"PENELOPE" ABOUNDS WITH WITTY LINES

Marital Happiness Theme of New Comedy by English Playwright.

BRIGHT PORTRAYAL BY MARIE TEMPEST

Comedienne Again Justifies Departure From Musical Comedy Field—Support Acceptable.

By J. R. HILDEBRAND.

The stage seems to abound in good advice for young married folk in this season of 1910. It begins to look like a willful usurpation of the rights of the French drama, which has been said to begin where American plays left off—at marriage.

But British and American playwrights have started out to throw some new light on the subject. Their little problems don't end in the divorce court or in suicide. Far from it. For instance, there is a play at the National this week called "Penelope" which might just as well have been named "How to Live Happily Forever After."

And this play is a sort of companion piece to "What Every Woman Knows" and "A Woman's Way," which Washington has heard about but hasn't seen.

W. Somerset Maugham, who wrote "Penelope," didn't strike any new truths. He elaborated the Emmanuel matrimonial movement idea advanced by J. M. Barrie and others. It's really very simple. The patient must have infinite faith and be kept guessing, that is all. The treatment is left largely to wife-y.

Man Is Defined.

Man, according to Mr. Maugham, is a naturally polygamous animal—which isn't an immoral remark at all. It is only another way of stating Shakespeare's opinion, that woman is of infinite variety. Mr. Maugham thinks that if she isn't she ought to be. It's a sort of battle slogan he sounds—now is the time for all good women to hustle—or something stirring like that.

The little sermon was well preached and couched in such bright lines, too original to have been purloined from Oscar Wilde. It didn't require much of a plot. Dr. O'Farrell had been fed for five years on strawberry-ice love, which seems to be the very acme of affection, and didn't have a taste of an occasional dill pickle. So he planned a little intrigue.

Wife-y, that is Penelope, took counsel with an unnecessarily large number of relatives who came in and went out but didn't have much to do, and she was advised to let hubby have his rein until he tired of it. She did.

Hubby got long leaves of absence by inventing a Mrs. Mack who was in a precarious condition for nearly a month and needed to be operated on weekly. These operations and almost daily consultations kept hubby out late nights. After the reconciliation the Other Woman is told by Penelope that Mrs. Mack is dead. There ensues one of the most delicious scenes of the play.

Miss Tempest's Acting.

The matrimonial experiment couldn't have been placed in better hands than those of Miss Marie Tempest. Her most ardent admirers must grant Miss Tempest a repertoire of little mannerisms and they can't claim that she has a voice that is at all times pleasant. But she had a great deal more excuse for forsaking comic opera than several stars one might mention if it wouldn't be impolite.

She can't weep as effectively as Margaret Anglin, but in her cheerful moments she proved the most "delicious, tantalizing, and buoyant creature," to quote some orchestra neighbors, that Washington has seen for many a day. She has the aptitude of a comedienne for making a sly glance seem infinitely funny ad bringing out the humor of every line.

Mr. Maugham, I was told, drifted from medical practice into the dramatic field. In "Penelope" he disclosed some secrets of the earlier profession. Physicians who split hairs to the extent of prescribing bread toasted on one side only, with jelly on the untoasted side, came in for gentle raillery as did patients who wanted such advice. The part of one patient, dissatisfied because his ailment was not serious, was well played by J. Sebastian Smith.

The clever situations are made by ingenious juggling of the lines rather than by a logical working out of the plot. And though the play is highly enjoyable, it isn't particularly well constructed. The main fault is the introduction of a number of lay figures which, on the whole, were well played. Graham Browne was acceptable as the husband.

LITTLE TO REDEEM PLAY AT COLUMBIA

Little favorable comment can be made of "The Girl With the Whooping Cough," which had its premier metropolitan production last night at the Columbia Theater.

Thoroughly unwholesome in theme and treatment, it has not sufficient comedy nor enough bright lines to serve as a glossing for the coarseness of its lines, the most noticeable feature of the production.

ROOSEVELT TO GO WEST IN AUGUST

Senator Warren of Wyoming received a cablegram from former President Roosevelt stating that he would attend Frontier Day at Cheyenne during the last week in August. Colonel Roosevelt was asked to fix the date, and replied that he could come at that time. The celebration of Frontier Day in Wyoming includes wild west performances and other features indicative of pioneer life and adventure.

