

# THE THEATERS

## LOS ANGELES TO SEE THEATER WAR

**F**ORMAL announcement has been made that the new Majestic theater, now being built for Oliver Morosco, will be conducted as a vaudeville house, the attractions to be furnished by Klaw & Erlanger. Rumors to this effect have been current for some time, but were met with denials until last week, when matters were finally arranged, the Schubert bookings that had been made for the Majestic being transferred to the Mason.

The significance of the move is plain. It means that Los Angeles is to witness a vaudeville war of the first magnitude between the so-called syndicate forces and the Orpheum. That it will be a battle royal is assured. The Orpheum people for years have had things all their own way west of Chicago, and they will not resign their primacy easily. They are firmly entrenched, their houses have an established clientele and all of them are paying.

On the other hand they have already suffered a loss in the desertion of "Big Tim" Sullivan to the syndicate forces. It is a fact not generally known that Sullivan is himself heavily interested in the syndicate. His is the money back of Abe Erlanger, and once the syndicate decided to fight the Orpheum it did not take the astute Erlanger long to persuade his backer that it would be well if the friendly relations heretofore existing between the Sullivan and Conditin houses and the Orpheum interests were allowed to cool.

The preliminary skirmish gun in the local field was fired some time ago when the People's theater was opened, here as a Sullivan and Conditin house, the relationship to the syndicate being clearly established through managerial affiliations with the Mason.

All this looks rather dark for the Orpheum. However, it is only one side of the picture. The reverse is highly interesting.

Martin Beck, manager of the Orpheum circuit, has not been caught napping. He is an adept in the art of fighting fire with fire and he dearly loves a good shindy. Consequently, when he discovered that the trust was out to wipe the Orpheum houses off the map he decided to organize a trust of his own. This, it is said, has now been accomplished.

### Seeks Aid in Europe

First Beck formed an offensive and defensive alliance with Proctor & Keith. Then he secured the adherence of the Williams combination. Next he went abroad.

Now it is a well known fact that the biggest vaudeville acts on the American stage in recent years have been importations from abroad. Beck knew this. Also, through long continued dealings with foreign managers and booking agencies he knew just what interests were strongest entrenched and just how to reach them.

Last week a conference was held at the Hotel Fortum in Paris. When it broke up the International Booking syndicate had been organized. And then Martin Beck leaned back in his chair and cried:

"Checkmate"

According to press dispatches the deal embraces the Keith & Proctor, Orpheum and Williams houses in America, thirty-eight of the best known theaters of the continent and a large number in England. The names of those in England are guarded from the public at present.

The theatrical managers present at the conference were F. Steiner of the Berlin Wintergarten, Percy G. Williams and Martin Beck, general manager of the Orpheum circuit; M. Ruez, who controls the four leading variety theaters in Paris; H. B. Marinell, who manages the booking of attractions for the Continental four, and W. Passpart, European representative of Beck and Mr. Meyerfield, working on English combination. The continental theaters which it is understood will be operated under the organization include in Paris the Folies Bergeres, the Olympia, the Parisiana and the Printania.

The vaudeville fight, however, will not be the only interesting feature of the season about to open. John Cort's invasion of Southern California is a move of much importance. Cort, as already announced, has secured the old Hotchkiss, has remodelled it and will operate the house in connection with his chain of one hundred and forty-one theaters in the northwest and along the coast. He will play the cheaper priced syndicate attractions that have in the past gone to the Mason. The house has been renamed the Mason. The Los Angeles theater and already is booked solidly, the bookings showing a large number of plays that were expected to be on the Mason list.

Cort is one of the few men who do not have to truckle to the syndicate. With his big chain of houses and booking arrangements in Canada he is something of a trust himself. However, he is on very friendly terms with the heads of the New York organization, as is shown by the party to come into Los Angeles, lease a hoodooed theater and take bookings away from the Mason.

He gained his first foothold in California through booking arrangements with a local theater which he had the American theater at San Francisco. Los Angeles came next and there are still other towns in the state that will be added to Cort territory later on.

The Cort attractions will come here from San Francisco and will return east over the Salt Lake route, playing the Cort houses in Salt Lake City, Ogden, Boise, Pocatello and Denver. Before reaching San Francisco they will play west over the northwest circuit, including theaters at Great Falls, Helena, Butte, Spokane, Tacoma, Seattle, Vancouver, Victoria, Portland, Salem and so on.

