

THE DIARY OF A SHOW GIRL

BY MRS WALLACE IRWIN

JUST think of it—Minnie Higgins helping a man to make a few thousands and all I am getting is \$16 a week, with all I eat to pay for. They didn't know I was brought up in Paris, Ohio—no one cared to ask where I was brought up—but they saw my dance took. They cut out part of Miss Wyncote's song after the performance to give me more time the next night. My, that made her peevish. The playwright said, "Hang it—I didn't write the dance!" I heard the fuss as I went out the side door, because Jim Burns was waiting for me.

"Well, hasn't Paris done itself proud?" he asked me. "Aren't we the people?"

I looked at him in perfect surprise, as if that was any way to talk about my hit.

The next minute there was mamma and papa waiting for me. I just fell into her arms and burst out crying. She didn't say a word, just held me close, never a word about not writing nothing, just held me close. Gracious, how good it felt.

"Who washes your windows now, ma?" I sobbed out; then I began to laugh.

"How much do they pay ye for all that jig step—g. Minnie?" asked pap. Sixteen dollars seems a good deal in Paris, Ohio.

a case on the star. He's such a dear! I love his vests. His voice is so grand when he sings "Good-by, My Lady Lov'" at the rehearsals, with his hat on the side of his head. It is a derby, so some of the chorus men wear derbies now, too, and they all fix them on the side of their heads—on the same side. Anyway, as Mr. Smith says, we are just one big family! Why, I can imagine if my dead body was found tomorrow, everybody, even the stage manager and the star, would shake their heads and say, "Poor Higgins!"

Well, about 5 o'clock in the afternoon we had a little rest while the principals got their turn. Mr. Bradley took me to dinner at a funny little joint with pictures done by artists and college boys all round on the walls. We had a real good beefsteak and a bottle of beer and some ice cream afterward.

"The trouble with this comic opera," says Mr. Bradley, lighting his cigarette, "is that it has too many songs for the star and not enough opportunities for the rest of us. I am told by those in authority that we are to have another song added after tomorrow night."

"What, has he written another one?" I asked, sipping my coffee.

"He's afraid of interpolations, and they've tried the Dutch song, so he's written one about

"Five little pickaninnies back in old Alabam',
Wish you could guess which one is ma lamb,
The old man has the costumes and it will give Grandcourt a chance to"—

Mamma's Pardonable Pride

"Well, at last you're an actress!" says mamma proudly. "I don't mind missing you so much now. Just think of the clapping you got."

"And did you see us coming from the train?" I said. "Every one running out of the stores to watch us as we walked over to the theater; all the clerks nudged each other. They all knew we were the Black Bats from the Babes."

"Oh, that's all very well," said Jim, "but I don't like the game. Do you have to know the fellows in all the towns you go to?"

"Hush!" said mother. "Minnie has always had her ambitions."

In the morning going on to the next town I was invited into the front car with the principals. Miss Wyncote advised me to do my hair closer to my face and to get a new jacket. The stage manager said I had made good and I had thrilling emotions—all of them staring at me. Of course when I rode in that car I couldn't be expected to associate, at least as an equal, with the chorus any more. I felt so sorry for McCann and Grandcourt and Mr. Smith. I had luncheon with Miss Wyncote when we arrived and now I'm writing about it.

PS.—Fritzi Scheff has a very nice figure, but mine is better for dancing, because I'm taller. That counts. Gee, but I am glad I've got a straight nose. After all, a German face never could take in this country as well as a really beautiful American one. I suppose Fritzi Scheff will hate it when she knows she is going to have a rival. But then, she has had her chance; now I'm going to have mine. "I love the click of those little wooden shoes on the tiles of Amsterdam."

Later—I guess I'll never forget the sight of that audience. It was my first real flesh and blood audience, all the faces turned up to me, just urging me on. The music and the lights, and the way they clapped—why, it was more exciting than Coney Island on a summer's night in an automobile that the owner doesn't know is out. When you're on the stage you're not yourself. You just feel like some wonderful person you've dreamed about. And you don't want to wake up, either.

Looking Toward Broadway

"Grandcourt!" I could see her pert little blonde face with the big mouth and the twinkling little eyes. How would that name look on a lighted sign in Broadway?

People would think it was a garage for Pullman cars.

"Why should she be hauled out of the chorus any more than I?" I said, quick, just like that. "I must dance in that song—will you help me?"

All he promised was to help me carefully into my new imitation broadcloth cloak, and we went back to the theater. We met a lot of them on the corner, and we were all talking and laughing so loud it drew a crowd.

