

BESSIE BACON'S VOLUBILITY FAILS TO INTIMIDATE

By James Crawford.

“THEY say I’m an awful chatterbox,” said little Miss Bacon, daughter of Frank.

“That gladdens me,” I responded. “I’m sorry you’re glad,” she declared. “Why?” I inquired.

“Because men don’t like gabby women,” she replied.

“And women like men’s admiration?” I ventured.

“Certainly,” she admitted. “Then you may find solace by reflecting that the object of my visit here is to listen while you talk, and that the more you talk the better I’ll like you—like it, I mean.”

“That amendment saves the situation,” she laughed. “But, unless you’re an expert stenographer, I’m afraid you’ll have trouble, for greased lightning is nothing to my tongue when it gets fairly started—wagging—at least, they say so.”

Then, as Thomson sketched and I scribbled, she proceeded to make good what “they”—subsequently identified as her parental relatives—had said about her volubility.

As an Infant Phenomenon

“Occupation, actress. In my fourth year I first appeared on the stage, as Little Ned in ‘The Black Flag,’ and toured the coast, father managing the enterprise and mother playing the sourette part. Leading woman’s sudden illness shifted mother into her place and me into mother’s, and when we concluded the season they sent me to school and kept me there until I was 15, and then—you mustn’t hesitate to check me if I speak too rapidly.”

“Your method of utterance is deliberateness itself,” I gallantly prevaricated. “After your stage experience the schoolroom must have seemed—”

“Pokey? I should say so. But they wouldn’t listen to my appeals for relief, and now I forgive them, for of course I had to be educated before I could act, although I didn’t think so then. But the educational grind couldn’t crush out my love for the theater—that was inherent, I suppose—and I never neglected opportunity to sit outside the curtain line and yearn for the time to come when I could be on the inside. And another part of my recreation was to pester managers to engage me, which none of them did, because they knew I was my father’s daughter, and they—you’re sure I’m talking slowly enough?”

“Almost drawing,” you say the managers refused—”

Stony-Hearted Managers.

“To engage me? Yes; those whom I interviewed merely laughed at me. But there were others whom I was just dying to interview and couldn’t muster up courage to tackle. I had heard or read somewhere that the best way to favorably impress a manager was to show him that the applicant was self-confident, and I’ll never forget the result of my trial of that plan. ‘You see,’ I said, in lofty tone, to the manager, ‘I’m at liberty to accept an engagement, but it’s useless for you to think of offering me the pittance that other girls would work for, because I’ve had experience, and besides, I must be permitted to play parts of my own selection and to play them in my own way.’ ‘I’m sorry, my dear,’ he said, quite gravely, ‘that just now I’m not in need of any one to run this theater, but you might leave your name and address.’ That crushed me, and for at least a week I nev—if you can’t keep up with what I’m saying you may whistle a signal to slow down.”

“My only trouble is to keep from running ahead of you,” I reassured.

“You said there were managers whom you couldn’t muster up courage to—”

Terrible T. D. Frawley.

“Interview? Yes; Mr. Frawley was one of them. I started out to beard him in his den or perch in the attempt—and I perished. As I rode to the Grand Opera-house, where his company was playing, my courage gradually evaporated, and when I arrived at the stage door I could do nothing but stand there and apprehensively shiver until approaching footsteps scared me away. Even now I can’t understand why I ran, for every one has told me that Mr. Frawley was a very courteous gentleman, and when I attended his matinees—did I hear you whistle?”

“Perish that idea. The persons who accused you of oral feistiness don’t know what rapid-fire monology means. So you attended the Frawley matinees—”

“Every Saturday afternoon there you could have found me, a box of chocolates in my lap and my soul filled with deepest admiration of Mr. Morgan—”

“Mr. Morgan?”

“E. J. Morgan, the leading man. After those lovely Saturdays came and went he married and died. But don’t think I was the only young girl who worshipped at that shrine. I can’t remember how many of us were in the tolls when he was on the stage, but I could attend his matinees—did I hear you whistle?”

“How long do you intend to remain—”

“Here at the Colonial? Until the season ends. Then I may either sign for another season or go back among the coast defenders—”

“The what?”

