A New Blend of Music, Girls and Frivolity Heads the Week's Array of Stage Attractions

The Season Begins to Erode

By EARLE DORSEY

The past two weeks in the theater have revealed strong evidence that the dramatic season of 1919-20 is beginning to stagger. Not that it ever, in its sprightliest moments, revealed to Washington a great degree of dramatic stamina or vitality, but the twenty-first of March, with two weeks more of Lent still remaining, seems a bit early for signs of erosion in even so fragile a dramatic season as the present.

A single musical show, tuning up for autumn speed bursts on Manhattan's main street, represents the sole offering of novelty in the Washington theaters this week, always excepting, naturally, anything of dramatic interest the pictures may have to display. This musical show is G. M. Anderson's "Frivolities of 1920," a plotless, bookless concoction of frivol, presented by the man whom picture fans a decade ago knew as "Broncho Billy" Anderson.

Mr. Anderson's "Frivolities," as a matter of fact, differ but little in subject matter and treatment from Mr. White's "Scandals of 1919," which returns to the National tonight as a further antidote for the cares of state. The dramatic end of the week's calendar leans heavily upon a revisit of George Hobart's allegory, "Experience," and Walter Howard's "Seven Days' Leave," both of which have displayed their charms here before.

The fact that next week will bring with it, among other offerings, an engagement of E. H. Sothern and Miss Julia Marlowe in Shakespearean repertoire, has nothing to do with the case. Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe are bringing to a close a rather extended tour through the provinces and their coming, while thrice welcome, probably will have little effect in checking the decline of the season. From now on until fall, the drama will be administered in homeopathic doses.

Miss Theda Bara is alleged to have registered shocked surprise when Washington critics found the "Blue Flame" not up to par at its recent Poli's showing. It is interesting to conjecture what she registered when she read the following comment on "The Blue Flame" by Alexander Woollcott in the New York Times last Tuesday:

"The play is a terrible thing. The authors of all the bad plays produced in this town in the last ten years were present in a body to jounce with their derisive laughter the poor dramatic critics, who, these playwrights said, must now be sorry they had exhausted their vocabulary on less stimulating occasions. Owen Davis, who has discovered a disconcerting similarity between 'The Blue Flame' and an ill-starred piece of his called 'Lola' which came and went these many years ago, witnessed last evening's performance in a sort of stupor of wonderment, as who should say:

"'I certainly never wrote this.'

"You know how it is when you have visitors from out of town and possessed to go on a perfectly delightful slumming party down on the Bowery or somewhere to see one of those killing melodramas—Oh, come on, won't it be fun?—and you take them, and after all, the melodrama is not bad enough to be funny and you come home disappointed. Well, 'The Blue Flame' is the kind of play you always expect the cheap theaters to show, and they never do."

A New Use for a Ziegfeld Chorus.

Flo Ziegfeld, tireless in his quest for fame, has aspired to new laurels. Hereafter, Ziegfeld may not be known solely for his uncanny eye for a maid. In days to come, his fame may encircle the continent as a chef par excellence, a restaurateur without peer. It all came about through Ziegfeld's sudden determination to acquire the gastronomic as well as the dramatic rights to the new 9 o'clock revue that he calls "The Girls of 1920"—a show which assists in keeping Manhattan awake these lazy spring evenings.

In days past, a firm of restaurateurs supplied the liquid and other refreshment demands by Mr. Ziegfeld's discriminating clientele but that's all a thing of the past. The impresario of the Follies has installed a culinary department as spotless as a chorus girl's knee and the outlay has set Mr. Ziegfeld back some $50,000. In the event of a waiters' strike, it requires only a half an eye to observe to what uses Mr. Ziegfeld's pulchritudinous choruses may be put by allowing them all the tips they collect.

The George M. Cohan Comedians, the designation for a new assembly of Cohan funmakers, will shortly make their appearance here in a new musical play by Otto Harbach and Frank Mandel called "The House that Jack Built." The production is scheduled for a run in Washington after which it will play several weeks in Philadelphia before going into New York.

Mr. Percy Mackaye was apparently blessed with second sight when he preceded his recent stage version of "George Washington" with an allegorical apology for his inability to properly tell a story like "George Washington" through the restricted medium of the modern theater. Mr. Mackaye found the theater so thoroughly restricted in scope that "George Washington" lasted a scant two weeks after leaving Washington, where it registered its premier performance.

