

# Gossip About the Theaters and the New Dramatic Offerings



action at the Lambs' gambol was anxious to appear at the public performance, which was given by the Lambs for the benefit of their Bohemian brothers in San Francisco after your big fire had swept the Bohemian club headquarters up to the four winds. You know a Lamb is a Bohemian, and a Bohemian is a Lamb, and we felt in New York that it was a high honor to appear at this monster benefit when "The Song Birds" had been put on with the Chestnut street opera house under the management of Klaw and Erlanger. Victor Herbert, composer of the music, came from New York and led the orchestra and "The Song Birds" scored the greatest success I ever saw in vaudeville. They had to get an extra man at the curtain to lift and lower it. The house went wild over the piece. Helen Bertram played Madam Yelva, which role is now called after the newer prima donna, Madame Tatrazzini, but the music is the same and her part is the same. J. B. Carson played Con, the Conried. William Courtleigh had played it at the gambol and Gus Weinberg had played it at the first public performance in New York. At the conclusion of the 20 weeks' contract with Klaw and Erlanger, Keith and Proctor made a better offer and took the piece and the people over to the opposition and under them we opened at the Alhambra in New York with an great success as ever.

"And that brings me down to the last chapter of what may be, I hope, my theatrical autobiography, for if things turn out as I hope, there will be no more one night stands, cross continent jumps, trips to London and back and all the rest that goes to make the theatrical life an absorbing mystery to all that are out of it and an intolerable tedium to those who are in it.

"But any way I hope to be able to stick here in San Francisco, or hereabouts, and perhaps realize that domestic dream—you know, the one about the life partner and the pudgy, curly headed things, which, God willing, I may some day call my own."

**Attractions at the Local Playhouses**  
Easter week promises to make up, in theatricals, for the quiet of the past seven days and nights. At the Van

**Princess**  
The great success achieved by the double bill, "Little Christopher" and "The Song Birds," at the Princess

**Alcazar**  
Martin V. Merle's dramatic romance of early Rome, "The Light Eternal," is the appropriate Easter week offering of the Alcazar theater management. The play is a familiar one to San Francisco, having received its first professional production here after it had scored a great success at the author's alma mater, Santa Clara college, where it was acted by the students. Since then it has been used as a starring vehicle by James Neill and Edythe Chapman, and this is its first season in a stock theater.

**Merle**  
Merle has been a close student of the time, place and people he has drawn together in his drama. His stage pictures are telling and effective in the extreme. The plot discloses the love of Artemia, daughter of the Emperor Di-

olettian. She has been promised in marriage to Corvinius, afterward a prefect of Rome, and he plots to destroy Marco because of his faith. Artemia learns from Corvinius that Marco is a Christian, and, believing that her love has been won by trickery, signs his death warrant. When it is too late she relents, and her affection asserting itself, she seeks to save her lover from the fate her suspicion had consigned him to. The big scene of the play occurs in the fourth act, when Marco refuses to bow to a statue of Jupiter, and by a miracle, shatters the pagan deity and raises in its place a flaming cross.

Thais Lawton will appear as Artemia; Bertram Lytell will be Marco; Will R. Walling will assume the role of captain of the imperial guards, Eurt Wessner will appear as the emperor, Howard Hickman as Corvinius, Ernest Glendinning as a minstrel, Adele Belgrade as Marco's mother, Daisy Lovering as his sister, Anita Murray as a handmaid, and Mary Duncan as a bond woman. Stage Manager Butler announces that the staging of "The Light Eternal" is one of the biggest tasks he has yet undertaken, but promises that the Alcazar corps of artists will be ready to meet the challenge.

**American**  
Lee Willard and a clever company will open a week's engagement at the American theater this afternoon at the rural comedy, "The Country Squire." Willard is a finished actor who has been seen in this city before, and who made a great success in a former presentation of the role of John Storm in "The Christian."

While it has been but recently that Willard was placed as star at the head of his own company, he has been featured by Daniel Frohman and has played leading roles in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "Monte Cristo" and "The Silver King." As a character actor he has had much experience, having played prominent parts in companies headed by Henry Miller, Nance O'Neill, Bertha Gailand, Richard Mansfield and Frederick Warde. Critics throughout the country have praised his work in the title role in "The Country Squire," which is said to be his best effort.

"The play, with life in New England, the scenes being laid in Vermont. Clean humor, wholesome sentiment and interesting action characterize the play. A strong company will be seen in support of the star, while an elaborate scenic production is promised as well. Some of the players being prominent parts are Harry Leighton, Harry Woodthorp, Lella Thompson, Volberg Algren and Avis Loddell. Popular prices will be charged during the week's stay in San Francisco and Saturday matinees will be given. Following this rural comedy, the distinguished actress, Mrs. Shaw, will be seen in "Mrs. Warren's Profession."

