

CURRENT OFFERINGS IN THE LOCAL THEATERS



MRS. W. W. O'BRIEN, LOS ANGELES

THE DIARY OF A REFORMED PRESS AGENT

(Written in Retrospect)

CHAPTER II

When I reached Chicago that city was in the throes of an artistic convulsion. Maeterlinck had just been discovered and symbolism was eagerly sought in the stock yards and the purlieus of "Bathhouse John." You fairly scented oriental mysticism and esoteric truth, among other things, as you came thundering into the jolly old town in the early evening. Later the word "high brow" was coined to fit the crime. Since then it has overlapped and is impartially applied to anything which the user does not understand. But I am wandering. The maid of the house knows of this and when a rich widow calls with her silly son and endeavors to purchase the doll for him, the maid substitutes the inventor's daughter. When the old man and the boy examine the doll they are astounded to find that it is alive. From this complication the laughs break out. At the end the apprentice steps in and wins the girl. Nan Halperin will enact the daughter of the old inventor, Max Steine will be the inventor and Billy Onslow the boy. Miss Mattie Hyde, a new member of the company, will play the widow, Miss Bauman has an excellent part as the maid.

UNIQUE—To meet the popular demand the Harry Earl-Grace Hawthorn company will produce the "Lost mine," a real, old fashioned melodrama, next week, beginning Monday evening. The story deals with a character familiar to the mining camps of the early days, a drunken miner who has discovered a rich claim and who works just enough to get sufficient gold to keep him in food and whiskey. His secret becomes known to several designing miners, who attempt to influence him to give up his holdings through an appeal to his heart. They threaten his daughter with starvation unless he accedes to their wishes, but in the end the villain is thwarted. Harry Earl will be Jim Hawkins, a dishonest gambler, Miss Hawthorn will play Samantha Clayton, who is instrumental in aiding Joe Williams, the miner, played by Fred Palmer, to keep his mine. Mr. Spencer, Mr. Cramer, Mr. Miller, Frank Freyne, Miss Noel and Miss Garle will all be seen in suitable roles. There will be the usual matinees, with the popular reception Wednesday.

OLYMPIC—"Town Topics" will be the next comedy to be presented by the Alphin-Fargo musical comedy company, beginning Monday. This comedy, written by Charles Alphin, is laid in a hotel above Angelo's flight, and deals with incidents of the day. It is built up with musical novelties such as only Charles Alphin can devise and for which the Olympic theater has earned its popularity. The cast, strengthened by several new members, includes Jules Funn, and the week of January 24, he leaves she has not received fair treatment from many newspapers, and declares that since she has left the management of David Belasco, a different attitude has characterized the press in discussing her work as an emotional actress.

Because New York reviewers wrote that she was not fitted for the role of Paula Marsh in Charles Klein's "Next of Kin," Miss Hedwig Roicher wrote a letter to her manager, Henry E. Harris, withdrawing from the cast. She has been succeeded by Grace Ellison.

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hypnotic fascination night after night, trying to twist them into the fabric of my success as a press agent. One evening after the show, while my hopes and fortunes were at their lowest ebb (it always happens so, does it not?) I wandered into the office building next door and casually discovered a new world. On the third floor, incidentally communicating with the second floor of the theater by the courtesy of a suborned usher, was a little room of dingy aspect, portentous to my fortunes. It was the headquarters of the Druids' club, an organization of newspaper and other spirits, rarely kindred, frequently in hostile collision. Here fongathered reporters, editors, cartoonists and one long-suffering business man to smoke and row and disturb the air with wild and whirling words of aspiring sedition. The arena was occupied nightly from 2 a. m. until daybreak.

Rashly I rushed in upon the brotherhood one night, succeeded in pre-empting a membership on sufferance and began to think how to turn my stroke of luck to financial advantage. The conversation turned to the stage, and then, by my adroit maneuvering, upon tenors. I casually mentioned the gentleman whose voice might have been heard some hours earlier through the secret entrance to the playhouse. I found willing conspirators at once. In dire and guilty conference we concocted a plot.

The next afternoon I made acquaintance with the Signor. He was a simple-minded boy who did his best to be agreeable in a language of no little mystery to him. My conscience smote me at what I was about to do, and then I reflected that the experience,

after all, might be a sort of education to him in the ways of America. By such simple and sinister means may a press agent justify his dark intent? I readily convinced the wanderer from across the seas that his attire was not quite becoming to his importance. The hair, especially, I strove to show him, was an all important feature of the success of the artist. I mentioned the magic name of Paderewski. I showed him the picture of the greatest of the early American school of Booth. He brightened visibly at each suggestion. Directly juring him to a costume's, I played upon his simple, mediæval nature with a devilish resolve. I lashed the dress of drab-souled moderns as a thing abhorrent to the spirit of the artist. I pictured the glories of the sunset as the color scheme most appropriate to the vocalization of all swift and receding melody. His heart was at my feet. I felt it, and I went relentlessly on with my shameless scheme.