In the crowded condition of New York theaters these days the box office is the autocratic barometer of a play's span of life so far as Broadway is concerned, and, although the show garnered nearly $13,000 during the week it played in Washington, its receipts fell to $7,300 the first New York week, and the second week even worse. The Mackaye play is reported to have cost Hampden over $50,000, most of which will be sheer loss as the play has been definitely stored.

The desire of the Shuberts to entice Walter Hampden, the producer and star, to their management is said to have been responsible for the ability of Hampden to get "George Washington" an early New York showing, despite the skepticism of theater men over its chances of success.

Recent queries addressed to this department as to the reason for the substitution of Adele Rowland in the part formerly played by Edith Day in "Irene," are answered with the statement that Miss Day's phenomenal success in the New York version of James Montgomery's musical show has inspired the producers of "Irene" to send a company to London for a run in the British metropolis. Miss Day has been selected to play the role of Irene O'Dare in the London production, and Miss Rowland will be seen in the same part for the rest of the New York run of the piece. Before passing from these shores, however, Miss Day took time to star in a new photoplay called "Children Not Wanted."

An amusing angle of the newsprint paper shortage, which periodically threatens to curtail the activities of dramatic editors, special writers, and plain reporters to the zero point, is seen in the dilemma that faces the publishers of sheet music. If the paper situation is not alleviated soon, we are told, Tin Pan Alley will be forced to materially curb its jazz frenzies, which again demonstrates that blessings may come in disguise. In the event of a shortage of song paper, it may be that musical comedy composers would find themselves forced to write songs that specifically relate to the show in hand rather than the standardized, interchangeable type of song that is making musical comedy very ill these days.

New Yorker to Renovate the Lyceum.

An echo of the recent excitement in the neighborhood of Eleventh street and Pennsylvania avenue northwest, occasioned by the fire which gutted the Lyceum Theater, is seen in the announcement from New York that John G. Jermon, of that city, has purchased the theater property and will completely renovate it in time for the opening of the 1920-21 season. The seating capacity of the New Lyceum, it is said, will be about 1,700. This is about 500 more seats than the old structure afforded.

Eugene O'Neil, who scored so heavily in Manhattan recently with his "Beyond the Horizon," has had another playwriting effort produced. It is called "Chris," and it recently had its premiere in Atlantic City with Emmett Corrigan in the leading role. Unlike "Beyond the Horizon," O'Neil's new play is not a tragedy that ends with the finality of death. It goes "Beyond the Horizon" one better and strikes the intensified tragic note of continued existence. A very bitter writer, this O'Neil.

"Shavings," now in its second month of outstanding success, has been endorsed by Broadway folks, church folks, and home folks. This Cape Cod comedy of Joseph C. Lincoln is a whole-souled, happy romance of American life, and its characters might as well be Californians as Cape Codders, for they have an all-American sense of humor, honor and humanity.

Marjorie Rambeau has assumed the stellar role in Channing Pollock's brilliantly successful melodrama, "The Sign on the Door," at the Republic Theater, New York, and has added another to her long list of metropolitan triumphs. Miss Rambeau will continue in the role indefinitely.

George M. Cohan is in Philadelphia whipping into shape his new production, "The Irresistible Genius." He will rewrite the entire first act and inject a punch into the remainder. When the play leaves Philadelphia it will take a roundabout trip to Broadway. Owing to the exigencies of bookings, the company will halt at Buffalo and Rochester. The show has also been renamed "Genius and the Crowd."

Not only has "Jane Clegg" presented by the Theater Guild at the Garrick Theater, New York, become a much-heralded dramatic success in the two weeks since its initial presentation, but its receipts have doubled the amount earned by "John Ferguson" last season, in a like period. The first two weeks' receipts of "John Ferguson" last season were, respectively, $4,200 and $5,345, and the receipts of "Jane Clegg" during the last two weeks were $9,000 and $9,024, respectively.

Ethel Barrymore, last Monday night at the Empire Theater, New York, began the seventh month of her run in Zoe Akins' "Declassee." The Empire was opened nearly thirty years ago, and never before in all that time has any star ever attracted such large audiences for so long a period.

Elsie Ferguson has scored as Carlotta Peel in Arnold Bennett's "Sacred and Profane Love" at the Morosco Theater, New York. In this interesting play is to be found a most intriguing study of the modern woman in love.