“Coast defenders—that’s what California actors are termed in the East. I am always assured of an engagement in Springfield and—”

“Pardon the interruption, but what is the California term for Eastern actors?”

“Those who make good are just alluded to as Eastern actors; those who don’t are usually called ‘gold bricks.’ But what do you think of the Colonial’s innovations—an act drop that doesn’t advertise anything or anybody and ushers in antique uniforms?”

“The uncommercial act drop is an eye feast, and the colonial days con-

know, also, that his habits were not of the best, but that didn’t make the least difference in our long-range adoration, a funny phase of which was that I didn’t attempt to conceal our feelings, were not in the least jealous of each other and had no desire to see our common hero of the stage. Father laughed when I told him of my enslavement and mother said I’d soon get over it. She was right—”

“Oh, you told your parents—”

“Of course I did, and every one I knew. Even now I cannot account for the charm of Mr. Morgan—any more than you are able to appreciate the heart feelings of a matinee girl. Since my release from that thrallhold I have seen the same kind of thing ever so many times when I was on the stage—silly school girls chewing candy, shedding tears and fondly imagining they were intricately infatuated with some ordinary-looking leading man or juvenile man whom they had never beheld, and had no desire to behold, in other than assumed character—how far am I ahead of you?”

“I could give you five minutes’ start and catch up in less than ten. You returned to the stage—”

Becomes a Real Ingenue.

“When I was 15 and with my parents’ consent. They allowed me to play the James’ in ‘Barbara Freitchie’ when James’ Nell’s company did the piece at the California Theater. There I spent two years on the road with my father in ‘The Hills of California,’ my part being a mixture of ingenue and sourette. It never was definitely placed—in which I wore a gingham gown and a big straw hat and was in love with my sister’s feller. After that I went East and was engaged as ingenue of a stock company at Springfield, Mass., of which Robert Drouet was the leading man and Maude Fearly the leading woman. We had played six consecutive months there when a change in the house management dissolved the organization and last January found me on the family range where I stayed until after the earthquake, when I came to the city and helped to open the Central Theater, and then rejoined father here at the Colonial, and—but I’d better stop till you get all that jotted down.”

“It’s jotted. So your matinee idolatry is ended—”

“Oh, no it isn’t. I’m still a worshipper, but no longer of masculine idols. Now I’m prone at the feet of several women players, Julia Marlowe holding highest place in my admiration. With my five feet, nothing it’s presumptuous to say so, but I would dearly love to play Juliet—”

“Just as all players of the supplanted sex yearn to try Hamlet?”

Juliet the Sentimental.

“I suppose so. It’s funny, too, when you think of Juliet being a part that almost every actress strives to reach for Juliet was such a lackadaisical character—such a fool, too, to poison herself for love. The well-bred girl of today, no matter how deeply smitten she may be, doesn’t do that sort of thing—”

“Not even the matinee girl?”

“Oh, she merely chocolates herself. But there is a glamor about Juliet that none of us can resist. I’m dying to play her to a good Romeo—”

“Maybe your father would—”

“Play Romeo? Goodness gracious! What an idea—”

“No, provide you with opportunity to play Juliet.”

“I suppose it’s one of the penalties of having a father in the profession to find him constantly suggested as an aid,” she said, with some severity.

“Nothing makes me so mad as to have people think that I cannot get along without father’s influence. If you ask him, he’ll tell you that with no other intent than to remove that impression I have refused to play desirable parts that he wanted me to play.”

“Such disobedience—”

Farce Unkind to Women.

“Oh, he’s obedient enough,” she interrupted, and I am still in doubt as to whether she willfully meant to misconstrue. I have endeavored to bring him up in the way a father should go, and he has not entirely disappointed me. But, as I was saying about Juliet—”

“From your desire to play her, I infer that you don’t like to play in farce—”

“No actress does—unless she’s a character woman and has a good role. Other women don’t like farce because its male characters invariably are the strongest, the authors having made them so, I suppose, in accordance with the prevalent delusion that women have an inferior sense of humor. At any rate, you’ll find that the men have the telling lines and business, while about all that we are allowed to do is to change our gowns and serve as ‘feeders’ for the characters who provoke the laughs. You have seen ‘The Man from Mexico’ and ‘Lost Twenty-four Hours’ played in this house, and you must acknowledge that the women in both casts were afforded little or no chance to shine. And isn’t it a queer thing that the humor of most farces is derived from the efforts of a prevaricating husband to hoodwink an idiotically trusting wife? As all the female characters in farce are either fools or flirts, it is not to our discredit that we don’t relish playing—but I’d better catch breath while you’re catching up.”

