

AMUSEMENTS.

Salt Lake Theatre—Florence Roberts in "Ann La Mont," matinee today, performance tonight.

Grand Theater—"East Lynne," matinee today, performance tonight.

Lyric Theatre—"The Merry-makers," matinee today, performance tonight.

Coming Attractions.

Salt Lake Theatre—"The Tenderfoot," Oct. 9-10; Mme. Herrmann, Oct. 11; "Peggy From Paris," Oct. 12-14.

AMUSEMENTS.

Last Monday night "Ann La Mont" received its premier American presentation on the stage of the Salt Lake theatre.

The play introduced us to a new author aspiring for Fitchian honors. Incidentally—or was it otherwise?—we were shown a new face in the many-sided genius of Florence Roberts. The audience which assembled was large, critical and dressy. It was a gathering which might well appeal to the vanity of an author, or be an incentive to players of a play. In fact it was—I say it seriously—as highly intelligent and justly captious as any that will hereafter pass judgment upon Mr. Armstrong's drama and Florence Roberts' "Ann La Mont."

This is a statement which may be denied elsewhere, but Salt Lakers know it to be true. Ogden, New York and Chicago may repudiate our claims—let them—the privilege of denial is universal. The audience was boisterous with noisy applause. Femininity beat its white gloves with powder balls and masculinity cracked its patent leathers, all in token of approval. These curtain calls were many—in point of actual number who attempted to count? When Paul Armstrong promised us a new problem play, he meant new in the sense of dramatic treatment. Otherwise he would have denied all history and the writings of Bertha M. Clay.

"Ann La Mont" contains nothing original in plot. Wherever man's duplicity has toyed with woman's weakness there has been the problem play. If it did not come with Adam and Eve, it crept into the human garden very soon after. The author cannot invent the plot—it always was. The most he can do is to gather up the tangled threads and weave them into a new pattern. Mr. Armstrong attempts this—the painting of old colors in a new frame. "Ann La Mont" is a New York art student. Her life is the life of Bohemia—gay, mercurial, unconventional.

Upon its feverish tide she drifts—carried to the sea where women's souls are lost. One day a great love comes into her life and she despises the man—the fellow art student—whose plaything she has been. She resolves to redeem herself, her incentive is another man whom she secretly idolizes. "Ann La Mont" determined upon a new life, flees from her old surroundings to London, where, with the past buried, she acquired fame as a painter under the name of "Miss John." Love mingles with her brush—her heart dissolves in the colors and glorifies her work. The man she loves discovers here in London—he again renews his offer of marriage. To him she tells the story of her fall—to her surprise the unforgivable is forgiven. But, despite his forgiveness, she still refuses him because of her unworthiness.

In the end, however, they are united. Now, in treating a theme so utterly worn and threadbare, Mr. Armstrong certainly shows that he can put new wine into old bottles. He summons to the task plenty of dramatic action, stage craft and unique situations. Into the dialogue he injects some epigrams which dazzle. Here and there he flings a literary flower as

fragrant as ever grew between the rosy lips of spoken words. There is a brightness, a warmth and depth in the Bohemian life of the first two acts which show that he is sure of his atmosphere and color. Indeed his atmosphere and color might have come from the very studies he is painting. But, in the framing of them he is less fortunate—there are some places where I saw cheap gilding and evidences of a coarse brush. The third act, the scene on the Thames, is a triumph for which scenic artists and stage carpenters should receive a union card of credentials. But also right here, occurs an incident which shows that Mr. Armstrong has not forgotten his Laura Jean Libby. It is the meeting between "Ann La Mont" and "Richmond," down by the water's edge, in the moonlight. The episode is happily spared the audience. There are, however, so many repeated references to it in the dialogue of the play, that one's laughter wants to cry out. Surely for one moon-struck lover who repents not, there are ninety and nine sensible men in the audience who wish he would. It is a mere incident—a mere dramatic detail—but altogether far reaching in harmful effect.

The last act takes place in Hawaii, and in it Mr. Armstrong makes his final concession to originality and geography. After globe trotting the audience around New York, London and the Thames, the author out does Jules Verne and lands in the Sandwich Islands. But that isn't so bad—seven league boots are something diverting. The act is an anti-climax. Its fatal weakness is its melodramatic strength. The scene is one of the native huts. There is a fusillade of blank cartridges. The villain rushes in and weaves a dark web of devilry. In comes Ann—the villain seizes her—ha! ha!—another blank cartridge. Strictly on schedule the hero arrives—other blank cartridges explode—bang! bang! Tableau. Ann is seen locked in her lover's arms. Surely, Mr. Armstrong, there must be some way of clipping the melodramatic wings from the last act. It is a bird.