Claude Berbohn has produced a new farce by Frederick Arnold Kummer entitled "The Bonehead." The piece will have its initial hearing in Providence tomorrow night and is already booked for a New York engagement, beginning April 6. Edward Nicander will play the leading role.

"Golden Days," described as a comedy of youth, by Sidney Toler and Marion Short, will be presented at the Powers Theater, Chicago, tomorrow night by George C. Tylen, with Patricia Collinge in the stellar role.

In support will be Helen Lowell, Maude Turner Gorden, Blanche Chapman, Hortense Alden, Nancy Currier, Norma Lee, Berenice Harley, Camille Pastorfield, Norval Keedwell, Paul Kelly and Adirna Morgan.

The piece was successfully tried out last summer at Atlantic City and is scheduled to reach Broadway the first week in July.

Next Week's Shows

Garrick—"Oh, Henry!" Bide Dudley's farce-comedy; cast includes William Roselle, Florence Carrette, Vira Rial and others.

POLI'S—E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe, in "Twelfth Night," "Hamlet" and "The Taming of the Shrew."

BELASCO—Mr. and Mrs. Coburn present their new play, "Three Showers."

B. F. Keith's—Elizabeth Brice in "The Overseas Revue;" Bronson and Baldwin; Aileen Stanley; Zardo; The Naesses; Walter Brower; Bobbe and Nelson; Jolly Johnny Jones; and the usual house inclusions.

THE COSMOS—Hunter, Chick and Hunter, all-round fun; Tommy Allen and Girls; Segal and James in blackface; Allen and Walton in "At the Flower Stand;" Trovato, violin virtuoso; Dorothy Dalton in "Black is White;" "The Grocery Clerk."

GAYETY—"The Bon Ton Girls," presenting a two-act musical comedy; cast includes George Douglass, John Barry, Harry O'Neill, Lucille Rogers, Jack Strouse, Mickey Feely, Jean de Lisle and Babe Burnett.

Palace—"Excuse My Dust," latest starring vehicle for Wallace Reid.

Columbia—First four days, Marion Davies in "April Folly;" last half of the week, Viola Dana in "The Willow Tree."

Metropolitan—Eugene O'Brien in "His Wife's Money."

Knickerbocker—"His Wife's Money," with Eugene O'Brien, Sunday and Monday; Tuesday and Wednesday, Conway Tearle in "The Atonement."

Crandall's—Sunday and Monday, Norma Talmadge in "The Social Secretary;" Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, Dorothy Gish in "The Tiger Girl."

Long strides have been made in the filming of "Mollycoddle," the next Douglas Fairbanks offering to be released by United Artists' Corporation, according to word received by Hiram Abrams, last week, from Holbrook, Arizona, the nearest city to that portion of the "Painted Desert" where Fairbanks' company of one hundred players have been active for the past 10 days.

An entire episode of the picture has been completed and the company is preparing to return to the studios at Los Angeles, where work will be started on some of the more important interiors.

Miss Elaine Hammerstein is resting after strenuous weeks of playing a dual role in "The Shadow of Rosalie Byrnes."

$2,000 For a Story

Thomas H. Ince offers a prize of $2,000 to any Columbia University student writing a photoplay suited to his needs. This does not mean that he will pay that sum for the best story submitted to him, but the reward will be received by as many of the students as create purchasable material.

In addressing the Cinema composition class as well as students in short story writing and dramatic construction last week, Mr. Ince touched upon various angles of writing for the screen.

"It is a difficult subject," he said, after thanking his audience for the honor conferred on him, "and there are no hard and fast rules to guide the beginner to success. Through experience such as I have had, however, certain facts have been made clear to me which may be of help to others. Producing pictures for nearly nine years is apt to have taught one what to avoid at least.

"Of paramount importance in the construction of a play for the screen is the human appeal of your subject as well as the way you develop it. Just as the best actors are the most natural ones, so the best stories are those which are closest to real life.

"Of course an uneventful sequence of humdrum incidents does not constitute a story merely because the characters and their actions have really lived and had their being. There must be intrigue, conflict, suspense and climax, no matter what characters are involved or what expedients are employed. And they must be natural."