**Orpheum**  
Mere mention of the names of those who will appear this week at the Orpheum will be enough to convince interested that a treat is in store this afternoon and all week at the big vaudeville house.

First there is Flo Irwin, who has not been seen in San Francisco for a long time. She will surely get a cordial reception when she appears this afternoon in George Ade's one act play, "Mrs. Peckham's Carousal." She will play the part of Susan B. Peckham, an elderly woman actively engaged in forwarding the work of the prohibition movement. Ade's skit is bright and clever, and is said to be the best vaudeville play ever written. Miss Irwin's support will be Jacques Kruger, an excellent company will carry the comedy playlet to success. Cliff Gordon, German politician and one of the best monologists on the vaudeville stage, will make his bow and speech. Cole and Rags, two splendid comedians, will present an amusing act, in which they will do some clever juggling; Marie Florence, called the American Sembrich, will be heard in popular and operatic

selections. She is a native of this city who has won wide fame as a singer. The Banks-Breazale duo, consists of two handsome girls, who, attired in colonial costumes, introduce a novel musical act, playing upon a variety of brass and string instruments. They also execute with much grace the dances of a century ago. This will be the last week of Orth and Fern; the three Leightons, and the Empire City quartet. The latter has made a tremendous success in the phum motion pictures will close the bill.

**Central**  
The management of the Central has, after much difficulty, secured for performance the latest New York melodramatic success, "Tony the Bootblack," to follow "Ten Nights in a Barroom," the last two performances of which will be given this afternoon and evening.

"Tony the Bootblack" exploits the mysterious plots and conspiracies which surround the crimes committed by the "Black Hand" society in its war against organized society. The play has never been seen outside of New York, and the Central staff of mechanics and artists has been working on the production for three weeks. The result will be an elaborate setting of the thrilling play. A great business is anticipated at the Central and the cast of Central favorites is provided with roles in which the full strength of the company will be manifested.

The market street improvement association, which is erecting a big tent at Eighth and Market streets for the entertainment of the enlisted men of the fleet, has secured a large number of tickets for Wednesday evening, to be sold to raise funds for the hospitable cause.

**Novelty**  
An event of much importance to local theatricals will be the reopening of the Novelty theater one week from tonight, April 26, when Clyde Fitch's International society comedy success, "The Truth," will be presented for the first time in San Francisco. Managers Lovrich and Lubelski of the O'Farrell street playhouse have negotiated with Martin Beck, who owns the American rights to the play, and the result has been the splendidly equipped company is coming direct from New York to give a careful and intelligent presentation of this American author's masterpiece. Katherine Grey, well and favorably known in this city, will head the company of players and will appear as Becky Warder, who has inherited the unfortunate habit of prevarication from her father. The supporting company will be the best obtainable, and after the run of "The Truth" several other strong plays will be produced.

Seats for the opening week will be placed on sale Thursday morning at the box office of the theater.

**Wigwam**  
The program at the Wigwam for the week beginning Monday at the matinee will include Carlisle's dog and pony circus, May Birdelle and her village cuts, and a new piece for the evening comedy cycle performers; Alva York, English comedienne; Bert Lennon, impersonator, and Rose and Severn in a comedy sketch. A special feature of the week's bill will be the appearance each evening of the League of the Cross band of 40 pieces.

**Chutes**  
The extensive and expensive alterations and improvements which have been in progress at the Chutes for several months have been completed and the reopening of this popular amusement place has been fixed for Friday, May 1. More than 50,000 invitations have been issued to the children of the different schools and every effort will be made by the management to see to it that May 1 is indeed a gala day. All of the old and many new concessions will be opened and the large skating rink, with its splendid floor, will be turned over to the public. The theater will present an excellent vaudeville performance and, in short, the Chutes will be as good as it ever was—and better.

**Beck Signs De Koven**  
Martin Beck is busy again. The general manager of the Orpheum circuit is living up to his reputation and his latest announcement is to the effect that operettas will invade the vaudeville stage. Modern "varieties" will thus include every department of

theatrical "industry," if so commercial a term may be employed in the consideration of the mummies' art.