An obliging customer furnished me a splendidly regal outfit. Colors garish and shyly seductive mingled in the robes of sham velvet, and absurdly pointed shoes, looking like the attenuated fingernails of a Chinese mandarin in a comic opera, were fitted upon his confiding feet. A massive Oriental turban (I never learned the proper name for it) was selected. I felt secure in my hopes because the week's bill was in the nature of a recital—not in costume, unless the harmless and inoffensive, dress suit might so be termed.

Then to the hair dressers! With a childish glee he consented to having his opulent tresses frizzed and curled and spirally elongated from front and side and rear. I refused him permission to look in the mirror, assuring him that an artist's judgment in the matter of makeup was traditionally lax and inefficient. Fifteen minutes before time for his first solo we were ready, he exuding expectation, I timorously triumphant.

I whisked him through the side door and down a rickety flight of stairs to his dressing room, well muffled in his huge ulster. I did not leave him for a moment. When the call boy summoned him to the stage I pressed his hand in parting, affectionately, and then stole down in front to watch.

The opening bars of his solo came sweetly from the orchestra. There was the hush of eager anticipation and the rustle of ambitious approval among the elect matrons of the bald-head rows.

Then he came.

He had kept faith. Arrayed in all the colors of a paint salesman's instructive catalogue, he seemed a dream of primitive Eden, or rather a radiant vision of the last. He advanced modestly and removed his turban. In a dozen different states of decomposition, the locks of Medusa darted forth (longest of subtle fit). (The last sentence is from my report of the proceedings, which one unvarying editor printed next day.) But hair and raiment all paled and vanished to the eye before the magnificent and dazzling confidence of his Latin smile. Obviously, he felt the glee and comic joy of the innovator who stands upon the sure ground of past centuries.

The audience had risen and was staring with fallen jaws of unconventional wonder. Then, little by little, a titter rose from the family circle. It descended to balcony and pit. It rose into something between a shout and a wail. The American spirit of reckless mirth, pent up for a moment by a feeling of duty to art, broke its bonds with a shriek of liberated delight.

The Signor was bowing. Then he hesitated and stared about him. Was this the American way of greeting the man of daring in the service of Beauty? He looked up and down the theater in some perplexity. He had half raised an imploring arm, when the orchestra leader, by an inspired impulse, started the "Stars and Stripes Forever," and next moment the stage manager, that human "hook," had dragged the baffled soloist into the seclusion of the wings.

I sold my story for a fair price and sat down to think it over. I was more than half ashamed of myself, but I felt that henceforth for me Chicago would not be a healthy place for such reflections.

In a dream I purchased a ticket for some place west of the Mississippi (I did not know where until the conductor sourly informed me next morning). As the train tore out of the ward at Chicago, it seemed to me that its tall chimneys were waving a blithe goodby to me. I went into the smoking car and lit a pipe.

(To be continued, unless enjoined by law.)

SCENE FROM "WOODLAND," GRAND

ETTA LOCKHART, "THE ALASKAN," MAJESTIC

CURRENT BILLS

MASON—To those who mourn the supposed decadence of Shakespeare it may be interesting to chronicle the fact that in New York city this season the classic revivals of Shakespeare, Lytton, Sheridan, etc., ran for more than 120 performances, a record that compares very favorably with the achievements of half a century ago. Buoyed up by this cheerful fact, as well as by his own confidence in the classic drama, Louis James will revive "Henry VIII" and "The Merchant of Venice" in four performances here, beginning Thursday night. The Wolsey and the Shylock of Mr. James are well known characterizations, but the Queen Katherine and the Portia of Aphie James will be anticipated with the interest of novelty. Especial care is said to have been given to the productions, adhering in scenic investiture and tradition to the best models. The cast includes Harold Forrest, Otto F. Andre, William A. Howell, Edmund Flais, Harrison Thompson, Hampstead Prince, Richard Scott, James Howe, Paul Terhune, Henry Hempel, Ida Werner, Vera Walton, and incidentally LeRoy Swaine, a native of Los Angeles, whose appearance with Mr. James has attracted widespread interest among his many friends. Thursday night "Henry VIII" will be produced; Friday night and Saturday matinee, "The Merchant of Venice," and Saturday night, "Henry VIII."