"Sleeping Partners," with Edna Goodrich in the leading role, will be an attraction at the Shubert-Garrick in April. The play is a comedy of the Paris boulevard, telling the story of the misadventure of a radiant Parisienne and her wayward husband, and relating how a sophisticated American saves both from the penalty of their folly. Edna Goodrich as the French wife is dazzling, alluring and becomingly coy.

Miss Goodrich has been seen here in pictures and as leading woman and co-star with Nat C. Goodwin. In her present role she will wear what are promised to be some of the handsomest Lucille gowns ever seen on the American stage.

"Sleeping Partners," with Miss Goodrich, will be seen here exactly as presented during its long and successful run at the Bijou Theater, New York.

Leslie Hunt, who plays opposite Marie Dressler in "Tillie's Nightmare," seen at Poli's last week, has been engaged by Capt. F. F. Stoll, author of the photoplay, "Determination," to play a prominent part in the forthcoming production of "Determination." Mr. Hunt has had prominent parts in recent pictures, including "Erstwhile Susan," Constance Binney's recent photoplay.

A Star from the Antipodes

It is a significant fact to all critical observers that whenever a musical comedy star shoots into space and falls into another realm, great is the fall thereof, usually. Not so with Miss Florence Darley, a comedienne of New South Wales, who has started her stage career in America by an engagement with "The Star and Garter Show," this week's attraction at the Gayety. Miss Darley has brought to burlesque the identical songs, the work of American composers, with which she delighted musical comedy audiences in the antipodes.

The Australian people are greatly interested in the American stage, the songs produced in this country, and the musical plays that drift to their land from the United States. Miss Darley is authority for this statement. She played in musical shows in Sydney and Brisbane three years ago. It was the keen interest manifested in American productions by Australian people that inspired Miss Darley to come to this country.

Miss Darley has found the American public takes to its own songs after they have been sung and whistled in foreign lands better, perhaps, than when they are first introduced here. Taking almost the identical musical program she used a year ago in New South Wales, Miss Darley has delighted burlesque audiences all along the Columbia circuit this season.

Miss Darley made her debut in Sydney in 1914. Since that time she has travelled extensively in the Orient, returning to her native home in Australia for a short engagement before coming to this country last year.

When George White's "Scandals of 1919" was produced early last summer in New York City, one of the big hits of the performance, which is to be seen here at the National Theater, was scored by a dancer whose name appeared on the program as La Sylphe. The name meant nothing to Broadway playgoers, but the sensation that she created was none the less pronounced. Her terpsichorean efforts savored strongly of the European quality, but it was not long until it was discovered that she was in reality an American, although her appearance with the "Scandals of 1919" was practically her debut in her native land.

La Sylphe's name is Edith Lambelle. She was born in New York City, and her mother had also been a "premiere danseuse," and as a child La Sylphe had been trained in the art.

As now in Chicago, it was the law in New York that a child dancer could not appear on any stage, so her mother decided on a trip abroad. The child was such a competent dancer that she became an instantaneous hit on the other side of the Atlantic. During the reign of the late Czar of Russia she became a great favorite in Petrograd, and it is related that she was offered a position in the royal Russian ballet. The law at that time, however, decreed that none but a Russian could belong to that organization, and it would be necessary that she be adopted by a native of the country before she could become a member. A Russian nobleman volunteered to do this, but the mother demurred, and La Sylphe remained an American.

She also danced in Paris, where she was a favorite; in London, and, in fact, in every one of the European capitals. She remained on the other side so long that she has become an accomplished linguist and speaks half a dozen languages.

Through an unfortunate accident, her eyesight became affected, and she had to give up her career abroad for a time and come back to New York. It was many months before she was cured, and it was just about that time Mr. White heard of the marvelous European dancer, La Sylphe, and offered her an engagement in the "Scandals of 1919," which was accepted, with the result that a new European sensation was given to Broadway.

William A. Brady's disinclination to book Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln" at the Playhouse, New York, was inspired, says that manager, not by lack of faith in the play, but by the terms proposed by William Harris. Whereas the customary division between house and attraction in New York is fifty-fifty, Mr. Harris, in this instance, asked 60 per cent, with an additional 5 per cent of all over a certain amount. (It might be mentioned in passing that Mr. Harris has long been enjoying some such felicitous arrangement at the Astor Theater where his "East Is West" is playing.)