It is freely predicted that Cort's invasion of Los Angeles will lead ultimately to a struggle between himself and Wyatt, though that is a detail for the future.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

**MASON**—A Kendall play in a Kendall way, which means a fun play, full of wholesome wit and humor, and a simple yet interesting love story which gets a real grip on one's heart is "Swell Elegant Jones," in which Ezra Kendall comes to the Mason opera house for the week beginning tomorrow night. The character assumed by Mr. Kendall is that of a newly rich, homely sort of man whom his neighbors in derision designate as "Swell Elegant" on account of his efforts to live up to his recently acquired wealth.

When Mr. Kendall began his career on the stage he declared that the public was more appreciative of good, clean humor, crisp witticisms and snappy satire than other methods of producing laughs, and his success has been won by adhering to these lines. He has never changed his methods, for as he himself says:

"I couldn't be different if I would, and I wouldn't if I could."



EZRA KENDALL IN "SWELL ELEGANT JONES" AT THE MASON THIS WEEK

## THE WEEK'S BILLS

**AUDITORIUM**—Dark.  
**BELASCO**—"The Charity Ball."  
**BURBANK**—"The Little Minister."  
**GRAND**—"East Lynne."  
**MASON**—Ezra Kendall in "Swell Elegant Jones."  
**ORPHEUM**—Vaudeville.  
**EMPIRE**—Vaudeville.  
**FISCHER'S**—"The Troubles of a Manager."  
**PEOPLE'S**—Vaudeville.  
**UNIQUE**—Vaudeville.



EDYTHE CHAPMAN NEILL, AT THE ORPHEUM

Given this play drawn along his most successful lines of fun making Mr. Kendall, it is said, brings to the title part quite humor, unctuous comedy and satirical wit. The stage settings are well done, the second act mountings having been especially constructed to carry "atmosphere" of a country cottage at a crossroad. John Stapleton, the stage director of "Checkers," "The Virginian," "The Heir to the Hoohah" and other successes, staged the comedy.

**BURBANK**—Barrie's delightful story of Scotch life, "The Little Minister," which laid the foundation of Maude Adams' success, will be Manager Morosco's offering for the coming week. Miss Adams and Miss Blanche Hall are probably the two most petite leading women on the stage, and the latter in the effish character of winsome, laughing Lady Babbie should develop piquant charm. The Frohman version which Mr. Morosco presents avoids the wearisome monotony of three or four scenes to each act.

Mr. Frawley is said to be peculiarly adapted to the role of Gavin Dishart, the little Scotch dominie. Arthur Rutledge reappears in the cast as Bob Dow, and the new acquisition, Mr. Beasley, has the important part of Lord Rintoul, which was played by Eugene Jordon three years ago when the Frohman company visited the Mason opera house. The striking character of the old, unbending Scotch elder has been assigned to John Burton. Little Fay Bainter is to have the boy part of Micah Dow. Miss Gilbert will play the French maid, Felice. Harry Mestayer will appear as Halliwell. The atheist character of Cruikshanks will be entrusted to Mr. Ginn, while Louis Royce will be seen as Nannie Webster.

The piece will be mounted in the usual effective Burbank manner.

**GRAND**—"East Lynne," the ever popular masterpiece of the emotional drama, will be the offering by the Ulrich stock company at the Grand opera house for the week. The management has been besieged by requests from the patrons of the house for the repetition of this play. Florence Barker will be seen in the character of Barbara Hare, Lillian Hayward

is cast for Lady Isabel, and the new member of the company, little Lella Bliss, will play the child's part of Little Willie.

**ORPHEUM**—The Orpheum program for the week of August 5 is reasonably sure to find favor with patrons of the popular vaudeville house. It includes James Neill and Edythe Chapman Neill, old Los Angeles favorites, who will present a comedy by Julian Street entitled "The Lady Across the Hall." "The Stunning Grenadiers" is an elaborate production containing four scenes, four complete changes of costume and many bewilderingly beautiful effects. With the "Grenadiers," who are in reality six magnificent young women, are Meredith Merced, the American prima donna, who has recently created a sensation in London, and Maude Corbett, an English comedienne of more than ordinary reputation. Roberts, Hayes and Roberts will present an uproariously funny sketch, "The Cowboy, the Swell and the Lady," one of the greatest vaudeville hits of the season. "Les Merveilleux Jardins" will be seen in their sensational equilibrium act. Benjamin Chapin will be seen again in his Lincoln play; Muller, Chunn and Muller in their hoop-rolling novelty, and Willard Smms, the popular comedian, will repeat the wall-papering scene which has made him famous.