Then we began to rehearse. Every one was cross. The stage manager said Miss Wyncote's new hat made her look like a feather duster; then she cried because she said she hadn't known they were going to take our pictures that morning and had worn her old clothes. So they called up the photographer again and he took her picture over again alone out in the hall, where the flashlight wouldn't take our attention. She came back wiping her eyes. And the star got mad because the proprietor of the show called him down to the footlights, and he said he was so tired already that if he had to stand there another minute he'd drop over among the musickers. Then the stage manager said he'd fire the electrician if the spot light didn't follow the star around faster in his "big" song, and Mr. Bradley forgot his three lines. The playwright was talking to the man who wrote the music, and he was awful mad about the star saying his song was rotten; no chance for business, and there we were interweaving, march—double march dance and McCann's décollete didn't come together at the back. But I was just ready to drop, but I kept my ears open to hear if anything was said about the new songs with a dance in it.

I think they might have treated us to a supper at



ADMIRING THE SET OF THEM AL WINGS

FEBRUARY 22—On the train speeding to Chicago. Well, last night wasn't so much. Jim followed the show and had a front seat. He wore a new Tuxedo with a white tie. And he clapped hard enough to break his lifeline in two. It didn't make a bit of difference. They didn't like that Dutch song in Dayton. They sat there as if they were a band of wooden Indians out with some stiff for a funeral. Once they turned their eyes because a society leader had chassed into her box. My dance took, anyway. The audience clapped, but nobody would let me do it over. Everything was on the bum. Here I am back in the car with the chorus. Grandcourt has her dog with her, so, of course, can't speak to anybody else, and McCann has three chorus men and Lovell is reading poetry. She is weeping over it and swallowing her gum, she's so excited. "Old Bill" said I was to come back to this car because they're going to cut out "Amsterdam." All I get for Chicago is three rows from the front in the Black Bats. Gee, but I'm mad! I'll beat them out yet. I don't know what they soured on it for; the owner of the show says it isn't a whistling number. I wish I had known they wanted folks to whistle it. Jim is a dandy whistler!

Chicago, Feb. 20, 190—

BEING a Butterfly isn't all it's cracked up to be. There's a blizzard going on, and it has held the boards ever since we tooted into this prairie town—why, ever—old thing is buried under a foot of soot and a foot of snow. McCann has a sore throat. It's no steam heated, elevator apartment, with a button at the front entrance for ours. No; what we draw is a back street exit where a lake breeze plays in at the keyhole like a trombone when the hall door is opened. We go skating along over slippery sidewalks, gripping onto each other, till we land plump in a pile of snow. Then we squirm through and there's the stage door. I see sables are marked down to \$4.92, so perhaps I can save up and get one next week. A girl must dress.

On the Run

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Ringing the Changes

The first night we got here we rehearsed from 3 o'clock in the afternoon—it was Sunday—till 3 that night. The chorus has to change its clothes six times, and most of the girls have at least five different dance steps. Most of them we had wrong. In the last act I wear an electric blue spangled gown, with a big hat to match, with a pink feather falling off the crown. While we performed the principals sat in the scenery and had a talkfest. Miss Wyncote must be at least 35. She has a beautiful figure, but she's big and stiff and walks as if she was afraid some one wouldn't know she was a lady. She's smooth. She smiles when we speak to her, but I wouldn't dare now to set next to her any more than I would go up and chuck the manager under the chin. I think she's got

Approaching the Playwright

At 12 o'clock, when the principals were jarring about their cues, I approached the playwright.

"Mr. Orden," I says. "Beg pardon, but I hear you've written a new song."

"Who told you that?" he asked, turning on me quick—like that—I had on a new hat.

"Nobody," I said, "but I love that Amsterdam song of yours. You are a wonderful genius. I know this pickaninny one must be great. I wish I could sing in it."

"They won't even try it," he hissed between his teeth. "They won't even try it, and all my friends coming tomorrow night. Why, they all know about that song. I've been singing it to them for years, and at last I thought I had landed it. They'll be watching for it. I am going home to bed."

That sounded so tragic.

"If you'll give me a copy of that song," I says quick, my heart beating so fast under my silk shirt waist, "I'll learn it before Tuesday night. I'll sing it there, in the intermission, as if I was just practicing for fun, then the stage manager may like it!"

He grabbed up a paper and gave it to me, and began humming the tune, and then he got the music. I could read it, because I sang in the church choir once for two months.

At 3 o'clock that night they let us all go home. We were so tired we could hardly walk. "What's up?" said Mr. Smith, outside the theater, chattering to keep himself warm. "Grandcourt's got a new song to learn, all about 'Pierrot Pierrette, I Love You Yet.' What is a chorus girl doing with a new song for herself. She says she's going to sing it at Tuesday rehearsal. That's all I could find out. Say, what do you think of Bradley, anyway? Isn't he a pill in that Eagle outfit? Looks like some sort of a wet hen."

