

Gossip About the Theaters and the New Dramatic Offerings



on something new. Until then we had done the regulation song and dance. The uniform three steps backward and the end in each way, and then the dance, restoring more or less gracefully meantime with outstretched arms. You recall how it was done. Remember Delehanly and Hengler, the latter the father of the Hengler sisters. They were the aristocrats in this line of work and their salary was \$250 a week for the team. That was, in those days, fabulous.

But our conversational stuff brought attention to us and finally the height of our ambition was realized. Tony Pastor wanted us, and the salary was \$60 a week for the two of us. We were getting on in the world. But my partner died in 1882, and that was the end. I thought of my fine things.

"They was my next partner, and we were together for 31 years," diving that time our professional ambition was made even closer by our marrying sisters, Minnie and Helena French. I am the only survivor of that happy quartet. Minnie, who was my wife, played ingenue and kid parts. Both were dancers as no doubt you remember. Hoyt had written but one play, "The Bunch of Keys," when I suggested to him that he expand our sketch "The Book Agent" into a three act play, which was called "There and Back," and which was a big success. The play was then pulled down to a sketch again and that is the piece we are playing, which resembles the original, sketch closely. A good three act play is good because it needs three acts to properly develop the plot and expound its artistic principles. A poor three act play may be reduced to a one act sketch; but a good three act play exists in that form because it was meant that way. It's easier to expand a sketch into a play with music and specialties, like "The Parlor Match," for instance, than it is to reduce a good play into a sketch. Please say that in your paper for me.

Hoodoo of the Fair

The hoodoo of the midwinter fair is back in town, and the day he came it reigned. Never was a man more advertised in this city than Milton Gunckel, who had charge of the fireworks which Pain was to supply as a night feature at the midwinter fair in 1894. He became a joke and a byword, and some folks began to believe that, after all, he was responsible in some occult, esoteric way, for all the rain that fell and for all the fog that ruined the fireworks which were supposed to, but didn't, go off.

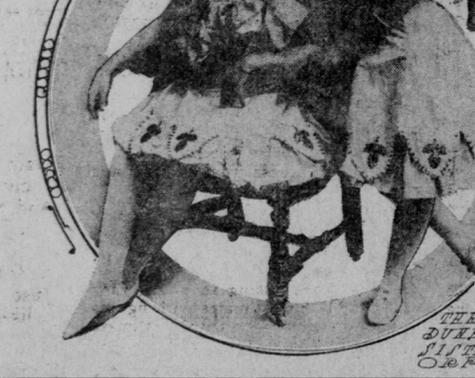
This time Gunckel appears at the head of the "Cupid at Vassar" company slated for a week at the American, and the only reminder of his former and departed fame is the fact that San Francisco managed to get up a little of a drizzle when he came last week, just to show he was not forgotten.

Gunckel's skill, however, is not limited to his alleged ability as a rain maker, and it is no more than fair to give him some compensating credit. I say, for what he is and has been, and forget what he did to the set pieces that stizzled sickly through the mist and fog which hovered over the midwinter fair so long ago.

He has a fund of anecdotes that would make fine reading, drawn from his experiences at the head of the lecturers and humorous speakers of the San Francisco, and with whom, years ago, he was the publicity man for Opie Read and James Whitcomb Riley; he was ahead of Joseph Cook, the man who could not tell a funny story, and he exploited the talents of Ben King, author of the immortal "If I Should Die Tonight."

"I remember the time," he said, "when I was glad to get \$25 a night for him, and James Whitcomb Riley was mighty glad to receive it for a lecture. But he's not rich from his books now. His son in law manages his finances for him and Riley has quit work. I tell you there's nothing like necessity to open a poet's lips."

Gunckel was Mme. Modjeska's last



is unique among musical comedies in that it has a tangible plot which threads the pretty musical numbers together, and makes the entire play delightful.

The story deals with an American girl who, believing that her sweetheart is false to her, tries to mend her heart by sending him, she becomes, accordingly, engaged to a man who is "the world" just for spite. Fate, however, in the person of Cupid, intervenes and the story ends happily.

Florence Gear, a handsome blonde, Jules Murray's former star, plays the leading role of Kate Newton. She has a sweet and flexible soprano voice and great talent as an actress. A strong company supports the star, including George Timmons, Harry Roche, George Castleberry and George Lewis. "The Vassar Girls' Chorus" is one of the novelties introduced.

Princess

Helen Bertram's reappearance in San Francisco has been a big success at the Alcazar. Her voice has lost none of its sweetness or range, and in the role of the pirate chief, Tivolini, she displays a dash and sparkle which made her so great a favorite when she created the role with the Bostonians.