“Catch all the breath you require—I’ll wait till you’re ready to resume talking.”

Unselfish Consideration.

“Thank you, but I’m always ready to resume talking. I was in consideration of your convenience that prompted me to pause.”

“Oh, don’t mind me; go right ahead as if you were talking to the folk at home.”

“My fund of interesting information is exhausted. No, I don’t sing, and I don’t play, and my usual conversation will not be enough to prevent people running away when I attempt it. My fondness for horseback riding, I have ridden a hundred miles in two days—fifty going and fifty returning—and felt better at the finish than before I started.”



Bessie Bacon, ingenue of the Colonial Theater Stock Company, Narrating Her Experience as a Matinee Girl.

times are appropriate to the title of the theater.”

Manners Outrage Attire.

“If the ushers would only live up to their garb all would be l-r-a-y,” she said, and I knew something more on that subject was coming without my solicitation. “It’s so queer, you know, to have a young man in white wig and stockings and other insignia of courtly politeness rush up the aisle while you’re bowing response to a curtain call and chuck a florid offering at you with such force and accuracy of aim that you don’t duck your head sharply if you’ll catch it in your face.”

“You don’t mean to say that you had such an experience as that?”

“Oh, yes, I do. Investigation of the youth’s conduct led to the disclosure that he had doffed his uniform and was about to start for home when the ushers arrived, and he had to don the flippers to approach the stage, so his temper was soured, I suppose. Then another night a bewigged youth stood in one of the boxes and signaled to Miss Jewell that he had a bouquet for her, and when Mr. Rogers stepped down stage with intent to take the tribute and transfer it the usher haughtily commanded him to stand aside. ‘Tain’t fer you,’ he said loud enough for the audience to hear; ‘it’s for th’ lady.’ Wasn’t that mortifying?”

As the artist and me were bidding adieu to Miss Bacon she opined that an ordinary edition of this newspaper would not be sufficiently voluminous to contain all she had said. “But of course it was impossible for you to jot down one-third of it,” she declared,

and the declaration seemed to give her comfort.

Bills for Current Week.

Heading the new bill at the Orpheum to be launched this afternoon is the Empire City vocal quartet, said to be an exceptionally well-balanced organization, and the other newcomers are Slim Collins and Lew Hart, comedy strong men; Augusta Glose, singer and pianist, and Max Millian, violin virtuoso. Among the retained are the six Glinesetts, acrobats; Hanson and Nelson, singers and dancers; Burton and Brooks, conversationalists, and Rafayette’s educated dogs.

Another screaming comedy, “My Friend from India,” is the week’s offering at the Colonial, commencing tomorrow evening. Judging from the way in which “The Man from Mexico” was acted by the Colonial players “My Friend from India,” by the same author, should receive good treatment. Frank Bacon will have a role that will give full play to his peculiar droliery.

This is said to be the last week of burlesque at the Davis Theater, where “Barbara Fidgety” is retained. Rumor has it that a dramatic season will follow.

“I. O. U.” enters its fourth week at the Central Theater tomorrow evening, 255 voted for the abandonment of the paid artist’s testimonial.

“The Duchess of Padua,” an Oscar Wilde play that has never been presented in San Francisco, will be Con-

stance Crawley’s offering at the Colonial Theater next Tuesday afternoon.

Guilbert and Chevalier.

San Francisco’s first really great theatrical feast since April it will be furnished by Yvette Guilbert and Arthur Chevalier, the famous European artists, who are jointly touring the country, playing one night only in each city. They are to make their single appearance here early next month, in a theater yet to be chosen, and the prices of admission will necessarily be high.