As for faith in "Abraham Lincoln," declares Mr. Brady, he has invested some $40,000 in Lincolnian plays during his producing career without getting any of it back, incidentally. The first of these was a play produced early in the '90s by the firm of Randall and Dickson, and the second was some nine or ten years ago, when Benjamin Chapin produced a Lincoln play of his own writing at the Liberty Theater here.

Mr. Brady also saw the play in London last May and coveted it, but discovered later that Mr. Harris had already acquired it. Still, in passing, there is Mr. Brady's story of the Englishwoman who sat in back of him that night at the Hammersmith. The scene at Appomattox had been reached and General Grant had covered the sleeping President with his cloak and was stealing silently from the room. Whereupon the Englishwoman whispered hoarsely to her escort:

"Does he kill him now?"

While up north making scenes for the special Selznick production, "The Law Bringers," Zena Keefe learned to ski.

Filming the Quartier Latin

A faithful reproduction of the bal masque, which is given annually in Paris by the students of the Latin quarter, is one of the most effective scenes in "His House in Order," starring Elsie Ferguson, which will be shown at Loew's Palace today. No expense was spared in making this scene as nearly as possible like the Parisian event.

Several hundred extras were used in the bal masque, and their costumes are noted for the bizarre and fantastic qualities. The costume worn by Miss Ferguson is a creation that embodies beauty with the unusual and is one of the prettiest costumes ever worn by this beautiful star, who has been called the "best dressed woman on the screen."

"His House in Order" was adapted from the stage success by the same name of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero. It is a photoplay that combines the dramatic, heart interest, pathos and humor effectively and maintains the high standard of excellence that characterizes productions of Miss Ferguson. Hugh Ford, who directed many Ferguson pictures, was the director.

Dorothy Gish, the vivacious motion picture comedienne in "Mary Ellen Comes to Town" at Loew's Columbia this week, like to share her happiness with others. One day on the way to the studio she spied a man sitting in the gutter selling pencils. A sign reading "I Am Blind" hung around his neck. Impulsively Miss Gish had her car draw up to the curb and dropped a dollar into the hat.

"Thank you, Miss Gish," said the man. "I wonder if you would think it impertinent if I asked you to send me one of your photographs. I always attend the movies when your pictures are being shown."

"But I thought you were blind," gasped the startled little star.

"Well, Miss," he explained, "I'm sort of like an owl—only blind in the daytime."

Manager Edwards, of the Garrick Theater, has granted Central High School students, in parties of fifty or more, half-price rates on seats at that theater for Monday and Tuesday nights of each week, beginning tomorrow. Central students who want tickets should leave their orders with H. F. Bursley, room 321A, Central High School.

"'Ere we are!
And 'ere we are,
And 'ere we are again."

So sings Clay Cody, the silly-ass stage Englishman, in "Seven Days' Leave," and it is literally true, for Mr. Cody has been coming here annually in the same sort of role since a period in the remote past where no playgoer's memory runs to the contrary.

Cody, superlatively silly and screamingly laughable, is a splendid fellow withal. He is an Englishman and finds much droll humor in caricaturing his countrymen, although he maintains that the type he impersonates is found only on the American stage.

"There ain't no such animal," as the little girl said when she viewed the giraffe on the occasion of her first visit to a circus," declares Cody. "Still American audiences like it, and I rather suppose it is up to us to give them what they like."

Cody is quite as funny off the stage as on, and there are some among his friends who maintain that he personally refutes his theory, although others declare that long association with such roles has left an imprint upon him.

Wanda Hawley has signed a long-term contract to star in special Realart productions. While the actual business of starring is new to Miss Hawley, it is not her first appearance as leading woman. She has had a liberal education in roles of this sort, having started first with Fox, then followed with Douglas Fairbanks in "Mr. Fix It." She has at other times supported Charles Ray, Bryant Washburn, Robert Warwick, William S. Hart and Wallace Reid.

She has had the widest and best possible screen introduction with these stars, and in addition, she has played the leading feminine role in the Cecil De Mille production, "For Better For Worse," "We Can't Have Everything" and as Beauty, in "Everywoman." So little Miss Hawley is not entirely unknown to the public. She was originally Wanda Petit, until Douglas Fairbanks changed her name to Hawley, as being more euphonious and better suited to a screen personage. A name may not have had a thing to do with her rise to fame, but, nevertheless, ever since she changed her name her rise has been rapid.

Miss Hawley will appear in a series of light romances to be especially selected for her. Her director and the title of her first Realart production will be announced later.