Vaudeville has long been a competitor of grand opera and some of the highest notes have been cashed by its managers. There was a time recently when no one would have expressed surprise had it been announced that Sembrich or Eames or Gadsch had been signed for a "turn." And for that matter they may yet be Zelle de Lussan may not be alone in her vaudeville career. The best of the dramatic stars have been offered more than they are worth to do stunts in vaudeville and many of them have not had the heart to say "no." So the announcement, from the offices of Martin Beck, that vaudeville was to contain on its attractive bills the name of Reginald De Koven as the composer of operettas comes rather as a matter of course. Since "The Song Birds," now playing at the Princess, was found to be a profitable turn for vaudeville, in spite of the number of participants in the piece, Beck has been turned to the musical comedy field of the amusement industry.

De Koven, who boasts of more than a score of successes, including "Robin Hood," "Foxy Quillier," "The Crusaders," "Rob Roy" and others, has signed to write four one act operettas. These will be staged by the producing department of the Orpheum circuit, under the direction of Charles Folsom. They will be complete musical comedies condensed into 30 minutes and will be utilized as regular vaudeville acts for two weeks' stay in each city.

**Blanche and Belasco**  
Eastern papers are busy speculating on the causes and effects involved in the separation of Blanche Bates and David Belasco. The opinion that the star of "The Girl of the Golden West" left the ring of her promoter because she was weary of playing "the girl" is generally accepted as the truth. She will go under the management of Klaw & Erlanger next season.

Blanche Bates has been under Belasco's management for a number of years, and for the last three years has been appearing as "the girl" though now and then playing "Madame Butterfly." Belasco refused to put her in a new piece for the season, the reason that "The Girl of the Golden West" was getting him as well as his star much money. It was a profitable piece of property and he did not share Miss Bates' weariness of the play.

Upon his final refusal to place her in a different piece next season, she resigned from his company. Thereupon Belasco released the play for stock, having intended to tour Miss Bates across the continent in it. Miss Bates says that she considers longer continuance in the play would dwarf her artistic stature, and that Belasco, having refused finally to give her another piece, she had accepted an offer from his bitter rivals, Klaw & Erlanger.

**Notes of the Theater at Home and Abroad**  
Henry Miller will play an engagement this summer in San Francisco.

William Collier, in "Caught in the Rain," is coming to the Van Ness soon.

George Bernard Shaw is hard at work on a new play, the subject of which will be marriage.

A feature of "When Knights Were Bold" is the singing of a twelfth century welcome song by the large chorus.

Tomorrow night, the members of Stanford Parlor, N. S. G. W., will attend the production at the Princess of

**Wins Picture Fight**  
A decision that may be the direct means of preventing a revolution in the theatrical business has been handed down in the United States circuit court by Judge E. Henry Lacombe. The decision is the outcome of an action waged by Henry W. Savage to protect his rights in "The Merry Widow" and to restrain the promoters of moving picture exhibitions from reproducing scenes from the opera. Judge Lacombe by his order has made permanent the temporary injunction recently granted to Mr. Savage, restraining the Kalem company, Inc., from manufacturing the films of such scenes. In the same decision he included the Miles Bros., Inc. distributors of the films.—New York Morning Telegraph.

**Little Christopher** and "The Song Birds" in a body.

Miss Billie Burke, who is a big success in John Drew's production this season of "My Wife," is to be starred next year in a new play, "Love Matches."

William Vaughn Moody, author of "The Great Divide," is still ill with typhoid fever at his home in New York. He is believed to have passed the crisis of his malady safely.

"The Light Eternal" will be played next Tuesday at the Alcazar for the benefit of the Catholic ladies' aid society and the members of that organization will attend in a body.

John Drew and his New York company in the comedy "My Wife" will be the attraction to succeed Francis Wilson at the Van Ness theater. Drew has not appeared in San Francisco for four seasons. "My Wife" is said to be his best play in many years.

Mary Boland, Francis Wilson's leading woman, is generally regarded as one of the cleverest of the younger generation of actresses. She is said to be not only a very pretty woman graceful in her movements, but is brimful of talent as well.

The Alcazar announces "The Heir of the Moor," to follow "The Light Eternal." Lester Rex Beach's dramatization of his famous story, "The Spoilers," treating of love and lawlessness at Nome, will be staged. This play as yet has not been produced in any city west of Chicago.

At the close of his engagement at the Stuyvesant theater, which is drawing near, David Warfield will sail for Europe. David Belasco will transfer "The Warrens of Virginia" from the Belasco to the Stuyvesant, when "The Music Master" will be withdrawn. Belasco will later join his star in Europe and arrange for Warfield's London appearance.

The American invasion of the London stage continues unabated. "Way Down East" departed from New York recently for a London season, and "The College Widow" is somewhere between New York and Liverpool, bound to captivate Londoners. The list of American successes now on, or soon to be in London, includes, "The Squaw Man," "The College Widow," "Way Down East," "The Secret Orchard," "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" and "Brewster's Millions."

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