**BELASCO**—"The Charity Ball," David Belasco and H. C. DeMille's well known comedy-drama, will receive the attention of the Belasco company this week. The piece is one of the standard plays of the native stage, and while it was written when the New York Lyceum theater was in the height of its popularity the story is of such strength and is so expertly told that the drama is just as interesting to the theatergoer of today as when it was originally produced. Hobart Bosworth will make use of Clyde Fitch's comedy-drama, "Her Own Way," which will serve to introduce the newly acquired



LILLIAN HAYWARD—GRAND

leading woman, Blanche Stoddard, in the role made familiar by Maxine Elliott. Besides Miss Stoddard the cast for "Her Own Way" will include the new ingenue of the company, Miss Violet Rand, while additional interest will be given to the performance by the return from their vacations of Lewis S. Stone and Richard Vivian.

**FISCHER'S**—Herr Fischer's offering for next week at Fischer's First street theater is a distinctively theatrical one. Its title is "The Troubles of a Manager." It is a play of one side of the theatrical manager's life. Briefly the plot deals with the attempt of a manager to take a vaudeville show "on the road." He advertises for comedians and specialists with all sorts of "bum" actors, who make their entrance to and exit from the manager's office in quick rotation, being helped in the later performance by a precocious office boy, who upon hearing the word "sidoo" from the manager, ejects the callers with more force than politeness. This part will be taken by Billy Onslow. The manager's role will be played by Tracy McDermott, well known here. Jolly Zeb will be seen as an acrobat whose specialty is standing on his head. Mile. Patience, an alleged singer, imagining herself the American Patti, will be played by Dolly Graham. A Walker Bum, a two-minute-a-minute pedestrian, will be depicted by Lew Dunbar. Of musical numbers the show has plenty. "The Girl with the Bang-Jo Eyes," "The Trials of a Theatrical Manager," "What's the Use of Living,"



JAMES NEILL, AT THE ORPHEUM

After All" and one or two other New York successes are the features. The chorus will be seen in several dashing drills and snappy numbers. Vaudeville and a fine string of motion pictures complete the bill.

**UNIQUE**—Major James D. Doyle, "the great little man," will be the headliner at the Unique during the coming week. The major is coming direct from the Great White Way and his peculiar stories and funny songs should prove a stellar drawing card. The Monarchs are also on the new bill with a novel musical act, and Thomas Meegan & Co., comedy sketch artists, may be depended upon to furnish a half hour's pleasant entertainment. Richard Cummings' "A Jury Trial" will be presented by the Unique comedy company, which can be relied upon to contribute their full share of fun to the evening's program. The popular Edythe Edmunds will sing the illustrated songs and the Unique-oscope operator promises a surprise in two unusually attractive films that have just been imported.

**EMPIRE**—The headliner at the Empire for the week beginning Tuesday will be Prof. Dowell, illusionist. Other numbers will be presented by the Whalens, in a German comedy sketch; La Bell and Bruns, contortionists and acrobats; Laura Banks in illustrated songs. The Empire stock company will present a laughable farce entitled "The Policemen's Ball" and moving pictures will complete the bill.

Walter N. Lawrence's production of "The Three of Us," by Rachel Crothers, which ran for a year in New York and had a most successful summer run in Chicago, will be the first independent attraction to come to the Pacific coast. It will be seen in Los Angeles

## OBSERVATIONS BY A FIRST-NIGHTER

With the arrival of Ezra Kendall and his company at the Mason tomorrow night the regular fall season of that playhouse will be in full swing. Maude Adams in "Peter Pan" closed the last season, Ethel Barrymore in the revived "Captain Jinks" and "Carrots" treated us to a delightful interlude. Now the fall season is at hand, and it is brilliant in promise of good things to come.

From September to Christmas time and beyond the Mason is booked almost solidly. This month there will be two vacant weeks—one between the Kendall engagement and the engagement of "The Prince Chap," and the other between the "Prince Chap's" close and the opening of "The Man of the Hour." After that the early season bookings include Fritz Scheff in "Mile. Modiste," Frank Daniels in "The Tattooed Man," Olga Nethersole and Louis James.

At the Mason one season has followed so close upon the other's heels that there has been no time for redecorating or other improvements. However, a new fire sprinkler system has been installed on the stage.