Sid Grauman pulled off one of the "stunts" for which he is noted last week at the Ince studios. Mr. Bosworth is working out on the Ince lot now and was engaged in making a mob scene, when the irrepressible Grauman arrived on the scene. He engaged himself as an extra and went to work with the howling mob. The players all edged up to Mr. Bosworth, who was the central figure, and Mr. Grauman stepped forward while the camera was grinding and said:

"I consider 'Behind the Door' one of the greatest productions of the year. Your appearance on my stage to personally act the closing scenes of the drama expressed a generous co-operative spirit no gift can adequately repay."

With these words Mr. Grauman handed the star a gold watch of new design engraved on the back, "A token of appreciation to Hobart Bosworth from Sid Grauman."

Mr. Bosworth was surprised, to say the least. He has shelved his old timepiece to do honor to the Grauman testimonial. As for Mr. Grauman, he was excused from playing the mob scene.

The members of the "Experience" Company are having quite a little fun these days at the expense of Miss Blanche Crossan. The company played Pittsburg recently and were alighting from the train with an opening matinee on their minds. It seems there was a wedding party on the train, and the friends of the happy couple, who had been notified of their arrival time by friends of the latter, were out in full force with the usual accessories of rice, old shoes and flowers.

Miss Crossan, who is a charming young lady of brunette type, was the first of the company to alight from the train, and as the young lady had on a new traveling suit, a cream colored veil, a new handsatchel and a pair of new boots that peeped out from under her short length skirt, the friends of the bride immediately jumped to the conclusion that this was she of the newlyweds, particularly as the groom stepped off immediately behind her.

Naturally the rice flew and shoes filled the air.

Olive Thomas is said to be able to get her makeup on and off faster than any other actress on the stage. She can change from a 16-year-old girl into a woman of society in an amazingly short period of time.

Miss Edith Hallor, who stars in Weber productions, is an accomplished musician. She has studied at the leading universities in this country and at one time expected to make her debut as a concert pianist.

In New York's Playhouses

By GILBERT SELDES

I suppose that I would be murdered or something if I began with anything except that notable production of "Richard III," which the combined talents of John Barrymore, Arthur Hopkins and Robert E. Jones (the names are in alphabetical order) made last week. It was an event and the busy rumors did not overtell the story. First came the story that Edward Sheldon had rewritten Shakespeare, as he had Sem Benelli (of "The Jest"). The truth is that this "Richard III" takes off with the final scenes of "King Henry VI," where Richard appears as the Duke of Gloster (or, if you will, Gloucester). The pundits are crying that it is very good drama, and if Shakespeare can come that way, let him come. As for Edward Sheldon, I am sorry to say that he is still seriously ill, in the West, and no official responsibility for this play has been assigned to him.

The Barrymore rumor is true. I understand that, wearied of people complaining about his voice, he found himself a teacher who believes that those only can properly speak who know how to sing. Wherefore Barrymore did scales for ten days or more and behold a miracle, the conversion absolute of his voice. There was no rumor about Mr. Jones' work. It was categorically announced that this was going to be his finest—and it is. No more need be said. The whole production, for which Arthur Hopkins gets credit, has been called the supreme moment of the American stage. I strongly suspect that it will be impossible to write this correspondence for many weeks without some reference to this play, so I abandon it now. I note only that a whole family of Barrymores, having done their bits in other plays, came over for the first night and saw two hours of it—for it lasted until 1 o'clock, with the suburbanites remaining to cheer after the final curtain.

I dropped in to see a bit of the Winter Garden show, and later Charles Winninger, who plays King Solomon and who used to imitate Leo Ditrichstein. Winninger told me an amusing story about David Belasco. Winninger was preparing a burlesque of Belasco for an actors' club affair. He went to Belasco and told him his intention. "Very well," said the wizard. "What would you like me to do?" Winninger suggested that Belasco's more famous attitudes should be struck. And without a trace of self-consciousness, and equally without resentment at the thought that he was perpetually being burlesqued, Belasco tugged at his little forelock and shoved his hand into his waistcoat and made funny little bows and otherwise deported himself as he does on his famous first nights. "And now, my boy," he said when he had completed the performance, "what about a costume?" Winninger had none. "Oh, that will never do!" And, turning to his secretary, Belasco ordered a specimen of the famous clerical black garb with the reversed collar to be put at the disposal of his imitator. The burlesque was a great success.