It is a most remarkable trip these people are making. New York City was allotted but one day in the tour, and this is the best that any municipality can hope for. The theatrical term “one-night stands” is sufficiently well known to the lay public to be understood, and when it is considered that the enormous distances of the West are to be cut up into a series of these some idea of the magnitude of the railway arrangements may be gathered. As an instance to show the speed at which the tour is being carried forward, Mme. Guilbert and Mr. Chevalier were in Quebec, Canada, October 10 and nine days later they reached New Orleans, after playing in nine of the largest cities in the Union. The itinerary comprises a total railroad mileage of over 35,000.

Chevalier will present his types of London character and Guilbert will convey similar enlightenment as to how certain Frenchwomen look and act.

Expensive Testimonials.

The paid indorsement feature of the piano business is occupying considerable attention in the musical world at present. Following the published statement that Paderewski, Rosenthal and other European pianists are to be paid small fortunes for playing particular makes of pianos, The Musical Age has started a symposium upon the subject. Out of 303 piano dealers interviewed 255 voted for the abandonment of the paid artist’s testimonial.

The competition between the manufacturers who desire to obtain the services of the great pianists to advertise their instruments has grown to such an extent in recent years that

enormous sums have been expended in this particular phase of publicity. The dealers claim that this additional expense is necessarily paid by the public, and that the expensive advertising does not increase the bulk demand for pianos. Many of the dealers interviewed, while acknowledging the good results from this class of advertising in the past, expressed themselves as believing that the public is more thoroughly informed as to the reasons why the pianists give such glowing testimonials to the different instruments, and hence the result is not so favorable today.

Nance O’Neil has been rehearsing “The Sorceress” and her tour is about to begin. Virginia Drew Trascott is recent engagement for the company.

Clean Vaudeville Pays.

Louis Hallett, who is now in the West playing vaudeville, has the following to say regarding the management of vaudeville houses and the tastes and demands of vaudeville audiences:

“Many managers, especially among those of the cheaper vaudeville houses, seem to arrive at their conclusions of what their patrons want by the acclaim given this or that kind of an act. In this they are very liable to err. Anything approaching a coarse or vulgar line, a suggestive situation or a slapstick piece of business will invariably bring forth greater response than equally amusing lines, situations and business embracing refinement and legitimate acting. The greater portion of the average vaudeville audience is ever ready to respond to the coarse, while the better class is equally slow in manifesting its approval of that which is good and which pleases them. However, as has aptly been said, ‘We laugh at monkeys but we do not applaud them.’ We laugh when we are amused but we applaud when we are entertained. There are also instances and situations where audiences manifest their appreciation and approval through extreme silence—which is often more forceful than applause.”

“While it is true that vaudeville audiences must be amused in this sense, yet at the same time it is equally important that they be entertained beyond mere amusement. The manager seeking to build up a clientele by bidding for the patronage of dramatic houses, catering to the gentle folk and better classes as well as the cheaper,

should see that he has one or more acts on each bill of real intrinsic merit and dramatic worth.

Noise Not a Criterion.

“An act or so that will remain in the thoughts of the auditor after he has left the theater—something that has appealed to his brain and reached his heart, and not merely pleased his eye and satisfied his momentarily bilious frame of mind; an act in which good English is spoken, legitimate acting employed, correct costuming and the actors possessing the stamp of refinement—an act or two of this kind on each bill will tend to make the occasional patron a regular one, bring to the theater new ones, and at the same time please that portion of the audience looking merely for amusement.”

“While it is true that there has been more need for reform in vaudeville than in drama, yet the vaudeville has made greater strides in this direction than the drama, and today is cleaner. But the manager is not to be credited so much as the demand on the part of the public. Vociferous acclaim given a certain style of acts is not a criterion to go by, much less a basis for a policy to follow to build up a patronage for a vaudeville theater any more than it is for a dramatic house. The manager should grasp this idea and set a certain standard and not wait for the public to compel him. Knowledge of this fact is what often leads to the success of one house where another fails. With the change vaudeville is undergoing—and especially in this time of the cheap houses—the management must cater to ladies and children, and to do this bills must be arranged with some legitimate vaudeville acts as contradistinguished from music hall and cheap variety stunts, even though the latter elicit more noise from an audience.”