persuaded by his daughter, seeks to aid him with collateral sufficient to cover the missing funds it develops that the governor in his youth had himself been a defaulter. For this reason his offer is refused. At the last minute, however, Mr. Pendleton, one of the directors, saves the bank, and in the end Prescott is exonerated. A Byron Beasley will play the cashier and Miss Frances Nordstrom his fiancée. Fay Bainter will return to the Burbank in this play. Others in the cast are David M. Hartford, director; David Landau, Henry Stockbridge, Harry Mestayer, John W. Burton, Willis Marks, H. Duffield, Lovell Alice Taylor, Louise Royce, Ethel von Waldron and Florence Grand.

ORPHEUM—Beginning with the usual matinee Sunday, Ferris Hartman and his company will present for the first time by a western stock organization Pixley and Luders' "Woodland." Mr. Hartman paid \$1000 for the rights to produce the piece. The plot of "Woodland" is exceedingly dainty and refreshing, unconventional, for it is lodged in the woods and such things as streets and towns and world-weary people do not figure at all. All the characters are birds—and no joke, that. There are three scores young women costumed to represent blackbirds, canaries, pert wrens, statuesque peacecocks, demure doves and mischievous sparrows, with the comical bluejay and the foolishly mad rooster, who are the cause of all the other's troubles. Mr. Pixley has written a whimsical book, and some rippling lyrics, while Gustave Luders' music is usually its own recommendation. The production of "Woodland" will give Los Angeles theatergoers their first opportunity to hear Mr. Hartman's new prima donna, Edna Lorimer White, who will make her first appearance in the role of Prince Eagle. Mr. Hartman will be seen as the comical bluejay, while the other important roles of General Rooster, Judge Owl, Miss Nightingale, Henry Wren, Turtle Dove, etc., will be allotted to the other principals of the company. The chorus will be well to the fore. The costumes are those used in the original Henry W. Savage production while the scenery has been painted for this production in the Savage studios.

"The Alaskan" with a great many touches of color. Every prop, such as a walrus hide canoe, has its significance, all of the fur costumes have been imported from across the border, and the remarkable sledge team of dogs is introduced on two occasions. All of these dogs won ribbons in a show in Chicago, and every one of them has a history on the frozen trail that would make Jack London jealous. They are in charge of an Alaskan "musher," Bill Brady, who is a government mail carrier to points as far north as some amateur explorers ever reach.

ORPHEUM—The Orpheum road show, usually the acme of all that is best in vaudeville, comes to the Orpheum, beginning Monday matinee, January 17, under Martin Beck's personal direction. The coming of the aggregation is a yearly event without parallel in local amusement circles. The road show this year contains five picked acts, each heading its own class, and not one of them possible of view anywhere else. They are the personal pick by Mr. Beck for the show, which is the pride of his heart. The sketch is "A Bit of Old Chelsea," a classic by Mrs. Oscar Berringer and presented by special arrangement with Harrison Grey Fiske. In it Mrs. Fiske made one of her greatest hits. Miss Ida O'Day and a carefully selected company will interpret it. Miss O'Day's appearance in vaudeville, oddly enough, was as a band soloist. She graduated from this into stock work and rose steadily till she is now a vaudeville leading woman. The little play itself makes a powerful appeal, with its odd contrasts of humor and pathos. The sensationally spectacular act is furnished by La Titeomb, known abroad as La Belle Americaine and as "La Chatouille Music Hall," a native Californian, is just that—the singer on horseback! With the aid of a superb white horse and clad in tight-fitting white, she makes a stage picture, and a light and airy, and much splendor of environment. She sings several selections, gives a number of posings and finally does a skirt dance on horseback—an act impossible of imitation. Her repertoire is broad, in Paris and London, has been fully equaled since she returned to America at Mr. Beck's behest. Maud Roicher will offer the animal act, "A Night in a Monkey Music Hall," wherein every actor is a Simian. A miniature music hall, with stage, orchestra pit and audience hall, is set up, and the monkeys not only enact the stunts but play the music and look on. The orchestra leader is called "The Simian Creator," Mae Melville and Robert Higgins will offer "Just a Little Fun," and their audiences will certainly take the adjective in a Pickwickian sense. Hyman Meyer, "the man at the piano," another California product, was with the last road show and is a fixture, as no one approaches him for playlogue humor. His "Chicken Patti" is a classic. Holding over are the Klein family, cyclists; Fay, two Coleys and Fay, minstrels, and the four Readings—hand balancers, with new motion pictures.