Robert Middlemas is, I suppose, one of the tallest and biggest actors on the stage, but that gets the interviewer nowhere, because Mr. Middlemas insists on talking as if he were not really a very good actor, which he is. You may have seen him in some of Claire Kummer's pieces—I think he played the lead in "Good Gracious, Annabelle" on the road. Now he is the top sergeant in "Buddies," the entertaining play in which Donald Brian dances and Peggy Wood sings, and everybody has a good time. Middlemas has had quite a career since his days at the Harvard Dramatic Club, of which he was one of the founders. Perhaps his most interesting experience, except studying to be an admiral during the war, was with the late Paul Armstrong. "Armstrong was a big, brawny, rough-and-ready person," Middlemas told me the other day, "who knew what he wanted and had the great gift of punchy drama. Also he wrote 'The Bludgeon,' the most dismal superIbsen piece I ever saw. He sent for me and said brutally that he wanted me to play the lead because I was no great actor. 'I don't want a star telling me what I ought to do or what he's going to do. I'm going to put you into this show and I'll make you.'" But "The Bludgeon" missed its mark and Middlemas was not "made" in the technical sense. He is taking the slower path of hard work. "Buddies" is scheduled for another year; after that the young actor will have time to look around for his next part.

I rush to give you the names of the new Florodora Sextette, with descriptive notes, because this is important: Beatrice and Marcella Swanson, sisterly blondes; Madeline Rickers, auburn hair; Dorothy Leeds and Dama Sykes, blondes, and for darker ones Muriel Dodge, Fay Evelyn and Zera Gibson. Now, if you've counted these names you will suspect that it will be an octette. Nothing of the sort. The producers are going to give two of them a night off each week, and if you want to be a complete Floderist you will have to see it every night for a week. The other day an interesting thing took place. Marjorie Relyea (Mrs. Albert Stokes), one of the originals (I say it twice for emphasis), came down and talked to the new sextette, telling them how to avoid the pitfalls of Broadway and encouraging them with the bright thought that there are more millionaires (and less liquor, I suppose) than at any previous time in the history of the American stage. She also told them about the 1901 sextette and how they did their "business" in the famous "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden." I have just been looking over the lyrics to which Leslie Stuart wrote his pretty music, and I confess that the words sound very difficult, but I remember that they were sung, and so do you. Next week, if I have room, I shall quote a bit, with a line or two of a "modern" lyric for comparison.

The success of "Ruddigore" is really phenomenal. A friend with whom I went, for the second time, suggested that they ought to change the bill because the ushers were getting bored, but the audience was not. A few changes take place in the cast, but with the exception of Gladys Cladwell, the principals are the same and Frank Moulan is as funny as ever. The piece is getting all sorts of "comebacks," including a violent controversy about using "Yonkers" (a suburb of New York, dear reader, and by no means a detestable spot), instead of Basingstoke, as in Gilbert's text. People really get violently excited about this; the real trouble is that "Basingstoke" occurs later in the rhyme and "Yonkers" cannot be substituted. Otherwise I am willing to bet that Gilbert would not have cared two straws. But it is nice to know that there are so many enthusiasts for these gayest of all musical comedies, and that they are still crowding the theater so that "Ruddigore" may run on until the end of the season. As this company does not leave New York (so far as I know), this production is distinctly one of those not to be missed by the visitor.

(Public Ledger Service.)

Schable's Octuple Demise

If Robert Schable were a prototype of the famous cat he might have withstood eight assassinations in one afternoon without the slightest effect upon his vitality. Being only one of the leading characters in "On With the Dance," now playing at Moore's Garden Theater, he felt quite fatigued when it was all over.

In the scenario, David Powell, who is playing the leading role opposite Mae Murray in the production, takes the part of an infuriated husband who shoots the man who he believes alienated his wife's affections. Robert Schable is the man.

As the first revolver shot of the afternoon cracked through the studio and Schable fell to the floor with a thump that wracked every bone in his body, Director Fitzmaurice raved impotently:

"Won't do! More life!" he howled.

A second time Schable's supposedly lifeless form tumbled to the floor and still Director Fitzmaurice objected. Schable was "shot" eight times in an hour and a quarter, before light, camera and human nature, guided by the director, worked in unison to the latter's satisfaction. One more death, Schable declared afterwards, and he would have exhausted his "cattish" allotment.