Tim Frawley, whose engagement at the Burbank continues for five weeks more, is to have a theater of his own in Oakland. Papers in the deal were signed last week and when Frawley leaves here he will go to Oakland to superintend the building of the house. Oakland capitalists will finance the enterprise.

Ezra Kendall who is at the Mason this week in "Swell Elegant Jones" has a reputation as a humorist, built upon the fact that he has published several books, all of which have been successful. Here are a few of Mr. Kendall's thought kinks, from a forthcoming volume.

"Blue blood is the heritage of lazy lineage. It's the birthmark of ancestral inactivity."

"Did you ever have a food fight in the stomach? It's caused from eating scraps."

"On some of those Indiana trolley systems, the stations are so close together the car has to begin to stop before it commences to start."

"In a southern village I ran into a lunch room to get a bite while the engine was being changed on the train. I finally flagged a shaving mug full of coffee. Then I sidetracked a biscuit that threatened to go by me. On the shaving mug were the words 'Remember me,' and some one had written on the biscuit, 'Forget it.'"

"In a crowd in New York one day I said to the man next to me, 'Pardon me, but if I am not mistaken you have your hand in my pocket.' He excused himself and said he was looking for his pocket-book. 'Why don't you look in your own pocket,' I said. He replied, 'I did and it wasn't there.'"

Lewis Stone and his wife returned to Los Angeles from their mountain climbing expedition early last week and left the day after for Catalina. The trip over was something to be remembered. I shall not tell you the Belasco's leading man was seasick, because I have been warned under dire penalty to say nothing about it. Perhaps he proved himself as good a sailor as he is an actor and perhaps not. Of course I am not responsible for any inference you might draw in the matter.

On their arrival in the Banning empire, however, Stone invested in a souvenir postal card and scribbled a few lines to a friend. The note read as follows:

"Water seeks its level, the scientist do tell; Seeks it like the devil, makes me feel unwell. I wouldn't so much mind it, except this awful lurch; O fish, water, find it, or else give up the search."

Leslie King, character man at the Grand, has brand new baby in his family, which he hasn't yet seen. Mrs. King is in Berkeley and last week her husband received the usual stereotyped message: "Mother and child doing well." He was rather rattled at first and announced to Charles Gunn that he didn't know whether he was a father or a mother, later explaining that he meant to say he didn't know whether the child was a boy or a girl. The next mail, however, solved the problem. The baby is a girl. And now the fond papa is trying to hit upon a name good enough for the youngster.

Miss Lillian Albertson and Miss Marian Ebers connect their connection with the Belasco company upon the fall of the curtain next Saturday night on the final act of "The Charity Ball." Hinc illae lachrymae. Both young women have made numerous friends and admirers since their arrival in Los Angeles who will be loath to see them go. However, we must bear it, even if we can't muster a grin. They will go east together, taking with them the best wishes of the Belasco clientele.

Passing out of the Burbank theater one night last week I overheard a pretty compliment to Miss Maude Gilbert. The remark was made by a young woman who was "coming upon the mark." Improvement shown in Miss Gilbert's acting since she joined the Burbank forces.

"It will not be long," she said, "before we shall be able to accept Miss Gilbert at her face value." The young woman's venture to say the player never received a finer compliment in her life, and from a member of her own sex, too.

Speaking of Miss Gilbert, perhaps you noticed how well she and Byron Beasley worked together last week. That is because they are used to it. Three years ago both of them were members of Dick Ferris' stock company at the Lyceum theater, Minneapolis, and last week's love making on the stage, of course—must have seemed quite like old times. After leaving Minneapolis Maude Gilbert became leading woman of a Chicago stock company, and Beasley took to the road. He was seen here earlier in the season, at the Mason, in support of Robert Edeson, in "Strongheart."

Dickie Vivian returns on his own at the Belasco this week after a vacation passed with his mother-in-law and father-in-law in Cincinnati, where the chief diversion just at present is trying to keep cool. Vivian had an exceedingly hot time of it and he lost flesh. He has brought back with him an increased regard for Los Angeles and a new story which I promised not to print until he had had a chance to work it off on his friends. A really new story in Vivian's repertoire is an event, as you may realize if you knew him. Consequently I shall forbear, not out of consideration for him but for his intimates who have smiled so often at chestnuts that they really should have one good laugh coming.

Ben Greed's players have been giving outdoor performances in Milwaukee.