Alcazar

"Secret Service," which is to be the Alcazar's offering this week, was the attraction at the old Baldwin theater when fire destroyed that famous playhouse. Since then it has never been given an adequate presentation in this city. To many adults, therefore, "Secret Service" is a new play and the Alcazar production will have the charm of novelty.

William Gillette had not written anything better than "Secret Service" and that is a statement indicating high merit, for Gillette is the author of many successes. In its construction he dispensed with many of the conventional "war drama" features, substituting a strong and logical plot. This fact accounts for the success of the play in England and France, where its merits as drama, pure and simple, were instantly and overwhelmingly acknowledged. There is something besides mere claptrap which appeals to American patriotism in the drama.

The incidents of the play center in the efforts of Captain Thorn (Bertram Lytell), a member of the United States secret service, to hoodwink the authorizer of Richmond while that city is under siege. He is employed in the army



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Central

"The Life of an Actress," which has been doing a big business at the Central theater this week, will be given its last two performances this afternoon and tonight, and will be replaced tomorrow night by the latest New York sensation, "Why Girls Leave Home." The play deals with fast life in New York and tells the story of a young woman who is enticed from a peaceful home by Joseph White.

telegraph service, and his endeavors to aid the besiegers by wiring false commands to the defending forces bring him under suspicion. He is subjected to various tests, but he successfully withstands them all, even to hiding the horror conveyed to him by a beloved brother shooting himself in his presence. The love interest is maintained through Thorn's affection for a typical southern girl and her infatuation for him.

All the Alcazar favorites are well bestowed in "Secret Service." Thais Lovington, Adele Belgarde, Daisy Lovering, Louise Brownell, Anita Murray, John E. Maher, Howard Hickman, Will R. Walling and Burt Wesner have well fitting roles, and about 25 extra persons are employed in an acting capacity. The staging will be up to Alcazar standard—and San Francisco need not be told what that means.

Fitch's Fifty Plays

Clyde Fitch's activity is evidenced in the following list of plays from his pen. There are 50 of them altogether: "Beau Brummell," in 1890; "Betty's Finish" and "Frederick Lemaire," in the same year; "Modern Match" (subsequently played as "Marriage") and "Pamela's Prodigy," in 1891; "The Masked Ball," from the French, 1892; "The Harvest," "A Shattered Idol," from the French, "The Social Swim" and "Mrs. Grundy, Jr.," in 1893; "His Grace de Grammont," "April Weather," 1894; "Mistress Betty," which was afterward revived as "The Toast of the Town," in 1905; "Gossip" with Dittichstein, 1894; "Bohemia" from the French, "The Ladies" from the French, in 1895; "A Superfluous Husband" with Dittichstein, 1897; "Nathan Hale," "The Moth and the Flame," "The Head of the Family" from the German with Dittichstein, 1898; "The Cowboy and the Lady," "Barbara," "Friedrich," 1899; "Sappho" from the French, "The Climbers," in 1900; "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," "Lovers' Lane," "The Last of the Danes," "The Way of the World," "The Marriage Game," "The Girl and the Judge," 1901; "The Stubbornness of Geraldine," "The Girl With the Green Eyes," 1902; and in the following year, "The Frisky Mrs. Johnson" from the French, "The Bird in the Cage," "Alley," "Her Own Way," "Glad of It" and "Major Andrew." In 1904 Fitch wrote "The Coronet of a Duchess," "Granny," "Cousin Billy," "The Woman in the Case," and "Wolfville." In 1905 he wrote "The Girl Who Has Everything," "The House of Mirth" with Mrs. Wharton, "The Truth," "The Straight Road" and in 1908 there have appeared so far "Girls" and "Toddles." "Lads," "Barbara," "Friedrich," 1899; "Sappho" from the French, "The Climbers," in 1900; "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," "Lovers' Lane," "The Last of the Danes," "The Way of the World," "The Marriage Game," "The Girl and the Judge," 1901; "The Stubbornness of Geraldine," "The Girl With the Green Eyes," 1902; and in the following year, "The Frisky Mrs. Johnson" from the French, "The Bird in the Cage," "Alley," "Her Own Way," "Glad of It" and "Major Andrew." In 1904 Fitch wrote "The Coronet of a Duchess," "Granny," "Cousin Billy," "The Woman in the Case," and "Wolfville." In 1905 he wrote "The Girl Who Has Everything," "The House of Mirth" with Mrs. Wharton, "The Truth," "The Straight Road" and in 1908 there have appeared so far "Girls" and "Toddles."