The fact that the bullets were only cotton wads didn't save him from a severe battering in his descents to the hard, uncarpeted studio floor.

Seldom is it that a young lady in the chorus hesitates to leap from her bespangled position in the front row of the ensemble to a more exalted role in a musical production. Usually such an opportunity is the very thing she is hoping and praying for. Yet in "Frivolities of 1920" there is a young woman who not only ignores the trumpet calls of fame, but goes so far as to insist that she will remain a chorus girl forever.

When Doris Lloyd, for that is the name of the fascinating young woman who has proven so immune to the delightful ravages of success, first appeared in "His Little Widows," a musical comedy that G. M. Anderson presented at the Astor Theater three years ago, she was unanimously proclaimed by the reviewers as the chorus girl find of the season. Although occupying an inconspicuous position in the choral line-up along with some thirty other girls similarly attired, her personality, grace and charm were so pronounced that she excited more comment than any principal in the cast.

Winchell Smith, playwright and producer, has joined Metro's staff of screen authors, which recently was strengthened by the acquisition of Bayard Veiller, author of "Within the Law." The first of his successes that Mr. Smith will supervise for the screen will be "The New Henrietta." Bayard Veiller's contract with Metro calls for four originals a year, the first to be for Bert Lytell.

George Barr McCutcheon's "The Husbands of Edith" has been purchased by the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation as a vehicle for Wallace Reid.

Al St. John will have earned—and what is more important he will have received—more than $50,000 in 1920. Five years ago he was earning $3 a day, when he was a carpenter in Los Angeles. Today he is shooting comedy scenes at his own studio, producing and directing his own films.

Nazimova Joins Brenon

Devotees of all that is finest in the art of the theater recognize in Nazimova one of the most distinguished actresses of the day. It was a distinct surprise to the old, established motion picture producing firms when they learned that she had signed a contract to appear in photo dramas for Herbert Brenon and Selznick-Pictures. Many offers had been made to Nazimova, but she had rejected them all, and the secret of her final capitulation to the newest of the producing concerns was that she was present at a private view of Mr. Brenon's masterpiece, "A Daughter of the Gods," and was so impressed with its imaginative qualities that she no longer hesitated to embark in the new art.

Ever since Nazimova came to the English-speaking stage her career has been an unbroken record of successes. Ibsen's plays were formerly regarded as a drug on the market, and yet in one after another of those history-making classics, she scored tremendously. In "A Doll's House," "Hedda Gabler" and "Little Eyolf," she won the highest laurels. She turned to comedy and in "The Countess Coquette" she was equally successful. She is the only player who has been able to introduce successfully to the American stage a full-length drama by the great Arthur Schnitzler, and in "The Fairy Tale" she scored again.

Departing from this European repertoire, she starred in "Bella Donna," playing to crowded houses in all the cities in the United States. Turning to vaudeville, she reached the zenith of her popularity in the only play, based upon the great war which is conceded to be of permanent value. In "War Brides," which will be seen in photodramatic form for the first time locally at Crandall's Metropolitan and Knickerbocker Theaters, beginning this afternoon, she is no longer the patrician, but an humble village girl, who revolts against militarism and with the same subtlety as in her "Hedda" and "Bella Donna" brings new meaning to the portrait of the oppressed women of a great empire and of the world.

Of the many scenario writers who have attained an enviable position in the fast-growing motion picture business probably none has had a more spontaneous and uninterrupted success than Clara Beranger, who is responsible for the scenario of "The Cost," the screen version of David Granam Phillips' novel, which is to be released next month as a Paramount-Artcraft picture.

At the time when the possibilities of the motion picture field impressed her Miss Beranger had already made herself known as a short story and magazine writer. Since her entry into new fields she has affiliated herself with the staff of Famous Players-Lasky Corporation scenario writers, and her endless activity is attested in the fact that she has since the first of last year, written fifteen scenarios, five original plays and a play for the stage in collaboration with Forrest Halsey. Among her more recent successes are Marguerite Clark's "Girls" and "Come Out of the Kitchen;" "Sadie Love" and "Wanted—A Husband," two pictures which starred Billie Burke, and the latest success, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," a compelling drama from Robert Louis Stevenson's work, in which John Barrymore is starred. Many of the best pictures made by Famous Players-Lasky Corporation have been adapted for the screen by her pen.