LOS ANGELES—So great has been the success of Carlotta in her heyday loop-the-loop that for the first time in the vaudeville history of the Los Angeles theater Sullivan and Connelino have been obliged to violate their time-worn rule of a complete change every week, and hold the daring young woman over for a second big week. This without doubt the most sensational act ever given at this theater in recent memory and has attracted great interest. Another headline on the new bill opening Monday will be Sydney Deane and his company of singers in the vocal novelty, "Christmas on Blackwell's Island." This act was originally given at one of the Lamb's club gambols, after which Mr. Deane took it into vaudeville, where it proved a success. Other acts on the new program will be the sensational European acrobats the Brothers Damm; Kathleen DeVole, a dainty singing comedienne; George H. Wood, a comedian with a style all his own, with Mr. and Mrs. O. W. O'Brien, in their rhapsodical skit, "Dorings of the Hour." Exclusive of these

BLASCO—Theatergoers will pass judgment on a new play by one of America's younger dramatists Monday night. The play is "The Spendthrift." It is the work of Porter Emerson Browne, a well known magazine writer, whose play, "A Fool There Was," is being given by Robert Hilliard in syndicate theaters in the east. The Blasco company's production of "The Spendthrift" is made by special arrangement with Frederic Thompson, who will present the play at the Hackett theater early in the spring. "The Spendthrift" is a comedy-drama with all of its four acts laid in New York city. The two central figures are a young broker and his wife. This wife has been brought up, together with her sister, by a rich aunt, a keen business woman—Mr. Browne might easily have had Hetty Green in mind when he drew this character. The broker is a hardworking, brilliant, and to all appearances, successful business man, but strive as he may the extravagances of his wife bring him to the verge of ruin in the banking business. The wife borrows \$20,000 and explains to her husband that she has acquired the money from her aunt. From this deception the situations arise. Lewis S. Stone will have the part of the young husband, while Miss Magrane will be seen as the wife. Richard Vivian will have a congenial comedy role, while Miss Lewis, Mr. Farrington, Mr. Yerance, Mr. Scott and the rest of the company will fill the other parts.

BURBANK—Beginning this afternoon and including the matinee Saturday, the piece selected for presentation is "Men and Women," written by David Belasco in collaboration with the late H. C. DeMille. It has been several years since his drama was last seen in Los Angeles. Its revival recalls the fact that "Men and Women" was the first American play to find romance in a counting house and sentiment in the banking business. The central figures are William Prescott, cashier of the Jefferson National bank in New York city, and Agnes Rodman, daughter of the governor of Arizona and the young woman with whom Prescott is in love. The big scene is in the third act, which shows a midnight meeting of the bank's directors, together with the bank examiner in the library of President Cohen's home. An extensive defalcation has been discovered and the directors meet to determine whether the bank shall open next day or suspend payment. Prescott is accused of the theft and when Governor Rodman,

MAJESTIC—"The Alaskan" will come to the Majestic for a week's stay beginning tonight, with Wednesday and Saturday matinees. Since its former production it has been freely re-adapted by Richard F. Carroll and Gus Weinburg, its principal comedians. "The Alaskan" passed into the hands of William Cullen last spring by arrangement with John Carr. Under his instructions Mr. Carroll and Mr. Weinburg went to work, sparing the narrative and the musical numbers but building up several ingenious specialties for the second act. As tried out in its five months' run in Chicago, "The Alaskan" was found to be known mainly by one number called "Snowballing," in which eight Eskimo girls pelted the audience with snowballs made of yarn, and were vigorously and genially pelted in return. The duration of this number is dependent upon the humor and the strength of the people in front. The Chicago Cubs and White Sox once sat in front and curved them across, only to find that their targets could not be driven to cover. "Hi Hi Hi," another specialty, is a review of all of the popular methods of song writing, with a characteristic dance for each number. The rest of the cast includes Detmar Poppen in the role of Totem Pole Pete, who sings "The Totem Pole," and who has played in the west in the title role of "The Show-Gun" and is also accompanied DeWolf Hopper on tour in "Happyland." The hero of the story, Dick Atwater, will be played by John R. Phillips, who figured in the plot of "The Tenderfoot" under Mr. Cullen's management. Miss Jessie Stoner, new to the west but well known in the east, will be the heroine, who has "grubbed" the mining prospectors. Important in the specialties is agile Kuko, an Eskimo girl, played by Miss Etta Lockhart. Sidney Algiers, an experienced animal actor, plays a polar bear, guardian of Kuko, with a part in her specialties. Mr. Cullen has equipped

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