

Theatres



Miss GENEVIEVE TOBIN in "LITTLE OLD NEW YORK" Plymouth.



Miss MARIE CHAMBERS and Miss SHIRLEY WARDE in "SMOOTH AS SILK" Lexington.



Miss LAURA HOPE CREWES in "Mr. PIM PASSES BY" Garrick.



Miss ANNA WHEATON and OSCAR SHAW in "9 O'CLOCK" Ziegfeld Frolie, New Amsterdam Roof.



Miss MARY KANE in "PASSING SHOW OF 1921" Winter Garden.



Miss MARY CARROLL in "CRADLE SONG" Times Square Theatre, Matinee.



SEÑORA CARITOS in "SPANISH LOVE" Maxine Elliott's Theatre.

PRODUCING PLAYS IN DAYLIGHT BRINGS OUT SOME INTERESTING AND EXOTIC DRAMA SPECIMENS

By LAWRENCE REAMER.

WITH the crackling of caramel papers still in the ears, it is possible to admit that the matinee season of the past week brought out some interesting, if exotic, specimens of drama. There were in the afternoon choice both Spanish and Italian, while the international character of the week was completed by the English and American plays acted at night. No critic of the theatre will grumble at afternoon employment that produces works so unusual as "Cradle Song" and "Amoureuse" or "The Tyranny of Love," as Mr. Baron called his adaptation of Porto-Riche's play. David Belasco established for all time the falsity of the charge that he had taken "The Woman" from a protesting barber when he acted at one of his theatres the manuscript which had been submitted to him. The production of "Cradle Song" at the Times Square Theatre the other afternoon, performed an equal service for Edward Knoblock, who was said to have taken "Marie Odile" from the Spanish play which Augustin Duncan so effectively and impressively produced at the Times Square Theatre the other afternoon. There is a certain superficial resemblance between the two works. Both have their scene in a convent. Both have nuns as their actors. But here the resemblance between the two pieces altogether ceases.

"Cradle Song," which really seems to deserve an article definite or otherwise, is a study of the unadmirable desire for motherhood in every woman, whether she be cloistered or in the world. The arrival of the waif in the convent and her departure after seventeen years to take her place in the world are all in the nature of drama that the Spanish play contains. The ringing cloister bells, the murmuring sisters over the cradle, the chanting nuns, the sunlight playing over the flowers on the convent wall, the loving whisper through the grill to his affianced—these are all of this static work's fiction. The difference in Mr. Knoblock's play will be obvious to all who remember its Prussian uhlan rushing through the narrow doors, the mother and her son on the fashioning and military St. Michael and the coming girl with the smile at the baby in her arms.

Not Theatrical in Form.

No, the Spanish drama is not conventionally theatrical in form. None was ever more literary than "Cradle Song." Gregorio Martinez Sierra is but 46, so the tendency of his writing is probably settled. Like so many Spanish playwrights he seems to be the impresario of his own theatre, which may have its share in explaining the facility with which plays that seem really undeserving of such an honor are produced in Spain. "Cradle Song" is said to be his most popular as well as his finest play, from which those who go to the matinee this week may draw their own conclusions. But there can be but one opinion as to the skillful manner in which Mr. Duncan has realized the two scenes of the play and contrived.

A. A. Milne may never have heard of Dion Boucicault, since few dramatists of the day ever indicate any knowledge of the man who at one time had seven plays on the London stage and said he would be perfectly willing to supply all the London theatres were he relieved of certain details of business. Among the matinee plays of the week, however, it is said that a farce should rest on a foundation of granite. Maybe such a firm basis is not needed for a comedy, but the surely "Mr. Pim Passes By" needs some more plausible point of departure than the mention by a stranger of a casual passenger on the steamer with the name of Australia. This name, which is the same that the first husband of the heroine bore, is all there is to start the action. The stranger returns to say that the man died on the boat. He returns for other purposes. This man, it afterwards appears, bore no relation to the wife's history.

