. The unique act of the Cosmos Theater bill this week is that of Greno and Platt, two Argentine comedians. While one, seated on a chair balanced on the slack wire unfolds and sets a table and eats his luncheon, the other performs a great number of novel feats in juggling. It is the best act of its kind seen at the Cosmos this season. Another striking number of that of Horn and Farris, entitled "A Year of Pictures," introducing operatic numbers for prima donna and tenor, but sung by two men. The scenic setting of the act is quite pretty, and the two comedians, with their songs, one of them describing the difference between a girl and a boy making their toilet. Edgar Foreman and company present a tense little play entitled "The Menace," based on the "yellow peril," with a patriotic ending.

Von Tilzer's Honey Girls in a scenic and melodic offering entitled "Proles at the Sea Shore" and presenting Ruth Rogers, Carl McBride and Earl Cavanaugh, is the sprightly headline attraction, with several chorus costumes.

BIRDS KILL LAIRD IN THREE HOURS

Vance Posey Enveloped in Flames He Started Near Alexandria Home.

COLE BLEASE TO SPEAK

Former Governor of South Carolina Will Address Elks' Memorial Exercises on December 6.

Alexandria, Va., Nov. 8.—Vance Posey, 8, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Posey, of 111 South Payne street, died at 5:30 o'clock this afternoon at the Alexandria Hospital as the result of burns received more than three hours before while standing around a fire he built in an alley adjoining his home.

Young Posey gathered together a quantity of leaves and paper and applied a match to the pile. The fire his clothing became enveloped and his agonizing cries attracted the attention of Frank Root, who conducts a blacksmith shop adjoining the Posey home. Root smothered the flames as quickly as possible. Dr. Llewellyn Powell had young Posey taken to the Alexandria Hospital for treatment. The child was conscious, but his body had been literally burned from head to foot.

Cole Blease, former governor of South Carolina, and Representative Nicol, also of South Carolina, will be the orators at the annual memorial exercises of Alexandria Lodge of Elks Sunday evening, December 5, in the auditorium of its home. August Pohl, of Rosemont, was elected a trustee to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of George H. Schwarzmann.

A number of merchants from the surrounding counties in the State today visited Alexandria and took part in the trade campaign of the chamber of commerce. What was done was served at 1 o'clock and later there was a trolley ride to Mount Vernon. Many more merchants will be here Tuesday and Wednesday. A part of the program for tomorrow provides for luncheon at the rooms of the chamber of commerce and a trip to Arlington by motor.

Arrangements have been made by the Alexandria Gun Club for the installation of a new automatic trap. It will be placed on the grounds adjacent to the home of Mr. Willis, Alexandria county.

Miss Myrtle Robey and Carroll Hantsman, both of this city, were married Saturday night at the parsonage of Trinity M. E. Church by Rev. L. M. Ferguson, pastor.

changes and a bit of quiet comedy. The added attractions include the Hearst-Selig news pictures and several photoplay features out of the ordinary.

Loew's Columbia—Geraldine Farrar in "Carmen."

Geraldine Farrar, favorite prima donna of the Metropolitan, came to Washington yesterday. She was not in the flesh, but in the shadow; not on the operatic stage, nor on the concert platform, but on the screen. The place was Loew's Columbia Theater and the occasion was the first Washington presentation of "Carmen," an ingeniously prepared, picturesque, amusing, and exceedingly physical photoplay based on the novel by Prosper Merimee. In this picture, a handsome and creditable product of the Lasky studios, now released like other titles on the Paramount program, Miss Farrar plays, of course, the leading role, and by this means makes her first Washington appearance in the movies.

It is a curious commentary on the crazy economy of the theater that a supreme dramatic soprano should give any of her precious time to a form of art wherein the chief characteristic is a complete and abysmal silence. But, though the call of the movies is audible enough, there is small reason for fear that after Miss Farrar's success, there will be a great rush of prima donnas to California, for precious few of them could so meet the exactions of the camera.

As for Miss Farrar, let it be said that among the motion picture actresses she is supreme. From her marvellous performance every indication points that this, her photodramatic debut will go down in history as one of her most notable achievements.

As a movie star Miss Farrar "registers" as the film folk have it. "There is no doubt about that. She does more than make faces at the camera; she knows that in acting for motion pictures she must do more than go through the motions. Her facial expression, her vigor and dash are helpful, and she can make most wonderful use of the flash-light Farrar smile. Quite aside from these she brings to the richly colored performance a degree of vitality that animates all the picture and offers a good illustration of the difference between posing and acting for the camera.

Casino—War Pictures.

Motion pictures made from behind the German and Austrian lines in France, Germany, Galicia, Poland, and Russia, are being shown at the Casino Theater this week. Half of the proceeds derived from the exhibition will be paid into a fund for the blind and crippled soldiers of the German and Austrian armies.

The pictures were taken by Edwin P. Weigle, photographer of the Chicago Tribune, and are entitled as "The German Side of the War."

There are five reels and they are intensely interesting because of their authenticity and the fact that owing to the use of a powerful telephoto lens, Protophager Weigle was enabled to make pictures of objects 5,000 feet away with remarkable clearness.

One of the first pictures shown on the screen is that of a crowd gathered before the Reichstag in Berlin singing the German national anthem with fervor. From Berlin the scene shifts to Hamburg through which the German army is seen passing to the battle front. Hundreds of soup wagons at Lubek are shown being loaded on trains ready to be sent to the sphere of fighting. Scenes of real fighting with men falling dead and wounded; pictures of the hospitals in Berlin and the field hospitals in the war zone; machine guns and huge caterpillar-like tanks in action; and the columns of sturdy German soldiers marching to the front, are only a few of the scenes thrown upon the screen.

Without doubt the pictures are the most important from a historical point of view shown in Washington this year. They give the audience a chance to see what the war is actually like. You see the men going singing to the front and then see them return, loaded like cattle on box cars, dirty and wounded. Pathos, humor, and real thrills come in rapid succession and you leave the theater convinced that Sherman was right when he said war was "Hell."

Dr. J. N. Rose, of the National Mps. Bureau, returned recently from South America, where he was engaged in plant research work.

The Most Popular Girl In the World



The Highest Paid Artist Who Ever Lived

MARY PICKFORD

Is Writing NOW

--FOR--

THE WASHINGTON HERALD

Every Day She Has a Talk

Don't Miss One of Them

Today's Talk Is On Page 3

The Girl Who Is Loved Throughout The World



She Is 22 Years Old and Has Been an Actress For Seventeen Years

Advertisement for BARBER & ROSS, The Big Hardware Store, 11th and G Streets. Lists various heating equipment like Round Gas Heaters, Gas Radiators, Rotary Ash Sifters, etc.