But I was thinking, thinking.

under the piano stool, picked the tune out with one finger, and began to sing:

"Five little pickaninnies back in Alabam',
Wish you knew which is ma lamb."

Gee, but it was easy! Mr. Bradley and a lot of the rest crowded around, and I forgot all about trying to please "Old Bill" with it, but just enjoyed myself, and then I tried a few steps.

Night of the Premiere

Then Monday afternoon we rehearsed again, and at last Monday night was the premiere. The whole company was so tired we could hardly drag ourselves to the dressing rooms. Miss Wyncote had a terrible case of stage fright and was drinking strong tea. Mr. Bradley said he had taken a pitcher of coffee to keep him awake, and one of the funny men said he had a frightful pain in his stomach and borrowed a whisky bottle of the other funny man. Usually they don't speak. Well, the music piped up, and the performance had begun again. There was that dear, lovely, expecting audience out there behind the curtain, and me looking at myself in the looking glass and admiring the set of them Al wings and the red on my lips. I forgot I was tired; I just knew I had those steps to do, and that I never knew before how beautiful I was. Grandcourt was ahead of me—Pullman car name and all. The stage manager passed us, and as he went he clapped her on the shoulder above her glittering wings and said, "You're a dream, Mame!" and then I knew how she had gotten that song.

Well, this is Tuesday morning. The performance last night was done rotten, the papers say, the company gone stale, but the music was good and probably we will do better tonight, so they'll give us one more chance. Kind, aren't they? I wish those critics had gone through it on tea and coffee and six hours' sleep in three days. Well, I'm learning "Five Little Pickaninnies" now. It is easy. I can hear Grandcourt hollering herself hoarse over "Pierrot, Pierrette, I Love You Yet," in the room downstairs. Her dog's name is Marmaduke and it hasn't had a bite but one chop since yesterday morning. Some of us girls are saving up breakfast sausages for it.

Feb. 21—Can't write, am going to lunch with a man who asked for an introduction last night. Molly is coming, too.

Later—The snide took us to a seventy-five cent table d'hote.

Feb. 25—At Tuesday rehearsal I sent a note to Mr. Orden, which read: "Dear Sir—Did you write 'Pierrot, Pierrette, I Love You Yet?' Grandcourt has it." Mr. Smith took it to him while the Black Bats were parading. He said he said, "Who in h—l is Grandcourt?" I could see by the way he rushed around that he never had written "Pierrot, Pierrette," in his life.

Then there came the intermission, and I walked over to the piano with perfect ease, stuck my gum

The Plan That Failed

"What's all this about?" yelled somebody, sticking his head into the crowd. "Oh, it's Higgins, isn't it? Well, you just sit way back in the auditorium until this rehearsal is over." Of course I knew I was going to be fired and Mr. Orden pretended he didn't know me. I'm glad I am not such a "butt in" as Grandcourt; she went right over to the stage manager and whispered in his ear.

Transparent Metals

METALS are usually regarded as opaque, but they become translucent when hammered out to very thin sheets. An English physicist, who has been studying this property, finds that, although thin gold leaf is usually green by transmitted light, the green light becomes white when the film is heated on glass. Microscopic examination shows that the gold has formed into opaque, detached spots, leaving clear spaces through which the light passes. Silver leaf also becomes transparent when heated. Copper leaf, when heated more and more, becomes successively emerald green, light olive, dark olive and dark port wine color. These latter results are apparently due to the formation of films of oxide, since to produce them the metals must be heated in an atmosphere containing oxygen. Aluminum and

I sat there crying, and at last the chorus work was over, and a lot of them came down and patted me on the back. It felt so good I couldn't bear not to belong to them and to "The Babes in Woodland." Lovell just called me into her room because some one she once knew somewhere had sent her a box of candy. It must have cost two or three dollars.

Feb. 29—To go on with the notes about my life. They didn't fire me. The next morning the "old man" sent word for me to know "The Five Little Pickaninnies" for rehearsal. When I got there with the other girls Grandcourt was up singing "Pierrot, Pierrette, I Love You Yet." "Old Bill" looked around proudly, but nobody liked it. She sings through her nose. I am going to give \$5 to Hartwell to send home because her mother's dead.

March 1—Mr. Bradley introduced me to a young man who travels for a silver firm. Oh, yes—about that song. After Grandcourt had finished I got my chance with the Pickaninnies again, so without saying anything more to me they began to plan my costume. "I'll be hung if that song ever gets on," swore the stage manager. "It's no place for it, in a French pink boudoir."

Mr. Orden looked awful quiet as if he hadn't heard, and talked with the owner. But it isn't in yet, and the second month has come, and "The Babes" was a great success after we'd got a little sleep. Well, I suppose the owner is making his thousands out of it. I'm glad somebody's rich.