Whether Miss Crewes is so amusingly debating with her husband a remark or any possible result of bigamy, there is always in the mind the shallowness of a play with no stronger motive than the charge that the first husband of the heroine bore, is all there is to start the action. The stranger returns to say that the man died on the boat. He returns for other purposes. This man, it afterwards appears, bore no relation to the wife's history.

treats his subject not with evident exaggeration but sincerely and as seriously as if this incessant canonizing were a part of the national character? Surely the battle of the sexes of which the authors are now so fond of writing is revealed with unerring truthfulness in this study of a man and his too dotting wife.

The whole thing sounds like the sublimated and Titanic tearing of a daisy. "He loves me, he loves me not," on and on ad nauseam. Finally in a minute of exasperated artistry the husband hurls her into the arms of his friend, only to realize too late that the satisfaction of her wounded vanity has left a scar on their lives which a lifetime cannot obliterate. But this is the bitter sweet of excess. Candy three times a day, argued the beautiful Grosvenor in "Patience," would be too much. This play is well worth seeing as a specimen of the best that the French drama is sending to the world nowadays, and, as ever, the best blooms from the national trait of such scientific loving. Estelle Winwood gives a remarkably varied and human portrayal of the instant wife. It is a genuine tour de force of histrionism which touches many points of life to gain distinction from the portrayal of all of them.

Miss Bilbainita to Appear for First Time in Broadway

Other Acts. Gus Edwards and his new song revue will be the chief attraction at the Palace this week. He will be assisted by the Misses Alice and Hazel Furness, Chester Fredericks and a new crop of youthful "finds." Charles (Chic) Sala will do his "Rural Sunday School Benefit." A new dancing celebrity from Spain will be Miss Nina Bilbainita, making her Broadway debut, with native Spanish dances. Others will be Miss Sylvia Clark, girl clown; Toto, male clown; Bronson and Baldwin in "Visions of 1871," by Jack Lait; Parish and Peru and Josephson's Icelanders.

The chief acts at other vaudeville houses follow: RIVERSIDE—Pearl Regay, Homer Mason and Marguerite Keeler. COLONIAL—Virginia Pearson and Sheldon Lewis, Chic Sala. EIGHTY-FIRST STREET—Kitty Doner, Charlie Chaplin in the photoplay "The Kid." ALHAMBRA—Billy B. Van and James J. Corbett, Charlie Chaplin in the photoplay "The Kid." ROYAL—Nat Nazarro, Jr., Yvette Ruel. BROADWAY—"The Night Boat," farce comedy; Charlie Chaplin in "The Kid." COLISEUM—Bobby Bernard and company, Charlie Chaplin in "The Kid." REGENT—Bernard and Garry, Charlie Chaplin in "The Kid." AMERICAN—Al Goldman Troupe, Charlie Chaplin in "The Kid." FIFTH AVENUE—George M. Roebuck, Martha Pryor. TWENTY-THIRD STREET—Edwin George, Harry and Emma Sharrack. FIFTY-EIGHTH STREET—Bernard Thornton and company, the Max Ford Revue. ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH STREET—Edna Bennett, Furman and Nash. The usual Sunday concerts will be given at the Manhattan Opera House, the Ziegfeld Roof atop the New Amsterdam Theatre, the Century and Central Theatres and the Winter Garden.

Did You Hear? How Mme. Kurz Is Reaping the Harvest of Her Own Kindness, How the Manager Approaches the Second Tuesday With Misgiving.

THE addition of Mme. Selma Kurz to the forces of the Metropolitan Opera House might never have taken place but for the graciousness of the famous Viennese prima donna on a certain important occasion some years ago. Mme. Kurz was selected about twelve years ago to take the place of Mme. Sembach when she retired from the operatic stage. Heinrich Conried, then impresario of the Metropolitan Opera House, engaged the soprano, who then was the first coloratura singer at the Imperial Opera House in Vienna, for a term of years. It happened that he so valued her services from his knowledge of her success in Vienna that he engaged her for a larger number of appearances than any other prima donna had ever received and at a rate of compensation then unprecedented.