"Ann La Mont," as interpreted by Florence Roberts, is a triumph of repressed emotional acting. Heretofore we have seen her in violent outbursts of denunciation. In "Ann La Mont" she shows, with true artistry, that down deep in the heart there are storms which can be mirrored in the face, reflected in the eyes. H. S. Northrup, as Ann's evil genius, was refined, polished meanness from kid gloves to silk hat. Max Figman overdoes the part of Grant Dudley. His gyrations and dancing master evolutions suggest musical comedy. Lucius Henderson, always a favorite here, makes his usual agreeable impression. Clifford Leigh as Lord Ashley should be toned down in accents and body movements—there are many cracks in the English mirrors he attempts to hold up to nature.

The ladies of the company are generally satisfactory. Stage settings and costumes are sumptuous.

But, unless Mr. Armstrong judiciously applies the pruning knife and gives some attention to points demanding reconstruction, "Ann La Mont" will add no laurels to the man Stronger plays have failed before now to set Long Island Sound on fire.

Next Monday and Tuesday the "Tenderfoot" will be in our wild and woolly midst. Salt Lakers are already familiar with this lyric offering which, as we all know, was written by Richard Carle when in a particularly happy mood of hilarity. The theme concerns the adventures surrounding Prof. Pettibone, whose absent-mindedness and deep submersion in science render him a victim to the unconventional freedom of the West. There are Texas rangers, cow-boys, Mexicans, and all manner of queer folk strutting about the stage in the

"Tenderfoot"—a condition which make possible a costumed variety bewildering to the eye. There is also a troop of cavalry with jingling spurs, clanking sabres and a determination to stir up the dust—lyric and scenic—on the slightest provocation. The eccentricities of Prof. Pettibone, which are the main comedy element of the show, are worth a box-office tribute from anybody who enjoys a hearty laugh.

Following "The Tenderfoot" comes the greatest of the very few female magicians, Mme. Adelaide Herrmann—a lady illusionist who rightly wears the magic mantle of her illustrious predecessor of the same name. Mme. Herrmann's engagement is for one one night only, Oct. 11th. Rounding out a week of brilliant theatricals is George Ade's musical comedy, "Peggy From Paris." In this lyric absurdity the author has run the gamut of characterization. There is a cosmopolitan mixture of leaders of fashion, both men and women; yachtsmen, men about town, theatrical people, nurse-maids, cooks, butlers, show girls, rustics and other amusing phases of life too numerous to mention. It is certainly a varied mixture and George Ade is said to be at his best in making use of such wide opportunities for wit, humor and gaiety.

The "Kentucky Belles," after ringing all kinds of money through the Lyric box-office, will chime for some time in the memories of the local bald-heads. From the patronage accorded to the organization, the impression must prevail that Salt Lake has bluegrass to burn. Of course Britt was a strong drawing card, even though his fighting brow wears only the paper crown of pugilism. It is a little singular—although there are two of them—that both Nelson and Britt are doing a footlight race over the same circuit. The fighters would have gained more friends if each had remained, for a time at least, in the quiet of his home. However, nobody can blame the theatrical managers. The fault lies with the "pugs," who, with evident greed, put the dollar mark on their mitts whether in the ring or on the stage. Anyhow let us hope that Sullivan, who is now in Butte, doesn't come our way. John L. could hear the call of the Silent and be very quiet.

Among the gayest of the gay now marching under the banner of unrestrained Frivolity, "The Merry-makers," I am told, carry the bluest of blue-ribbons. Manager Egan, who has them booked for a week at the Lyric, beginning with today's matinee, assures his patrons that while some names may be misleading, "The Merry-makers" make good with their title. The company, besides the usual specialties in songs and dances, introduce two burlesques, "Two Wealthy Men" and "A Dish of Scandal."

I am quietly informed that the gay boys in the first have money enough to throw out of the window, while the second farce contains more than one dish steaming hot from Mother Grundy's cook-stove. There is the usual dress parade of show girls.

HARRY LE GRANDE.

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