Plays and Playfoik.

A committee consisting of J. J. Gottlob, Melville Marx, Joseph Gottlieb Morris Meyerfeldt, Jr., John Morrissey, W. H. Leahy, S. L. Ackerman, Harry Blush, Ernest Howarth, Charles F. East and M. M. Dodge has been formed for the purpose of insuring the success of the matinee benefit to be given at Ye Liberty Theater, Oakland, on Friday, November 2, to the veteran comedian, I. R. Stockwell, who was lately operated on in an Oakland hospital, and who is threatened with blindness. A splendid programme, including acts, scenes and specialties from every theater in this city and Oakland, will be presented.

Walker C. Graves, who made his professional debut and scored a success last Monday evening as Amos Barlow in “Tennessee’s Partner” at the Colonial Theater, is a native of San Francisco and comes from one of the best known families in the State. His father is W. C. Graves, a well-known attorney. Mrs. Graves is a Jefferson James, the cattle king. The young man has dramatic ability and magnificent physique.

At the fourteenth symphony concert by the University Orchestra in the Greek Theater the afternoon of November 8, the programme will be: Overture, “Phedra,” Massenet; Symphony No. 1, “The Military Symphony,” Haydn; Andante Cantabile, from Quartet No. 11, Tchaikovsky; overture, “The Merry Wives of Windsor,” Nicola

Mrs. Flske’s new play is treated very kindly by the Chicago critics, one of whom says: “The New York Edition is a satirical comedy of manners, enlivened by a suggestion of polite farce. It is brilliant in dialogue, clever in characterization, beautifully complex in setting. The support of the Manhattan company is as usual as well as perfect. The scenic setting is beautiful and the detail finely worked out according to the Flske standard.”

David Belasco announces that the play to follow “The Girl of the Golden West” at the Belasco will be a drama of Western life entitled “The Rose of the Rancho.” It is a story of life in California at the time of the invasion from the United States, and is by David Belasco and Richard Walton Tully. It is to be a “no star” play, but is to have an unusually strong company, which will include Charles Richman, H. R. Hall, Frank Loss, Mrs. Grace Gayle, Clark, Frances Starr, Maria Davis, Jan Towl, John W. Cope, J. H. Benrimo, F. H. Westerton, Gilmore Scott, W. E. Elliott, Wayne Gray, Robert Hill, Givrigli Arrizza and Martha Melean. The play has been produced in New York under the title of “Juanita,” but has been largely rewritten. It will be presented first at the Majestic Theater, Boston early in November, and then at the Belasco Theater.

One of the biggest successes scored by James Neill on this coast was “The Light Eternal.” This piece is now in rehearsal and will shortly go on tour. Mr. Neill will of course play the lead part, and his wife, Edythe Chase, will leave Annie Russell’s company to be the leading woman.

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When Mrs. Langtry arrived in New York and saw herself billed as “Mrs. Lily Langtry,” she was indignant, and within a few hours billboards were busy obliterating the “Lily” with strips of white paper. It is said the Keith-Proctor houses Mrs. Langtry receiving \$2000 per week, and that the transportation expenses of herself and her company are paid by the management.

Louis James celebrated his sixty-fourth birthday at Roseman, Mont., October 2. The members of his company observed the occasion by decorating his dressing-room with flags and flowers and presenting the actor with handsome silver loving cup.

“Mrs. Warren’s Profession,” by Bernard Shaw, was produced at the Richmond Theater, Vienna, on October 1 for the first time in Austria. The play is said to have met with the approval of the critics.

Herman Sudermann’s latest play, “Die Blumenboot,” which was produced in London last week, has been almost unanimously condemned by the critics as disgustingly immoral.

Annie Russell has addressed to various New York newspapers a letter, which she protests against the method of press agents.

Yvette Guilbert and Albert Chevalier, after their present six weeks’ tour ended, will appear jointly in a new play, called “Les Autres Jours,” by Paul Hervey, who has taken the idea of the plot from one of Beranger’s poems. An English version has been prepared by Louis N. Parker, and the stars play in English-speaking countries they will use this version while in France they will do it in the original French.