Mr. Conried was already ill. His retirement was impending. The management of the company which supplies the performances at the Opera House wondered what in the world was to be done with such a contract. In case the stranger made a great success it might be possible to come through with it. Even then the number of appearances exceeded what the season could offer. The engagement, in spite of the eminence of the artist, was a problem to the management. It was decided to approach the prima donna with a view to obtaining some modification of the terms of the arrangement. An ambassador went to Vienna.

Mme. Kurz was most gracious. Then at the height of her popularity in Vienna she was, moreover, on the point of getting married. So she was not at all keen about a long voyage to the United States. She had travelling orders to fill her engagements in London, Russia, Germany and France. So the contract was indefinitely suspended. Mme. Kurz married, her husband is one of the foremost lawyers of Vienna and she is now the happy mother of two children. But she felt that returning next year to this country it would be agreeable to her to appear in opera in which her success has always been made. So the Metropolitan Opera Company, remembering her graciousness in the past, happily added her famous name to its roster.

What They Believe. There is no day in the week to which the producer of the new play looks with the same interest that he does the second Tuesday after the first night. The receipts then are supposed to tell the tale of success or failure as they do at no other time. Saturday night is almost sure to be a sellout whatever happens. Monday is such a poor night at the theatres in comparison with Saturday that it is scarcely fair to draw any conclusions from what may happen then. But the second Tuesday is supposed to be the magic time. Then there ought to be a purely normal demand. If the public comes running that night there is every chance of success. So the experienced manager anxiously awaits the decision of his second Tuesday.

Lay On, Macduff. There already has grown up a legend about the production of a Shakespearean play which has caused more discussion than any similar artistic enterprise in years. There is, of course, the joke of the actor who calls the piece "What Happened to Jones." Mr. Jones being the designer of the decorations. But there also is the report of the ticket speculator who had been sent up to look over the show in the hope that the agencies might be persuaded to enter into "a buy" for a few weeks at least. But the speculators were unconvinced. It was during one of the scenes that an agent expressed his opinion by calling out: "That's all right, lay on Macduff! But it will be lay off, Macbeth all right." In an interview published twelve years ago with Ethel Barrymore the actress says that her brother Lionel when he contemplated retirement from the stage to study art had taken away the best Macbeth that the American theatre ever had.

"But has he ever acted Macbeth?" the reporter asked at that time. "Oh, no," was the answer of Miss Barrymore. "He never played it. But if ever he had he would be the greatest Macbeth the stage ever knew."

Perhaps Miss Barrymore did not refer to a Macbeth done on the Jones-Hopkins plan. But the most characteristic of all the stories about this performance concerns an actress in it who has made a reputation by her skill and by the beauty of her voice. She was about to make her entrance on the first night of the play. "Now, please remember," said the presiding genius of the evening. "Don't act and don't use your voice." Evidently this was the advice given to all the players, judging by the detachment with which they approached their tasks.

IN BROOKLYN THEATRES.

"Love Birds" to Have Metropolitan Premiere at the Majestic. Pat Rooney and Miss Marion Bent will make their metropolitan debut as stars of musical comedy to-morrow night at the Majestic Theatre in the musical comedy, "Love Birds," produced by William Le Baron. John Charles Thomas still heads the original cast. Includes Misses Elizabeth Murray, Eva Davenport, Elizabeth Hines and Emilie Lee. Edgar Allan Woolf wrote the book. The music is by Sigmund Romberg and lyrics by Ballard MacDonald.

The Selwyns will offer at the Shubert-Crosby "Buddies," George V. Hobart's play of France, with music. The tritars, Miss Peggy Wood, Donald Brian and Ralph Morgan, will head the cast as doughboys, as they did during the successful run at the Selwyn Theatre. The B. F. Keith Sunday evening entertainment at the Academy of Music to-night will have a six reel motion picture, presented by a six act vaudeville, in which Miss Marie Nordstrom and Miss Emma Haig will share the honors. Miss Ethel Levy will be the headliner at the Orpheum. Donald Kerr and His Lady Friends; Sydney Grant, and Franklin Charles and company will be others. Ciccolini, opera tenor, will be the chief performer at the Bushwick. "Nixon's Big Sensations" will be the offering at the Star.



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