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FRENCH OPERA COMPANY QUAINT AND ENJOYABLE

Performance at the Belasco Has Flavor of Cities of the Provinces in France—Men's Voices Heard to Best Advantage in "William Tell."

By ROBERTA V. BRADSHAW.

So long as the French Opera Company is at the Belasco Theater one does not need to travel 'cross sea to witness a deliciously quaint and an altogether "French" production of opera.

Not after the fashion of the classic or impressionistic productions of Paris, but like as nature to the presentations one may see in the large cities on a day's journey out from the capital where opera is a necessity seven days in the week, and not a "stunt" for the entertainment of the fashionable.

To one accustomed to the smoothly moving stage mechanism which distinguishes the New York productions, the peremptory knocking behind the dropped curtain which signalizes that the scene is changed and the play ready to move forward, comes first as a surprise and later as a delicious note of simplicity.

So also is it interesting to note how the house stays bathed in light well into the middle of the act before the stage managers "get around" to the detail of relegating the house to darkness.

Quaintness and simplicity, however, are not by any manner of means a drawback to the performance as given at the Belasco, and that the French visitors pleased their record-breaking audience was amply evidenced by the applause distributed in equal part in the right place, and otherwise.

"William Tell," Rossini's masterpiece, which has delighted three generations of opera goers in all parts of the world, was the work chosen for the initial performance of a week's engagement. The score runs primarily to the men's voices and each of the principals gave a good account of himself, the masculine superiority extending to the chorus which was far more satisfactory in its male voices.

M. Escalais, whom Oscar Hammerstein has signed for next season, made a virile and convincing Arnold both from the histrionic and vocal standpoints, though in many instances he marred his work by a needless straining for volume and effect.

The Walter of M. Huberty was possibly the most effective characterization in the whole performance. To a superb presence M. Huberty made a keen perception of values, and with his fine sonorous voice beautifully delivered, he made a compelling and eye-filling Walter. M. Hansetto, in the titular role of the Swiss patriot, brought fire and vigor to his work as well as a voice altogether adequate to the role. The Jemmy of Mlle. Sterckmans, the Hedwig of Mlle. Mea, the Mathilde of Mme. Cahusac, and the Gessler of M. Cargue were satisfactory in the vocal score and physically pleasing to the eye insomuch as each fitted more than fairly well the general conception of the personages they were depicting.

The choruses in the main were perfunctorily sung, while the orchestra, in not a few instances, quite drowned the singers. Especially was this the case in the famous hunter's chorus, when a very mild-mannered group of nimrods were fairly overwhelmed by a particularly active choir of brasses.

Altogether, the presentation was not only interesting, but enjoyable, and more than well worth the time and money spent by those in attendance.

Tonight, Delibes' Orientally picturesque "Lakme" will be given, with incidental Hindoo dances by Mlle. Fabris, Mlle. Hansens, Mlle. Codolini, and the entire corps de ballet which last night delighted the audience with some wonderful exhibitions of saltatorial art.

Story of Tonight's Opera

"LAKME."

THE scene of Lakme is laid in one of the large cities of India, and in its immediate vicinity, recently subdued and occupied by the English. The opening takes place in the grounds of Nilakantha, a Hindoo priest, whose premises it is considered criminal and worthy of death to profane. A small party of English ladies and officers of the British army find their way thither while strolling about for amusement. They force an entrance through the bamboo inclosure, and, while admiring the beauties of the place, come upon some beautiful jewels which have been laid aside for the moment by the daughter of the Brahmin proprietor. Realizing the impropriety of their presence, they turn to leave; but Gerald, one of the officers, and the lover of Ellen, daughter of the governor, wishing to make a sketch of the jewels for the benefit of his lady-love, remains behind for that purpose while the others depart. Upon reflection he decides to relinquish the idea of copying the form of the jewels, and in the moment of leaving is surprised by the sudden appearance of Lakme just returning from a little excursion upon the neighboring stream.