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and quite a novelty. The management has spent a great deal of money in making the park more attractive than ever. A new entrance has been constructed on the northwest corner of the grounds which opens on a midway, on both sides of which are bazaars, palaces of illusions, circle swing, maze, novelty candy booth and many other concessions housed in gay and fantastically decorated buildings.

There will be a photograph gallery with scenic effects so arranged that photographs of patrons appear to have been taken on board one of the warships of the fleet. Other novelties in different portions of the great inclosure are electric autos running on an elevated track, half a mile long; a miniature electric railroad for children; "around the flume" journey in a boat touring car, and Klein's electrical theater. A menagerie of monkeys will, as heretofore, be on hand to amuse the old and young. There will be vaudeville performances each afternoon and evening in the big theater.

The skating rink will be open day and night and a commodious cafe, with meals at all hours, will be a convenience which the public will be certain to appreciate. The "Trottoirs" promises a convenient car service.

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John Drew visited this city when, in May, he will appear at the Van Ness theater in "My Wife."

Clara Morris has written a play about Sarah Siddons, in which the scene where the heroine was blazed from a London stage is disclosed.

It is related of Robert Mantell, who will appear in a few weeks at the Van Ness theater, that he is one of the most thorough students of Shakespeare on the stage.

George H. Timmons, who is one of the best negro impersonators on the stage, has made a big hit as Shiny in "Cupid at Vassar," which will be at the American this week.

James K. Hackett, the failure of whose play, "John Gladys' Honor," left the star without a production this season, will appear in a stock company in Washington for a season of four weeks.

Lewis Morrison's version of "Faust" will be revived next season with new spectacular features. Florence Roberts, who will represent her late husband's estate, is interested in the production.

One of Nat Goodwin's successes, "In Missouri," will follow "Secret Service" at the Alcazar with Bertram Lytell as the sheriff. This is a role in which Goodwin made one of his greatest successes.

Kolb and Dill will end their engagement at the Circle theater April 4, to make room for the new musical review of Gus Edwards. Kolb and Dill will make a road tour of three weeks, playing Brooklyn, Newark and Baltimore. After that they will return to Broadway for an indefinite stay.—New York Mirror.

The present tour of Francis Wilson in "When Knights Were Bold" will be one of the longest he has played in many years. His season opened at the Garrick, New York, in August and will close next June in the northwest.

Martin V. Merle's scriptural play, "The Light Eternal," is announced for production in the near future at the Alcazar. It had its premiere here several years ago and was used as a vehicle in which to star James Neill and Edythe Chapman in the east.

Among the bookings at the American theater for the near future are "Mrs. Temple's Telegram," which will follow "Cupid at Vassar," Max Figman's return engagement in "The Man on the Box," the Pollard opera company, and "The Country Squire," a new pastoral drama.

Miss Lulu Glaser, who is playing the widow in Weber's burlesque on "The Merry Widow," is reported to be on the point of leaving that company. She will stay but two weeks longer and will then be put at the head of her own company in a musical comedy show. She denies she intends going into vaudeville.

Only two cities in the United States will see "The Thief" this season, for at the close of the big New York run at the Lyceum theater the play will be brought to the Van Ness theater. At the expiration of its engagement in this city the company will return to New York for an indefinite time.

Williams and Walker recently celebrated the sixteenth anniversary of their theatrical association. A big jubilee performance of "Bandana Land" was given last Monday in New York in honor of the occasion. The partners first appeared together in a sort of wagon minstrel show, traveling out of San Francisco, says the New York Telegraph. At the first performance it was discovered that the program needed lengthening. Accordingly a sketch was improvised with Williams and Walker in the principal roles.

After appearing in vaudeville for several seasons they obtained an engagement in Canary & Lederer's production of "The Gold Bug," which was presented at the Casino in 1894. The late Will A. McConnell then took them under his wing and presented them in "The Senegambian Carnival." Under his direction they created a mild sensation at Koster & Bial's.

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Easter Announcement

Departments having goods appropriate for EASTER have now their full supply, comprising a magnificent selection of Imported and Domestic Goods in the following lines.

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Cloaks, Suits, Costumes, Lingerie and Linen Suits. A special \$25.00 line of Street Suits at

Waists, Matinees, Negligees, Silk Petticoats, French hand-made Lingerie. Silk Petticoats, specially priced \$5.50 at

Dress Goods, Silks, Ribbons, Laces, Veilings, Wash Goods, Jewelry, Trimmings, Handkerchiefs, Leather Goods, Perfumes.

GLOVES

An exclusive new line of Easter Novelties in Bonbonnières from Paris.

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