March 5—The young man who travels for the silver house took Lovell out to supper instead of me. I was standing right there in the wings, too. Men is so un sincere.

March 6—Ain't it awful? I haven't been asked to sing in the Little Pickaninnies yet! I've got an awful cold in my head.

March 7—Had a letter from mamma. She says I'm famous in Paris, Ohio. Well, that's some comfort! There's so many girls acting in Chicago.

March 10—"Hullo, Minnie," says Miss Wyncote to me last night; "I'm going to sing 'The Little Pickaninnies' next Monday' night, and you're to stand next to me in line and do your cute little dance." Say, you could have knocked me down with a feather! Of course, I might have known she'd have gotten the song. But she can't dance. Thank heaven, I ain't been so fed up on lobster and champagne that I can't get around pretty lively yet.

March 21—I went to lunch yesterday with a man named Bowsox.

March 30—Well, the costume of the "Little Pickaninnies" fitted me like a potato peel. We sang it last night. Say, it was a knockout. Mr. Bradley says the audience was tired of the pink French drawing room, anyway, and glad of a change. Audiences as a whole, he says, are shifty. First Miss Wyncote sang her verse all through, then us chorus joined in, and then I out and danced—like a bird. It was something like the Dutch dance, only more niggery. Well, they clapped and clapped, and Miss Wyncote swooped on and bowed and then they clapped harder, and she looked worried, and then "Old Bill" came right over to me himself: "You've got to do that dance over," he says, glum as a man you owe money to. Then we sang the last chorus verse over and I danced again, and everything was lovely, except that somebody says Miss Wyncote cried all through her powder when she toddled back to her dressing room. Of course, I hate to make a lady cry. But what was she expecting? She isn't any Fritzi Scheff! Why, if it wasn't for the Johnnies who come to see her figure she wouldn't be prima donna. My voice has six more notes than hers, three below and three above. And the playwright came up and shook my hand, for, of course, his song goes, though he didn't write the dance.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



GRACIOUS, HOW GOOD IT FELT!

THE LATEST IN POPULAR SCIENCE

Moving Pictures by Daylight

STEREOPTICON pictures either fixed or moving for use in ordinary daylight or in a brightly lighted room are now made in France. The trick is simple and consists merely of some device to keep the light from shining directly on the screen on which the picture is thrown. In the Cinema palace, Paris, this is effected by arranging heavy curtains around the screen at proper positions and distances. The lantern, for protection, is at the opposite end of the hall, as is now usual. In another device the pictures are thrown on a sheet of ground glass forming one end of a large black box, whose opposite end is open to view. In this case the lantern is not in the same room with the spectators, and the picture resembles that seen on looking at the ground glass of an ordinary photographic camera. As the screen in both these cases is sheltered from the diffused light of the theater or hall, it is not necessary to extinguish or lower the lamps, although, of course, these should not be brilliant enough to dazzle the eyes. In describing these "full daylight" devices it has been wrongly stated by some writers that they depend on special brilliancy in the lantern or on some arrangement of reflectors. This is incorrect. The only things necessary are to keep the light away from the screen and out of the spectators' eyes.

Getting Rid of Steamship Ashes

THE newest liners now dispose of their ashes by forcing them through the bottom of the hull by means of compressed air. The old method of hoisting them up and dumping them overboard was disagreeable to the passengers, and an attempted improvement by which they were mixed with water and pumped overboard was equally so when the wind was in the wrong quarter. In the new "expeller" a hopper receives the ashes and clinkers and delivers them into a crusher, which breaks up the large pieces. Below this is a drum revolving in a watertight casing and open as it turns first to the crusher chamber and then to the discharge pipe below. In order to counteract the upward pressure of the water compressed air at about 70 pounds to the square inch is delivered to the interior of the ash filled drum just before its opening comes opposite that in the discharge pipe. Thus the ashes are expelled with such force that they are swept clear of the bottom of the vessel. This expeller will get rid of the ash and clinkers from 48 furnaces under forced draft, amounting to 8 or 10 tons an hour.

Curious Property of Printer's Ink

THAT printer's ink gives off an emanation that passes through opaque bodies and affects a photographic plate has been discovered by a German investigator. Photographic roll film is sometimes thus affected, through its celluloid cover, by the printed characters on the paper in which it is wrapped. The emanation is found to proceed from the oil in the ink during the drying process. It is not precisely the same as the emanation from radium and other radio active substances, for, unlike them, it changes gum arabic into a granular, insoluble substance. It was this effect produced on the gum of envelope flaps by the printed characters on the envelopes that first attracted the investigator's attention. The emanations are reflected by metal mirrors in the same way as light, and they oxidize metal surfaces against which they strike. The exposure necessary to affect a sensitive plate is eight or ten days.