They are mutually struck by each other's presence, and, seemingly, a case of love at first sight is the result. Lakme demands how and why he came there, and tells him of the death penalty which must follow such intrusion. Gerald expresses his admiration of Lakeme's beauty, and hastily departs, or conceals himself just as the priest-father returns to his home. Nilakantha notices the disturbance of his daughter, and observes the strange footsteps, and declares that the intruder must die if discovered. In the second act the scene is changed to the neighboring city, where a grand Brahminic festival and procession take place in honor of the gods and goddesses of India. Also an Indian bazaar, with its occupations and amusements. Many English residents are present, among them the party of the first act. Also the priest and his daughter disguised as penitents. Nilakantha orders Lakme to sing, believing that she will be heard by the intruder upon his premises, and by his admiration of her beauty and voice will betray himself to his enemy's vengeance. The plan succeeds, Gerald is noted by the pleasure he shows at again meeting with Lakme. Nilakantha, convinced of his guilt, sends his daughter away and consults with his friends upon the manner in which he proposes to take vengeance upon the destroyer of his peace and the intruder upon the sanctity of his home.

Lakme, disobeying the commands of her father, remains at hand, and when, shortly afterward, Gerald is stricken down by the dagger of Nilakantha, she comes forward with her faithful slave, Hadji, and orders him to be carried to a hut concealed in the forest, where, his wound found to be not mortal, she cares for him and restores him to life and strength by the juices of certain plants whose medicinal properties are well known to the Hindoos. There as he recovers, his passion for her increases, and all else, including his former love, seems forgotten. A chorus of voices is heard passing their retreat, which comes from a procession of young lovers on their way to drink the waters of a sacred fountain, said to have the property of making unions lasting. Gerald wishes to drink of this water. Lakme obtains it, and is about to present it to him, when she perceives that a change has come over him during her absence. Meanwhile Frederic has made diligent search for his friend, and at last finds him alone in the hut.

He endeavors to recall him to his duties by telling him that his regiment is ordered off at once to suppress an outbreak among the Hindoos. Gerald promises to be at his post in time, but begs a little delay, that he may once more see and bid adieu to Lakme. Upon receiving this promise, Frederic leaves him at the moment of Lakme's return with the sacred water. As she offers it to Gerald the fifes and drums of his regiment, just leaving for the seat of the rebellion, are heard in the distance. The sound, which recalls him to love and duty, transforms him, and he turns away from the proffered draught. Lakme is shocked by the sudden change in him, which she but too wells knows how to account for. In her heart-breaking despair she gathers and eats some flowers of the deadly poisonous datura stramonium, from the effects of which she dies in his arms just as her father and his friends arrive on the scene.

The cast follows:

Gerald .....M. Nubio
Nilakantha .....M. Cargue
Frederic .....M. Chadal
Hadji .....M. Delaxe
A Chinaman.....M. Driemens
A Fortune Teller.....M. Llevain
Lakme .....Mlle. Rolland
Mallika .....Mlle. Sterckmans
Miss Ellen.....Mlle. Allard
Miss Rose.....Mlle. Vincent
Mrs. Benson.....Mlle. Mea
A Sepoy.....Mlle. Dumont

Peoples, Hindoos and Sailors.

In the second act—Hindoo dance by Mlles. Fabris, Hansens, and Codolina and the entire corps de ballet.

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PAINT AND POWDER COMEDY IS READY

Premiere of Amateur Production in Baltimore Tonight—To Appear Here on Friday.

BALTIMORE, Md., March 29.—The first performance of "The Belle of New York," which will be seen in Washington Friday afternoon, will be presented tonight at Albaugh's Theater. The play will be given by the Paint and Powder Club, Baltimore's amateur theatrical organization, for charity.

Four performances will be given in Baltimore. The others will be tomorrow and Thursday nights. After the matinee at the National Theater, Washington, Friday afternoon, the scenery will be shipped direct to Frederick, where a performance will be given next Monday night at the Frederick Opera House.

The club was founded in 1894, the first president being Dr. Nathan R. Smith. Altogether it has given six different production, the last one in 1908—"Conquering Cupid."

WARD AND VOKES HIT AT ACADEMY

The laugh regulations have been raised at the Academy this week, and Ward and Vokes, ably assisted by Lew Kelly last night pranced through their little two-act musical comedy, "The Promoters," spilling fun as they went.

Ward and Vokes have long since been listed as funny and pleasant acquaintances to the Capital. Saying they are up to past standard is paying them high tribute. But Kelly—well when the three came together it was hard to tell whether the team or Kelly held the higher role. Kelly portrayed Prof. Dope, and was easily the hit of the show. His lines afforded him more opportunity for good comedy than those of the stars.

Lucy Daly scored heavily in her character song, "Betsy Bollver." Sandy Chapman was another who won popularity by his consistent good work in three roles. One of the best portions of the play was the introduction of a chorus girl band. "The Anvil Chorus," "Cubanola Glide," and several other popular numbers, were given.

CASINO—Continuous Vaudeville.

A variety program is offered at the Casino this week that pleased capacity houses yesterday and last night, each performance being attended by a gathering that filled the seats and available standing room.

Grand opera, moving pictures, trained animals, and comedy sketches are included in the bill, which is one of the best ever presented at the cozy theater.

J. Aldrich Libbey, of grand opera fame, and Katharine Trayer hold their auditors by their interpretation of several operettas. Kent's musical seals, which play several instruments, and twirl firebrands in a novel manner, were among the headline acts.

In presenting a comedy acrobatic act the Three Lovetts gave a number of athletic feats that showed exceptional skill. Gilbert Fitzgerald made a hit in "Just Out of College." He was ably assisted in the comedy sketch.

GAYETY—"Fads and Follies."

With an olio equal in length and variety to some of the best bills offered at high class vaudeville houses and presenting two musical melanges that, as producers of mirth and laughter, have not been surpassed this year, the Fads and Follies Extravaganza Company opened at the Gayety last night.

Comedy rich and clean marks the musical portion of the bill. "The Green Sod Club" serves as a means for Roger Imhof, as Casey, about to be initiated, and a host of supporters to display their ability as comedians. May Walsh, May Shirk, Corinne, and others ably assisted Imhof in the farce.

Ned Norton, with songs and recitations, appeared in the olio. Imhof and Corinne, in "A Strange Hotel," depicted the troubles of a peddler whose horse dropped dead nine miles from home. May Walsh and May Shirk had their auditors singing in unison the chorus of "The Old Gray Bonnet."

A troupe of Russian singers, dancers, and musicians made the hit of the olio. John A. West and his musical wolf, concluded the olio.

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OPERATIC NUMBER HEADS CHASE BILL

Tuscany Troubadours and Eight Berlin Madcaps Week's Features.

Acrobatic and novelty dancing by the Eight Berlin Madcaps and excerpts from operatic masterpieces by the Tuscany Troubadours are the distinctive features of this week's bill at Chase's.

A hearty reception was accorded the sextet of vocalists.

In "The Billiken Freshmen" Wynn and Lee repeat their former success of patter, parodies, and paroxysms. Mr. Wynn's Panama hat is again much in evidence.

Howard, a ventriloquist recently imported, entertains at length with the sketch, "The Doctor's Shop." Tsuda, with his revolving globe, is an expert at triple balancing, and Mallia and Bart as "The Baggage Smashers," do some excellent comedy tumbling.

Wormwood's dog and monkey circus is a departure from the ordinary acts in that line, and the antics of the various members from the jungles were extremely amusing.

An interesting feature of the program is the vitagraph pictures of the United States Army maneuvers at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. G. B. R.

LYCEUM—Sam T. Jack Company.

Sam T. Jack's Company, presenting "A Midnight Spree," "Teddy in the Jungle," and "Fun in a Seminary," is at the Lyceum this week, and a capacity house last night enjoyed one of the best shows seen at this theater in some time.

Abe Leavitt furnished the bulk of the comedy work, while the female contingent was headed by Blanch Washburn. During the olio the principal members of the company are given a chance to do their specialties. The singing and dancing act of Eddie Barto was a good one. The extra attraction was Cora Livingston, whom the program styles the world's champion female wrestler.

Miss Miller, a Washington girl, went on the mat with her last night and succeeded in staying the limit of ten minutes, winning the purse of $25 offered any female wrestler whom Miss Livingston fails to throw in ten minutes. There was an argument about the time and much excitement prevailed until the management turned over the purse to Miss Miller. They will meet again Wednesday night, when Miss Livingston will endeavor to throw the Washington girl in fifteen minutes for double the usual purse.

MIDWAY.

The first of the fun-seeking crowds of the week at the Midway last night broke records so far since the big pleasure palace has been opened. The Midway has evidently taken a big hold on that part of the public which is looking for clean fun of the kind that the biggest amusement enterprises can offer.

The human roulette wheel was filled with a laughing crowd all evening. Around the wheel the boxes were filled with people who came to watch the fun. Whether it is more fun to watch the people on the wheel or to actually ride on the whirling thing is yet to be decided.

The orchestra had several of the season's musical hits in its program last night, and gave an almost continual concert from 8 until 11.

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